

### **Arguments AGAINST Women's Suffrage**

- Woman's place is in the home. Going into the rough world of politics will change her caring nature. The military and the government were the proper domain of men.
  - Women were too emotional and unstable because of their biology. They were in many ways inferior to men.
  - Proposals to give the vote to women were often considered comical. Women, and especially men, who made them were held up to ridicule.
- There was, of course, a standard ideal of masculinity to which most men conformed.
  - Masculinity was associated with power, strength, initiative, courage and dominance.
  - Many men disdained the prospect of submitting to powerful women, competing with them or even sharing power with them.
- Many women do not want the vote – Many women had no interest in the campaign and there were even women who actively campaigned against votes for women.
  - Public opinion for many centuries maintained the consensus that women were not interested in politics and were unfit for political life. It was said that women were absorbed with trivial, domestic matters.
- Many women would not use the vote if they got it.
  - Only militant Suffragettes would use it, not gentle intelligent women.
  - Therefore, government would be ruined.
- It was held that interference with male authority would undermine the natural order of things.
  - It would undermine the family, the bedrock of society.
- Women do not fight in wars.
  - It was said that since women did not risk their lives in war, they might vote against war.
  - The power of the clergy would be increased because of their reputed influence over women
- Women in politics would be open to corruption and bribery.
  - It was said that most women did not really want the vote themselves and that only a minority of bitter, unattractive, frustrated women bothered about it.
- The majority of women are too ignorant of politics to be able to use their vote properly.
- Many said that the interests of women were safe in the hands of men and that women could influence men indirectly by persuasion and charm.
  - There was a standard ideal of womanhood which most women felt obliged to copy. The 'ideal woman' was widely represented. She was subordinate and pleasing to men, obedient, humble, modest, pure, delicate, refined, gentle, soft, charming, beautiful.
  - It was said that such qualities would be out of place in the boisterous world of politics and good women would only be made rough and coarse there.