

Factory Bill, embodied in a government measure, passed through both Houses, so that the hours of labor for women and children are now limited to fifty-six and a half in a week.

But although much has been effected, it may be regarded as serious that so keen and independent a thinker as Mr. Fawcett should have offered determined resistance to the bill. But his argument was founded on the assumption that those whom the bill is taking care of are well able to take care of themselves, which is at least a doubtful proposition; and that legislative interference, to be logical, should be complete, and should extend even to women employed in domestic service.

But no one would deny that if great injury to women were to be apprehended as an effect of domestic service,—that if, for example, every master was a Legree and every mistress a Brownrigg,—the legislature would have to interfere for the protection of maids. Nothing of the sort is, however, pretended.

Now we have evidence, and very complete evidence, that injury is done to women, and not merely to women but to their descendants, by their undue employment in factories. Parliament must in consequence determine what limitation must be placed on factory labor, not merely for the protection of weak women now, but in its own imperial interests for the preservation of health in the children of these women—the future citizens of the country.

Nor is it certain that Mr. Fawcett's other assumption, that the classes affected are well able to take care of themselves, is in any degree correct. It is certain that women, from love of approbation, as well as from those feelings of unselfishness which do honor to them as wives, are only too easily led to work beyond their powers. . . .

The conditions of life in this country are rapidly reversing themselves. Wealth is doubling itself and increasing the population; greater care in management and subtlety in mechanical appliances are diminishing, and must further diminish, the proportion of persons employed, especially in agriculture. Here is the problem: daily a greater population, daily in all probability less work, which means less subsistence.

We are shut up by a sea with our surging myriads,—a source of strength if guided and controlled; if not, an immeasurable volcanic power. Many of them must go forth to people the world. Our race has colonized and colonizes, has influenced and influences; and in future ages seems likely further to colonize and influence a great part of the habitable globe.

So great has been our field of influence that we can only view it with awe. It has been, and is, a great destiny for this country to sway so mightily the destinies of the universe. But the great privilege involves a sacred trust. We must look to it that the fertile race we send forth to the waste places of the earth is a race physically, morally, and intellectually equal to its high duties.

At present we will not compel our children to be educated, however rudely; at present, in one of our cities nearly a quarter of the infants born die before they are one year old. In one of your sections you propose to discuss, "What are the best means of drawing together the interests of the United Kingdom, India, and the Colonies?" I submit that the primary means are to send forth colonists who may be worthy the country they leave and the destiny they seek.

The different agencies I have noticed to-night all tend to this: Whether we keep them in England or they pass from

us, we must look to the nurture of this race of kings. We annually distribute through the world a population nearly as large as that of Birmingham. In the last two years more emigrants have left our shores than there are inhabitants in Glasgow and Dundee put together. After all, whatever our commerce or political influence may be, this is the most gigantic enterprise in which this or any other nation can be engaged; and the responsibility for its success, not merely for the present, but for countless future generations, lies with us.

Will this great stream pass from us a turbid flood, composed of emigrants like some we now send forth, who shake the dust from their feet and swear undying enmity to us; or shall it be a broad and beneficent river of life, fertilizing as the Nile, beloved as the Ganges, sacred as the Jordan, separated from us indeed by the ocean, but, like that fabled fountain, Arethusa, which, passing under the sea from Greece into Sicily, retained its original source in Arcadia?

We do not know what our fate may be. We have no right, perhaps, to hope that we may be an exception to the rule by which nations have their period of growth, and of grandeur, and of decay. It may be that all we most esteem may fade away like the glories of Babylon. But if we have done our duty well, even though our history should pass away, and our country become—

—“an island salt and bare,
The haunt of seals, and orcs, and seamews' clang,”

—she may be remembered, not ungratefully, as the mother of great commonwealths and peaceful empires that shall perpetuate the best qualities of the race.

I have only mentioned one of the topics with which a Social Science Congress is called upon to deal; yet how vast

this single subject appears! Indeed, it is difficult to see any limit to the possible usefulness of a meeting like the present.

We live in remarkable times—times of social development so ominous that we may be approaching a period of social revolution. What a change from that old world whence this fertile brood of nations sprang! On the one side, a dark surging mass of barbarians; on the other, the inevitable, stern immobility of the Roman Empire.

Now the whole universe seems undergoing the volcanic influence of social theory. Everywhere there is breaking out some strange manifestation. The grotesque congregation of the Shakers, the agricultural socialism of Harris, the polygamous socialism of Mormon, the lewd quackery of Free Love, the mad, blank misery of Nihilism, the tragic frenzy of the Parisian Commune, are portents no observer can neglect.

Some try to solve the problem by abolishing property; some by a new religion. Most of these experiments thrive in America, which alone has room for such diversities of opinion and practice. It is too much the practice to treat these various organizations as a mixture of knavery and folly. Two, indeed, of these phases of humanity will receive more attention from the historian of the future than they attract from their contemporaries,—I mean the Commune of Paris, and the Church of the Latter-Day Saints. That eccentric church is a socialism founded on a polygamous religion and ruled by a supreme pontiff. But it would be a mistake, I think, to suppose that polygamy is an essential part of Mormonism. The traveller in Utah will be struck most, not by the plurality of wives, but by the prevailing industry and apparent external brotherhood. These are the outward features of an extraordinary community.

That it should largely increase; that it should have converted a desert into a garden; that it should, in the last few years, have attracted to it thousands of the working classes (not by polygamy, for that is expensive, and almost all the emigrants are poor), will seem, to a future age, a strange sign of our times.

Again, whatever may be thought of the Commune of Paris, which issued quaintly ingenuous decrees, and which ended in blood and iron, it will always remain one of the sinister facts of our age. Like the Ninevite king, it perished in a blazing pyre of what was fairest in its habitation; and the world lost so much in those flames that it cannot now pass judgment with complete impartiality.

But as a gigantic outbreak of class hostility, as a desperate attempt to found a new society in the very temple of the old, it has hardly, perhaps, received sufficient attention. Far be it from me to attempt to palliate the horrors of that disastrous conflict. They are, however, only terrible accessories. But the ominous fact of that sudden social revolution is a portent that cannot be blotted from the history of humanity. While human beings remain human beings, and while efforts like these are made for complete social reorganization, a Social Science Congress has even more scope than a Parliament. . . .

Never was a league of the friends of humanity more needed than now. Never was there, on all sides, so much of energy and skill given to the preparation of those efforts by which civilization is retarded and mankind made miserable. The armies of the four great military Powers, when on a war footing, engross three and a quarter millions of men in the prime and flower of life. Three and a quarter millions of men in four countries with their swords ready to the grind-

stone form a portentous, silent fact which we cannot ignore in the halls where we discuss the efficacy of arbitration in settling disputes between nations.

In Spain we see a war of dynasty; in America a conflict of color. The night is dark and troubled; we can but labor steadfastly, hoping for the dawn, united by the sympathy of the living and animated by the example of the dead.

THE LORDS' VETO

DELIVERED IN ST. GEORGE'S HALL, BRADFORD, ENGLAND, OCTOBER 27, 1894

I PROPOSE to speak about the House of Lords to-night. But if I do not do so with all the passion, and with all the fervour, and with all the power of invective which orators in a less responsible situation might be able to indulge in—to your unbounded delight and their own—you must put it down not so much to my want of zeal in the cause as to the fact that I should be wanting in my duty as a Minister if I approach the greatest constitutional question that has arisen in England for two centuries or more without a solemn sense of the responsibility of my words. Now, gentlemen, this question of the House of Lords is not a new question. It is over a hundred years since Mr. Pitt declared that it was the part of the Constitution which would first give way. It is just under a hundred years since Mr. Burke said:—"Fuerunt. There is an end of that part of the Constitution." But for ninety-nine years the House of Lords has continued to exist, and, if you will pardon me one word of egotism, I will say all through my political life it is the question to which I have attached the most importance. On two occasions I have brought it before the notice of the House

of Lords themselves, and on neither occasion have I spared or minced my language. And some five years ago, when at a great Liberal conference in Scotland, they spread out their plan of operations, and the number of objects with which they proposed to deal, I told them that their programme was a foolish programme, for it omitted the one question which took the first place in the realization of all their projects, and that was a drastic dealing with the House of Lords. Well when I have said these things, all my sagacious friends have said, "Why do you tilt at this windmill? Why don't you take up practical subjects? That question will settle itself." But that question will not settle itself. It cannot settle itself, and, if you do not take care, it will wreck many Liberal measures and many Liberal Governments before you have done with it. I will tell you why. When Liberal Governments come back to the country to give an account of their stewardship, they do so too often with many promises unfulfilled against their will owing to the action of the House of Lords. But the country does not nicely scrutinize the reason for that emptiness. They blame the Liberal Ministry and the Liberal majority.

Well, now, gentlemen, is this the moment at which to deal with the House of Lords? I think it is. And I think I could show you on the testimony of our opponents, that no more fitting time could be found. I know well the advantage that the Lords have in representing an English majority against Irish Home Rule. I know that, linked to that majority, they occupy a stronger position in many ways than they have for some years past. Nor will I on this occasion exaggerate the importance of the Leeds Conference, great as it was; but I will say this, that if it is a time of calmness and apathy in regard to the House of Lords, as our op-

ponents say, that is precisely the reason for dealing with it now; because great constitutional questions should not be dealt with at moments of passion and revolution. They should be dealt with by the calm and unbiased reason of the people of the country. Well, what has been the course of history on this question? There have been paroxysms of passion against the House of Lords, followed by intervals of reaction or calm. When the nation has been thwarted on some great question in which it took an interest, and it has flamed into a fury, the House of Lords has given way. The nation then has relapsed, and has given the House of Lords a new lease of life; and these periods of passion and reaction have been so sudden that they have not given any time, perhaps so favourable as the present, for showing to our opponents an earnest intention of dealing with this question. And what is more unfortunate, perhaps, about these sudden paroxysms against the House of Lords is this, that in England your passions against the House of Lords are selfish passions, you are stirred into a rage when the House of Lords defeats some bill that affects England and is dear to England, but you will not flame up when the House of Lords deals in the same way with Scotland, or Ireland, or Wales. In that way I might make an allusion—taking a metaphor from Roman history—to the powers exercised by the Praetorian Guards. You might say that by giving way to the English Praetorians the House of Lords buys the right to deal as it chooses with the more distant provinces of the Empire. And the misfortune of that is this—that it produces a feeling of neglect and of differential treatment as between England, on the one hand, and Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, on the other, which in itself is a great danger to, and dissolvent of your Empire. Well, then, gentlemen, I

contend that this is a favourable moment. This is, on the Tory hypothesis, not a moment of passion. It is not a moment of reaction. If the Tories say this is a moment of calmness and apathy with regard to the House of Lords, we reply that is then a reason for dealing with the House of Lords as a constitutional subject. But if, on the other hand, there is, as we believe it to be, a feeling of deep, subdued but persistent resentment against the House of Lords, it is equally a moment for dealing with it.

But, gentlemen, I shall be asked the question that Lord Melbourne asked about every great political problem, "Why not leave it alone?" After all, it may be said we have got on with it for many centuries. We have prospered in spite of it. There are worse things than it, such as our climate—and if we can bear with our climate, is it worth while working ourselves up in a rage against the House of Lords? Well, that might have been very well if things had remained as they were. But while the House of Lords has remained as it was, the circumstances have changed all round it. If you pull down a street and rebuild it all with the exception of one house, you will probably find in the course of a year that the house will be condemned as a dangerous structure. On three separate occasions you have in the last sixty years, popularised the House of Commons. In 1832 you passed the first great Reform Bill. The House of Lords resisted it to the point of death. Had it resisted a little more, you would have had no question of the House of Lords to deal with now. Well, that changed the balance of the constitution, because not merely did it make the House of Commons in itself infinitely more powerful and infinitely more representative, but it diminished the influence of the House of Lords, which up to that time, through the medium of the

rotten boroughs, had directly controlled the majority of the House of Commons. Therefore the Reform Bill of 1832 was a nail, and a deep nail, in—I won't say the coffin—but in the future arrangements of the House of Lords. In 1867 you had another great democratic Reform Bill, which, I may note in passing, the House of Lords allowed to become law at once, because it was introduced by a Tory Government. And in 1884 you had another Reform Bill, which completed the measure of 1867 to a certain extent, which, as it was introduced by a Liberal Government, was fiercely resisted by the House of Lords, which opposition produced another great outburst of popular feeling, but which again ended by strengthening enormously the power of the House of Commons itself. And in 1886 another event took place, which still further weakened the House of Lords. For one peculiarity of the situation is this, that all these three strengthenings of the popular element in the House of Commons have been accompanied, strangely enough, by a diminution of the strength of the popular element in the House of Lords. Even up to the time of the last Reform Bill of 1884 there was some sort of balance between the two parties in the House of Lords. I even recollect, I believe, once in my life being in a majority in the House of Lords—but that could not have been on any vital question. But in 1886 the House of Lords changed its character for good or for evil. In 1886 the proposal of the Irish Home Rule Bill alienated the great remaining mass of the Whig or Liberal Peers, and from that time to this the House of Lords has represented no balance of parties whatever, but an overwhelming mass of Tories and so-called Liberal Unionists, with a handful of Liberals thrown in.

And so, gentlemen, we come to the present state of things.