

Printed for the Conference of Women's Suffrage Societies  
at Birmingham, October 16th, 1896.

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## POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

AND

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

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*In 1883, at the Parliamentary Reform Conference of the London and Counties Union, the National Liberal Federation and the National Reform Union, held in LEEDS (Oct. 17th), the following resolution was passed WITH A LARGE MAJORITY.*

“That, in the opinion of this meeting, any measure for the extension of the suffrage should confer the franchise upon women who, possessing the qualifications which entitle men to vote, have now the right of voting in all matters of local government.”

*In 1891 the Annual Conference of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, held in BIRMINGHAM (November 23rd), RESOLVED BY A LARGE MAJORITY:—*

“That this Conference is of opinion that when the question of the representation of the people is re-opened by Parliament, serious consideration should be given to the claims of women to be admitted to the Franchise when entitled by ownership or occupation.”

List of the various occasions on which Resolutions in favour of extending the Parliamentary Franchise to women, have been passed by representative gatherings of political organizations from 1883 to 1896.

Parliamentary Reform Conference (Leeds, Oct. 17th, 1883,) representing the London and Counties Union, the National Liberal Federation and the National Reform Union, *by a large majority.*

National Liberal Federation, Annual Meeting (Bristol November, 1883).

National Reform Union, Annual Conference (Manchester, January, 1884), *by a large majority.*

National Union of Conservative Associations of Scotland, Annual Conference (Glasgow, 1887), *by a large majority.*

National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, Annual Conference (Oxford, November, 1887)

Welsh Division of the National Union of Conservative Associations (Swansea, February, 1888), *with two dissentients.*

National Reform Union, Annual Meeting of General Council (Manchester, May 22nd, 1889).

Conservative party of North Devon Conference (Barnstaple, May, 1889), *by an overwhelming majority.*

Lancashire and Cheshire Division of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations (Council Meeting at Lancaster, June 29th, 1889), *with one dissentient.*

Northern Union of Conservative Associations, Annual Meeting (Newcastle-on-Tyne, November 15th, 1889.)

National Union of Conservative Associations of Scotland, Conference (Dundee, November 14th, 1889) *by a very large majority.*

Birmingham Liberal Association, General Council of "the Two Thousand." (Birmingham, January 21st, 1891) *with one dissentient.*

National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, Annual Conference (Birmingham, Nov. 23rd, 1891), for the second time, *with a large majority.*

Scottish Branch of the Primrose League, Annual Meeting of the Grand Habitation. (Edinburgh, Oct. 30th, 1891), *unanimously.*

National Union of Conservative Associations of Scotland, Annual Conference (Edinburgh, Nov. 8th, 1892), for the second time, *unanimously.*

National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations (Newcastle-on-Tyne, April, 1894), for the third time, *with one dissentient.*

At a meeting of the General Committee of the Bath Conservative Association, May, 1896, and subsequently at a meeting of the Executive Committee, the following resolution was *unanimously* passed and forwarded to the Members for the city:—"That this meeting learns with great satisfaction that a Bill entitled, 'The Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill,' has been introduced in the House of Commons, and they earnestly trust you will be able to give your support to its second reading, which is set down for the first place on Wednesday, May 20th."

S P E E C H E S

TO RESOLUTION I.

DELIVERED AT THE

✓ NATIONAL CONFERENCE

OF DELEGATES OF

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES IN GREAT BRITAIN  
AND IRELAND.

ON OCTOBER 16, 1896.

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(REVISED FOR THE PRESS.)

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1896.

ERRATUM.

PAGE 1.—*Add* "Parliamentary Committee" to  
list of Societies represented at the Conference.

This is a photograph of the original  
manuscript of the "Map of England and Wales"  
showing the "Suffrage Meetings & Lectures"  
for the year 1887-1888.

M U T A M

MAP OF  
ENGLAND AND WALES

SHEWING

**MEN'S SUFFRAGE**

**MEETINGS & LECTURES**

1887-1888

ME

WOM

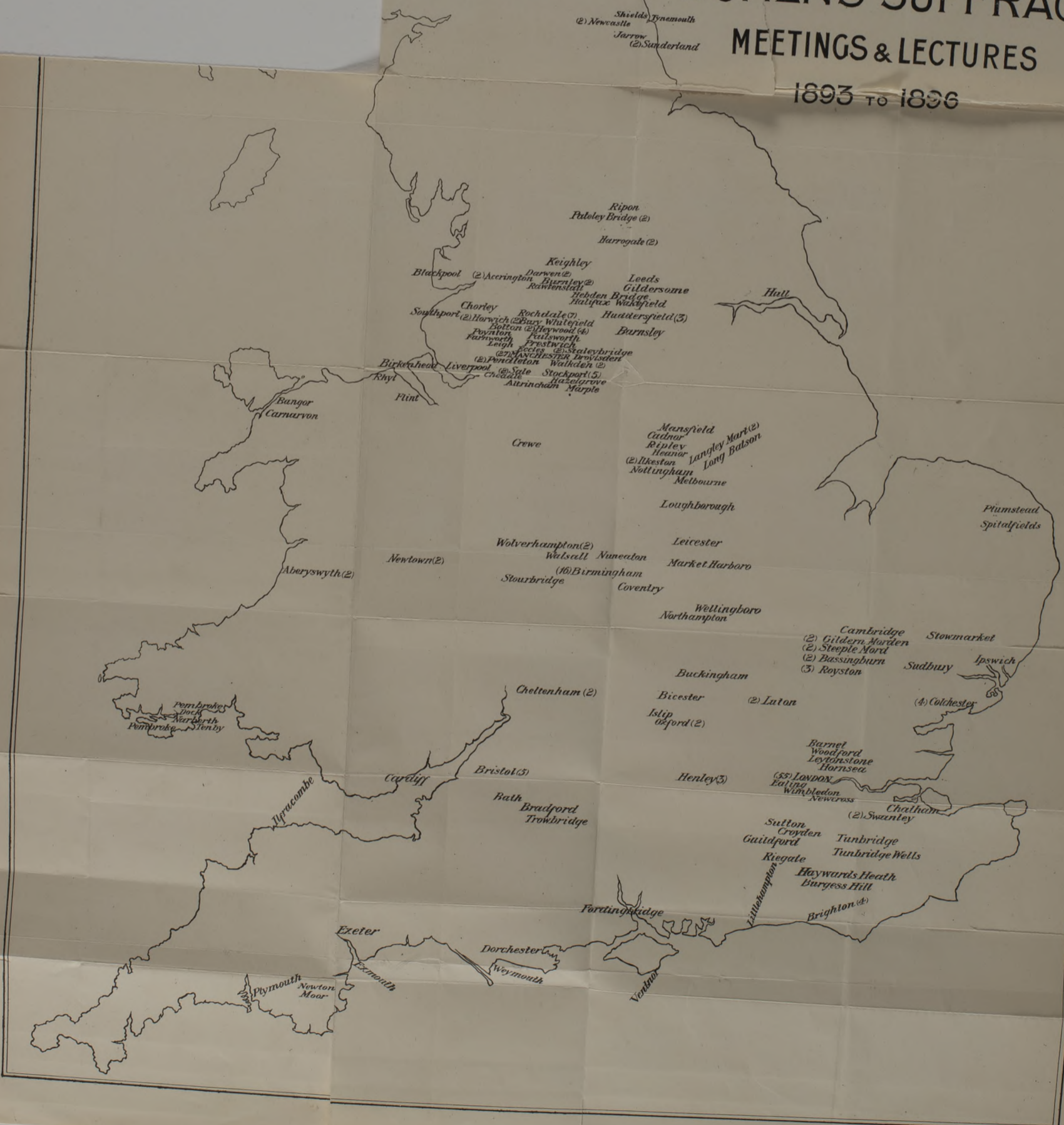
Newcastle  
Sunderland  
Jarrow

Printed and published by the Geographical Institute, 10, South Molton Street, London, W.1.  
E. B. & J. W.

# MAP OF ENGLAND AND WALES

## SHEWING WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MEETINGS & LECTURES

1893 TO 1896



Shields  
Newcastle  
Tynemouth  
Jarrow  
(2) Sunderland

Ripon  
Pateley Bridge (2)  
Harrrogate (2)

Keighley  
Darwen (2)  
Blackpool (2)  
Accrington  
Barnley (2)  
Rawthorpe  
Leeds  
Gildersome  
Hebden Bridge  
Halifax  
Wetherfield  
Huddersfield (3)  
Barnsley

Chorley  
Rochdale (7)  
Southport (2)  
Horwich (2)  
Bury  
Wigan  
Preston  
Lancaster  
Farnworth  
Fulwood (6)  
Leigh  
Salford  
Stockport (5)  
Pendleton  
Widnes (2)  
Warrington  
Atrincham  
Marpole

Bangor  
Carnarvon  
Plymouth  
Newton Moor

Crewe  
Mansfield  
Cadnam  
Ripley  
Heanor  
Langley Park (2)  
Lang Balsall  
(2) Ilkeston  
Nottingham  
Melbourne

Wolverhampton (2)  
Walsall  
Nuneaton  
Stourbridge  
(16) Birmingham  
Coventry

Leicester  
Market Harboro  
Wellingboro  
Northampton

Cambridge  
(2) Guilden Morden  
(2) Steeple Mord  
(2) Bassingburn  
(3) Royston

Stowmarket  
Ipswich  
Sudbury  
(4) Colchester

Pembroke  
Dinorwic  
Aberystwyth (2)  
Stenby

Cheltenham (2)  
Bicester  
Islip  
Oxford (2)

Buckingham  
(2) Luton

Barnet  
Woodford  
Leytonstone  
Hornsea  
(55) LONDON  
Ealing  
Wimbledon  
Newcross  
Chatham  
(2) Swanley

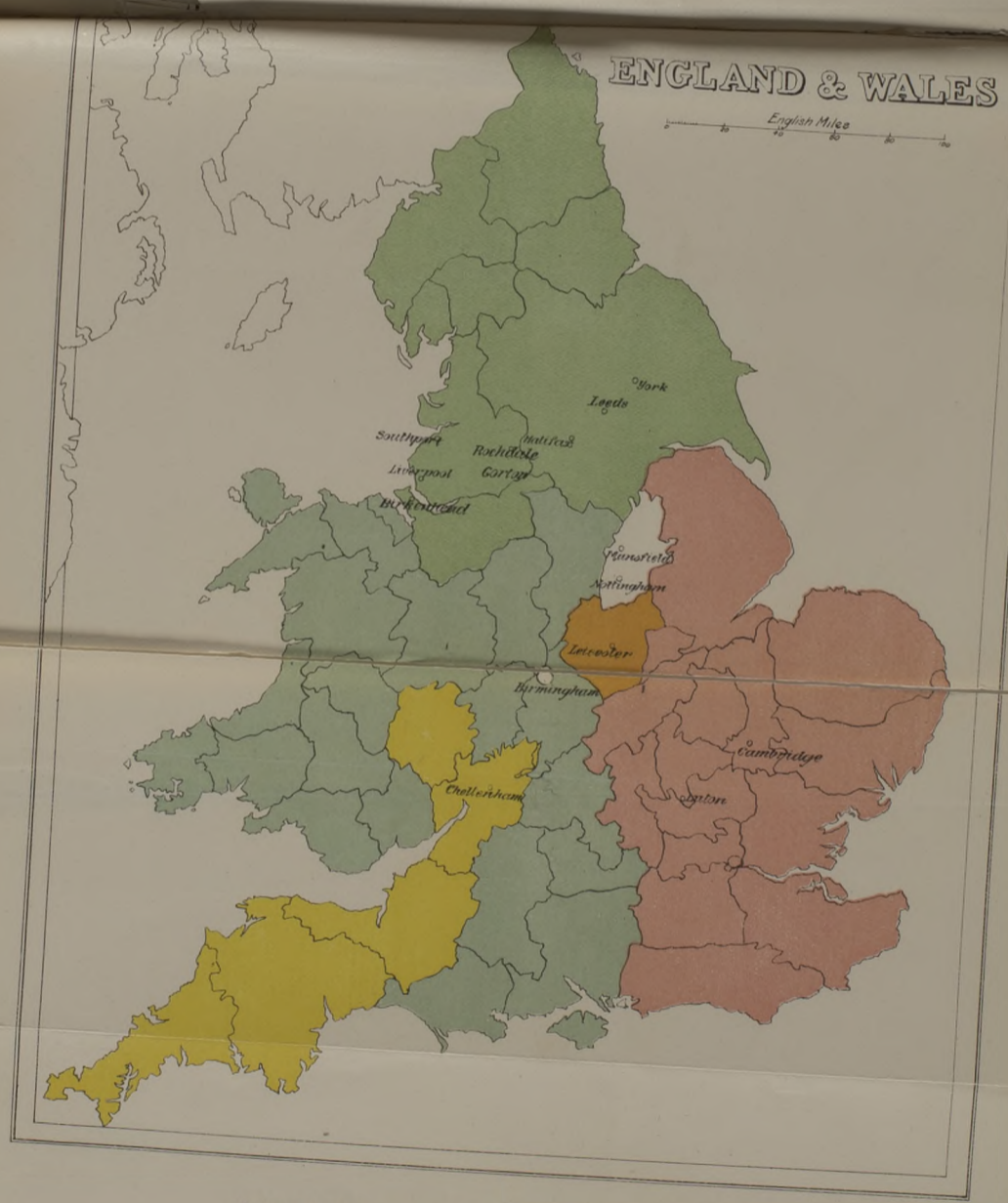
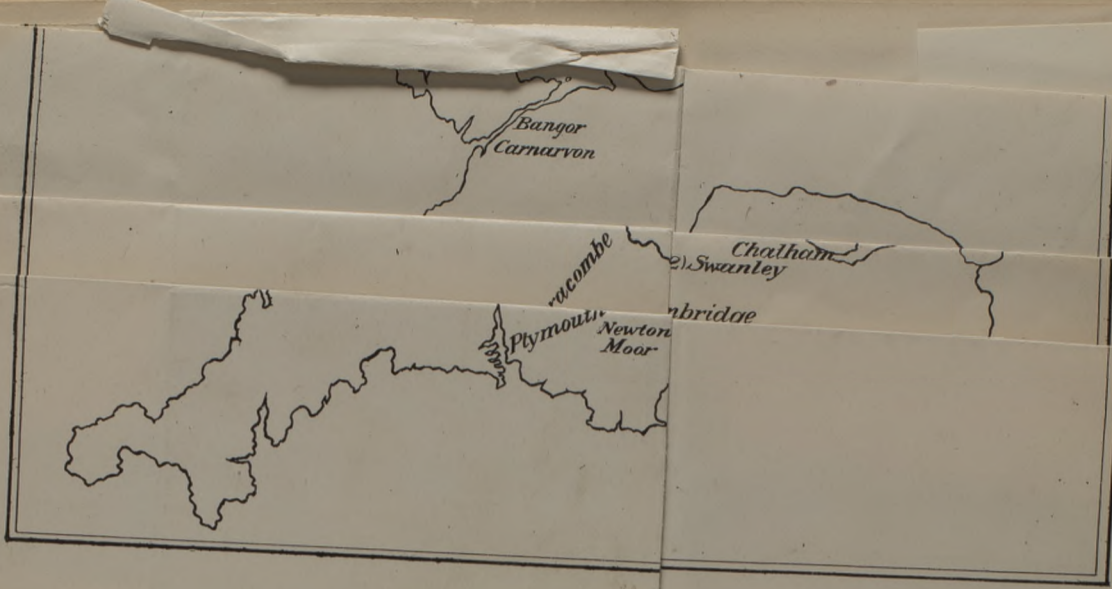
Apracombe  
Cardiff  
Bristol (3)  
Bath  
Bradford  
Trowbridge

Henley (3)  
Sutton  
Croyden  
Guildford  
Regate  
Tunbridge  
Tunbridge Wells  
Haywards Heath  
Burgess Hill

Exeter  
Dorchester  
Weymouth

Fortingalodge  
Brighton (4)

Plymouth  
Newton Moor



*AREAS of the various Societies.*

- = Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage.
- = Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage.
- = Central National Society for Women's Suffrage.
- = Bristol and West of England Branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage.
- = Leicester Society.

- Nottinghamshire = Nottingham and Mansfield Societies.
- Birmingham and the district for 20 miles round = Birmingham Society.

The Societies in Leeds, York, Halifax, Liverpool, Birkenhead and Wirral, Southport, Rochdale, Gorton, Cambridge, Luton, Cheltenham, undertake the work in their own districts.

The London constituencies are divided between the Central Committee, the Central National Society, and the Parliamentary Committee for Women's Suffrage.

## SPEECHES TO RESOLUTION I.

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ON Friday, the 16th of October, 1896, a National Conference of Delegates of Women's Suffrage Societies in Great Britain and Ireland was held in the Priory Schools, Birmingham. Mrs. HENRY FAWCETT presided, and the following Societies were represented: The Central National Society, the Central Committee, the Manchester National Society, the Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Luton, Nottingham, Leicester, Mansfield, Southport, Birkenhead, and Cambridge Women's Suffrage Societies, the Franchise League, the Edinburgh National Society, the Dublin and Belfast and North of Ireland Societies.

✓Mrs. FAWCETT, in her opening speech, said, "Ladies, you are most of you aware of the circumstances which led to the calling together of this Conference. We are all aware, ladies, that there are two different kinds of Conferences. There is the Conference the object of which is to blow the trumpet in the presence of the public, to say what a very magnificent organisation we form, to bring out our triumphant successes into the strongest relief, and to say nothing about our failures and want of perfection. The object of the other kind of Conference is to confer. The Conference we are attending to-day is of the latter kind. We are not here to celebrate our own perfections but rather to ponder and bear in mind those particulars in which we fall short of perfection. There are here met together representatives of as many as twenty-two Suffrage Societies, in various parts of the United Kingdom, to consider in what way our organisation can be improved, and what methods and measures can be adopted in order to cover the ground we have not yet been able to cover. A glance at the maps will show you that much still remains to be done. If we were a Conference of the first sort, we should dwell exclusively on the rather remarkable fact, that during the last three years 309 Suffrage meetings



have been held, and we should refrain from mentioning the fact that in England alone there have been, in the three years, eight counties in which no Suffrage meetings at all have been held, and three others in which only one meeting has been held. But, as we are here to-day to study our defects and the means of remedying them, I would call your attention particularly to these. We have yet a large field which we hope by better organisation to cover.

Then, again, if we were a Conference of the first order we should dwell, with a satisfaction we are quite entitled to feel, upon the growth of Societies that are dealing with this Suffrage Question. There are the exclusively Suffrage Societies, and also a number of political organisations, which have declared themselves in favour of the Suffrage. Thus there has been considerable increase in the working strength of Women's Suffrage Societies; but all this makes increased organisation absolutely necessary. Only those that are Suffrage Societies pure and simple are represented here to-day; that is, we have omitted, for convenience sake, to extend the invitation to the representatives of Political Societies that have taken up Suffrage as a part of their programme. The very growth in the number of these Suffrage Societies makes it necessary that we should map out between us various sections of England, in order that the work in various districts might be done more effectively.

"For myself I regard with much hopefulness the mere fact of our being met here together. I think it is a very useful thing indeed for friends working in the same cause to meet together, not constantly, perhaps, not annually or regularly, but from time to time, that is occasionally, in order to discuss the general outlook, to consider what is being done, and how our methods and organisation might be improved. I do not intend to touch in detail upon the various questions coming before you in the resolutions, but whatever method of work may be devised or accepted by this Conference, I believe you will all agree with me that in the long run there is only one method that is really effective, and that is to convince the consciences, the minds, and hearts of the people of England, whether men or women, that what we are seeking is likely to prove conducive to the general well-being of the nation. We are not seeking to turn Society upside down, or to turn women into men. Far from it. We are seeking to give women the power which would enable them the better to fulfil their duties as women. If we can show that we approach

political questions in a reasonable, temperate, moderate spirit, I think we shall convince the men of the nation that the influence of women in politics would be a source of strength to the general condition of the country. I have said things myself which have rather partaken of the nature of threats, but I am sure that, in our more reasonable moments, we must feel that threats, without force behind them to carry them out, are amongst the most futile, absurd, and childish of things in the world, and threats, even when they have force behind them to carry them into effect, are not convincing. People are not convinced of the righteousness and justice of a cause by being threatened with something disagreeable. You may have heard the saying, that before we can have wine or oil the grape must be crushed and the olive must be pressed. We have to work in this cause to produce this change, this conviction in the hearts of our countrymen and country women, and it is in this spirit that I believe the work of the various Suffrage Societies will be undertaken in order to bring it to a successful issue."

The first Resolution submitted was:—

"That this Conference resolves that each Society here represented undertake, as far as is practicable, a definite area of Great Britain and Ireland, with the object of extending the Women's Suffrage movement within that area, each Society being left free to work on its own lines."

✓ Mrs. THOMAS TAYLOR, in proposing it, said: I want to ask you first to look back at the work that has been done. It is nearly twenty-five years or so since I attended, in St. George's Hall, Regent Street, one of the first public meetings held about Women's Suffrage. I well remember the admiration and respect I felt for the young woman who was so bravely and ably addressing that large audience. Bravely, for it was a very different thing in those days for a woman to address a public meeting from what it is now: it was a new thing then, and required great courage: and ably, for I heard an M.P., who formed one of our party, say to himself, "This is first rate,—in every way first rate." That young woman's name was Mrs. Fawcett. Since then her work for the cause of Women's Suffrage, as we all know, has been unceasing and invaluable; and it is by common consent that she occupies the justly earned position of President of our Conference to-day.

At the same meeting Miss Becker also spoke,—a clear, strong, resolute speech; and by her death Women's Suffrage lost one of its most zealous workers. But the effect of her work and of all those first large meetings remains. The few hundred women who got them up and who wanted the Suffrage then, have grown, as we know by the Special Appeal that was presented this year, to a quarter of a million women: and those few early meetings have given rise to the number of meetings shown on the map recording the work of the last three years.

And yet with all this—with all these twenty-five years of work—Women's Suffrage is not yet won. How is this?

We all know that Women's Suffrage may come to pass at any time. Whenever it suits the needs of either political party, it will be taken up and carried. Man's political necessity will be woman's opportunity. But we cannot afford to wait. None of us wish to wait for the mere chance of Women's Suffrage being some day taken up to suit some political exigency. So we must seek for the real reasons why we have not yet got the Suffrage; and amongst all those that are hurled at our heads by friends and foes, only one to my mind really hits the nail on the head. It is this—"You have not got the great mass of women with you. The majority of women do not really care about the Suffrage." That, I think, we must all admit is true. There are hundreds and thousands of women who do care for the Suffrage; but there are millions—I speak advisedly—millions who not only do not care, but who have, many of them, never heard of it, and who certainly do not realise what it means. I refer to the Special Appeal in proof of this. 260,000 seems a large number of signatures to get in six months; but it comes to this, that it is just one out of every forty adult women,—the numbers, I assure you, are correct. Some here may think that we could easily have doubled the number in another six months. But those of us who acted on the Special Appeal Committee I think would very much doubt it; and personally I am convinced we could not; for this reason, that in the six months all who cared keenly about the Suffrage worked their utmost in the districts they could influence, and the other districts were beyond their reach. There were great tracts of country that would never have been reached even if the Appeal had been continued for two or three years, simply because there was no one there to work them. Look at Cumberland, at Lincoln, at Devonshire. What do all those blank spaces mean, but that there are no Suffrage

women there, or only a few isolated individuals? If all the marked places may be taken as centres of light, all those blank spaces are realms of darkness—heathen lands, so far as Women's Suffrage is concerned. And what chance, I ask you, have we of getting Women's Suffrage, or of having numbers of women at elections pressing M.P.s for the Suffrage, when we have all that much country unconcerned about it—unconverted? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? That is our problem to-day.

Now, I think it may be taken for granted that we all realise and agree as to the need there is to preach the gospel of Women's Suffrage to those as yet heathen districts. But I would urge on you as strongly as I can the need of doing the work systematically. Let us consider the position. How do we work now? There is no reason to blame the methods that have been pursued up to the present time. When any propaganda work of any sort is begun it is best to go first to the places most likely to receive it; in fact, to get a footing wherever possible. That is what has been done, and done successfully up to now. And yet not altogether successfully, as those blank spaces show. Therefore, the question arises, Would it not be better to change the method of work, and instead of each Suffrage Society getting up meetings here and there and sending speakers hither and thither, would it not be better, instead of this costly and aimless method of procedure, for each Suffrage Society to undertake a definite area of work, and work it for the next few years in any way it thinks best? For instance, suppose the Manchester Society undertook the North of England, the Great College Street Society the East, the Victoria Street Society the West (including Wales), the Bristol Society the South-west, leaving Birmingham and Leeds and other Suffrage Societies a definite area of so many miles surrounding their town, or even the whole of their own county; the constituencies of London being divided between the London offices. That in the rough is what this resolution proposes.

As to the method of working the definite area undertaken, it must, of course, be left to each Society to do as it thinks best. Only—and this is merely my own suggestion, and has nothing to do with the terms of the resolution—I very strongly recommend the appointment by each Society of one or two organisers, who should work the definite area very systematically, avoiding the large towns as much as possible, and working chiefly in the villages and small towns; for this reason: that

any one woman's work is simply lost in a large town. Large towns are best dealt with by large meetings, and even these merely afford a couple of days' interest, and are given a few sentences or possibly as much as half a column in the local paper—and there is the end. By the next week the whole subject is forgotten and the interest evaporated. But in a village, the very appearance of a stranger is a novelty, and causes excitement. To call at a cottage and say a few words, and leave a leaflet or two, raises curiosity and causes much talk. In small towns the effect is much the same. The whole thing is noticed, and, so to speak, soaks in. And, further, in almost every village there is at least one intelligent, open-minded woman, and this woman's name can be taken down, and then when Suffrage work of any sort is wanted, the Society knows whom to write to. In every small town two or three such women are to be found, if sought for. But for this work a paid organiser is needed, for any one woman visiting and working day after day and month after month gets over the ground and covers the country in a way that volunteer workers cannot possibly do, although, of course, all volunteer work should also be used to the utmost.

And now I want to bring before you a few points, in order to forestall objections to the scheme. (1) It may be objected that no Committee of any Society can possibly pledge its Society to undertake a definite course of action that is likely to extend over some years (and though this is not mentioned in the resolution, it is not much use attempting to work a large definite area in a year). But this objection is merely a technical difficulty. The resolution does not demand a *pledge* of action, but that the system of working a definite area of country may be taken as a *plan* of action.

(2) If any objection to, or difficulty arises in the area undertaken, another Conference can be called and the areas re-arranged.

(3) Though the definite area undertaken by a Society should as a rule be worked solely by that Society, we should, I think, have no hard and fast line—only a general system of work; for we are all friends and fellow-workers; and if in any special town a particular speaker is desired for a meeting—a speaker belonging to some other Suffrage Society—that speaker should freely go there. Also political associations affiliated to any of the Suffrage Societies will continue to belong to that Society.

(4) And here I want to meet what may be called the political difficulty. On broad lines the Victoria Street Society has chiefly Liberal

workers on its committee; and the Great College Street Society has chiefly Unionists and Conservatives. But I see no difficulty in undertaking definite areas on this account; for it is a root principle with us all, that Women's Suffrage knows no party. And not only is it our principle but it is our practice that, in ordinary work, year in year out, the work of all the Suffrage Societies is done on non-party lines. At election times it is necessarily different. Each district wants speakers that suit its special political needs; and, therefore, I would suggest that during a General Election, or bye-election, and perhaps for a month preceding it, the whole system of definite areas of work should lie in abeyance for the time, and the Societies meet in a Parliamentary Committee, as was done this year.

(5) Lastly, there is the difficulty of funds, if, as I suggest, regular paid organisers are to be employed. I do not, however, think this would be any real difficulty. I believe the plan would be found not only to pay its way, but to pay well. The organiser will sow; the secretary will reap, some months afterwards; for at present many persons who, from one cause or another, become interested in Women's Suffrage, do not know which Suffrage Society to join, or to which they should send a contribution; and it ends at present in their not joining, and in not sending any contribution. I know this, for I myself remained two years without joining any Society, not knowing which I had better join, not knowing if there were any radical differences in the two London Suffrage Societies. I simplified matters by joining both, and then finding out that there was no fundamental difference between them. But I fear that most people do not indulge in this expensive process; and I know various friends who have remained undecided up to the present time as to which Society to join. Now, if the definite area system were adopted, everyone living within it would know clearly and at once which Society to join and subscribe to.

Finally, I would like to say that as we are all in accord on Suffrage matters, and have in our rules precisely the same objects, I see no reason why at some future date the various Suffrage Societies at present existing should not join and form themselves into Divisions of one National Society for Women's Suffrage, to which these Societies avowedly belong (as may be seen in the title-page of their reports), and thus form the *Northern* Division, the *Eastern* Division, the *Western* Division, the *South-western* Division, the Birmingham Branch, the Mansfield Branch, of the National Society for Women's Suffrage.

We should then, each committee and organisation, be perfectly free as now, and yet present a united front to the world. But this, as Rudyard Kipling says, is another story; only in defining the areas, I think it might be contemplated as a future possibility.

To return to the subject in hand, and to end it. I feel convinced that if definite areas for work were adopted, each Society would gain largely in membership and in money, and be able to do treble the amount of propaganda work. I therefore hope most earnestly that you will adopt this resolution, which I now beg to move.

✓ The Hon. Mrs. ARTHUR LYTTELTON, in seconding the resolution, said: Mrs. Fawcett and ladies,—Mrs. Taylor has gone in such detail into the scheme embodied in this resolution, that it is unnecessary for me to trespass upon your time by any further elucidation. But I would like to say a few words in advocacy of the resolution. Some of you may have wondered why other Societies in England that are working for Women's Suffrage are not included in this modern "partition of Poland," if I may so speak. But you will readily understand that there is good reason for this omission. Some of these Societies have other objects in view besides Women's Suffrage, and therefore practically extend over the whole of Great Britain, and, I might add, they do not in the same way come into conflict with each other. Now, there are obvious advantages to be gained if the branches of the National Society would undertake definite areas, as described. I was specially struck with the point which was brought forward as to the perfect freedom of any town, district, or area to select other speakers besides those sent, if so inclined. What is essential is that the Societies should work together perfectly amicably, as indeed they have been doing for the last few years. If we disagree among ourselves, the thing we have at heart will go wrong. No amount of rules, maps, divisions, or partitions, or anything in the world will have effect unless we are all agreed. And there need be no differences between us; for, surely, in the face of such an enormously important measure as this of Women's Suffrage, we must agree to sink all differences—to fight them out, if need be, after the united struggle is over. I feel that we are in the position of the old adherents of the Stuarts, when they did all in their power to restore those monarchs to the nation. They agreed to put aside their differences entirely while efforts in favour of the Stuarts were being made: let us do the same, and with better success. Let us keep this question of the Suffrage clearly before us, for it stands in the

forefront of all other questions. The more we face the whole position the more we are convinced that it is a great stumbling-block in our way—this assertion of the inferiority of women. In whatever direction our special efforts lie, whether it be in political organisations, temperance work, the reform of various laws, or attempts to raise the status of women in great towns, whatever our work may be, we are always confronted—I am convinced of it—by this one difficulty, the assertion by the State of the inequality of women and men. Only let us get rid of that, and the way will be cleared for us to discuss other subjects. Let all those anxious for the amelioration of the position of women, in whatever department of life it may be, put aside their differences, and agree to some such scheme as that laid before us to-day, which will, as we hope, insure that every man and woman in England will be made acquainted with what we seek. This will enable us to have a definite plan to put before our supporters, many of whom have contributed to the Suffrage movement during the last twenty or thirty years, and who are growing tired of giving, for, as they say, we seem no nearer to our goal. Now we can go before them and say that we intend to have a company of organisers (at present we have only one in Manchester) prepared to go through the towns and villages of the country, so that no one in future will be able to say that they have not heard of Woman Suffrage; and no one will be able to think, or to pretend they think, that the Suffrage means that every woman will try for a seat in Parliament, or that it will lead to every man having as many wives as the Mormons, or to every woman having three husbands, as in Thibet. Some people will tell you they have an "instinct" against the measure. What is instinct? Is it not a divine gift which enables one to see quickly facts which can be afterwards proved by reasoning? When we cannot prove our feelings we don't call that instinct, but prejudice. You know the sort of objections by which we are confronted,—“You are undermining everything that we hold sacred,” and so on. We have to go before these people and tell them simply and plainly what we want. Having done that, we shall find that we have throughout the constituencies a determined band of workers who will put this question before the country, and press it upon Parliament, and thus remove the charge made against us—and it is a perfectly true charge—that a large proportion of women do not care for Women's Suffrage. I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution.

Mrs. SCATCHERD: Mrs. Fawcett and ladies,—I think the resolution may have struck some of you, as it did me, that if it be carried out it will have the effect not only of obviating overlapping, but it will rouse each district up to work with more enthusiasm and energy. Thirty years ago the country was divided into six districts. The outlines have become blurred, so to speak, and now it has been found necessary to have such a resolution as this. The question is, What are we to do now? It is useless merely to say pleasant things; we must speak the truth and face the situation. Our experience, then, is that the day of the average public meeting, which we have been holding for the last fifteen years, is practically over; and the drawing-room meeting is also becoming a thing of the past. What did you get at these meetings? A resolution passed in favour of the Suffrage. What next? Well, nothing—nothing practical. You get an expression of approval, intellectual approval; but that is vastly different from conviction. Conviction leads to action. How are we to get it? Public and drawing-room meetings will not suffice—the old order changeth; and we must devise a new. I would strongly advise what the Franchise League has done, and that is to hold meetings at some special crisis, which would form a good peg to work upon; say at the time of an election. We have coming on not only the Municipal elections in November, but the School Board and Parish Councils elections; and meetings held in connection with these would attract deeper interest than if held at any odd time. But a great deal of our work, ladies, must be indirect; such, for instance, as influencing various political societies.

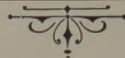
Mrs. RUSSELL-COOKE: Ladies and gentlemen,—I have great pleasure in coming here to support this resolution. I am glad to see in this room the representatives of so many Societies, with differences, perhaps, but all caring intensely about getting the vote for women, and all realising how entirely that is the key to the whole position. But this position changes, as has been just said; and, therefore, it behoves us to bestir ourselves to do something new. What has struck me lately at Suffrage meetings is the immense number of new faces, showing that many fresh people are taking an interest in the subject. That is a most encouraging sign. But the most important thing for us now is to undertake what may be called missionary work. There are still very many places up and down the country where people know and care nothing about Woman Suffrage. The great fault of meetings

is that they cannot be got up in places where there are no friends; and thus there has been a tendency to confine these meetings to places that are already converted. One woman firmly convinced of the necessity of Woman Suffrage, going into some quiet town or village, might, with her missionary enthusiasm, convert many people to her side. In a report, that might not sound very grand; but, after all, it is real missionary work. It is certainly discouraging work, and needs women of great determination to carry it out. There was a time when I thought it a misfortune that Woman Suffrage was split up amongst so many Societies; but I have now come to see that each Society gets hold of a different set of people; so there has been no harm, but rather much good done in the past by this division. But in order to cover the ground more effectively, greater care must be taken not to overlap, as has hitherto been the case. I am not sure that we shall be able absolutely to keep entirely to fixed lines. You all know that if you get up a concert, and you say to a friend, "Here are ten tickets; will you kindly distribute them among your friends?" you manage to get them all taken; but if you say, "Take some tickets, and dispose of what you can," the chances are you will find only one or two will have gone. The same thing applies to the work of these Suffrage Societies. I do not want larger areas to be given to people than they can manage; nor that we should be too ambitious about it; but I do want the various Societies to be agreed to take definite areas and to work them as carefully as possible. If they cannot cover them this year, they can continue the work next year and the year after; and by these means we shall get such a propelling power behind Members of Parliament as is absolutely necessary if we would get this question through the House of Commons. I am under the impression, though I would not say it to everyone, that, although we sometimes attack Members of Parliament, there is on the whole a larger proportion of opinion in favour of Woman Suffrage in the House of Commons than there is in the country; and that is why Members are so slack about putting their professions into actual practice. Therefore, if we would make progress we must create a stronger public opinion behind Members in their own constituencies. We are no longer a small body of women wire-pulling—as we have been accused of being, and perhaps with some truth;—we are an immense body of women, not merely in the big towns such as London or Manchester or Birmingham, but scattered over the whole country. I have never known so much active

work for Woman Suffrage proposed so early in the autumn. Years have elapsed since there has been such an intensity of feeling; so we must put our shoulders to the wheel. Altogether, I am extremely glad this Conference has been called so early, so that we may look forward to a winter of increased active work.

Mrs. BEDDOE: Mrs. Fawcett and ladies,—I am sorry to be the only representative of what I do think through all these years has been one of the most active and prosperous branches of our Society. Our chairman has said that we do not wish to blow the trumpet; but if we can only agree unanimously to sink smaller differences, and to present ourselves as a united force before the world, then we may take it for certain that some one will blow the trumpet for us. No one can say that the present structure of party politics is founded upon a rock; indeed, many think it is in a very crumbling condition. Now, should any changes take place in party arrangements—and in these times changes sometimes occur so suddenly that it is possible we might not have to wait many months—then this, our cause, for which we have been working more than a quarter of a century, might at once come to the front. Every year I live, I am the more convinced that this question is the most important that concerns women: it forms the ground-work of everything else. Let us, then, be united; let this resolution be carried unanimously, or else let the question be deferred. Do let it go forth to the public that we are all agreed. It is indeed most foolish to enter upon a great contest and let the enemy think that your forces are divided; it is also a mistake to let the enemy know more than you would wish them to know in regard to your future line of policy.

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously, and the areas were allotted to the different Societies, as shown in the second map.



## THE

## Plea of Disfranchised Women.

On the twentieth of June, 1897, our most gracious Sovereign Queen Victoria (whom God preserve!) will have reigned over a loyal and grateful people for a period of sixty years. From all parts of her vast dominions will be poured forth spontaneous tributes of respect, praise, and devotion; and unanimous pæans of congratulation will resound from every clime, emphatic witnesses of the supreme magnanimity and enlightened prosperity of her reign. It will be an unprecedented episode in the history of the world; and the question is often mooted—"What great national event would best celebrate this unique epoch of the Nation's life, and for ever identify the name of our beloved Queen with yet another glorious achievement of her beneficent and brilliant rule? And unhesitatingly the voice of Britain's womanhood answers,—“Let the enfranchisement of Women, the most law-abiding, the most loyal of her Majesty's subjects, be made an accomplished fact, thus crowning her illustrious reign with a supreme act of justice.”

During the Queen's sovereignty of sixty years, the slave has been freed in all her dominions; in Great Britain, the male householder has been enfranchised; the male labourer has been granted civil and political rights. Labour is free; the press is free; trade is free; but womanhood is not free. At the present moment, “every woman, except the Queen, is politically non-existent.” Women have not fully participated in this great advance of emancipation, this rapid development of liberty; they are still denied the exercise of their just rights, and an equal political position with the workman and the labourer, though often weighted with greater and heavier responsibilities.

The existence of so great an anomaly is a discredit to the judgment of a free, generous, and reasonable people, for there is no argument based upon justice which can deny the Parliamentary Franchise to women who are paying rates and taxes, simply because they are women. If there is a valid reason, it would be well for the opponents of female suffrage to make it known.

It is England's illustrious prerogative to have hitherto ever been in the van of progress, but in this one respect, of late years, she has lagged behind her own children; many of the Colonies having granted the political vote to women, on the score of justice and right, and as conducing to the better government of the people; while, strange as it may appear, in this age of masculine freedom, the political status of women in Great Britain has been essentially lowered. Women's political liberties have not “broadened down” the stream of Time, rather, anomalous and contradictory restrictions have insidiously crept in, curtailing in many vital particulars the public functions of women, as the following brief summary of facts will conclusively demonstrate:—

TACITUS, speaking of the ancient Britons, says, “They were wont to war under the conduct of women, and to make no difference of sex in places of command or government.”

PLUTARCH tells us,—“That owing to the frequent intercessions of women, in favour of peace, a custom grew up among the Britons that women also had prerogative in deliberative sessions touching either peace, government, or martial affairs.”

In his “Antiquities of Parliament,” GURDON relates—“that women sat in the Saxon Witas, and the Venerable Bede assures us that the Abbess Hilda presided at an ecclesiastical Synod.” For centuries after the Norman Conquest women continued to exercise both lay and clerical rights, sat and voted in the great Councils in right of their fees or Constituencies; assented to the taxes, and were elected or took part in electing parochial officers.

“So, too, women retained in the Parliaments of the Plantagenets the place and power that had belonged to them in the Saxon Witenagemot. When Parliaments were summoned, women were included in the summons.”—*The Enfranchisement of Women.*—MRS. MCLQUHAM.

Women served as High Sheriffs and in that capacity they sat on the Bench at Assizes; and women acted as Justices of the Peace. They were also custodians of castles in various counties. Gradually, however, they had allowed their right to sit in Parliament to fall into abeyance, resting content with choosing and naming lawful proxies.

“The first statute prescribing qualifications for the County Franchise is the 7 Hen. IV. c. 15, which enacts that all they that be present at the County Court, as well as suitors summoned for the same cause as others, shall attend to the election of the Knights for the Parliament; and neither in this statute, nor in any later one, down to the Reform Act of 1832, is any word used which implies any disability of sex for electoral purposes.”—*The Enfranchisement of Women.*—MRS. MCLQUHAM.

Thus the right to the Parliamentary vote was based on the just principle, that those who were liable to taxation were equally granted representation, and a voice in choosing the persons authorized to levy taxes. Women were unfortunately slack in availing themselves of their civic and political rights. Such slackness was quite intelligible under the conditions of those troublous times, but was none the less unfortunate, since, but for this, even the arbitrary dictum of Sir Edward Coke, could not have resulted in their virtual disfranchisement for nearly three centuries. The full cup of their political humiliation was not however filled till the passing of the Reform Act of 1832, where the use of the words “male person” effectively excluded women.

Let it therefore be fully understood by opponents of female Suffrage that its advocates are demanding no *new* right, but pleading for the restitution of an old one; that up to so recent a date as 1832, duly qualified women, if they had chosen, could have legally voted at Parliamentary Elections.

When the Representation of the People Act of 1867 was passed, thousands of women claimed their right to vote, as throughout the Act, the word “man” is used, which in ordinary legal enactments includes “woman.” But in utter disregard of justice, history, and precedent, four judges, Bovill, Byles, Willis, and Keating, declared women to stand under a constitutional disability with regard to the Parliamentary Franchise, although the word “man” might in other cases be held to include “woman”—thus committing themselves to the two extraordinary doctrines:—1. That taxation and representation do not and need not go together; and 2. That one and the same word in Parlia-

mentary enactments means *male and female* when duties and obligations are imposed, but “male” only when rights and privileges are conferred.

Never was there a legal interpretation more open to the charge of mere arrogant sex-bias, prejudice and inconsistency.

Women’s appeal for justice must now be laid before the nation at large; and they must look to Parliament for the restoration of their constitutional right through the support of sympathetic members, of whom in the present House of Commons *there is a majority in their favour over their opponents.*

The following great names will show how many illustrious men have ranged themselves on the side of Women’s Suffrage, both in the past and at the present day—Disraeli, the late Lord Iddesleigh, Lord Salisbury, Mr. A. J. Balfour, the late Archbishop of Canterbury, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Vaughan, the Chief Rabbi, Canon Wilberforce, The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, Professor Robinson, Professor Drummond, Mr. Kidd, Mr. Lecky, and many others, from whose remarks on the subject are culled the following quotations:—

“I have always been of opinion that, if there is to be universal Suffrage, women have as much right to vote as men. And, more than that, a woman now ought to have a vote in a country in which she may hold Manorial Courts and sometimes act as a churchwarden.”—DISRAELI.

“I contend that there has been no reason assigned by anyone, why the Parliamentary Franchise should not be conferred upon those fit and capable female rate-payers.”—LORD JOHN MANNERS.

“I earnestly hope that the day is not far distant when women also will bear their share in voting for members of Parliament and in determining the policy of the country. I can conceive no argument by which they are excluded. It is obvious that they are abundantly as well fitted as many who now possess the Suffrage, by knowledge, by training, by character, and that their influence is likely to weigh in a direction which in an age so material as ours is exceedingly valuable—namely, in the direction of morality and religion.”—LORD SALISBURY.

“I do not now express my opinion,—my opinion is well known on the question of female Suffrage, but if you are going to say that every intelligent person, who is of age, has a right to a vote, on what possible principle are you going to exclude the women?”—MR. A. J. BALFOUR.

“The Committee are authorised to say that the Archbishop “is in favour of the Suffrage being given to women.” *March, 1895.*

“I believe that the extension of the Parliamentary Franchise to women upon the same conditions as it is held by men, would be a just and beneficent measure.”—CARDINAL VAUGHAN.

“I am in favour of removing the restriction at present imposed on women in respect to the Parliamentary Franchise.”—THE CHIEF RABBI.

“The immense majority of human beings on this Island are either women or children, and as modern legislation so directly affects women and children, it is absurd to exclude the direct legislative influence of women.”—

THE REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES.

"The extension of the Franchise to women householders has had for many years my hearty approval. Their claim is so clear and just that it scarcely admits of discussion."

PROFESSOR ROBINSON.

Surely therefore, with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House of Commons so distinctly advocating the justice of women's enfranchisement, we may confidently press our claims on the present Unionist Government, and humbly beg that the year of grace 1897 may be rendered illustrious by the passing of a measure granting political freedom to the most loyal and not the least deserving of her gracious Majesty's subjects.

In conclusion, we, women of Great Britain, base our claim on the acknowledgement in the past of our political rights, now unhappily abrogated; on the just principle of representation with taxation; on the plea that half of her Majesty's subjects, who must be obedient to the laws, have no voice in the making of them; that at present the nation is robbed of the great moral force the enfranchisement of women would bring to bear politically on legislation; that the gain of the vote is regarded by women as a means towards an end, namely, the advancement of the nobler and purer interests of their country.

We base our plea still further, on the fact, that we appeal for the restitution of our political rights on the common ground of womanhood, we appeal to the Supreme Head of the Government, as women to a woman.

For the first time for nearly two centuries, the British Empire is ruled by a Sovereign Lady, under whose beneficent sway the whole nation has increased and prospered, and no act in her reign would be more gracious than the gift of the Franchise to her humble sisters, who have in divers ways, contributed to the development and advancement of the English race.

For it cannot for one moment be contended, that while *men* have progressed, *women* have deteriorated, and that the highly educated enlightened women of the nineteenth Century are less capable of exercising a wise and prudent judgment in political matters, than their ancestresses in the times of the early Saxons and Normans; therefore the question of fitness and ability does not enter into the argument at all, nor again is the justice of our cause seriously disputed; evidently it is only among the tangled undergrowth of prejudice and apathy, ignorance and egotism, there are to be found lurking the enemies of the enfranchisement of women. The noblest and highest instincts of our greatest men advocate it; the best and purest aspirations of women plead for it; the nation, as a whole, is the poorer for the want of it; and, if justice is right, and right prevails, the day of women's political Freedom has already dawned.

May the year 1897, the sixtieth anniversary of her most gracious Majesty's accession to the throne, shine with the full radiance of regained liberty on the Parliamentary Enfranchisement of the Women of Great Britain and Ireland!

R. SWINEY,

*A Dame of the Primrose League,*

*President of the Cheltenham Women's Suffrage Society.*

November, 1896.

Shenton, Printer, Cheltenham.

# THE DEBATE

IN

## THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON

### WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,

3rd FEBRUARY 1897.

London:

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# THE DEBATE

IN

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ON

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,

3rd FEBRUARY 1897.

MR. FAITHFULL BEGG (Glasgow, Rollox), in rising to move the Second Reading of this Bill, said the question of the extension of the franchise to women was in no sense a Party one. He had no desire that it should be dragged into the area of Party controversy, and he did not think the interests of those whose cause he was pleading would be furthered should such an event occur. He asserted, however, that in his opinion, it would be a lasting credit to any Party in the country which should undertake a Party Measure embodying the principle which was embodied in the Bill. ["hear, hear!"] The Bill was intended merely to establish the principle of the extension of the Parliamentary franchise. The Bill, however, contained an irreducible minimum which should be granted by the House in the matter of the franchise was granted to women at least. It was calculated that the Bill would give the franchise about 500,000 women. He was given to understand that one of the most difficult points in connection with the phraseology of the Bill was whether it did or did not include married women. ["Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean, who held strong opinions on the subject,

had said that the Bill was obscurely drawn, and contended that it would not include married women. He had no desire to go into the intricacies of legal phraseology, for in the course of discussing the details of the Measure the intention of the House would no doubt be made perfectly clear on the point. He might say, however, for his own part, that he approved the inclusion of married women, and his reason for doing so was that, by a series of Acts which had been passed in recent years, married women had been given the control of their own earnings—["hear, hear!"]—the control of property that accrued to them as next of kin, and the right to hold property which was secured to them by bequest; and in those circumstances he contended that it followed, as a matter of course, that they should be entitled to vote in connection with the management of that property. ["Hear, hear!"] Another criticism of the Bill made by the right hon. Member was that it would further complicate the existing qualifications for the franchise. He admitted that the franchise was already sufficiently complicated, and he had hoped that the wording of the Bill, if it were passed into law, would rather simplify than further

complicate the present state of things. At present the disqualifications for the Parliamentary vote applied to Peers—a restriction which he fully approved—to candidates' agents, to minors, to lunatics, to paupers, to felons, and lastly to women. That was the category in which intelligent women were placed in this country in relation to the Parliamentary franchise. ["Hear, hear!"] Even illiterate persons were allowed to vote, and he found that in the last election no fewer than 73,000 illiterates voted. It was not a credit to our civilisation that, in such circumstances, intelligent women should be debarred from exercising the privilege. [Cheers.] Now as to the qualifications of women to vote. They were regarded as capable of holding property, and in consequence, paid taxes upon it, and it had been recognised for many years as a principle of the constitution that taxation and representation should go together. ["Hear, hear!"] Further, the right had been extended to them to vote in connection with Parish and District Councils, Poor Law Guardians, County Councils, Town Councils, and Schools Board Elections, and he ventured to say that they had exercised those functions with credit to themselves and advantage to the country. ["Hear, hear!"] Moreover, women had been recently appointed on Royal Commissions, and had been from time to time called as witnesses in Parliamentary inquiries. They had also been granted in recent years educational facilities, through which they had distinguished themselves in many walks of life. Nearly 500 women had already taken the B.A. degree of the London University, nearly 400 had passed tripos examinations at Cambridge, and nearly 300 had passed with honours at Oxford. [Cheers.] Notwithstanding all this, they were debarred from assisting to decide by whom the laws under which they lived should be made. ["Hear, hear!"] The criminal statistics of the country showed that women were more law-abiding citizens than men. ["Hear, hear!"] *and laughter.* The female population of the country exceeded the male population by about one million, and yet they found that while 8,426 men were convicted at assizes and quarter sessions last year, only 1,267 women were convicted. They were told that women did not

understand politics. Did all men understand them? [Laughter.] He denied that women were less capable of understanding difficult questions than men, but even if they were that would be a valid reason for excluding them from the franchise. ["Hear, hear!"] Women had special interests of their own which they understood, and which they desired and required to protect. They had special knowledge with regard to special questions, and they had special means of obtaining information with regard to matters which affected their own interests, which were not open to men in the proper sense of the word. ["Hear, hear!"] Therefore, it was only a matter of justice that women should have the same means of giving effect to the opinions they formed on those subjects in a constitutional manner—namely, by voting for the election of Members to the House. He wished to say here, in regard to the names which were on the back of the Bill, that he desired to thank Members who had assisted him in bringing in the Measure. There was contended, a large mass of public opinion both in Scotland and in England, in favour of the principle of this Measure as shown, not only by the petitions presented up to that House by women, but by the resolutions adopted at representative conferences of both the great political parties in the State. He also reminded the House, on this point, of the appeal which was signed last year by no less than 257,000 women from every constituency in the United Kingdom, in favour of the principle of the Bill. Then they had the experience of their Colonies, and he thought this experience was very valuable, because it had given them an object lesson in connection with the working of this principle. A Bill for the enfranchisement of women in connection with Parliamentary Elections was passed in South Australia in 1885, and the working of that Measure had been eminently satisfactory. The General Election under the Act of 1896, and he found that women voted in very large numbers and that the utmost order and good feeling prevailed. "The gloomy forebodings," said his authority, "of the country which, if he might say so, was who had opposed Women's Suffrage have proved entirely groundless. In New Zealand, too, where

Bill was passed in 1893, the working of the principle had been satisfactory. John Hall, who was formerly the premier for New Zealand, stated:—

Already the fallacy of the arguments against women have been proved. . . . Instead of the high usage and unpleasant associations which were warned awaited them, never before has a selection been conducted with more decorum and order."

Sir John quoted a returning officer, who told him that he would rather poll 10 women than 70 men. That was, he thought, admirable testimony to the proper sense of the word. ["Hear, hear!"] Therefore, it was only a matter of justice that there was a strong opposition to the proposal he was now bringing forward. He knew the rejection of this Measure was to be moved by his hon. Friend the Member for Hereford (Mr. Radcliffe Cooke). He was wounded in this matter in the house by his friend, whose manly, but ungallant conduct, would be shortly raised in opposition to the Measure. The rejection would be seconded by the hon. Member for Northampton. He had always understood that the hon. Gentleman's mission in this matter was to break down privilege and remedy injustice, yet here they had the advocate of exclusiveness and perpetuator of inequality. He had been able to follow the arguments of the hon. Gentleman in this matter. His main position he understood to be that this was a Measure for unsexing men. He had pondered over that question, but he had not been able to attach any definite meaning to it. If the principle was one of the working of which they had not had experience in other connections in this country and in the Colonies, then there might be some point in the criticism. At this principle had been introduced here in municipal matters, and in the Colonies in Parliamentary Elections, and had introduced with advantage. That being so he was unable to fathom what would be the basis upon which the hon. Gentleman brought forward an assertion of this kind. He believed himself that the hon. Gentleman had in his mind a certain political institution in this country which, if he might say so, was the Suffrage Petition—*that great organisation, the Primrose League*—and that he believed, if women were enfranchised in

this country, their votes would be cast exclusively in support of Tory candidates. If that was so, and the hon. Member did not dissent from it—

MR. HENRY LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I do dissent.

MR. FAITHFULL BEGG: Then the hon. Gentleman thinks that the votes would be cast in favour of the candidates of his own way of thinking.

MR. LABOUCHERE: No.

MR. FAITHFULL BEGG: Then the hon. Gentleman has no opinion on the matter at all.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Yes, I have.

MR. FAITHFULL BEGG said that, however that might be, the argument was largely used in the country that the effect of the enfranchisement of women would be to bring a great reinforcement into the ranks of either one or the other Party in the State. In his opinion that was a most unworthy argument. That was the very last consideration which should be advanced in connection with a matter of this kind. He was not aware that when they had had to consider the granting of an extension of the franchise they had ever considered the particular direction in which the votes would be cast. If they had done so he hoped they would never do so in the future. Such an argument and such a consideration as that was pure and unadulterated Krugerism. Mr. Kruger professed to be willing to redress the grievances of the Uitlanders and to extend the franchise, but he wished to be satisfied beforehand that the votes would be cast in favour of the particular policy of which he approved. That was not an aspect of the question which should be regarded for a moment by anyone considering such an important matter as this. His general position was that there was no valid argument against the principle of this Bill. Arguments there might be, born of prejudice or of sentiment, but there was no logical, valid, or just argument against the position which he took up in this matter. He had had the greatest possible pleasure in bringing this matter before the House, and he appealed to all hon. Members to cast themselves loose from any remnant of prejudice of sentiment, or other unworthy consideration; to recognise the inherent justice of the claim which was now being once more

made in constitutional form in that House, to give effect to the logical consequences and outcome of those successive legislative experiments which had been made, and which, he contended, had been made successfully, in this country in the past, and by doing so once more to broaden, to strengthen, and to improve the basis upon which our representative institutions stood. He believed that, thus broadened, thus strengthened, and thus improved, those institutions would continue to be the guarantee and security for the prosperity of the country in the future as they had been the guarantee and security for that prosperity in the past. He begged to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

✓ Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.), in seconding the Motion, complimented the hon. Mover on the ability of his speech. He did not think there were any persons in the House who would be prepared to dispute the view that the Women's Suffrage question had, in the last few years, made the most substantial progress in the opinions of the people of this country. He did not deny that they may still be confronted to some extent with the ridicule which, in times past, was the usual way with which this question was approached by those opposed to it; but on the whole, the question had passed from the stage of ridicule to the intelligible ground of practical politics. Upon that common platform, as to the political expediency or in expediency of the Measure, they were now in a position to debate the question. There still remained one or two grotesque arguments against the Measure of Women's Enfranchisement, but before dealing with them he should like to say one word with regard to the legal aspect of this Measure. He had not the smallest doubt that the Bill would be exposed to the critical acumen of many learned friends, and he might say at once that on the compass of the Measure there would be a divergent opinion from two points of view; one that it was not large enough in its scope, and the other that it was too small or narrow in its scope. Those who were responsible for the drafting of the Bill thought it wise to choose the line of least resistance. They knew perfectly well, if, for instance, they were to enfranchise women lodgers, that there

would be a very strong and very formidable volume of opposition from certain sections of the House, and although he, for one, should very much like to see women lodgers included within the scope of the Bill, yet those who were responsible for its drafting came to the conclusion that it would be well to allow that question to be laid before the House at large, so that when the Bill came before the Committee, amendments in that direction, if that was the general sense, might be included. Again, there was a debatable question as to whether women who were married should be included in the Bill. There, again, no attempt had been made to deal with that proposition. The point of view of the promoters of the Bill took was this. There were a large number of Members who say, "If we include married women we shall open the Bill." On the other hand, there were Members who said, "If you do not include married women we shall object to it, because we think married women, all people in the world belonging to that sex, at any rate, are entitled to the highest consideration, and it is desirable to be able to make marriage a loss of political status." He ventured to suggest that the Bill probably did include married women. It was not quite clear, and perhaps some hon. Gentlemen would agree that it ought to be made quite clear. He agreed there was force in that observation, but, in view of a very recent decision in the High Courts of Justice, he was some doubt raised as to whether it was no certain operative words in the Act of Parliament creating local government franchises did or did not include married women. However that might be, the basis upon which all hon. Members voted, either for or against the Measure was this—that its promoters were enunciating the principle of Women's Suffrage, and they should leave the questions of the scope and the extent of its qualifications to be dealt with by the House in the proper place for so dealing with them—namely, in the Committee of this House, and upon the Report stage of the Bill. He had said there were grotesque arguments still surviving against the enfranchisement of women. One such argument was that because women were not likely and could not be called upon to use arms in defence of the country, they ought not to be entrusted

with the franchise. He remembered the time upon which this question was debated in the House, his right hon. friend the Member for East Fife—whose sense, in common with that of the occupants of both Front Benches he revered, because he knew they should probably hear, when the Debate had reached final stages, speeches from his right hon. friend and other right hon. Gentlemen directed against this Bill, without their having condescended to listen to the arguments which had been advanced in support of it—he remembered his right hon. friend adopted that argument, and he ventured to say that his expression of grotesque as applied to it was not ungranted. He should like to ask how many people who were responsible for solving this country in war were ever likely to bear arms in its defence? They, the House of Commons, and also in the other House, were the persons who, by a large measure, were responsible for directing that movement of popular opinion which might produce war. And of all the hon. Members in that Assembly, except one or two hon. and eminent Gentlemen, there was hardly a military man who would bear arms. He no doubt that his hon. friend the Member for Hereford and the hon. Member for Northampton, who would not, either of them, take the position of a drummer boy in the Army, would rise up in their places and say it was an anomaly, unjust and unreasonable, to intrust the franchise to people capable of bearing arms in the defence of their country. What he claimed women was, that although they did not actually, and might not, perhaps, be able (although that might be an arguable question) to bear arms, at the same time they bore the responsibilities and disadvantages of war. They suffered more quietly in their own persons and the persons of their children from being deprived of their husbands or their sons or their fathers by the operations of war. They suffered from the burden of taxes and from a general disarrangement of their social condition by war, to as large an extent as men, and probably even to a larger extent, than those who took an active part in carrying on war. He would not call further upon that argument. He dismissed it as one which was grotesque, which could not be reasonably sus-

tained before any enlightened assembly. Among arguments he had culled from speeches made against this extension was one which at first sight appeared formidable, that women were indifferent to the franchise, and did not care to exercise it, that there had never been any demonstration on their part of their anxiety for the franchise. Had the working classes of this country ever demonstrated with any remarkable ardour for the exercise of the franchise? ["Yes!"] For centuries the working classes of this country acquiesced in their exclusion from the franchise. True, there were intermittent agitations excited by the enthusiasm of political leaders, but for the most part it was a sorrowful fact, and it was a matter of common reproach at the time of the extension of the franchise in 1867, and again in 1885, that the working classes were to a very large and lamentable extent oblivious to the responsibilities that devolved upon them in relation to the franchise; and he ventured to say, speaking with the strongest democratic instincts, that it was more due to the exigencies of political parties than to any persistent and solid agitation for it that the working classes received the franchise. Women had not the same opportunities of making their views and opinions known as were in the nature of things conceded to men. Women had not control of the Press, women had not control of the platform, it was contrary to the nature of women to take part in those formidable demonstrations which from time to time marked the activity of political enthusiasm among men. But, although they had not these facilities, there were not wanting indications of a strong opinion in favour of this movement among the women of the day. Many women of distinction had given adhesion to the movement, and so far as he could gather the feeling among women was in that direction. So far as vehicles for the expression of opinion offered, petitions and so forth, the evidence was abundant that women did desire the possession of the franchise. Another argument which had a formidable appearance, and which no doubt would be heard *ad nauseam*, was that women would come under influences direct or indirect which would control their votes. Now which were these improper agencies?

Mr. LABOUCHERE: The Church.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES said he anticipated that. But which Church? Was it the English Church or the Catholic Church? [HON. MEMBERS: "All!"] Well, were the precepts and examples of the churches good or bad? Were Ministers belonging to the various religious denominations fit and proper persons to exercise their influence over women or not? In the first place there would be as great variety of opinion brought to bear upon women from the various sections of the Church as would be exercised in other directions, and Nonconformist Ministers using their influence in one way, Clergymen of the Established Church perhaps in another. Therefore, so far as the Church was concerned, there would be check and counter-check applied, and the effect even if such influence did operate would be impartial. Another influence was possibly that of the male relatives of women. Well, that was not an unenlightened or baneful influence, and again there would be check and counter-check, and the number of the electorate would swell without injury to either political party. But these were mainly speculative opinions. There was no ground for supposing that women would be more likely to be susceptible to undue influence than men. The very same argument was advanced against the enfranchisement of certain sections of the working classes. It was said they would be subject to all kinds of indirect influence and would be driven to the polls like sheep. But none of these anticipations had been realised. The working classes had exercised the franchise with a full sense of their responsibility, and it was unworthy the serious consideration of this great cause to argue on the assertion that women would not honestly, conscientiously and intelligently exercise the franchise if it were conferred upon them. Another argument he would briefly touch upon would probably be the degradation of women. One hon. Member had even gone so far as to say women would be unsexed by being dragged into the turmoil and dust of party strife. Could such an argument as that be in the mouth of hon. Gentlemen who were only too glad to avail themselves of the services of women during election time? Had the hon. Member for Hereford (Mr. Cooke) never found a haughty Primrose Dame ready to go through the slums of Hereford

to gain a vote for him? Did not hon. Friend (Mr. Labouchere) sometimes lean for support on a Liberal Woman Northampton? [Laughter.]

MR. LABOUCHERE: No. [Laughter.]

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES said hon. Friend repudiated the suggestion but he had reason to believe that among the ladies of Northampton his hon. Friend had many hearty and sympathising supporters. Not only did Members avail themselves of women's help in political organisations, but they dragged the wives through all the dreary, weary election time, from platform to platform, listen to insipid oratory. [Laughter.] He knew one most charming lady, wife of a Member on that side of the House, who conducted a successful issue an election campaign during her husband's absence abroad. It was idle to talk about this degradation, all the evidence we had showed that it tended to elevate the tone of elections when women took part in them. If there ever was any force in the argument it had disappeared and women now took part in District Council, Parish Council, County Council, Boards of Guardians, Municipal and School Board elections, and upon some of these bodies women sat and took part in the administration of local affairs. In view of these admissions made by the Legislature, the justice of the claim for a vote for a Member of Parliament could not be invalidated by any such ridiculous contention. Another, and the last argument to which he would allude, was that there was no necessity to give women votes because they were already represented by the male members of the families. It was a specious, plausible argument, but absolutely unsound. A similar argument was advanced against the enfranchisement of agricultural labourers; it was said that the farmer and owners represented the interests of agriculture, and solemn speeches declared the interests of owners, farmers, and labourers to be identical. He had only to state one fact to bring conviction to the minds of Members that the interests of women are not adequately represented. There are over two millions of women employed in our factories. He wished to say nothing in disparagement of Trade Unions, they might be right or wrong in the view they took, but they had been constant in their efforts to interfere

with the rights of labour by women. Trade Unions had continually been hampering the attempts of women to have the free right to sell their labour in whatever direction they pleased. The two million women who worked in factories should have the right to bring direct influence to bear through legitimate channels upon Parliament, through Members chosen by themselves to decide this question. Was it not of urgent and vital importance in the interests of sanitation that factory women should be able to bring direct pressure to bear on Parliament to better the conditions of their lives? Was the question of education and employment of children of no moment to women? Whatever might be the effect of recent legislation in New Zealand or New South Wales, undoubtedly a great factor and lever for dealing with the temperance question would be the enfranchisement of women, and it was a well-known fact that what animated the women of New Zealand to secure the franchise was the conviction that, not through the men, but through the agency of women, could any reform in that direction be secured. If women possessed the franchise, an honest effort could be made, which, he believed, would be crowned with success, if not to remove at least to mitigate the horrible evils which resulted from our unhappy social system. The number of women who could be enfranchised by the Bill was comparatively small. The supporters of the Bill believed that by admitting women to the franchise Parliament would do much to upraise, morally, intellectually and politically, the condition of women, and to make woman what to a large extent she was not at present—a more fitting companion, comrade, and partner to man. [Cheers.]

MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Hereford), in moving the rejection of the Bill, congratulated the supporters of the Bill for the able advocacy of the hon. Member who moved the Second Reading. First of all, however, he desired to remove the reproach cast on the capital city of his native county, which he had the honour to represent. It was said that he sent names to wander about the slums of Hereford to get votes for him.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: Haughty, not forty. [Laughter.]

MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE: He sent no Primrose Dames to wander through the slums of Hereford, because there were no slums in that highly-respectable city. ["Hear, hear!"] His hon. and learned Friend who had just spoken had said he was a comparatively new convert to this movement. He did not tell all about himself. When he first entered the House he was in favour of Women's Suffrage. A few years after he changed his mind, and became a convinced opponent of it, and now he said he had been re-converted to his original views.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES: I never was in favour of it when I first entered the House. It was in my childhood. [Laughter and cheers.]

MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE: Then the sooner the hon. Member attains to his second childhood the better. ["Hear, hear!"] The Conference of the National Union of Conservative Associations, which at Oxford in 1887 passed a resolution in favour of Women's Suffrage, passed also a resolution in favour of Protection, but nothing came of either. [Laughter.] It was suggested that we should follow the example of New Zealand and South Australia. Generally speaking, the children followed the example of the parents, not the parents the example of the children, and the only answer to this he would give in two words—*fiat experimentum*. When other civilised nations began to grant the franchise to women, it might be time for the most civilised nation in the world to see whether it would not be well to follow their example. Women had now the vote in Wyoming, and formerly in Washington, but when the latter was formed into a State the Women's Suffrage Law was repealed. If in America, where there were about 44 States, only the smallest and most remote had adopted the system, that was considerable reason why we should hesitate and watch what they were going to do in the matter. Before proceeding further he would like, with the permission of the House, to make a few respectful comments on the attitude assumed by Members of Parliament on this question. He

had had an opportunity on this and previous occasions of conversing with Members of the House, and he had found their attitude to be one of considerable doubt. In fact, many would have been only too pleased if the Debate of yesterday had lasted over to-day. He did not wonder at their state of mind, for sometimes they called themselves Wobblers, and sometimes Waverers, but he would not weary the House with particular instances, though he would mention in passing one hon. Member who, when he asked him if he was going to vote for the Bill, said, "Yes, to please my mother." [Laughter.] There were also a large number who said they would vote for the Bill, but hoped it would not pass, or would vote for it because they had a number of women bothering them to do so. He had also a very good instance which would give rise to no little surprise if he ventured to mention the name of the hon. Member. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Name."] No, he was not going to give him away. [Laughter.] He was not going to expose him to the tender mercies of the women he had deluded and deceived. [Laughter.] What did that hon. Member tell him only last Thursday as ever was, when he met him in the Lobby? The hon. Member was in the House now. [Laughter.] He said to him, "Are you an advocate of Women's Suffrage?" He replied, "Oh, yes, yes!" Then he looked very solemn, cast his eyes up to the ceiling, smote thrice upon his breast, assumed the attitude of the penitent publican, and said, "But in our inmost soul"—and then he smote his breast again so as to leave no doubt where he kept his soul—[Laughter]—"in our inmost soul we dislike this Measure. We are the victims of pertinacity. We are the victims of the importunate widow." [Laughter.] Then he went on to say, "More than this, I will give you what I think a good argument to use against it"—and he was going to use it. He would not say on which side of the House that hon. Member sat, but he could see him. [Loud laughter.] The argument was this. It was said that several of the Leaders of the two Parties in the House were in favour of Women's Suffrage; yet was it to be supposed that, if the Leaders of the two great Parties had

been in favour of Women's Suffrage, and believed there was a feeling in the country in favour of it commensurate with the talk about it, they would allow the matter to remain in the hands of private Members? Would it not before this have formed a plank in the Government platform? Was it not supposed that the Leader of the House who was believed to be in favour of this movement, would have taken Wednesday last year which would have afforded so favourable an opportunity for the discussion of this Bill? Would the right hon. Gentleman not have spared that one day if he had had any real business, that either his followers were in favour of this Bill, or that there was any considerable body of opinion in the country in its favour? He thought it was very honourable on the part of hon. Members to deceive the ladies by telling them that they would vote for this Measure though they did not want it. Now he would say a few words as to the progress made with the movement. The two principal Women's Suffrage Societies into which the original society was divided had been in existence for 30 years, and had asked the Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee, Miss Cozens, whether she had seen her outside in the Lobby?—what she thought was the original society was divided, and whose centre was Manchester. The Manchester society was the earliest of the married women. He knew there was a difference of opinion. The marriage year 1867—30 years ago. It was greatly over by spinsters and widows, and they had their way; but the cause of the division was, that eight or nine years ago the fortunes of Woman Suffrage were at an extremely low ebb. Many branches had to be given up because no women attended them. The main support came from the Radical side, and at last it occurred to a brilliant but unscrupulous genius that it would be a good stroke of policy if they could persuade Liberal associations—purely political associations—to become affiliated with the central body of the Women's Suffrage Society. That scheme was actually carried out, but at the expense of unity. Why? Because some who remained in the old society said was not honourable nor honest.

at all. So, roughly speaking, they were in a proportion of about 1 to 3,500 of the population, and that in a part of England where the Society had been longest in existence. In these circumstances could it be said that public feeling had been greatly roused in Manchester, or that there was a great desire for the grant of these privileges to the sex in that part of the world? Then as to the question of finance. In what condition were the finances of the Suffrage Society in Manchester? Why, the Society was in debt to the extent of £70 at this moment, and yet in Manchester there were plenty of wealthy, intelligent women who were supposed, according to the supporters of this Bill, to be pining for the franchise. How was it that they did not come forward to free the Society from the burden of this debt, planking down their thousands, and putting the Society in a position of permanent financial security? But there was not a single supporter of the movement in Manchester who would move a finger to relieve the Society from this burden of debt. But if the parent Society in Manchester languished, what about the branches, of which there was one at Rochdale and another at Gorton? A friend of his wrote to those places asking what the position of those Societies was, and what was the feeling in the neighbourhood. With reference to Rochdale, the report of the Secretary said:—"Thought has been stirred in the town on the question, and we have enrolled new members." Now this stirring of thought had resulted in the expenditure of £4 15s. 4d., and in receipts of £4 9s. 3d. There was accordingly a deficit of 6s. 1d., which the General Committee had to defray, so that the Rochdale branch of the Society was now without a shilling to bless itself with. With reference to Gorton, the report of the Secretary said:—"The cause of Women's Suffrage is slowly gaining ground, and the opinions of this branch have been instrumental in some degree in forming a true opinion upon the matter here." But they had not gone very far in the formation of a true opinion, for the total income of the year amounted to the magnificent sum of 12s. The management, however, cut their coat according to their cloth, and spent in the year exactly the same sum. They were, however, happier than the Society in Manchester, in that they were not in

debt. To sum up, Manchester was in debt to the sum of £70, Rochdale had not a single shilling to bless itself with, and Gorton was in the same position. Yet he should have supposed that, if these opinions were really spreading, there would have been people in both those places who would be willing to give some practical expression of their views, and to put these Societies on a sound foundation, thus enabling them to rouse public opinion in the neighbourhood. Now he would go to another place in the North of England. In Leeds the population was 402,500, and the number of members there was about 113, bearing the same proportion to the population as the members of the Society did to the population in Manchester, namely, 1 to every 3,500 inhabitants. The finances of the Society in Leeds, the report said, were in a satisfactory condition, and he was bound to say they were, as compared with the finances elsewhere. The income of this Society last year was £7 6s. 4d., and there was a cash balance of £2 11s. 5½d. That appeared to be the Society in the whole of this part of the country which was in the most flourishing condition. But he was not surprised that the Secretary who supplied this information should say, "Here also women are very indifferent;" so they were not only indifferent in Leeds but in many other places also. In London there were the two parent Societies, and he lumped their members together, although it was very difficult to say whether they were residents in London or not. It was clear that many were not, and had no real connection with London; but he would give the Society the benefit of those members, and, lumping together the total number of members of the two parent Societies in London, he found that the proportion of members of this Society to the population was 1 to half a million. So this movement had made so much progress that one person in half a million would subscribe to the funds of the institution which was intended to promote the cause. If it were said, as it would be probably, that this view was the view of an opponent, and possibly a biased individual, he would refer to what the most active supporters of the movement said about it themselves. Did they say that much substantial progress had been made? He had with him a report of the

National Conference of the Delegates of the Women's Suffrage Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, held in Birmingham in October last. He presumed they had put it and who had been all over the country propagating the faith—body they could. Affixed to this report was a map of England, which he held in his hand. The dark places on the map were the names of places where meetings had been held during the last few years in drawing-room meetings and so on. He thought the suffrage to millions of women was Manchester, where so much good work was said to have been done, Leeds, and Gorton, and Rochdale. The map he had shown to the House were marked very black. All the rest of England was almost wholly blank. The supporters of the movement did not seem to be altogether satisfied with the condition of the country. They did not think that it had been quite sufficiently well worked, and they had drawn up a smaller map, which he held in his hand. On this, as would be seen, they proposed to divide England into districts, to be organised by paid organisers. Well, they had £2 11s. 5d. in Leeds, which would go some way to pay the money he supposed. Where the rest of the money was to come from he did not know. He would say as regarded that matter that it was as blank as a map of Africa used to be. So here was a great constitutional agitation for conferring rights upon people who had never heard of them before, and who inhabited places where they had never even heard of the rights, never had been approached on the subject, and knew nothing about it. The first reference he should make to the speeches delivered at this Women's Suffrage Meeting, in October last, was to the speech of the principal speaker—a Mrs. Thomas Taylor. She made an earnest speech, a speech which was referred to as being the most interesting and practical speech those present had ever heard. She wanted to know how it was that Women's Suffrage had not made the progress that some of their friends wished it had made, and she said:—

"We must seek for the real reasons why we have not yet got the Suffrage, and amongst those that are hurled at our heads by friends and foes only one to my mind really hits the nail on the head. It is this: 'you have not got the great mass of women with you. The majority of women do not really care about the Suffrage. That I think we most all admit is true. There are hundreds and thousands of women who

are for the Suffrage, but there are millions—I speak advisedly—"

and this was a woman who knew all about it and who had been all over the country propagating the faith—

millions who not only do not care, but who have many of them never heard of it, and who certainly do not realise what it means."

that House was actually asked to grant the suffrage to millions of women who knew nothing about it, and did not care for it. Then Mrs. Taylor referred to the map he had shown to the House, and said:—

look at Cumberland, at Lincoln, at Devonshire. What do all those blank spaces mean? That there are no Suffrage women there, or a few isolated individuals. If all the dark places may be taken as centres of life, those blank spaces are realms of darkness, then lands so far as Women's Suffrage is concerned. What chance, I ask you, have we of getting Women's Suffrage?"

It was what the Women's Society, the active supporters of the movement said, who knew all about it—

what chance have we of getting Women's Suffrage or of having numbers of women at elections pressing M.P.'s for the Suffrage when we have all that much country unconcerned about it—unconverted."

what they were asked to do was to give to that large country, that unconverted land, the Suffrage, and there were gentlemen who would actually do so, and who were ready to take a leap into the realm of darkness, to use this good lady's phrase. Mrs. Taylor was followed by a lady of distinction, the Hon. Mrs. Arthur Lyttleton, who, after addressing Mrs. Taylor, and thoroughly agreeing with the truth and accuracy of the observations that had fallen from her, spoke as follows:—

"Let all those anxious for the amelioration of the position of women, in whatever department of life it may be, put aside their differences, and agree to some such scheme as that laid before us to-day, which will, as we hope, assure that every man and woman in England shall be made acquainted with what we seek. This will enable us to have a definite plan to put before our supporters, many of whom have contributed to the Suffrage movement during the last twenty or thirty years, and who are growing tired of giving, for as they say seem no nearer to our goal."

No nearer our goal!" And his hon. friend pretended to think they had

reached it when he knew perfectly well they had not even made a start for the race that was set before them. He would give the House one more quotation, and then he had done. Mrs. Lyttleton was followed by Mrs. Scatcherd, who also spoke with such becoming frankness that he would venture to read one passage, the last one he should read from the Report:—

"The question is," asks this good lady, "what are we to do now? It is useless merely to say pleasant things; we must speak the truth and face the situation. Our experience then is that the day of the average public meeting which we have been holding for the last fifteen years is practically over and that drawing-room meetings are also becoming things of the past. What did you get at these meetings? A resolution passed in favour of the Suffrage. What next? Well, nothing—nothing practical. You get an expression of approval, intellectual approval; but that is vastly different from conviction."

They had it then that the day of the average public meeting held in Manchester, Leeds, or at the Oxford Conference, which the ladies had been holding for the last 15 years, was practically over and that the drawing-room meeting was also becoming a thing of the past. The drawing-room meeting of his day was sometimes of a singular complexion. The ladies used to think then that it was desirable to try and get up some kind of discussion on the subject of Woman's Suffrage, for although they were all women they were of one mind in one house, and they could not get them to advocate the question with any show of argument on behalf of the unfortunate men. What they did, therefore, was this. In order to make the meeting more agreeable they used to borrow a couple of barristers and invite them to come and say what they had to say on behalf of their own degraded sex. He knew this, because he had been "borrowed," and he had made remarks that were not received in the cordial spirit in which they had been offered. [Laughter.] He knew also the exaggerated mode in which the resolutions were passed, and how the meetings were put in the press. He met the same speakers over and over again; the same organisers, such as Miss Becker, Miss Tod, Miss Orme. If the front drawing-room was nearly full then the meeting was described as "a fine display of public

feeling; "if the front drawing-room was quite full, and the folding doors were thrown open, and the little back drawing-room nearly full, too, then the assembly assumed the character of a national demonstration. [Laughter.] Those meetings were industriously reported throughout the country, until at last people began to say that there must be something in the movement, whereas, if they were behind the scenes they would know perfectly well that it was a "put-up job," that it was a manufactured article, and that the people who promoted it were "a stage army." [Laughter.] It was the same now. The Report of the National Society for Women's Suffrage, 1894, contained a list of meetings which were held—78 in all, of which 25 were drawing-room meetings. There was a drawing-room meeting by invitation of Miss Tickell; a drawing-room meeting by invitation of Mrs. Algernon Joy, with Mr. Joy in the chair; and of these meetings Mrs. Fawcett, the hon. secretary, addressed 34, Miss Blackburn 10, and Miss Mordan 8, and all these women made one attempt after another at different meetings to endeavour to excite enthusiasm among their friends in favour of this movement. In the North, the manifestations were the same. Out of 34 meetings held in the year ending October last, the "stage army" was again to the front. Mrs. Philip addressed 15 meetings, Miss Hodgson and Miss Edwards each 7.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cocker-mouth) rose to order, and asked whether the hon. Member was speaking to the question before the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is within the limits of order, though perhaps somewhat discursive.

MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE said he was employing all these quotations as an illustration to show how the movement in favour of Women's Suffrage was got up, and he was, therefore, endeavouring to support the arguments with which he began—that there was no sufficient demand for the Franchise among women; and that the demand was supported by meetings organised and got up in this way was no true demand, and in order to show what the nature of the meetings was. He said now, as he said before, that it was a "stage army" that went

about the country; whereas now they had Mrs. Fawcett and other ladies going from place to place about the country endeavouring to promote the movement, so then they had Miss Becker, Miss T. and Miss Orme following the same procedure.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): It is right, Sir, that all the means of the ladies should be dragged into this controversy. [Cheers.]

MR. SPEAKER: It is not a question of order.

MR. W. JOHNSTON: It is very bad taste then.

MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE said it was a matter of purely good or bad taste, the hon. Gentleman liked, when he mentioned that a lady attended 50 meetings that the women had a public meeting here and a public meeting there, and that certain ladies attended so many public meetings, and he mentioned them by name. Was it wrong to say that? Was it a question of bad taste? How could he show how a movement of this kind was organised unless he mentioned the organisers by name? Was it bad taste to mention that? No; he thought it was good argument. He considered that Mrs. Russell-Cooke formed a very good judgment of the opinion of the Members of the House when she said:—

"I am under the impression, though I do not say it to everyone, that, although we sometimes attack Members of Parliament, there is on the whole a larger proportion of opinion in favour of Women's Suffrage in the House of Commons than there is in the country; that is why Members are so slack about putting their professions into actual practice."

He had shown the plan of campaign and the war chest at Leeds; and he said that the position of the movement in this country did not as yet warrant the introduction of any Bill of any sort or kind granting the Suffrage to Women. [Cheers.] If he were conducting a case in Court he should stop here. He should submit that there was no case; or if it went to the judgment he should rest content with the facts he had proved and should decline to address them. But he thought it due to his hon. Friend who brought forward the question, and in consideration of the strong views held by some hon. Members on the subject, to venture with the permission of the House, on

rather dry disquisition while making the endeavour to prove the second head of the argument with which he started, namely, that it was unjust to grant Women's Suffrage. Might he be allowed to preface the observations on this head with some remarks on the nature of the Franchise? This Measure was said to be intended to give the vote to duly-qualified women, that was to say women who had some sort of property qualification. Stress was laid by his hon. Friend in the intelligence of women, and this was a point which was made much of, and would be again, by subsequent speakers. He granted that intelligence was fully as ever the hon. Member could wish, but intelligence had nothing to do with this question, except that the voter must not be deficient in ordinary human capacity, must not be a lunatic or an idiot. But intelligence, whether good, bad, or indifferent, was not a qualification, for the simple reason that they could not test it where millions were concerned. Mr. Mill, an early and consistent advocate of what he called the emancipation of woman, desired such a test, but he abandoned all notion of it in the ground of its impracticability. Examinations formed some test, and they had the University vote so tested, but this, too, as a test, was becoming discredited. Therefore, the highly intelligent widow with a lowly intelligent coachman, had no cause *quod* to complain because he had a vote and she had not. But it was said that the highly intelligent widow had a large property and the non-intelligent coachman none; but on the score of intelligence she had no claim for special consideration, because to put her on an equality with the coachman she ought to have a proportion of votes equivalent to the extent in which her intelligence exceeded his. [Laughter.] It would be said also that there were many women possessed of a large amount of property, but neither was property in itself a qualification. It was not the house, the sticks and the stones, that voted; this property was only an indication of the position in the community held by the owner of it; it was an outward and visible sign that he had some interest in the country. But property was not the only indication, and as an indication it was rapidly falling into disrepute. Indeed, they proposed

to take away from the owners of property the very property qualification and votes which they now enjoyed. Services were a qualification, a lodging was a qualification, and the like. Now, what sort of position did these indications denote? He thought it was this, that the subject of them was not a mere casual, not a mere waif and stray.

MR. WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead): Mr. Speaker, I beg to call your attention to the fact that there are not 40 Members present.

After the usual interval, a quorum was found to be present.

MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE said all the qualifications he had mentioned were indications of some stability on the part of the voter, or led to some presumption that he had some interest in some place for some time, and therefore was likely to be engaged in the duties of a citizen. Underlying all these qualifications or indications was the suggestion or presumption of work. Position in the community, with the ever underlying accompaniment of work, was in his judgment the true qualification for the exercise of the franchise. Now women, like men, had position in the community—married women the best and most stable of all positions; and they had their sphere of work; but again, with insignificant exceptions, their sphere of work was different from that of men. It had no direct relation as men's work had to the principal functions of this House, and the reasons for the existence of this House. In a word, the question resolved itself into a question of sex. Look around. This building, in which this room, from its associations and use, was the most noteworthy feature, was raised by the labours of men. He went forth into this great city and found that throughout the length and breadth thereof not one brick nor one stone was laid on but by the hands of men. All those great arteries of communication which constitute what Lord Bacon called the essentials to the greatness and wealth of a nation—easy conveyance of men and goods from place to place—had been made and were maintained by men who, in like manner, conduct the traffic over them, and devise the complex system whereby such traffic was

regulated. All our manufactories in which the produce of the earth was converted into wealth for the use of mankind, and all the machinery therein, had been erected and were kept going by men. Go to our great ports and see how vast was the foreign trade of this country, and how all the laborious part of it was carried on by men. Who went down to the sea in ships and saw the wonders and braved the dangers of the deep? Men. Who navigated over trackless oceans that vast marine which brought wealth and comfort to every home? Who founded the great Empire of which this kingdom was the heart? Men. That "morning drum beat which," as had been well said, "following the sun and keeping company with the hours, encircles the earth with one unbroken strain of the martial airs of England," awakened whom? Men. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Who nursed you?"] Who secured to us the fruits of toil and safeguarded us in our sea-girt isle? Men. What was the outcome of all these unceasing and ever increasing labours of men? [Mr. ALLAN (Gateshead): "Children."] Our existence here to-day as a social and civilised community. And what did a social and civilised community involve and require? Laws, whereby its complex system might be regulated. And laws made by whom? By Parliament. [Cries of "Order!"]

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. Member to address himself more directly to the question. [Cheers.]

Mr. RADCLIFFE COOKE: Oh! I must have egregiously failed to make myself clear. [Cheers and laughter.] What he was arguing was this, that as all the material framework of society, all that enabled this country to be a social and civilised community, was made and executed by men, so they ought to govern it. That this point was a good one was plain from the efforts which the supporters of the Women's Suffrage movement had made from time to time to show that women could do the work of men. In the *Women's Suffrage Journal*, conducted by Miss Becker, a number of instances were cited of cases in which women performed the work of men. From that he gathered that there were a few women who superintend lighthouses in America, a few women who navigate small coasting vessels, and that there is at least

one woman pilot somewhere on the Welsh coast. She even went to the extent of instancing women criminals where the crime committed was, he might so say, of a masculine character, such as burglary, and she included these as instances of women being equal to men. In this day he gave an example in this last mentioned respect was followed by her successor for in a recent number of the *Women's Signal* there was an instance given of a young woman housebreaker who was given as an instance of women being physically the equal of men. The pit-brow girls were used by the supporters of the Women's Suffrage Movement for that particular purpose. There was a deputation to a former Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) requesting him to include these girls in his Bill and prohibit them from working as described, on the ground that the work was hard and unwomanly. A deputation of those same girls attended this House in their picturesque garb, and by whom was it led. By the leaders of the Women's Suffrage Movement, who had declared that the reason why they supported the claim of these women to do this hard and unwomanly work was, that it showed women were physically the equals of men, and could do the same hard work as men, and that that was the strongest argument in favour of granting them the suffrage. He did not see, at present, any prospect of putting the two sexes on an equality. No one could set bounds to the march of intellect or the discoveries of scientific men; but he could see no chance of the human race being propagated in any other mode than that with which they were familiar. [Cries of "Oh!"] Looking around them as they walked through the streets, and observing how the standard of height of women had risen as compared with the standard of height among men, one might possibly expect the time when the equality of women and men would be physically, and regards stature, an established fact; possibly, as was the case with birds of prey, the female might become ultimately bigger than the male, and then she would have to take a back seat. But he hoped hon. Gentlemen, therefore, until this physical alteration was effected, he should be a convinced opponent of the Measure, and if ever he happened to be in the House of Commons when it was

brought forward, if he did not move its rejection he should, at any rate, vote against it.

On the return of Mr. SPEAKER, after the usual interval,

Mr. HENRY LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said he was sorry that an important question such as this was should be greeted with a certain amount of levity by the House. He would ask the hon. Gentleman who moved this Bill to look at it in its serious aspect. He apologised for being the only Scotchman whose name was upon the back of the Bill. What surprised him was that there was one Scotchman who would put his name on the back of the Bill, because in his youth he had been nurtured on the works of John Knox, and he remembered especially one of John Knox's works, which was "The Blast of the Trumpet against the monstrous regimen of women." Scotchmen had any respect for that great man—who they all respected in England—he was convinced that they could not say that John Knox's views were to be set aside on account of anything that might be said by recreant Scotchmen—he did not use the word in any invidious sense. It was 30 years ago, he thought, when this question was first submitted to the House of Commons. Mr. John Stuart Mill. About 50 Members voted in favour of it; but he remembered that it was regarded by every Member who went into the Lobby as a huge joke. He was perfectly certain that there was not one Gentleman in the House who voted on that occasion who took the thing seriously, with the exception of Mr. Mill himself. [Sir C. COOKE: "Mr. Bright."] His right hon. friend said Mr. Bright. He himself happened to be sitting down in the smoking room with Mr. John Bright while the discussion was going on, and Mr. Bright said, "I suppose we must give John Mill a vote, but I cannot say that I am strongly in favour of giving votes to women," and on subsequent occasions he had told him that he regretted on that occasion that he did give a vote for it. But he hoped hon. Gentlemen, therefore, could think well before they voted. He admitted that, foolishly, looking upon the thing as a joke, he went into the Lobby as one of those 50 Members; and

it was because he might have done some evil upon that occasion that he had made it his special duty to show his repentance by doing what he could ever since to prevent women having votes. It was said that this was a woman's question; but he ventured to point out that it was also a man's question. As a man, he objected to petticoat government, and he also spoke for the vast majority of women, who recognised that they were not fitted to govern in that House, and did not wish to. [Cries of "Oh!"] He was obliged to call attention to the tactics pursued on this occasion. They seemed to him to be essentially feminine, and they were a forecast of what they might expect if this vote was carried and women were allowed to exercise paramount influence on the affairs of the country. He gathered from what fell from the hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading of the Bill that he did not intend to proceed with the Bill. [Mr. FAITHFULL BEGG: "I made no such statement."] Did he understand the hon. Gentleman distinctly to say that he intended to proceed to the Third Reading of this Bill? [Mr. FAITHFULL BEGG: "Yes."] The hon. Gentleman divided different political opinions into three categories; one was as to subjects that no one could understand, and he proceeded to tell them that this Bill was one of the subjects which he could not understand. He had said that the phraseology of the Bill might be bad, that everything in the Bill might be bad, but that he did not trouble himself with the cobwebs of phraseology. He could not help thinking himself that a lady must have drawn up this Bill. He saw the names of the right hon. Member for the Liskeard Division, of an eminent lawyer on this side of the House, and of other equally eminent Gentlemen upon it, but he should like to ask these Gentlemen and the hon. Gentleman who moved it, whether they had anything to do with the drawing up of the Bill? The hon. Gentleman's silence gave consent. He should like to know whether he ever took the trouble to read the Bill before it was in print. No, he did not.

Mr. FAITHFULL BEGG: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. I am entirely responsible for the phraseology of the Bill so far as a layman can be responsible for a document of this kind.



Mr. LABOUCHERE said the hon. Gentleman made his position worse. He said he did read the Bill, but he had told them that he did not understand it, and he calmly put it before them without understanding what it meant. The words of the Bill were, that on and after the passing of this Act every woman who is an inhabitant, occupier, or tenant of any dwelling place, tenement, or building within the borough or county where such occupation exists shall be entitled to be registered as a voter. There was a certain amount of ingenuous cunning in these words, if he might say so. There were two associations for Women Suffrage, and there was a dispute going on between the women suffragists. Some desired that married women should have votes; others desired that married women should not have votes. So far as he could see—and he had taken the opinion of eminent lawyers—this Bill would not give married women votes, although it was intended by it to give married women votes. Surely they ought to know whether this Bill did give married women votes or did not. If this were a Bill for men, would they for a moment go on with it without clearly understanding so essential a point as whether they gave to one-half of the men whom they were going to enfranchise a vote or not? The Bill went on to say that women should be entitled to be registered, but it did not state what were to be the conditions of registration. They knew, in regard to men, that there were certain conditions which had to be fulfilled in order to enable a man to be on the register. One condition was the question of time; but here there was to be no time. Does the hon. Gentleman wish to place women in a different position to men? He did not think he did; and therefore he hardly thought that he did read this Bill before it was printed, or if he did so, that he did not read it with any very great care. The last clause of the Bill said, "Provided always that such woman is not subject to any legal incapacity which would disqualify a man voter." Now, what were the legal incapacities at the present moment? That a man must not be an alien, a lunatic, an idiot—or a Peer. There was actually inserted in this remarkable Bill a special clause to make a distinction between men and women, and to say that idiot, alien, or

lunatic women, and Peereses in the own right, were to have a vote. He did think that a Bill ought to be drawn up in a more practical manner before the discussed it.

Mr. FAITHFUL BEGG thought the phraseology of the Bill was perfectly clear; the object was to attach to women precisely the same disability as was attached to men.

Mr. LABOUCHERE asked the hon. Gentleman, whatever his opinion was to look at the words he had quoted. The male voter was subject to the incapacity he had pointed out, but the Bill distinctly said that a woman was not to be ["Oh, oh!"] Well, grammar was the same whether it applied to men or women. So far as he could see, the only women who would be enfranchised by this Bill would be widows and spinsters who lived alone and had some little shop. It was a thorough property qualification, and, therefore, he should be surprised if many hon. Gentlemen on his own side voted for it. They had heard of the two million toiling women, but they were not the persons who would be enfranchised, so that the very class of women for whose sake hon. Friends of his had advocated female suffrage would not be benefited by this Measure. Very possibly his argument did not affect hon. Gentlemen on the other side. He had been very glad to notice on the other side in the present House of Commons so many young women—so many young men. [Laughter.] If he ignored their initial error in being Conservatives he had found them manly and independent in the views they expressed, and he wished to address a few remarks to them. His right hon. Friend the Member for the Forest of Dean had brought in a Bill which provided that every man and woman of full age, whether married or single, should be qualified to vote at Parliamentary or local elections unless disqualified for reason other than sex or marriage, by common law or Act of Parliament. The Bill further provided that no person should be disqualified by sex or marriage from being elected or being a Member of either House of Parliament. If they did away with the barrier of sex logically they must give the vote to every woman. [Ministerial cheers.] What would be the consequence? In electioneering the life of a candidate would be

absolutely intolerable. [Laughter.] They knew what phase of mind a lady had. He never would understand a plain answer to a question. [Laughter.] He had always observed that ladies, for whom he had the highest respect and admiration, were incapable of argument; when one proved to a woman she was wrong she simply repeated in almost the same words her previous proposition. [Laughter.] A lady, one of the leading members of the Liberal Women's Federation—he believed that was the name of it—[a laugh]—who had been in favour of female suffrage, wrote to him only this morning. She said she was recently founding a Liberal Women's Association when a lady got up and said:—

"We need a moral vote; no one ought to be allowed to vote whose character does not bear the strictest investigation."

[Loud laughter.] He merely mentioned that as an instance of the sort of thing they would be exposed to when women ruled the roast. It must be remembered that women were in the majority. ["Not qualified."] He was pointing out that if they passed this Bill they would in the end have to give women the vote on the same conditions as they gave it to men. [Ministerial cheers.] His right hon. Friend the Member for the Forest of Dean was perfectly logical in saying that if women were to be elected they ought also to be elected. They themselves would look to that when they got the vote. What would happen? This august assembly would become an ephebe club. [Laughter.] They would have men and women sitting here together and discussing matters. Women would claim the right to be on the Executive. They had now a Lord of the Admiralty; they would have a Lady of the Admiralty. [Laughter.] He really believed that the Speaker's seat would not be sacred, and that it was probable they would have a Speakeress. [Laughter.] He took it the Whips would be ladies. If he were allowed to choose the Whips he did not know anything he could not pass through the House. It was a most dangerous and fatal possibility that they would have Whips surging hon. Members, by all the blandishments known to the fair sex, to vote for or against what were their conscientious opinions. Reference had been

made to the action of New Zealand on this subject, but he declined to admit that the Mother of Parliaments should be influenced by what the New Zealand Legislature did. Would the hon. Members who cited New Zealand be in favour of a proportionate income tax and divers other schemes which had passed the New Zealand Legislature? Women had votes at municipal elections. Well, he was sorry they had, but he did not think the few women who had such votes would do themselves much harm by it. But he was perfectly certain that when they obtained those votes they would make the fact an argument for claiming the Parliamentary vote. Nor had he any objection to women sitting on Boards of Guardians and School Boards, because there were matters concerning women and children who were under the control of those bodies, which women were best fitted to deal with; but to say that there was no distinction between women having a vote for those local bodies and for the election of Members of Parliament was, in his opinion, to take an exceedingly low view of the Imperial Parliament. ["Hear, hear!"] What hon. Member who was in favour of this Measure would appoint a woman to manage his estate or his business? Not one of them; and to say that, because women were elected to sit on Boards of Guardians and School Boards, therefore they had a right to sit in that House, was in his opinion an utter absurdity. ["Hear, hear!"] Hon. Gentlemen who were moving in this matter had to face the hard fact that women generally really did not want the suffrage. But they were told that, even were this so, it should not prevent the House from granting it to them, and in this connection the hon. Member who seconded the Motion asked whether the working man really wanted the suffrage before he got it. He was surprised at his hon. Friend using that argument, because he was certainly under the impression that the working man did want the suffrage, and that Parliament gave it to him, not only as a matter of justice, but because he claimed it. ["Hear, hear!"] Then it was urged, as an argument in favour of the Bill, that women had no means at present of expressing their views. Why, they went about the country holding meetings,

forming associations, and getting up petitions, and they almost mobbed hon. Members when they were leaving the House. [Laughter.] He sometimes thought that, on the whole, ladies had too many means of expressing their views. [Laughter.] Assuredly, then, they had the means of expressing their views, but the views they expressed were their own particular views, and they did not represent the views of their sex. ["Hear, hear!"] As to the statement that women really desired the vote, he could only say that he had met a great many women in the course of his life, and he had not found that any such desire existed among them. In fact, he did not believe that one woman out of 100 was the least desirous of obtaining the vote. ["Hear, hear!"] He would state what happened to him at Northampton at the last General Election. Ladies connected with the Women Franchise movement came down in strong force, took a committee room, placarded the town with denunciations of him, and went about the place trying to induce persons to vote against him. Well, he asked a meeting of Liberals whether they had seen those ladies going about the town, and they said they had. Then he said he wanted to know what the husbands of those women were doing, and the men exclaimed: "Nursing the baby"—[laughter]—"Washing up the baby's dirty clothes"—[laughter]—"Cooking the dinner," or "Cleaning up the room." [Loud laughter.] He asked them whether they wished their wives to go galavanting about the country in this way, and whether they were prepared to undertake domestic duties? They said emphatically that they were not, and he did not believe he lost a single vote in consequence of the action of those ladies. ["Hear, hear!"] It was not a question of Conservative or Liberal, for not only were there a couple of Conservative, but there were two or three Liberal candidates in the field besides himself who were in favour of giving women the suffrage, and yet the men of Northampton deliberately came to the conclusion that they preferred sending to Parliament a Radical who was opposed to Women's Suffrage, rather than either a Conservative or a Radical who was in favour of it. ["Hear, hear!"] One of the ladies came to see him—a nice-looking, charming girl—[laughter]—and she said, "Is it

possible that you are against us?" Think that they would in any way benefit the vast numbers of working women, just to show the kind of way women were subjected to on these matters. What did hon. Members think this lady next said to him? She said, "Do you believe in love?" [Loud laughter.] He replied that he did—more or less—[laughter]—and he added that he was surprised so so fascinating a young lady had not succumbed to the demands of some gentleman. "Well," she replied, "might have done so; a baronet wanted me to marry him, but I did not love him." [Laughter.] And he then told her if she would take his advice, she would do a great deal better for herself to and get a baronet than going about fishing for votes on this question. [Hear, hear!] He had noticed that one hon. Gentleman who had supported the Bill charged its opponents with having recourse to sentimental arguments, but he contended that was wholly on the other side of the matter. ["Hear, hear!"] He was ing the other day on the subject with an esteemed friend on that side of the House, and when he said that he was going to vote against the Bill his friend said, "Had you a mother?" [Loud laughter.] He frankly said that he had had a mother; that she did not want the suffrage, and did very well without it. ["Hear, hear!"] But really what had all this to do with the matter? He only related those incidents as specimens to show the silly talk that did duty for argument on this question. He had no doubt that there were many hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House who were sincerely and honestly in favour of the Measure on the merits of the question; for instance, men like the right hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney), though he must confess that he was surprised that a man of his robust views should be in favour of it. It was further urged that the proposal ought to be granted on grounds of justice, and they were asked whether it was just to impose taxation without representation? Well, the present Bill would not give representation to women generally, even if it were passed. Widows and moneyed spinsters were not the only women who were taxed. There was such a thing as indirect taxation, and all women were subject to it. ["Hear, hear!"] Did hon. Gentlemen

Woman was essentially an altruist, if he might be allowed to use the expression—she worked through somebody else. The fact was, woman's province was not to go into the market-place and talk. Who was the woman they had respected for ages? Cornelia. Did they suppose that if Cornelia had gone talking in the Forum her name would have come down to them with that respect it had? No. They respected her because she was the mother of the Gracchi—because she brought into the world these Gracchi, and worked through them for the benefit of her country. He did not want women to take part in the rough wrangles and quarrels that distinguished political life. It had always been the rule, since the world began, that it was most undesirable that women should take that active part in public life that men did. The Greek view of women was that the best woman was the woman who was the least heard of. The Roman view was, "the woman who lived chaste, made wool, and looked after her own house." For his part he was of opinion that those views, though old, were sound and solid, and by them he should always stand. He stood there, not only as the advocate of men, but as representing the wishes of the women in protesting against their being given votes, and in saying that the vast mass of women did not want them. If they had the ballot he did not think they would have twenty Members of that House voting for this Bill. He only asked hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House to vote fairly and squarely, and according to their own conscientious opinions. If they did really believe it was desirable that the whole of the women should have votes and should be allowed to sit in that House, and to fulfil all the duties that were now performed by men in public matters, let them by all means vote for this Bill. But he urged them not to vote simply because they imagined that this was not a practical question, and that the Bill would not be pushed forward. The fact was, they pledged themselves by giving a vote for the Bill, because if it was not pushed forward at the present moment another Bill would be brought in later, they would be reminded that they had already voted for a similar Measure, and that they were bound to continue to do so. Always after a large extension of the franchise there

was almost immediately a general election. The result of this vote would be that there would be a general election. He showed the strength of his convictions on this subject by urging the House to vote against the Bill, although he thought that in some respects a general election was most desirable. If hon. Gentlemen opposite were not anxious for a general election let them not give a vote, a thoroughly unpractical vote, for a Bill which was drawn up in a fashion truly ridiculous, and which at one moment tried to persuade them that all women would have votes, and, at another moment, that they would not have votes.

✓ SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) said they knew that there were more than 100 Members who would vote for the Bill that day, and they voted because there was a strong feeling outside for the Bill. The hon. Member for Hereford seemed to imply that there was no feeling in Cumberland in favour of it. He happened to know that there were no less than 4,000 women connected with the various political associations in that county, and every one of those associations was in favour of Women's Suffrage. He was glad that there had not been much said that day on the odious lines of voting for this Bill, because women would vote this or that way. He thought that was about the lowest line anybody could take. If all the women were to vote in favour of the publicans he should still be in favour of giving them votes, because he thought it was right and just that they should have them. There could only be two sound and satisfactory reasons why women should not be allowed to take part in Parliamentary elections. One was that they had some defect in their intellect, and the other was that they had some defect in their conscience. Either their head or their heart must be wrong if they were justified in excluding them as they were now excluded. He did not think there was any deterioration in women in regard to character in any way. A diploma of this kind from the hon. Member for Flint was trustworthy. But, without going so far as the hon. Member for Flint, he would say that women were at least as good as men. Then, if they were not too bad for the franchise, they were too stupid? If the stupid were to be excluded from the franchise, how about the illiterate voters?

These were entrusted with the franchise and elaborate precautions were taken to allow them to record their votes. Surely these should be excluded if women were to be excluded. What did the £1 householders know about politics when the Whigs enfranchised them in 1832 or the householders who were enfranchised by the Tories in 1864; or the county voters whom Mr. Gladstone enfranchised in 1884? The way to teach people politics was to let them take part in politics, else it was to act on the principle of the old lady who would not allow her son to go into the water until he had learned to swim. [Laughter.] Women would learn politics, and have plenty of teachers when they had votes to give. Many of them were politicians now. Look at the Primrose Dames—did they not talk politics at their meetings? Look at the Women's Liberal Association—were they not at the present time most active among Liberal organisations? It was but a year ago that his hon. Friend Mr. Labouchere took him to address the Women's Liberal Association somewhere in the East End of London. [Laughter.] Were not candidates delighted to avail themselves of the services of women? Of course they were; and was it not an extraordinary thing for a Member to accept the assistance of women to influence votes, and yet to say that women who could influence votes were not fit to have a vote themselves? This was more inconsistent than the average politician, and that was saying a good deal. Another argument which had not been used much during the Debate was what he might call the refinement argument, the argument that women were too refined, and would be spoiled if they took part in the rough and tumble of Parties—that they are too good for politics. He read in a newspaper the other day how at Dunedin, New Zealand, where it appeared the women electors outnumbered the men, they returned a man who had been very much opposed to giving the franchise to women, and he explained his position by saying he opposed the extension because women were too good for the franchise, not that the franchise was too good for women. That might be so; he did not know whether that argument would be used. It had been said by so great an authority as Mr. Gladstone, that to adopt Women's Suffrage

would be to invite woman to leave that position of delicacy, purity and refinement which is the present source of her power. But he was not convinced. If politics degraded women they degraded men; and if there was something degrading in politics, then they had better not take part in them, but leave them to the basest of mankind. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Thanet (Mr. J. Lowther) had in times past expressed the view that the Turf offered a more honourable pursuit than proceedings in the House, but he did not agree with the right hon. Gentleman. In sitting for six months in the House, trying to promote just legislation for the whole country, they were employed in the noblest work men could occupy themselves with. If, as Mr. Gladstone said in one of his articles, all those who lived in a country should love that country and take an interest in it, it was a most patriotic thing to give women votes. He could not understand how any Liberal could be afraid in this matter. He looked upon his hon. Friend (Mr. Labouchere) as a leader of democrats, as a friend of political economy and of liberty in every shade, and yet there he was shuddering and shaking in his shoes at the prospect of a few women voting for or against him. [Laughter.] It was an extraordinary position to take, and it gave him a thrill of pain to contemplate him. Everybody was to have equal justice—except women. An American planter expressed the view that all men are born free except niggers; and similarly his hon. Friend declared all men are born free except women. [Laughter.] If women were admitted to the franchise, what harm could they do? Could they make things worse than they were? Mankind had been running the world for some four thousand years, and had made an awful mess of it; could women make it worse with hundred-million Budgets, massacres, famine, riots, and frightful war expenditure all over the world? Would they bring in the drink traffic or do anything to remove evils which, as Mr. Gladstone said, made our people in our slums as miserable and degraded as those of any heathen country? Let us not wrap ourselves in self-complacency and say, "Who can show us any good?" Take women's help in everything that was humane and

merciful, everything that would alleviate the lot of our suffering fellow countrymen—that was our duty. He might quote the words of the present Prime Minister, uttered some eight months ago:—

"It is the improvement of the daily life of struggling millions, the diminution of the sorrows so many are born to, which is the task, the blessed task, that Parliament is called into existence for."

If that be so, then call in women to help in that noble work. We had arrived at a year which should be memorable in the annals of this country, and every day brought suggestions how to celebrate the completion of the sixtieth year of the reign of our Sovereign—a woman—he might say *the* woman of the century. The House might do something worthy of the celebration of this great event, the longest reign in English history, by performing a great act of enfranchisement, which would be a legislative monument for all years to come of statesmanlike justice. ["Hear!"]

✓ COL. WARING (Down, N.) said he was an advocate of the rights of women, but he took a view slightly differing from that of hon. Members who had posed in the part. He was a convert or a pervert. The first time he voted in the House on this subject it was for a Bill similar to the present, and on the present occasion he had the full intention of voting in an opposite sense. He had been convinced by the arguments of women themselves, and held with good reason, that the majority of women, and those whose opinions were best worth having, were strongly opposed to the Bill. He was not without a little experience in the matter, and had the opportunity of knowing the views of a considerable number of ladies in various relations, and he had found them without exception opposed to this Bill becoming the law of the land. The proposer and seconder of the Amendment had gone over the grounds of objection thoroughly, and had dealt with the question from a jocular point of view. That was not his intention. He held the view of women, who were the best judges in this matter, that in accepting the franchise they would surrender more powerful influence than they would receive in political matters. They preferred the indirect power to the direct power with which it was proposed to invest them. This direct power would

be exercised only by that class of women of whom samples might be seen outside the doors of the House. He confessed that he did not think that the hon. Member for Northampton, or even St. Anthony, would incur much danger in passing through the small crowd in the Lobby. [*Cries of "Oh, oh!"*] Well, it was his opinion; it was a matter of taste. If hon. Members found attractions there it was surprising that they attended the Debate. The opinion among women generally was opposed to their introduction into political turmoil. If they had the franchise they would prefer not to use it, and still less would they like to be governed by their fussy sisters whom Members might see in the Lobby. What evidence was there that women asked for the franchise? The evidence only of those ladies to whom he had alluded. There had been no demonstration on the other side, simply because those who were opposed to the Measure were those who considered it would be out of their sphere to demonstrate. They had demonstrated indirectly through their husbands, brothers, and sons, and he hoped they would do so effectually on the present occasion. The proposer of this Bill talked about their discarding prejudice. He had no prejudice in this matter. He had already voted for this proposal, and now he was prepared to vote the opposite way, because in the intervening time he had become convinced that to pass such a Measure would be mischievous to the country, mischievous to the sex it was proposed to emancipate, and mischievous to the interests of the world at large. The hon. Gentleman who seconded the Bill talked about the military argument. He dared say there were some Members who wished to see the military influence of this country less preponderant than it was, and who thought that if ladies had a vote wars and rumours of war would cease. He believed that the most militant and most military people were the ladies. Did they ever hear of a woman who would not like to see her son in the Army or Navy, and if she had children in either branch of the service would object to their going to the front? It was said that the ladies should have this direct power because their male relations did not represent them. He thought a good many hon. Members would be chary about giving a vote contrary to the desires of his female

relatives. It might also be said that, if the local franchise had been given, the merits of the question at all, for he did not call it an attack upon the merits of the question to say in one sentence that women are so subjected to the influence of the other sex that they ought to be struck off the register, and in the very next sentence to say there were not 20 men in the House who would vote according to their convictions, because they were all subject to the influence of women. As to the shape in which the Measure was presented to the House, it was the result of many Debates in times past. When the hon. Member argued that the House was suspicious, and justly so, of any attempt to capture its assent to abstract resolutions, he associated himself with him. But in times past so many attacks had been made upon the shape in which this Measure was put forward that they dared not bring it forward as, perhaps, they should have done, in the form of a resolution, because if they had brought forward a resolution on the question of Women's Suffrage they should have been told that such a resolution weighed for nothing. They were, then, driven to a Bill. But if a Bill was brought forward, on the other hand, which introduced any question which was rather a question of franchise—whether for men or for women—it gave an opportunity to the enemy. He would assume that they made women who were owners voters, in right of their ownership, and not of their occupation. If they had done so, there was not a Radical who would have voted for the Measure. He would assume, on the other hand, that they had left out the owners and put in women on the larger or service franchise. In such a case there was hardly a Conservative in the House who would have voted for it. Hon. Gentlemen who differed from them might say it was clear they could not frame a Bill on this subject. He denied that altogether. He said if, in that House, it was impossible to invite an opinion upon a question of principle, why then they were restricted by the law they had made from doing the duty which the country expected from them. The country did expect that this House should be able to say whether the sex was to remain under this disability or not, and in this Bill they invited the House to say yea or nay to that question, and invited them to

pronounce on no other question of representation whatever. The hon. Member for Northampton, descending into minuter details, tried to frighten people by saying that in this Bill they gave a woman a preferential right over a man in the matter of registration. He did not read it so. They entitled a woman to be placed on the register of voters, but they only entitled her to be placed on as the Revising Barrister acted in accordance with the rules and procedure of his office. This Measure was, in the opinion of its promoters, a Reform Bill, and they declined to associate it in their minds with the terrors which the hon. Member for Northampton had depicted before them. They thought that this Reform Bill had nothing whatever to do with the so-called movement for Women's Rights, whatever might be the merits or demerits of that movement. It had nothing more to do with that movement for Women's Rights than the Reform Bill of 1885 had to do with the propaganda of Jack Cade. On the contrary, they held—and they appealed to the past to support them—that the result of every inclusion of new voters into the electorate had been to minimise the apparent importance of the most extreme advocates of those reform measures. He remembered when he was a boy that the name of the hon. Member for North West Norfolk was a word of terror in good Tory households, while now he was an esteemed and popular Member of that House on both sides. He would name again another question of representation—the question as to whether the religious test should be applied in that House. Mr. Bradlaugh, so long as he was fighting for that question, was also a word of terror, but, when he had won the victory on that question of representation, Mr. Bradlaugh was also an esteemed and popular Member of that House. And so, he thought, it would be found that when the franchise was granted to women, who otherwise were capable and were householders, a great deal of the extreme pronouncement of views with which some persons were alarmed would no longer be heard. So long as they did not allow an elector to give effect to his voice constitutionally, he was justified in trying to attract their attention. For his part, he said that before the last Reform Bill he thought an agricultural labourer was

quite entitled to "booh" a candidate while he was making a speech, for he had no other way of showing that candidate that he disagreed with him. Now, however, he had no longer any such right to "booh" him. If he did so he was a public nuisance, because he had a remedy in his hands. If he did not agree with the candidate, he could now vote against him. So also if the hon. Member for Northampton had been incommoded by the arguments pressed upon him by certain ladies in this country, if he would pass this Bill, he had the remedy in his hands. He could say, "My dear lady, if you disagree with me, vote against me at the next election; do not trouble me with your arguments now." But that was exactly what the hon. Member feared. In spite of all his imposing attitude of manly courage, what was the real motive of the hon. Member for Northampton in opposing the Bill? It was very transparent. He said that if these ladies had a vote they would make the life of a candidate intolerable. What he meant was, that they would bring the Parliamentary existence of certain Members to an abrupt close. That was really the view of the hon. Member. Mr. Bagehot, in his work on the English Constitution, said that when Lord Eldon was Lord Chancellor of England the only political view he had was that things as they were were consistent with the continued existence of John Scott, Earl of Eldon; but if there were any change how did he know that they would be? So it seemed to be with the hon. Member for Northampton. Things as they were were consistent with his having a seat in that House, but if there was any change he might not any longer be very sure of his seat. [Laughter.] What was there in the present representative machinery of this country that claimed sentimental adherence? We spent many thousands a year to get barristers to interpret Acts of Parliament relating to our electoral system. The problem of Women's Suffrage would be presented to the same tribunal, and the technical difficulties which might be involved ought not to affect the decision of the House.

SIR BARRINGTON SIMEON (Southampton) asked how they were to be sure that ladies would not claim to sit in the House of Commons if they once had Parliamentary votes. If once there was "one

man one vote, and every man a vote," how could they deny votes to women? Considering there were 1,100,000 more men than women, and that every man would have a vote if ever one got it, they would suppose that when women came to swamp the votes of men they would be content to remain outside. If ever they got into Parliament the end of this country would not be far off. The immediate result, however, of this Bill would be the biggest creation of faggot votes ever known. Rich men would buy votes for their wives and daughters, while the wives and daughters of artisans, who were at every election that they were the backbone of the country, would have no votes. This would work the greatest possible injustice, and he could not possibly vote for such a thing. If the working classes were the backbone of the country, why should not the female backbone of the country have votes. The present House of Commons contained more new Members (and he was one of them) than any previous House, and even if they were as wise and sensible as their predecessors they would defeat this unwise and pernicious Bill by a very large majority. [Cheers.]

Mr. JEBB (Cambridge University), in supporting the Bill, said he was largely influenced by the fact that during the same period an active movement had been in progress for extending the franchise to women. But such a movement could not be relied on as a permanent force for keeping up the attention of legislators to the interests of women. He was also granted that legislators had in recent times had no desire whatever to refuse justice to women, but women were necessarily better judges of the needs of women than men could possibly be. It could not be denied that before the extension of the franchise to the agricultural labourer in 1885 there was not then more evidence before the country of their desire for the franchise than there was now of the needs of his class were viewed for the first time from the point of view of that class; and the same was true of every successive extension of the Suffrage. If women had the Suffrage, legislators would legislate in the light of the directly expressed views of women on questions relating to the interests of women. ["Hear, hear!"] He had the honour of being a Member of the Royal Commission appointed to deal with

certain educational questions. There were women members of that Commission, and one of the problems with which they had to deal was connected with girls' schools, and the male members found they had very much to learn from the women members. Women's Suffrage was especially desirable in the interests of those women engaged in employment which they shared with men, and in the interests of women who were candidates for employment as to their fitness for which men were at present the sole judges, and had the final power of excluding them. Large numbers of such women were not in a position to take any active part in demanding the Suffrage. The hon. Member who seconded the Bill referred to a large deputation of women which came up from the collieries to represent their views on the subject of female labour in collieries. Many of the women who had been leaders of the movement had taken that part not only because they themselves desired the franchise, but also in the interests of women engaged in such employments as he had mentioned. It was true that the omission of the Lodger Franchise from the Bill would exclude numbers of women for whom the Suffrage was especially desirable, but he submitted that this was eminently a question in which it was desirable to proceed circumspectly, and the omission of the Lodger Franchise was not a reason for voting against the principle of the Bill. ["Hear, hear!"] It was said that women would be drawn out of their proper sphere. He did not see how voting would do that. They already canvassed and spoke on platforms, and candidates for Parliament were only too glad to get them as canvassers. It was further contended that domestic interests would be neglected; but did domestic life make larger demands on women than professional life on men? Then it was said that the relations between the sexes would be revolutionised. He was unable to see how that result was to follow. If anything they could do in that House was capable of subverting the fundamental laws of nature, the powers of the House were very much greater than he took them to be. A revolution in the relations between man and woman was not likely to occur until "human nature is other than it is now." As to the suggestion that women would claim seats in Parliament if they obtained the franchise, there was

absolutely no logical or practical connection between giving women votes and giving them seats in Parliament. Clergymen had votes, but they could not sit in the House. It might be said that the Bishops represented them. Were men then to be looked on as Bishops, and women as a sort of inferior Clergy? It was said, again, that women would believe too much in the remedial power of legislation, and that if they had the franchise there would be some danger of increasing the tendency to over-legislation. What proof was there that women held that belief any more than men; and if they did, what reason was there to doubt that a little experience would cure them of the illusion? He now came to an argument which deserved respectful attention. It was that women were by nature more emotional and excitable than men. It was argued that a leaven of female voters in the electorate might be dangerous at times of crisis, when popular feeling ran high—as, for instance, at times when the issue of peace or war was in question. But what proof was there that women were on the average more emotional and excitable than men? It would certainly be difficult for them to be more so than some men, and he did not know by which process it was to be established that as a sex they were so. He should say that as a sex they were more practical than men. He would now introduce a few considerations on the other side. The calamities of war fell on women even more heavily than on men, because war desolated the home. At such a crisis as that supposed, women would have an even stronger motive than men for using their interest against any rash or precipitate movement of public opinion. ["Hear, hear!"] At such a moment women would, probably, be often a moderating force. Another case in which the supposed emotional temperament of women was represented as a danger was the case of suffering caused by improvidence or vice. It was alleged that women would lean towards an excessive and misplaced clemency. Now it was to be noticed that women were not more lenient, but usually harder and more severe than most men in their judgment of certain delinquencies; for example, in their judgment of suffering incurred by thriftlessness—for women were accustomed to the details of

economy, and were apt to resent the absence of thrift with just severity. Again, women are more severe than men towards all offences against the life of the family. And, further, a wider consideration applies here. The women who had been most active in claiming the Suffrage were familiar with the arguments which had been used against their claim. They would be especially on their guard against justifying the objectors by committing those errors which their opponents asserted that women, as a sex, would be sure to commit. And the less educated portion of the female electorate would be influenced in such cases by the example of those women to whom they would look as their natural leaders in such a matter. Further, the political responsibility of the Suffrage would of itself tend to steady and sober the judgment of women. If on some public questions, some women had shown a lack of that quality, this had not been due simply to the temperament of woman, but also to the fact that hitherto they had not had the direct responsibilities of active citizenship. It was objected that, as there were more women than men in this country, the votes of men might ultimately be swamped by the votes of women. This argument assumed that men and women voters would form opposite camps. But how, he asked, was this argument to be reconciled with the other argument that there was no reason for giving women votes, inasmuch as all that they could want had already been done for them by male legislators? For if that were the case, why should the votes of all women be arrayed against the votes of men? The two arguments contradicted each other, and the first, that all women would vote on one side and all men on the other was flagrantly absurd. What were the probable advantages of Women's Suffrage? An eminent writer had said that women were, on the whole, more conscientious than men. Without denying or affirming that, it might be said that the number of women who would vote for a real and intelligent sense of civic duty would probably be at least as large as the number of men who did so. When a woman had some definite duty set before her, she was at least as scrupulous in the discharge of it as the average man, especially if it demanded self-effacement and self-sacrifice. The new element which Women's Suffrage

would add to the electorate would probably have the quality of conscientiousness in a high degree. The result would tend to increase the importance of character in public life, and that was a result which they would all welcome. It had been said by the hon. Member for Hereford that in the State of Washington the Suffrage was given to women and men taken away. He could not help wondering that the hon. Member who had that argument against this proposal give the Suffrage to women did not see that it cut both ways, because the reason for the withdrawal of the privilege in Washington might have been that the male voters found the female voters more staid than they desired. Then women knew a great deal about the life of the poor, and if they obtained the vote questions affecting the social condition of the masses would come to the front. Women would be opposed by instinct to violent or revolutionary changes, and to Measures involving consecration of property. Let no one suppose that he meant that women, as such, would collectively lean to one of the great parties in the State rather than to the other. He could imagine nothing more absurd than to predict that the female sex, if enfranchised, would prove to be collectively Conservative or collectively Liberal. What might safely be predicted was that the general influence of women would tend to moderate extreme tendencies on either side in politics. It would be no slight gain from Women's Suffrage, through it, mothers who had taken an intelligent interest in the public affairs of their country, and in the duties of citizenship, were thereby better fitted to educate their children in such thoughts and aims as would tend to make them patriotic and public spirited men and women. When he weighed the objections which had been urged against Women's Suffrage, and placed in the other scale the advantages which might reasonably be expected from it, he could feel no doubt in which side the balance inclined. He supported this Bill, not only because it was just, but also because he believed it to be expedient in the public interest. *Cheers.*

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): I do not feel as if I ought to give a silent vote upon this Bill. It seems to me that if ever there was

a question upon which people ought to have the courage of their opinions it is this. ["Hear, hear!"] They ought to form an opinion and act upon it according to their convictions. It has been agreed all through this discussion that we are not dealing merely with the details of this particular Bill. That, I think, is generally admitted by both sides. What we are dealing with is a principle of the highest possible importance and of the gravest possible consequences. We have to consider it not in the least, I should hope, with reference to speculations as to the effect of that principle upon political parties—["hear, hear!"]—but with reference to the result which it will have not only upon the present, but upon the future interests of this country. I suppose that if this Bill is intended to do anything it is intended to assert ultimately the identical rights of women to exercise the electoral franchise with men. I shall not discuss the question on the ground of the distinction between local and Imperial questions. Everybody must feel that there is a real and solid distinction between them. ["Hear, hear!"] You cannot import the mere fact of female suffrage in local matters as a substantial and far less a conclusive argument in favour of female suffrage in Imperial matters. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Why not?"] If that does not commend itself to the hon. Member he can answer me. To my mind the point is obvious. I decline altogether to enter upon invidious comparisons of the merits or capacities of the two sexes, for it requires a man with more courage than I possess to make distinctions of that kind. [*Laughter.*] But some Gentlemen have entered upon that dangerous ground. They will find abundance of such discussion in the modern literature of the day—[*laughter*]—conducted, I think, to a great degree, probably to the largest degree, by the more numerous sex. [*Laughter.*] I shall confine myself to one single point, a dry, statistical point, which is incapable of contradiction and introduces no controversy—namely, the numerical relations of the two sexes. That has been stated already over and over again in this Debate. There are in this country 1,200,000 more women than men. This is practically a Bill for the ultimate enfranchisement of that majority. [*Cheers.*] The hon. Member for

Durham argued upon that basis. He did not proceed with the caution of the hon. Member for the University of Cambridge, who held out as an encouragement to men in this matter that this would be such a very small Bill. It is not a small Bill in the consequences which it may entail. It is a very great Bill, for you cannot resist the ultimate results of this Measure. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member for Northampton referred to the Bill of my right hon. Friend the Member for the Forest of Dean. That is a Bill for universal manhood suffrage, and if that principle is ultimately accepted this Bill will lead as a consequence to universal female suffrage. There is not an argument used by the hon. Member for the University just now which is not applicable to the ultimate extension of the suffrage to all women. That is the question upon which you are to vote to-day; that is the consideration that you ought to have in your minds. The hon. Member for the University asked what connection there is between voting powers and a seat in the Legislature. Well, there is the most intimate connection. My right hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, the greatest authority upon that question, tells me that in the American States, where the vote has been given to women the capacity for a seat in the Legislature has also been given as a matter of course. Therefore we can see what is the character and magnitude of this question. No man can doubt that at some time or other—it may be sooner, it may be later—all the restrictions, or most of the restrictions which are now placed upon male suffrage will be removed. These things wait sometimes a great deal longer than people hope, but they come quicker sometimes than people expect. But those restrictions will be removed. The hon. Member for the University of Cambridge says that it is not to be expected that all men will vote on one side and all women on the other. No man expects that, but is it not perfectly clear that where you have a majority of 1,200,000 those who possess that majority must in the long run have the determining voice? Then this is a very fundamental change in the constitution of the country. [Cheers.] No one can

doubt that. It is to establish what I think was called in the course of the Debate a change upon an Amazonian basis; you are going to establish the electorate on a popular womanhood majority. In my opinion that may be a good thing or a bad thing, but it is not a thing to be disposed of on a Wednesday afternoon. [Cheers.] If a proposal fundamentally affecting the whole Parliamentary Constitution of this country is to be entertained, not in a trivial Bill, but in a discussion of a great principle with enormous consequences, it ought to be produced on the authority of a responsible Government. [Cheers.] I do not see any indications to-day that Her Majesty's advisers are prepared to take the responsibility of making any such recommendation. [Laughter and cheers.] Therefore it appears to me that this is not the manner and this is not the occasion to inaugurate the establishment of such a momentous change. This is a question which I think does not come within the ordinary category of these Wednesday debates, the value of which I entirely admit. I attach to it consequences which for good or for evil are of the most momentous character in the future of this Empire. I am not entitled at all to express any opinion as to what are the real sentiments of women on this subject. Each man must form his own judgment according to his own lights on that matter. Several hon. Gentlemen have expressed their opinions, among them the hon. Member for the Cambridge University. I am sure that his opinion is gathered from the most enlightened sources, but he has not gathered it, I am afraid, from his eminent studies in the ancient classics, particularly in the pages of Aristophanes. [Laughter.] To my mind, and according to my experience of what I have observed and learned, I should say that the great majority of women do not desire to have the Parliamentary vote. [Cheers.] They have come to the conclusion, therefore, and I think it my duty to express it to the House, that it is not wise or expedient, nor is this a proper occasion for the House of Commons, by what I can hardly call in all respects a considerate vote, to endeavour to establish a principle of this kind, not on the responsibility of those who generally lead or advise the House, but by what I can only call on this occasion a catch vote to determine

question of this enormous consequence. I feel compelled, therefore, to give my vote against this Bill. [Cheers.]

MR. LEONARD COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) thought that the advocates of this Bill were to be congratulated on the fact that his right hon. Friend had refused to give a silent vote on this occasion. He had, however, given a silent vote before now. Indeed, he had heard him declare that he would never undergo the degradation of speaking on this question. [Laughter.] Why had he spoken to-day? It was a good augury; they were going to win. [Ironical laughter.] What was the kind of argument addressed to the House whenever a discussion arose on women's suffrage? He always asked those who were debating the question to substitute men for women, and to see whether the same argument would not apply. His right hon. Friend, disdaining the question as the moral constitution of men and women, based his argument on the firm principle of numerical superiority. They had heard that argument used in respect of men. [Cheers.] His right hon. Friend had in previous years heard the argument used with regard to the admission of the artisan class to the franchise and he had heard it said that the admission of the artisans would swamp the men of property and intelligence, and though they might impose what checks and limitations they chose to the progress of manhood suffrage, the artisans would overwhelm the other classes. He remembered that on one occasion Mr. Lowe used an illustration to the effect that the artisans were so numerous that it might be said, as Curran said of the fleas, "if united they could pull a man out of bed." [Laughter.] If, therefore, the artisans were united they could break down all the limitations which were against their wishes. Had they done so? Again, it was said that if the women united in that far distant time when there was absolute equality between men and women in respect of voting, the women might outvote the men. There was the same unfounded apprehension with respect to women as previously existed with respect to the labouring classes. He was astonished that his right hon. Friend, who had listened with disdain to similar arguments when applied to different classes

of men, did not see how it disposed of the same question when it was based on the numerical argument. Then his right hon. Friend said that if the change were to be made at all it should not be voted on a Wednesday afternoon—[cheers]—and that it must be introduced by a responsible Minister. Did his right hon. Friend say that when the extension of the county franchise was proposed, or when household suffrage in the boroughs was brought forward? Not at all. Then it was a very proper exercise for the opinion of the House, if not to effect and promote legislation, at least to educate Ministers for the future. He hoped, therefore, that the House of Commons would disdain the notion that it had to wait for the Ministers of the Crown before it expressed its opinion as to whether women be enfranchised or not. The whole of these arguments were a thorough illustration of "the fears of the grave and the follies of the wise." They were afraid of a vast upsetting of human society, of overturning the relation of the sexes, and of altering the constitution of human nature. The House might do many things, but it could not achieve those ends. Those fears as to the dreadful consequences of this change recalled to his mind what was said by an even more advanced authority than his right hon. Friend 60 years ago. Hon. Members knew that before the old House of Commons was burnt down women were admitted to hear the Debates. There was a ventilating cylinder in the centre of the hall, and there was a gallery down which the ladies peeped and listened. When the question arose as to the rebuilding of the House there was a discussion as to whether there should be a gallery for the ladies. Sir John Cam Hobhouse declared then that "life would be intolerable if there was to be a Ladies' Gallery." [Laughter.] Those were the terrors which Sir John held out in those days, and they were just as substantial as those with which his right hon. Friend now tried to frighten the House. A former Speaker once interfered in a Debate in Committee to express his opinion that if a Ladies' Gallery were provided, society as at present constituted could not exist. [Laughter.] But society had existed in spite of the Ladies' Gallery, and it would exist in spite of the passing of this Bill that afternoon. [Cheers.]

MR. FAITHFULL BEGG rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

MR. SPEAKER: I think it right that the House should have an opportunity of saying whether it does or does

not desire to come to a decision on the Bill. I, therefore, accept the Motion.

The House divided:—Ayes, 214  
Noes, 170.—(Division List—No. 15 appended.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)  
Abraham, William (Rhondda)  
Aird, John  
Allan, William (Gateshead)  
Ambrose, William (Middlesex)  
Arch, Joseph  
Arnold, Alfred  
Arnold, Sir William  
Aseroff, Robert  
Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)  
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r.)  
Barlow, John Emmott  
Barry, A. H. Smith- (Hunts.)  
Beach, W. W. Bramston (Hants.)  
Beckett, Ernest William  
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.  
Bhownaggee, M. M.  
Bigham, John Charles  
Bousfield, William Robert  
Brigg, John  
Brookfield, A. Montagu  
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn  
Bucknill, Thomas Townsend  
Burt, Thomas  
Cameron, Robert  
Carson, Edward  
Cecil, Lord Hugh  
Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.  
Channing, Francis Allston  
Clare, Octavius Leigh  
Clough, Walter Owen  
Cohen, Benjamin Louis  
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse  
Colville, John  
Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)  
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)  
Courtney, Rt. Hon. Leonard H.  
Cox, Robert  
Cozens-Hardy, Herbert Hardy  
Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton)  
Curran, Thomas B. (Donegal)  
Currie, Sir Donald  
Davenport, W. Bromley  
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan)  
Davies, W. Rees- (Pembrokesh).  
Davitt, Michael  
Denny, Colonel  
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles  
Dixon, George  
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred. Dixon  
Doogan, P. C.  
Dorington, Sir John Edward  
Drucker, A.  
Dunn, Sir William  
Edwards, Gen. Sir James Bevan  
Fardell, Thomas George  
Farquharson, Dr. Robert  
Fenwick, Charles  
Fielden, Thomas  
Finch, George H.  
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne  
Firbank, Joseph Thomas  
Fisher, William Hayes  
FitzGerald, Sir R. U. Penrose  
FitzWygram, General Sir F.  
Forster, Henry William  
Foster, Harry S. (Suffolk)  
Foster, Sir W. (Derby Co.)  
Fowler, Matthew (Durham)  
Fry, Lewis  
Galloway, William Johnson  
Gedge, Sydney  
Gilliat, John Saunders  
Goddard, Daniel Ford  
Gold, Charles  
Goldsworthy, Major-General  
Gordon, John Edward  
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon  
Goulding, Edward Alfred  
Gourley, Sir Edward Temperley  
Graham, Henry Robert  
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)  
Green, Walford D. (Wednesb'ry)  
Gull, Sir Cameron  
Haldane, Richard Burdon  
Hall, Sir Charles  
Hazell, Walter  
Hedderwick, Thomas Charles H.  
Helder, Augustus  
Hickman, Sir Alfred  
Hill, Rt. Hn. Lord Arthur (Down)  
Hill, Rt. Hn. A. Staveley (Staffs.)  
Hogan, James Francis  
Holburn, J. G.  
Holland, Hon. Lionel Raleigh  
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry  
Howell, William Tudor  
Howorth, Sir Henry Hoyle  
Hudson, George Bickersteth  
Hughes, Colonel Edwin  
Jacoby, James Alfred  
Jebb, Richard Claverhouse  
Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick  
Johnston, William (Belfast)  
Johnstone, John H. (Sussex)  
Jones, David Brynmor (Swansea)  
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)  
Kearley, Hudson E.  
Kemp, George  
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.  
Kenyon, James  
Kilbride, Denis  
Kinloch, Sir John G. Smyth  
Lafone, Alfred  
Laurie, Lieut.-General  
Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)  
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb.)  
Lecky, William Edward H.  
Leng, Sir John  
Llewelyn, Sir Dillwyn-(Swans'a)  
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine  
Logan, John William  
Lubbock, Rt. Hon. Sir John  
Lucas-Shadwell, William

Luttrell, Hugh Fownes  
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred  
Macaleese, Daniel  
Macdona, John Cumming  
Maclure, John William  
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift  
McKenna, Reginald  
McKillop, James  
McLaren, Charles Benjamin  
Marks, Henry Hananel  
Massey-Mainwaring, Hon. W. E.  
Maxwell, Sir Herbert E.  
Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)  
Melville, Beresford Valentine  
Milbank, Powlett Charles John  
Milner, Sir Frederick George  
Milward, Colonel Victor  
Montagu, Hon. J. Scott (Hants)  
Montagu, Sir S. (Whitechapel)  
More, Robert Jasper  
Morton, Edward John Chalmer  
Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)  
Nicol, Donald Ninian  
Northcote, Hon. Sir H. Stafford  
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)  
O'Kelly, James  
Oldroyd, Mark  
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay  
Parnell, John Howard  
Perks, Robert William  
Pickersgill, Edward Hare  
Pinkerton, John  
Platt-Higgins, Frederick  
Pryce-Jones, Edward  
Purvis, Robert  
Pym, C. Guy  
Randell, David  
Rankin, James  
Rentoul, James Alexander  
Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. Thomson  
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)  
Robinson, Brooke  
Roche, Hon. James (East Kerry)  
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye  
Round, James  
Russell, Sir George (Berkshire)  
Russell, T. W. (Tyron)  
Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)  
Saunderson, Col. Edw. James  
Schwann, Charles E.  
Scott, Charles (Prestwich)  
Sharpe, William Edward T.  
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)  
Sidebottom, William (Derbysh.)  
Smith, Abel (Herts.)  
Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)  
Souttar, Robinson  
Spencer, Ernest  
Spicer, Albert  
Stanley, Henry M. (Lambeth)  
Stephens, Henry Charles  
Stewart, Sir Mark J. McTaggart

stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.  
stone, Sir Benjamin  
trauss, Arthur  
trutt, Hon. Charles Hedley  
ullivan, Donal (Westmeath)  
thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)  
thomas, Alfred (Glamorgan, E.)  
thorburn, Walter  
tutton, Charles Ernest  
Wallace, Robert (Perth)  
Walrond, Sir William Hood

Allen, W. (Newc.-under-Lyme)  
Anstruther, H. T.  
Ashton, Thomas Gair  
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry  
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy  
Bailey, James (Walworth)  
Baker, Sir John  
Balcarres, Lord  
Banbury, Frederick George  
Barnes, Frederic Gorell  
Bartley, George C. T.  
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)  
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.  
Bethell, Captain  
Bill, Charles  
Birrell, Augustine  
Blundell, Colonel Henry  
Bolton, Thomas Dolling  
Bonsor, Henry Cosmo Orme  
Boulnois, Edmund  
Bowles, T. Gibson (King's Lynn)  
Brassey, Albert  
Broadhurst, Henry  
Brown, Alexander H.  
Bryce, Right Hon. James  
Butcher, John George  
Buxton, Sydney Charles  
Caldwell, James  
Campbell, James A.  
Causton, Richard Knight  
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs)  
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbyshire)  
Cawley, Frederick  
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (Birm.)  
Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r)  
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry  
Charrington, Spencer  
Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)  
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.  
Coddington, Sir William  
Coghill, Douglas Harry  
Compton, Lord Alwyne (Beds)  
Cook, C. W. Radcliffe (Heref'd)  
Crean, Eugene  
Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)  
Curzon, Rt. Hn. G. N. (Lanc. S. W.)  
Dalbiac, Major Philip Hugh  
Dalrymple, Sir Charles  
Dane, Richard M.  
Darling, Charles John  
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph  
Doughty, George  
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-  
Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.  
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir William Hart  
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton  
Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)  
Farrell, James P. (Cavan, W.)

Wedderburn, Sir William  
Weir, James Galloway  
Whiteley, George (Stockport)  
Whiteley, H. (Ashton-under-L.)  
Whitmore, Charles Algernon  
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer  
Williams, John Carvell (Notts)  
Wilcox, John Archibald  
Wilson, Charles Henry (Hull)  
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)  
Wilson, John (Govan)

NOES.

Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward  
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)  
Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Mane.)  
Finch-Hatton, Hon. Harold H.  
Flannery, Fortescue  
Fletcher, Sir Henry  
Folkestone, Viscount  
Foster, Colonel (Lancaster)  
Garfit, William  
Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. G'rg's)  
Goschen, George J. (Sussex)  
Gunter, Colonel  
Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord Geo.  
Hanbury, Rt. Hon. Robert Wm.  
Hanson, Sir Reginald  
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir William  
Hardy, Laurence  
Hare, Thomas Leigh  
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Charles Seale-  
Heath, James  
Hoare, Edw. Brodie (Hampstead)  
Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)  
Hobhouse, Henry  
Hopkinson, Alfred  
Howard, Joseph  
Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn  
Hutton, Alfred E. (Morley)  
Jessel, Captain Herbert Merton  
Joicey, Sir James  
Jolliffe, Hon. H. George  
Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hn. Sir U.  
Kenny, William  
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. William  
King, Sir Henry Seymour  
Knowles, Lees  
Knox, Edmund Francis Vesey  
Lambert, George  
Lees, Sir Elliott (Birkenhead)  
Lockwood, Sir Frank (York)  
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Liverpool)  
Lorne, Marquess of  
Lowther, Rt. Hon. James (Kent)  
Loyd, Archie Kirkman  
Macartney, W. G. Ellison  
Maclean, James Mackenzie  
McArthur, William  
McCalmont, Mj.-Gen. (Ant'm. N.)  
McDermott, Patrick  
McEwan, William  
Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe  
Martin, Richard Biddulph  
Mellor, Rt. Hn. J. W. (Yorks.)  
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.  
Monk, Charles James  
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy  
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)  
Mowbray, Rt. Hon. Sir John  
Mundella, Rt. Hn. Anthony John,

Woodall, William  
Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Hud'rsf'ld)  
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-  
Wyndham, George  
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.  
Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy

TELLERS FOR THE AYES, Mr. Faithfull Begg and Mr. Atherley-Jones.

Myers, William Henry  
Nussey, Thomas Willans  
O'Brien, P. J. (Tipperary)  
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)  
O'Keefe, Francis Arthur  
O'Malley, William  
Paulton, James Mellor  
Pease, Arthur (Darlington)  
Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)  
Pease, Sir Joseph W. (Durham)  
Penn, John  
Phillipotts, Captain Arthur  
Pierpoint, Robert  
Pirie, Captain Duncan Vernon  
Plunkett, Hon. Horace Curzon  
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp  
Pretymann, Capt. Ernest George  
Provand, Andrew Dryburgh  
Quilter, William Cuthbert  
Reid, Sir Robert T.  
Ridley, Rt. Hon. Sir Matthew W.  
Robertson, Edmund (Dundee)  
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)  
Roche, John (East Galway)  
Russell, Gen. F. S. (Cheltenham)  
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles  
Sheehy, David  
Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)  
Simeon, Sir Barrington  
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)  
Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)  
Stanley, Edwd. Jas. (Somerset)  
Stevenson, Francis S.  
Stock, James Henry  
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier  
Sutherland, Sir Thomas  
Talbot, John G. (Oxford Univ.)  
Tanner, Charles Kearns  
Taylor, Francis  
Thornton, Percy M.  
Usborne, Thomas  
Walton, John Lawson  
Waring, Col. Thomas  
Webster, Sir R. E. (Isle of Wight)  
Wharton, John Lloyd  
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)  
Williams, Joseph Powell-(Birm.)  
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord  
Wilson, Frederick W. (Norfolk)  
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)  
Wilson, J. W. (Worc'sh. N.)  
Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks)  
Wodehouse, Edmond R. (Bath)  
Young, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE NOES, Colonel Lockwood and Mr. Labouchere.



Question put accordingly, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question." The House divided:—Ayes, 228; Noes, 157.—(Division List—No. 16—pende.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Aird, John
Allan, William (Gateshead)
Ambrose, William (Middlesex)
Arch, Joseph
Arnold, Alfred
Arrol, Sir William
Ascroft, Robert
Austin, Sir John (Yorkshire)
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Baker, Sir John
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r)
Balfour, Gerald William (Leeds)
Barlow, John Emmott
Barnes, Frederic Gorell
Beach, W. W. Bramston (Hants)
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bhownaggree, M. M.
Bonsfield, William Robert
Brigg, John
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Bucknill, Thomas Townsend
Burt, Thomas
Cameron, Robert
Carson, Edward
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lanes.)
Chaloner, Captain R. G. W.
Channing, Francis Allston
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Clark, Dr. G. B. (Caithness-sh.)
Clough, Walter Owen
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Colville, John
Cook, Fred. Lucas (Lambeth)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Courtney, Rt. Hon. Leonard H.
Cox, Robert
Cozens-Hardy, Herbert Hardy
Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton)
Curran, Thomas B. (Donegal)
Davenport, W. Bromley-
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan)
Davies, W. Rees-(Pembrokesh.)
Davitt, Michael
Denny, Colonel
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dixon, George
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Doogan, P. C.
Doughty, George
Drucker, A.
Dunn, Sir William
Edwards, Gen. Sir James Bevan
Ellis, Thos. E.
Fardell, Thomas George
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fenwick, Charles
Fielden, Thomas
Finch, George H.
Finch-Hatton, Hon. Harold H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Firbank, Joseph Thomas
FitzGerald, Sir R. U. Penrose
FitzWygram, General Sir F.
Flannery, Fortescue
Forster, Henry William
Foster, Colonel (Lancaster)
Foster, Harry S. (Suffolk)
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)
Fowler, Matthew (Durham)
Fry, Lewis
Galloway, William Johnson
Gedge, Sydney
Gilliat, John Saunders
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gold, Charles
Goldsworthy, Major-General
Gordon, John Edward
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gourley, Sir Edward Temperley
Graham, Henry Robert
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
Green, Walford D. (Wednesb'ry)
Gull, Sir Cameron
Haldane, Richard Burdon
Hall, Sir Charles
Harrison, Charles
Hazzell, Walter
Hedderwick, Thomas Charles H.
Helder, Augustus
Hickman, Sir Alfred
Hill, Rt. Hn. Lord Arthur (Down)
Hill, Rt. Hn. A. Staveley (Staffs.)
Hoare, Samuel (Norwich)
Hogan, James Francis
Holburn, J. G.
Holland, Hon. Lionel Raleigh
Hopkinson, Alfred
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Howell, William Tudor
Howorth, Sir Henry Hoyle
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Hughes, Colonel Edwin
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jebb, Richard Claverhouse
Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
Johnston, William (Belfast)
Johnstone, John H. (Sussex)
Jones, David Brynmor (Swansea)
Jones, William (Carnarvonsh're)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kemp, George
Kenyon, James
Kilbride, Denis
Kinloch, Sir John George Smyth
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Lawson, John Grant (Yorks.)
Lawson, Sir Wilfrid (Cumb'ld.)
Lecky, William Edward H.
Leng, Sir John
Llewelyn, Sir Dillwyn-(Swans'a)
Lockwood, Sir Frank (York)
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine

Logan, John William
Lorne, Marquess of
Lowles, John
Lubbock, Rt. Hon. Sir John
Lucas-Shadwell, William
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Macaleese, Daniel
Macdona, John Cumming
Maclure, John William
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
McDermott, Patrick
McKenna, Reginald
McKillop, James
McLaren, Charles Benjamin
Marks, Henry Hananel
Massey-Mainwaring, Hon. W.
Mellor, Colonel (Lancashire)
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Milbank, Powlett Charles J.
Milner, Sir Frederick George
Milward, Colonel Victor
Montagu, Hon. J. Scott (Hants)
Montagu, Sir S. (Whitechapel)
More, Robert Jasper
Morton, Edward John Chalmers
Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath)
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Northcote, Hon. Sir H. Stafford
O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
Oldroyd, Mark
O'Malley, William
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Parnell, John Howard
Perks, Robert William
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pinkerton, John
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pryce-Jones, Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pyn, C. Guy
Randell, David
Rankin, James
Rentoul, James Alexander
Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. Thomson
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Robinson, Brooke
Roche, Hon. James (East Kerry)
Roche, John (East Galway)
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Round, James
Russell, Gen. F.S. (Cheltenham)
Russell, Sir George (Berks.)
Russell, T. W. (Tyrone)
Rutherford, John
Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
Samuel, J. (Stockton-on-Tees)
Saunderson, Col. Edw. James
Schwann, Charles E.
Scott, Charles (Prestwich)
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
Sheehy, David

debottom, William (Derbysh.)
Kewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, Abel (Herts.)
Smith, Abel H. (Christchurch)
Suttar, Robinson
Wencer, Ernest
Wicker, Albert
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (Somerset)
Stanley, Henry M. (Lambeth)
Stewart, Sir Mark J. McTaggart
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Strauss, Arthur
Strutt, Hon. Charles Hedley
Sullivan, Donal (Westmeath)
Sennant, Harold John
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Balcarras, Lord
Banbury, Frederick George
Barr, A. H. Smith-(Hunts)
Barr, Francis Tress (Windsor)
Bartley, George C. T.
Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. H. (Bristol)
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Beckett, Ernest William
Bethell, Commander
Bigham, John Charles
Bill, Charles
Birrell, Augustine
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Bonsor, Henry Cosmo Orme
Boulnois, Edmund
Bowles, T. Gibson (King's Lynn)
Brassey, Albert
Broadhurst, Henry
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Brookfield, A. Montagu
Brown, Alexander H.
Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
Butcher, John George
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Campbell, James A.
Cannon, Richard Knight
Cavendish, V.C.W. (Derbyshire)
Cawley, Frederick
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (Birm.)
Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Charrington, Spencer
Clarke, Sir Edward (Plymouth)
Coddington, Sir William
Cooke, C. W. Radcliffe (Heref'd)
Cranborne, Viscount
Crean, Eugene
Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
Curzon, Rt. Hn. G. N. (Lancs.)
Dalbiac, Major Philip Hugh
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Dane, Richard M.
Darling, Charles John
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Donelan, Captain A.
Dorington, Sir John Edward
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncombe, Hon. Hubert V.
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir William Hart
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton

Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Alfred (Glamorgan, E.)
Thorburn, Walter
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
Wallace, Robert (Perth)
Walrond, Sir William Hood
Wedderburn, Sir William
Weir, James Galloway
Whiteley, George (Stockport)
Whiteley, H. (Ashton-under-L.)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Williams, John Carvell (Notts.)
Wilcox, John Archibald

Wilson, Charles Henry (Hull)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, John (Govan)
Wolf, Gustav Wilhelm
Woodall, William
Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (Hudd'rsfld.)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, George
Wyndham-Quin, Major W. H.
Wyvill, Marmaduke D'Arcy
Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE AYES, Mr. Faithfull Begg and Mr. Atherley-Jones.

NOES.

Evans, Samuel T. (Glamorgan)
Evans, Sir Francis H. (South'ton)
Farrell, James P. (Cavan, W.)
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
Fergusson, Rt. Hn. Sir J. (Mnc'r.)
Fisher, William Hayes
Fletcher, Sir Henry
Folkestone, Viscount
Garfit, William
Goschen, Rt. Hn. G. J. (St. G'rg's)
Goschen, George J. (Sussex)
Gunter, Colonel
Hamilton, Rt. Hon. Lord Geo.
Hanbury, Rt. Hon. Robert Wm.
Hanson, Sir Reginald
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir William
Hardy, Laurence
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Charles Seale-
Hoare, Edw. Brodie (Hampstead)
Hobhouse, Henry
Howard, Joseph
Hubbard, Hon. Evelyn
Hutton, Alfred E. (Yorks)
Jessel, Captain Herbert Merton
Joicey, Sir James
Jolliffe, Hon. H. George
Kay-Shuttleworth, Rt. Hon. Sr. U
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
Kenny, William
Knowles, Lees
Knox, Edmund Francis Vesey
Lambert, George
Lees, Sir Elliott (Birkenhead)
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (L'pool.)
Lowther, Rt. Hon. James (Kent)
Lloyd, Archie Kirkman
Macartney, W. G. Ellison
Maclean, James Mackenzie
McArthur, William
McCalmont, Maj.-Gn. (Ant'm.N)
McEwan, William
McHugh, E. (Armagh, S.)
McHugh, Patrick A. (Leitrim)
Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, Sir Herbert E.
Mellor, Rt. Hon. J. W. (Yorks.)
Meyses-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Monk, Charles James
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Mowbray, Rt. Hon. Sir John
Mundella, Rt. Hn. Anthony John

Myers, William Henry
Nusse, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, P. J. (Tipperary)
O'Connor, Arthur (Donegal)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
O'Kelly, James
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, Arthur (Darlington)
Pease, Joseph A. (Northumb.)
Pease, Sir Joseph W. (Durham)
Penn, John
Phillipotts, Captain Arthur
Pierpoint, Robert
Pirie, Captain Duncan Vernon
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Provand, Andrew Dryburgh
Quilter, William Cuthbert
Reid, Sir Robert T.
Ridley, Rt. Hon. Sir Matthew W.
Robertson, Edmund (Dundee)
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sidebotham, J. W. (Cheshire)
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanley, Lord (Lanes.)
Stephens, Henry Charles
Stevenson, Francis S.
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
Stock, James Henry
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Sutherland, Sir Thomas
Talbot, John G. (Oxford Univ.)
Tanner, Charles Kearns
Taylor, Francis
Thornton, Percy M.
Usborne, Thomas
Walton, John Lawson
Waring, Col. Thomas
Welby, Lieut.-Col. A. C. E.
Wharton, John Lloyd
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)
Williams, Joseph Powell-(Birm.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson Frederick W. (Norfolk)
Wilson, J. W. (Worc'sh. N.)
Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks.)
Wodehouse, Edmund R. (Bath)
Young, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE NOES, Mr. Labouchere and Colonel Lockwood.

Main question put, and agreed to: and committed to a committee of t  
Bill Read a Second time amid loud cheers, whole House for Monday next.

ANALYSIS OF DIVISION LIST, INCLUDING TELLERS AND OFFICIAL PAIRS

For the Bill				Against the Bill.			
Conservatives	...	...	120	Conservatives	...	...	91
Liberals	...	...	71	Liberals	...	...	38
Liberal Unionists	...	...	23	Liberal Unionists	...	...	20
Nationalists	...	...	18	Nationalists	...	...	12
			<hr/> 232				<hr/> 161

Majority 71.

# Women's Suffrage in

## "The Queen's Year"

BY

MRS. CARMICHAEL STOPES

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## The Women's Suffrage Bill in the "Queen's Year."

By MRS. STOPES.

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revised and expanded.]

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AFTER years of brave effort, and incalculable expenditure of energy, time and money, life itself even, the Women Suffragists at last have had a chance. Fortune unexpectedly smiled into the ballot-box, and the women's friends drew a good place. But they could hardly hope for a Wednesday before April. Again fortune proved kind. The supporters of another Bill were not ready, and abandoned their earlier day. Mr. Faithfull Begg, knowing that he and his followers were "never unprepared," eagerly seized it. Thus it was that the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women), was set down for the first place on the first Wednesday of February, to the surprise of all. The post office must have earned a good many coppers over the literature distributed. Letters, appointments, enquiries, pamphlets, volumes, sent by women resident in the Constituencies to their (*should be*) members, sent by women to their acquaintances in the House, sent by societies to all the members. One gentleman at least, was known to say, "I fear I *must* vote for the women, I have had so many letters about it."

A large number of women went early to the Central Hall, and sent in their cards to various members. They wished not only to know how matters progressed, but to give moral support to their friends, and the stimulus of their watchfulness. "Ah!" said one lady to a hesitating member, "We know how you voted last time, we have long memories for our

friends and our opponents." Fragments of suggestive conversation fell on our ears as we passed. "What prospects do you think we have this time?" "Don't you think we are safe?" "Not anything like safe. I have lost hope in man, but I work, and trust in God. I have laboured for thirty years over this, and we are no further forward than we were in 1870." "If it does not pass now we must hold together the longer," said a Radical leader to a Primrose dame, alluding to the agreement that has been come to among many women's political associations, of sinking all party differences, and working only for the men who will vote for women. "Ah," said a third lady, standing near, "longer and stronger, and we must find new workers. There must be more of us. Numbers appeal to ordinary masculine imaginations more than questions of right and justice." And through the soft hum came the sharp voices of the policemen, "Stand on one side, ladies!" "Stand further back!" They rather seemed to forget that though we were neither members nor electors, we were "visitors to members." When my member appeared, he said, surprised, "What a lot of women!" "There are more round the corner," said I, and then added, "The last time I saw you, you told me that no government could encourage this Bill, because any change in the electorate would force on a dissolution. I have been told this is not the case?" "Yes," he replied, "I find that I was mistaken."

Ah! that ladies' gallery! Object-lesson of the proportion of attention women's interests receive from male members selected on mere male votes. Badly lit, badly ventilated, uncomfortable space for three dozen women, behind a screen like a hareem, with great placards of "Silence," and "No demonstration allowed here," while through the screen we see hundreds of men in space and air and light, and allowed to "make demonstrations."

The Bill is not a perfect Bill by any means, but it has the merit of brevity. "Every woman who is the inhabitant, occupier or owner or tenant of any dwelling-house, tenement, or building within the borough or county, where such occupation exists, shall be entitled to be registered as a voter in the list of voters for such borough or county in which she is so qualified as aforesaid, and when registered to vote for a

member or members to serve in Parliament, provided always that such woman is not subject to any legal incapacity which would disqualify a male voter."

Personally, I would have preferred that it should have been moved that Lord Brougham's Bill for the shortening of the language of the Acts of Parliament should be applied to all Registration Bills. That determines that the "word man shall always include women, unless where otherwise expressly stated."

But we must sink all private "amendments" and support the *principle*. Mr. Faithfull Begg, the member for Glasgow St. Rollox, moved the second reading in his maiden speech—an honest manly speech in which he tried to remove the question from the sphere of party politics, though he said it would be a lasting credit to any party which should pass such a Bill. It was intended merely to establish the principle that sex in itself should not disqualify women. If the qualification was a property one, some women had property, and it was a principle of the Constitution that taxation and representation should go together. If the tests were intellectual, women could hold their own; and if it were a question of good behaviour, women were far ahead of men, as criminal statistics prove. There was no valid argument against the Bill, objections there were, born of prejudice or sentiment, but no logical or just argument against it.

Mr. Atherley Jones supported the Bill by pointing out that the question had made substantial progress of late in public opinion. It had passed from the sphere of ridicule into that of practical politics. He showed the fallacy in the grotesque argument, that because women did not fight they should not vote. How many men in the House were willing to bear arms? Opponents said that women were indifferent to the franchise; were agricultural labourers more ardent before the franchise was extended to them? Women had not the opportunity of expressing their opinion that men had, but there were many petitions always being presented. Already women were allowed to vote in local elections without injury to themselves or others. There were two millions of women in factories, whose action was hampered by trade unions among male voters. He believed the women's franchise

would raise, morally, intellectually and politically, the position of women in the country.

Mr. Radcliffe Cooke moved rejection of the Bill, first, because there was no demand for it; and second, if there were a demand for it, it would be unjust to grant it. In his discursive speech he stated that Women's Suffrage societies were short of funds, and therefore women should not have their request. Being called to order, he wound up by saying that "all that enabled this country to be a social and civilized community was made and executed by men, and therefore it ought to be governed by men." He forgot, as of no account, the mothers that bore the nation, the sisters that blessed it, and the Queen that governed it, through whose reign society and civilisation had advanced more rapidly than it ever had done under the hands of a male sovereign. One good already has come out of his foolish speech, it has brought many new subscribers to the Suffrage societies and doubled the subscriptions of others.

And then came the speech of Mr. Labouchere, not dull like Mr. Radcliffe Cooke's, but sparkling only on account of its shallowness. He twitted Mr. Faithfull Begg for supporting such a Liberal Bill, seeing that his countryman John Knox had written against "The monstrous regiment of women!" Mr. Labouchere did not seem to know that the book was written against Mary, but only came out in time to face Elizabeth, who soon brought John Knox to his knees, and would not accept his apologies and explanations. Neither did he seem to know that *all* his objections were answered 338 years ago, by John Aylmer, former tutor to Lady Jane Grey. He was made Bishop of London for his work: "An Harborowe for faithful and trewe subjectes against the late blown blaste concerning the government of women, wherin be confuted all such reasons as a stranger of late made in that behalfe, with a brief exhortation to obedience. 26th Aprill, 1559." A book worth reading to-day.

Ungraciously criticising the text of the short Bill, Mr. Labouchere stated that grammar was the same for men as for women. We women have not found it so. "Inhabitant," "occupier," "owner," or "tenant" have been parsed as "common gender" when taxes were demanded; and "mas-

culine gender," when the Franchise was to be conferred. That, to say the least of it, is not grammatical. Mr. Labouchere had always found women incapable of argument. Strange to say, they have generally found him so. Probably they do not start from the same logical and ethical fundamentals. Neither had he found women capable of understanding a plain answer to a question. Certainly not, when the answer was "No." He said some other funny things that made members laugh. It is always so easy to make men laugh about women. They do not take them seriously. "Women on the executive" seemed irresistibly comic. But Mr. Labouchere may remember what happened when a woman put herself on the executive among the wounded soldiers in the Crimea?

He was satirical about a "Lady of the Admiralty." He need not; if he had known more history he would have remembered that there are few offices in the country, (not dependent on University training), that have not been held at some time or other by women, ever since the Conquest. The Governor of the Isle of Wight is a woman to-day; and they have been Governors of Royal Castles and Jails, High Sheriffs, High Chamberlains, High Constables, High Stewards, Marshals, Royal Champions, even though in the four latter cases they exercised the offices by proxy. And it is only their right to a proxy that is contested to-day by hundreds and thousands of women. He also wandered off into personalties. The last time he discussed the subject he said he would as soon give the vote to rabbits as to women. Now he would raise Englishwomen of to-day to the status of women in Greece and Rome. He added, inconsequentially, that he did not believe the members wanted the Bill, and that if the voting were done by ballot, he was sure there would not be twenty supporters, a very uncomplimentary remark on the principles of members. And thus this member, who at his public dinner in the same evening, posed as the unveiler of humbug, and the opponent of injustice, appeared in his true colours, as an exponent of humbug, and a supporter of injustice.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson spoke on the right side, and suggested that if the members wanted to commemorate this year of the Queen's reign, nothing would be more suitable and graceful,

than the permanent monument of statesmanship and justice, the Enfranchisement of Women.

Colonel Waring argued against the Bill on the grounds that some women did not want the vote, and therefore those who do should not get it, about as reasonable an argument as to say that because some women were too delicate or too lazy to risk exercise, the healthy ones should not go out for a walk.

Mr. Wyndham, in support of women, showed the fallacies in Mr. Labouchere's speech, and suggested that his heat rose from the doubts of his continued representative existence, were women to be included in the electorate.

Talleyrand and Rousseau based their arguments against female suffrage, only on prescription. But Talleyrand himself, the honourable member might have known, said that "to see one half of the human race excluded by the other from all participation in Government, is a political phenomenon, that on abstract principles it is impossible to explain."

Sir J. B. Simeon's terror was that women, being in a majority, would swamp the views of men, would get into Parliament, and bring the country to perdition.

Mr. Jebb, of Cambridge University, pointed out that women needed the Suffrage to secure just legislation for themselves. He objected to the argument that women should not have the Suffrage because more emotional. He had found them more practical than men. He supported the Bill not only because it was just, but because it was expedient.

After hearing these speakers for and against, Sir William Harcourt felt that he must give his reason for voting, not only against this Bill, but against the general principle of Women's Suffrage. There is a real and solid difference between Local and Imperial questions, and women, he thought, had no right to be interested in the latter. But the strong point he made against the admission of women to the suffrage was, that there was a majority of them, and if manhood suffrage came in, so would womanhood suffrage. The terrors of this state of affairs he tried to picture to the audience, but the central idea seemed to be that the interests of women might be more attended to than those of men. It is true that they will require at first to make up for long arrears of masculine neglect, but men have an easy remedy at hand, by

which they may subvert the feminine majority. They have only to take more care of their constitutions, and live longer in the land, so as to keep up the masculine majority nature provides at birth. Then they could outvote women on any question in which their interests differ, a rare event, if the true meaning of interest is understood.

Mr. Courtney suggested that in this discussion, if we substituted "men" for "women," we would see the full value of the arguments against the Women's Bill. Perhaps the honourable member is not aware that the very cleverest paper on the women's side is one entitled "Latest News from the Planet Venus," which appeared in *Frazer's Magazine*, and was reprinted by the Suffrage Societies. Therein is supposed a Parliament of women discussing the question of the enfranchisement of men. All the old arguments are dished up on the other side; and a stronger one added, that by the introduction of man, the element of physical force would be introduced, so dangerous to calm considerations of justice.

After Mr. Courtney's speech Mr. Faithfull Begg moved the Closure, the division giving a majority of forty-four; division for the second reading having a majority of seventy-one. There were loud cheers in the House, and away down in the Central Hall there was ladylike, but heartfelt applause from the women, who, practically put on their trial, were left out there in the cold. Then there was a stampede for the telegraph office.

The reviews and comments in the daily papers have been chiefly unfavourable; and, as usual, many inveigh against the personal appearance of the ladies who lead the Appeal. The scribblers forget that these women have grown grey in their labours, waiting for justice at the hands of men; and that handsome young girls are rarely "qualified" to be electors.

*The Times* leader is a strange *mélange*. It says, "the strongest argument yet disclosed for entrusting the government of the Empire to the hands of women, is the levity with which a House of Commons chosen by men voted the most sweeping of all constitutional changes." But, severe upon men, it was more severe upon women, and expressed its inimical views to the notion of a nation composed of *men and women*, being treated as if it were so. The writer says, "it

would double the electorate, shift the whole basis of the Constitution, and initiate an experiment for which there is no precedent in the history of mankind." As to the first it would only triflingly increase the electorate until many other "extensions" than the present have been made; it only confirms the basis of the Constitution, which consists of Sovereign, Lords and Commons, the latter of whom, being so numerous, only send up representatives. In the election of these representatives, every one who "resides" or "pays taxes," by the Constitution has a right to vote. The precedents in history may be found if we go back in the history of our own island.

One fact we must always clearly recognise, that every speech and every paper against us, is a new argument *for us*; a new proof that we urgently *need the Franchise*. *Do such men as oppose us represent us?* They could not. We therefore wish to choose those who can.

On Monday night, February 8th, at five minutes before twelve, again fortune was favourable to us. The Bill was sent up to committee, and the day decided for its discussion was June 23rd, the day after the "Queen's day." Let us hope that, to do the Queen honour, even as to Esther of old, her whole proscribed people (or sex), may be set free by the Ahasuerus of British masculine domination, from the schemes of Haman.

Meanwhile we all must work, converse, lecture, educate men and women alike, even the very spirit of our country. And petitions must be sent up, so that those whose spirits refuse to be educated, may succumb, like the unjust judge, to the weariness of the continual coming of the widow that cries for justice.

And if we are now successful, all the labours and tribulations of the past thirty years will not have been suffered in vain, if they only have educaed a wider sympathy between different classes of women, and greater combination between them in their efforts for the public good.

CHARLOTTE CARMICHAEL STOPES.

TEXT OF

B I L L

FOR

tending the Parliamentary Franchise A.D. 1896.  
to Women.

On and after the *passing of this Act* every man who is the inhabitant occupier as owner or tenant of any dwelling-house, tenement, or building within the borough or county where such occupation exists, shall be entitled to be registered as a voter in the list of voters for such borough or county in which she is so qualified as aforesaid, and, when registered, to vote for a member or members to serve in Parliament.

Qualifica-  
tion of  
women  
for parlia-  
mentary  
franchise.

Provided always that such woman is not subject to any legal incapacity which would disqualify a male voter.



TEXT OF

B I L L

FOR

giving the Parliamentary Franchise  
to Women.

and after the passing of this Act every  
person who is the inhabitant occupier as owner or tenant  
of any dwelling-house, tenement, or premises  
within the borough or county where  
population exists shall be entitled to be  
registered as a voter in the list of voters for such  
borough or county in which she is so qualified as  
to be registered, and when registered to vote for a  
member to serve in Parliament.

It shall always be lawful for a woman to be  
registered as a voter in any local authority which would  
be a voter.

YACOB & CO. PRINTERS, WINDSOR.

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FACTS

WOMEN & VOTES

Under the Act of 1902  
the number of women  
registered as voters  
in the various  
boroughs and counties  
of England and Wales  
was as follows:

Table with 2 columns and 10 rows, containing faint data.

## SOME ELECTORAL FACTS.

### ONE HOUSEHOLD IN EVERY EIGHT WITHOUT A VOTE.

There are 866,453 inhabited houses in the United Kingdom which are not on the Parliamentary Register.

As any occupier who is not a woman is entitled to be on the register, whatever the amount of rental, these unregistered houses represent with fair amount of accuracy the women who would be enfranchised by the Bill for extending the Parliamentary Franchise to Women, now before Parliament.

These figures are arrived at in the following manner:—

A Parliamentary Return has been recently issued which shows that there are **6,460,074** electors on the Parliamentary register of the United Kingdom.

The return also shows that there are 7,139,643 inhabited houses in the United Kingdom, that is to say, 679,569 more inhabited houses than electors.

Further the return shows the electors to be distributed in the following manner:—

Occupiers, 88 per cent.

Owners,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

Lodgers, 2 per cent.

Freeholders and other ancient franchises, less than 1 per cent.

University Graduates, rather over  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

If the lodgers and the ancient and university franchise holders are deducted, it will be found that there are 866,453 inhabited houses whose occupiers are not electors.

Ask your Member to support to the utmost the Bill, introduced by Mr. Faithfull Begg, which passed Second Reading by a majority of 71 on February 3rd and is down for Committee on July 7th. That Bill provides for the registration of every woman who is the inhabitant occupier, as owner or tenant of any dwelling house, tenement or building, within the county or borough, and will, therefore, give the vote to these voteless occupiers.

FROM THE BISHOP OF SOUTHWELL AND LADY LAURA RIDDING.

—:o:—

THURGATON PRIORY,  
SOUTHWELL,  
NOTTS.

Dear Mrs. Dowson,

Many thanks for the pamphlet containing the opinions of so many of the Leaders of Religious Thought in England upon the desirability of properly qualified women being granted the Suffrage. They express in better words than I can frame, the opinion I have long held that it is illogical to confer voting powers on women householders for Parish and District Council, and School Board and Board of Guardians Elections; and to withhold them for the Elections of the Parliamentary Representatives of the area where they reside.

All the arguments used in favour of women being allowed to vote and be eligible, for election to School Boards, Boards of Guardians, and Parochial and District Councils, can be urged with equal justice to shew the desirability of giving them votes for Parliamentary Election. Our members of Parliament legislate on matters affecting the interests of vast numbers of women and children. They control Departments of State which deal daily with vital questions affecting their welfare, as for instance in the—

HOME OFFICE:—Concerning Prisons, Factories and Workshops, Reformatory and Industrial Schools, etc.

BOARD OF TRADE:—Concerning Emigrants, etc.

COLONIAL AND FOREIGN OFFICE:—Concerning the position of Englishwomen abroad, in regard to Marriage, Inheritance, Contracts, etc.; and concerning the protection and rights of Native Women and Children, etc.

INDIA OFFICE:—Concerning the position and treatment of Mahomedan and Hindoo women and girls, etc.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD:—Concerning the whole Poor Law Department, Boarded out Children, Canal Boat Population, General Sanitary Laws, etc.

EDUCATION COUNCIL AND SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT:—Concerning Women Teachers, Pupil Teachers, Scholars, Deficient and Deaf, Dumb, Blind, etc., Children Technical Education, Art and Nursing Students, etc.

Besides Legislation for Protection of Lunatics and Minors, Marriage Laws, Criminal Laws, etc.

A glance at these selected Headings shews how nine at least of our Departments of State deal with matters on which the experience and judgment of capable women deserve a hearing; but as things are at present, these women cannot bring their opinions to bear on Members of Parliament as can their male constituents. Women are not likely to wish to press their opinions on Parliament about matters which do not clearly fall within their sphere, any more than they have been found to do on Boards of Guardians. But on matters affecting the welfare of the children, wives and mothers, of England and her Dependencies, they may fairly ask to have opportunity given them for doing what they can to raise the Standard of public opinion and for bringing improved conditions to bear upon the homes and workplaces of the Empire. Forgive this long letter, I hope your meeting will be successful, and that in time people will see the reasonableness of our demand.

Believe me,

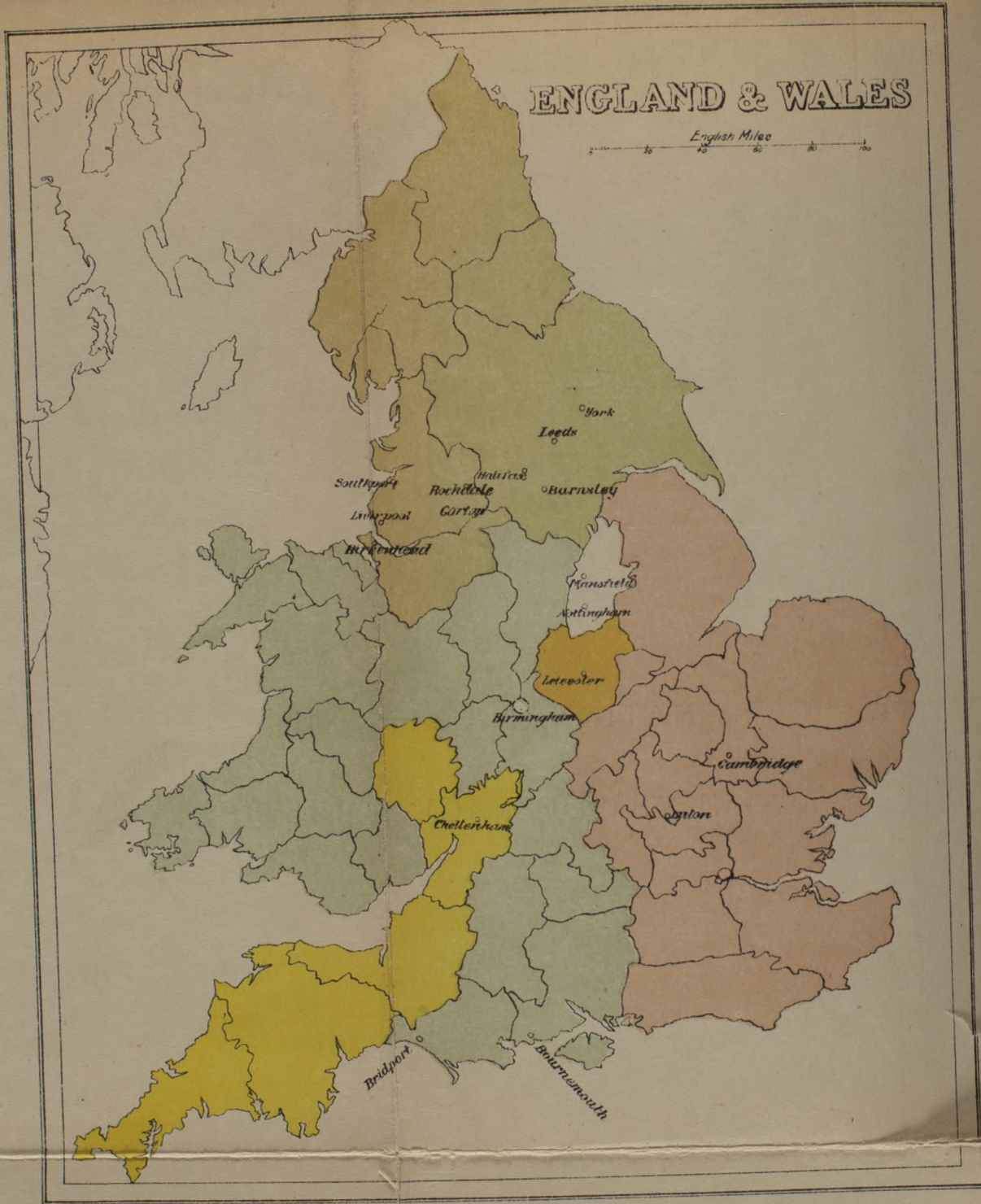
Yours very truly,

LAURA E. RIDDING.

The Bishop is much pressed with work just now, and I fear he may not be able to write to you, but his opinion is, as you know given in that pamphlet.\*

(\* ) Namely, "I am a cordial supporter of proposals to give the Parliamentary Franchise to women householders."

NATIONAL UNION OF  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES.



AREAS of the various Societies.

- = North of England Society for Women's Suffrage. Secretary: Miss Roper, 5, John Dalton Street, Manchester.
- = Central and East of England Society for Women's Suffrage. Secretary: Miss Palliser, 10, Great College Street, London, S.W.
- = Central and Western Society for Women's Suffrage. Secretary: Mrs. Charles Baxter, 39, Victoria Street, London, S.W.
- = Bristol and West of England Society for Women's Suffrage. Office: 69, Park Street, Bristol.
- = Leicester Society.

- Nottinghamshire Nottingham and Mansfield
- Birmingham and the district for 20 miles round Birmingham Society.

The Societies in Leeds, York, Halifax, Liverpool, Wirral, Southport, Rochdale, Gorton, Cambridge, Bridport, Cheltenham, Bournemouth, and Barnsley, undertake work in their own districts, but are in connection with the Society in whose area they are situated.

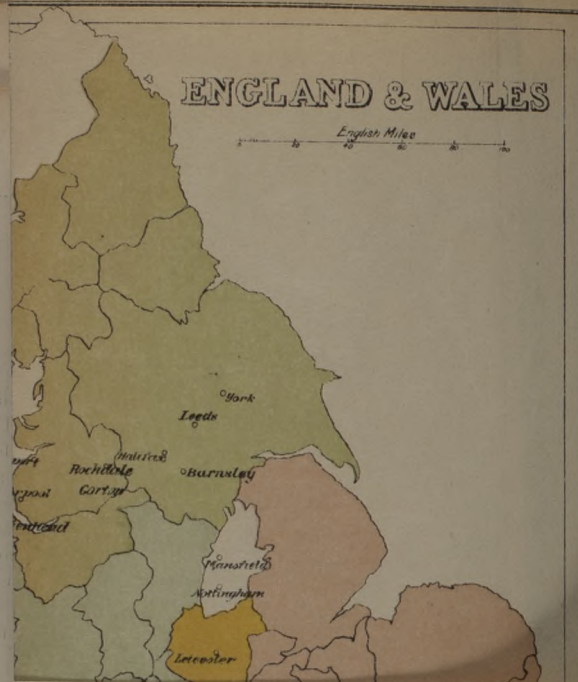
The London constituencies are divided between the Central and East of England Society and the Central and Western Society for Women's Suffrage.

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## National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

WITH a view to the more systematic and combined organisation of the work throughout the country, a National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies has been formed on the lines of the scheme adopted at the Birmingham Conference of 1896, by which England was divided for organising purposes into four large territorial areas, one of which was allotted to each of the four chief Societies.

Since the close of 1895 there has been in existence a representative Committee, consisting of delegates at first from the two Women's Suffrage Societies whose offices are in London, and from the Manchester Society, and at a later date from Edinburgh, Bristol, and other Societies. This Committee was found to be of considerable practical utility in facilitating combined action for Parliamentary work, and in other ways, and it has now taken a more definite and permanent form in the National Union.

The geographical division of work, which forms the basis of the present Union, has led to the modification of the names of several of its constituent Societies, whose titles will in future indicate their special sphere of work. Thus the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage becomes "The Central and East of England Society," the Central National Society becomes the "Central and Western," and the Manchester National becomes the "North of England Society."

It is hoped that this Union will shortly become completely representative of every active non-party Suffrage Society in the United Kingdom.

It will easily be seen that organisation on so extensive a scale must involve extended work in each area, and therefore increased expenditure, and the Committee of the Central and Western Society earnestly hope that the friends of the movement will give them that liberal support which alone can enable them to carry out such an enterprise successfully in the large district which they have undertaken.

M. M. RUSSELL COOKE, *Treasurer.*  
MARIE LOUISE BAXTER, *Secretary.*

CENTRAL AND WESTERN SOCIETY  
FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,  
39, VICTORIA STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

Nov., 1897.