

# WOMAN SUFFRAGE AND POLITICS

The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement

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## WHY THE BOOK IS WRITTEN

THE campaign for woman suffrage in America long since ended. Gone are the days of agitating, organizing, educating, pleading, and persuading. No more forever will women descend on State Legislatures and the national Congress in the effort to wrest the suffrage from State and national legislators. The gates to political enfranchisement have swung open. The women are inside.

In the struggle up to the gates, in unlocking and opening the gates, women had some strange adventures. They learned some strange things. Especially startling became their experiences and their information when woman suffrage once crossed the devious trail of American politics. It is with that point of intersection that this book concerns itself. We have left it to others to write the details of suffrage history. Those details fill six huge volumes. We have left it to others to tell the immortal story of the services of individual suffragists. Here we eliminate names to emphasize work. We have left it to others, too, to synthesize American politics. This book's essential contribution must be sought in its revelation of the bearing of American politics upon the question of woman suffrage.

It is impossible to make that revelation adequately without a summary of the seventy-two years of campaign for the enfranchisement of women in the United States, together with a survey of American politics for the last fifty-five years of that period. The two are interlocked, neither story is complete without the inclusion of the other, and this story is not comprehensible without the inclusion of both. But our summary of the woman movement will be brief. Our survey of American politics will be brief. Our emphasis will lie where woman movement and American politics met in mutual menace. Our revelations will illu-

mine political crises with which the suffrage cause was closely identified and over whose motivation suffragists had to keep sharp watch.

Throughout the suffrage struggle, America's history, her principles, her traditions stood forth to indicate the inevitability of woman suffrage, to suggest that she would normally be the first country in the world to give the vote to women. Yet the years went by, decade followed decade, and twenty-six\* other countries gave the vote to their women while America delayed.

Why the delay?

It is a question that was the despair of two generations of American women. It is a question that students of history and national psychology will ponder through generations to come.

We think that we have the answer. It was, not an antagonistic public sentiment, nor yet an uneducated or indifferent public sentiment—it was the control of public sentiment, the deflecting and the thwarting of public sentiment, through the trading and the trickery, the buying and the selling of American politics. We think that we can prove it. Suffragists consider that they have a case against certain combines of interests that systematically fought suffrage with politics and effectively delayed suffrage for years. We think that we can make that case.

We find it difficult to concede to the general opinion that, because of the tendency to overestimate the importance of events with which they are most familiar, those who have been a part of a movement are disqualified to write its history. We are sure that history would be worthless if it took no account of the observations made within a movement by those who have been a part of it. That is why we, who have had an opportunity to become

\* Australia, Austria, Belgium (municipal), British East Africa, Burmah (municipal), Canada, Czecho-Slovakia, Denmark, Esthonia, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, Isle of Man, Latvia, Littonia, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Roumania (municipal), Rhodesia, Russia, Sweden.

acquainted with facts which throw light upon the political aspects of the woman suffrage question, feel impelled to pass our knowledge on to others.

The sources of all our information when not otherwise indicated are the archives of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, which contain continuous reports and other data from 1848 to 1922. Documents of this kind decline in interest for the general public as the movement they chronicle recedes into the past, but the facts and deductions drawn from them, and here assembled, should prove of significance to the advocates, perhaps especially the women advocates, of each recurring struggle in the evolution of democracy.

CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT.  
NETTIE ROGERS SHULER.

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