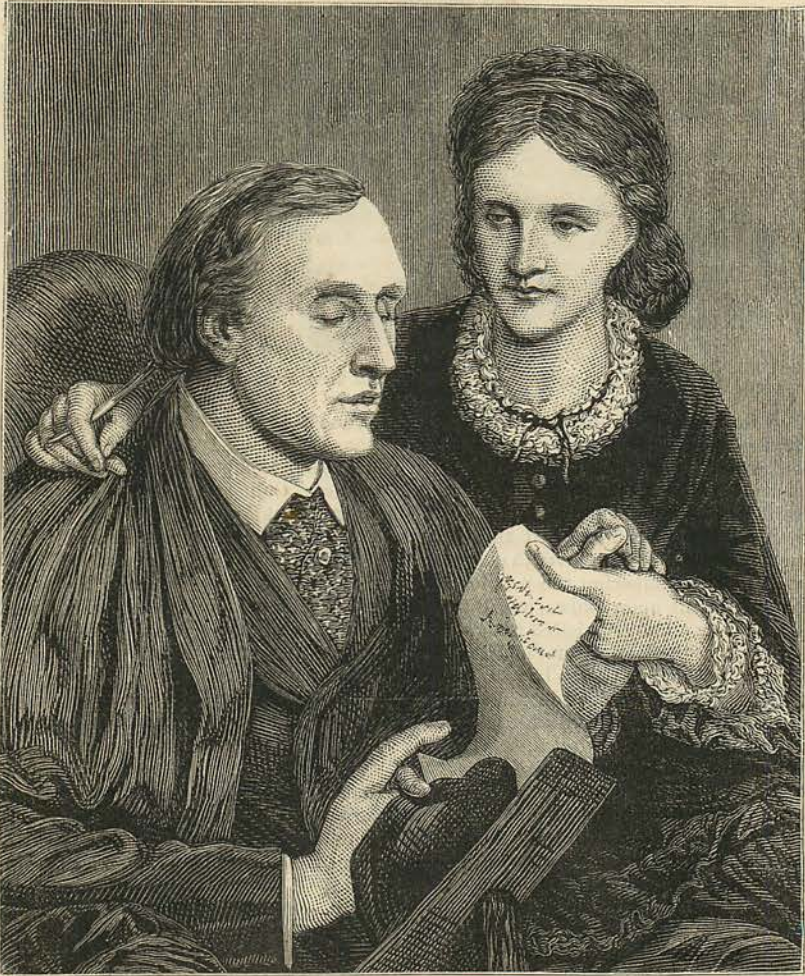


## PROFESSOR FAWCETT.



PROFESSOR FAWCETT AND HIS WIFE.

THE visitor to the House of Commons, waiting at the door of the Strangers' Gallery, and watching the members of Parliament as they file in by the main entrance, will no doubt have his eye particularly arrested by a tall, fair-haired young man, evidently blind, led up to the door by a youthful *petite* lady with sparkling eyes and blooming cheeks. She will reluctantly leave him at the door. The British Constitution would be quite upset were a woman to invade the floor of the House of Commons after the chaplain's incantation has been heard, even so far as to conduct her blind husband to his seat, so she has to consign him to a youth who stands waiting to lead the blind member to his place. As she turns away many a friendly face will smile,

and many a pleasant word attend her as she trips lightly up the stairway leading to the Ladies' Cage, near the roof of the House. The whisper passes around, "One day, perhaps not far off, she will take her seat beside her husband, and remain there." And certain it is that when ladies have the suffrage, the first female member of Parliament will be the lady of whom I write—Mrs. Fawcett. Not one-half of the members of that body are so competent as she to think deeply and speak finely on matters of public policy, while not the daintiest live doll moving about London drawing-rooms surpasses her in the care of her household, her husband, and her child. The two whom I have mentioned are as well known figures as any who approach the sacred precincts

of the legislature. The policemen bow low as they pass; the crowd in the lobby make a path; the door-keeper, Mr. White, the most amiable Cerberus who ever guarded an entrance, utters his friendly welcome. The strangers ask who is that, and a dozen bystanders respond, "Professor Fawcett." No one can look upon him but he will see on his face the characters of courage, frankness, and intelligence. He is six feet two inches in height, very blonde, his light hair and complexion and his smooth beardless face giving him something of the air of a boy. His features are at once strongly marked and regular. He narrowly escaped being handsome, and his expression is very winning. His countenance is habitually serene, and no cloud or frown ever passes over it. His smile is gentle and winning. It is probable that no blind man has ever before been able to enter upon so important a political career as Professor Fawcett, who, yet under forty years of age, is the most influential of the independent Liberals in Parliament. From the moment that he took his seat in that body he has been able—and this is unusual—to command the close attention of the House. He has a clear fine voice, speaks with the utmost fluency, has none of the university intonation, and none of the hesitation or uneasy attitudes of the average Parliamentary speaker. He scorns all subterfuges, speaks honestly his whole mind, and comes to the point. At times he is eloquent, and he is always interesting. He is known to be a man of convictions. The usual English political theory that you need not prove a thing right in principle if you can show that it for the time works without disaster is one which Professor Fawcett ignores. He defends the right against the wrong, with little respect to consequences. He, Sir Charles Dilke, P. A. Taylor, and Auberon Herbert are intimate friends, and are looked upon as the four Irreconcilables of the House of Commons.

Professor Fawcett is the son of one of the landed gentry of England. He was a scholar of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he graduated with the highest mathematical honors in 1856. He studied law, and was admitted to the bar at the Middle Temple in 1862, but he could not proceed with his profession, owing to his blindness. It was by a sad accident that he lost his sight. He had just graduated at Cambridge, and all his blushing honors were thick upon him, and as fair a prospect in life as ever opened before a young man welcomed him, when he went out shooting with his father. As the latter was getting over a hedge, his gun was discharged accidentally, and part of the charge went into his son's face, putting out both eyes, but leaving him otherwise undisfigured. The father, who had

fondly looked forward to a distinguished career for his son, was almost inconsolable, and it was for a time feared he would not survive the event. I have heard from Professor Fawcett's intimate friends at Cambridge touching accounts of how the blind boy sat beside the father, who felt the affliction more keenly than himself, assuring him that the accident should make no difference whatever in the career to which they both had looked forward. "The accident," he would say, "did not happen until I had received at the university the basis of my education, and fortunately we have the means to secure aid from the eyes of others for practical needs. Rejoice with me that my health is unimpaired, my purpose still strong, and my spirit as cheerful as ever." He has lived to make good the hope he thus held out to his father. As, first, a Fellow of his college, and now Professor of Political Economy in his university, Henry Fawcett has acquired an influence among scholars unsurpassed in his own direction by any other living Englishman. John Stuart Mill, as I happen to know, esteemed the young professor as a leading thinker, while also loving him as a personal friend. No recent work on political economy has had a greater success than Professor Fawcett's *Manual*, which is now used by the students of many colleges. When I first visited Cambridge, more than nine years ago, Henry Fawcett was a Fellow of Trinity Hall, but he was as really a professor as any in the university. It was my good fortune to be his guest on that occasion, and I have never known any thing more like the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* of one's fancies than the evenings passed in his rooms. After dinner many of the scholars assembled there, among them, it might be, one or two professors. Cigars were lit, and then every subject relating to politics and philosophy was discussed in a way which hardly left one reason to envy the assemblies of Pericles any thing but their *Aspasia*. Fawcett's mind has the instinct of leadership; it is able to bring out every thought in a circle of minds. He has also a rare humor, enriched by imagination, and has a large repertoire of good stories with which to enliven his altogether extraordinary conversation. His marriage and his residence in London have not destroyed his influence at Cambridge, where he is always welcomed with a symposium of the old kind.

There have been many predictions that Fawcett is destined to be one day the Prime Minister of England. The remarkable talent which has brought him with unexampled rapidity to the position of a leader on the independent benches in Parliament—a position which may be fairly ascribed to him from the time John Bright left them for the ministerial benches—would naturally bear

him to any eminence whatever. But he is, perhaps, too independent, too critical, and too unbending in his radicalism to become a Prime Minister. Besides this, he has very peculiar views on many subjects upon which a great deal of popular prejudice exists, which may prevent his ever carrying the popular enthusiasm, and he has no idea of concealing these views, but advocates them openly whenever there is an opportunity. Among other things, he is an earnest Malthusian. I have just now had a conversation with him concerning pauperism and kindred matters in this country, which convinces me that he will certainly raise some day a very important agitation upon these questions. "We are," he said, "treating pauperism in the most ignorant manner in this country. We are actually encouraging it. We have here a system of out-door relief, so that if a man by indolence makes himself a pauper, he gets as much as an honest laborer, and without any corresponding inconvenience. He stays at home and receives his money. It is so throughout the kingdom, except in Ireland, and the consequence is that in Ireland—where, if a man have relief as a pauper, he must get it by entering the work-house—there are far fewer paupers than are found either in England or Scotland." On my expressing surprise at this, the professor adduced the statistics, which proved that there is not by a fifth as much government relief called for in Ireland as in Scotland, the relative figures being nearly the same between Ireland and England.

"We are also," said the professor, "encouraging profligacy by making a better provision for children abandoned by their parents than we make for the children of honest parents. The deserted child is placed out in a family that wishes a child; twelve shillings a week are given for its support, and additional sums for its clothing and education. I would not have such children left to perish, but I would have the provisions made for them attended by very severe penalties to the criminals who have abandoned them. The absence of any grave penalties in such cases encourages people to bring children into the world recklessly, without any prospect of providing for them and educating them. I fear that if we had free schools they would add to our difficulties in this direction. The state ought to enforce the education of every child, but it ought also to compel every parent to pay for it. I doubt if the same rule would apply to America, where the people admit more universally the absolute necessity of education, and are willing to pay for it; but here we are overwhelmed with population, and it is dangerous to add to the encouragement of its further increase even the consideration that the state will provide freely for the

child's education. But our provisions for out-door relief of paupers, and for the education of children without direct expense to their parents, do not represent the root of the evil in Great Britain. It is fast becoming an absolute necessity that we shall find some means of checking the increase of population in a country, like England, where no class is willing to emigrate. Ireland is relieved of surplus numbers by emigration; so also is Wales to some extent. Scotland sends her surplus in a considerable extent to England. But here we have no relief; we must face the question of the reckless begetting of children to an extent beyond the resources of the country to supply all with work or the means of subsistence."

The professor recognized the difficulty of legislation on so delicate a subject, especially amidst a people whose religion teaches them that it is a prime duty to "increase and multiply;" but he contended that when the first task—that of educating the country to see the evil—was accomplished, the ways and means of restricting the passions of the people in this direction would be found, as they had been found for restricting the excessive indulgence of other passions.

It is, of course, not my place here to discuss this Malthusian question, which is really an impossible one—almost an incomprehensible one—except in overpopulated countries like England, from which the masses can not be tempted to remove in any large numbers. But I am satisfied that it is to be a "burning question" in the future, and that no man who, like Professor Fawcett, takes the philosophical rather than the Philistine view of it is ever likely to become a Prime Minister of England. The professor will no doubt be qualified to fill that high office in a hundred years from now; but he is not sufficiently given to prophesying smooth things for the attainment of that position within any shorter period. And yet, as often as I have seen him standing forth in the House, so moderate in manner, so sturdy in principle, so clearly the representative of scholarly England, I have felt that there might come sooner than is expected the great day when this nation, sick of parties and partisans, shall call for such a man.

Professor Fawcett must be regarded as a type of "the coming liberal" as distinguished from the democrat of that familiar description which approaches demagogism. All men have faith in the fundamental honesty of the masses. The most rigid Tory, walking in a lonely place after midnight, may feel a qualm of apprehension if he discern a single individual approaching; but if there are a dozen, he will feel safe. He knows that security, so far as good intent is concerned, is with the many. That feeling is the basis of democracy. But who would venture to submit it to the vote of the first

twelve he should meet what shall be his creed or his conduct? They would send him at once to the Rev. Mr. Stiggins's or Mr. Chadband's chapel. It is significant that while we praise popular government, we despise the man who seeks popularity. We suspect masses, and look for benefit to the individuals who have emerged from them. The true liberal is more and more felt to be he who, while trusting the heart of the people, does not bow to their superstitions or their prejudices, and, while serving them, does not suffer their dictation as to the way in which the service shall be rendered. There appeared to me something purely statesmanlike in the course which Professor Fawcett recently pursued when his Parliamentary career appeared to have suffered a serious check. Gay and frivolous Brighton had chosen a more congenial representative than it had found in the earnest and vigorous thinker. But his presence was missed in the House of Commons even by his political antagonists. A vacancy having occurred in one of the large boroughs of London (Hackney), the Liberals of its constituency were entreated to nominate Professor Fawcett, and they did so; not, however, without trepidation, for the "conservative reaction" (so the great Beer Rebellion against Gladstone was euphemistically called) was showing itself every where, and the Liberals felt that the seat might be lost if their candidate should not concede a great deal to certain dominant popular prejudices.

Professor Fawcett, after his nomination, was met by two questions menacing to his prospect of success. One was that relating to the proposed opening of the public museums and art galleries of London to the people on Sunday afternoons. The professor regarded it as a religious oppression that while the working classes helped to support these institutions, they were virtually excluded from them by the fact that on the only day in which they are liberated from toil those treasuries of knowledge and art are closed. He saw the people on that one day which might be devoted to their culture having nothing open to them but their own dens, the churches, and the gin-palaces; and in the British Museum and the National Gallery he saw formidable rivals to the gin-shop, which now almost monopolizes the lower classes during the hours of Sunday. In these views he is sympathized with by the Dean of Westminster, Canon Kingsley, and a large number of the clergymen and ministers of London, two hundred of whom have recently petitioned Parliament to open this means of harmless and instructive Sunday enjoyment to the millions of London. Of course the Sabbatarian party opposing this is very strong, and the excitement has run particularly high in Hackney. Professor Fawcett met the question honestly and

bravely, and argued it fully. Nothing could induce him to conceal his views or evade the issue in any way, though the Sabbatarian party was one of the strongest elements among the Liberals themselves. Another question on which the professor had to withstand a very wide popular feeling was that relating to the restriction of the hours of labor for women and children. It is not often that one has to charge large masses of the working classes with a deliberate scheme of injustice or oppression. But I fear that under the terrible struggle for existence in this country the working-men have at length begun to show signs that their instincts have become impaired. From them appears to have proceeded a demand for a measure which, under the pretense of a desire to protect women and children from overwork by restricting the hours per day in which they can labor, can only result in rendering women unable to compete with men even in the few employments now open to them, and so crippling that sex still further in the struggle for life. The excess in the numbers of women over men in Great Britain is nearing a million. I need not point out that this momentous fact alone implies that many thousands of women have before them the alternatives of selling their time and work or selling themselves. The number of women who are dependent upon sharing such ordinary work of men as is legally open to their sex is not, however, alone to be estimated by the numerical preponderance alluded to. It is to be remembered that women are by law excluded from professions, and by custom from many of the most lucrative occupations—hair-dressing, tailoring, etc. Were the professions and the occupations referred to open, there would not be such a large pressure of the demand for employment by women upon the market of manual toil. It is undoubtedly the increase of that pressure which has induced the working-men to take this mean way of handicapping women in the competition, disabling them from selling their *time* on the same terms as man sells his. As women have no voice in the tribunal which is called upon to enact this measure, which betrays them with a kiss, it is as if a strong trade-union were empowered to legislate restrictions upon the work of a weak one. While I write the bill is before Parliament, and before this paper can see the light it will probably have passed its second reading. If it does, it will bring home to thousands in this country the fact that there is still some difference between a Tory and a Liberal government, and it will mean penury, ill health, and shame to innumerable women, who by it will find themselves beaten back from the means of honest livelihood, which hitherto has alone saved thousands of them from degradation and despair.

It is to be hoped that a large number of working-men have been really deceived by the superficial proposal of this venomous measure to protect women and children from overwork. If so, we may hope that even yet the plot of the strong against the weak may be defeated. If that shall be the case, it will be due to the quick eye of the blind statesman, who from the first detected the softly sheathed sting, and warned all honest men and women of the wound it would inflict. In his speeches during the Hackney canvass he so eloquently exposed the fraud of this treacherous cry about women and children, and so grandly denounced the infamy of a set of male trades and male councils and legislatures arranging to suit themselves the affairs of a sex, while rendering that sex powerless to speak or act in the matter, that he quite overbore the heavy force which had been brought against him among those very working-men and artisans on whose suffrages he was chiefly dependent for the recovery of a seat in the House of Commons.

This, as I say, appears to me pure statesmanship, and a presage of that true liberalism of a healthier era when the *popularis aura* shall not find its mere echo in the true friend of the people—one who can scathe its ignorance and folly while realizing any reality that may be at the heart of it. Professor Fawcett is the most radical man in Parliament in some regards, yet no man is less servile to the many, none more normally in the minority. One can well under-

stand that the aid of his wife in the revision of his *Political Economy*, which he has so gracefully acknowledged in the recent edition of that work, has been of equal importance to him in the masterly completeness with which he has dealt with such questions as that relating to female work. At any rate, the two are never divided in the homage of the large circle of their friends and admirers. Mr. Ford Madox Brown has recently painted for Sir Charles Dilke the portraits of the two. The work was one of the greatest difficulty even for an artist of Mr. Madox Brown's unquestionable genius, especially because it is the subtle play of expressions in Professor Fawcett's countenance which to those who know him compensates for the lost light of the eye. I fear that the absence of colors will prevent the reader from appreciating through the engraving on page 352 the wonderful extent to which in the original picture the artist has conquered the peculiar difficulties in the case. The picture, however, is too characteristic of the admirable artist and of those he has portrayed to be without value even apart from the vitality of its colors; and if the little sketch I have written shall have the good fortune to fall under eyes that can glow at thought of a right and true man, it may be that they can invest the gray outlines of the engraver and my poor sentences with the true realistic tints which belong to two of the most interesting and even picturesque figures of contemporary England.

## RAPE OF THE GAMP.

### CHAPTER XVII.

#### BITER BIT.

"SIT down," said Mr. Browne, when Frank came into his private office, quivering all over with rage. But the son's fury was at once calmed by the pale anguish of his father's face.

"I suppose," Mr. Browne said, "you have not yet heard that the offices of Baily, Blythe, and Baily are closed?"

Frank had not heard even a word in warning of such a catastrophe. But the blow was so sudden that he said nothing.

"Nor that your nice brother-in-law has squandered every penny of his wife's fortune, and left the country?"

Frank winced at this.

"And laid himself open to actions for conspiracy and fraud?"

"How so?" Frank asked.

But Mr. Browne went on with his grievous catechism. "Nor that the £500 which I had laid by for Hubert's outfit is gone?"

"Hang it!" Frank ejaculated, involuntarily. At this little outbreak a sickly smile

played for a moment over the father's face, but immediately gave place to the settled expression of pain.

"Nor," he continued—"nor that Blanche had no more right to the fortune which she has lost than I have to the crown jewels?"

"What matters that?" asked the son, savagely.

"Nor," his father went on—"nor that Janet holds her fortune, or the title to it, entirely on the sufferance of Bedford Lyte?"

Again Frank ground his white teeth together, and scowled in silence.

"In short," Mr. Browne resumed, gasping, "General Lyte, the captain's father, executed *two wills*, one faulty, the other perfect. The Bailys suppressed the latter testament, which was a *fac-simile* of the former, without a flaw, and allowed, or, I fear, encouraged, Captain Lyte to set aside the former, and to bequeath the fortune in which he had only a life-interest to your sisters. The suppressed will, leaving the whole fund to Bedford Lyte at his uncle's death, was kept by the Bailys, and offered only the other day to that young man for a