WHY WE LOST IN WISCONSIN

A year ago Wisconsin was the only state east of the Mississippi in which a suffrage referendum was pending, and in view of its great reputation as pioneer among progressive states, suffragists everywhere felt that the Wisconsin campaign presented a tremendous national opportunity. And we, in Wisconsin, felt our responsibility to the whole national movement. In answer to our appeals, the word went out and echoed back and forth throughout the country, "Help Wisconsin! If we can win one big industrial state east of the Mississippi, it will put us ahead ten years." In answer to this word came money in large sums—thousands of dollars—from the National, from New York, from Illinois, from Minnesota, Nebraska, Indiana, Missouri, California, Kentucky, and from countless individuals. To all who came so splendidly to our aid we are deeply, profoundly grateful. We asked it believing we had a chance to win—you gave it believing we had a chance to win. The vast bulk of this outside help for Wisconsin was given or pledged a long time before anybody knew that Michigan and Ohio were also to have 1912 campaigns, and it was asked and
given in the thought that Wisconsin might be our only hope of winning in an eastern suffrage state in 1912.

Well, friends and helpers, we lost, but your money wasn't wasted. It went directly into the salaries and traveling expenses of organizers, and the suffrage leagues carefully and laboriously built up by these organizers—often beginning in towns where there was not even one suffragist to entertain the organizer,—these are alive and flourishing today, 50 of them, active, solvent, dues-paying locals—your money was invested in them and they stand ready to win our next campaign.

But do not think we let you give all the money. You should know that one Wisconsin woman put $3,000 into our campaign last year and gave $1,000 to the National besides.—Mrs. Charles W. Norris of Milwaukee.—Others—men and women—gave lesser sums, ranging from $300 to 5 one cent stamps,—in all many thousands.

Before passing on to tell why we lost, I want to mention some of those to whom we owe that degree of success we had. First the older suffragists, without whose early labors we never could have had a referendum to put before the people,—those self-sacrificing pioneers, who have kept the torch burning for fifty years, under the inspiration of their devoted leader, the Rev. Olympia Brown. Next I want to speak of Miss Harriet Crim of
Illinois—our girl orator of the middle west—whose continuous services to Wisconsin were made possible by the National Association. North, south, east and west, wherever Miss Grim went, they clamored for her to come back and they are clamoring still. Next the LaFollette's, all three of them, but in this recent campaign we owe most to Mrs. LaFollette, who, from the moment Congress adjourned in July until election day was a leading spirit in the campaign,—writing, persuading, speaking, almost continuously.

Last but not least I must mention Miss Ada James, President of the Political Equality League, daughter of Senator James, who introduced our bill. Miss James is a rare combination, almost unfailing good judgment, keen political insight and the character of a saint on earth. Throughout the long months of the campaign, though she grew thinner and paler through her unceasing labors for suffrage, her spirit never failed. It was our constant inspiration.

Then I wish I could give a personal word of greeting from Wisconsin to the splendid speakers; the experienced campaigners and the brash new recruits who came in from other states to help us. —First the Illinois women, without whose help we never could have begun our campaign, last the Ohio women, without whom we never could have made
as good as finish as we made, and in between many another splendid woman, who put in a week or two weeks or six weeks, to help Wisconsin—Bless their hearts, one and all. I wish we might have won for their sakes.

The vote on woman suffrage in Wisconsin barring one county from which returns have not yet come in, stood 132,000 for, 224,000 against. The papers have published it as a two to one defeat, but you see it wasn't nearly as bad as that. The majority against us fell 40,000 short of being a two to one majority. Nevertheless it was a heavy defeat. Now the only question which can possibly interest this great audience is why we lost, when our hopes were so high a year ago. Wherein were our calculations wrong? I have time merely to outline the situation. For one thing we over-estimated the friendliness of the large Scandinavian vote. We counted on the Norwegians and Swedes of western Wisconsin standing in favor of equal suffrage as a matter of course, because women vote in Norway and are on the verge of it in Sweden, but when we came to campaign among them we found many on our side but many just as conservative about woman as the majority of the Germans. In short we found we couldn't count on their votes—they had to be brought over man by man and we didn't have time to
get around. Next we over-estimated the support to be counted on from the Progressive Republican voters; we had hoped they would follow their great leader Robert LaFollette in this, as they have for so many years, in other Progressive measures, but thousands of them did not. I sometimes think the last thing a man becomes progressive about is the activities of his own wife.

Again, we over-estimated what the Socialist vote would mean to us. I believe that nearly all the Socialist Party members stood by their platform and voted for us, but their sympathizers did not. Thus, many of the wards in Milwaukee which gave Victor Berger enormous majorities went more than two to one against woman suffrage.

Finally, we under-estimated the far-reaching power of the great organized brewing industry in Wisconsin, and we under-estimated the extent of its hostility to woman suffrage. The open opposition of the retail liquor dealers is common to all suffrage campaigns. Wisconsin was no exception, but that alone was not enough to defeat us. The determined and united opposition of a great organized manufacturing industry is another matter.

Wisconsin stands among the great brewing industries in its output of malt liquors. The brewing industry ranks fourth in Wisconsin; its capital stock amounts to $85,000,000. I need not remind you of what
made Milwaukee famous and I may say it deserves its reputation, but it is not in Milwaukee alone that good beer is made. A dozen other cities in the state are big brewing centers. Indeed there is hardly a town of 3,000 in the eastern part of Wisconsin which has not two or three big breweries.

นำมา, of course, the brewers didn't fight us openly. They didn't need to. The important thing was that everybody who did business with them from the farmer who sold them barley to the big city newspapers who sold them advertising space, knew how they stood. Thus, their mere enormous corporate existence in the state was a constant effective protest against the suffrage referendum. Have you ever thought how many industries there would be in a brewing state dependent upon the brewing industry for their success? The bottle-makers, cork makers, barrel makers, wadens—etc. Why there are whole cities of 20,000 in Wisconsin where not a single business man dares to let his wife come out for suffrage. Why? Because practically every man's business is dependent for success on the good will of the big breweries in that city.

Whether they are wrong or right in their fears, the brewers of Wisconsin have decided that giving women the vote will hurt their business. They put their business, as, alas, most big corporations do, ahead of democracy,
justice and simple human right, and they are determined
to do all in their power to delay the coming of votes
for women.

But what does this mean to the suffragists of Wis-
consin? It is merely a challenge. The brewers do not
control the majority of the voters of Wisconsin and they
cannot defeat us alone. Their power can defeat us only
when it is allied with ignorance and prejudice, and it
is our business to cut off these allies,—to do away
with the ignorance and prejudice that still exist in
Wisconsin in regard to woman suffrage. When we have
done that the issue will be clear and we shall win.

We made a great beginning last year; it will take
two years more, perhaps four. Meanwhile all hail to
Michigan for getting in ahead of us, she has made our
task easier, and above all all success to the campaign
states of 1913.