

Mr. William Woodall, M.P., ON Women's Suffrage.

I believe it has been established that of the landowners in England and Wales one-seventh are women, and these ladies have devolving upon them, as you know, the most important duties. Their opinion and choice is often in the selection of Parliamentary candidates. Upon them devolves patronage and other important functions in regard to the Church, and their influence is often sought and commonly acknowledged in regard to public affairs, but when the day of Polling comes these ladies have to stand on one side and see their own labourers who live in the boroughs—and shortly they will see the labourers who live in the agricultural districts—go up to record their votes yes, stand on one side as if the matter was something quite beyond their own concern. Nor need I remind you of the many cases in which there devolves upon widows—in some cases inherited by daughters—the conduct of extremely important commercial undertakings. In their case, although they have to exercise large and important responsibilities in the course of their duty, the same anomaly presents itself ; but while these may be few, we know that there are hundreds of thousands of women of the poorer classes who toil amid many hardships to fulfil their duties as householders, and who are accordingly interested—more interested perhaps than any other class of the community in wise laws and good government.—*Speech at St. James's Hall Meeting, July 5th, 1883.*