

APPEAL IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

persons" had been greatly reduced by Lord Brougham's  
that so that the choice of the word "person" had of itself the  
smaller significance in the question of including women. The  
one expression like the other needs to be read in the light of  
the subject matter. The case of the appellants has as I have  
said, the word "person" (in the Act of 1868) for its basis, but  
it is necessary to remember that it is only by virtue of an ordinance  
of the University Commissioners under an Act of 1880 (having  
to do with academic as distinguished from political matters)  
that women were made eligible for graduation, and that were  
introduced into the university councils. Now it must be allowed  
that if Parliament has by this means conferred the franchise  
on women it has taken the most roundabout way to do it. Which  
view be taken of the merits of the question whether women  
should vote for members of Parliament, it is at least a grave  
and important question for Parliament to decide. This question  
according to the theory of this appeal, Parliament devolved on  
a Royal Commission about the details of academic affairs, which  
had power moreover to provide graduation (and by consequence  
the franchise) for women in one university or in all according  
to its absolute discretion. It is difficult to ascribe such proceed-  
ings to Parliament and at the same time retain the conventional  
respect for our Constitution. I have only to add that I have  
not in this judgment relied on the work about legal incapacity,  
it is not that I do not consider the argument on them to be  
legitimate, but I prefer broader grounds and I think that a  
judgment is wholesome and of good example which puts forward  
subject matter and fundamental constitutional law as guides  
of construction never to be neglected in favour of verbal con-

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# Old Fogeys and Old Bogeys

A Speech delivered at Queen's Hall  
June 7, 1909.

BY  
ISRAEL ZANGWILL



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**National Women's Social  
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The Women's Social and Political Union are NOT asking for a vote for every woman, but simply that sex shall cease to be a disqualification for the franchise.

At present men who pay rates and taxes, who are owners, occupiers, lodgers, or have the service or university franchise, possess the Parliamentary vote. The Women's Social and Political Union claim that women who fulfil the same conditions shall also enjoy the franchise. It is estimated that when this claim has been conceded about a million-and-a-quarter women will possess the vote, in addition to the seven-and-a-half million men who are at present enfranchised.

The Women's Social and Political Union claim that a simple measure, giving the vote to women on these terms, shall be passed immediately.

**CONSTITUTION.**

**Objects.**—To secure for Women the Parliamentary Vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the power thus obtained to establish equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

**Methods.**—The objects of the Union shall be promoted by—

1. Action entirely independent of all political parties.
2. Opposition to whatever Government is in power until such time as the franchise is granted.
3. Participation in Parliamentary Elections in opposition to the Government candidate and independently of all other candidates.
4. Vigorous agitation upon lines justified by the position of outlawry to which women are at present condemned.
5. The organising of women all over the country to enable them to give adequate expression to their desire for political freedom.
6. Education of public opinion by all the usual methods such as public meetings, demonstrations, debates, distribution of literature, newspaper correspondence and deputations to public representatives.

**Membership.**—Women of all shades of political opinion who approve the objects and methods of the Union, and who are prepared to act independently of party, are eligible for membership. It must be clearly understood that no member of the Union shall support the candidate of any political party in Parliamentary elections until Women have obtained the Parliamentary Vote. The entrance fee is One Shilling.

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**OLD FOGEYS AND OLD BOGEYS**

BY

**ISRAEL ZANGWILL.**

(Speech Delivered at Queen's Hall, June 7th, 1909.)

IT is told of a little girl who had been brought up in a newly built town in a remote Western State of America that when she was taken to New York and saw for the first time the crowded horse-cars outside the mighty station of the Pennsylvania Railway, she cried out, "How cruel! They are using horses to drag the street cars! How barbarous!" This little girl had never seen anything but electric cars. Her town, being brand-new, had jumped over this antiquated absurdity of horse-traction.

The position of women offers an exact parallel. In strange, raw regions of America or the Antipodes the march of civilisation has jumped the political disabilities of women, and women from New Zealand, who have never known the want of a vote, come over here—to the capital of the Empire—and cry, "Englishwomen mustn't vote! How barbarous!" The other day, in a London drawing-room, everybody was saying how the vote would degrade and unsex women. A pretty young Englishwoman, exquisitely dressed, stood shyly by, taking no part in the discussion. Presently her opinion was asked. "Well, you see," she said, blushing delicately, and in a soft, musical voice, "I have always had a vote. I used to live in Melbourne."

Ladies and gentlemen, the time is fast coming—coming at motor speed—when in no civilised country will be seen cars without electricity or women without votes. The labours of so many brave and brilliant women for over half a century, culminating in the



splendid spurt in our own day, are about to receive the guerdon of victory, and from England the spirit of sex equality will spread all the world over, and England will once again recover her place as the Mother of Liberty.

Beside all these brave and brilliant women who are ready to go through fire and water for their cause, the mere man who is in favour of Women's Suffrage cuts, I am afraid, but a poor figure. Indeed, we poor male sympathisers have been described as "men of putty seduced by women of brass." Who invented this delightful description I know not; the suffragette who reported it to me was too shocked even to mention the author's name in her letter, but she begged me to protest publicly against it. I tried to soothe her by saying that *I* didn't mind, and that this was the sort of thing one must expect in politics, whereupon she replied that I was no gentleman. You will see, therefore, that my conviction that women should have votes is not based upon any superstition that women are invariably reasonable. But then, with our great opponent Lord Cromer, I quote Mrs. Poyser: "God Almighty made them to match the men."

### The Absurdity of the Situation.

It is indeed fortunate for us men that no test of intelligence—short of idiocy—bars us from the polling booth, and that we can even commit crimes of every degree without forfeiting our superiority to Mrs. Humphry Ward. Even a man of putty may have a vote. It is only when we men ask ourselves seriously *why* we have votes that the full absurdity of women *not* having them begins to break upon us. We are told—it is the great, crushing argument—women can't have votes because they can't fight for their country. But can *I* fight for it? Why, my only chance of shooting an enemy would be by aiming at something else. And yet I have four votes. We are told that women are incapable of understanding the affairs of State. But do *I* understand them? Does Mr. Asquith? Not according to Mr. Balfour. Does Mr. Balfour? Not according to Mr. Asquith. We are told that Female Suffrage would bring discord between husband and wife. Well, but I had a vote long before I had a wife. This particular argument always reminds me of what Josephus tells us about that old Jewish sect, the Essenes. The Essenes, says Josephus, do not marry "because marriage gives the handle to domestic quarrels."

This bogey of domestic discord is the very oldest of the old bogeys with which the old fogeys are perpetually terrifying themselves. Yet a distinguished New Zealand visitor has just been telling us that in his country the women of the family generally

vote with the man, with the result that the married man gets a larger vote than the mere irresponsible bachelor. This is just as it should be, and, indeed, reveals to us what an injustice it is over here that the settled man with a family should have no more voting power than the bachelor butterfly. In one point only our New Zealand visitor betrays the old Adam. He did not say that the women vote with the man; but with the head of the house. I must confess I know very few men who are the head of the house. For if woman's place is indeed the home, it cannot be man's place too. My observation of life leads me to the conviction that the partner who bears the children and does the housekeeping is really the predominant partner, so far as the house is concerned, and that man's true place in the home built up by women is more that of a paying guest than of a lord and master.

### The Final Argument.

Really, the more I think of it, the less I understand *where* my political superiority over the other sex comes in. Why have I four votes and no woman any? It can't be brains—there is Mrs. Humphry Ward. It can't be strength—there is the female Samson in the music-halls. It can't be courage—there is the lady lion-tamer, or Mrs. Despard. It can't be money—there was the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. A wild suspicion dawns upon me. Can it be beauty? I see I need say no more. We must fall back on the grand reason given by Mr. Austen Chamberlain at the Woman's Anti-Suffrage meeting in this hall, and repeated by Lord Cromer at that furtive dinner of the Men's Anti-Suffrage League: "It is because men are men and women are women."

"Because men are men and women are women." If this is what the opponents of Female Suffrage are reduced to—and this is what it always comes to in the last analysis—no wonder that the late Lord Salisbury said, "I know no argument against it." There *is* no argument against it; there is only a certain instinct against it due to centuries of custom, but the effort to find reasons for this instinct lands otherwise sensible people in a logic that has never been heard outside "Alice in Wonderland." Austen in Blunderland actually wound up his impassioned speech by urging the women of England to protest against a movement that would impose on them a burden unsuited to their sex. *Impose?* Why, who is going to drag them to the poll? Indeed, if, as Mrs. Humphry Ward contends, the overwhelming majority of women object to Female Suffrage, what finer way is there of checkmating the agitation than by granting women the vote? Parliament gives it to them; the overwhelming majority refuses to use it, and the Suffragettes are squashed. Each polling booth will show a few



forlorn female figures, but the great, sound body of British womanhood will remain safely barricaded at home. Seriously, was there ever anything in Gilbert and Sullivan more paradoxical than the Woman's Anti-Suffrage movement—this rush of women into politics to declare that politics is the ruin of womanhood? Why Mrs. Humphry Ward should drag these shrinking creatures into the hurly-burly of the platform, unsexing and degrading them, when there is such a short way with the Suffragettes, passes my comprehension. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, too, forgets another reason why it is impossible to *impose* the burden of a vote on any woman who objects to it. The law already sees to that. For a woman who, being given a vote, should refuse to use it, would be an idiot, and, as I have already pointed out, idiots are *debarred* from voting.

### Political Support.

And if most women won't use their vote, what becomes of that other bogey—that, since there are a million and a-quarter more women than men, England will come under Petticoat Government? Not, of course, that there *is* such a preponderance of women. I was taken in by this bogey myself once, so far as to point out that this vast predominance only showed more acutely the injustice of giving them *no* representation. But the fact is there are *not* a million and a-quarter more women than men. When I came to look at the statistics for myself, I found that they concern, not men and women, but males and females. In the female million and a quarter are included schoolgirls and children and babies, not to mention lunatics and convicts, the elimination of whom would largely reduce the supposed surplus of voting power. Only those females over twenty-one and not otherwise disqualified would be able to vote even under Adult Suffrage, and the idea that they would all cast their votes on the same side so as to dominate the men (who would similarly all cast their votes on the other side) is perhaps the most childish of all the bogeys conjured up against Female Suffrage.

“I know of no argument against it,” said Lord Salisbury. And his successor in the Premiership, Mr. Balfour, a man who cannot often be accused of definite opinions, pronounced in its favour as far back as 1891. Mr. Balfour's successor, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, was so violently in sympathy that he actually instigated the militant methods for the conversion of his Cabinet. “Make yourselves a nuisance,” he told the ladies' deputation, and they obeyed him like lambs. How is it, then, that with three successive Prime Ministers in favour of a reform whose righteousness was demonstrated by John Stuart Mill fifty years ago, Mr. Asquith

remains so antediluvian? Fortunately, even in *his* Cabinet there are several Liberals, and the very Home Secretary who treats the Suffragettes as criminals for drawing attention to their demand, has actually signed a declaration in favour of it. Mr. Lloyd George is likewise on the list of signatories, which further includes most of the greatest names in English thought. The intellect of England goes almost solid for Women's Suffrage.

Against this phalanx of the intellectuals the rearguard of reaction has been hastily brought up—men like Lord Cromer and Lord Curzon and Lord Milner. This trio is significant. A new danger has crept into British politics. The great pro-Consuls of Empire, men who have governed dusky Asiatic or African races, come back here with their autocratic notions and their disdain of the masses, and infect our British freedom with their unconstitutional outlook. This is one of the perils of Empire when it is not an Empire of freemen and equals. These great pro-Consuls, despite their brilliant record abroad, may easily become a force for evil at home. Lord Cromer is the chief spokesman of the Anti-Suffragists, but Lord Cromer has been away in Egypt for a generation, not spoiling but improving the Egyptians: spoiling only himself. He has lost touch with the movement of Western civilisation; he is ignorant of the new and splendid breed of women—the noble, free womanhood that has, happily, been growing up in these islands, and that is determined to do battle against the social evils which men have encouraged, or tolerated, or failed to sweep away. Lord Cromer's attitude is the more pitiable since, in his great book on Egypt, he points out that the test of a nation's civilisation is the position of its women. He comes here and talks of Englishwomen being sullied by being dragged from the drawing-room. He forgets that Egyptian women are sullied by being dragged *into* the drawing-room. *They* have to stay in the harem.

I know nothing more demoralising in English thought than the suggestion of the *Times*, so eagerly adopted by the Anti-Suffrage League, that to give our women a vote would undermine our prestige and power in our Oriental Empire, whose millions of dusky subjects would feel outraged to be ruled by women. If this is the price of Empire—to be slaves to our own subjects, to be dragged down to *their* ethical level—well may we ask ourselves the great question: What shall it profit a nation to gain the whole world and lose its own soul?

Lord Cromer tells us that the grant of votes to women would produce a social revolution. But the revolution has already happened. Lord Cromer reminds me of Noah's bear, which, being a hibernating animal, was carried into the ark asleep, and only woke up in the middle of the Deluge to growl that the sky



portended rain. The Deluge, with which Lord Cromer gloomily menaces us, is already half over; it has already swept away half the landmarks of the harem stage of civilisation.

And the humour of the situation is that no one has done more to lead women out of the drawing-room and into politics than the chief Anti-Suffragists. Only a few weeks ago we witnessed a great rally of the Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association, and on the petticoated platform, amid many other masculine enemies of women's emancipation, was Mr. Austen Chamberlain, dragging duchesses from their homes and fostering domestic disagreement with their dukes—for there *are* Free Trade dukes. This association, mark you, occupies itself with those high Imperial affairs which, according to Mrs. Humphry Ward, are beyond woman's brain. And what does Mr. Balfour tell this great union of women? He tells it: "One of the reasons why I so greatly value the co-operation you are giving to this cause of Tariff Reform is that *you* regard it from the national point of view, and still more from the Imperial point of view." And the same evening, on the other side of politics, the Liberal Social Council, a body entirely worked by women, foregathered under the auspices of nearly all the Cabinet, including Mrs. Asquith, while Miss Haldane seconded the motion of the day. And a few days earlier the Women's Navy League, representing both sides of politics, met to consider the high Imperial subject of naval efficiency. And then Lord Cromer talks of the vote causing a social revolution, and Lord Curzon babbles that the place of women is the home. Have the Old Fogeys, then, *no* sense of humour?

No, my dear Old Fogeys, if you really wish to go back to the old ideal, then make a counter-revolution, like the Old Turks. Take women away from the coal-pit and the factory; dissolve their trade unions; send them back to their little ones; dismiss them from the post-offices and the shops; banish them from their municipal positions, from your county councils and borough councils and parish councils and Royal Commissions, from your school boards, your boards of guardians, and your education committees; drive them out of Girton and Newnham; forbid them to work in your hospitals and to exhibit in your picture galleries; expel them from your Navy Leagues and your Primrose Leagues, your National Service Leagues and your Liberal Federations and your Tariff Reform Leagues; stop them from canvassing at your elections; put back the movement of evolution and the march of civilisation, and then you may begin to talk of woman's place being the home. But if you will not, or cannot, do this, then neither can you deny our noble professional women the dignity of a vote, nor our sweated factory women its protection. The Suffrage is not the begetter and forerunner of an impending revolu-

tion, but the seal and consecration of a revolution that has already succeeded.

And what is this vote that carries with it so much danger? What is this politics whose touch is so pestiferous? Woman, turning from the foolish fashion papers, is to study real questions; she is to be lured from the clubs where she plays bridge to the stimulating atmosphere of public meetings, from the school for scandal to the school for study. Our absurd party system makes politics sound like the prize ring. In reality, politics has more to do with the nursery. A woman studying politics—studying, that is, the best measures for the health of the State—is only attending, in a larger spirit, to her home and her children.

Cynics and preachers agree that women are unbalanced and hysterical, fond of luxury and finery, swayed by persons instead of by principles, yet we refuse them the one thing that may rationalise and spiritualise them. A modern Greek poet recently sent me his poems (fortunately there was a French translation). They were all about woman—woman the monstrous, voluptuous, fitful, inconsequent, Satanic sphinx, at once man's delight and his destruction. I told him that was not how women appeared to us in England, and he replied that he had noticed it himself with surprise. These queer Cleopatras are, in fact, a morbid product of the hothouse theory of womanhood. The cure for them is fresh air and Female Suffrage.

### The Statesman and the Politician.

"Yes, we will grant Female Suffrage," says Mr. Haldane, "as soon as the will of the people declares for it. I have always voted for Female Suffrage myself." What a strange remark for a man who has hitherto shown more signs of being a statesman than a politician. A statesman leads; it is only a politician who is led. That was not the way Richard Cobden brought Free Trade to England. That is not the way Joseph Chamberlain has tried to bring back Protection. Nay, on the very evening that Mr. Haldane made his time-serving remark, Mr. Winston Churchill, speaking in Manchester, announced the intention of the Government to promote compulsory insurance against unemployment. This policy, he said, was a new departure, and involved an element of compulsion and regulation which was unusual in happy-go-lucky English life, but he would work for such a policy because he knew no other way by which the stream of preventable misery could be cut off, and he would try to carry it through, even if it were a little unpopular at first, and he would be willing to pay the forfeit of exclusion from power in order to carry it through. That is an



utterance which puts Mr. Haldane's utterance to shame. A man who has always voted for Female Suffrage must use his power in the Cabinet to carry it through.

"I know of no argument against it," said Lord Salisbury; and I, who have heard every argument that the champions of stagnation have been able to scrape together since, even under the spur of their impending defeat, I can only repeat with Lord Salisbury: "I know of no argument against it." One-half of the so-called arguments may be brushed aside at the very start. They are the arguments involving in this or that shape the idea that Female Suffrage would lead to an increase in the illiterate vote and to mob rule. These arguments would prove, not that the vote should not be given to women, but that it should be taken away from the majority of men. These are the old, defeated arguments of 1832, the arguments against every Reform Bill before and since. These are the old *male* bogeys dressed up again in female clothes. One imagined they had been finally laid to rest in historical museums in 1867, when it was the Conservative and not the Liberal party that extended the franchise to the working man and the lodger. But, no; as the Old Turks continue their subtle, sinuous opposition against the Young Turks, so the Old Fogeys with their Old Bogeys seize the chance of vamping them up afresh. "The results will be disastrous," says Lord Cromer. "You may as well put up the shutters of the British Empire," says Lord Curzon. Who can fail to be reminded of the old Duke of Wellington before the Reform Bill of 1832? Yet, despite the Iron Duke, government by the people is such a success—with all its shortcomings it is so superior to government by peers or princes—that the demand for it is spreading like wildfire among races of every creed and colour. There is not a newspaper in Europe but supports the Young Turks. The very Czar of Russia orders the Shah of Persia to consent to a constitution. And do you suppose this movement for constitutional representation is going to stop short at that most subject of all subject races—the race of women? No; the movement for Female Suffrage is only one wave of a universal agitation. And therein lies the certainty of its success.

The reasons why representative government is in such demand are not far to seek. I see, indeed, that the other day Mr. Balfour, presiding over a philosophical lecture by Professor Masterman, concurred with him in the view that no Hobbes or Locke had yet appeared to explain the philosophic basis of modern democracy, into which the world had drifted without precisely knowing why. But I venture to think it requires no great philosopher to explain it. The ideal ruler should be all-knowing, so as to be aware of all social facts; all-wise, so as to understand how to better them; and all-good, so as to wish to do so. Such a combination cannot

be found on earth in any man, be he King or Pope, nor even in any group, be it noble or plebeian, but the nearest approximation to it lies in the whole people. Nature has confined political wisdom to no class, and by allowing every class to rise to leadership—a John Burns or a Lord Salisbury—we secure the best talent in the country. By allowing every class to be represented in Parliament we provide a network for collecting all possible knowledge of social needs, and we obtain a guarantee against legislation in the interests of any one class. Democracy is thus aristocracy (or government by the best) equipped with knowledge and armed against injustice. And if it is not *all-wise*, *all-knowing*, and *all-good*, it compensates for its inferiority to the ideal autocrat by promoting a healthy spiritual and educational activity among the ruled, instead of turning them into perfectly governed puppets.

If only for the spiritual profit of this activity Women's Suffrage would be desirable. But it is desirable also on material grounds. Man as a legislator for women may be all-wise and all-good; he cannot be all-knowing. Have not generations of men confessed or complained that they couldn't understand woman? And yet they have coolly gone on legislating for her. Even when the legislators have been chivalrous they have not been competent, and when they have protected their own interests at her expense—as in France—they have sullied their statute-books with abominable facilitations of cowardly immorality.

### The Real Foundation of Society.

And then comes the *Spectator*—England's great Christian organ—and tells us that all this is right and proper because women have no power to enforce their wills, and the foundation of society is brute force. The trouble with the *Spectator* is that it does not *spectate*. It is as blind to the real structure of society as it is to the real position and character of modern womanhood. I deny that society is held together by force. Society is held together by love. For what power, pray, has the male half of the population to enforce its will upon the female half? None at all. True, in theory, men can turn their guns on their mothers, sisters, and wives, but only in theory. In practice not only would they never wage such war, but, carried to its bitter end, it would, in exterminating the female sex, exterminate their own as well. And women have exactly as much compulsive power over men as men have over women—that is, none at all. Women, too, in theory, could exterminate mankind by simply ceasing to have children. But in dealing with a real issue like Female Suffrage, the bogey of a sex-war is too fantastic for consideration. Force must be dismissed altogether from both sides of the equation. No social



aggregate is held together by force. It is the mutual sympathy of its atoms that makes them cohere into a group. Even the Anti-Suffragists are held together by the sympathy of stupidity. Force is only necessary when hostile atoms—whether from within or without—try to destroy your group. Force may be the preservation of society; it cannot possibly be the foundation. And to this force that makes for the self-conservation of society the male and female atoms contribute equally.

“Nonsense!” shriek the *Times* and the *Spectator*. “Women contribute nothing to the State’s safety. They cannot be soldiers or sailors.” What a shallow view! As if the stability and security of a country rested solely upon its fighters! To imagine that our safety depends only on the man at the front is as crude as to imagine it rests on the dead piece of iron called a gun. And as important as the man behind the gun is the country behind the man—the country, with its resources and its *morale*—ay, and the woman behind the country, the woman who is the source and replenisher of its life. We cry out that without more Dreadnoughts the country must go under. But who pays for the Dreadnoughts? The common labours and sacrifices of the men and women who sit at home weaving the daily fabric of the Empire. A million soldiers and sailors will not save a country if it cannot equip or provision them, or if it lacks the temper to struggle and endure. The wars of Sparta were waged as much by the Spartan mothers, who told their sons to return with their shields or on them, as by the sons themselves. Men at least may see the glory and glitter of the battle, enjoy the noise of the captains and the shouting; but the mother, who has already risked her life to bear her soldier son, must endure a longer agony when he fades from her vision to the sound of the drums and the trumpets.

### The Hidden Workers.

Deep down in every Dreadnought, far from the panoply and pageantry of war, far from the flags and the guns, is a stokehole, where grimy, perspiring figures for ever shovel coal on blazing furnaces. Above may be the roar and splendour of battle; they must go on shovelling coal. This is the centre of the ship’s life, without which your Dreadnought would drift and flounder at the foe’s mercy. Yet who ever thinks of the stokers? Not for them the thrill of the combat; theirs but to shovel coal, though shells shatter the bunkers around them, though they go down with the ship like rats in a cage. Not altogether unlike theirs is the part played by women in the protection and conservation of the State.

In the actual fighting they may take no part; but because their work is not on the surface, because, unseen, they feed the fires of life, they are treated as clinging parasites, creatures who contribute nothing to the State’s stability.

This barbaric blindness must cease. There is a division of functions. Who denies it? “Men are men and women are women.” But greater than the sex difference is the human oneness. Men and women are alike citizens of the State, alike contributors to its strength and security, and alike entitled to a voice in its destinies and their own.



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# TALKED OUT!

BY

ISRAEL ZANGWILL.

(Being a Verbatim Report of the Speech at Exeter Hall,  
March 8, 1907)

PUBLISHED BY THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE,  
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**NAME.**—The Women's Freedom League.

**OBJECTS.**—To secure for Women the Parliamentary Vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the power thus obtained to establish equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

**METHODS.**—The objects of the League shall be promoted by—

1. Action entirely independent of all political parties.
2. Opposition to whatever Government is in power until such time as the franchise is granted.
3. Participation in Parliamentary Elections; at By-elections in opposition to the Government candidate and independently of all other candidates.
4. Vigorous agitation upon lines justified by the position of outlawry to which women are at present condemned.
5. The organizing of women all over the country to enable them to give adequate expression to their desire for political freedom.
6. Education of public opinion by all the usual methods, such as public meetings, demonstrations, debates, distribution of literature, newspaper correspondence, and deputations to public representatives and other bodies and their members.

**MEMBERSHIP.**—Women of all shades of political opinion who approve the objects and methods of the League, and who are prepared to act independently of party, are eligible for membership. All members must approve, though they need not actually participate in, militant action.

## TALKED OUT!

BY

ISRAEL ZANGWILL.

(Being a verbatim report of the Speech at Exeter Hall,  
March 8th, 1907.)

WHEN, some weeks ago, the Women's Social and Political Union fixed a demonstration for the date of the second reading of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill, I could not help feeling that the unhappy speakers would be in the position of the coster in Mr. Sims's admirable melodrama of 'The Lights of London.' Some of you may remember the street-vendor in that play who sells ice-cream or hot potatoes according to the state of the weather, but who, in the deplorable uncertainty of the English climate, has frequently to go out equipped with both, so that he has constructed a barrow fitted up with a freezer at one end, and a burning stove at the other. We had to arrange our oratorical wares in complete ignorance of the political atmosphere, whether we should have to congratulate ourselves upon the second reading, or condole with you over the freezing of our hopes.

But I cannot agree with some of the speakers that these hopes have really been frozen; on the contrary, I think we have gained a great victory. Look at that poster of the *Pall Mall Gazette*,



suspended from our platform, and wholly devoted to the announcement that our Bill has been talked out. Look at all the papers, full of the same subject. It was only the other day that the *Times* declared that by your noisy methods you had proved your unfitness for public life. I pride myself on having been the first man to maintain that, on the contrary, only now had you proved you understood how to make British politics. And very wonderfully and rapidly you have made them. A Women's Suffrage debate is far from novel in Parliament: it has often enough held its languid course, feebly rippled by the witticisms of Mr. Labouchere. But when has a Women's Suffrage debate proceeded in a Parliament guarded by policemen? Why, we read that when the police saw half-a-dozen girls come out of an A.B.C. shop, they began to think of sending for reinforcements! When has a Women's Suffrage debate had the ear of Europe—nay, of the world? The Bill has been talked out. And Woman is called the talking sex. The Bill has been talked out! Very well, we are here to talk it in again. They may talk it out, but your processions can walk it in. They may arrest you, but they cannot arrest your movement.

You should be feeling victorious, I say, not defeated. Patience! Your movement dates precisely from the day on which the *Times* said you had proved your unfitness for politics. The B.P. period—the Before Prison period—doesn't count. And the A.P. period—the After Prison period—is yet young. John Bull must have time for digestion. But I cannot agree with the *Westminster* "Wobbler" as to the form this digestion must take—that Women's Suffrage must be first made a clear and definite issue at a General Election. How *can* it be? Both parties are *for* it. How can either obtain a clear, definite, and exclusive mandate from the country? Balfour and Campbell-Bannerman both declare that the measure is right and just. Woman between the Conservatives and the Liberals is like the donkey who starves between two bundles of straw.

But she must cease being a donkey. She must learn to unite. She is divided against herself. (Cries of "No.") Yes, look at Mrs. Humphry Ward's letter in to-day's *Times*. Sad as I was to see that letter, I yet was pleased to think some new arguments would be forthcoming from such an intellectual source, for the case against Women's Suffrage is so feeble that we speakers in its favour have to make our bricks without straw. The opposition is indeed in a pitiable position. Women already may vote for poor-law guardians, for municipal committees, for members of the school board, for the County Council—and all this the opposition has suffered more or less patiently—but some mysterious magic attaches to the M.P. This fearful and wonderful being is too holy for the touch of woman. But Mrs. Ward has found an argument, which the *Times* applauds as that of a female Daniel come to judgment, to which the *Pall Mall* devotes an ecstatic

leader, to which even the *Westminster* draws reverential attention. It is that if women had votes they would have Power without Responsibility for action. I may be deficient in intelligence, but I am absolutely unable to understand what this wonderful argument means. I have had a vote all these years, and never have I felt this mysterious responsibility, or been called on to take the faintest action. It would seem that Mrs. Humphry Ward can only refer to War. But she explicitly denies that. She says that War is only one of the many fields of action into which women cannot enter, and on which the existence of the State depends, and that we all know what they are. As I neither know what they are nor understand what they have to do with the question, I looked into the *Times* leader for enlightenment. But it only repeats, parrot-like, that there are many kinds of action. I consulted the *Pall Mall* oracle—there are many kinds of action, it echoes oracularly.

Mrs. Ward reminds me of the little girl who cried out: "Oh, mother, there are a million cats in the garden." "Oh, my child," said the mother, "you mustn't exaggerate." "Well, there are six cats." "No, no; where do you see six cats?" "Well, there *is* a cat." There is only one cat—War. But if there is a war, women have to pay the war-taxes. And if they do not go to war themselves, they have to see their sons go—which is worse. The joke about Mrs. Ward's great discovery is that the soldiers and sailors who do fight have no vote! And if women are to be debarred from Imperial affairs, as Mrs. Ward claims, how about the Primrose League, which is nothing if not Imperial? Does the distinguished authoress realize that the vote denied to her may be exercised by a convicted felon after he has served his sentence? Is she satisfied to be classed legally with infants, paupers, lunatics, idiots, and peers? This catchword of "Power without Responsibility" is Mrs. Humphry Ward's best contribution to fiction.

But if women as a whole are divided against themselves, still sadder is it that there should be divisions even among the Women Suffragists. We need, above all, unity of temper and of programme. When I last had the privilege of speaking upon this platform, some of our oldest workers took umbrage at a portion of my remarks. What was my offence? Merely that, in the innocence of my heart, in my ignorance that these ladies were not first and before anything else devoted to the cause of Women's Suffrage, I had said that Women's Suffrage must be run as an end in itself, quite regardless of Party lines. And it appeared that they were Liberals. They put Liberalism first and Woman only second. As if any cause could be safely left to the whim and mercy of a single Party! I am only an amateur politician, but I was very pleased to find Mr. Keir Hardie afterwards telling them the very same thing. If any Liberal is shocked at the idea of damaging a Liberal Government, she must remember that ministries are here to-day and gone to-



morrow, and to-morrow it might be the Conservative Government that came in for our attacks. I am not a woman, I need scarcely observe, but I am prepared to sacrifice my own politics to woman and womanhood, because the question seems to me far bigger than any other at present on the horizon of either party. Still more, then, should a woman say to herself, "The first political question for *me* is that I should be recognized as a political unit. If I am not worthy to be a voter, then at least I will not be made use of as a tool." Mr. Birrell has never come out boldly for Women's Suffrage, yet the other day he utilized a meeting presided over by his wife, to send a partisan message. But either woman is fitted to play a part in politics or she is not.

Of course, should either Party definitely affix the recognition of Woman's Rights to its programme, I could understand our whole movement pinning itself *pro tem.* to that Party. But when has Liberalism done this? Never—not even with its present huge majority. The ladies who cling on so desperately to the Liberal party afford a pathetic picture of unrequited affection. They will never desert "Mr. Micawber," who for his part continues to assure them that something will turn up, but who takes no steps whatever to turn it up; indeed, rather, as our American friends say, turns it down. Did "Mr. Micawber," when he wrote the King's Speech, in his accustomed grand style, say a single word about Women's Suffrage? And what about the Liberal Conference at Newcastle? Was not the success of Women's Suffrage there by such a small majority almost worse than a defeat? The fact is that both Parties are glad enough to have women's work—the Tories through the Primrose League, the Liberals through the Women's Liberal Federation. But when it comes to paying them for their work—ah, that is another matter. Their labour has been taken, as woman's labour is always taken, at the cheapest possible rate. Woman has been sweated by both Parties; it is time she tried to drive a better bargain.

It is true that Campbell-Bannerman is ready to vote for the Bill, and we must be thankful for small mercies. But it is not my notion of a leader that he should follow a follower. If Campbell-Bannerman had any true sense of the significance, the historical importance, of this measure, he would hasten to immortalize himself by fathering it. A lady said to President Roosevelt the other day, "If you can bring about Women's Suffrage you will be greater than Lincoln. He emancipated the black man, but you can emancipate the white woman." What an opportunity Campbell-Bannerman has missed! I am sure that unless he gets this reform through, the Tories will jump at it. After all, they have a much better chance of passing Liberal measures than the Liberals. They have the support of the House of Lords. That is, perhaps, why all the real Radicals are found on the Tory benches.

By whom was the last great Suffrage Act passed—the Household Suffrage? Why, by Mr. Disraeli, in 1867.

When that Bill was passing through the House, John Stuart Mill moved as an amendment almost the very measure that the House has considered to-day. That great apostle of our cause demanded that in the grant of Household Suffrage the occupier should have the vote regardless of sex. You can imagine the hullabaloo it evoked, what a godsend it was to all the comic papers; you have only to read them to-day to see how well a joke wears! A woman who wanted a vote was supposed to be a sort of lower creature who chewed the quid and divided the skirt. But nevertheless there was a very grave and memorable debate, and with John Stuart Mill were found no less than 73 other righteous men who voted for this amendment. 196 voted against. Where were the other 400? As usual, neglecting their duty.

This epoch-making debate took place in 1867—exactly forty years ago. Forty years of Wandering in the Wilderness; it is high time we entered the Promised Land.

Four years later—in 1871—when the Ballot Act was passed, Mr. Gladstone said in the House of Commons that there could be no harm now in woman's voting. Mr. Gladstone meant that, now that the old rowdiness and publicity attaching to elections had been abolished, the last excuse for refusing to enfranchise woman had been equally swept away. Thirty-six years ago, then, there was not a vestige of a reason left for refusing woman the vote. Yet the logical animal, man, has gone on thirty-six years as a passive resister. Women unborn in 1871 have now got girls of their own, and if the women we see on this platform had not begun to wake things up, their granddaughters and great-granddaughters would probably be doomed to go on passing annual resolutions and awaiting the chivalry of their lords and masters. It is a strange thing that English ladies should have to go to prison to-day to bring home to Englishmen the words of the last four Prime Ministers in succession—Gladstone, Salisbury, Balfour, and Campbell-Bannerman.

But what other way is open to them? "Ah, if you had only been moderate and reasonable, we should have listened to you," lots of men will tell you to-day. Well, I have consulted the pages of history. Writing of a Women's Suffrage campaign carried on nearly twenty years ago, an impartial historian says: "The agitation for Woman's Rights was conducted with great sobriety, steadiness, and moderation." And you see the result. Twenty fruitless years. Surely it was time to try insobriety, unsteadiness, and immoderation. It is true the *Times* will then seize upon your behaviour to prove the utter unfitness of woman for political life. If you act moderately, no one will ever trouble to give you



a vote, and if you act violently you are not fit to have it. "Them as asks shan't have, and them as don't ask don't want."

Even if you go to prison—what does that prove? *Mr. Punch* told you the other day that if any woman went to prison, that did not prove that the women of this country wanted the suffrage. Far from it. It only proved at most that this particular woman wanted the suffrage. And, however many ladies went to gaol, it only proved that precisely this number of ladies desired the suffrage.

Now this argument, like so many things in *Punch*, is no joke. It is a serious argument, and, what is more, a sound one. The only way of answering it would be that each prisoner should be elected by a constituency of suffragettes to represent them in gaol. Thus, a House of Ladies would be sitting in Holloway. The only question, however, is—whether Holloway is large enough to hold all the representatives of all our feminine constituencies. The same difficulty, we know, attaches to the House of Commons, which is likewise quite inadequate to the number of its members. But, then, the House of Commons relies, as we have seen, upon its members neglecting their duty. You could never rely upon that with the women.

But if, pending the establishment of this representative assembly in Holloway, we admit that every prisoned "suffragette" represents nobody but herself, then how can any argument against women at large be drawn from her behaviour? How can the *Times* say that the behaviour of this or that individual Amazon in hurling herself upon our police proves the unfitness of all other women for public life? Either the women in gaol do represent womanhood at large or they do not. If they do, how dare you deny women the vote? If they do not, how dare you say their behaviour proves women are unfit to have it? The cause of Female Suffrage stands quite apart from the merits or demerits of the new tactics. They are merely the town crier's bell, the "Oyez, oyez," to draw your attention. But the actual matter is one of logic and justice, and those men who argue that the cause of woman has been damaged by the noisy demonstrations of our gaol-birds are merely finding a new reason for their old antagonism. The wolf in *Æsop* had always a pretext for eating the lamb. The only reasonable thing to do on this argument would be to refuse the vote to those noisy, unwomanly females who went to gaol, and give it to all the women who didn't; and I am sure there is not one of the prisoners who would not be content on these terms to have secured the vote for her sisters and for all future generations of her suffering sex.

If, however, the womanliness which these females have failed in has been displayed by the ladies of the Women's Anti-Suffrage movement, then the sooner such womanliness is emancipated away

the better for all of us. The worst that you can say about our police-pummelers, after all, is that they are too manly. But these anti-suffragettes, alas! are not manly enough. Their action is redolent of all that sneaking mutual hatred of woman by woman which was unhappily engendered by woman's old over-dependence upon man. These women are guilty of treason to their sex. They are trying to set back the current of Evolution. It is ridiculous to suppose that what woman once was she must always remain. Eve might as well have remained a rib. Did Evolution say its last word when woman came out of the harem, when she dropped the Oriental head-veil from her face, and looked eye to eye upon life? Who knows what further heights she has to scale? Why do we always hear of Man and Superman, and never of Woman and Superwoman?

If you want to see the weakness of the "anti-suffragettes" you have only to imagine one of them going to prison for her ideal. The thing cannot be imagined; she has no ideal, no living fire flowing in her veins, nothing but a barren negative, nothing but a sluggish satisfaction in old superstitions. That is the saddest feature of a state of slavery: the slaves actually come to prefer their condition. It is well known that when the American slaves were emancipated, many petitioned their masters to be kept on as before—just as these women are petitioning men.

But if some of woman's worst foes are found in her own sex, some of her best friends are found in mine. This is no duel of sex—heaven be praised! This is only a duel between prejudice and reason. And no sex has the monopoly of either the one or the other. And so I have the pleasure of informing you that some of us have established, this last week—as a counterblast to the Women's Anti-Suffrage Movement—a Men's League for Women's Suffrage. But the sympathy of this body is not meant to be merely platonic. We propose to be an active political force. For, unlike the "anti-suffragettes," we shall consist mainly of voters—our guns will be loaded. Our organization will be divided into several classes—like *The Times' Library*. In Class A are those voters who put Female Suffrage before every other question; who, whatever their personal politics, will vote against, or at least refrain from voting for, the candidates of any Government that refuses to grant it. To this superior class I belong. And under the present iniquitous system of plural voting I have no less than four votes. In Class B are those who will not vote against their own party, but will support Female Suffrage in all other ways. By this means we hope to circulate our views all over the country, and to defeat the publishers of the Anti-Suffrage petition. The subscription is only one shilling—net. By this organization our fighting strength will be increased by a new battalion—nay, by a Territorial Army spread all over England.



But I do not believe the organization will live long. It will be swallowed up in the earthquake of its own success. But, be the fight long, or be the fight short, the issue is not for a moment in doubt. If it is dispiriting to fight a hopeless fight, it is heartening to know that we cannot possibly be defeated, because we are in harmony with all the upward forces of human life. Woman is bound to be emancipated; even woman herself cannot prevent it. She can only delay the great moment. No country is free while a single class is governed without representation. What, then, shall we say of a country in which half the population is legislated for like dumb, driven cattle? We shall not rest till this barbarous handicap of sex is wiped out from the statute books of civilization.

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BY  
ISRAEL ZANGWILL.

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# ONE AND ONE ARE TWO

BY

ISRAEL ZANGWILL

(being a verbatim report of the speech delivered at Exeter Hall, on  
Feb. 9th, 1907, at the Demonstration of Women's Suffrage Societies).

The proposition that we are here to maintain is so simple, so clear, that when one is called upon to justify it, one scarcely knows what to say. The fact is, it is not our business to justify it; the onus of proof lies on the other side. How do *they* justify their monstrous proposition that one half of the human race shall have no political rights?

When Wilberforce started his campaign against slavery, it was scarcely Wilberforce's business to defend the proposition that no man has the right to make a chattel of another. The burden of proof lay on the slave-holder. How dared *he* violate elemental human rights? We, too, appear here not as defendants but as plaintiffs; not to beg and protest, but to demand and denounce. We accuse! We accuse the opposition of barbarism and injustice. We call upon Parliament to redress this historic wrong.

Our case, I say, is so simple, that it is like having to prove that one and one are two. Indeed, this is precisely what the opposition denies. It says that one and one are not two; that in politics one man and one woman are only one, and man is that one. Savages are notoriously bad at arithmetic, but in the Colenso of civilization it is written that one man and one woman are two persons. Like most simple truths, this axiom of spiritual arithmetic has taken the human race a long time to arrive at; but, thank heaven, we are there at last! Woman is a separate and individual personality; a human soul, and, what is more to the point, a tax-payer. Even marriage cannot extinguish her. She is no longer a mere appendage to her lord, united and fused, like Campbell with Bannerman. The Married Woman's Property Act gives her the right to her separate property; with property goes taxation, and with taxation must and shall go representation.

What are the reasons for refusing this representation, for depriving half the qualified population of political power? Is this half, then, exactly the same as the other half, so that the other half sufficiently represents it? Quite the contrary. Woman has a peculiar relation to a number of problems; her standpoint, her interests, differ vastly from man's. How dare we then leave her



out of the reckoning? Take only the last great political measure with which the male half of the population has been grappling, and which they have discussed with such masculine balance, such freedom from hysteria—I need hardly say I mean the Education Bill. If ever there was a subject on which woman had a right to a voice, it was surely this. You all know what happened to that Bill—what was the result of all those months of sane masculinity, all those torrents of temperate talk in both Houses of Parliament. Nothing; absolutely nothing. If anything could show the utter unfitness of men for public life, it was surely this mammoth fiasco, this monumental example of male mismanagement.

Yet I have nowhere seen the suggestion that the sex should be disfranchised. On the contrary, it is felt that the masculine method of **how not to do it** is so marvellous, and the world we see around us so satisfactory, that the feminine touch might jar all this exquisite machinery, upset all this wonderfully happy world. And yet an unprejudiced observer might well conclude that our Constitution would work not only better but with a fairer balance of powers if the House of Lords were replaced by a House of Ladies. The Commons, having settled affairs from the man's point of view, might more justly have their ideas revised by an elective Chamber of the other sex than by a mere irresponsible body with the same masculine prejudices in an even crustier form.

The Prime Minister has hinted darkly that a way will be found of dealing with the Lords. I do not know if this is what he is hinting at. It would enable him to right two wrongs at one stroke. But alas! I am afraid he will do justice neither to the Lords nor to the Ladies.

What is it that prevents his bringing in a bill for Female Suffrage at once, in this very Parliament that is opening? He is in favour of it himself, and so is the majority of the House. The bulk of the representatives of the people are pledged to it. Here, then, is a measure which both parties deem necessary. A sensible woman would think that the first thing a Parliament would do would be to pass those measures about which both parties agree. Simple female! That is not man's way. That is not politics. What is wanted in Parliament is measures about which both parties *disagree*, and which, in consequence, can never be passed at all. I declare I know nothing outside Swift or W. S. Gilbert to equal the present situation of Women's Suffrage.

In Gulliver's Travels, in the school of political projectors in the island of Laputa, there is a most ingenious doctor who directs that every senator in the great council of a nation, after he has delivered his opinion and argued in favour of it, shall be obliged to give his vote directly contrary. Really there is something of this spirit in the present House of Commons as regards Female Suffrage. Perhaps a little analysis will enable us to understand this paradoxical situation. The majority have promised to vote for Women's

Suffrage. But *whom* have they promised? Women. And women have no votes. Therefore the M.P.'s do not take them seriously. You see the vicious circle. In order for women to get votes they must have votes already. And so the men will bemock and befool them from session to session. Who can wonder if, tired of these gay deceivers, they begin to take the law into their own hands? And public opinion—I warn the Government, public opinion is with the women.

It is true that there is still a certain opposition in the country to Female Suffrage, but how faint, how half-hearted, compared with that ancient opposition to woman's higher education or to her wider sphere of work. It is the last sullen struggle to keep her exclusively a domestic animal. But the gibes and sneers are a mere feeble echo from the past. The fact is that woman's battle is practically won. To-day, when woman has done so brilliantly in medicine, in mathematics, in science, when a woman has made the most interesting discovery of our day—radium—the stale old flouts and jeers go off like mouldy Christmas crackers. The battle is won, I say, and it is time the enemy accepted their defeat. The vote will be the legitimate reward of woman's proved capacity in almost every sphere of work.

The legitimate, but, mark you, not the logical, reward. Our domestic grandmothers had as much right to a vote as our scientific sisters.

To have an opinion upon politics is not incompatible with the strictest domesticity, knitting not excluded. Nay, knitting her husband's socks gives woman the very leisure for forming wise political opinions. There is nothing essentially womanly in being ignorant and careless of the affairs of one's country. Our late Queen, who had no little to do with the affairs of her country, was a peculiarly domestic woman; indeed, quite early-Victorian. We demand this vote for woman not because of her manly capacities, but because of her womanly capacities. To mix up this question, therefore, with the question of keeping woman domestic is really a vulgar confusion. The most domestic of women may surely be allowed to leave the hearth once every four years or so, to record her vote. Her husband can even be in attendance, since he has to record his vote too. It is really less dangerous than her visits to the dentist.

But it is said this will lead to domestic quarrels. As if a couple who wish to quarrel had any need of politics. Think of the centuries in which domestic discord has got along without Female Suffrage! As a matter of fact, husband and wife are generally of the same politics, and when they are not, the possession of a vote by the wife would rather promote harmony than discord. The husband would not be left with the last word—the battle would be drawn.



But the bitterest enemy of woman is not man—it is woman, alas. A number of ladies declare they do not want the vote. Poor things! There are ladies in China who are content to have their toes crippled. There are ladies in Turkey who are satisfied with a quarter of a husband, or even an nth share of a husband. But this would not justify these Chinese and Turkish ladies in keeping back their sisters who had evolved higher—who wanted a natural foot or a whole husband apiece. Besides, the vote is not compulsory. Those ladies who do not wish to exercise their right will have full liberty to stop at home, knitting, or reading "The Lady." No band of janissaries will drag them to the polling booth; and even if they were dragged there, the ballot is secret. There is always one last resource—they can spoil their voting papers.

The paradox is that a good many of these ladies are members of the Primrose League, a League, which, for about a quarter of a century, has been petted and pampered by Prime Ministers, whose members have been addressed as saviours of their country by all the leading lights of Toryism. These dissenting Dames tread the primrose path of politics, yet reckon not their own rede. These defenders of domesticity are found on political platforms, they pack the Albert Hall, they interfere in elections more or less illegitimately—yet they shrink from the legitimate influence of a vote. They remind me of those ladies who get their alcohol surreptitiously from grocer shops, but would be horrified to deal with a wine merchant. But the logic of facts cannot be evaded. The first lady who wore a primrose was the first "suffragette." The Conservative Party, which has fostered and profited by all this feminine activity, is logically bound to crown it with the suffrage.

But there is another class of ladies, who, while desiring the suffrage, object to the present methods as unwomanly. They *are* unwomanly—and therein consists the martyrdom of the pioneers. They have to lower themselves to the manners of men; they have to be unwomanly in order to promote the cause of womanhood. They have to do the dirty work. Let those lady suffragists who sit by their cosy firesides at least give them admiration and encouragement. *Qui veut la fin veut les moyens.* And undoubtedly the best means are not the most ladylike. Ladylike means are all very well if you are dealing with gentlemen; but you are dealing with politicians. Hitherto I have kept away from political platforms; this is my maiden speech. But twenty years ago I used this very subject as the backbone of a political satire. Twenty years ago—twenty years of ladylike methods—and how much further have they brought us? Was there the faintest progress till the other day, when a married lady went to prison to prove that she was not the same person as her husband? In that old novel of mine, Female Suffrage was passed by the Conservative Party. The prophecy has not yet been fulfilled. But I warn Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman that, unless he hurries up, my words will

come true. Possibly even the House of Lords will initiate the measure as a last act of spite against Sir Henry before he abolishes it.

It is true those unladylike methods are not the only new ones which might be brought into play. The fault of the old methods was not that they were ladylike but that they were unpolitical. They exercised no pressure upon the Government. In politics only force counts. But how is a discredited minority to exercise force? The late Mr. Parnell supplied the answer. The minority must stand between the two parties, throwing its weight into either scale as opportunity offers. But does our movement possess a Parnell? Apparently, yes. The tactics which I heard the late Miss Billington expound were those of a Parnell in petticoats. But, alas! the task is far harder than that of the great Irish leader. He, at least, was inside the House, he and his men. The ladies are outside—with policemen in between. What possible influence can they exert on the divisions? It would appear that we are face to face with the old dilemma. To get a vote woman must already have one. But there is a little loophole. Every now and then the party in power has to venture outside its citadel to contest a bye-election. The ladies are waiting. The constituency becomes the arena of battle, and every Government candidate, whether he is for Female Suffrage or not, is opposed tooth and nail. For every Government—Liberal or Conservative—that refuses to grant Female Suffrage is *ipso facto* the enemy. The cause is to be greater than mere party. Damage the Government—that is the whole secret.

Are these tactics sound? In my opinion, absolutely so. They are not only ladylike, they are constitutional. They are the only legitimate way in which woman can bring direct political pressure upon the Government. Serious as may be the questions which divide the parties, woman is justified in thinking that there is none so serious as her own exclusion from a voice in any of them. And so I would venture to advise those ladies who meditate martyrdom to choose a male victim instead. Far better than to put yourself in prison is to keep a man out of Parliament. It may be said women ought to oppose only those candidates who are against Female Suffrage. But they are so difficult to find. There never was a cause with so many champions. Why, there are elections in which both candidates swear devotion, and what is poor woman to do then? No, let her remorselessly pursue the Government; there will be at least this advantage, that the candidate, having nothing to gain by declaring himself in favour of Women's Suffrage will be reduced to telling the truth. Then we shall know where we really are. Open foes are better than false friends.

But although these tactics are sound, I trust woman will not have to fight every inch of her way. I trust that man's chivalry and justice, which have awakened in New Zealand, Finland and other outlandish places, will not much longer lie dormant in the



so-called centres of civilization, and that, hand in hand, man and woman will try to work out the problems of the social order. There is no problem upon which an intelligent woman cannot throw some new light, and in neglecting woman's help, men are not merely blundering in what they do do, but blundering still more badly in what they do not do; in the terribly important provinces of life which they leave untouched by legislation. We men require this Reform as much for our own sakes as for women's sakes.

Ladies and gentlemen, strong as the Women's Suffrage Party is in brilliant women of our London world, its life-sap comes, I venture to think, from where so much of the energy, the wisdom and the earnestness of England reside—from the Provinces. Were it only a metropolitan exotic, a society luxury, it would soon pine away. But its roots go deep into our national soil, and draw their sustenance and vitality from all those myriads of obscure underground working women. These working women are *not* womanly, they are *not* domestic. True, they still weave and spin for man, but no longer by their own hearths. They must leave their homes and their babes to become machines in a world of machinery. And we men, we hypocrites, who prate so much of womanliness and domesticity, what care have we had for these? No vote can make *them* so unwomanly as not having a vote has made them. Perhaps, on the contrary, the vote may be the only means of bringing them back to womanliness. For only since the working men in these dismal towns have had a vote has their lot become at all human. What Christianity cannot do, what charity cannot do, what all the thunder of your Carlyles and your Ruskins cannot do, a simple vote does. And so to these myriads of tired women who rise in the raw dawn and troop to their cheerless factories, and who, when the twilight falls, return not to rest but to the labours of a squalid household, to these the thought of Women's Suffrage, which comes as a sneer to the man about town, comes as a hope and a prayer. Who dares leave that hope unilluminated, that prayer unanswered? Surely not the most powerful Liberal Government of our generation, supported by the most powerful Labour Party of any generation. That would be too cruel an irony, too bitter a disillusionment.

For fifty years now woman has stood crying: I stand for justice—answer, shall I have it? And the answer has been a mocking "no," or a still more mocking "yes." To-day she calls upon Parliament to have done with this flabby friendliness, this policy of endless evasion. To-day she cries: I *fight* for justice, and I answer that I *shall* have it.

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# BE LAW- ABIDING!

BY

LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

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WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE, 1, Robert Street, Adelphi, W.C.



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## BE LAW-ABIDING!

This Speech was delivered by Mr. LAURENCE HOUSMAN at a Meeting held by the Women's Freedom League at St. Peter's Hall, Bournemouth, January 30th, 1914, in compliance with the following condition inserted by the Committee who let the Hall:—"There must be no advocacy, or expression of approval, of militancy or of any form of lawlessness on the part of any speaker."

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I do not usually write my Suffrage speeches beforehand; I generally trust to the inspiration of the moment, and the help of my audience, to say what I want to say. But on this occasion I cannot do so. I am not here to say what I want to say, but what I must. I have not on this occasion to satisfy either my own conscience or an audience of my own countrymen and women, but the syndicate or committee under whose auspices this hall has been let. I have come here to speak to you metaphorically in a white sheet.

There have been occasions in the past when I have expressed the mistaken notion that those who are persistently and forcibly excluded from a share in their own government, under a system which calls itself representative, are less morally bound to submit to that outside power which imposes its law upon them than those who have a part in its constitution and a voice in its control.

To-day I am to put to you the other point of view, and tell you that they should submit, and; as a consequence, tell you incidentally that law is a higher thing than justice, and legality more to be desired than liberty.

The main reason, so far as this audience is concerned, why you should have this point of view dinned into your ears is that it is only on these conditions that we are allowed to hold this meeting at all. Other reasons, of lesser importance, I hope to give you in the course of my address, all as reputable and as irrefutable as Lord Curzon's famous set of reasons why women must not have the vote.

I will give you my reasons—the best reasons I can find, that is—why you should be law-abiding, for what they are worth; and you can take them home with you and knock them into a cocked hat, or—if you prefer—turn them into a fool's-



cap or fire-extinguisher or any other domestic article suitable for children, paupers, criminals, lunatics—or Anti-Suffragists. But here, I warn you, you must not say a word against them; otherwise you—or I—will get turned out.

This meeting is held, you will understand—or at all events this lecture is given—in praise of law-abidingness—law-abidingness under all circumstances; yes, even present ones. In spite of all the provocations, the shufflings and the delays of unjust and unrepresentative government, in spite of broken promises and pledges not redeemed, in spite of the corrupt manipulation of the judicial procedure of our law courts in order to help the Government to its political ends,—the prosecution of one set of political offenders, and the refusal to prosecute another set of political offenders, the temporary release of one set of prisoners, under the terms of the Cat and Mouse Act (women who have not the constitutional weapon of the vote), and the unconditional release of another set of prisoners—men, with a strong backing among our working-class electorate; in spite of all these inequalities and injustices which weigh against the women in their fight for political freedom, you—if you would stand well with the powers that be, and with the gentlemen who make a profit in letting to you this hall—you must obey the law.

And before I sit down I will tell you what the law is, or what some of it is, this thing which—please the pigs!—you are to obey. I will tell you also some of the history of the law, how laws were made and unmade, and how very law-abiding was the conduct of those who built up the constitutional history of this country.

But you must not read constitutional history—or only if you would disown its teaching and deprecate its results. I am not here to encourage you to take your political lessons from history, rather to warn you against history. If you wish to believe in law-abidingness as a principle suitable for all circumstances, all times and seasons, and all governments that claim to be just governments, then you must not read history. And that is where the trouble comes in: women Suffragists have been reading history and applying its lessons not only in theory but in practice to their own case. They mustn't! If they do St. Peter's Hall will be closed to them.

Ladies and gentlemen, people in the present day are coming to know a dangerous amount of history. For our present political institutions to be safe, it ought to be kept a closed book.

You will recall how some 350 years ago there was another closed book in this country, closed by law and by order of the Ecclesiastical Authorities, backed by Parliament; and the people of this country, or some of them, the leaders of the

Reform Party—the Reformation Party, I mean—insisted on having it open. They broke the law so as to have it open,—and they got it open, they got it read in all their churches in the vulgar tongue. And what was the result of the opening of that book? The overthrow of an established order of religion and the substitution of another; the most tremendous change and overthrow—social, religious and political—that this country has yet seen; and all brought about by a few men, and women—and then a few more, defying the authorities of St. Peter's Hall in Rome, breaking the law, and saying that there was something higher than law. You mustn't do such things, or say such things—no! You must be law-abiding.

If you had lived in those times it would have been your duty to consent to that book remaining shut until Parliament said that it might be opened; or, if you had been Roman Catholics and had lived a little later when Parliament ruled that in this country mass was not to be said even in a private house, it would have been your duty to give up the practice of your religion because Parliament, which is higher and more sacred, said that you were not to practise it.

That is where the principle of law-abidingness would have led you in the past. I hope that it makes you feel very comfortable in your consciences, very certain that you would have been right, noble and self-respecting, helpful to the advancement of the cause of Liberty.

If it makes you feel like that, then you will agree with everything I have yet to say.

If law-abidingness is a principle, if it is not sometimes a mere opportunist device for the drugging of our consciences to the crimes done by existing governments, and to our duty to bring mis-government to book by all possible means,—then it is a principle which did not spring into life only yesterday. Government exists no more by divine right now than it existed by divine right 300 years ago. If it was right for people to rebel against and to resist the acts of Government then, it may equally be right now.

And since I am not here to say that it is right now, I have no ground—nor have any who agree with the controllers of this hall—to say that it was right then.

But if you think otherwise—if you say that conscience must rule a man's actions—then a consideration you have to face is this: that our consciences may easily be blind to the iniquities done to-day in the name of Government, though no longer blind to the iniquities done in the past; and that while we see clearly, in looking back, which side was right in those causes for which our fathers fought against law and govern-



ment to the death, we are unable to see so clearly to-day under conditions to which we have become habituated.

Nevertheless, if to be law-abiding is a moral principle, it cannot really depend on the question whether we are blind or whether we see. Irrespective of our blindness or our clear-sightedness law must be obeyed, if to be law-abiding is a moral principle.

Let me, then, take you back once more into the past, and precipitate you gently but firmly against some of the problems in which your law-abidingness as a moral principle would have landed you.

In the past the law of this country ordered that unfaithful wives should be burned to death—the crime of which they were guilty being “treason”—but for unfaithful husbands it provided no penalty at all. It would then have been your law-abiding duty to hand over to so-called “justice” any woman thus threatened by an unequal sex-law with agonising death, who came to you seeking concealment or a means of escape. In choosing between a crime against the law and a crime against humanity it was your bounden duty to commit a crime against humanity: law—if law-abidingness be a moral principle—being far greater than humanity. That was your duty. It wasn't what Christ said; indeed, it directly contradicts what He said; but that, of course, cannot concern us here. This is only St. Peter's Hall, dedicated, I suppose, to the saint at that period of his life when he denied Christ. We also, if we would exalt law-abidingness into a ruling principle above the law of humanity, must deny Christ. There is no help for it. That is our duty.

Let me give you yet another instance. The law of this country said, at one time, that witches and wizards were to be burned; and it was almost always women who were accused of that crime: (it was a mediæval way of getting rid of women of superior intellect and originality). We no longer believe in witches; we believe that all those unfortunates who were burned as witches were innocent of the charge laid against them. Nevertheless it would have been our duty to deliver them over to the tender mercies of the law had we lived in those days, and had they sought help of us in their extremity. I hope you begin to see, then, in what hole the dictates of your “hall-marked” consciences would have placed you. In order to support this great law-abiding principle it would have been your duty to become partners in the law's crime against humanity—supporters of folly and superstition—and to hand over the innocent to be burned!

A comfortable doctrine, my friends, which I am not here to refute. The law which said that witches should be burned was just as sacred—being based upon the infallible intellect of

male legislators—as the law which says to-day that a woman is not to have a vote,—as the law which says that the husband may forbid his wife to go out of the workhouse without him, as the law which says that the husband—and not the woman—shall decide whether her life or the unborn child's is to be spared if the conditions of birth make it impossible to save both.

A medical friend of mine told me that if he thought the husband would not give the right and just answer he would avoid asking him the question; but in neglecting to do so he would be breaking the law.

Dare we say that the days of superstition are over,—that laws to enforce superstition no longer exist—when we still give such power over their wives into the hands of men?—so that not long ago a man charged with an assault upon his wife was filled with wonder and indignation. “What!” he cried, “cannot I do what I like to my own wife?”

You say that the law does not allow it. The law, by its sentences, tells the men of this country that they can assault their wives at less risk of serious punishment than if they assaulted any other person; and the law of this country allows assaults of a particularly detestable kind to be practised by men upon their wives with impunity. For the law provides no punishment whatever for the man who knowingly brings disease into the home, turns marriage into an infection, and destroys the health of wife or child. And this is how those who would allow that license to continue seek to save their faces upon this matter: they say that the law gives precisely the same immunity to the woman. And they know perfectly well in saying it that for every single case of infection brought into the home by the wife there are hundreds brought in by the husbands. You might just as well say that it was right to have no law against thieves, because honest men had equal opportunities for robbing others if they wished to do so. You know perfectly well that disease is rife in the homes to-day—not because of the lives that the married women have lived, but because of the lives of the men.

It is when you examine honestly our social habits and conditions that you see what a superstition, what a vain juggling with truth is this assertion that our laws are equal for women as for men. For if we persistently neglect to make laws because they would affect uncomfortably the wrong-doings of men, if we leave a criminal habit unchecked because in the main men and not women indulge in it, then, though there were not one word of inequality upon our statute books to show for it, I say that our laws relating to sex are not equal. You can secure and maintain inequality between class and class,



and between sex and sex, just as much by refusing to make laws as by actually making them unequal.

I would like to give you yet another of your law-abiding problems, brought a little nearer to date than the cases of witch-burning. Within the memory of many of us slavery as an institution still existed in America, the country which I suppose even then regarded itself as the most civilised in the world. And when the law so stood, slaves were forbidden to run away—they were a man's property, and people called "iree" themselves were forbidden to help them to run away; they were compounding a felony—helping the slave to steal his master's property.

If there is any one here—any member of the St. Peter's Hall Committee—who thinks that under those circumstances it was right to be law-abiding and to hand back the escaped slave to his master, will it kindly hold up his or her hand?

I fear that I am in a minority, that in my plea for people to be law-abiding I stand—deserted by the committee—among a perverse and a rebellious generation.

Let me, then, in order to get at your consciences and smite them—if so I may—let me divert your attention from the apparently discredited claims of laws set up in the past, to the more sacred claims of the laws which are in operation to-day. And for a beginning let me read you a short extract from a quite reputable and usually law-abiding paper, *The Daily News and Leader*, giving an account of what took place in South Wales only a month ago:—

#### WOMEN ROADMAKERS.

##### STRIKING PROTEST AGAINST OFFICIAL APATHY.

The women of Haverfordwest—descendants of those brave Pembrokeshire women who used their red cloaks with such success in repelling the attempted French invasion at Fishguard in 1797—are once more banded together in the public service.

Armed with shovels, reaping-hooks, and other implements, a band of forty are at work on an almost impassable road leading from Hook to Haverfordwest—the highway over which the women have to struggle on market days. Despairing of getting the Pembrokeshire County Council to do the necessary work by any other means, they have decided to effect temporary repairs themselves, and thus shame the public authorities into action.

The squad works with the precision of trained soldiers. The leader is armed with a motor horn, by means of which the operations are directed, and under her guidance yesterday trenches were dug, pools of water drained away, and a decent pathway made in the middle of a long section of the road.

"For years we have been trying to get the road made good," said one of the workers, "but it has always been discussion and more discussion, and we despaired of getting anything done. We are determined to have a decent path over which we can walk in comfort."

Those women, whose action you have so incautiously applauded, were law-breakers; they were interfering with the

work—or the repose—of the properly constituted authority, trespassing upon its legal domain, taking upon themselves what they had no right whatever to do—the repair of the King's high road. It is no answer to the offence chargeable against them, that the properly constituted authority was neglecting its business—was doing so perhaps for very good party reasons—in order to keep down the rates, or placate some voting interest on which it depended for its election to local office; or perhaps because it was divided in its opinion as to the need for that particular piece of road-making,—said, perhaps, that the majority of the women of the country did not demand it, and so on, and so on.

Liberal Cabinets may do the same sort of thing, and for the same sort of reason; but that is no excuse for the road-makers of Reform to set to work on their own account and make that position of refusing to legislate untenable.

What this reprehensible and lawless gang of women ought to have done was to agitate constitutionally—ask all the voters who never had to walk along that muddy road to use their votes and turn out these neglectful councillors from office at the next election, or at the next election after that. And if the voters who didn't have to use that road didn't care enough about it to turn them out,—very well; then it was the law-abiding and constitutional duty of those women just to wait and wait, and meanwhile on wet market-days go in mud up to their knees.

Instead of that, they took the law into their own hands, and *The Daily News* praises them and calls their action "a public service!"

We live, I fear, in a rebellious age. Only a week ago a man was up before a London magistrate for molesting a woman, not in a lonely road where she was unprotected, but in a street with people walking about and with a policeman in sight. And it came out in the evidence that the woman had taken the law into her own hands and struck her assailant in the face. And the magistrate—dreadful man!—said he was very glad she had done it, and gave her victim an additional punishment over and above the blow that he had already received.

That magistrate mustn't come and say that sort of thing here! With a policeman in sight, she had really no excuse. There was the "arm of the law" ready to come to her rescue. What more did she want? Her mistake was that she allowed human nature and womanly instinct to come before law and order. And just as there is this tendency in individuals to be human first, and law-abiding only afterwards, so in the relation of sections of the community to the State there is a growing tendency to demand that the law shall adapt itself to human



nature, and not human nature to the law: in other words, to assert that it is the duty of the Government to placate the governed, not the duty of the governed to placate the Government. We even have moral teachers who tell us that it is only through people in this country having been implacably opposed to unjust government that our Constitution has made any appreciable advance toward freedom. "All our liberties," says Dr. Clifford, Free Church divine and contemporary leader of the Nonconformist conscience, "all our liberties are due to men who, when their consciences have compelled them, have broken the law."

This is a very disturbing doctrine,—all the more disturbing because, if you read history, it is unanswerable. Therefore, I must beg of you not to read history. You who wish to be law-abiding—as I wish you to be law-abiding—will find the study of our constitutional history as full of incitement to rebellion against bad government as are some of the speeches which Mr. Lloyd George has made in Wales, Mr. Bonar Law at Bristol, Sir Edward Carson at Belfast, and Mr. Larkin, Mr. Tom Mann and Mrs. Pankhurst wherever they stand up to speak.

These people, if we lived under an even-handed Government, would all have been in prison together—would every one of them have "done time." But they have not. Only the woman and the working-class leaders have been selected for that honour—perhaps because they really meant what they said, perhaps because membership of the Privy Council insures immunity from arrest, whether one of its members frequents a Piccadilly flat, or whether another stirs up rebellion in Ulster.

I mention the Piccadilly flat case because the Editor of a London paper, which was lending its columns to the exposure of that scandal last year, told me that a member of the present Cabinet came to him and said: "What name have you got hold of?"—tried for an hour to get it out of him, and, failing to get it, said: "If it is a Front Bench man, on either side, then it is your duty—to suppress it for the credit of the country!"

Do you wonder, when that is a Cabinet Minister's notion of the credit of the country, that women are determined to get the vote in order that they may sweep back such false notions of our national credit into the dustbin that they came from?

Our laws, and our administration of the laws, may no more represent the consciences of women than does the mind of that Cabinet Minister, who used his power and influence to prevent the moral exposure of a Front Bench politician, so as to keep up the credit of male government. We men are responsible for the making and the administration of those

laws, and for the keeping of such ministers in office. The women are not responsible. We men are a part of that legislative system; the women are not. And yet I come here to tell women that they are as responsible and as bound to give obedience to those laws and to those ministers as men are!

You pay taxes for the upkeep of unequal laws, for the unequal administration of those laws; you pay out of your pockets the cost of the re-imprisonment time and again, under the Cat and Mouse Act, of Suffragist prisoners, and you see other prisoners,—men, with a big backing of votes—(charged and sentenced for precisely the same offences)—Larkin and Lansbury and Connolly and John Scurr, you see them unconditionally released before they have served their time, and you are not to resist the payment of your taxes—those taxes which provide for the forcible feeding and help to wring out the lives of heroic women—resisters to unrepresentative government! You are not even to be tax-resisters!

Political corruption enters a borough or other constituency,—political corruption in which women have had no voice or part. A legal inquiry into that corruption is set on foot, and the cost of it is charged upon the rates. And for that political corruption of the male electorate voteless women have to pay and are not to resist payment! The political corruption of that borough "represents them," I suppose; and they are chargeable for it, as they also are chargeable for the upkeep of Members of Parliament who have not troubled even to canvass them to ascertain their views.

This House of Commons, which could not find time—even though militancy had ceased—to pass into law a measure of woman's enfranchisement to which it had twice given a majority larger than the Government itself could command, could yet find time to vote into its members' pockets the money of unrepresented women, and having secured its £400 a year still continued to vote to itself meals below cost price—food for its stomach for which you women as well as men have to pay. And you, while this easy and callous indifference to your claims goes on, have to sit down "constitutionally" and wait!

These road-makers are continuing to make roads of their own without consulting you, roads which lead them to £400 a year, roads which lead them to a cheap dinner-table where they can get mutton-chops below cost price; but you must continue your mud-march on that stick-in-the-mud route called "constitutional," which, in fact, is no real road at all, because it gives you no constitutional footing whatever. You must not do as those Welsh women did—go out with hammer and pick and shovel in defiance of slumbrous authority, and make



a path of your own. No, that you must not do! You must be law-abiding.

Legislation will go on, over your heads, session by session, and Liberal electors who say they "support" Women's Suffrage will still refuse to use in your service, by putting Suffrage first, that constitutional weapon of the vote which is denied to you; and will go on "supporting" still this piling up of laws unjustly based. But you, with an equal right to the remedying of your grievances, but without the same constitutional means that they have, are not to substitute other means as a makeshift. No, that would be wrong.

You women have been compelled into the Insurance Act, but you must not resist its compulsory levies. Yet see what happens to you in its administration. A working-man who is insured, if he is unable to earn his wage gets his insurance money; but a working-woman, who goes out to work, if unable to earn her wage does not get her insurance money unless she is also unable to do her housework, for which she gets no pay at all. They don't ask the working-man whether he is able to do his house work; knocked off from his wage-job he gets his pay without further question. The woman doesn't. The "rare and refreshing fruit" only falls to her when she is too ill even to potter about within the four walls of her home. Nay, sometimes it does not fall to her even then without a long struggle; for this precious law which compels the poor woman to insure forgot to compel the officials to make due and punctual payment. Listen to this, published in the Press less than a fortnight ago:—

An old woman was discharged from a convalescent home still incapable of work. She sent her medical certificate (properly signed) to her approved society week after week, but was unable to obtain the money due. In despair, the penniless woman appealed to the commissioners who very solemnly declared that she was entitled to the money.

Several more weeks went by, and in spite of the declaration of the commissioners, the money was not paid. A further appeal was made for the people responsible for the working of the Act to see that justice was done. Though the medical certificate was quite in order, she was treated as a malingerer and sent to a referee!

The medical referee also reported that the woman was unable to work and therefore entitled to benefit. Still the society did not pay, and the woman found herself butting against a stone wall of—"nobody's business to enforce payment." Every authority declared in favour of payment, but there was no authority to see that justice was done.

Why did not this Government which provided compulsion and penalties to make that poor woman insure, provide also compulsion and penalties for the responsible officials to make them pay what they owed her?

They did pay at last: and who made them? Not the Government, but Miss Margaret Douglas, who threatened a row and exposure in the Press, and perhaps at the next by-election, if they didn't pay.

That was all to the good; but there is no redress for the woman who, though she was sick and needing extra delicacies, was starved during five months of waiting. It is nothing to those who took her money with fine promises of help in time of need that after those months of privation she is back in hospital and not expected to recover.

No penalty under that Act was provided for those officials, but there was penalty provided for her had *she* refused payment. And it was a woman who had to be her champion. Miss Margaret Douglas is an exceptional woman, with exceptional knowledge and courage and persistence; and it was she more than Sir Edward Carson or Mr. F. E. Smith who lost the Government their by-election at Reading. But she can't be all over the country, and she can't make herself a sufficient substitute for the granting of the vote to women. And I say to you men here that if you compel women under penalty into your ill-thought-out schemes of social legislation, and cannot prevent even one such case of mal-administration befalling them as a consequence—then it is up to your conscience and your honour, by that very confession of your impotence to prevent wrong, to put Suffrage first all the way and all along the line; and get rid once and for all of your arrogant notion that you can conduct social reforms to a right conclusion without the help of your "better halves."

But all this is a light digression from the main point of my discourse, which is "Women obey!" Obey! Separate yourselves from all those great periods and examples in English history, which we men praise but which you must not, when our forefathers to preserve the spirit of the constitution broke the letter of the law.

Separate yourselves from the evil thing—from Wycliff, and Latimer, and Sir Thomas More—great names, but alas! every one of them law-breakers: from John Hampden, who tested by resistance the law of taxation as it then stood,—was adjudged by the High Court to have broken the law, and who yet went on breaking it, obtaining for himself in consequence not only a statue in Parliament, where it stands to this day, but the more excellent reward of a *statute* in Parliament which altered the law for ever afterwards, mainly as a result of his rebellious example and instigation.

Yes, you must separate yourselves from him; from all those non-jurors also, and Free Churchmen who pushed our national claim for religious liberty to its logical consequence against the Church as by law established—and won. You must separate yourselves also from those obstinate jurymen who, in order to force amendment of the criminal laws of this country from a careless Government in days when we hanged men for sheep-stealing, refused to convict even the guilty;



and by holding the law up to contempt got it changed. Point by point you must separate yourselves from those exemplary acts in our constitutional history of which we unregenerate men have pretended to be most proud, but which we have to throw over when we come to dictate to you, who stand to-day in a like case, and tell you that in all circumstances you must be law-abiding.

But I cannot stop there. We are all law-breakers to-day, perhaps without knowing it. Where the law, in consequence of changing conditions, ceases to be representative we break it—break it so often that we make it become obsolete long before it has become old. Of course it is very wrong of us, but that is what we do. All motorists break the law, though it is scarcely fifteen years old. It does not represent the present condition of things, and because it is out of touch with present conditions juries more often than not refuse to convict, even when chauffeurs in their haste have killed people. You cannot administer strictly a law that has got out of gear.

You women, who wheel perambulators in our streets, will in future, if you wish to be law-abiding, go off the pavements and wheel them in the road. You will there be a much greater nuisance and a much greater danger to the traffic, but you will be law-abiding. And if you wish to show Bournemouth what an uncomfortable thing law-abidingness can be made you have only to organise a parade of perambulators along that part of the thoroughfare in which, by law, they are allowed to go.

Or again, how many of us always go to church on Sunday morning? The law says that we must; but we have so persistently broken it—and did so persistently break it from the time when it was first imposed—that it has passed out of mind, and no Government has even troubled to repeal it. But the punishment for breaking it is two hours in the stocks. And now that the Committee of St. Peter's Hall know of the statute and the penalty, I look with confidence that they shall re-assert the majesty of the law, and that every one of them who has broken it shall apply for the re-erection of the public stocks, in order that its rigours may be visited upon them in their own persons, and they—sit in that seat of judgment until their offence has been purged.

I give what may seem to you now a light example of the position in which these devotees of law and order would find themselves if they faithfully followed out their principles; but it was no light thing in the past for the men who broke down that rotten law by their persistence and made it of no effect. And while it is against that law itself that the laughter is now turned, it was not always so. In the days when that law was

considered to be just, it was those who sat in the stocks who were laughed and jeered at.

So it is to-day. Men who are blind to the injustice of our present laws, and of a system which expressly excludes from the constitution one-half of the people, direct their wrath or their mockery against those who, without the constitutional weapon at their command, are fighting to get that injustice remedied. And always you will find it true, when the fight is against injustice, that those who would maintain injustice are keen to exalt the letter of the law, as though that were sacred, while caring nothing for the spirit.

In the past the men of this country fought against King and oligarch, and all institutions claiming authority over them, till representative government was granted them. But now the men of this country are a responsible and a guilty part of that Government which the women have to fight. It is the men as well as the Government whom the women accuse of holding unjust power. Thus it comes about that, when women to-day break the laws, it is not the dignity of King or of ruling class that they offend, but our dignity,—the dignity of men,—our self-esteem, our self-complaisance in the laws that we have made—our good conceit of ourselves which makes us go on thinking that we can still manage to effect just reforms without the women's aid; and so, exalting the party system above humanity, we tell the women that they must wait!

And they won't wait: and therefore we punish them! And I do not envy that man his mind who says that he "believes in Woman's Suffrage," and who is not utterly ashamed to let that cause, when once he has admitted its truth, stand anywhere but first.

If we men wish this fight to be fought and won constitutionally, then it is absolutely necessary that we should give the women the help of that constitutional weapon which is ours but not theirs. We must give them the help of our votes. We must redress the weight of those great party-organisations which still shut out the woman's claim from their programmes by ourselves putting Suffrage first, by recognising—what surely we must know in our heart of hearts—that this Woman's Movement, which has come to disturb so inconveniently the nice balance of our party system, is the biggest and most living movement of our day, that to it belongs the future, and that with it is bound up our best hope for the moral cleansing of the race.



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# The "Physical Force" Fallacy.



The special panel designed by Mr. Housman : "From Prison to Citizenship."

By LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

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**National Women's Social  
and Political Union.**

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The Women's Social and Political Union are NOT asking for a vote for every woman, but simply that sex shall cease to be a disqualification for the franchise.

At present men who pay rates and taxes, who are owners, occupiers, lodgers, or have the service or university franchise, possess the Parliamentary vote. The Women's Social and Political Union claim that women who fulfil the same conditions shall also enjoy the franchise. It is estimated that when this claim has been conceded about a million-and-a-quarter women will possess the vote, in addition to the seven-and-a-half million men who are at present enfranchised.

The Women's Social and Political Union claim that a simple measure, giving the vote to women on these terms, shall be passed immediately.

CONSTITUTION.

**Objects.**—To secure for Women the Parliamentary Vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the power thus obtained to establish equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

**Methods.**—The objects of the Union shall be promoted by—

1. Action entirely independent of all political parties.
2. Opposition to whatever Government is in power until such time as the franchise is granted.
3. Participation in Parliamentary Elections in opposition to the Government candidate and independently of all other candidates.
4. Vigorous agitation upon lines justified by the position of outlawry to which women are at present condemned.
5. The organising of women all over the country to enable them to give adequate expression to their desire for political freedom.
6. Education of public opinion by all the usual methods such as public meetings, demonstrations, debates, distribution of literature, newspaper correspondence and deputations to public representatives.

**Membership.**—Women of all shades of political opinion who approve the objects and methods of the Union, and who are prepared to act independently of party, are eligible for membership. It must be clearly understood that no member of the Union shall support the candidate of any political party in Parliamentary elections until Women have obtained the Parliamentary Vote. The entrance fee is One Shilling.

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The "Physical Force" Fallacy

By LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

OPPONENTS of Woman Suffrage put forward as their final and most irrefutable argument against the admission of women to the franchise that as the State rests in the last resort on physical force, and as women cannot fight, they have therefore no right to share in the making of the laws by which the State is governed. And this argument is put forward in a civilisation burdened by enormous problems which have mainly arisen out of our sedulous preservation of the physically unfit from their natural extinction under pressure of the physically strong. The State, that is to say, has found that it can only maintain its polity by extending to the weak as well as to the strong the rights and protection of citizenship. Had it not done so, society, as we know it now, would never have come into existence; and, surely, the anxious endeavour of every civilised community to give protection to the weak and frail among its members, even when desperately struggling for existence amid hostile surroundings, might well give pause to those who so boldly assert this unregenerate doctrine of physical force. They are, in fact, only giving utterance to a half-truth, or rather so inverting the truth as to change it into falsehood; for it would be almost as reasonable to say that a man's legs determine his course in life, because he stands and goes upon them and not upon his head, as to assert that physical force is the fundamentally deciding factor in the life of a community. What those who exalt physical force to this position of primacy in the affairs of men fail to see is that, like certain chemical substances, it only becomes effective in a given combination: left to itself, it is as sluggish and as incapable of initiative as a certain recently discovered gas named argon; and in the following pages I shall hope to demonstrate the properties and limitations of this recently discovered gas of our anti-Suffragist friends.

The True Function of the State.

It will be generally conceded, I think, that sheer physical force, the brute force of wild beast and savage man, impelled by hunger or greed, was the first external incentive to communal life, being,



in fact, the original evil which primitive society set itself to withstand. And in the putting of two and two together, with a mutual trust and for a common end, man discovered that he possessed strength *at compound interest*, and out of this discovery the State or commonwealth came into being. Its real basis, therefore, lay in man's reasonable apprehension of the advantages to be derived from combination; and with combination and consent to common action for the general good there came into play a new force—not physical, but economical. Two men fighting back to back, sure of each other's support, make a better defence against odds than two who fight independently. But the back-to-back position can only be taken up where there is mutual trust. And in that simple formula lies the secret why States not only can, but must, afford to deal justly by the weak as well as by the strong. Society thrives on the economy of its forces; economy depends on combination; combination depends on mutual trust; and from the general unity of the component parts may be broadly measured the strength of the whole.

In the long run the State which uses its resources with economy, self-discipline, and harmony prevails over States, often numerically stronger, which employ their energies in waste and luxury and discord; and that State is always strongest, other things being equal, which sets the welfare of the whole above the welfare of the individual. I need not labour a point which past records have proved. The most decisive events in the world's history are those victories which have been won by the few over the many, because their national ideal was more passionate, more absorbing, and more communal than that of their more numerous or more wealthy opponents. It is quite true that physical force is necessary to produce action; but its application through a wisely adjusted State resembles the application of a given unit of power by means of a lever, infinitely outweighing in result the same unit when applied with no such mediary aid. And just as your lever is the essential medium for efficiency, so is your commonwealth. As long as it holds together and is properly balanced it has a tremendous "pull," but only when welded without fault or flaw into a homogenous structure can it be really effective; and that which gives to this communal instrument its full balance and power is the consent of all its component parts to take their share of the strain that is imposed. It is, therefore, a far heavier blow to the welfare and power of a State for the people to lose confidence in the justice of its laws than to lose confidence in its defences or in its army. In the first case it is the moral force of the State which is called in question; in the second it is merely the physical; and while doubt as regards the latter leads only to reorganisation, doubt as regards the former leads to revolution—a curious commentary on the doctrine that physical force is the true basis of government!

Of physical force amenable to reason we have no cause to be afraid; for justice is more persistent than injustice, and the position of the women's movement to-day demonstrates how the

hardest prejudices and the most selfish interests give way to reason when once a hearing is accorded. And so in the world's history has every great cause won from a minority to a majority through the conversion of the physical by the moral power.

If, then, it is only physical force divorced from right and reason which we are bidden to fear, let us see where and in what proportion that kind of force shows itself under present conditions of civilisation. It shows itself on occasions of great disaster, such as the destruction of a city by earthquake, when, for a time, the institutions of law and order are shaken and disorganised; and it shows itself then, not in a majority, but in a small minority, admittedly the very scum of humanity, who, to do their work successfully, must hide themselves from the light of day and run at sight of their fellow-man. Even, therefore, while cataclysm lasts, it can only maintain a precarious existence, and has no binding principle by which it can prolong life after the cataclysmic conditions are over. Lacking the moral standard which alone is capable of inspiring mutual trust, it has not sufficient economic force to impose its will on society.

#### In Moments of Panic.

Unsocial physical force shows itself again in moments of panic, when men are thinking only of self-preservation. But there already, as we have things now, and quite irrespective of political enfranchisement, the women, the children, and the physically weak go to the wall, and are trampled under the feet of men. But when the panic is over the men are by no means proud of their exploit, or anxious for their physical prowess in the pursuit of the *ultima ratio* to be sounded abroad. A certain French aristocrat, who beat his way out of a burning charity bazaar with a walking-stick through crowds of struggling women, risked his life afterwards by fighting a duel in order to give the lie to the assertion that he had found salvation upon this "ultimate basis," which we are asked to regard as the final sanction of government. And if the individual finds the evil of that doctrine sufficient only unto the day, still less can it become for the State in its higher evolution a permanent basis of conduct.

Theorists who put forward these traits of unsocial and savage humanity as applicable in any fundamental sense to the present condition of society ignore the fact that modern States are far more ruled by economic than by purely physical forces. Far more remedial legislation has been brought about in the last hundred years by economic pressure than by threat of war or revolution; and especially is this true of legislation which has sought to better the conditions of the poor, the weak, and the ignorant. Democracy is gradually bringing us face to face with the fact that, if we remain too long deaf to the moral appeal, we must yield eventually to the economic; and unfortunately we have had to wait again and again, under our one-sided representative system, for the economic pressure to be felt before right has been done. We know



in our own history how the Jews and the Roman Catholics, though in each case a small minority, had to be enfranchised because their disenfranchisement proved a weakness to the economy of the State, and an offence to the public conscience. We know also how the passive resistance of the Quakers, whose tenets would never have allowed them to resort to physical violence, brought about, in 1843, the reform of those unjust laws of marriage registration to which every other section of Nonconformity had yielded unwilling submission. In all those matters physical force played a very small part, and conscience and economic force a very large part; and the pressure of morality and of economics in public affairs does not grow less as time goes on.

#### How a New Class Becomes Enfranchised.

At the present day in this country a large majority of men between the ages of twenty-one and sixty is already possessed of the Parliamentary franchise, and those who remain unenfranchised are, numerically, physically, and economically, the less powerful section of the community. From the physical force standpoint it would, therefore, be quite gratuitous for the present electorate to hand over any share of its power to others. But we know perfectly well that if, from this still unenfranchised class of the community, were to come a persistent and resolute demand for the further extension of the franchise, something would have to be done to meet the claim. The issue would not depend on a mere counting of noses or a weighing-up of physical forces, but on the genuineness and intensity of the demand, and on the straight, plain, staring fact that a strongly determined minority which puts forward a claim based on justice, can bring such economic pressure to bear on the Administration and the Legislature that even an unwilling majority has perforce to yield. The power to organise and the determination to agitate are in themselves the beginning of a qualification for political enfranchisement, for they are a proof of political vitality, and show that a fresh section of the community has awakened from sleep. As long as any class, through ignorance or lack of will, remains quiescent and consenting to the rule of others, as long as, in return for benefits real or supposed, it is willing to obey laws in the making of which it has had no share, so long can the State afford to withhold from it direct representation. But if its members become conscious that such conditions are ignominious, and begin to rebel against them; if they say, "Though weaker than you in physical power or fewer in numbers, we are willing and determined to take our share in the government of the State," then you have a new force to reckon with; a section of the community which was previously, from a political point of view, a negligible quantity, has taken to itself a new attribute, and presents, by the awakening of its will for citizenship, a claim which no democracy can afford to withstand. The mere demonstration of that desire for citizenship will draw to it a body of support from the already enfranchised—and especially from those social

workers who know how far-reaching a weakness to the State is the sloth and indifference of its citizens—such as will, in the end, bear down the opposition of class-prejudice and privilege. The willing service of its citizens is to the State like fresh air to a man's dwelling. Stupid, physical force may for a time shut it out; and when, to avoid suffocation, it resorts to ventilation, stupid, physical force no doubt imagines that it has done so entirely on its own initiative. The more ignorant a man is of the invisible forces which govern his life, the more will he fail to realise the nature of that power which drives him, "in the last resort," to open the door for the fresh air whose cold draught he so much dislikes. And so, I suppose, to the end of the chapter, a certain class of mind will continue to regard the State as the swayed and not the swayer of physical forces, being unable to apprehend the workings of that divine chemistry which, by invisible ways, is bringing about, daily and hourly, the evolution of man.

Now, if physical force is to be the basis of man's rule in the State, why should it not also remain the basis of man's rule in the home? But we know quite well that those homes where it is the basis do not show the best results, nor are they regarded as beneficent types of what a home should be. To say that the physical compulsion of wives is the *ultima ratio* of average home life among savages is true: but here in England it is an idiotic statement. Economic compulsion there very often is, and it is the unjust economic pressure imposed on married women under modern conditions which keeps many an unhappy home from falling apart. But were physical compulsion added, the turning-point, in a great many cases, would be reached, and the application of your "true basis of government" would lead to the breaking-up of many more homes than is now the case. No doubt our physical force preachers will argue that the compulsory powers of the husband have merely passed into the hands of the State. But that is not the case. The State, it is true, tried for a while to assume them, but the attempt has broken down; and, though some of the old formulæ remain, the claim—in this country, at all events—has been abandoned. Even in France, where the Napoleonic Code still gives the husband the right to the service of two gendarmes to enforce his will upon a reluctant wife, such a disgusting and farcical remedy is never attempted; the public conscience would not stand it, nor, in some cases, would the lives of the husbands who invoked it be safe.

#### Behind the Fighting Line.

We come now to the argument which the physical force theorists seek to draw from these very unstable premises—namely, that as women "cannot fight," therefore they must not vote. And just as we found that their definition of the modern State broke down on examination, so shall we find that their implied definition of a modern army has very little relation to anything that exists in the present day. In primitive, and even in later times, an army was really and truly composed of nothing but fighting men (with occa-



sionally a picked body of fighting women thrown in); its sustenance was drawn from the country through which it ravaged its way, or consisted in the fat of the slain left upon the stricken field. Your savage warrior, that is to say, depended in the last resort on killing his enemy in order to obtain his supper. But the conscience of civilised man no longer permits us to wage war on such physically economical lines, so savage a breed of blood being incompatible with the life of a civilised community. Yet we have at the same time not stinted to multiply and to increase the efficiency of our killing apparatus, with the curious economic result that for every enemy slain we have to incur an expenditure of £1,000 or upwards, and that often quite as many are killed accidentally by disease as intentionally by bullet.\* And the organisation which we have thus produced demands for its existence a proportion of non-combatants to combatants which can certainly never be less than five to one, for at the back of every combatant we have a whole string of workers through whose exertions alone he is able to take the field; and so it may truly be said that the application of his physical force at any given point depends quite as much on their consent as on his. Our military organisation, in fact, has developed just as our civil organisation has done, and depends for its working not on mere physical force, but on an economic combination which draws upon the whole community for its supplies; and (failing moral revulsion) it is economic and not physical exhaustion which nowadays brings wars to an end.

Now this dependence of an army on its rear has in the last fifty years enormously increased. Fifty years ago we loaded our guns through the muzzle; then we loaded them through the breech; and now we load them through a magazine in the stock. And as with our fire-arms, so with our armies—the *loading-point has been put farther and farther back*. For that reason alone, then, if for no other, it is untrue to say that women cannot be fighters: the army is a weapon loaded from the rear, and women as well as men are the loaders of it; and women, even more than men, are the cleaners of it when it becomes fouled through much fighting. Not only, then, has this increasing importance of the rear given to the non-combatant a new standing in relation to war, but fighting itself has come to depend more on nerve and less on muscular force than in the old days of close combat; and though civilisation has, until the last twenty or thirty years, tended to make women less physically fit for such service, the development of arms of precision and long-distance fighting has on the contrary tended to make such service more possible.

The real question, therefore, that we have to meet is: where in a wisely conducted State can the service of women be most economically and effectively employed during war? And if it be found that in the rear of the fighting-line she is worth a man and a half, and in the fighting-line itself something less than the average man, that may be a very good reason for requiring her

\*The cost of the Boer War to this country alone was £226,331,000; the number of killed on both sides is reckoned at 166,073.

services accordingly, but it is none whatever for depriving her of citizenship. If the co-operation of women is necessary for the efficiency of a modern army, then their right to representation, even on the physical force basis, clearly follows; for, if you deny it, it is within their power, when you are next engaged in war, to compel it; and that compulsion could be brought about not by any muscular effort, but by the avoidance of it. I suggested just now that behind the fighting-line a woman's value may be even more than a man's; it certainly is so in military base-hospitals, for it accords with human nature that the presence of women nurses has a more cheering and restorative effect on the sick and wounded than that of male nurses. That is a definite sex-value which the State cannot afford to let go: exclude women from your military hospitals, and your armed forces are weakened. And so, the more you examine into the economics of modern warfare, the more surely will you find that without the co-operation of women its conditions would become intolerable; for not only would its horrors and suffering be greatly increased, but its cost to the community, both in treasure and in the dislocation of trade, would prove crushing even to the wealthiest of states.

But society has, quite reasonably, come to the conclusion that woman can be better employed for the common good away from the fighting-line. In motherhood she has a battle-field of her own, where she also risks her life: but no one therefore suggests that she alone has sufficient responsibility for home legislation, nor is any attempt made so to divide our Legislature that women, excluded from foreign affairs, may have at least an equal share in all that relates to internal government. Yet in a very real sense the ultimate physical force in the internal economy of the State lies in the hands of women. It is there unconsciously even in States where women still live in passive subjection: it is there consciously wherever education and social development have aroused instincts of self-possession and free will. And the educational and social conditions to which women have already attained in this country (conditions on which it is impossible for us now to go back) are sufficiently advanced, even without the vote, to bring that consciousness of power more and more to life. You cannot, in this country, make women the mothers of live, sane, and healthy stock against their will; their power of life and death in that connection is too absolute for man's control; and continuous physical compulsion on his part would only defeat his end. Of the two extreme powers inherent in the State—to kill and to make alive—the latter rests to a preponderating extent with the women, and is the more essential of the two. That is an economic condition which must always defeat mere physical violence if the two are ever to be brought into conflict under any form of popular government. Your physical force theorists take their outlook over a society where motherhood has remained quiescent and submissive; but were motherhood to rise in revolt against the pressure of unequal laws, then "all the king's horses and all the king's men" would be powerless against it.



What physical force, however, would be unable to cure, social instinct will prevent; and it is by the quickening of social instinct, and not by physical force, that the higher values of womanhood are gradually obtaining their recognition in the State. Social or race instinct imposes on men the duty of saving women and children before themselves from shipwreck and fire—not out of chivalry, not because they are the weaker, but because with them lies, in a larger proportion, the material necessary for the increase and continuance of the race. For the same reason social instinct taught men quite early that the State could better afford to lose its males in war than its women; and the withdrawal of the latter from the fighting-line was a direct recognition that they had a higher value elsewhere. But what has become quite wisely a law of nations is not necessarily a law of nature; and, as a matter of fact, whenever a nation is *in extremis* the rules laid down in peace count for less and less; the more desperately the community stands at bay the nearer do its women approach the fighting-line; and in spite of custom, and prejudice, and long disuse, women when thus called on have proved even up to modern times that they can fight not merely with courage but with efficiency.\*

We find, then, on examination that the physical force theory is merely an assertion that the majority of male electors, forgetful of past history, may become so short-sighted as really to believe that physical force can choose its own path irrespective of economics, and will turn to revolution if it finds obstruction in its way. If it does so the revolution will be short-lived. The old fable of the war which the members of the body waged against the stomach is always applicable, quite irrespective of sex, wherever ill-conducted force sets out to defeat function. The physical force party, the arms, the legs, the hands, and the loud-boasting mouth, thought to score an easy victory over their uncombative opponent. They found out their mistake: the stomach remained unconquerable. And whether in military or civil affairs it is the stomach, the internal economy, which dispenses strength to the rest, and those who seek to control it by physical violence will only live to discover that they have "no stomach for the fight."

Anti-suffragists are disturbing themselves quite unnecessarily. If the movement for women's enfranchisement has not a preponderance of the economic forces at its back it will come to nothing; but if, as we believe, those forces are its allies, then no amount of physical violence can bring about their defeat. Economy is the automatic controller of government, an instrument welded by the combined life and industry of the State: physical force is but the raw material out of which it is made, only valuable if directed to a really economic end, and, if wrongly directed, finding its mistake from the economic pressure that ensues.

\* During the Indian Mutiny, the rebels produced only one leader of real military ability, the Ranee of Jhanzi. When at last defeated she died fighting in the ranks.

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# Woman. and Evolution.

By

Sybil Smith.



## WOMAN AND EVOLUTION.

"The centuries have made us, forcing us into new practices, teaching us new habits, creating for us new capacities and wants, adding, ever and anon, to the soul organism of mankind features, which at first were but accidental peculiarities, which became little by little, qualities deliberately sought for and at length inborn and hereditary characteristics."—Essay on "Mediæval Love,"  
VERNON LEE.

FOR all practical purposes we are apt to regard ourselves and our fellows as the finished product of the ages, and man, or rather modern civilized man, as a being to be taken as found, for good or for evil, and as such to be made the most of, or kept in bounds by legislators and rulers. How often is it said in objection to any new idea on social reform: "You cannot change human nature!" the objector failing to see that the mere existence of the desire for such reform argues that human nature is changing or rather being modified in some new direction. Certainly the same forces of nature are at work in the being of the modern Englishman as in the being of the savage, but in the course of evolution natural instincts become modified, amplified and complicated almost beyond recognition. The same impulse animates the bestial craving of a Caliban for the object of his desire, the devoted selfless love of a Dobbin for his Amelia, and the spiritual passion of a St. Francis for all things living, but in practice these phenomena bear little or no resemblance to each other. Surely, if anything is certain, it is that human nature is plastic and the human race in a state of transition. What countless and widely varying phases must it have manifested in its descent, or rather in its ascent from monkey-like ancestors to its present so-called civilisation! The end of this wonderful though painful and laborious process of development on our planet remains as obscure as is at present the origin of life. But may we not hope at least that evolution is leading us towards an ultimate unfolding of faculty and a high degree of morality as remote from our present conditions as are they from the brutality and instinctive unreason of primitive man. It is at all events a possibility worth all the faith, hope and charity we are capable of bringing towards its fulfilment, all the more in that Science would have us believe that a retrograde movement of the race, a process of degeneration, is equally possible.

When physical force alone ruled the world, woman by

reason of her physical inferiority sank into a condition of complete subservience to man—she became his slave, his absolute possession as we still see her in the East and in all Mahomedan countries.

The reason for woman's inferior size and muscular strength as compared to man's may possibly be found in the disability caused by the prolonged care of the child which remains helpless for so much longer a period than the young of any other animal. However that may be, such disparity is a striking fact, though under natural conditions it is probably far smaller than we are accustomed to think. (1)

Zoology shows that some animals have developed along the female line at the expense of the male, as in the case of a certain spider (2), of which the male is described as a small parasite living on the female, with whom she is apt to deal in a summary manner when his agility fails to save him from her clutches. This suggests that differences in the mental and physical constitution of the sexes in any animal species is determined by external causes without reference, except indirectly, to the sex functions.

Science tells us that the simplest and oldest manifestation of life known is in the form of sexless organisms that propagate themselves by cellular division or fission, that the differentiation of the sexes came about through the gradual growth and increase of faculty by the slow forming of special organs for different purposes. It is part of the wonder and mystery of life that each individual is potentially of both sexes and that one set of reproductive organs develops rather than the other as the result of some unknown prenatal stimulus. Does not this last fact point to the probability that in spite of essential temperamental difference between the sexes, mind in both is at least in essence the same?

The laws of natural selection and the survival of the fittest are presumably as potent factors as ever in the history of mankind, but it would seem that now-a-days physical supremacy alone is no longer what most fits

(1) The unhealthy conditions of life of a woman in our towns, such as tight, inconvenient clothing, and insufficiency of air and exercise, tend to artificially increase her bodily weakness. With the majority of these women, child-bearing and its attendant functions become difficult, highly painful and even dangerous, but it is well known that among some savage races, and among our countrywomen who do hard field labour, these functions are attended with hardly any suffering at all.

The peasant women of Galicia carry loads on their heads that few Englishmen could carry.

(2) "The Descent of Man,"—Chap. IX., *Darwin*.



the individual to survive. Muscular strength conduces ever less and less to this end, while nervous energy, intellectual activity, endurance, strength of will to dominate, and the power of combining with others to attain desired objects, are some of the qualities most necessary in the competitive struggle of modern life. For this reason women are more able every day to assert themselves and to make themselves felt otherwise than by the charm of their sex.

It may be contended that neither sex is superior to the other, but that each is, in the widest sense, necessary to each; that woman is not necessarily man's inferior in faculty because she is different from him in constitution; that her powers are the compliment of his and that her strength corresponds with his weakness as his with hers. Man's inferior in size and muscularity, woman is probably his superior in her capacity for endurance, while Forel, perhaps the acutest recorder of the psychological difference between the sexes, pronounces her man's superior in will power though his inferior in creative imagination. (1).

Many centuries have gone by since the Spirit of Progress began to stir in the being of the Woman of the West urging her to cast off the yoke of man which she wears to his hurt as much as to her own. She is nearly free now, but still there are some bonds which hold her, and the end is not yet.

May her complete freedom herald social conditions higher, wider and purer than any the world has yet seen.

In a polygamous State, such as Turkey for instance, the entire responsibility of the maintenance of woman is thrown on man. In the strictest sense one sex is kept by the other, and the prostitute or the self-supporting woman almost unknown. Woman's whole destiny, according to Mahomedan ideas, which deny her even a soul, is to be a breeding machine and an instrument to man's pleasure and profit. As such, she is the absolute property of her father or husband. But though woman does the bulk of the labour of the country, her task is meted out to her according to her strength as we give work to our horses, and should she fall sick or become too old for work, the charge of her keep devolves upon her husband: she has no anxiety as to her future and none of the cares of a responsible member of the community. Possibly while still completely uneducated and in subjection, woman is happy and contented under such conditions; whether she is the best possible mother for

(1) "The Sexual Question."—Forel.

the rising generation of a progressive race is another question. One might suppose that a life of unintelligent drudgery or one of equally unintelligent luxury would unfit her, to a great extent, mind and body, for the high function of maternity. Nevertheless such a condition as described above is the logical outcome of the theory that woman by reason of her sex is essentially inferior to man, should depend upon him, and must for ever remain unfit alike for the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. Those who cling to such theories should have the courage of their opinions as had Schopenhauer (1) and declare themselves in favour of polygamy.

It would seem that nature, or as some prefer to call it—The Divine Impulse—is working in the white races to evolve a monogamous from a polygamous people. In spite of all conventional assurance to the contrary, the existence of eighty thousand prostitutes in London alone proves that such a condition, except as an ideal and in some individual instances, has not yet been in any true sense attained (2).

Man of the Western nations has always been haunted by the ideal woman, in union with whom he should at last find himself a perfect and complete being; she has been imagined, pictured, longed for by countless poets, thinkers and philosophers; Man's true companion and twin soul—his complement, not his inferior—equal in power and importance if different in function—his fellow labourer sharing equally with him the burden and stress of life and so lightening it for both. He is still pursuing this ideal, and many and strange are the phases passed through on the way.

When man began to form a more elevated idea of woman, and of love for woman, he separated love from passion in his thoughts and dealings. So on the one hand we find the wife and mother chosen for judicious reasons—often by the family of the contracting parties—without reference to the affections on either side, exacting respect, esteem and calm affection in return for her maternity and wise ordering of the home—on the other hand stands the mistress, for whom all passionate regard is reserved. The passional side of life is represented by an undertow of un-

(1) Essay on Woman.—Schopenhauer.

(2) "The latest estimates show that at the commencement of the year 1906 there were upwards of eighty thousand women in London who were living more or less upon the wages of prostitution, and that of these not less than one-tenth were removed from the ranks by death within the limits of their first year." See statistics published by the London Female Guardian Society, 1906.—Annette M. B. Meakin.



fortunate women without position or consideration. We find a regular example of this system in Japan (1), where passionate love for a woman to be taken to wife is held to be nearly impossible, and in any case irregular and almost improper, while prostitution is legalised and regulated by the State, and its necessity and desirability never called in question. The same system still prevails, if somewhat modified, among the Latin races, but the Anglo-Saxon races have formed another ideal. With them the matrimonial choice is left to the individual and a man is by way of offering passionate love combined with affection and respect to the woman he desires to make his wife. She, after marriage, according to public opinion, has a right to expect fidelity from her husband—(though not according to the law of England—*vide* the Divorce Laws).

Though, thanks to the energy and devotion of women reformers, prostitution is not countenanced by law in England, still we find women divided in two camps for satisfaction of man's dual nature, and a large proportion of the "weaker sex" living as prostitutes in the utmost degradation. These are irrevocably cut off from any intercourse with respectable women, the mothers, sisters, wives and daughters of their male associates. Socially ostracised, beyond the chivalry and consideration of men, deprived of all home life and domestic affections, they are debarred from any surroundings that might tend to wean them from their horrible trade. They sink from stage to stage of vice into an abyss of misery, and with hardly any exception die early of drink and foul disease. Those who have lived and worked among these wretched women tell us that few survive more than five years after taking to the life of the streets, and that for one woman who "goes wrong" from natural depravity, ten are driven to do so because of the impossibility of retrieving their position after the first or second fall, or of obtaining any honest employment where their history is known, while many girls take to this life from sheer pressure of starvation and dread of the workhouse (2).

Consider these facts and remember that in London something like one woman in every thirty is a prostitute.

This is the state of things which many would have us believe is necessary to the health and sanity of the male half of the population! Necessary! If this were

(1) 'Japan.'—*Lafcadio Hearn*.

(2) The writer knows a woman, a widow of thirty, who too delicate and incompetent to work, became a prostitute in order to support herself and her five little girls, the alternative being the workhouse and separation from her children. There are many such cases.

true then are these poor women entitled to respect and consideration as essential to the well being of the State, and should have their definite place in Society! As things are at present, the honourable wives, mothers and daughters of England, held too pure to even hear of such matters, much less to come in contact with prostitution in the persons of the females who practise it as a means of livelihood, indulge in virtue at the expense of their unhappy sisters. Surely if men individually would pause and face these hideous facts as just stated, many of them would die rather than add to the demand for such an awful supply of human life.

Here in England women are being drawn more and more every day into the labour market for economic reasons. An ever increasing number of women find themselves thrown upon their own resources and must either work or starve (or resort to the third terrible alternative as described above)—till now something like fifty per cent. of the sex are wage earners. Is the growing necessity for women to work altogether deplorable, or is it perhaps a healthy sign of the times—of the evolution of woman! Who can say!

So long as the women of Great Britain outnumber the men to the extent that they do at present, it is impossible that the male sex should provide for the maintenance of the whole female sex in a monogamous state and under modern conditions of labour. Wives living at the expense of their husbands can at best form but a small majority, and few men are able or willing to hold themselves responsible for the well-being of their nearest unmarried female relatives. As it is a large proportion of the work of the country is done by women.

In the ideal State, women bearing or nursing children should unquestionably be exempt from any but the lightest labour (which is far from being the case under our own Constitution), but there would remain a large residue of spinsters, widows and married women, either childless or with children too old to need their care, on whom many duties and responsibilities might fall to the great advantage of the community.

Those who in theory hold that all women should be allowed the opportunity to exercise their sex functions and eventually become wives and mothers, should call to mind that such a state of things is mathematically impossible combined with monogamy. They must make their choice between polygamy, monogamy based on prostitution as we see it to-day, or a true monogamy that recognises an honourable and useful virginity for the large minority of women who necessarily remain



unmarried. It is often asserted that unmarried women are specially prone to hysteria and sex derangement. If true perhaps this is due to the fact that so many among them are dependent and unoccupied. The typical old maid—shrivelled, discontented, bitter and narrow, belongs in almost every case to the leisured classes. Is the average number of neurotic subjects higher—say, among the nurses at the London Hospital than among any other class of women? The physical and mental development so often observed in a newly-married woman may largely be accounted for by the increase of happiness, the wider life, the assured position, the healthy occupation and wealth of interests which marriage generally brings (1). Any noticeable difference between married and unmarried women of the working classes is, if anything, to the advantage of the unmarried woman. It is undeniable that marriage is essential to the health and happiness of some temperaments, but this is not the general rule.

The spirit of womanhood is needed everywhere to temper the masculine spirit and draw out the full powers of both. The race suffers when one sex develops at the expense of the other—for ultimately the interests of both are identical; if one goes to the wall both suffer. Not till the feminine element pervades our political life as well as our social life, shall we see woman able to make her own terms, and the same moral standard applied to both sexes alike.

What does Woman's demand for the parliamentary vote signify?

The vote represents of course certain actual tangible privileges; but above and beyond these the vote is to woman the certificate of her equality with man—the hallmark of her co-responsibility with him, and the acknowledgment of her equal importance to the State. It is the sign that her opinions and wishes are as worthy as his of attention. In short it confers on her the degree of citizenship.

Men alone so far have made a poor business of Society. Who knows what men and women shoulder to shoulder may not do!

(1) The writer knew a case of a young woman in whom much the same effect was produced when she was first allowed to train as a hospital nurse after some years of opposition from her family. On the other hand, the most pronounced case of sex derangement and hysteria in the writer's knowledge was that of a married woman of forty living on good terms with her husband, and the mother of several children. She was a clever woman, and possibly a rather narrow home life did not give sufficient scope to her capacities.

## I. WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

"The question of Women's rights can only be decided with the question of rights in general, of which it is a part."

"No individual of the human species has any rights, or else all have the same."

Secretan.

Condorcet.

A human being is, as such, a person.

The autonomy of a person has for its foundation and guarantee the civic personality conferred by law.

This right of autonomy finds its justification in social service which implies duties and corresponding responsibilities.

Every human being contributes something to the life of the community.

What we term Right—"le droit"—defines the respective rights of each contributor. It is therefore the expression of the law which regulates the life of the community, the guarantee of order and the essential condition of an effective solidarity.

What is right finds its expression in Law.

Absolute right guarantees the respect, the honour and the liberty of the individual person.

From time immemorial, man has arrogated to himself the right to make the Law. He has arrogated this right to himself by virtue of his physical force, regardless of any principle of right. The Revolutionary Proclamation of "THE RIGHTS OF MAN" ignored the rights of Woman!

Woman is a person. She performs her part in social service, consequently she has responsibilities in her capacity of woman, wife, mother and worker. She contributes in these various capacities towards the maintenance and enrichment of Society. She suffers in bearing children. She gives citizens to the State. She undertakes the important duty of cherishing life in infancy. She trains the child at the outset of its life. She works in the home and in the factory. She is at once housekeeper and worker. She goes out to service, into business, takes her share in the hard work of the fields, pays taxes, exercises thrift, submits to the law.

As a person, Woman is governed by Right. The question of a Woman's Right is identical with the question of Right in general.

Woman must be either a slave, or free and self governing to the same extent as man and by virtue of the same law. In a democracy every member of the community has the right to establish his or her legal status by the making of laws or the organising of public administration, either directly or through representation. Woman ought to have this power of establishing her legal position, and of evolving the laws to which she is obliged to submit. Any other system is based on slavery. There can be no true freedom where this right is not conceded.

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Law must therefore ensure that woman has this primary right. Civic right is nothing but the emanation of political right. There would be no law without political right. Political right is the guarantee of civic right.

Woman, to be a free person, must possess political right.

This right is only refused to her by a legal convention which, without any juridical basis, establishes an arbitrary system of law.

Political sovereignty is not essentially masculine.

Men and women are persons. *The accident of sex does not create personality.* Men and women should therefore possess equal rights.

The marriage state, whether it be the consecration of a union "sui generis" founding a family, or a simple contract of partnership freely entered into, cannot suppress a woman's personal autonomy. It cannot place her outside the law, unless it raises a law of disability against her. The legal ordinance of marriage must respect equality of rights as between the couple, and the woman should have a voice in formulating the marriage laws which bind her.

Up to now her only law has been man's law.

Woman is a being physiologically different from man. Her social activities will generally, therefore, be different from his, but neither the physiological nor the mental capabilities of a human being can determine the elemental rights of that person. *Nor is it possible for the nature of the sex to constitute a special right.*

Civic power can only justly be restricted in the case of those who are not considered responsible for their actions (as in the case of minors), irrespective of sex.

A person who is not in complete possession of legal rights is in the position of a *Minor*.

In order to give liberty and equality of rights to both sexes the capacity and function must be recognised as an essential condition of justice. There can be no real justice so long as woman is refused equal rights with man, and is unable to take her share in making the laws which govern her.

"We have no knowledge, and we can have none, of what justice demands so long as woman is not consulted." (Secretan).

The Woman who does not possess the same rights as man, above all the fundamental right of establishing her own legal status, is therefore not a free being.

The State represents the Community. Its existence implies the principle of recognition of the rights of all.

Woman forms a part of the whole; it is by her that the race is perpetuated and she is subject to the laws which constitute the State.

A democracy is based on the right of every citizen to contribute towards the framing and improvement of the Community's laws. As long as women do not possess this right, the State must be a power based upon exclusion; its representation is inadequate, founded on privilege, and it cannot be a true democracy.

The State should derive its power from ascertaining the will of the whole people, and woman is part of the people. Without complete Civil and Political Rights for her, it is not possible to have universal Suffrage, or real electoral representation.

Electoral rights include eligibility.

"Democracy," says Buisson, "is the administration which makes the right to the Suffrage a natural one, independent of the material, moral, economic, or social circumstances in which a person may live."

It does not matter to us whether man can justify the privilege he has reserved for himself or not, what we ask is, that he should justify the exception he has made in the case of woman.

J. S. Mill said that the task of proving *why* they withheld rights which all should have in common from half the human race devolved on those who denied liberty and equality to women.

To recognise woman as a citizen with electoral and other rights, equal to man's, will be to introduce an element which is lacking, and which ought logically to be included, in the organisation of a democracy. The forces of democracy will then be complete. Woman will contribute those moral and psychic qualities which are characteristic of her sex, and her influence will tend to direct politics towards measures of hygienic, educational and social reform.

The State is the family on a larger scale and it needs the experience, the devotion, and the varied faculties of the woman as much as it needs those of the man. It is the woman who provides the State with citizens and the democracy with soldiers. *Woman is a part of the nation* and the nation cannot be rationally organised without her aid.

To deny women the right to consider themselves a part of the nation as citizens, and to contribute as free and responsible persons to the organisation of a democracy whose laws they are subjected to, is not only to show a want of respect towards woman, but also to furnish a proof that you have no faith in justice for all.

A democracy is governed by the consciences of its people. Does woman not possess one? And, what is more, is hers not often more scrupulous than a man's? Is her conscience not a part of the nation's endowment? To forbid its expression is to rob the people.



## II. ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS.

"The higher the status of Woman, the greater the influence of the family."—*Legouvé*.

A.—Society is based upon the principle of the division of labour and of duties. To man is allotted public administration, to woman the government of the home and the management of the children.

*Reply*.—The division of labour does not involve a duality of rights. Public administration demands responsibilities and moral competence, and that woman can bring to it. The care of a house, children, household economies, food, etc., entails responsibilities and capabilities which the orderly administration of the public service also require. The question of public education, health, control of food supplies, taxation, domestic service, etc., equally require these attributes. If "nature" has ordained a differentiation of the capabilities and activities of the sexes, "justice" ordains an equality in their rights.

This equality in no way implies identity in duties. Although woman differs from man by nature, *she remains his equal in value*. Not all women are married. Widows and spinsters have not always the care of a home. Many widows are childless, and even admitting that certain married women are content that their husbands, and not they, should possess the right to vote, there are others who are not so, and who demand their share of liberty.

B.—Woman's place is in the home. The working woman is a "social mistake," and the rights claimed for her as a worker and a tool for the production of public wealth, will but encourage her in a vocation for which she is not suited.

*Reply*.—There can be no liberty that does not give the right to earn one's own living. Woman must have the same right as a man to work for wages. Under present conditions when working, she is, as a woman, usually exploited, and works for lower wages than a man. She is also constantly subjected to annoyances, and even losses, consequent upon her subordinate position. She is defenceless. Woman ought not to be necessarily economically dependent on a husband. How will those women live who have lost theirs, or remained single? The question is not whether a woman ought, or ought not to work for her living. *She works*, and this very fact gives her the right to all her rights.

"Since you allow women to work, equally with men, you are bound to admit that they have the same right as men have to protect themselves."—(Mlle. Clement).

C.—Woman has a social prerogative that is worth all the others put together. She bears and brings up the coming generation. Here is a nobler task than any that the right to vote would give her.

*Reply*.—If motherhood is a joy, it is also a heavy burden. The child who is to become a citizen of the State and subject to its laws, is often the victim of social wrongs and immoralities. He or she can be better protected and guided by a mother, conscious of the responsibility involved, and having a voice in the Government of the country to which she gives her child. Responsible women with rights will be better advisers, teachers, and mothers. The worth of family life cannot be independent of the condition of a country. Women ought to be free to act directly for the welfare of their country, and not be reduced to doing so only through the influence they can exercise over their husbands.

D.—Military Service for man has an equivalent in political rights. Woman is exonerated from this duty.

*Reply*.—The responsibility of maternity, which is also a blood tax, is equivalent to the military service for which the women furnish the men, and if it is deemed necessary let the women who have not the duties of motherhood to fulfil be enrolled as citizens with other duties. The good soldier will be the good citizen,—and the good citizen is the child brought up by an intelligent mother, conscious of her rights and capable of exercising them, both nationally and locally.

"Neither logically nor by law is the suffrage bound up with military service."—(*Buisson*.)

E.—To enfranchise women would be to introduce discord into the home, and would have the effect of turning women away from their proper duties.

*Reply*.—This argument only applies to married women and is therefore of no general value. It is based on an autocratic conception of marriage which sees only the "head of the family," who is assumed by law to be alone capable of directing the conjugal union as well as the affairs of his country. Facts, but too often, give the lie to this theory. We see an alarming proportion of our electors ignorant, illiterate, immoral, and stupid. In regard to a man's position as a husband, these facts make no difference. Why is the wife of such a man to remain silent when matters of the gravest importance to herself, her family, and her country are in question? As to disputes, the couple must settle these between themselves; it is not for the law to establish the tutelage of women in order to avoid any possible conflicts.

Besides, the system under which woman has been treated as a minor, has not had the effect of diminishing the number of matrimonial quarrels, witness the divorce cases or even the numbers of unhappy marriages. But why should there be disputes? These are more often caused by mere frivolities than by the performing of duties held in common, which would, on the



contrary, only serve to create new and powerful bonds between husband and wife.

*F.*—Woman has not the “political acumen.”

*Reply.*—When men have shown theirs we can begin discussing this point.

The present party contests with their pettiness, their dishonest combinations and self-interest, are not calculated to give women a high idea of the spirit in which men conduct their politics. Women will have a spirit that is lacking in men, that of intuition and a sense of refinement which are not always attributes of the stronger sex. Women would make good prison visitors, clever Governors of hospitals, and fervent partisans of those who are fighting against the evils of drink, of which they and their children are the principal victims.

They will insist on respect for their sex, which has, up to now, been so poorly protected by men's laws. They will combat the code of morality so jealously preserved for themselves by the makers and administrators of the law. They will give useful advice in discussing the curriculum in the schools where their children are educated. They will, as members of a chamber of commerce, know what to decide in furthering the interests of their sisters in business. Or as members of Children's Courts they will bring in more just and helpful decisions. Wise in their election of Ministers to the Churches, or as parish councillors, they will also fight against the immorality lying in wait for their children in the streets. They will, in many cases, elect more honest and suitable administrators and so purify the political atmosphere of the lobbies.

Above all, the working woman will be enabled to protect herself, and to improve her position both morally and economically.

If “political acumen” is lacking in women, the world may very well dispense with it.

Women will protest more effectually than men against the military enterprises, which, hidden behind “diplomatic necessities,” deprive them so lightly of those they hold most dear, their children.

Finally, the sense of civic responsibility will help women to combat successfully those defects, which we do not deny that they may have, but which our present system simply serves to accentuate.

*G.*—The legislative faculty is essentially a masculine characteristic.

*Reply.*—The law is not solely the transcribing of theoretic principles of right, even if it were, women would be quite capable of understanding it. Law is the exposition of social requirements, concerning women as well as men, therefore, the laws framed by men only must of necessity be incomplete and inefficient. Who can say whether the suffrage when exercised

by them may not be the means of developing in women capabilities and talents hitherto unknown. Woman has always been treated as a minor, her mental transformation under new conditions may become very great after a generation of her new majority.

*H.*—Granting political equality to woman would mean dragging her down to the level of the political arena, with its battles and the rough and tumble these entail, it is also asking her to keep herself in touch with the political questions of the day.

*Reply.*—Politics have degenerated largely into a sport in which private ambitions are the prevailing factor, they are also but too often associated with calumnies and slanders. If woman can introduce an element of moderation, honesty, and self-control, since she even more than man, needs peace and the assurance of public morality for herself and her children, surely Society at large must benefit by the change? And if these new duties necessitate curtailing the time hitherto devoted to shopping, visiting, novel reading, etc., in order to study questions of vital importance to her country, surely it can but be for her own good, as well as that of the Community?

A young bachelor, degenerate, and devoid of intelligence, may vote; but the respectable hard-working mother of a family may not. Is this logical? Is it just thus to lower the prestige of the mother? Is it wise thus to shake the foundations of the family?

*I.*—The right of the vote for women can be maintained in theory and from the point of view of justice. But in practice it is not desirable, and society is not upheld by theories.

*Reply.*—If a principle is just, that principle must be applied. *The experience of those countries where women have the vote, shows the great social value of this reform.*

The exercise of a “right” educates those called upon to make use of it. The Ballot is directly bound up with the destinies of a country and its citizens. Their moral worth may depend upon it. Politics ought to be the direct expression of what tends towards the best interests, moral and material of the nation.

*J.*—If a woman can become an elector, she will also have to be eligible.

*Reply.*—The right to be an elector carries with it the right to eligibility. We can see no valid reason why her rights should be restricted in any direction. Power should depend upon fitness.

If a woman is capable of being a deputy, and of that we have proof, sex *of itself* should not prevent her becoming one. Either the right to vote is a right, in which case it, and the consequences it entails, must be given to all, or it is merely a restricted right, in which case let it, with its accompanying



privileges, be given to the most capable only. *And under those circumstances sex will not affect the question.*

K.—Woman is largely under the influence of the Church. Her vote will increase the influence of religion and clericalism in politics, which is contrary to a good secular administration of the nation's affairs.

Reply.—If Clericalism constitutes a danger to the country and women are strongly influenced by it, *this danger is increased* by the fact of their being set aside and given no responsibility in the conduct of public affairs. Under present conditions they are left fatally accessible to special influences. They can only realize the true needs of the State through a clear understanding of its machinery, and by feeling that they are free to help in its organisation.

L.—If one can justify the introduction of women as administrators of schools or the Poor Law, to allow them to be electors in Church matters is surely a doubtful proceeding? It should be thoroughly understood that they cannot become eligible for the Ministry.

Reply.—To leave women out of Ecclesiastical Organisation is to deprive the Church of those who could render her the greatest service. Are those who support the Church to be refused the right to take a practical interest in her work? Women have in most cases essentially the religious spirit, and can largely aid in the development of that spirit by a judicious choice of its teachers. The Churches are suffering from the effects of the exclusion of women from their Councils. Those who no longer do so are congratulating themselves on the result.

As for refusing women the right to don a preacher's surplice, in other words, to speak God's word, read the Gospel, deal with Spiritual matters, or pray in public, that is as much as to assert that man only is capable of being inspired by the Spirit of God and, therefore, that he holds more direct communication with the Divinity than woman does! Men are very far from having proved that such is the case!

M.—Woman is the "Angel of the Home," the cherished being whose grace and charm beautify life. Lay not sacrilegious hands on the "Eternal Feminine."

Reply.—With Secretan I say, "Would that blood might flow from my pen to arouse some pride in the hearts of my sisters."

The "Eternal Feminine" means, alas, the eternal dupe! Forced to stand aside from all great social problems, she has grown careless, often wanting in logic, trusting more to her innate intuition than to her reasoning faculties, and yet, in spite of all, she has given, and still gives, greater proofs of moral heroism and noble endurance of suffering, than man. Yet it is she, usually so dependent, who becomes so easily a sport

for those gentlemen. In this connection the "Angel of the Home" is good for anything. State immorality, as well as that of individuals, takes shameful advantage of Woman's helpless position both legally and economically. Her dependent position contributes, in many cases, to her downfall. She will never be able to defend herself properly till she is armed with the vote, and morality, public and private, will profit by it.

"Men and Society have accustomed them to be charming rather than intelligent. Having been deprived by men of the means of distinguishing themselves by their intellect they applied themselves solely to that which might cause them to appear more attractive."—(P. de la Barre, 1676).

An old saying but still a true one.

And Marie Deraisme said: "Let a woman go on the stage, let her influence be demoralising and depraving, she will receive an ovation. But let a woman mount a platform to speak of morality and virtue and every form of ridicule will be directed against her."

As Secretan said with as much courage as truth: "Are three thousand years of experience not sufficient to show that the respectable woman's being reduced to a mere cypher owing to her suppression, her superficial instruction, and her subordinate position has in effect made the greatness of the courtesan?"

N.—Woman is lacking in genius. She has no broad views.

Reply.—The arguments that the Anti-Suffragists have served up to us during the past fifty years do not appear to us to be particularly distinguished by their originality or genius, their chief effect has been to add each year fresh adherents to the numbers of the Suffrage Movement. Woman has not written the Iliad, nor decorated the Sistine Chapel it is true . . . but I leave Faguet to speak:

"Is it a question of genius? Is it not more a question of pleading in law courts, of nursing pneumonia patients, of judging lawsuits. . . . You forbid women to exercise those functions which demand Genius! and what are the occupations of men that require Genius? Are they those of the chemist, the teacher, the Minister of Justice, or the President of the Republic? . . . The male occupations requiring intellect are entrusted in a proportion of 90 per cent. to fools, whom the most average women would be capable of replacing. . . . Women are out of their proper place in business and have no capacity for politics because they have not broad views? We may well laugh. It is by virtue of their broad views that men vote on committees? that deputies vote in the chamber? A third of those actually enjoying 'universal Suffrage' are inebriates! Drink is rarely a feminine failing."—Faguet.



## III.

## WHAT ARE THE RIGHTS WE DEMAND FOR WOMEN?

"A nation consisting of Men and Women cannot be successfully governed by men alone"  
John Bright.

1.—We demand for woman the right to sit on School Committees, because being by instinct and tradition a teacher, her proper place is there. In view of her incontestable experience of children their education is especially her province. The mother's opinion ought to be taken as well as the father's, in discussing such subjects as time tables, overwork, school hygiene, etc. . . . It is not right that the mother who can decide these questions sensibly should be excluded from the governing educational bodies.

2.—We claim for woman the right of voting upon ecclesiastical matters, because women, participating more in the life of the Church than men, ought to have the right to elect the clergy, members of the synod, and other ecclesiastical authorities. This principle is so just that it has been adopted and put in practice with advantage by many of the Churches both National and Free. The question has also been raised in several of the Cantons, where it will be solved doubtless in the affirmative.

3.—We claim the right for women to sit on Health Committees. Women have easier access to the homes of the poor than men. They are, therefore, better able to enquire into housing conditions. Their help will be most useful in this department, particularly in all that concerns women and children.

4.—We claim for woman the right of eligibility to all appointments dealing with poor relief. The intelligent co-operation of women is appreciated even by the adversaries of "women's rights." These render willing homage to her tact, her activity, and her untiring devotion, and yet refuse her the right to sit on the Poor Law Boards, or the Committees of Public Institutions, Hospitals, Asylums, Almshouses, Orphanages, etc. We demand that her opinion and advice, based on long experience, should be listened to equally with men's.

5.—We claim for her the right of voting on and being eligible for Trade Councils.\* Nowadays when thousands of women are obliged to leave their homes and earn their living, and that of their family, in workshop or factory, they should nominate the trade experts and be able to sit on Trade Councils themselves. It is only natural that disputes over employments occupying women, should be pronounced upon by women. It is obvious, for instance, that a woman is more competent than a man could be to give a decision in any case arising from a dispute between a milliner or dressmaker and her employee.

6.—We claim for women the right to sit on juries. Men are

\*Frenchwomen have now this right.

judged by their peers, it ought to be the same with women. Should we fear that an excess of sentiment would prevent her giving an impartial verdict, we have but to recall the leniency of certain sentences in the cases of flagrant offences pronounced by men against men! It is unjust that men only should summon women to appear before them, interrogate them, and decide what their punishment is to be, there should, therefore, be mixed juries. When women all over Switzerland are admitted as Counsel we shall claim for them the right to be Judges. And if Children's Courts are established in our country, we shall protest against women being excluded from what is clearly their special province.

7.—We claim for women the right to a voice in municipal and communal government because "Who pays the piper calls the tune!" and where women, especially widows, spinsters, and women workers, have to pay taxes as men do, they should have the same right as men have, to elect Town and County Councillors, and so forth. In municipal matters the woman's interests are at stake just as much as the man's.

8.—We claim for women full political rights (electoral and eligible) because these are the sole guarantees of civil rights. All Swiss are *not* equal before the law, as our Constitution states. The word "woman" is not mentioned in the Constitution. She is thus placed in the ranks of those considered unfit to elect or be elected. Yet taxpayers, whether men or women, should have a voice in the State's housekeeping. Being neither an elector nor eligible, woman has only the right of petition left her by which to make her wants and wishes known, and a very feeble and illusory right it is, depending as it does on the good pleasure of the Authorities as to whether they will deign to consider women's petitions at all. It is supremely unjust that in a democracy one half only of the people should frame the laws for all. Why should men alone make the laws, to which women are obliged to submit? In spite of the amendments introduced into the civil and penal codes, legal equality of rights for the sexes will never be established till women have the right to vote and be eligible of election equally with men in all matters concerning the State, and only then will she be a citizen and a free woman, able to consider the laws which affect her directly, such as Factory Acts, Insurance, etc., only then will she be able to take an active part in the struggle against drunkenness, prostitution, gambling, those social evils of which she is the chief victim.

In all countries where women possess political rights, they have obtained better laws and have thus contributed towards the progress of humanity.

Our modern Democracies have succeeded in freeing themselves from an hereditary aristocracy. Will they not free themselves also from this aristocracy of sex, which is quite as injurious?



## IV.

NOTES ON POLITICAL SUFFRAGE FOR WOMEN AND  
ON THE SWISS CONSTITUTION.

The Swiss Constitution is composed of the people of 22 cantons (cantons souverains) (Art. 1.)

All Swiss are equal before the law. (Art. 4.)

In Switzerland there is no special privilege attaching to place, birth, *person* or family. (Art. 4.)

The Confederation guarantees . . . liberty and the rights of its people,—the constitutional rights of *citizens*. (Art. 3.)

The citizen of every Canton is a *Swiss citizen*. (Art. 43.)

This *entitles him* to take part in all elections. (Art. 43.)

The Swiss woman is not a man's equal before the Swiss law. She is not a citizen. She is subordinate to a masculine privileged class.

Constitutionally the Swiss woman is, therefore, *not a part of the nation*.

## V.

WHAT ARE THE ACTUAL ELECTORAL RIGHTS WHICH  
WOMEN POSSESS AT THE PRESENT DAY?

New Zealand (1893) not eligible for election.

I. *Parliamentary Suffrage (electoral and eligible).*

Australia (South, 1893, West, 1899).

    " Federal Parliament, 1902.

    " New South Wales, 1902.

    " Queensland (1905).

    " Victoria (1909).

    " Tasmania (1903).

(Not eligible for the Senate of the six States and the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia.)

United States: Wyoming (1869).

    " Colorado (1893).

    " Utah (1895).

    " Idaho (1896).

    " Washington (1910).

    " California (1911).

    " Arizona (1912).

    " Kansas (1912).

    " Michigan (1912). *Partial*

    " Oregon (1912).

Finland (1907).

Norway (1908).

    on the basis of an annual revenue of 230 kroner—320 francs.

Great Britain: Isle of Man (1880) eligible.

China (Provincial Assembly of Canton), 1912.

2. *Parliamentary Suffrage, limited or indirect. On property qualification.*

Bosnia-Herzégovine.

Russia: Douma.

Bohemia.

3. *Municipal Suffrage.*

Australia: New South Wales (1867).

    " Victoria (1869).

    " West (1871).

    " South (1880).

    " Tasmania (1884).

    " New Zealand (1886).

India: Madras and Bombay.

    " Baroda (1910).

United States: Kansas (1887).

California (1911).

Canada: Vancouver (1910).

England (1869) (eligible 1907).

Ireland (1899).

Scotland (1889).

Denmark (1908).

Norway (1901).

Iceland (1882—1908).

4. *Municipal Suffrage limited or indirect, or conditionally.*

United States: New York State.

Australia: Sydney.

Canada: Ontario (1884).

Quebec (1884).

    " Prince Edward Isle.

    " New Brunswick (1886).

    " Manitoba (1887).

    " Alberta and Saskatchewan.

    " New Scotland (1887).

    " British Columbia (1888).

Austria-Hungary: Moravia.

    " Bohemia (eligible).

    " Vorarlberg (eligible).

    " Leibach in Carniole.

Russia: Certain towns (1864):

Germany: Certain towns by proxy.

    " Hanover (Schwarzbourg-Rudolstadt), Direct.

    " Travemünde (Lubeck).

    " Saxony (Country).

Sweden (1862—1909).

*Educational Bodies (eligible, electoral).*

England.

Canada.

France.

Switzerland (Geneva, Bâle, Zurich).

Belgium.

New Zealand, Australia (Federation).

Various States of North America.

Bavaria.

Bulgaria.

The Netherlands.



*Boards of Trade and Trade Councils.*

France (1907). Belgium. Italy. Hungary. Switzerland (Geneva (1910), and Zurich). The Netherlands.

*Poor Relief Administration.. (Commission).*

France. Austria. Italy. A few States in Germany (Bavaria).

*Ecclesiastical Suffrage.*

Certain American States (eligible).  
Some Churches in Holland (Lutheran, Jewish), Denmark Iceland, Germany.  
Switzerland: Geneva (Established Church, 1910), Free Church, (eligible).  
Switzerland: Neuchatel (Independent Church, 1910).  
" Vaud (Established 1908, Free, 1898).  
The Free Church of Scotland. English Congregationalists.  
The Free Protestant Churches of the United States, and of Canada.

## VI.

## SOME RESULTS.

Opinion of JUDGE KINGMAN, member of the U.S. Supreme Court since 1873:—

"The admission of women has enabled the Courts of Justice to follow up and punish offences which formerly went unpunished.

"When the Jury was composed of men only, the Courts were powerless to enforce the laws on drunkenness, gambling, immorality and the various evils under these heads. In this matter we could count, neither on common, nor on Grand Juries, but a few women at the Sessions soon put an end to this state of things. But these were comparatively few, as women are generally too occupied in their homes to be able to come in sufficient numbers."

Motion voted by the Representative Assembly of Wyoming in 1893:—

"The exercise of the Suffrage by women during the past 25 years has had no drawbacks, but has, on the contrary, had excellent results. It has helped greatly in putting down crime and poverty in the State, and that without either oppressive or reactionary legislation. It has given us peaceful elections, good government, and has secured the attainment of public order and civilisation to a remarkable degree. We take pride in drawing your attention to the following:—After 25 years of Woman's Suffrage, not a county department in Wyoming has a poorhouse; our prisons are nearly empty, and crime, except that committed by foreigners, is almost unknown.

"Since this is the result of our experience, we strongly advise all civilised communities to give women the right to vote."

### A few of the Laws passed in Wyoming since the admission of Women to the Suffrage.

Laws establishing equal salaries for teachers, men or women having the same qualifications. Laws raising the "age of consent" to 18. Laws condemning the abandonment or ill-treatment of children. Laws forbidding the employment of boys under fourteen, and of girls at any age, in mines, as well as the exhibiting of children under fourteen on the stage.

A law forbidding the gift or sale of tobacco, cigarettes, or intoxicants to persons under sixteen (1895).

The providing of public gardens for children. Severe laws against the adulteration of sugar. Law regulating the guardianship and protection of deserted children or orphans, as well as the children of the sick, the destitute, or of those considered legally unfit to have the custody of children.

Declaration of the GOVERNOR OF COLORADO, signed by a number of Officials:—

"That the results of Woman's Suffrage have been good. That none of the disadvantages predicted by the enemies of this reform have been realized, and that the vote recorded by women is noticeably more conscientious than that recorded by men."

### Laws passed in Colorado since women have had the Suffrage.

Laws forbidding the life insurance of any child under ten years of age (1893). Laws giving the mother equal authority with the Father in anything relating to their children (1895). Law raising the "age of consent" to 18 years of age. Law establishing a professional State School for young girls, three or five of the Administrative Council thereof to be women (1897). Law making it obligatory to nominate a woman doctor for Lunatic asylums. Law establishing Truant Schools (1901). Law relating to the care of the feeble minded. Law for the preservation of forests.

"Laws for the inspection of Institutions, supported by private charity. Transferring the Humane Society of Colorado to the State for the more effective protection of children and animals. Law establishing special Children's Courts (1903). Law instituting compulsory education for all children between the ages of eight and sixteen with the exception of those who are ill or educated at home, or of those over fourteen who have passed the eighth standard or whose parents need their help, and of those who have to earn their own living. Laws setting up a committee to regulate State circulating libraries, composed of five members of the Federation of Women's Clubs to be nominated by the Governor. Laws for the punishment by imprisonment of any person employing a child under fourteen, in mines, mills, factories, or in any underground workshop. A law requiring the signature of the wife as well as that of the husband for mortgages on furniture, sale of household goods, and sale or transfer of the homestead. A law forbidding all minors under the age of sixteen to work more than eight hours a day in mills, shops, factories, or at any occupation likely to be injurious to health. Law by which no woman shall be allowed to work more than eight hours at any occupation which requires her to remain standing.

Law which regards complicity in the matter of offences committed by children as criminal.

The refusal to help aged and sick parents also being declared a misdemeanor.

In Denver, where women have the vote, they decreed the placing of fountains for drinking water in the streets, and waste paper baskets for all refuse at the street corners.



Under woman's influence the number of towns where the sale of intoxicating drinks is prohibited has risen from three to fifty.

Opinion of the GOVERNOR OF UTAH, MR. HEBER WELLS (1902) :—

“Legislators seem afraid to give the Suffrage to Woman on account of the disastrous effect politics may have on her womanliness. Let us see if the experience of Utah has justified this fear. It is now six years since the right to vote and to occupy Official positions was conferred on the women of this State. Have the wheels of progress been arrested? On the contrary, we have advanced by leaps and bounds. Have the fears and the predictions of the local adversaries of Woman's Suffrage been verified? Have women degenerated into low class politicians, neglecting their homes and stifling within their own souls all noble feminine emotions? On the contrary, women are quite as much respected as they were before their entry into political life. The simple truth is this: that the influence of women in politics has been distinctly a moral gain to the State.”

One woman has been elected a member of the Senate, and several others, members of the Representative Assembly.

The position of the Head Directorship of schools has often been confided to a woman.

**Some of the laws voted in Utah since equal Suffrage Rights have existed.**

Laws establishing for men and women teachers alike equal salaries when holding similar positions and performing similar duties (1897).

Law raising the age of consent for girls to 18. (1896).

Law setting up Public Libraries in the towns. (1899).

Law requiring that in schools and institutions supported by public funds, a thorough course in Physiology and Hygiene be given, especially on the effects of intoxicants and narcotics (1897).

Law founding the school of Fine Arts (1899).

Law arranging for a series of lectures on Hygiene and Race Culture every year in the capital (1903).

Law making it illegal for a minor (18) to buy, accept, or have in his possession cigars, tobacco, opium, or any narcotic.

Laws for the protection of deserted or ill-used boys under fourteen, and of girls under sixteen.

Also for the providing of Public Gardens for children in educational centres when the population reaches 2000.

Opinion of the CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE STATE OF IDAHO :—

“Woman's Suffrage is a success. None of the inconveniences predicted were realised. The women's vote has increased in popularity since its adoption. The amendment to the Constitution which established it was voted for by more than two-thirds of those present. Were it put to the vote again now, we think the voting would be unanimous.”

Opinion of the GOVERNOR OF IDAHO, MR. MADY (1909) :—

“From a political point of view Woman's Suffrage has contributed greatly towards raising the standard of elections. By

putting the principle of justice to woman in practice better men have come forward as candidates for official posts. The administration of Government Offices has fallen into more conscientious hands and the Republic has benefited thereby. Legislative activity has been carried out on wiser and worthier lines. There are no longer as formerly scandals in the making of the laws, either in the local or provincial matters of the State. Women elected to official posts, show themselves to be amongst the most conscientious servants of the State.”

**Some of the laws in force in Idaho since 1896 due, in part at least, to the influence of Woman Suffrage.**

Laws prohibiting gambling (1889). Raising the age of consent for girls to eighteen. Establishing Libraries and Reading Rooms and authorising a special tax for their support (1901). Law enacting that at least three per cent. of School Funds should be used each year for the support of School Libraries, the books to be chosen from a list compiled by the State Board of Education. Laws decreeing that domestic economy should be taught in the State University, and a Professorship for such teaching be maintained in the Idaho Academy (1903). Law establishing Technical Schools. Law giving the married woman the same rights as the husband in matters concerning the administration of sale of property.

Opinion of MR. JOHNSTON (the Judge) and the Magistrates of the KANSAS COURT OF JUSTICE :—

“In consequence of Woman's Suffrage our elections are more orderly and more equitable. A superior class of officials are chosen; we have a firmer and more conscientious Governor.”

**Laws presented to the Diet of Finland through the Influence of Women's Votes.**

Laws creating a fund for Maternity Insurance, for the appointment of women as Sanitary Inspectors, for equality of rights between the sexes in law; for the amendment in the Law concerning Prostitution; for providing free meals for school children; for pardoning those condemned for the Sveaborg revolt; for abolishing disciplinary penalties in prisons, and adding the following to the Penal Code :—“Whosoever shall, on roads, streets, or other public places insult any woman with immoral intent, shall be fined 200 marks.”

Opinion of SENATOR MECHELIN, PRESIDENT OF THE FINNISH GOVERNMENT :—

“National opinion demands Woman Suffrage, and there is no reason to fear that women will not use this right with the same sense of responsibility that men do.”

**Schemes proposed by the Women Deputies in Finland up to 1908.**

Three different proposals for the abolition of the husband's guardianship over the wife and a new Woman's Property Act, one to confer greater authority on mothers in matters relating to their children; also for raising the marriageable age of women from 17 to 18 years.

On the legal position of illegitimate children. For State Houses of Refuge for unmarried mothers. For the increased employment of women in the Civil Service. For a State subsidy to Schools for Domestic Train-



ing. For an Annual Subsidy of 20,000 marks for Temperance work. For compelling every Municipality to appoint a midwife for every Commune (Parish). For the encouragement and extension of mutual education. For the abolition of the Law on Domestic Service. The construction of two new railways.

#### A Glance at the Reforms accomplished in Australia since the introduction of the Woman's Vote.

Increased protection for married women whose husbands are guilty of cruelty towards them and their children, through infidelity, desertion or having neglected to provide for their needs. Amendment to the Laws dealing with drink. Amendment to the Laws relating to gambling:—Betting prohibited to all Minors. The suppression of indecent advertisements. Legitimization of illegitimate children through marriage. Raising the age of consent. Protection of children from immoral literature. Fixing the hours for wage-earning children.

Prohibition of smoking for all under sixteen. Improvement in the scale of working-men's wages through the establishment of a Wages Board. Amendments in the Education Laws. Prohibiting the sale of opium. Amendments in Laws relating to the property of married women. Legislation dealing with men who live on "immoral earnings." Nomination of women Inspectors of Public Institutions. Further legislation dealing with the paternity of illegitimate children compelling fathers to pay £10 towards the confinement and other expenses incurred by the mother. Protection of young unemployed girls on landing in Australia. Formation of Children's Courts.

#### Declaration of the Federal Senate on the Influence of Women as Electors (Nov. 1910).

"This Senate considers that the granting of the Parliamentary and Federal Vote to the women of Australia on the same terms as men has had the most advantageous results. One of these results being the more methodical manner of conducting Elections: and at the last Federal Election the Women's Vote in the majority of the States showed a proportionately larger increase than the men's. Her Vote has given greater prominence to the needs of women and children in legislation, although women have not occupied themselves solely with these questions to the exclusion of others. In all questions concerning National defence and the well-being of the Empire, they have shewn themselves to be as full of foresight and discernment as the men. Since we consider that none but good results have followed from this reform, although disaster was universally predicted, we give it as our opinion that the Nations having a representative Government would be well advised in granting the Vote to Women."

#### Reforms obtained through the Influence of the Woman's Vote in Australia.

(Report of the Stockholm Congress (1911).

The same scale of wages for both sexes when doing the same work. Uniformity in Naturalisation Laws. Protection of young emigrants. Inspection and control of food supplies. Protection of young children. Appointment of women as Police Matrons. Children's Courts. Children's Public Gardens supported by the State.

#### Sketch of the Reforms obtained through the Woman's Vote in New Zealand.

The conditions for obtaining a divorce are now the same for both sexes. Women can obtain damages for libel without being obliged to prove special injury. The profession of Barrister can be entered by Women. Legal separation from a bad husband can be obtained summarily and without expense. A Law relating to the support of the family of a testator, forbids a man disposing of his property without reserving to his wife and children a sum adequate for their support.

Provision for the aged poor has been to a certain extent assured by the granting of old age pensions for persons of both sexes. The founding of Inebriates' Homes has been legally decided upon; one is already in existence and others are in course of construction. The health of working women and of young persons of both sexes under eighteen is the object of special attention on the part of the State, which has also fixed the number of working hours and holidays without stoppage of pay. Payment of salaries to apprentices has been secured, and the responsibility of the employer in case of accident has been interpreted in a spirit very favourable to the workmen.

Legal recognition of partnership between husband and wife has been defined by two Laws. Through amendments in the penal Laws a juster and more moral standard has been attained. The adoption of children has been regulated by law, and in order to protect new-born infants they are not allowed to be put out to nurse.

Registry Offices have been put under State control, and the health and general well-being of shop girls has been legislated for. The Law has also dealt with improvements in the management of Industrial Schools, now under a far better system. In 1902 a Law relating to the teaching of Trades has been brought forward with the object of founding technical schools throughout the Colony. Laws prohibiting the sale of opium and forbidding smoking to young people have also been passed, as well as a Board of Arbitration for the settling of industrial disputes, and a Law abolishing imprisonment for debt.

Extract from a Declaration of the Minister for New Zealand, MR. JOSEPH WARD, 1907:—

"We have not found that the fact of a woman putting her name to a voting paper once in three years has robbed her either of grace or beauty nor of her devotion to domestic duties. On the contrary, the Woman's Vote has had a distinctly purifying effect, in the general conduct of the Elections.

"Is it not supremely ridiculous to hear any citizen argue against giving a woman the right to Vote because she cannot carry arms, when one remembers that his own mother could not have brought him into the world and cared for him during the years of his childhood without much physical endurance, suffering and danger far greater than the ordinary risk run by the average soldier.

"The argument which has had most weight in this country in giving women the suffrage has been the one of abstract justice. If Government is based on the consent of the governed, it appears to us monstrously unjust that one half of the population should be unrepresented and should have no share in that Government. Therefore, after long and profound study of the question, we have given women the same rights as men.



"I am convinced that if a great National crisis should arise the Women's Vote would have an irresistible influence in promoting pure, honest and efficient legislation.

"New Zealand has had no cause to regret the abolition of differential treatment for the men and the women who have contributed equally towards the foundation and welfare of our country. For twenty-five years, even before my election to Parliament, I have advocated woman suffrage, and studying upon the spot the results, I have never had any reason to doubt that this reform has largely contributed to the welfare of our country."

MR. REEVES, Agent General for New Zealand in London, says:—

"It is not only Woman's influence on public life that we have to consider, but the influence that the responsibilities of public life has upon the woman. No one can deny that this influence has been excellent. It has widened her outlook on life, increased her intelligence, her usefulness to the country, and has in no way interfered with her duties in the family circle."

Opinion of MR. HUGH LUSK, late Member of Parliament, New Zealand:—

"It might appear strange at first sight to see half the benches at a political meeting occupied by women, but once men have become accustomed to it, they are unable to dispense with the presence of their female advisers. The possibility of being able to bring ones wife and daughters to election meetings and of discussing with them subsequently the questions raised there, has enlarged family life by introducing a community of thought, which was formerly lacking.

"The family is the basis of the State. We have found by experience that the Suffrage for both sexes is the strongest of family ties, the most solid foundation of family life."

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Conservative and Unionist Women's  
Franchise Association.

AN ANALYSIS

OF THE

DEBATE

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON

THE WOMAN'S FRANCHISE BILL

JULY 11TH AND 12TH, 1910

BY

THE LADY BETTY BALFOUR

PRICE ONE PENNY.



THE DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
ON  
THE WOMAN'S FRANCHISE BILL  
JULY 11TH AND 12TH, 1910.

For the fifth time a Bill for the enfranchisement of women has been debated in the House of Commons and has passed a second reading by the substantial majority of 110. This may be accurately described as a strong expression in favour of the principle of Woman Suffrage. The consequences of such an expression the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for War have both said should be "that effective opportunity should be given for the House to translate its feelings into concrete form." How are these members of the Government going to redeem that pledge?

The debate itself is well worthy of study. It calls for some general remarks before any speech in detail is commented upon. The arguments brought forward both for and against the Bill were for the most part serious and genuine, but both—whether for or against—whether able or foolish—have one characteristic in common, they are speeches made almost exclusively from a man's and not from a woman's point of view. Secondly, they exhibit the usual crop of inconsistencies which a discussion of this subject always calls forth. The same objections are urged for diametrically opposite reasons; but this fact seems in no way to diminish their force in the minds of those who urge them. For instance we have it stated in turn that this reform would have a very profound and far-reaching effect, and that it would have none at all; that the effect upon the whole State, upon the whole government of the country, the whole social life, and the whole Imperial idea, would be enormous and enduring, yet that the views of women are adequately represented at present, that they possess no grievances which the vote would redress, and that therefore presumably the vote, if granted them, could make no difference to the State or the individual: that it is bad for married women to have the vote because it would interfere with their functions

of motherhood, and that they do not want it because they hold "a preferential position" under man-made laws; nevertheless that a Bill which is designed to enfranchise chiefly the single, self-supporting, and unprotected woman cannot be tolerated because it leaves out the married woman, who must and best deserves the vote. Moreover, when married women have no property, they are referred to as "wives of our citizens, mothers of our children," but when they have property of their own, and are qualified to vote apart from their husbands, the Liberal statesmen assert that these are "persons who are possessed of no special claim of any sort or kind to be distinguished from their fellow-women." Again the Bill was opposed because it would create injustices and anomalies, and therefore the status quo, involving as it does still greater injustices and anomalies, was to be maintained.

It is impossible within the space of a short pamphlet to deal separately with every speech made within the two days debate, but I will attempt to group the main arguments under separate heads, and for this purpose I take particularly the speeches made by the following Anti-Suffragists:—The Prime Minister on the Liberal side, and Mr. F. E. Smith, Mr. Walter Long, Mr. Butcher and Mr. Austen Chamberlain on the Unionist side of the House. I select these particular speeches partly because they were made by men whose position and character entitle them to respect and consideration, and partly because they seem to me the ablest and weightiest speeches in themselves made during the debate.

The headings under which I propose to group the arguments are as follows:—

1. The Thin end of the wedge argument.
2. The dangers of Woman Suffrage to the State.
3. The evils to women themselves that would ensue from their enfranchisement.

I. THE THIN END OF THE WEDGE ARGUMENT.

This argument was urged by the Prime Minister, by Mr. F. E. Smith, by Mr. Walter Long, and by Mr. Butcher. These speakers had little or nothing to say about the Bill before the House. They assumed, however, that it must lead to adult suffrage with a preponderant female vote, and to women being eligible not only to vote but to sit in Parliament. It is vain to say to these gentlemen that the passing of this Bill will leave men in a majority over women of 7 to 1, a small step in-



deed in the direction of putting the men of this country under a majority of women; or that the passing of this Bill does not remove the non-eligibility of women to sit in Parliament. It is like assuring a timid bather that if he enters a shallow pool he will still be safe from the waves of the sea; but who replies that as the water in both cases is salt, once allow your feet to get wet and you must eventually drown. The flaw in this argument is that in aiming at a "logic" which Mr. Balfour calls "no logic," they ignore "the human factor" altogether. Woman Suffrage is not now being advocated because it is the logical consequence of women voting for municipal bodies. Yet this was urged as an objection to their admission to local Government by the same type of debater in bygone days. Woman Suffrage is urged on the grounds of pressing expediency, on the ground that it is desirable in itself. In so far as our generation holds the view that to adopt Adult Suffrage, or to include women in the House of Commons is undesirable and inexpedient, these supposed consequences will *not* follow. If a generation in the future should arise holding the view that the principle of representation should be extended to every man and woman, and that the influence of women in public life was so beneficial that it would be desirable to elect them to the House of Commons, these changes would probably take place not as a logical consequence of Mr. Shackleton's Bill, but on account of a practical change in public opinion. When Mr. Gladstone was attacked in 1884 for not making his Franchise Bill go far enough, he said "the Government looked not to the perfect or the Utopian, but to the attainable." There were advocates in the House then of Adult Suffrage, they no doubt accepted the Bill, as Mr. Shackleton does this one, as "the thin end of the wedge." Twenty-six years have passed and public opinion is not yet insisting upon "the logical consequence" of that half-way measure.

Women for generations have voted for the election of their ministers in the Scottish church. This has not led to the "logical consequence"—that they should become eligible for election themselves to that profession, presumably for this reason, and this reason alone, that public opinion, though it has tolerated women preachers, women missionaries, women Bible teachers, is not favourable to the idea of women entering the ministry. Mr. Balfour's words on this head may be taken to heart. "I see no logic in saying that you cannot remove this particular difficulty without doing something else

which . . . will profoundly modify . . . for the worse the Constitution of this Assembly:" and again, "Are we not sufficient statesmen to refuse to reject a system because we cannot clean cut every frontier of our case, and be able to say, with perfect precision, this instance falls outside our rubric, and that instance falls within?" If it can be shown that some women want to be represented, that it is good for the State that some women should have the vote, do not let us refuse it on the ground that some day all women will want it, and all men wish to give it them.

## II. THE DANGERS TO THE STATE OF WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE.

Under this heading I take first the argument, very plausibly put forward by Mr. F. E. Smith, that if women at all have votes some measures may upon occasions be carried by a minority of men and majority of women, as against a majority of men and minority of women—carried that is to say by the help of the Woman Vote. He instanced the possibility of a measure for universal military training, or a temperance measure being passed, in this way to the annoyance of the majority of male electors. I will try to answer this argument from a man's standpoint, putting aside the fact that legislation for women is always passed without their consent being asked at all. In the first place, I should like to ask how, under the ballot, it will be known in what proportion the women or men had voted for, or against the particular measure? In the second place, this is precisely the type of legislation which has been passed in Australia and New Zealand since women have had the vote. Women and men alike boast of it, and it has brought about no indignation or resentment in a predominantly male majority. In this instance the precedent of our Colonies seems applicable.

Next we come to the time-honoured well-worn argument that physical force and the vote must go together. That women should have no voice in framing the laws which they have not the physique to enforce. That women cannot bear arms in defence of their country, and "votes are to swords what bank notes are to gold." Mr. F. E. Smith, from whom I quote these words, declares that this is an argument which the Suffragists have never attempted to answer. I cannot imagine what Suffragist literature he has read; I have never read a single pamphlet that did not deal with this point. I dare not think that Mr. F. E. Smith will ever honour me by



reading my reply, but at any rate I have him imaginatively before me as I answer him. "Votes are to swords what bank-notes are to gold." This implies that the physical force of the country is in the hands of the male electorate of seven million. Should however, these voters misrepresent the opinion of their country, and should they all vote together in an unpopular sense, there is a majority of men, non-voters, including most of the soldiers, sailors, and policemen of the land who could certainly physically overpower them. Yet I have never heard this put forward as an argument for enfranchising only Army men. Moreover if physical force, and the power to handle firearms (the modern equivalent of the sword) were really thought a desirable qualification for the vote I can imagine a regiment of Amazons so trained and equipped that woman for man they would be a match for any regiment in the British Army. If such a band, however, made a raid on Westminster demanding the vote, I believe Mr. F. E. Smith would be the first to say "What! give the vote to these unnatural, unsexed viragos. Never! Let the gentle wives of our citizens, the delicate mothers of our children, have the vote, but not these monsters." Then let it be admitted that physical strength is not a good ground for enfranchisement; but do not let us also say that a privilege which has been extended more and more to men on the ground that it is a protection for the weak against the strong, is to be denied to all women because on the whole they are weaker than men and do not need for the fulfilment of their best functions in life the masculine type of physical strength.

Finally, is it really true to say that any modern democratic State is based on physical force, and that the laws are obeyed because at the back of them is the physical power to enforce them. I deny this utterly. The modern State is based not upon physical force but upon public opinion, and the strongest Government, backed by the most powerful army, navy and police, would be powerless to enforce the laws which the people as a whole resented as unjust or tyrannical. Revolutions have always been the revolt of the weak against the strong, and where equity was on the side of the revolutionists they have ultimately prevailed. In the making of that public opinion women inevitably have a share as well as men, and we have marked a stage in our evolution when we can no longer continue to call an electorate representative of public opinion if it leaves women altogether out of account.

I next come to the Imperial argument: that Woman Suffrage would be dangerous to our positions with regard to the Oriental population under British rule with its 450,000,000 inhabitants "detesting Government by women." This argument was used in the debates on the 1884 Franchise Bill against extending the vote to our agricultural labourers, or to the disloyal nationalist peasantry of Ireland. Our legislators were justified in ignoring that argument then as they should now. Democratic Government is probably a detestable form of Government in the eyes of all Eastern rulers. Have we ever urged that as a reason against adopting a democratic form of Government ourselves? On the other hand it has become a commonplace to say that the "Great White Queen" received devoted loyalty at the hand of her Indian subjects. Why should we suppose that they would resent a measure of enfranchisement in this country for her sex? Did we consult Oriental opinion when we opened some of our professions to women, our universities to women, our local government to women? Why should we do so now? Lord Cromer, far from advocating the view that we should treat our women in this country in accordance with the principles of the East, has laid it down that unless the Egyptian woman can be not only "educated" but "elevated," no reformer, however enlightened, will succeed in giving Egypt "the only European education which is worthy of Europe." Since this debate took place the "Times" has published an article on the feminist movement in Persia, in which the writer committed himself to this opinion: "Sufficient to say that in the day when women join openly in the affairs of the men a great change for the better will take place in the relations between Europeans and Persians." In one of the recent able articles on "Indian Unrest" another "Times" writer said, "As masterful a ruler as any in the whole of India is a lady, the Begum of Bhopal, a Mahomedan Princess of rare attainments and character."

Another State objection urged by the Prime Minister had reference to the danger of what he supposed would be an increase in the "fluid and mobile" element in the electorate causing "intermittency of interests." He acknowledged that under the present system of male representation sudden waves of enthusiasm were apt to sweep at times over the country with reference to a particular cause or a particular controversy, and that that was followed by a period of "lassitude and indifference." Women voters, according to Mr. Asquith, will



"enormously increase the danger of having fitfulness and capricious movement followed by intervals of indifference." This argument depends upon prophecy which only time can refute or prove. In connection, however, with this very movement of Woman Suffrage, I have heard it again and again made a reproach against the Suffragists that they were so tactlessly persistent, so immovably persevering in their advocacy of the cause, in season or out of season. Again I have heard it said that women are well qualified to be nurses and teachers of the young because of their feminine capacity for patience and persistency. It was an "importunate widow" and not a "widower" who moved the unjust judge. Women are the housekeepers of the world. Is not steadiness and orderliness of purpose one of the most fundamental qualities for house-keeping? Again in the political world has it not been made a reproach against women that their loyalty to their party, and the leaders of that party, will outlive the betrayal of the principles of the party? If these are feminine qualities, or rather defects, they should surely have a tendency to diminish rather than increase the element of "intermittency of interests," and a woman's vote for party purposes would probably be a more stable and reliable one than a man's.

Finally there is the argument of "No Precedent." Mr. Butcher spoke of the "possibly immense perils" of granting Woman Suffrage, "because we are, after all, the only Imperial nation, and indeed, we shall be, if we carry this, not merely the only Imperial nation, but the only great Sovereign State that has ever yet been governed by women." The passing of a much wider measure for the enfranchisement of women than that proposed under Mr. Shackleton's Bill would be possible without entailing the consequence that our State would be governed by women. Some countries legally debar women from being Queens. That is a precedent we have not cared to follow. Our country, in spite of Mr. Butcher, may be said more than once to have been governed by "a woman." We are, I believe, "the only great Sovereign State" which is at present governed under a system of Free Trade, yet I do not find that Free Traders find that a convincing reason for adopting a system of Protection. We are also the only democratic country which has not adopted Adult Suffrage, and retains an hereditary Second Chamber. Should these things be abandoned on that account? We have hitherto been rather proud of leading

the way to the rest of the world in the matter of freedom of Government. Are we so anxious to follow the action of other nations? To be alone in doing right, once we are convinced that a step indeed is right, may be a reproach to other nations, but is rather a glory for ourselves. If, on the other hand, this step is wrong, we should not wish to advocate it even if it were adopted by all the Sovereign States of the world. British women, however, are certainly not alone in demanding the Parliamentary Franchise. This is a world-wide movement, and the cause is gaining ever more adherents in all the principal countries of Europe, in France, in Germany, in Italy. If we do not soon set the example to the Sovereign States of Europe, by following that of our pioneer Colonies, we may for ever lose the honorable opportunity of doing so.

### III. THE EVILS TO WOMEN THEMSELVES THAT WOULD ENSUE FROM THEIR ENFRANCHISEMENT.

I now turn to the argument that it would be injurious for women themselves to have the Vote, that they suffer under no disadvantage, and that the vote would redress none of their grievances.

Mr. Walter Long believes the vote "will do great harm to women themselves by forcing them into a position which many of them, I believe the majority of them, are most unwilling to occupy." Mr. Asquith also declared that Woman Suffrage would involve consequences injurious to the real interests of women, though he did not make it clear how this would be. To what degree can it be maintained that the vote will force women into a position which they are unwilling to occupy? The exercise of the vote certainly does not involve a life in the main devoted to politics, though some women lead such a life now, without the vote; only a very small minority of the male voter devotes his life to politics. The exercise of the vote does not involve any publicity of action, such as some women face who speak on public platforms, or act on the public stage, or sing in the concert hall. The exercise of the vote necessarily involves nothing more than the expression of an opinion on the part of a woman once every five or six years as to which of two male candidates will best represent her interests in the Imperial Parliament. It is difficult to see how such an act could do any women "great harm," or be contrary to her "real interests." But, it is argued, women do not want it, and therefore should not have it forced upon them. It is no longer possible to deny that many women, and women in all



classes, do most earnestly want it, and feel growingly resentful at not having it. It is also not possible to deny that the numbers wanting it are increasing by thousands every year. But in the event of it being proved that the majority of women were opposed to it, it might still be urged that as the majority of women would not under the proposed Bill be enfranchised, nothing would be imposed upon them. This argument of Mr. Long ignores another inconsistency. The Anti-Suffragists urge women as an alternative to voting for Parliament to use the privileges they have in the way of the local Government franchise. But this franchise was granted with no consideration as to whether the majority of women desired it, and with no evidence at all that the great majority did so desire it.

Mr. F. E. Smith went the length of saying that "*all* that has been regarded in the past as being most characteristic and of greatest value to the country in true womanly character would be degraded if not destroyed by the proposals of this Bill." That is to say that while "all that is of greatest value in true womanly character" will be uninjured, if she votes for a body ruling the police in the country it will be "destroyed," if she votes for another body ruling them in London; that "all that is of greatest value in womanly character" will be "uninjured" if she votes on matters concerning roads, water, and main drainage, but will be "destroyed" if she votes on questions affecting the educating of children, the fitness of midwives, the treatment of infants, and such questions as how many buttonholes a woman may make for 6d. without being scheduled as "sweated." Truly the logic of the Anti-Suffragist is marvellous, and his reason past finding out.

Miss Emily Davies has recently re-published her old magazines on questions relating to women. It is interesting to read the arguments which in 1863 were brought against the higher education of women. "Women ought not to pursue the same studies as men; they would become exceedingly unwomanly if they did. A woman so educated would make a very poor wife or mother. Much learning would make her mad. . . . She would lose the gentleness, the grace and the sweet vivacity which are now her chief adornment, and would become cold, calculating, masculine, fast, strongminded, and in a word generally unpleasing." Yet the whole male world has lately pressed forward to do honour to the memory of one who was a brilliant example of the higher education of women, namely, Miss Florence Nightingale, and no Anti-Suffragist

now publicly expresses the desire to close the doors of our Universities to women.

Mr. F. E. Smith admits that if it could be proved that the vote might "ameliorate the conditions under which many working women live their lives," he would feel that to be a forcible argument for giving it to them, but he goes on to say that women in this country after centuries of "man-made law," hold a "position so preferential that no parallel can be discovered in any civilised country of the world." He supports this opinion by the statement that every man who marries is under the legal obligation to provide for his wife, whereas no wife can be compelled to provide for her husband. This sounds well enough. What does it amount to? If a man is wealthy and his wife has not a farthing he can be compelled by law to give her a bare subsistence if she applies for poor-law relief as a destitute person. She may, as a single woman, be earning a substantial wage. She may give this up to marry him, he can exact from her the whole of her time, she is expected to bear the burdens of a large family whether he can support his children or not, and for life long unremitting labour she cannot exact from her husband the wage that under any other employer she would be justified in demanding for her services. So hard is the position of the working woman sometimes felt to be that it is not unknown for a woman to prefer the freedom of an illegitimate connection to the bondage of marriage. If a married woman has property and dies without a will the whole of her fortune goes to her husband. Whereas in the case of his death the whole of his fortune does not go to his wife. The burden and the pain of rearing children is pre-eminently the mother's, and in some cases she even supports the child by her labour; yet legally she does not count as the parent of her child. It is the father and not the mother who decides where the child shall live, to what school he shall go, in what religion he shall be brought up. In the eye of the law the mother does not exist. Mr. Smith boasts of the fact that the man is responsible if the woman assaults or slanders a neighbour, whereas the woman is not responsible for similar acts on the part of her husband. No woman should boast of this privilege. It is evidence that in the eye of the law she is not recognised as a separate individual; and she claims her right to be considered, even in the eye of the law, as a human being responsible for her own actions. In the matter of the Divorce Laws Mr. F. E. Smith admits that women have one grievance,



and declares that in this respect he is not a supporter of the sex inequality. Has he ever taken any active steps to get this inequality redressed? With no pressure from his male constituents will it ever be worth his while to give time and personal trouble to this reform?

Mr. Smith asks, "has there been one case within recent memory in the House of Commons where the issue of any question affecting women has shown the slightest partiality in favour of the male sex over the female sex?" Two cases instantly occur to one's mind; the debate on the Post Office vote of this session and the framing of the Midwives' Bill. To take the last first: for twenty years women agitated for this Act. For twelve the male-elected Parliament ignored the demand altogether. In 1902 an Act was passed, but not at all satisfactory to the women who demanded it, for it made no provision for the fee of the doctor who was legally compelled to attend. Eight more years of suffering and complaint followed, and then a Bill was hurriedly passed which compels a woman to send for a doctor if the midwife deems it necessary, and at the same time (if she cannot pay his fee) compels her to become a pauper so that the doctor may be paid through the Poor Rate. This Bill is being bitterly resented by women.

In the debate on the Post Office vote thirteen members brought forward thirty-five specific grievances of male employees in the service to plead for their redress. Of these no less than eighteen concerned the raising of wages, yet the vote is said to have no effect upon wages. Not one single member brought forward the grievances of women employees, although the women employed in the Post Office amount to many thousands, and it is impossible to suppose that in that number there were no harsh dismissals, no cases of under-payment, no "legitimate grievances," such as members noted amongst their male constituents. Yet the Postmaster General admitted that the official enquiry into the condition of the young operators (women) had revealed that this work imposed "a certain strain upon the nervous organisation," which had led to "gross exaggeration" as to its evil effects on physique in the public press. The debate also revealed that the maximum wage of the most highly skilled woman telephonist was 2/- per week less than that of the comparatively unskilled porter; yet the grievance was said to be on his side!

Lord Ronaldshay pleaded against the wage inequalities of men, and said that the voteless women had secured equal

treatment in different localities, a great deal better than men. A critic of this debate has pointed out that whereas the maximum pay for male telegraphists is 62/-, the maximum for females is 40/-, and then pertinently asks if Lord Ronaldshay would be satisfied "if for the sake of the uniform rate between localities which the alternative would achieve, the male clerks were willing to exchange rate of wages with the female clerks of the same occupation."

Mr. F. E. Smith maintains that every step which has been gained in the interests of male combination has been gained equally in the interests of female combination, and that this gives away a large part of the female suffrage argument. On the contrary, the statement, though only partially true, serves to illustrate the argument. Mr. Balfour, in his speech, pointed out that Trade Unions were called into existence before the Reform Bill of 1832, but it was not till the vote had followed the power to combine that combination became effective.

Mr. Butcher, speaking on the same lines as Mr. Smith, confessed that if it could be proved that the grievances of women could not be redressed without the vote he "would greatly modify if not entirely alter" his views, but he maintains that men have been ready to remedy "every proved injustice" against women, and that women are not "an unrepresented, but well represented class," as may be seen by the legislation of the last forty years, to wit, by the Women's Property Act of 1870, and the Guardianship of Children Acts. I entirely agree with Mr. Butcher and Mr. Smith that our male legislators are "ready" enough to redress our grievances, and it is to them that we Suffragists appeal, but we maintain that without consulting us as voters and listening to our point of view, our grievances are not redressed, because they are not even adequately voiced or heard. Now and always a member of Parliament will listen to the constituents who have power to elect or reject him before he will listen to other members of the community, and this very few Members of Parliament will deny. The Members of Parliament before 1832 were "ready" enough no doubt to redress the grievances of the men of their country, but their good will was not thought a sufficient security by the voteless who were clamouring in a militant way for a vote. It is, however, objected that women in this sense are not "a class," although Anti-Suffragists like Mr. Butcher call them "a class" when it suits their purpose. Men also as a sex are not a class—but if women had votes and



men had none, I think it would hardly pacify the men of all classes to tell them they were not one class.

Mr. Asquith (whose speech appears to me the ablest of all the Anti-Suffragist speeches) takes credit to himself, and rightly, for having been the first to appoint women as Inspectors of factories and workshops. But why did he do this revolutionary thing? He admitted that it caused much "perturbation and trepidation" on the part of the officials that surrounded him (as the thought of giving women the vote is causing now). I do not even believe that he ascertained whether the majority of women were in favour of this step or not; and certainly to make a woman a factory or workshop inspector was to impose upon her a very great burden of responsibility and labour, which up to then it had been universally thought only men could undertake. Why did he do it? Because, he tells us, as there were employed in these factories and workshops a vast number of women and girls it seemed to him "irrational"—"almost grotesque"—that the "administration of our sanitary laws, and our protective laws in these factories and workshops in so far as they affect the lives and health of women and girls, should be left to men, who cannot claim any special knowledge of their own regarding the particular care of women in such places." For precisely the same reason we hold that as women and girls in vast numbers are employed in and by the State, it seems "irrational"—"almost grotesque"—that they should have no voice in the framing of those laws "in so far as they affect the lives of girls and women." And can it be maintained that any laws are passed by Parliament that do not affect the lives of women as well as of men? whether they be laws of finance, of education, of prison or factory administration, concerning poor-law, or concerning our Colonies, or foreign nations? And in legislating for any of these things in the name of the State can it be said that the State is represented while half the population of the country are left out of account? Mr. F. E. Smith asserts that "in schools, in shops, the mill, the street, in clubs, in ale-houses" men can qualify themselves for the vote by rubbing shoulders with their fellows. "No such opportunities," he declares, "are open to women!" He seems unaware of the fact that women too are to be found in the school, in the shop, in the mill, the street, in clubs, and even, I regret to say, in ale-houses. If contact with their fellow beings in such places constitutes fitness for the vote, women for years have qualified as much as men.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain was perhaps the wisest opponent. He did not commit himself to any argument as to the industrial position of women, and how it could or could not be affected by the vote, but confined himself to the fact that his own womenkind did not want the vote, and would not support him if he gave it to them, and that certain qualities fitted a citizen for the vote, and these were male qualities, and that others, however lofty and ideal, were unsuited to politics, and these were female qualities. Let me enumerate them. Ladies first. What are their qualities?

1. *Lofty devotion to ideals.* (Principles, that is, not persons). Does this unfit for the vote, and should a man with a lofty devotion to an ideal be disfranchised?

2. *Dependence upon others—upon husband, or brother, or hero of their imagination: their willingness to yield their opinions.*

This suggests that their lofty devotion to ideals will give way to the arguments of husband, brother, hero, and that they would on occasions compromise between their own opinion and that of others. Yet further on Mr. Chamberlain asserts the willingness to compromise to be a political and exclusively male characteristic, and the woman's incapacity to compromise to be one of her disqualifications.

3. *Their almost passionate desire for self-sacrifice.*

In these days when material selfishness is sometimes asserted to be the deplorable sign of our times, would the introduction into politics of a little of the spirit of "passionate self-sacrifice" be wholly bad?

4. *Finally their insistence, without compromise, on what they believe to be right.*

This I have already pointed out is inconsistent with what went above, but if we accept it as a feminine quality, would a little of it, a solution of one in seven, be dangerous or wholesome for the State?

The male qualities which fit man for the vote are said to be:—

1. *The separation of the individual from the cause.* (Sounds like devotion to lofty ideals!)

2. *The ready sacrifice of the individual for the cause.*

3. *The strict subordination of personal preference to great principles.*

4. *The steadfast pursuit of the same objects for long periods.*



Can it really be maintained that these are the qualities to be found in all male voters, and not to be found in any women? Mr. Chamberlain admits that they do not occur too frequently in man, and asserts that they are "very rarely" to be found in women. If, however, these qualities were made the test for the franchise we should live under a noble oligarchy indeed, in which the "few" men would mingle with the "very few" women, but with which common humanity to be found in Mr. Chamberlain's constituency and every other constituency would have very little to do.

What does Mr. Asquith admit was the result of his revolutionary action in appointing Women Inspectors? Apparently it was the thin end of the wedge, since he says it has "since had a large development"; but has the "perturbation and trepidation" been justified? On the contrary, Mr. Asquith says his concession "has had the most beneficial results in the administration of our Factory Laws." When the "perturbations and trepidations" with regard to the Parliamentary enfranchisement of women have been finally overcome, that, we believe, will be the verdict of history with regard, not only to the administration, but to the making of our laws. In the meantime let us take to heart the closing words of Mr. Balfour's speech that if in times gone by the political exclusion of women were justifiable, yet with "the development of political institutions, and political discussions, it is tolerable no longer."

Conservative and Unionist Women's  
Franchise Association,  
48, Dover Street, Piccadilly, W.

324,30941  
15210✓

## "Heads I win, tails you lose."

*(A political forecast addressed to those suffragists who flatter themselves that adult suffrage is possible before the principle of Woman Suffrage has been admitted in practise by first granting the Vote to Women "on the same terms as it is, or may be, granted to men").*

**Extract from a Daily Paper referring to the Prime Minister's Speech on Woman Suffrage towards the end of 1916 or 1917.**

**P**ERHAPS no Prime Minister has ever met with more respectful sympathy than did Mr. Asquith when he rose to give his views on this important question before an expectant House; and it may safely be said that never before has any Prime Minister so completely set aside his own personal opinions in order to deal with a momentous question solely and entirely from the progressive and democratic point of view. The very genius of the nation seemed to animate him as he reviewed the entire history of the franchise from its commencement, pointing out how, in recent times, majorities were obtained for a measure granting the suffrage to women, only when such a measure was based on class inequality, and a property qualification. In a masterly exposition he demonstrated how members had voted in favour of "Votes for Women" from time to time, less from a desire to see a limited franchise conferred upon women, than from a desire to embarrass the Government; and there was not a single member who did not cheer him as a sincere spokesman of true democracy, when he concluded one of the most convincing speeches the House had ever been privileged to listen to, with the following statesman-like utterance:

"I will now leave this question to the decision, and the tried experience and judgment, of this the most truly representative assembly in the whole civilised world. Is it our intention to assume an autocratic and arrogant attitude and force political power on to the women of this nation, although they have proved of what immense achievements they are capable *without* this additional responsibility being laid on their already over-burdened shoulders? Do we wish to flout the chivalrous sentiments of English *men*, and the dignified reserve of English *women*, by passing this law without any sort of reference to the considered opinion of the nation as a whole, and without obtaining any expression of the peoples' will?"



resentment in the minds of men brought up with oriental ideas. During the suffragists' recent campaign all over the country, I am told that one of the most frequent questions the British workman put to any of the speakers concerned this numerical preponderance of women; and if the working man here, with all his well-known reverence for, and deference to, womanhood, nevertheless seems to have misgivings about what is known as *petticoat government*, what must be the feelings of an Indian Sikh? (Laughter.)

"I would humbly submit that this is *not* an opportune moment for the enfranchisement of women. Let us rather 'wait and see.' That the men who gave up their lives for home and hearth have earned the franchise for their sex, irrespective of any property qualification, is beyond dispute; but women have not given up their lives. Women, though now forming the majority of the population do not form the fighting part of it. An army of women is unthinkable. Our minds turn from such a notion with loathing as being altogether against nature. Women are non-combatants and the word 'nation' implies men with strength and power. Let us then first pay our debt to the men who have saved us from a serfdom worse than death, let us give them their due and leave it to them subsequently to decide the women's question on its own merits. It is, therefore, not on account of any personal prejudice on my part, but solely having regard to these weighty considerations that I would urge this House to retain the old legal interpretation of the word 'Person' for the purposes of this Bill."

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So the Bill became a **MANHOOD SUFFRAGE Bill** and passed into law in due course, and women were never thought of again save as amiable and over-worked beasts of burden.

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WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE  
AND  
PARLIAMENTARY MORALS.

"MANIFESTO"

BY  
NORTHERN MEN'S FEDERATION  
FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

(With Postscript and Appendix.)

Written by Mrs. ARNCLIFFE SENNETT,  
President of the N.M.F.,  
And Signed by the General Committee of the N.M.F.,  
and Sixteen Magistrates of the City of Glasgow.

PRICE 1d.



## Woman's Political Disability in its relation to the Morals of a Nation at large.

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In his speech at the Mansion House on the subject of Venereal Disease, the Home Secretary, Mr. Herbert Samuel, spoke of the inability to limit prostitution because "the action of the *police* was hampered in no small degree by legal restrictions."

Concerning the compulsory notification of diseased persons he said "the objection, of course, was that in the conviction of many persons well qualified to speak such a measure would not have the desired effect, because . . . . it was thought that if a person when *he* presented himself for treatment knew that *he* was to be put on a list and be subjected *to control until cured* the *result* would not be to induce but to deter them from coming forward for treatment." (the italics are ours.)

Later on in his speech he said "Another question was whether persons convicted of certain offences (soliciting) if found in prison suffering from this disease ought to be detained in some institution not necessarily in prison, until cured. He would be glad to receive the opinion of the Nation at large, before expressing his opinion."

The inference to be drawn from this speech is, that the Home Office desires greater liberty of action for the Police over women prostitutes, and fuller control and detention of them when in prison: but that persons, well qualified to speak, deprecate a similar control of diseased men out of prison. And this, in spite of the fact that the Royal Commission which has just been held upon the subject reports the disease



to be if anything more prevalent among the upper and middle classes.

The speech, though tentative, and subject to National approval, appears to be heading for the re-introduction in disguise of certain provisions of the loathsome C.D. Acts, and as the Home Secretary has publicly asked for the opinion of the Nation at large, we desire, as a body of enfranchised men and an integral part of the Nation to be allowed to publicly express our determination to fight to a man and use our votes against the "deep damnation" of the re-introduction of those Acts, or any of their provisions involving an inquisition of the sex of woman, and we wish to give our well considered reasons for this line of action, which are as follows:—

We hold this to be an ethical question rather for the conscience of the people than one to be commanded by the Police:

We believe that Prostitution is caused mainly through the accepted double code of morals:

We think that women are often led into prostitution through ignorance and innocence; forced into it by economic exhaustion; exasperated into it by the neglect of men who prefer to seduce women rather than to marry them:

We think that vicious Landlordism is a great factor in maintaining the system:

And that it is caused by a state of society which involves the presence of ordinary working women in the factories and elsewhere, and makes it impossible for them to remain with their children in their own homes to guide and educate them in a manner making for morality:

Above all, we hold the political disability of woman and her forced subjection to laws unfitted to her status as a self-respecting human being and the counterpart of man, to be responsible for prostitution:

We think that man should heal himself before he starts to persecute by legislation the victims of his double code of morals:

And we deplore attempts to reconstruct the Race upon a degraded basis of the State persecution of politically disabled woman and the State protection for the wild oats of politically emancipated man.

And we think the time is ripe for the fathers of the Nation to instruct their sons upon the value of clean living and respect for the Potential Motherhood of the Nation if the Race is to continue great.

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An exhaustive study of the Commissions, Parliamentary, C.D. Acts, and Criminal Law Amendment Acts of the latter part of the last century reveal a condition of mind often to be found in Parliament which is incompatible with the State education of a healthy civilization. But, when a woman, Josephine Butler, courageously fought her way into public opinion and commenced to lead upon the subject, the hands of Parliament were forced, and a Royal Commission held in 1871 and 1872. Commissions are generally held to hang up legislation and silence Social Reformers, but the evidence attested on this Commission revealed such an awful state of life and morals under the Acts, that the public set to work at once to work for their repeal which was subsequently accomplished.\* And we suggest that the republication by the Government of the Royal Commission of 1871-1872 is due to the Nation at large in order that it may become fully acquainted with the subject before it sanctions any action on the part of Parliament in this matter. It is inexpedient to refer here to the evidence of witnesses in this history of crime, but in view of the sinister suggestions reappearing in this connection we quote the answers of a doctor who was called as a witness by the Commission, one, who was opposed to the Acts:

Question (19,364) "Do you think that the law (the C.D. Act) sanctioned the grossest violation of the liberty of the subject that has ever been proposed to a British Parliament?—Yes, I agree to that.

Question (19,365). "You think that a woman, a common prostitute, who hires out her body for money, in a state of disease is entitled to the same liberty to which any harmless subjects of these realms is entitled?—She is entitled to the same amount of liberty as any man in the same condition.

Question (19,366). "Do men hire out their bodies for prostitution?—There can be no trade without a buyer and a seller, and I consider the man as much a trader as the woman, and also as likely to spread the disease.

Question (19,409). "The examination of prostitutes is altogether of such a character that you believe that it must

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\* 1886.



necessarily have a degrading and demoralising effect upon them?—Unquestionably; my opinion of it is this, that it is an outrage which nothing human ought to submit to.”

This was the opinion of Dr. Charles Bell Taylor, who had, in the pursuit of his profession, seen the working of the Acts and the “detention” and “control” of women not necessarily in prison and was therefore a man “well qualified to speak.”

It may be said that to mention Votes for Women here, is to confuse the issue. In our opinion the political emancipation of women is part of the issue, for it is inconceivable that if women had had the same hold over Parliament as had the men of that day they would have allowed their sex to be subjected to an outrage which, in the opinion of that doctor, nothing human ought to submit to. The Women's Suffrage Movement has been, and is, mainly a moral movement, a desire on the part of women to obtain their share of authority in the State in order to cleanse it, and from our personal acquaintance with its advocates, we believe that women would, if enfranchised, accomplish this task without degrading proposals for either sex.

John Stuart Mill said in his speech on the People's Representation Act of 1867: “The time is now come when unless women are raised to the level of men, men will be pulled down to theirs.” Women were not raised to the political level of men and in direct ratio to the increased enfranchisement and status of men, their status has declined to that degree that the events of 1864 are again casting their shadows before us. Unable to perceive the relation between cause and effect a panic stricken minority now seeks to deal in a spirit of fear and cruelty with the effect of vice instead of courageously striking the axe at the root and cutting out the core.

Let us here give a time table of events, and call attention to the close connection between Parliamentary lack of morals and women's disenfranchisement.

In 1859. Lord Herbert's Commission was held and the inspection of men in the Army abolished.

In 1864. The first C.D. Act was passed and the inspection of women by men introduced. In this year the agitation by women for their enfranchisement commenced.

In 1866. The second C.D. Act was passed. The vice of the law was tightening round the unhappy women and the agitation for Women's Suffrage increased.

In 1867. Disraeli's People's Representation Act threw out the women, and enfranchised some extra millions of men.

In 1869. The third and most awful C.D. Act was passed; morals were going from bad to worse; men were sinking to the level of the women they had created; Government action was demanded and

In 1871 and '72 The Royal Commission on the C.D. Acts was held. The evidence showed that venereal disease was on the increase: that the orgies in connection with the Acts became a scandal wherever the Acts were in operation, and worst of all, that whereas the age of consent on the Continent was (and is) 21, the age of consent in England was 12 years, a fact which rendered England the most open market in the world for the White Slave Traffic and made hers the happy hunting ground and Clearing House for the Souteneurs of Europe. But no Parliamentary action was taken until Josephine Butler's continued investigations and agitation forced, once more, its hands and

In 1882. The Lords held a Commission of enquiry for better protection of girls and infants and the Infants' Bill was passed. Mothers were thrown out of the Bill as joint legal guardians of their children (*see Postscript*).

In 1883. The first Criminal Law Amendment Bill for the protection of girls and the raising the age of consent to 17 was passed by the Lords and rejected by the Commons responsible only to a *male electorate*.

In 1884. The second Criminal Law Amendment Bill was passed by the Lords and again rejected by the Commons *after* women had been thrown out of Gladstone's “People's Representation Act” of 1884.



In 1885. The third Criminal Law Amendment Bill, fixing the age of consent at 15 to meet the views of the Commons was passed by the Lords but the Commons rejected it for the third time, one Honourable Member stating that in his opinion, the age of consent (12) "should be lowered instead of raised," and spoke of "prostitutes of 9 tempting men" (see Hansard on the Debates). The callousness of Parliament and the infamous opposition of Hon. Members to the Bill drew forth Steads' agitation which threw such a light upon the appalling condition of morals in high life and its responsibility for the traffic in vice, that a storm of indignation swept over the Nation, the Criminal Law Amendment Bill was hurriedly brought back to silence the scandal, and rendered futile and feeble by amendments framed to suit its opponents, it passed into law at last, the age of consent, being raised to 16, at which it remains to-day, in glaring contrast to the 21 years on the Continent.\*

This then, is a brief history, suppressing all the horrors of the under currents, but showing the close connection between Women's Political disability and the morals of the land, and we hold it to be retrogressive and injurious to the coming generation, that history should attempt to repeat its mistakes and Parliament allowed to re-introduce immoral and despotic laws framed against the sex it has so cruelly neglected. We cannot separate Women's enfranchisement from this great issue and we shall fight as determinedly for the one, as we shall resist any encroachment on their liberty in the other until such time as women themselves are free as men with an equal opportunity with men to keep themselves honourably alive by a self-respecting wage, which a raised political status alone can give them, for in very truth it is the daughters of the poor who go to feed the system.

In conclusion we wish to remind the public that the C.D. Acts never got north of Colchester, they were inaugurated chiefly (as the Doctor's Commission of 1864 stated in its title) for the benefit and better protection of Her Majesty's Forces. They were confined chiefly to the Military and Naval seaports in the South and the South-East of England. They were fiercely fought against in the North of England, and Scotland repudiated them altogether without deterioration

\* See Time Table of Administrations, Appendix.

to her people. But Scotland is an integral part of the United Kingdom, fighting side by side with England for the preservation of her National honour, and, speaking as Scotsmen, and an integral part of the Kingdom we do not deem it an honour to subscribe to laws we hold in abhorrence, or to sanction the violation to the liberty of her women subjects who, by their patriotism, self abnegation, and the assistance they have rendered to the Nation in the darkest hour of its peril, have earned for the Sex an immortal glory which we shall always reverence and respect.

HAMILTON BROWN, Magistrate, Glasgow.  
(General Executive N.M.F.)

WM. DAVIDSON,	do.	do.
G. D. MORTON	do.	do.
JOHN B. DRUMMOND,	do.	do.
JAMES STEWART,	do.	do.
WM. MACLURE,	do.	do.
ROBERT SADLER,	do.	do.
JOHN M. BRYCE,	do.	do.
JOHN STEWART,	do.	do.
ROBT. HUNTER,	do.	do.
JAS. STEWART,	do.	do.
THOMAS KELLY,	do.	do.
JOHN MUIR,	do.	do.
A. OLIVER EARLY,	do.	do.
ROBERT MITCHELL,	do.	do.
HENRY MACNAUGHTON,	do.	do.

R. FERGUSON,  
Hon. Sec. Glasgow Centre, N.M.F.

JOHN McMICHAEL, J.P.,  
Councillor Edinburgh Town Council, General Executive N.M.F.

J. WILSON McLAREN,  
General Executive N.M.F.

ALEXANDER ORR,  
Hon. Treasurer and General Executive N.M.F.

ROBERT K. GAUL,  
Hon. Sec. Berwick-on-Tweed and N.M.F. General Executive.

JAMES BRUNTON,  
Trustee Edinburgh Trades Council, Edinburgh Executive N.M.F.

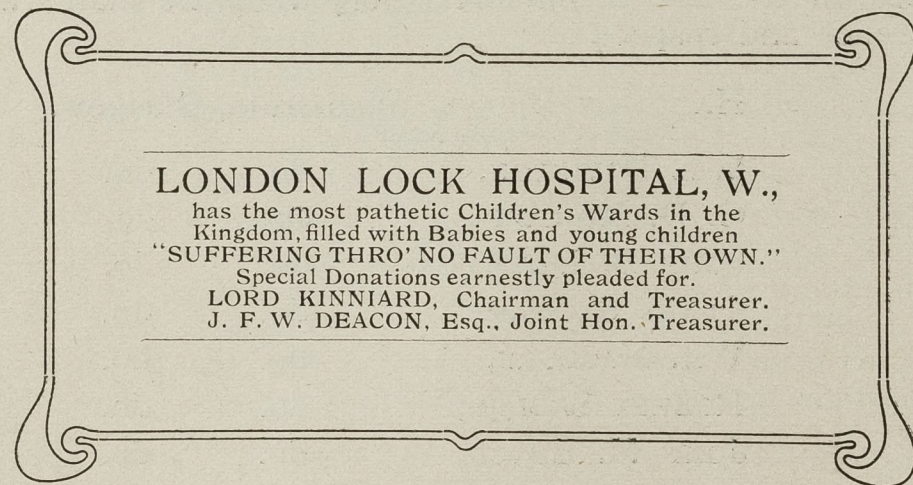
Councillor HENRY DRUMMOND,  
Edinburgh Executive N.M.F.



**POSTSCRIPT.**

**"The law of Nature, the law of God," and the law of man.**

The following is a copy of a frequent Advertisement which has appeared for some years on the front page of the *Times* :



"The law of England has not been unwise in throwing upon the father the entire responsibility of bringing up his children."—LORD BEAUCHAMP on the "Infants' Bill," House of Lords, April 21st, 1885. (*Hansard of Date.*)

"I am old-fashioned enough to believe that by the law of Nature and the law of God, the father is the person who ought to have the care of his child."—MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, on the "Infants' Bill, House of Lords, April 30th, 1885. (*Hansard of date.*)

The mother was thrown out of the "Infants' Bill for the better protection of Children," and is not the legal parent of her child.

"Parliament, I venture to say has shown itself to the full as regardful of the special conditions and special interests of women and of children—(cheers)—neither of whom are directly represented, as it has of adult men who are represented in this House. (Cheers)."—Mr. ASQUITH on the Conciliation (Women's Suffrage) Bill, House of Commons, March 28th, 1912. (*See Hansard of Date.*)

And the women were thrown out of the Suffrage Bill.

**APPENDIX.**

**Time Table of Administrations in their connection with the Nation's Morals and Women's Disability.**

**Contageous Diseases Acts "For the better protection of Her Majesty's Forces."**

- 1864. 1st C.D. Act passed. Premier: Lord Palmerston.
- 1866. 2nd C.D. Act passed. Premier: Lord John Russell.
- 1869. 3rd C.D. Act passed. Premier: Mr. Gladstone.

**Criminal Law Amendment Bills "For the better protection of young girls and children."**

- 1883. 1st Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Passed by Lords, rejected by Commons. Premier: Mr. Gladstone.
- 1884. 2nd Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Passed by Lords, rejected by Commons. Premier: Mr. Gladstone.
- 1885. 3rd Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Passed by Lords, rejected by Commons. Premier: Mr. Gladstone.

The Gladstone Administration was beaten on a Vote of Censure over the EXCISE, June 8th, 1885; Lord Salisbury took over the provisional Government pending the General Election of November, 1885; the Stead agitation and National outcry forced its hands; the Criminal Law Amendment Bill was hurriedly brought back to the Commons and amidst a *storm of opposition in the Commons* passed into law and became the Act of 1885.



Women's Suffrage Bills "For the better protection of Women and Children."

1867. **People's Representation Act** (Disraeli's) passed. Premier: Lord Derby. (Women thrown out.)
1884. **People's Representation Act** (Gladstone's) passed. Premier: Mr. Gladstone. (Women thrown out.)  
(Women travel for over 20 years in the Desert.)
1906. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (Mr. Keir Hardie's). Talked out. Premier: Mr. Campbell-Bannerman.
1907. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (Mr. Dickenson's). Talked out. Premier: Mr. Campbell-Bannerman.
1908. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (Mr. Stanger's) **PASSED**. Majority 172. Blocked in Parliament. Premier: Mr. Asquith.
1910. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (1st Conciliation—Mr. Shackleton) **PASSED**. Majority 110. Blocked in Parliament. Premier: Mr. Asquith.
1911. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (2nd Conciliation—Sir G. Kemp) **PASSED**. Majority 168. Blocked in Parliament. Premier: Mr. Asquith.
1912. **Women's Suffrage Bill** (3rd Conciliation—Mr. Agg-Gardiner). Lost by narrow margin of 14 votes. Premier: Mr. Asquith.
1913. **Mr. Asquith's Reform Bill** (People's Representation) Sir Edward Grey's Women's Suffrage Amendment, ruled by the Speaker "**OUT OF ORDER**." Women thrown out and Bill dropped. January 24th.
- 
1913. "**CAT AND MOUSE BILL**" (Mr. McKenna's). Passed in the House of Commons, April 23rd.  
" " House of Lords, April 24th.  
Premier: Mr. Asquith.

Lord Curzon on the Turkish Constitution.

"They found in Parliamentary Government the sole guarantee against tyranny and oppression, and the best existing vindication of those personal rights and liberties and that sense of self respect which was as dear to the eastern as to the western and which, indeed, was a portion of the imperishable heritage of the human race."—*Times*, July 21st, 1909.

"Disqualifications for the Parliamentary Vote."

"Aliens, idiots, lunatics (*except during lucid intervals*), infants, convicted felons (*until freed by pardon or otherwise*), bankrupts, paupers and women." (See *Whitaker of 1915 and Parliamentary Statute*.)

Price 1d.; or post free 1½d.

To be obtained from all the principal Suffrage Societies, or from the N.M.F. Hon. Secretaries of London, Glasgow and Edinburgh Centres, as follows:—

6, Wellington Road, St. John's Wood, London, N.W.  
13, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh.  
14, Bute Mansions, Hillhead, Glasgow.



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