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Woman Suffrage and Good Citizenship

Mrs. Henry M. Youmans

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President's annual address delivered at Good Citizen-
ship Convention, Wisconsin Woman's Suffrage
Association, Public Library and Museum
Building, Milwaukee, October 29, 30,
31, and November 1, 1919.

Woman Suffrage and Good Citizenship

Mrs. Henry M. Thomas

The Great Book tells us that nearly four thousand years ago, after long wandering, the children of Israel entered the Promised Land. They had gone through hard experiences in the country of the Egyptian, who had made their lives bitter with bondage, "in mortar and in brick and in all manner of service in the field."

Finally deliverance came to them, but it was a deliverance so slow, so painful in its processes that it must often have appeared more unbearable than that from which they were delivered. For forty years they wandered in the wilderness and although the Lord was with them and fed them with manna and provided that their raiment waxed not old upon them "neither did their feet swell those forty years," still it was an unhappy journey, with murmurings and chidings and futile rebellions on the part of the people and a steady flow of teachings and exhortations and threatenings on the part of the leaders.

When the end of the long journey finally came and even the sons of Anak, those giants before whom the Children of Israel felt themselves as grasshoppers, were passed, when they entered into and possessed the Promised Land, finding it a rich and goodly land as the Lord had promised, we may well believe they thought their troubles were all over. But the Great Book tells us that that was by no means the case. The Promised Land, like other lands designed for human habitation, proved a land of struggle and contest. To the reader it appears that the chosen people led quite as strenuous an existence in the Promised Land as they had led in the long journey in the wilderness or even during the days of slavery in Egypt.

Women Wandered Forty Years.

I am not claiming that it was foreordained that women of the United States of America should wander forty years in the wilderness of ignorance and prejudice and obstinacy, especially obstinacy—before entering into the Promised Land of Political Freedom.

I am willing to believe it just chanced that way. It was in fact just forty years from the day of the introduction of the federal amendment conferring the right of franchise upon women before the House of Representatives passed that amendment. The date of introduction in the House was

January 14, 1879, and the date of passage which was really the beginning of the end of the journey, January 14, 1919. I do not think it is irrelevant to compare the leaders of this later exodus to the leaders of that other so long ago. Both groups were given to see the light and both followed the light, pressing on without regard to obstacles, and commanded and adjured and persuaded others to follow.

We have not as yet actually entered into the Promised Land. We stand now like Moses on Mount Nebo, viewing the prospect o'er. It appears to us a fair and pleasant land, vastly attractive after the difficulties of the journey. But my friends, we do not forget for one instant that this Promised Land like that other is not a land of ease and sloth but a land of striving, a land in which there are enemies to conquer and difficulties to overcome. To secure the weapons to fight with is after all a small thing compared to the fight itself, when that fight must be a perpetual one against wrong and injustice.

We are sure that the children of Israel, after they had entered the Promised Land, loved to recall the difficulties and dangers of the journey in the Wilderness. All travelers do that. We suffragists have been so occupied in pressing forward through our wilderness that we have had little time or inclination for looking backward over the journey. Now we may briefly enjoy that luxury.

Discussed in 1846

Ever since I have been connected with suffrage work I have heard the tradition that the enfranchisement of women was debated at the convention which was held in Wisconsin in 1846 to formulate a constitution for the proposed state of Wisconsin. I have only recently learned the exact basis of this tradition, the facts having come to me through the kindness of Miss Louise Phelps Kellogg of the Wisconsin State Historical society. The convention of 1846 was a typical frontier convention. Many able men were in its membership, among them those of a forward-looking spirit in advance of their times. The question of suffrage raged in that convention but it was centered mostly about the enfranchisement of the black man. It also touched the question of the enfranchisement of the Indian, the full-blood and the half-breed, and it concerned terms of naturalization for foreigners. Norwegians and Germans, who were already swarming into the territory. In the debate on negro suffrage the record tells us that James Magone, an Irishman from Milwaukee, who had the reputation of being a wag, arose and offered an amendment that the word 'male' be stricken out and the right of suffrage be extended females as well as males. The record continues: "Moses M. Strong hoped the gentleman would withdraw the last amendment and allow those in favor of negro suffrage to obtain a vote and have a fair test of the question. Mr. Magone said he was in favor of females voting and wished to tack a motion to a popular resolution to insure its success. Mr. Strong said he was a friend to females and it was for that reason he did not wish to see them tacked on to negroes. Some further conversation passed between the gentlemen on the subject and the question was then put on the adoption of Mr. Magone's amendment, which was lost." Miss Kellogg concludes: "There was really no serious consideration of women's right to suffrage. The discussion thereof was an attempt to ridicule and embarrass the favorers of negro suffrage and to show how preposterous it was."

Wives' Property Rights

There was one phase of women's rights, however, which was seriously considered and was favored by the convention and that was the right of married women to own their own property. Under the common law of England, which prevailed in the territory of Wisconsin, as in most of the United States, at that time, the husband and wife were one, and he was emphatically the one, in the ownership of property. As soon as the marriage ceremony was performed, the husband came into complete ownership of all his wife's personal property and all the income of her real estate. The provision giving married women separate ownership of their own property, in the first constitution drafted for Wisconsin, was part of a provision to exempt a certain amount of family property from a forced sale for the debts of the husband. In this new community, where there were many of the debtor class, worthy families had been evicted from their homesteads, and the wives had lost every cent of their patrimony, in discharge of their husband's debts.

The constitution adopted contained a provision that married women should own their own property, but it was bitterly opposed by many members. Edward G. Ryan, who later became Wisconsin's famous chief justice of the supreme court, argued violently against it, declaring that such a provision violated both the usages and customs of society and the express commands of the Bible, that its results would be to lead the wife to become a speculator and destroy her character.

A member of the convention from Racine, Marshall M. Strong, was so outraged at the adoption of this provision, on top of two or three other radical provisions, that he resigned his seat, left the convention, and went home declaring that he would defeat the constitution at the polls. History gives him some credit for the defeat which actually did occur and the married woman's property act provision was undoubtedly one of the causes why this first constitution drafted for Wisconsin failed of favor by the voters.

As you know, another constitution, framed two years later, was of a more conservative character, was adopted by a majority of the voters, became the constitution of the state of Wisconsin and has so remained up to the present time. This constitution contained no provision for securing to married women their own property. But a law making that provision was passed by the legislature only two years later.

First Suffrage and Suffragists

The first serious effort to interest Wisconsin law-makers in woman suffrage is believed to have taken place in 1856 when petitions for the enfranchisement of women were submitted to the legislature.

Clarina Howard Nicholson and Lydia Fowler toured the state for temperance, incidentally scattering suffrage seed, in 1853. You remember that in those days abolition and temperance and woman's rights were inextricably intertwined, the advocate of one being usually the advocate of all.

Lucy Stone is said to have given suffrage lectures in Wisconsin in 1855. As far as known the first suffrage society in the state was organized in Janesville in 1858 and the first popular convention was held in Milwaukee in 1869. This Milwaukee convention seems to have been organized largely through the efforts of a young medical woman, Dr. Laura Ross, who secured the third medical degree awarded to a woman in this country and who later

married the eminent surgeon, Dr. Wolcott. A story has come to us of this convention which illustrates the attitude of the times toward public activities of women. One of the Milwaukee women who believed in "woman's rights" and had attended the convention, was approached by a more conservative friend the following day. "Did you attend that convention" asked the conservative one in awed tones, "I hear that women at that meeting clapped their hands just like men. Can that be true?"

After the Milwaukee convention the principal speakers, Mary A. Livermore, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, went to Madison where the legislature was in session and appeared before that body, where the record says "they made a very great impression." We may well believe it for they were great women and powerful speakers.

Frau Mathilde Annecke

An interesting personality of these early days was Frau Mathilde Annecke, a German woman forced to leave her native country following the uprising of 1848. She and her husband, Col. Annecke, were friends of Carl Schurz and members of the company which he brought to Wisconsin. Madame Annecke must have been a remarkable woman. She had edited a newspaper for women in Germany and when she and her husband were obliged to flee from that country she brought certain essentials of her frauen zeitung with her and continued the editing of the paper in Milwaukee. She also established a girls' school in that city. She was in sympathy with all advancement for women, a believer in woman suffrage and the record tells us that when Miss Anthony was on trial in the Rochester court for refusing to pay her taxes, Madame Annecke sent \$50 to help defray the expenses of that trial.

W. W. S. A. Organized in 1881

A state association of some sort was organized at the Milwaukee convention in 1880, but the Wisconsin Woman's Suffrage Association came into existence twelve years later, in 1881, when Lucy Stone and her husband, Henry Blackwell, with the help of Mr. and Mrs. John M. Olin, Madison, arranged a convention in that city at which Mr. Olin presided. The following officers were elected:

President, Dr. Laura Ross Wolcott.
Secretary, Miss Ella Giles.
Treasurer, Miss Frisbee.
Chairman Executive Committee, Mrs. Olin.

The society declared itself independent of national organizations. Mrs. Olin was invited to attend this convention and take part in its program. In responding to the invitation, which she was unable to accept, she writes that the change in public sentiment in Wisconsin since those early days seems to her "like a miracle."

Rev. Olympia Brown

Meanwhile suffrage ranks in Wisconsin had received a notable addition, Rev. Olympia Brown, born in Michigan, a Unitarian minister, who had been serving as pastor of a church in Massachusetts. From her earliest years

she had been interested in the advancement of women and had attended suffrage conventions in the East. I am sure you will enjoy her description of her preparations for a woman's rights convention in New York city in 1868. In her book, "Acquaintances Old and New," she writes: "I prepared myself for the event by getting an entire new outfit of clothing. I recollect that my dress was crepe marete, a silk and wool fabric much in vogue at that time. It was of a drab color and there was a large cape of the same material. My bonnet matched the dress in color and was trimmed with a pink rose on one side. This drab array seemed to me modest and exceedingly appropriate for a person going to a woman's rights convention. Like the green veil with which Josiah Allen's wife prepared herself for her visit to President Arthur, "dressy, not too dressy." I also invested in a \$12 silk umbrella which even now I remember as having been very pretty; also a new \$25 leather valise, quite beyond my means but what was money when preparing for my first woman suffrage convention." Thus woman suffrage and the unchangeable womanly in the year of our Lord, 1868.

Mrs. Brown became a resident of Racine, pastor of a Unitarian church in that city. A meeting of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association was called at Mrs. Brown's home in Racine in 1883. New officers were elected, the president being Mrs. Bascom, wife of the president of the University of Wisconsin. She held the office only a short time and was succeeded by Mrs. Brown, who retained the position until 1913, a period of thirty years.

Mrs. Brown bore the responsibility of a great cause on her own slight shoulders all those years. The self-reliance and energy of her character were equalled only by the depth of her convictions and her determination that the right should prevail. She gave herself unstintingly to her cause, and you and I celebrate today a triumph which is in large measure due to her efforts.

School Suffrage Law

A notable achievement of Mrs. Brown's early administration was the school suffrage law passed by the legislature of Wisconsin in 1885 and ratified by the voters the following year.

The text of the school suffrage law gave rise to interesting complications. It provided that women under proper conditions of sanity, residence, etc., should have a right to vote at "any election pertaining to school matters." The phrase "pertaining to school matters" was pleasingly ambiguous. Many people believed that the legislature, wittingly or unwittingly, had really given full suffrage or nearly full suffrage to women by providing that they might vote at any election pertaining to school matters. Following out this assumption, Mrs. Brown and other women attempted to vote at the municipal election in 1887 and in some places the ballots were received. In Racine Mrs. Brown's ballot was rejected, and as a test case she brought suit against election inspectors of that city for refusing to accept her vote. The case was argued before Judge John B. Winslow of the Circuit Court, now Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin, who rendered a decision that under the provision of the law women were entitled to vote at that election and for all candidates. An appeal was taken to the Supreme Court which reversed the findings of the lower court, declaring the intent of the law to be to confer school suffrage only. This decision was written by Justice John B. Cassidy. This long litigation cost the little band of suffragists

\$2,000, which they paid by unremitting devotion and self-sacrifice. The school suffrage law was partially a dead letter until 1901 when an act of the legislature provided for separate ballot boxes for women.

Meanwhile suffrage activities in this state were steadily going forward. Organizations were being effected, annual conventions held, and the Wisconsin Citizen, organ of the association, was being published. Each legislature as it came into existence was importuned to pass a law giving women the right to vote. In 1911 these efforts were successful and a measure was passed under section 4, article 3, of the constitution, giving women of Wisconsin the ballot subject to ratification at a referendum of the voters in November, 1912.

Our First Plunge in 1912

Some of us who are here took our first plunge into suffrage surf during that campaign. Wisconsin women were so interested in a real suffrage campaign and had so many and such diverse opinions as to the manner in which it should be conducted that a new state organization came into existence, the Political Equality League. Miss Ada L. James of Richland Center was president and Crystal Eastman Benedict was brought here from New York to serve as campaign manager.

Miss Mary Swain Wagner of New York, who had first appeared as lobbyist at Madison during the legislative session, was instrumental in organizing the Political Equality League but did not remain long connected with it. Later she organized the American Suffragettes, a short lived society limited to Milwaukee members.

The Wisconsin Suffrage Association and the Political Equality League, working separately, waged the campaign for woman suffrage in 1911-12. The first named organization already had affiliated organizations in many parts of the state. The Political Equality League made active effort to secure organized branches in every county, also organized a Political Equality League among colored people and a Men's Political Equality League. The lamented H. A. J. Upham was president of the last named organization.

That campaign was as lively as we, untrained in suffrage campaigns, could make it. In general we followed the suffrage styles of other states and imitated the stunts of those who had passed that way before.

Suffrage speeches were scattered over this helpless commonwealth as a sharp wind scatters dry leaves in autumn. Mass meetings were held at points of vantage. Many counties were toured with suffrage automobiles and the native Badger experienced the destructive shock of seeing a woman stand up in an automobile on a street corner and plead for political freedom.

My first active work was that of press correspondent in that campaign. Every week I sent out a suffrage letter to all the newspapers in the state, 600 or more in number. I am still thrilled by the postage bills we had to pay every month.

There is no adequate existing record of that campaign or even of its financial expenditures. The Political Equality League raised and expended \$10,000, the sum allowed by the state corrupt practices act. What sums were expended by other organizations I do not know. The National American Suffrage association gave great assistance by paying the salary of a speaker and organizer who did splendid work for many months until her health failed.

An unprecedentedly large vote was cast at the woman suffrage referendum in November, 1912, due partly, we flattered ourselves, to our efforts, and partly we knew, and did not flatter ourselves, to the efforts of the liquor interests. We learned the disciplinary lesson of how to lose in that election.

We rested a bit after that climax. We needed it. You remember Kipling's lines—

"We shall rest and faith we shall need it;
Lie down for an eon or two,
Till the Master of all good workmen
Sets us to work anew."

We rested for weeks, not eons. In February, 1913, a joint convention of the two suffrage organizations was called. Their hostility had been more than half friendly, they easily forgot their differences and united as one body, the hatchet was buried and the ghost of that hatchet has not been seen since that day. Mrs. Brown and Miss James both retired and a new president, vastly surprised to find herself in that position, was chosen.

The Day's Work

From that day to this suffrage history in Wisconsin is very modern and many of us can say with the old chronicler "all of this I saw, part of it I was." In looking back over the seven years there are some high-lights, but mainly it is a sober record of doing the day's work as well as one could, educating and organizing, raising money and expending it, writing and exhorting and never for one moment failing in faith as to the justice of our cause or its final outcome.

The first year of my presidency we had no office and I took care of an extensive correspondence with my own hand. The next year an office was opened in Madison and Miss Alice Curtis was installed as executive secretary. Finding it difficult to do effective work at such long range, the office was removed to Waukesha, my home city, with Miss Curtis and later Mrs. Helen Haight in charge. In October, 1916, the office was removed to Milwaukee and, in partnership with the Milwaukee County Suffrage Association, the present headquarters were opened. These headquarters have been continued up to this time with Mrs. Ruth Hamilton as office Secretary.

Of course each legislature as it came on was the object of our special solicitude. The legislature of 1913 passed a referendum measure which was vetoed by Governor Francis E. McGovern. The legislatures of 1915 and 1917 almost passed woman suffrage measures, almost though not quite. But the tide was turning.

"Take It From Us, Ladies"

"There comes a time," said Mrs. McClung, the brilliant Canadian woman who spoke at our convention two years ago, "there comes a time when the political parties, however shy they have been toward woman suffrage advances, say 'take it from us, ladies.'"

That time had come in Wisconsin when the platform conventions were held in September, 1918. All parties adopted suffrage planks. All leaders were anxious for us to know they were for us or at least were not against us. The woman suffrage session of the Wisconsin legislature naturally followed. The legislature was so keen about suffrage that it got ahead of

our lobby and passed a resolution favoring the federal amendment and urging the United States senate to pass it before our lobby got settled to its task.

Followed at intervals four more suffrage measures:

The presidential bill.

The referendum bill.

Ratification of the federal amendment.

Repeal of the referendum bill.

The referendum measure was not desired by suffragists but was passed on the prevailing suffrage enthusiasm of the legislature. When the federal amendment was ratified and the legislature realized that under the provisions of the referendum measure Wisconsin women might vote in November, 1920, on the question of their own enfranchisement, the referendum measure was repealed, a wholly friendly and considerate act.

Each of the suffrage measures was passed by a very large majority in both senate and assembly. The conversion of the political leaders of the state as represented in senate and assembly, as well as in the United States senate and house of representatives, was apparently complete. Legislation in this state had done for us all it could do.

And suffrage work in Wisconsin appeared to be ended. It was not in fact ended and will not be until Wisconsin women with all women of the country are fully enfranchised. Our loyalty and support are still due the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Thirty-six states must ratify the amendment. Seventeen states have already ratified. We are assured that the necessary nineteen more will ratify, either at regular or special sessions, within a few months. Until that happens we must bear our share of the financial burdens of the National and afford any other service required of us. Don't imagine this is philanthropy on our part. The object of the Wisconsin Woman's Suffrage Association, as stated in its constitution, is to secure the enfranchisement of women of Wisconsin. Since that enfranchisement is to be secured only through action of legislatures of other states, we must adapt our efforts accordingly.

In looking backward we are filled with gratitude and happiness at what we have accomplished. We do not minimize the importance of what has been done. The enfranchisement of women in face of the prejudice against it, prejudice woven into the very web of human nature, is a marvelous achievement. The careless world will probably continue to think that woman suffrage just happened, that it was "in the air," but we know that the change in the opinions of society which made it possible are the results of ceaseless, unremitting toil of hundreds of women extending over half a century. Stones wear away with constant dropping. So do prejudices which are much tougher. The political equality of women is coming because a few women at first, and always a few compared to the total number of women, were convinced that it was just and right and gave their time and strength, their very lives, to make it come.

Wisconsin Does Its Part

Wisconsin has done its part. We say it with great pride and fervent thanksgiving. Wisconsin the last to enfranchise its women? Not by any means, in spite of the fact that only 21 per cent of its voters are native born of native parents; in spite of the power of its enormous breweries and their inherent enmity to our cause.

At the last national line-up of suffrage forces, Wisconsin led the procession. To a Wisconsin woman that pays.

We are not sure that Wisconsin First in the ratification procession is generally accepted. The situation gives opportunity for differences of opinion. After the federal amendment had passed both houses of congress by the necessary majority, a copy of the amendment was hurried to the governor of each state whose legislature was in session. The legislature of Wisconsin received that copy and ratified the amendment about 11 o'clock on the morning of June 10, 1919. The legislature of Illinois was a bit smarter and ratified the amendment nearly an hour earlier, but the text of the preamble of the resolution embodying the amendment sent to Illinois was incorrect, and a second passage of the amendment was necessary, this second passage taking place a fortnight later.

Soon after the Wisconsin legislature had ratified the amendment, Senator David G. James started for Washington as special messenger carrying the ratification document. Upon his return home he brought this declaration:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 13, 1919.

By direction of the Acting Secretary of State I hereby acknowledge the receipt of a certified copy of the Joint Resolution of the Legislature of the State of Wisconsin, ratifying the proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States extending the right of suffrage to women, which was delivered by Special Messenger, D. G. James, on June 13th, 1919, and is the first ratification of the Amendment which has been received.

J. A. TONNER,
Chief of Bureau.

Since, in spite of Mr. Tonner's statement, Illinois still claimed first place, I made an effort to have the whole matter settled in the most official manner possible by requesting Governor Emanuel J. Philipp to secure from Secretary Lansing a statement of the exact situation as it appeared in the office of the secretary of state. My request brought forth this letter, forwarded to me by Governor Philipp:

My dear Governor:

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of August 18th stating that Mrs. Henry M. Youmans, President of the Wisconsin Woman's Suffrage Association, has requested you to obtain a statement upon the question as to whether Wisconsin or Illinois ranks first officially in the ratification of the federal suffrage amendment.

In reply I regret to inform you that the Joint Resolutions of the various states ratifying an Amendment to the Constitution on file here do not definitely show the time of ratification, and for that reason the Department is not in a position to decide the question between the States of Wisconsin and Illinois as to which was the first to ratify the proposed woman suffrage amendment to the Constitution. While the Department has made no decision which state ratified the amendment first, it is of record here that Wisconsin's ratification is the first to have been received by the Department, and a statement

to that effect was furnished the special messenger who delivered Wisconsin's ratification.

I am, dear Governor Philipp,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) ROBERT LANSING.

Honorable E. L. Philipp,

Madison, Wisconsin.

August 21, 1919.

The question of whether Wisconsin or Illinois was first in ratifying the federal amendment bids fair to become one of the famous unsettled questions of history. But there is no question that Wisconsin, either alone or with one companion, held the proud position of leader in this great roll-call of democracy.

This state will never recognize the debt it owes Mrs. Brown and the other pioneers. Suffrage work has not been easy even in these later days. We realize how doubly difficult it was thirty or forty years ago. And we honor and reverence the women who did it. I recognize with deep appreciation the ability and devotion of my own official families, one after the other. I should like to provide a wreath of laurel for each of those who have stood so loyally and worked so hard. Soldiers who have fought and suffered together on the battle field have a bond of attachment for each other even stronger than that of blood brotherhood. We suffragists have just that feeling, and I foresee reunions in the future when we shall recall our Gettysburg, our Belleau Wood, with the gusto known only to fighters who were there.

Education in Citizenship

It is easy and pleasant to reminisce of the journey in the wilderness. But the journey was undertaken to reach the goal. What of the Promised Land wherein we enter?

In Wisconsin in November, 1920, nearly a half million women will have the right to vote, certainly for president and vice-president, probably for all officers. They have this right through our exertions. It is no reflection on them to say that a great majority of them know little about public affairs or the modus operandi of voting.

Our duty is plain. We must devote our best effort to helping the women of our state to that education for citizenship which they need and want. They do want it—we have had many requests for citizenship material at the suffrage headquarters. Club women are making tentative efforts in that direction by placing citizenship programs on their calendars.

I think the first instinct of the woman who wakes up one morning surprised to find herself a real live voter is in the mechanics of voting, if one may use that term. She learns that she may vote for presidential electors. Presently it comes to her that even that one vote is an integral link in a long chain of political machinery. A presidential elector does not just grow like Topsy. He is nominated in a certain prescribed fashion. A primary election precedes the general election. The rite of registration is universal for voters. And the great political conventions which nominate president and vice president, with their hundreds of delegates and thousands of spectators, with their party platforms and their extraordinary newspaper exploitation—these seem so extremely important, that it is thrilling for our practice

voter to be even remotely connected with them. She would be entirely lacking in that quality which is supposed to dominate her sex if she did not want to know about all these things.

And not these only. She realizes that her voting will not long be limited to presidential electors and presidential elections. So the great new world of government, all government, opens to her. She must know about national elections and state and county and city elections and judicial and school elections, and town meetings and whatever else has a part in the machinery of government in these United States.

It is easy enough to learn of definite things like elections. Above and beyond mere machinery of this sort, interesting and important as it is, are principles of government and the methods by which government is carried on, and great national policies and problems.

What Government Means

An adequate political education is not a small thing for any person to undertake. But let no woman be deterred from exercising her rights as a voter because her education is not complete. If a rule of that sort should be applied to all voters there would be a surprising shrinkage in our electorate.

We would have our women begin a thorough course of study. We want them to become as wise as may be, knowledge is always power, but let us not forget that good citizenship rests on only two or three elementary propositions.

Good citizenship involves first an understanding that government is only the transaction of community business. There is nothing magic or mysterious about it. It is simply a chosen means of doing the common business of a group of people who may live near together or who may not, but who have many interests in common and who are bound together in governmental units. National government is the transaction of national community business, state government is the transaction of state community business, local government is the transaction of local community business—nothing more.

The second fundamental which our good citizen must see clearly is that a government like ours, of the people, by the people, for the people, really rests in the hands of the people, that is in the hands of individuals, every-day folks like ourselves. It is plain that citizenship duties are laid upon us just as family duties are laid upon us. We may shirk them if we will, some people do shirk them, but they are there just the same. It is the plain duty of every citizen of this republic to do his share of the common business of the republic and to do it as well as he can.

And thirdly, it is greatly to his interest to do so. Community life has an immense influence on individual and family life. When the citizen is working for the benefit of the community he is working for the benefit of himself and his children. If through his neglect community business is dishonestly and inefficiently done, he and his family, as well as everybody else, suffer.

The actual significance of government may best be studied close at hand. A group of women could not find a more attractive topic of study than the government of their own city. The general plan of the conduct of city business, the work of each official and each committee; the management of public utilities, street railways, water, light, sewerage and garbage systems;

the municipal boards which direct the affairs of parks, libraries, cemeteries, hospitals; the police and fire department; the health department; the school system with its continuation school, its vocational and Americanization classes, possibly its open air school, its school for the deaf, etc., the care of the poor, the defective, the criminal, the general subject of taxation, the city budget, all of these topics and others allied to them would provide fascinating material for many meetings.

Study like this, which may well be carried on to the county and state and nation, makes the student perceive what government really means, and what the tax-payer gets in return for the money he pays in taxes. Furthermore it builds up in the student an appreciation of the importance of public business and the need of character and ability in public officials.

I hope the advent of women in public life, women who believe in the ballot as a power and who take their political duties seriously, will forever silence those unpatriotic cynics who assume that public business is beneath notice and who speak with contempt of public officials as office-seekers and office-holders. To assume that public business is less important than private business or that the man who does it is inferior in capacity or ability is to indicate a fundamental ignorance of representative government.

The woman voter seeking information will find many helps in books and magazines. The war brought to our national consciousness the need of a new and better citizenship for men as well as women, and especially the need of laying the foundation for better citizenship in the schools. A new literature is arising in response to this demand. We have at the suffrage headquarters a short bibliography of books on citizenship compiled by Miss Kulzick of the Milwaukee Public Library. Some of the new school text-books on civics are extremely good and will be helpful to women students. Dr. Ford McGregor of the University Extension course has outlined a course of lessons in voting methods which is admirable.

We should have citizenship classes all over the state. We hope to provide a trained representative, teacher, lecturer and apostle of good citizenship all in one, who shall travel about from county to county teaching and preaching what the new women voters want and need to know. We urge your cordial co-operation both in the support of this speaker and in the organization of her classes.

We urge you to keep in mind that the boys and girls of today are the voters of tomorrow and that the public schools should do better work in the future in training for citizenship than they have done in the past. Co-operate with the schools. Use your influence for something real and vital in this school citizenship work. In various parts of the country, school path-finders are active and are suggesting modes of teaching civics which are as different from the old academic dry-as-dust methods as light is from darkness.

Reading the Newspapers

Women will forward their education in citizenship by reading the newspapers. To read the newspapers for political information is something of a fine art. You must first know your newspaper, its principles and its prejudices, so you can make allowances. You can't believe all you read but on the other hand you must obtain practically all your information on current events from what you read. You must learn to read with divination, balancing the statements of one newspaper against another, applying your own

judgment as a balance weight and so arriving at something like the truth. This is said without flattery. We often forget that every article we read is the expression either of fact or opinion of one person. Another person has another viewpoint and another pair of lenses through which to look. He presents a different version. Your own point of view, your own glasses, are different from both. You must learn to read discriminatingly, drawing your own conclusions.

Beware of the Headlines

Beware of reading the head-lines only. You know the experience of the Chicago woman who went to the police department with a complaint. She said an agent had come urging her to buy shares in the League of Nations. The agent had assured her there were two kinds of shares, one with reservations, the other without, prices being \$4.50 and \$6 respectively. The purchaser asked what kind President Wilson had bought and was told that he took stock without reservations. So she had purchased two shares of that kind and paid for them.

"But don't you read the papers?" inquired the police officer.

"Of course I do," she responded. "I always read the head-lines. I knew President Wilson was interested in the League of Nations."

The Question of Party

The woman voter entering diffidently into the unknown world of politics needs all her wits about her. Let her not imagine for a moment that she is as unimportant as she appears to herself. Madame Wisconsin with a half million votes in her pocket is not one to be ignored. On the contrary she will have her head turned by attentions accorded her if she is not careful. All political parties sue for her favor. To join or not to join—that is the question which will face her early and to which she must give her best attention.

It is a serious question and one not to be settled off-hand. Woman suffrage workers are used to a strictly non-partisan attitude. That was necessary when the success of our cause depended upon the favor of men of all parties. It is not necessary in Wisconsin now. Women are free to work with the parties of their choice. Many women are without party affiliations and as a whole women are I think much less partisan than men. I hope they will remain sufficiently independent so that they will always look behind the party label to the character of men and measures there represented.

However we must not forget that this is a government by parties. Parties formulate policies and select public officers. We may wish that this were not so but it is so. Our budding voter may well study the history and ideals of the political parties. She must decide for herself whether she can do best the good work she wishes to do by working inside the party with which she has most sympathy, and thus possibly have some influence on its actions, or by remaining outside, independent of all parties.

But whether she wears a Republican or Democratic or Socialist badge or only votes one of those tickets, is less important than that she votes with intelligent understanding of the issues involved, with a high sense of responsibility to her community, with a deep and abiding loyalty to her nation.

Need Women's Assistance Now

These are difficult and dangerous days, the world is in a ferment, chaos breaks loose here and there. The conscientious woman may well consider how she shall use her first vote. She needs knowledge and faith to guide her, knowledge that government is not something far off and remote from herself and her children but is instead close to the home and the children, touches them at many points; knowledge that in a government like ours the individual is responsible for the community—which indeed rests upon the individual and nothing else. It is easy to show that local government, city and township government, come close to the home. It is ordinarily more difficult to show that national government really touches family life, but war activities offer vivid illustrations of this truth. War activities also offer vivid illustration of how community welfare rests upon individual shoulders. The government needed immense sums of money to finance the war. It called upon you and me to lend money. Compared with the government's need of millions my little fifty dollar bond, your little fifty dollar bond, appears nothing less than ludicrous. But when all the men and women of this country bought bonds, as they could afford, the money was raised. It would not have been raised if each man and each woman had not said, "this is my responsibility," and acted accordingly. So with the conservation of food, so with all war activities. Each of them was brought home to every individual as a personal duty.

If the woman voter can learn but one lesson, let her learn that she must bear her share of responsibility for the life of her community. That is the corner-stone upon which good citizenship is builded.

Needs Faith In Government

The woman voter in the U. S. needs faith in the fundamentals of this government, belief that the principles upon which it is founded are just and right. She needs an abiding conviction that a government by the people, of the people, for the people, meets the inmost need of human society. She will not be blind to the fact that many evils exist under our government but will see that the structure itself stands forth sound and four-square to human nature and human justice.

A World-old Problem

I suppose the industrial problems with which we are striving are really phases of the problem of the ages—who shall do the work of the world and who shall have the profits. Certainly both work and profits have been ill distributed in the past. To bring about a fairer distribution, a more equitable division of the good things of life, is an aim which we must keep steadily in view. We can do much in advance of this aim by legislation and regulation and much more by education and a sound, deep-rooted feeling of brotherhood.

Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, recently arrived in N. Y., is quoted as saying that women will put an end to Bolshevism, a statement which at first seems merely didactic. 'Truly there are women "Reds" as there are men "Reds"'. Many strikes show women quite as ferocious in their determination as men. Women furies of the French Revolution, who took their knitting to the Place de la Concorde and watched the heads of so-called aristocrats fall into the basket, counting with satisfaction each one as it fell, will promptly recall

themselves to the memories of those who have read of those awful happenings more than a century ago.

But after all Mrs. Pankhurst has on her side something stronger than the example of a few violent women—that is the conservatism, the desire for law and order, inherent in women as a class. It was this instinct that made the first home, so the learned ones tell us, and it is this instinct that holds onto the home under all vicissitudes. The woman must always have some place in which to care for and rear her children. Personally she may like to roam abroad with her mate, for many women have in them strong spirit of adventure. But woman is mother before everything else, and her own spirit of adventure must be suppressed if the gratification of that spirit will injure her children.

A disordered, chaotic state of society would undoubtedly be acceptable to many men and some women. But on the whole women want ordered society because only in ordered society can children have the best kind of rearing. Women are the conservative, non-adventuring sex. As an abstract proposition it would appear quite safe to trust them with a high explosive like the ballot when their more radical and adventurous mates have safely handled that TNT for many years.

Need Common Sense

We profoundly need conservatism at this time and common sense and the old-fashioned virtues of industry and thrift. And not in the kitchen only. I hope women who have failed in vanquishing the high cost of living with the arts of the frying-pan will attack the ogre from the rear with the blandishments of the ballot. The distribution of food is one of the great problems of the hour. It has had the prayerful consideration of the voteless woman. It is commended to the prayerful consideration of the woman who has a ballot in her hand.

Americanization

Many questions of the day will make especial appeal to women. A national and state question of supreme interest is the Americanization of the millions of those who live in the United States, who know little of the essentials of the United States government and ideals, and who are easily influenced against the United States. Foreign women kept at home by their own shyness and their old-world conventions have little chance to become Americans except through the neighborliness of American women. Remember that no home becomes American until the mother of that home is an American.

We have the problem of the Americanization of the foreign-born and some native-born because we have held our citizenship too cheaply and carelessly. It is our fault that colonies of the foreign-born, living next door to us, remain foreign in all essentials. They represented a danger during the war. They represent a duty and an opportunity now. We must all become better Americans, men and women, foreign and native, working together. Women must be good citizens, not alone because of their personal votes, but because they will make good citizens of their sons and daughters, they will encourage the men of their families to greater interest and they will guide and assist their neighbors.

League of Women Voters

Americanization is one of the main lines of work of the League of Women Voters, the heir apparent of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. You will hear details of aim and method of the League from this platform. The National American Woman Suffrage Association will change to the League of Women Voters as soon as ratification is complete. Some state associations having already changed. You will decide at this convention when and how Wisconsin would best undergo the transformation.

You are reminded that suffrage work is not done in Wisconsin but the road ahead broadens and changes. We must close up the old task the while we undertake the new. You here have been faithful over a few things. You are worthy to become, as you are destined to become, ruler over many things. A fundamental change has come to Wisconsin because of your efforts. Only future generations can measure the value of that change. We must ensure that it shall be a wholly beneficent change.

As Matthew Arnold says in the words which we have adopted as the inspiration of this convention:

"If ever the world sees a time when women shall come together purely and simply for the benefit and good of mankind, it will be a power such as the world has never known."

Let us make that dream come true.