

WOMAN SUFFRAGE—HISTORY, ARGUMENTS AND RESULTS

(To be published serially until complete. In order that all suffragists, and especially those who have joined the public speaking class, may keep well informed on the status of suffrage.)

A Brief History of the Movement for Woman Suffrage in the United States.

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(Continued from last week's issue.)

An account of this Massachusetts convention in the *Westminster Review*, London, by Mrs. John Stuart Mill, marked the beginning of the movement for woman suffrage in Great Britain.

In 1850 the constitution of Indiana was revised and, under the leadership of Robert Dale Owen, chairman of the Revision Committee, the laws for women were liberalized beyond any then existing. The question of the rights of women was widely discussed, and at an anti-slavery meeting in Greensboro in the spring of 1851 a resolution by Amanda M. Way was adopted to hold a Woman's Rights Convention. This took place in Dublin in October. Mrs. Hannah Hiatt presided, and the large audiences of the two evening sessions were addressed by Henry C. Wright, the noted Abolitionist. Dr. Mary F. Thomas sent a strong letter. A permanent Woman's Rights Society was formed and a convention appointed for the next year at Richmond. Thereafter these meetings became annual.

In June, 1852, the first Woman's Rights Convention of Pennsylvania was held in West Chester and was largely under the auspices of the Friends or Quakers, among them James and Lucretia Mott. Prominent speakers came from New York and Massachusetts, and the next convention was appointed for Philadelphia.

From 1852 Woman's Rights Conventions were held in many parts of the country. Leading men and women supported the movement for the rights of women, but as most of them were also leaders of the movement for the abolition of slavery, the former had to suffer the odium and opposition directed against both. It was slowly gaining ground, however, when the breaking out of the Civil War banished all other questions from the public thought. When the war was ended and the women again took up their cause they met the vast complication of the rights of the emancipated negroes, and were compelled even by those who had been their strongest supporters to yield their claims to those of negro men. The civil, legal and political results of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the National Constitution tended still further to hinder the effort to obtain the franchise for women.

An Equal Rights Association had been formed to promote the interests of both negroes and white women, but in 1869 the latter were forced to recognize the necessity for a separate organization if they were not to be entirely sacrificed. At the close of a meeting of this Equal Rights Association in New York, women who had come from nineteen States to attend it met at the Woman's Bureau in East 23d street, May 15, 1869, and formed a National Woman Suffrage Association, whose object would be to secure a Sixteenth Amendment to the National Constitution which would enfranchise women. Mrs. Stanton was made president and Miss Anthony was put on the executive committee. As there was some division of sentiment at this time, a call was issued by Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe and others for a convention to meet in Cleveland, O., the following November, and here the American Woman Suffrage Association was formed, with Henry Ward Beecher president, and Lucy Stone chairman executive committee. It worked principally to obtain the suffrage through amendments to State constitutions. Both societies held national conventions every year thereafter.

In 1890 the two bodies united under the name National American Woman Suffrage Association, and since then both methods of work have been followed. Mrs. Stanton was elected president of the new organization; Miss Anthony, vice-president-at-large; Lucy Stone, chairman executive committee. In 1892 Mrs. Stanton resigned her office because of advancing age. Miss Anthony was elected president, and the Rev. Anna Howard Shaw vice-president. Miss Anthony resigned the presidency in 1900 at the age of 80, and Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt was elected to it. In 1904 she felt unable to serve longer, and Miss Shaw was made president.

Until 1895 the work of the National Association was conducted principally from the home of Miss Anthony in Rochester, N. Y. That year Mrs. Rachel Foster Avery, who was corresponding secretary for twenty-one years, shared the burden by opening office headquarters in her home at Philadelphia. In 1900 regular headquarters were opened in New York city under the supervision of Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, chairman of the National Organization Committee. In 1903 they were removed to War-

ren, O., and placed in charge of Mrs. Harriet Taylor Upton, national treasurer.

In 1909 headquarters on a large scale were established in New York city, with offices for the president, corresponding secretary, chairman of the press committee and an office staff of eight or ten workers. The press bureau furnishes an endless amount of material to reporters, magazine writers and newspaper syndicates. In the reading-room are woman suffrage papers from all parts of the world; a large collection of books and magazines relating to the feminist question and photographs of the leaders, men and women, in many countries. The headquarters serve as a clearing-house for information on matters of all kinds connected with woman suffrage.

In December, 1912, the Congressional Committee of the National Association opened headquarters in Washington and began an active campaign for its original object—an amendment to the Constitution of the United States. The association is a federation of sixty-one suffrage organizations in forty-eight States. It is affiliated with the International Alliance, in which twenty-six countries are officially represented.

In 1914 the National Woman Suffrage Publishing Co., Inc., was formed and took charge of the literature department.

The Gains for Woman Suffrage.

There are two ways through which women can be enfranchised—Congress can submit an amendment to the National Constitution, which must be ratified by three-fourths of the Legislatures; or the Legislature of each State can submit an amendment to its own constitution, which must be approved by a majority of the voters. The former would be the easier way, but the National Association has realized that Congress would not act until a considerable number of States had first conferred the suffrage. Therefore, while it has appealed to every Congress since 1869, it has continually assisted the individual States in their struggle. The Legislature of a Territory can grant the suffrage without a referendum.

The Enfranchisement of Wyoming Women.

The first recognition of the principle of Woman Suffrage by any State was made by progressive Kansas, which came into the Union in 1861 with school suffrage for women in its Constitution. No further advance was made until 1869, when the first Legislative Council was in session after the organization of Wyoming as a Territory. Mrs. Esther Morris, who with her husband had gone out from New York as a pioneer, appealed to the president of the Council, Col. William H. Bright, for a bill enfranchising women. She was sustained by his wife and he succeeded in having the bill passed. The Council was Democratic and it hoped to embarrass the Republican Governor, John A. Campbell, whom it expected to veto the bill. On the contrary, he signed it; and when two years later the Council repealed it he vetoed the repeal. The Council was unable to pass it over his veto and no effort to abolish woman suffrage was ever again made in Wyoming. Mrs. Morris was appointed Justice of the Peace and of nearly forty cases she tried none ever was appealed to a higher court. Women sat on juries from the beginning and have continued to fill various offices down to the present day.

In 1889 a convention composed entirely of men met to form a Constitution for Statehood, and after twenty years' experience they adopted unanimously as its first clause "equal political rights for all male and female citizens." The Constitution was ratified by more than a three-fourths majority of the people and sent to Congress for approval. That body, always hostile to the enfranchisement of women, fought for three days to have this first clause eliminated and the Territorial delegate telegraphed to Wyoming that it looked as if this would have to be done. The Legislature, which was in session, wired back: "We will remain out of the Union a hundred years rather than come in without woman suffrage." The same struggle took place in the United States Senate and pages of the *Congressional Record* were filled with awful Senatorial prophecies as to what would happen to the country if Wyoming should come into the Union with women voters. After days of oratory they were obliged to face the calamity, and President Harrison signed the bill admitting the new State in June, 1890. Thus Wyoming became the first Commonwealth in history to grant to women the same rights in the government that men possessed.

Women in Wyoming are eligible to all offices and are elected to many in the cities and counties and sent to the Legislature. They serve on juries and various State boards and a woman always is State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The official statistics show that about 90 per cent. of those qualified cast their votes at the annual elections. Not one man of prominence has ever voiced publicly the slightest opposition, while volumes

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