

Woman Suffrage

By Marilla M. Ricker

Many letters come to me asking about woman suffrage and I see many articles in papers—some of them written by people who ought to be authority on the subject—but I find many mistakes; consequently, I will so far as it lies in my power, answer the questions that have been asked.

In 1869, Wyoming, then a territory, granted full suffrage to her women. In 1890, twenty-one years later, Wyoming was admitted to statehood with equal suffrage for women in its constitution. There was some opposition to the suffrage clause, but the best men in the territory openly declared that they preferred to stay outside with their women than to be admitted without them.

In 1893, Colorado granted full suffrage to women on same terms with men. In 1895 came admission of Utah into statehood, with equal suffrage in its constitution, which had been adopted by popular vote. In 1896 full suffrage was granted to women in Idaho, on same terms as to men—by constitutional amendment. In 1887 municipal suffrage was granted Kansas women by legislative enactment.

The first American woman to demand the right for suffrage was Margaret Brent. It was on the 24th day of June, 1647. The assembly was in session in Baltimore, Md. She appeared and demanded a voice and vote in the assembly. They refused to allow her to vote and she protested against all the acts of the session as invalid. Calvert (Lord Baltimore) was governor. Margaret Brent was his cousin.

The first place where women were permitted to vote in this country was Newark, N. J. (See Gordon's *History and Chronicles of New Jersey*.)

In 1807 there was a contest between Newark and Days Hill, to determine the location of the court house. By a construction then given to the state constitution, the women were allowed to vote.

The first woman's rights convention was held at Seneca Falls, N. Y., in 1848. The "call" was issued by Lucretia Mott, Martha C. Wright, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Mary Ann McClintock. At the end of the second day the convention adjourned and met again in two weeks in Rochester, N. Y.

Emily P. Collins formed the first local suffrage society in the world, at South Bristol, N. Y., in 1848. The first woman suffrage convention which I attended, and the first one ever held in Washington, D. C., was in 1869. It was in Carroll Hall, on the 19th and 20th days of January. It was a period of great interest and many important measures of reconstruction were under consideration. The fourteenth amendment to the constitution was ratified, but the fifteenth was still pending and several bills were before Congress on the suffrage question. Petitions and protests against all amendments to the constitution regulating suffrage on the basis of sex were being sent in by the thousands in charge of the Washington (D. C.) Association. *The Revolution*, Susan B. Anthony's paper, did heroic work during the fall of 1868.

On the morning of the 19th of January, the business committee assembled in the ante-room of Carroll Hall to discuss resolutions, officers, and so on. Senator Pomeroy from Kansas was present and made an able speech. I remember how important I felt. It had been the dream of my life to vote, and, really, at that time, I thought

the "Millenium," otherwise Woman's Day, was soon to materialize and visions of what I would do when I had a vote danced before my imagination.

Lucretia Mott was chosen president; resolutions were reported and everything was in fine working order except the furnace and when Pomeroy announced that he must go to the capitol, Susan charged him with trying to avoid the smoke. Mrs. Stanton

the close of this convention a committee of women, appointed by the convention, was received at the capitol by the committee of the Senate and House, for a formal hearing, the object of which was to request the honorable gentlemen to present a bill to Congress for enfranchising the women of the District of Columbia. Hanibal Hamlin of Maine, chairman of the committee, introduced them.



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made a great speech on the evening of the 19th. She spoke for a sixteenth amendment and there was a discussion, Fred Douglass, Doctor Purvis and many others speaking.

The second Washington (D. C.) convention assembled at 10 a. m., January 19, 1870, at Lincoln Hall, and lasted three days.

On the morning of the third day Senator Sherman was present. At

Mrs. Stanton made the first speech, Susan Anthony, the second.

The young and brilliant Victoria Woodhull materialized in December, 1870, and presented her memorial to Congress and secured a hearing before the judiciary committee of the House. Her efforts at that time were outside the suffrage association. The aim of that body had been to obtain the franchise by amending the consti-

tution. Her argument was that no amendment was necessary—that equality was already granted to both sexes under the constitution as it stood. The memorial is too long for a magazine article, but it was printed in the *Congressional Globe*, December 21, 1870. In the Senate, Mr. Harris presented the memorial. In the House, Mr. Julian, Charles Sumner agreed with her. It was considered by constitutional lawyers to be the most able document ever presented to Congress. On January 30, 1871, Mr. Bingham submitted the majority report to the House of Representatives. On the following day, Judge Loughbridge and General Butler presented the minority report. They exhaustively reviewed all the points in the memorial, upheld its contentions and fortified them by quotations from eminent jurists and constitutional lawyers and recommended that Congress should pass a declaratory act forever settling the disputed question of woman suffrage. Victoria Woodhull drafted her memorial, got it submitted to Congress and referred to the judiciary committee and they listened to her with great pleasure and interest and the acute legal minds of the best lawyers in the country were on her side. In the whole history of the Woman's Movement, this was the most notable event and is unto this day.

It was so apparent to me that I thought our New Hampshire officials would see the justice of it, so I hurried home and appeared before John R. Varney, Charles P. Shepard and William H. Vickery, our selectmen, and asked them to put my name on the checklist, telling them I was a law-abiding, tax-paying citizen, and wished to vote, leaving with them a printed argument on the subject which I considered unanswerable, and do now, but they thought otherwise, and when I appeared at the polls three days later, my name was not on the checklist. Many excellent men

fail to see things in their true light.

Susan B. Anthony entered the suffrage work in 1852 and took the laboring oar, joined by Ernestine L. Rose, Rev. Antoinette Brown and Amelia Bloomer. Susan was a great woman. I've heard her say many times, "Freedom cannot be bestowed, it must be achieved." "Education cannot be given, it must be earned." She caused the women to think for themselves and in that way they were educated. Miss Anthony's sense of justice was never outraged for herself alone. She had in mind always the weaker women and the children.

Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Matilda Joslyn Gage did much towards securing better laws for the women of New York. They were a trinity that have never been equalled on the suffrage platform, or elsewhere. They could see no providence fighting for equal suffrage; no Father in Heaven battling for woman's equality. They saw injustice triumph and wrong sustained by the votes of men, and they did not hear the voice of God setting aside the verdict. They tried to do what Providence had neglected to do; tried to bring more justice, more love, more kindness into the world. They were not assisted by priests or parsons.

The first woman suffrage meeting ever held in New Hampshire was on December 22, 1868, at Eagle Hall, Concord. It was held in response to a "call" signed by Nathaniel White and other leading citizens. The meeting was called to order by Armenia S. White, who called upon Col. J. E. Larkin to read the following "call," which should be reprinted in every paper in this country:

"The spirit of the age, vigilant for justice, purified and matured by the recent struggles and experiences for the redemption of a race, still grasps an evil, unjust and oppressive in its results. While our national declaration affirms the self-evident truths of equality and that all just govern-

ments derive their power from the consent of the governed, our democratic government holds arbitrary and unjust sway over one half its subjects. No discerning mind can fail to be arrested by the doubtful policy of withholding the ballot from the mothers, wives and daughters who adorn our homes with the highest culture and refinement, while it is conferred so freely on foreigners just arriving from the social degradation and ignorance of the Old World. 'Vigilance is the price of liberty.' 'Man is only just to himself when he is just to all.' Free discussion and agitation are the life of progress. No position in life in which woman is not co-equal and absolute in her relations, involving a community of interests which should have no antagonisms and cannot be separate or hostile, can exist without muddying the springs from which it draws its highest life. Truth is reviving and right is everywhere asserting itself to fulfil its noblest duties. The public is aroused for justice. The times are propitious. We are sowing fallowed ground; our movement is only reciprocal with sister states, and from across the water comes encouragement of 'God Speed You.' The ballot is our final argument. Come to the convention and give us the inspiration of your best thought and coöperation."

At this convention, a constitution was adopted and an association formed, which immediately took up the work of petitioning the Legislature. Mr. and Mrs. White were the head and front of the movement, but they were ably assisted by Stephen Foster and wife, Parker Pillsbury and wife, Jacob H. Ela and wife, Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell and many others. Annual conventions were held, hearings were had before the Legislature and much work was done. Many petitions were circulated and the public was educated to a great degree by these conventions, which were all held in Concord except one. The result of this work was that in

1871 a law was passed enabling women to serve on our school boards, and in June, 1878, a law was enacted giving school suffrage to our women.

Lucy Stone's living protest against woman resigning her name at marriage, and having her identity eliminated, and her individuality merged in that of the man she married was the greatest step towards freedom for women since the institution of marriage was evolved. I've heard Lucy Stone say many times: "The custom of a woman taking the name of the man she marries is preposterous. There is no law requiring her to do so, and this unwritten law is only another testimonial of woman's abject submission to man." Men consider the loss of their names a dishonor. There are but four classes who surrender their names: First, men receiving titles or estates on condition of a change of name; second, fugitives from justice who wish to conceal their identity (for instance like our "over due" bank cashiers); third, nuns on giving up the world; fourth, women when they marry. Law relegates woman to the political company of convicts, lunatics and idiots and *custom* places all married women in the company of fugitives from justice, nuns, and those who barter their names for title or wealth.

Josephine K. Henry of Kentucky, than whom no more brilliant woman lives, said: "When a man dies the world designates the surviving wife—his widow. The expression 'his widow' came from the time when woman had no resort for support save marriage. When a married woman dies the death notice is, 'Died, Mary J., the wife of John Smith.' The Lord Himself would not know who Mary J. was, and the world lets her pass on to the New Jerusalem without knowing who the woman was." We hear every day the question, "Who was she before she was married?" And the answer, "She was Sallie Smith."

Lucy Stone laid the foundation for

a great reform and if she had done nothing else would have left the mark of her individuality upon the world. The brilliant daughter of Luey Stone and Henry Blackwell, Alice Stone Blackwell, in talking about a "relief of barbarism," otherwise an "assignment of dower," in William Sturtevant's estate, which was made October 7, 1785, said: "Under the common law, when a man died his wife was virtually turned out of doors; it was the Christian substitute for Hindu Sutte. Mistress Joanna Sturtevant entered into rest long ago, but one cannot help wondering whether in that land to which she is supposed to have gone, she is reckoned an individual, a unit, or as a fractional part of her husband and so is entitled only to one third of the supposed heavenly inheritance."

I am often asked why women don't stop talking about suffrage and do something—invent something. Ancient history tells us that the first maker of covered buttons was a Mrs. Williston of East Hampton, Mass. In 1826 she commenced to cover buttons with cloth. They attracted much attention and became very popular, and business increased so fast that she contrived machinery to do the work. An immense manufactory sprang up and she made half the covered buttons of the world, and we are told that Mr. Williston died worth more than a million, but not a word concerning Mrs. Williston's wealth, although she was the inventor. In those days a man and his wife were one legally and he was the one. Slaves never get credit for inventions. I saw not long ago that a Western woman had perfected a valuable apparatus for removing wool from skins by electricity, but the young male student still goes forth, sheep-skin in hand, to pull the wool over the eyes of the world.

When I was a girl the field of woman's work was limited. Now see what she can do. Cause—the agita-

tion of woman suffrage. The last time I was in Washington, D. C., I visited the pension office; there I saw three women clerks, two of whom received \$1,400 per year and the other \$1,600. I said, "Girls, you are no brighter than I, but I taught school for \$2 per week and 'boarded round.' Do you wish to know what has changed the affairs of women so much in the last fifty years? The agitation of woman suffrage has done it."

In my opinion the paramount question today is woman suffrage. Hard times and bad laws bear more heavily upon woman than upon man—consequently she should be interested in all questions pertaining to government. And were it true that a majority of the women do not wish to vote, it would be no reason why those who do should be denied. If a right exist, and only one in a million desires to exercise it, no government should deny its enjoyment to that one. A friend of mine had an excellent husband who always called her his better half. I, at various times, tried to interest her in woman suffrage, but she would say, "I have all the rights I want; I am my husband's better half; he takes care of me and our daughter." This excellent husband died and the laws made by men cut her down to *one third*. I saw her several times during the settlement of the estate; she was a collection of sorrows and seemed to be waiting for some man to take up the collection. She had her lesson and is now an ardent suffragist.

It takes an immense amount of evidence to open the eyes of some women, although the intelligent, wage-earning woman must know that the cause of the difference in wages for the same kind and quality of labor is woman's disfranchisement. In the four states where women vote their wages are the same as men for the same work, and it is illegal to make any distinction in salaries of

any person in the public service on account of sex. Any woman who would want more evidence than that on the question of woman suffrage would be like the foreman of a jury in San Francisco on a whiskey case. The whiskey was offered in evidence. Jury retired to deliberate on the evidence. Judge—"What is the verdict?" Foreman—"Your honor, we want more evidence."

There are millions of women in the United States who work for wages—the majority are overworked and underpaid. They would get better treatment if they had the ballot. Voting and thinking about questions on which they would have to vote would be an education for them, unless they should do as many men have done—One said he had studied the matter and concluded that the women ought not to be allowed to vote; said that women had too much spare time. You see a man usually has so much other business to attend to that he just goes and votes and forgets all about it; but it would be just like the women to want to know what they were voting for!

We hear much about the chivalry of men, and woman's influence, but I noticed that the Vermont courts and Legislature showed neither chivalry nor mercy to the degenerate Mary Rogers. Experience has taught me that influence isn't in it with affluence, and that mercy is not so powerful as the ballot. All I ask is justice. I believe in the equality of the sexes. I believe in a government of men and women, instead of a government of men and women by men alone. "Equal rights to all and special privileges to none" should be the foundation of all governments. Long ago Abraham Lincoln said, "I go for all sharing the privileges of the government who assist in bearing its burdens, by no means excluding women." Lincoln knew whereof he spoke; he was born and brought up, or rather came up, in the Southwest and lived

in the Middle West. I was in the Middle and Northwest thirty-six years ago, saw many women who had left good homes in New England living in log houses, straining every nerve to establish and keep up the schools, boarding the teachers without money and without price in order to have the school terms lengthened, doing all the housework and assisting in the farm work, besides battling with rattlesnakes—in fact enduring all the hardships that the men endured—and it reminded me of what Fanny Fern said of the Puritan mothers, "They endured all the Puritan fathers did, and had to endure the Puritan fathers also."

If any one takes issue with me on this question, I want him to read the history of establishing the colonies on the hostile shores of an alien land which marked the beginning of this nation. He will find that women shared equally with men in the labor, equally endured the hardships and equally faced the dangers. Equal suffrage is no longer a theory. It is a fact. Women vote on municipal questions in England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, Norway and Sweden; they have equal political rights with men in New Zealand, the Isle of Man, and throughout the federation of Australia, a country equal to the United States in territory. And that reminds me that Josephine K. Henry said that the Australian kangaroo ranked the American eagle, which I am sorry to admit is true.

A bright Irishman said, "Every man should be proud of the land of his nativity, whether he was born there or not." I was born in New Hampshire; I consider our state the finest in the Union and our men the best. New Hampshire had the first free public library in the world; it was established in the little town of Peterborough in 1833. In 1834, it adopted the policy of keeping its library open on Sunday, which has been continued to the present time. I am

loath to complain, but the apathy of many of our women on the suffrage question is hard to understand. I have always thought when the home women were awakened on the subject, the men would fall into line and be willing for their "*Women folks*" to have the ballot, especially in the farming districts. It is doubtless a good thing to complain sometimes, and I reserve *my right* to complain. I am not like the Irishmen who were discussing the condition of Ireland: One said, "England has robbed her of

all her rights." The other exclaimed, "Then she has no right to complain." I think we should all work for equal suffrage and I trust the time is not far distant when no man or woman will admit that it was ever opposed in New Hampshire. I want New Hampshire to be the banner state of the East on the equal suffrage question. It would do more toward settling our state firmly on its political axis than all outside influences combined have been able to do in that direction.

The New Year

By C. C. Lord

Sweet friend, this daylight fancy breaks,
A joy to heart, to thought a cheer,
That the wide world of revel wakes
To hail the advent of the year.

The mad, gay throng diverts its feet
To paths eestatic; blent with praise.
And song and shout, its accents greet,
With laughter loud, the first of days.

Yet I trip calmly on, though scene
And time are rapt and wild, for you
Lend love and richer faith, I ween,
To bless the year with all days new.

Winter

By George Warren Parker

The earth in peaceful rest now lies;
Her canopy, rich azure skies,
Her shroud, fresh-fallen virgin snow,
While ice-capped rivers slowly flow.

But list, the sleigh-bells joyous peal!
The skaters fly on blades of steel;
The coasters utter shouts of mirth,
For winter has of fun no dearth.