

HISTORY  
OF  
WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

EDITED BY

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ILLUSTRATED WITH STEEL ENGRAVINGS.

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

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1876-1885.

Mrs. ZERELDA G. WALLACE of Indiana said: *Mr. Chairman, and Gentlemen of the Committee:* It is scarcely necessary to say that there is not an effect without a cause. Therefore it would be well for the statesmen of this nation to ask themselves the question, What has brought the women from all parts of this nation to the capital at this time? What has been the strong motive that has taken us away from the quiet and comfort of our own homes and brought us before you to-day? As an answer to that question I

will read an extract from a speech made by one of Indiana's statesmen. He found out by experience and gave us the benefit of it:

You can go to meetings; you can vote resolutions; you can attend great demonstrations in the street; but, after all, the only occasion where the American citizen expresses his acts, his opinions, and his power is at the ballot-box; and that little ballot that he drops in there is the written sentiment of the times, and it is the power that he has as a citizen of this great republic.

That is the reason why we are here; the reason why we want to vote. We are not seditious women, clamoring for any peculiar rights; it is not the woman question that brings us before you to-day; it is the human question underlying this movement. We love and appreciate our country; we value its institutions. We realize that we owe great obligations to the men of this nation for what they have done. To their strength we owe the subjugation of all the material forces of the universe which give us comfort and luxury in our homes. To their brains we owe the machinery that gives us leisure for intellectual culture and achievement. To their education we owe the opening of our colleges and the establishment of our public schools, which give us these great<sup>[Pg 156]</sup> and glorious privileges. This movement is the legitimate result of this development, and of the suffering that woman has undergone in the ages past.

A short time ago I went before the legislature of Indiana with a petition signed by 25,000 of the best women in the State. I appeal to the memory of Judge McDonald to substantiate the truth of what I say. Judge McDonald knows that I am a home-loving, law-abiding, tax-paying woman of Indiana, and have been for fifty years. When I went before our legislature and found that one hundred of the vilest men in our State, merely by the possession of the ballot, had more influence with our lawmakers than the wives and mothers it was a startling revelation.

You must admit that in popular government the ballot is the most potent means for all moral and social reforms. As members of society, we are deeply interested in all the social problems with which you have grappled so long unsuccessfully. We do not intend to depreciate your efforts, but you have attempted to do an impossible thing; to represent the whole by one-half, and because we are the other half we ask you to recognize our rights as citizens of this republic.

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind., January 21, 1883.

DEAR MISS ANTHONY: When in the call I read that for fourteen consecutive years the National Woman Suffrage Association had held a convention in Washington, I was oppressed by two thoughts: First, how hard it is to overcome prejudice and ignorance when they have been fortified by the usages and customs of ages; and secondly, the sublime faith, courage and perseverance of the advocates of woman's enfranchisement, and their confidence in the ultimate triumph of justice. After all, by what are governments organized and maintained? By brute force alone? Despotisms may be, but republics never. What are the qualifications for the ballot? The power to fight? Are they not rather intelligence, virtue, truth and patriotism? I scarce<sup>[Pg 258]</sup> think the most obstinate and egotistical of our opponents will assert that men possess a monopoly of these virtues, or even a moiety of them. As to their fighting capacities, of which we hear so much, I think they would have cut a sorry figure in the wars which they have been compelled to wage in order to establish and maintain this government, if they had not had the sympathy and coöperation of woman. I entirely agree with you that, while agitation in the States is necessary as a means of education, a sixteenth amendment to the national constitution is the quickest, surest and least laborious way to secure the success of this great work for human liberty. Any legislature of Indiana in the last six years would have ratified such an amendment. With highest regards for yourself and the best wishes for the success of the convention, I remain,

ZERELDA G. WALLACE.

Yours, etc.,

In December, 1880, the society issued a letter, secured its publication in the leading papers of the State, and addressed a copy to each member of the General Assembly, in order to advise that body that there were women ready to watch their official careers and to demand from them the consideration of just claims:

INDIANAPOLIS, Dec. 22, 1880.

DEAR SIR: The Equal Suffrage Society of Indianapolis, in behalf of citizens of Indiana who believe that liberty to exercise the right of suffrage should neither be granted nor denied on the ground of sex, would respectfully notify you that during the next session of the State legislature it will invite the attention of that body to the consideration of what is popularly called "The Suffrage Question." The society will petition the legislature to devote a day to hearing, from representative advocates of woman suffrage, appeals and arguments for such legislation as may be necessary to abolish the present unjust restriction of the elective franchise to one sex, and to secure to women the free exercise of the ballot, under the same conditions and such only, as are imposed upon men. To this matter we ask your unprejudiced attention, that when our cause shall be brought before the legislature its advocates may have your coöperation.

ZERELDA G. WALLACE, *President.*

Very respectfully yours,

MAY WRIGHT SEWALL, *Secretary,*

On January 22, 1875, the two houses of the General Assembly convened in joint session, to receive petitions from the "Temperance Women of Indiana," who were on this occasion represented by Mrs. Zerelda G. Wallace, Mrs. Avaline and Mrs. Robinson, who had been appointed by the State Temperance Association. Mrs. Wallace read a memorial and stated that it was signed by 10,000 women, and then argued its various points and pleaded for the action of the "Honorable Body." Mrs. Avaline and Mrs. Robinson followed in briefer, but not less earnest appeals. The only answer elicited by these ladies was the assurance made by Dr. Thompson, a member of the Senate, that he and his colleagues were there, "not to represent their *consciences*, but to represent their *constituents*," whose will was directly opposed to the petition offered.

The name of Lizzie Boynton of Crawfordsville frequently occurs in suffrage reports between 1865 and 1870. She was a member of the State Association and a frequent speaker at its conventions. Besides working in that body, she assisted in the organization of the local society at Crawfordsville, wrote poems, stories, essays, and won high rank in the State in literature and reform. From mature womanhood her record as Mrs. Harbert belongs to Illinois rather than Indiana.

The first time I met Mrs. Zerelda G. Wallace she was circulating a temperance petition to present to the legislature. One day while busy on the third floor of the high-school building a fellow-teacher sent up word that a lady wished to see me. Descending, I was introduced to Mrs. Wallace, who, in a bland way, requested me to sign the paper which she extended. Never doubting that I might do so, I had taken my pen when my eye caught the words: "While we do not clamor for any additional civil or political rights." "But I do clamor," I exclaimed, and threw down the paper and pen and went back to my work, vexed in soul that I should have been dragged down three flights of stairs to see one more proof of the degree to which

honorable women love to humiliate themselves before men for sweet favor's sake. Mrs. Wallace went forward with her work of solicitation, thinking me, no doubt, to be a very impetuous, if not impertinent, young woman.

When, however, upon the presentation of her petition, whose framers had taken such care to disclaim any desire "for additional civil and political rights," Mrs. Wallace was startled by Dr. Thompson's avowal (having known the doctor, as she naïvely says, "as a Christian gentleman"), that he was not there "to represent his conscience, but to obey his constituents,"<sup>[Pg 552]</sup> in her aroused soul there was that instant born the determination to become a "constituent." As soon as the hearing was at an end, Mrs. Wallace confessed this determination to Dr. Thompson, thanking him for unintentionally awakening her to a sense of woman's proper position in the republic. This change in Mrs. Wallace's attitude was not generally known until the following May, when the annual State Temperance convention was held in Indianapolis; then, in her address before that body, she avowed her conviction that it was woman's duty to seek the ballot as a means of exerting her will upon legislation. From that time Mrs. Wallace has neglected no opportunity to propagate suffrage doctrines, and has been most potent in influencing her temperance coadjutors to embrace these principles. Earnestness and logic are Mrs. Wallace's abiding forces. Her literary work is chiefly confined to correspondence, in which she is so faithful that it is doubtful if any man in public life in Indiana can plead ignorance of the arguments in favor of suffrage. Mrs. Wallace has been an officer in the National, the American and the State suffrage societies, and has served the Equal Suffrage Society of Indianapolis as president most of the time since its formation. Having lived in this city more than half a century, related to many men who have held high official positions, she has had an opportunity to exert a wide influence, and it may be safe to say that, by virtue of her own consecrated life, she exerts more moral power in this community than any other woman in Indiana.

Mrs. Helen M. Gougar has addressed the legislatures of New York, Kansas and Wisconsin, besides that of her own State. As an extempore speaker she has no peer among her co-workers; her first suffrage speech was made at Delphi, May, 1877. In July, 1881, Mrs. Gougar became the editor of *Our Herald*, a weekly which she conducted with great ability and success in the interest of the two constitutional amendments then pending. In 1884, in an extensive lecturing tour, she addressed large audiences in Washington, Philadelphia, New York and Albany. In the year 1883, Mrs. Josephine R. Nichols of Illinois, and Mrs. L. May Wheeler of Massachusetts, came to reside in Indianapolis. Both these ladies have lectured frequently and with marked effect in various parts of the State.