

Emily Smith

The Fenian Sisterhood, Ladies Land Leaguers and the Woman Suffrage Question: The Representation of Women in the Victorian Irish Press

Irish women often served as props in various causes, both within and outside Ireland. Regardless of the cause, the women became objects in an ideological struggle, to be lauded or vilified according to the needs of the argument. This tokenization existed because stock concepts of womanhood proliferated during the Victorian era.¹ These figures appeared frequently in newspapers and were used to support or condemn various causes, according to the purview of the paper.

Women in the Victorian era operated within a dichotomy of archetypes. A proper woman conformed to Victorian ideas of femininity, while a reprobate woman did not.² Acknowledging class and religious differences, the ideal woman oversaw servants, tended to the children, and ensured that her home was a haven from the world.³ Morally superior to men, she

¹ Isabella Beeton, *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*, abr. ed. (London: S. O. Beeton, 1861; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18 (1966): 151-174; Aileen S. Kraditor, Introduction, *Up From The Pedestal: Selected Writings from American Feminism*, ed. Aileen S. Kraditor, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 3-24; Joyce W. Warren, *Notes, Women, Money and the Law: Nineteenth-Century Fiction, Gender, and the Courts* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2005); Claudia Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2007); Bridget Walsh, *Domestic Murder In Nineteenth-Century England: Literary and Cultural Representations* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014); Susan G. Bell, Karen M. Offen, eds. *Women, The Family, and Freedom, 1750-1850: The Debate in the Documents*, (Stanford, California; Stanford University Press, 1983), 139; Breda Gray, *Women and the Irish Diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2004), 27-28, 63; James H. Murphy, eds., *The Oxford History of the Irish Book Volume IV The Irish Book in English, 1800-1891*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 382.

² Ibid.

³ Rosemary Cullen-Owens, *A Social History of Women In Ireland 1870-1970*, 5, 17-18, 37-39; Frances Finnegan, *Do Penance or Perish: A Study of the Magdalene Asylums in Ireland*, 9-10, 242; Claudia Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England*, 46; Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1-8. Isabella Beeton, *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management*, abr. ed. (London: S. O. Beeton, 1861; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18 (1966): 151-174; Aileen S. Kraditor, Introduction, *Up From The Pedestal: Selected Writings from American Feminism*, ed. Aileen S. Kraditor, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 3-24; Joyce W. Warren, *Notes, Women, Money and the Law: Nineteenth-Century Fiction, Gender, and the Courts* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2005); Claudia Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2007); Bridget Walsh, *Domestic Murder In Nineteenth-Century England: Literary and Cultural Representations* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014); Susan G. Bell, Karen M. Offen, eds.

was chaste, innocent, naive and loving, and relied upon her husband for all worldly matters.⁴ She could support suffrage, or Irish nationalism, but only so long as that support did not hinder her from carrying out her accepted roles. The reprobate woman involved herself in politics, either supporting the suffrage movement or the Irish nationalist movement, to the neglect of her proper place—or engaged in criminal activities, with petty theft, prostitution, and child neglect being most common. This woman was reprobate because she contradicted everything that an ideal woman embodied.⁵

The Irish press at home and abroad reflected these stereotypes, with some papers supporting them and others challenging them. All four papers presented a version of the ideal woman, informed by the social class, political views, and religious beliefs, of the individuals involved with that paper. Most papers took an ambiguous stance on women's suffrage, with the tone becoming more condemnatory as the period progressed.

Reflecting its focus on nationalism, the *Freemen's Journal* did not outwardly support one concept of good or bad women but included examples of women's groups considered both positive and negative, depending on the views expressed in editorials and letters. The following discussion of the Ladies Land League, an early nationalist organization focused on land reform, illustrated this trend.

The first remarks came from the Reverend M'Cabe, who served as the archbishop of Dublin. Throughout his argument, he employed traditional notions of womanhood in his critique

Women, The Family, and Freedom, 1750-1850: The Debate in the Documents, (Stanford, California; Stanford University Press, 1983), 139; Breda Gray, *Women and the Irish Diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2004), 27-28, 63; James H. Murphy, eds., *The Oxford History of the Irish Book Volume IV The Irish Book in English, 1800-1891*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 382..

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Maria Luddy, "Prostitution and Rescue Work in Nineteenth Century Ireland," in *Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women's History in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 61-64; Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy, "'Cherchez La Femme': The Elusive Woman In Irish History," in *Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women's History in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 9.

of the women and their activities. He wrote, “The modesty of her daughters was the ancient glory of Ireland...Like Mary, their place was the seclusion of home. If charity drew them out of doors, their work was done with speed and their voices were not heard in the world’s thoroughfares.”⁶ In the archbishop’s time, however, “matrons or virgins...are called forth, under the flimsy pretext of charity, to take their stand on the noisy streets of public life.”⁷ The women used charity as an excuse “to forget the modesty of their sex and the high goal of their womanhood...[and to] parade [themselves] before the public gaze.”⁸ The archbishop clearly targeted the Ladies’ Land League in his remarks.

A. M. Sullivan wrote a letter supporting the women.⁹ He insisted that politics motivated the archbishop’s vitriol, and that, “Catholics like myself have a right to complain when he allows his political prejudices to go so far as to cruelly wound our sisters and wives.”¹⁰ Mr. Sullivan based his support for the women on his, “hope that in all...[things] the women of Ireland will show...what is womanly....what is gentle, modest, pure and holy.”¹¹ Though he strove to refute the archbishop’s cause, Mr. Sullivan shared some of his views.

The Ladies’ Land League defended itself by reprinting their resolutions. The first stated, “We do not consider [how] an organization of Irish Ladies [formed] to relieve the victims of unjust land laws....can be considered unwomanly, outstepping the natural limits of their sphere of influence and duty.”¹² Another resolution asserted, “We...wish to protest against the

⁶ Dr. M’Cabe, Letter to the *Freeman’s Journal*, March 12, 1881, 2, in *Irish Feminisms 1810-1930*, Mary S. Pierse ed. (London: Rutledge, 2010), 2: 138.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ A. M. Sullivan, Letter to the Editor of the *Freeman’s Journal* March 16, 1881, 5, in *Irish Feminisms 1810-1930*, Mary S. Pierse ed. (London: Rutledge, 2010), 2:140.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid, 139.

¹² Ladies’ Land League, Resolutions in *Freeman’s Journal* March 21, 1881, 3, in *Irish Feminisms 1810-1930*, Mary S. Pierse ed. (London: Rutledge, 2010), 2: 140. This resolution was adopted by the Ladies’ Land Leagues of

unwarranted slander showered upon us by the rejected member of Tipperary and other gentlemen.”¹³

Both the women and their male supporter used traditional expectations of women to craft their defense. They referenced “female modesty”, and the virtue and charity believed to be women’s “natural sphere of influence and duty.”¹⁴ The women recognized that support would come only as long as they reflected society’s stereotypes. The *Freeman’s Journal* prioritized Irish nationalism, so an ideal woman supported Irish nationalism through the fulfilment of her proper role in society. The reprobate woman stepped beyond those bounds—and therefore stopped behaving as a proper Irish woman.

The *Irish Republic*, a nationalist paper printed in Chicago, took a similar stance, publishing letters to the editor concerning the Fenian Sisterhood, an all-female offshoot of the Fenian Brotherhood. In these letters, the women discussed their plans for aiding families of imprisoned Fenian Brotherhood members. They drew upon traditional notions of femininity, combined with a zeal for Irish nationalism, to advocate support for their cause. When detractors arose, the women were not the focus of their critics. An assumed lack of zeal on the part of the women involved provided the enmity for those critical of the group.¹⁵

Galbally and Aberlow and was put forward by Miss Margaret Bourke. Miss Alice Donovan seconded it and the resolution was then unanimously accepted by all the ladies present at the meeting.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ John Gallogly, Letter to the Editor of the *Freeman’s Journal* March 25, 1881, in *Irish Feminisms 1810-1930*, Mary S. Pierse ed. (London: Rutledge, 2010), 2: 141 and Ladies’ Land League, Resolutions in *Freeman’s Journal* March 21, 1881, 3, in *Irish Feminisms 1810-1930*, Mary S. Pierse ed. (London: Rutledge, 2010), 2: 140.

¹⁵ Letter to the Fenian Sisterhood, in the *Irish Republic*, May 4, 1867, 12

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/iune_bismuth_ver01/data/sn94054745/0033289819A/1867050401/015.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022;

Fanny E. C., “The Fenian Sisterhood and the Families of the Irish Prisoners,” in the *Irish Republic*, May 18, 1867, 12. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn94054745/1867-05-18/ed-1/seq-12/>; Accessed April 7, 2022;

A Native Born, “The Fenian Sisterhood and the Families of the Irish Prisoners,” in the *Irish Republic* May 25, 1867, 12. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn94054745/1867-05-25/ed-1/seq-13/>. Accessed April 7, 2022;

Hazel Greene, “The Fenian Sisterhood and the Coming Convention,” in the *Irish Republic*, September 07, 1867, 6. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn94054745/1867-09-07/ed-1/seq-6/>. Accessed April 7, 2022.

For brevity, one letter demonstrated the theme. Entitled Letter to the Fenian Sisterhood, it read in part, “Gentlemen, I would wish to call the attention of the Fenian Sisterhood, and of all of the Irish ladies throughout the United States, to the condition of the families of the Irish State prisoners, at the present time, and to ask them, as *women*, to come forward and aid them.”¹⁶ Insisting that, “there is not an Irish lady, rich or poor, but can do something to aid the suffering families of Irish patriots,” the author went on to provide several suggestions for how that aid might be collected. She reminded her audience that the recipients were “patriots” and added, “when you support...them, you but do your *duty*.”¹⁷ These societies collected monetary donations which would be sent back to Ireland for the relief of the families.¹⁸

The author deployed traditional gender roles to advocate for Irish women’s involvement in this cause. She pleaded with her audience “as *women*,” which implied an unspoken assumption that those who read her letter would be moved to help because of their womanly compassion, and their gender-based solidarity with the female relatives of the Fenian prisoners. She also employed two positive stereotypes about women. All women were both inherently empathetic toward suffering and innately moved to assist if provided with the opportunity, and, all women shared an identical identity, based upon their gender, regardless of their socioeconomic status. She emphasized the necessity of the Fenian Sisterhood’s helping these families, referring to it as a “duty” and disregarded any class based socioeconomic distinctions in stating, “there is not an Irish lady, rich or poor, but can do something.” The Irish women of the

¹⁶ Letter to the Fenian Sisterhood, in the *Irish Republic*, May 4, 1867, 12
https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/iune_bismuth_ver01/data/sn94054745/0033289819A/1867050401/0015.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022.

¹⁷ Letter to the Fenian Sisterhood, in the *Irish Republic*, May 4, 1867, 12
https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/iune_bismuth_ver01/data/sn94054745/0033289819A/1867050401/0015.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022.

¹⁸ Letter to the Fenian Sisterhood, in the *Irish Republic*, May 4, 1867, 12
https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/iune_bismuth_ver01/data/sn94054745/0033289819A/1867050401/0015.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022.

Irish diaspora, in Iowa and elsewhere, would be moved by their inherent womanly compassion to aid the afflicted families. Providing such aid was their duty—first as women, and secondly as Irish nationalists. For the *Irish Republic* then, a good woman used her traditional womanly attributes in service to her country—but did not step beyond her assigned gender roles.¹⁹

The paper’s treatment of women’s suffrage bore out the latter assertion.²⁰ While the editors reprinted a pro women’s suffrage editorial from the *Independent*, the editors of the *Irish Republic* remarked, “Without pronouncing on the question of ‘woman suffrage,’ it has long been painfully evident that the payment and general treatment of working women and working girls are very far indeed from what they ought to be. Have our rulers and politicians, sacred and profane, neither hearts nor consciences?”²¹ Though clearly sympathetic to the plight of these women, the newspaper refused to embrace the cause of women’s suffrage.

The paper also reprinted the following remarks from the *Western Railroad Gazette*, which “winds up a fierce and fiery diatribe against ‘woman-suffrage’.”²² The remarks were:

“Married men know how difficult it is to maintain even a decorous shadow of household discipline in these days of unlimited privilege and license. Give women the right to vote, and we should soon see our wives and daughters rampaging through the country, spouting politics from stump and rostrum...What would become of the dignity of the

¹⁹ The other letters demonstrate a bit of an argument over the points raised in the original letter, but the primary crux of the debate centers on whether women in Ireland or women in America were better suited to aid the Irish Fenians. No one objected to women helping, the question was simply a matter of whose responsibility it was based upon geography.

²⁰ The phrase woman suffrage occurred five times in the *Irish Republic* in issues published throughout 1867. The words woman and suffrage occurred seventeen times, but the bulk of those were articles dealing with fashion, incidents involving women, or questions of suffrage more broadly, either universal suffrage, householder suffrage, or suffrage questions concerning Black men.

²¹ The Social Evil, in the *Irish Republic*, July 20, 1867, 7.

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/iune_bismuth_ver01/data/sn94054745/0033289819A/1867072001/0160.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022.

²² The Omnibus, *Unpolite*, in the *Irish Republic*, June 1, 1867, 13.

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/iune_bismuth_ver01/data/sn94054745/0033289819A/1867060101/0066.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022.

parental relation, or what would husbands be good for then? We would sooner be wedded to the d—l, horns, hoofs and all, than to a she-politician.”²³

The paper’s sole comment on the republished content was to assert that, “This ‘chap’ evidently speaks from experience.”²⁴

The *Irish Republic* though radical in matters of Irish independence, remained traditional in its views of womanhood. Women and their enfranchisement would only be possible once Ireland had achieved its independence, and even then, those advocating for women’s suffrage were, by and large, viewed with suspicion and derision. They were reprobate women. The ideal woman knew her place and kept to it, employing her natural feminine attributes in service to her country—but only by bestowing charity, fundraising, and contributing to various relief efforts. Her worth was bound up in her ability to advance the cause of Irish nationalism, and any woman who stepped outside that role lost her status as a good woman.

For the *Irish Standard*, a good woman might or might not be a suffragette. Editorials, speeches, and comments in favor of women’s suffrage appeared in several issues, along with opposing views.²⁵ The paper published an editorial by noted suffragist Mrs. Fawcett, “Woman’s

²³ The Omnibus, *Unpolite*, in the *Irish Republic*, June 1, 1867, 13. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/iune_bismuth_ver01/data/sn94054745/0033289819A/1867060101/0066.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022.

²⁴ The Omnibus, *Unpolite*, in the *Irish Republic*, June 1, 1867, 13. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/iune_bismuth_ver01/data/sn94054745/0033289819A/1867060101/0066.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022. Other references to women’s suffrage were more ambiguous. The paper reproduced in whole a supportive speech given by John Stuart Mill, in which he based his support for women’s suffrage on the same grounds that laborers and other oppressed groups demanded the vote—assuming that the group with the power would be kind to the group without the power was ridiculous, and the group without the power needed protection in the form of the vote.²⁴ The editorial was published in its entirety, with no editorial commentary, which would suggest that at least some editors were sympathetic. There were also references to a speech given by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, also published without comment. See for example, *Late News*, in the *Irish Republic*, November 23, 1867, 14. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/iune_bismuth_ver01/data/sn94054745/0033289819A/1867112301/0383.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022.

²⁵ The phrase woman suffrage occurs twenty-one times in the issues of the *Irish Standard* published between 1869 and 1915, though most of those sources occurred from 1904-1915. Woman and suffrage occurred a total of 17 times in the *Irish Republic* but most of those results were articles discussing fashion, violence against women, or discussions of suffrage more broadly.

Suffrage: English Lady Makes a Plea and Answers Some Objections,” in the January 5, 1889, issue. The editorial stated in part, “None of us want to...convert women into men. We want women...to continue womanly...to bring their...influence on behalf oftrue, honest, just, pure, lovely [things]... to serve...by helping to send good men... to... Parliament.”²⁶

Mrs. Fawcett demonstrated several common justifications for women’s suffrage. She assured her readers that women would remain women, by insisting that enfranchising women would not turn them into men.²⁷ She maintained that women’s special characteristics were what made them suitable for politics.²⁸ Mrs. Fawcett’s arguments were based on women using their influence as women to enact change by electing men. She, as the women of the Land League and the Fenian Sisterhood before her, used the traditional image of the ‘good woman’ to advocate for women’s participation in civic life—and the *Irish Standard* supported those views by giving her a platform.

Two editorials demonstrated the paper’s shift to a more negative view of women’s suffrage. The first editorial, “The Reformation of Politics the Last Thing Women Should Attempt,” mocked and castigated women’s desire to be involved in politics, and further argued that women’s involvement would be detrimental.²⁹ The second editorial, “The New Woman,” made similar arguments, but centered its primary condemnation on, “men wanting to become

²⁶ Women’s Suffrage: An English Lady Makes a Plea and Answers Some Objections in the *Irish Standard*, January 5, 1889, 6. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/mnhi_antares_ver03/data/sn90059959/00271742800/1889010501/0448.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022.

²⁷ Women’s Suffrage: An English Lady Makes a Plea and Answers Some Objections in the *Irish Standard*, January 5, 1889, 6. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/mnhi_antares_ver03/data/sn90059959/00271742800/1889010501/0448.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022.

²⁸ Women’s Suffrage: An English Lady Makes a Plea and Answers Some Objections in the *Irish Standard*, January 5, 1889, 6. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/data/batches/mnhi_antares_ver03/data/sn90059959/00271742800/1889010501/0448.pdf. Accessed February 24, 2022.

²⁹ Ward McAlister, “The Reformation of Politics the Last Thing Women Should Attempt,” in the *Irish Standard*, November 24, 1894, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/609882808>. Accessed March 26, 2022.

women and women wanting to become men.”³⁰ These editorials indicated that the *Irish Standard* also provided a platform for negative views, and sometimes saw a woman as reprobate for involving herself in matters which did not concern her. The shift in tone matched a similar shift in the Edwardian era in Ireland, with women’s suffrage becoming more criticized and women suffragists more vilified.

For the *Irish Standard*, the ideal woman matched the archetypal characteristics associated with Victorian womanhood. While initially such a woman could support women’s suffrage, as time went on, that became less acceptable. Toward the end of the period, the *Standard* characterized supporters of women’s suffrage as reprobate, in the same class as criminals.³¹

The *Irish Times* took a traditional view of women. Though they were initially supportive of women’s suffrage, their coverage of the woman suffrage question during the Edwardian period turned decidedly negative.³² The ideal woman could be a wife, a mother, or a servant,

³⁰ “The New Woman,” in the *Irish Standard*, January 26, 1895, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/609880935>. Accessed March 26, 2022.

³¹ For one example of how female criminals are described, see “New From Ireland,” the *Irish Standard*, December 4, 1897, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/609886238>. Accessed March 26, 2022. For the earliest example of the negative use of suffragette, see “Flays ‘Smart Set’ Father Vaughan Roasts Aristocracy,” the *Irish Standard*, July 21, 1906, 8. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/609893035/?terms=suffragette&match=1>. Accessed May 5, 2022. For suffragettes being linked to criminality see “Christmas in Jail for Women,” the *Irish Standard*, December 22, 1906, 3. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/609893942/?terms=suffragette&match=1>. Accessed May 5, 2022.

³² For some examples of the shift in tone, consider the following from the Edwardian period: Initially the above reports from the Irish Women’s Franchise and Local Government Association continued to be published by the newspaper. See, “The Irish Women’s Suffrage and Local Government Association,” *Irish Times*, January 14, 1911, 5, accessed February 12, 2017. <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1911/0114/Pg005.html>; “The Irish Women’s Suffrage and Local Government Association,” *Irish Times*, May 10, 1913, 8, accessed February 12, 2017. <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1913/0510/Pg008.html>; “Women and the Franchise,” *Irish Times*, June 20, 1910, 7, accessed February 13, 2017. <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1910/0620/Pg007.html>. For the most part, women’s suffrage was not taken seriously in the newspapers and suffragettes were routinely mocked. Even the above piece’s grandiosity of descriptions could be interpreted in an almost satirical light. The following are some examples: “Gladstone and the Suffragettes,” *Irish Times*, August 5, 1909, 6 accessed February 13, 2017. <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1909/0805/Pg006.html>; “More Suffragette Hunger Strikers,” *Irish Times*, August 5, 1909, 5, accessed February 13, 2017. <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1909/0805/Pg005.html>; “Suffragettes Charged With Assault In Jail,” *Irish Times*, August 5, 1909, 5, accessed February 13, 2017. <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1909/0805/Pg005.html>; “Suffragist Silliness,” *Irish Times*, December 3, 1912, 4, accessed February 13, 2017. <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1912/1203/Pg004.html>; “‘Suffragettes’ and Mr. Lloyd George,” *Irish Times*, December 2, 1912, 6, accessed February 14, 2017.

provided she met the desired qualifications—primarily that of respectability.³³ The reprobate woman typically appeared in court cases.³⁴

While the *Irish Times* published an editorial supporting improvement in women’s education, the paper also evidenced a lack of support.³⁵ The paper published an editorial which discussed a meeting concerning the education of women and girls. The editorial described the participants as having “the usual indiscretion of newly acquired zeal,” and asserting that they “advocate[d] the position that a woman ought to receive equal technical training with a man, and then proceeded to remove by a very imperfect kind of destructive distillation the reasons why she should not.”³⁶ The author went on to insist that women’s place was in the home, and that they had no need of, “higher mathematics and natural philosophy except it be a few of the main laws of physical science, written in a broad and popular spirit, free of technicality.”³⁷ While they acknowledged exceptions—seeming to assent to the capabilities of some women—they nevertheless maintained that, “We have nothing to say to exceptional cases though we very much doubt whether any man would not much rather marry an affectionate and simple-minded girl,

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1912/1202/Pg006.html>; “Pillar Box Outrages,” *Irish Times*, December 2, 1912, 6, accessed February 14, 2017.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1912/1202/Pg006.html>.

“No Title,” *Irish Times*, January 24, 1910, 6, accessed February 13, 2017.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1910/0124/Pg006.htm>. “Franchise Bill,” *Irish Times*, January 28, 1913, 5, accessed February 13, 2017. <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1913/0128/Pg005.html>;

³³ See for example, the following: Advertisements, in the *Irish Times*, February 1, 1870, 9,

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/59282129>; Advertisements, in the *Irish Times*, April 25, 1871, 7.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/59325477>; Advertisements, in the *Irish Times*, April 30, 1889, 2.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/61573818>. Accessed March 26, 2022.

³⁴ For just a few examples, consider the following, “The Attempt to Murder Captain Sills,” in the *Irish Times*, July 31, 1871, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/61574056>; “County Cavin: Thefts, Attempted Murder, Attempted Assault,” in the *Irish Times*, July 12, 1877, 3. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/59286145>; “The Commissioner of Over and Under: Bigamy,” in the *Irish Times*, February 8, 18889, 3.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/61570182>. Accessed March 26, 2022.

³⁵ For a positive example see, Untitled, April 2, 1870, 4.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/59285667/?terms=woman%20suffrage&match=1>. Accessed February 25, 2022.

³⁶ Untitled, June 6, 1877, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/59283789>. Accessed February 25, 2022.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

who was nicely brought up and moderately accomplished, than be tied for life to a female genius who bored him to death with a sense of his own inferiority.”³⁸ This author believed “female geniuses” were the exception, not the rule. Most women were—or should be—“affectionate and simple-minded [and] nicely brought up,” and the education they received should ensure that they remained that way.³⁹

A similar ambiguity existed in the coverage of women’s suffrage.⁴⁰ The following examples represented the general trend. In a report on woman’s suffrage, the editor stated, “Sir Stafford Northcote, replying . . . to a deputation in favor of a Woman’s Suffrage Bill doubted whether such a change in the electoral system would not render necessary greater changes than he could assent to.”⁴¹ A previous objection, reported on March 19, 1889, referenced an M.P.’s concern that making a ruling would encourage those in the House of Commons to attempt to give orders to the House of Lords.⁴² The M.P.’s fear seemed to be motivated by his belief that endorsing women’s suffrage was tantamount to giving the House of Commons power over the House of Lords.

Though the *Times* printed Ms. Fawcett’s speech, the overall tone of the other remarks indicated that they viewed women’s suffrage with skepticism, or adopted a paternalistic attitude,

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ The phrase woman suffrage appeared a total of one hundred twenty-one times from 1864 to 1889 as indicated by the graphic found on the right of this page: <https://www.newspapers.com/search/#query=woman+suffrage&t=2229>. The paper printed a favorable report of the speech made by Mrs. Fawcett, alluded to elsewhere, wherein she outlined the arguments for and against women’s suffrage—though they did refer to her as a “fair lecturer,” which could’ve been a compliment or a sarcastic dig, similar to that discussed in the response to Fanny B.’s letter to the *Irish Standard*.⁴⁰ Other references were less positive. Numerous reports of M.P.s’ refusals to support women’s suffrage were printed, which evidenced both the reasons for opposing the extension of the franchise, and the Time’s likely endorsement of such views.

⁴¹ Woman Suffrage in the *Irish Times*, June 6, 1877, 5.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/59283797/?terms=woman%20suffrage&match=1>. Accessed February 25, 2022.

⁴² Women’s Suffrage Bill, in the *Irish Times*, March 19, 1899, 5.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/61572414/?terms=woman%20suffrage&match=2>. Accessed February 25, 2022.

but were at times willing to entertain suffrage arguments. In later years, the *Times* vilified woman suffrage supporters. Earlier in its history, the tone was more patronizing and less condemnatory. The ideal woman behaved as a proper wife and mother or worked as a domestic servant. The reprobate woman stepped outside her traditional role by pushing for changes that would be detrimental to society or by becoming a criminal.

Each paper reflected society's views of women. The *Irish Standard* advocated Victorian notions of proper and improper female behavior. The *Irish Republic* took a slightly more radical view, but for the most part, the women in its pages were praised for conforming to traditional gender roles. The *Freeman's Journal* focused on nationalism, and that focus influenced its depiction of women. The *Irish Times* likewise conformed to Victorian stereotypes.