

The position of women in British society at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries was influenced by the traditional conservative ideas which allocated their place in “private (domestic) sphere”; these views continued to have in Britain considerable influence and they were moreover supported by the new ideologies of social darwinism, social maternalism or eugenics. At the same time the influence of representatives of liberal, democratic ideas, the so called new people advocating women emancipation in all spheres of life largely grew. It is not possible to perceive the end of Victorian and Edwardian era as a period in which the modern ideas on women position in society succeeded; on the contrary old conservative concepts though often in new context and another “more moderate” version had the support of the majority of British society, including women. The main reason why the feminists failed to enforce their radical claims at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries lied in the fact that women movement was confined largely to the liberal elites of middle classes and failed to obtain wider support.