
CALL TO THE
NINETEENTH CONVENTION
OF THE
Delaware Equal Suffrage Association

THE Delaware Equal Suffrage Association issues the call to all members and friends for its Nineteenth Annual Convention, to be held in Wilmington, Delaware, at Pythian Castle, 906 West Street, Thursday November 11, 1915.

In the long years of work for Equal Suffrage, no year has been so crowded with self-sacrificing labors for the cause as this, and no year so significant of the early ultimate triumph of woman suffrage.

We shall gather in convention this year with renewed zeal and inspiration, rejoicing that the long struggle for the new freedom for women is nearing an end. It seems borne in upon the most conservative that it is only a matter of time when nation-wide political freedom will be granted to women as an inevitable outcome of our democracy, and the last step in the great experiment of self-government.

The poll of 132,081 votes for woman suffrage at the special election in New Jersey on October 19th, we regard as most hopeful and significant—a token of the realization of our vision of the near emancipation of the women of this country, East as well as West South as well as North.

Come, if you believe that women and men should stand on an equality before the law, and that therefore some laws in Delaware need changing.

Come and help to dissipate the false assumption that women are too ignorant, or too petty, or too emotional to assume and discharge any duties that fall to their lot.

Remember that this is your contest, your responsibility. You may not recognize it, but you cannot evade it. You profit everyday of your lives by the work of the women gone before. It is your plain duty to help discharge this debt by helping the women who come after.

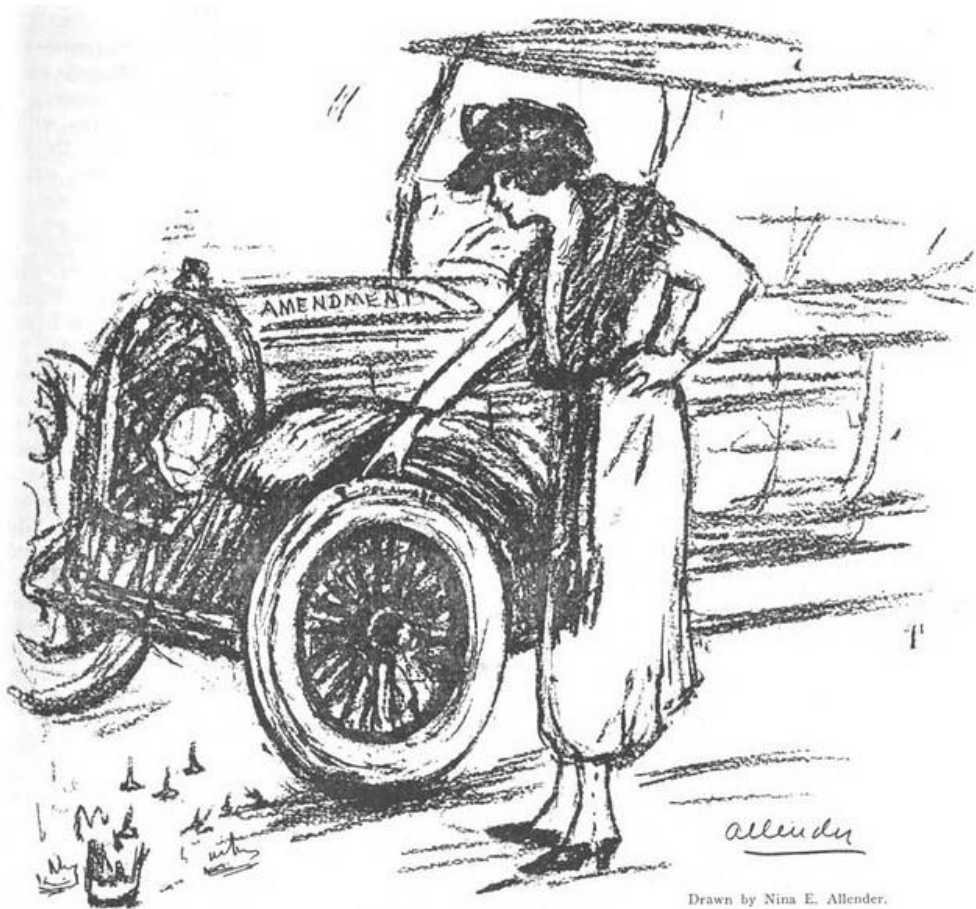
We shall have a fine convention. It will help you, and your presence will help us. Our national president, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, will be with us. Come.

MARTHA S. CRANSTON, *President*,
Delaware Equal Suffrage Association.

MARY R. deVOU, *Corresponding Secretary*,
Delaware Equal Suffrage Association.



Suffrage Parade
Philadelphia ca. 1915
Courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society

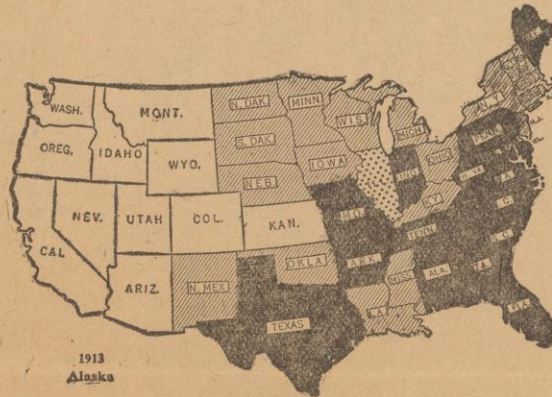


Drawn by Nina E. Allender.

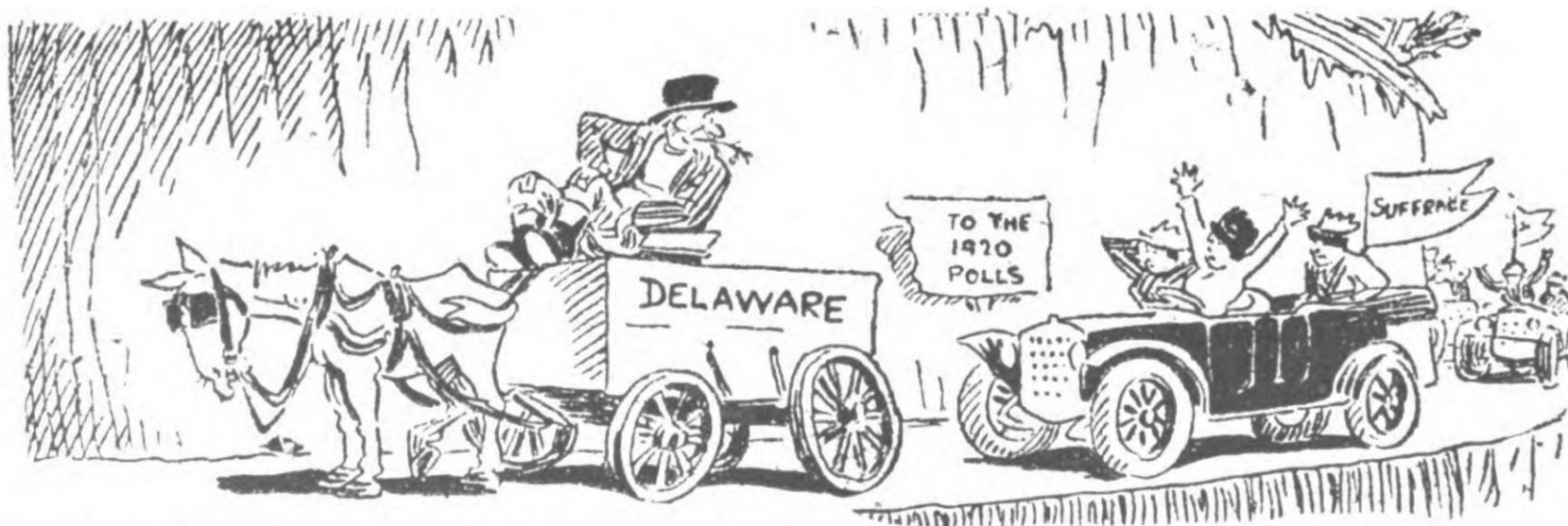
A Puncture in Delaware

The Suffragist
April 1920, p. 29
Courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society

Vote for the Woman Suffrage Amendment Nov. 2nd



EMPIRE STATE CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE
Headquarters: 303 Fifth Avenue, New York



The Suffragist
May 1920, p.69
Courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society

ANTI-SUFFRAGE

I have always opposed votes for women. It is constitutional with me. Not that I feel women cannot vote or are not the equal mentality of our men folks, but I feel that it is duplicating our work. It is putting an extra burden on the women and it has weakened materially our power with the Legislatures.

As long as the women of the state came to the Legislators of the state to ask for a reform in the laws or an improvement in conditions, our Legislators knew we had no ulterior motive, and also knew that they could act with a clear conscience, as there was no return vote by which they might benefit. The first question now that arises in their minds is, - will she vote for me, or will she not? After more than fifteen years of a try out, what has been accomplished?

The cheapening of womanhood; - giving her a sort of independence by which she makes it a favor to her husband to attend to her house-keeping and attend to the children; a sort of overbearing spirit towards the men she meets casually, insinuating that she is better equipped in many ways, than they are.

I say to the women in this country that their first duty is to keep up her man power. If a woman constantly jears and openly refuses to consider her husband's opinions what is to become of the family? With women all taking up jobs and receiving independent salaries for them, naturally they feel equal if not superior to their husbands.

The young woman you see around in public is personally unattractive; she talks too loud and makes herself conspicuous; she is immodest on the beach and in the ball-room and with her continual loud talking and constant smoking has lost much of her feminine charm.

Personally, I should like to see them shut up in the Harem for a while. Not that I think men are so much better than women, but what opportunity are they making to-day of their power for example and influence? The country has certainly not benefited by the women's vote.

In 1919, I heard some rumors of a special session being called in the Delaware Legislature to consider suffrage. As I wanted to take a trip to the West Indies with my daughter, and Anne Gray and Jane Marvel, I went personally to John G. Townsend our Governor at the time and asked him if it was likely we would have an extra session. He said, "No." "You may go without any anxiety, nothing will take place in your absence."

Our Committee opposed to Women Suffrage was a very lax one. We would raise a little money as we needed it but our wants were not great and our expenses very modest, and we held very few meetings. Some time previous to this I had toured the state with one of our workers and spoke at Georgetown, Milford, Smyrna and Dover. It was merely in an educational way; I wanted the women to know what the agitation was all about,- and was received everywhere with the greatest kindness. The state was organized as to counties, three prominent women from each county were on my committee and I received the most conscientious and devoted support from them.

For about three years previous to this, I had worked very hard over the anti-suffrage question, raising all the money that was spent in the state. Mrs. Arthur Dodge, President of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage appointed me as Chairman of Finance for the National Association, and I made several trips to Wall Street, and obtained several thousand dollars to help out the National Expense Account. I raised all the money

spent in Delaware and I felt in all justice to the women of the state that a count should be taken just to find out how popular votes were for women.

We hired a census man from Ohio, had cards printed for each woman's signature and I paid three cents a name, whether for or against, We found the poll running about 18 to 1 against Suffrage, which made the fight justified.

On my return from the West Indies, the first week in March, - and on the dock was met by Mrs. P. L. deArmond, who called out, - using her hands as a megaphone, "Special Session called for 22nd of March." - The Governor had broken his word.

Mrs. Henry P. Scott, Vice President, of my organization and her very able husband, had taken every opportunity during my absence to start our work in the right way. Mrs. Florence Bayard Hilles was Leader of the Suffrage Movement and the suffragists all over the State seemed to have unlimited means. The day of the opening of the Legislature, we understood they had placed \$40,000 to their credit in the bank at Dover.

The first event after my return home was a large meeting held in the Playhouse, where our friends from Baltimore came to promise us their assistance. A large meeting was held at which prominent speakers took part. It seemed as if everyone was on our side; by the time the Legislative session began, we had manned our forces and were on hand at the State House the day of the opening.

Mrs. Hilles and Mrs. Ridgeley with their contingent, were also ready for us. Mrs. H. I. Beers of Dover was a valuable and efficient member of our Executive Committee. Mr. Beers had a large and commodious office on the main street. These we used as

our Headquarters, where we had literature, posters, books to register in, comfortable chairs to rest in, and a large sign out in front, "Anti-Suffrage Headquarters." Pickets representing twenty-seven different states were quartered in the Motel Richardson. Our National colors were white, deep rose and black,- our emblem was the rose. The Suffragists' color was yellow and purple and their emblem the daffodil,- it was truly exciting.

We left no stone unturned to keep this movement before the public. I even went so far as to have a tent erected at the State Fair in Wilmington. It was the only rest tent on the Fair Grounds. We had chairs, plenty of ice-water and various comforts for those who entered our sanctuary. I was assisted by an able corps of women, who provided the guests with literature on the question of votes for women, and after they had rested their tired feet, we deftly asked them to sign their names on our book.

Perhaps the thought of doing something extra at that time was more than they could bear and so we secured many new members for our association in this way. It was an extremely hot week, and I shall never forget the acquaintances we made. The high diver, whose tank was just across from us; the snake charmer; the Wild Man from Borneo,- all became our friends. It was a most amusing week and I may say I was delighted personally because I lost ten pounds of avoirdupois in spite of all the comforts.

In the ensuing campaign we employed only two workers;- Alice D. W. White of Maine and Charlotte Rowe of New York. They were splendid girls and Mr. McNabb said of Charlotte Rowe that if you awakened her in the middle of the night she could get right up and make a speech on Anti-suffrage without the least hesitancy. Alice White was in charge of the office and was extremely capable.

My first idea was to be friends, particularly with those opposed to us, and this I think I was, as far as the men were concerned. Old Mr. William Hart, who had the Bill in charge, was one of my best friends. Day in and day out we met, from the 22nd of March to the 18th of June; I never missed a day, except during the recess of ten days, when I was forced to go to Concord, N. H. to see my son who had a slight case of scarlet fever at St. Paul's School.

When the time came for our hearing, it was certainly a great event. My dear old friend, Judge Grubb prepared a beautiful long speech for me to make with a legal argument. He read it all through to me as he said he knew how to handle those men. I finally wrote my speech for Dover and in great excitement took it in to Judge Gray. I very carefully read my poorly expressed miserable speech, - the Judge looking at me all the time, and shaking his foot over his crossed knee. I looked at him and said, "Judge, do you think that will do?" "Oh yes, yes! But you WILL wear that bonnet, Mary,"? scanning my head-gear anxiously.

It all seems far away now, but at the time, it was a very exciting session and was looked at not only by the state but by every state in the country, for if we could hold our state, it meant strengthening our defense elsewhere materially. Mr. Hart and I met every day in the corridors, when I would ask, "When are you going to bring your Bill up." "Very soon, I hope, because I want to get home and plant my corn and look after my farm. Everything is at six's and seven's and I'm sick of this place."

Finally, (on a certain date) it was promised to be brought up. The Suffragists had made a careful poll of the Legislators and decided they would lose if it was brought up at this time, but

Mr. Hart had promised me and I felt sure he would do it. The day arrived; the State House was packed with friends and foes. The order was given by Mr. Daniel Corbet, Speaker of the House, for Mr. Hart to appear. Tipstaffs rushed out to seek him, but he was seen driving away in Mrs. Hilles' high powered motor towards his home, - he had been kidnapped. Consternation reigned; in the Legislature no one could understand it. Finally it adjourned for the day, - nothing could be done.

Immediately I went to Mr. Corbet, told him what had happened and asked what to do. "Is there no way for this Bill to be forced up?" "There is, if you can obtain a written statement from Mr. Hart saying that he will produce the Bill on a certain day, and if he does not you can hold the situation in your own hand!" I immediately got in Mary Scott's car and motored to Mr. Hart's home. I took precaution to bring paper and pens and had the statement prepared when I arrived.

I said, "Mr. Hart, I want you to do something for me." "I will do anything I can do, Mrs. Thompson." "Then sign this paper, otherwise you will be kidnapped to-night," I said. "You don't think they would take me out of the State, do you?" "I most certainly do; their plans are made; if you sign this, you will be safe." Accordingly he signed the paper to this affect:-

"I hereby agree to bring up the Bill known as HB - 42 for a vote to-morrow - or if I am unable to do so, I delegate my power to Mrs. H. B. Thompson."

That night, the Chairman of the Democratic Committee of Massachusetts and one of the leading suffragists, hired a taxi and repaired to the home of Mr. Hart. Mr. Hart's daughter had a gentleman caller which necessitated their waiting at a place in

the woods nearby, until after eleven o'clock. When they saw the young man's car disappear, they drove to the door. The family had just gotten to bed, when a loud knocking aroused Mr. Hart, who came to the door to see what was the matter.

The gentleman from Massachusetts was standing on the threshold and ordered Mr. Hart to dress and come with him. He said he could not as his wife was sick. "That doesn't make any difference," he said, "you have to come." "What do you want with me?" "We want you to get away so House Bill 42 cannot be brought up again." "That won't make any difference, as Mrs. Thompson has my written consent to bring the Bill up herself if I am not there." Loud were the oaths which fell from the Democratic Chairman's lips.

They had asked the taxi man how far out of the state he would go with them and he replied, "As far as you like if you pay for the gasoline." It seems that this ruse was not permissible by law and that a person who had undertaken to kidnap some one from another state was guilty of criminal procedure.

The next morning the National Committeeman was wandering about, meddling in everybody's affairs and I took it upon myself to address him, "Will you tell me what right you have to come here and meddle in Delaware's affairs? Your place is in Massachusetts and you had better get back as soon as you can." We went home and we never saw hide nor hair of him again.

Bull McNabb, leader of the Republicans in the House, a splendid man, honest and staunch, was my friend. I took his advice on every occasion and we fought the fight together.

I was afraid one or two or possibly more of my backers would slip away from me, and I decided to make a pledge for them all to

sign. Mr. Henry Scott thought this was unpolitic but I went through with it and the eighteen men all signed a copy, stating they would not reverse their votes but would hold fast to the belief that we held "no votes for women." This was a great safeguard. We might not have pulled the thing off without these signatures.

Everyone,- even the United States Presidential candidate for election, meddled in our affairs. As it was near the time for the election, this candidate wired the Legislators to put it over. Coleman duPont was against us and also Alfred duPont, Owner of the Morning News. The only time the entire duPont family ever united was under Anti-Suffrage. They held a great caucus,- all coming down to Dover,- Alfred, Pierre and Coleman. That was the most exciting day we had. Judge Cochran, who was one of my good friends, said that I need have no fear;- he had brought several bottles of Green River, which he was going to hand out, when the time came.

The Hall was full of solons; suffragists and Anti's,- backed by their various friends. No one wanted to go into the caucus rooms. Ruby Vale arrived in time to do a little mischief and everyone was on hand who could turn out. Finally they had the caucus with about twenty-five people and on leaving the Hall our loyal Anti-suffragists gathered together and held an opposing caucus. Mr. George Elliott, Mr. George Sparks, Henry P. Scott, H. B. Thompson and many of the Legislators to say nothing of the crowds of women, packed the Hall. I think the Caucus did a great deal for us.

We had one staunch friend, Hanratty; he was a farmer and lived near Smyrna. Just to show you how the suffragists worked

during this time. He told me that they made nineteen separate visits to him to try and make him change his vote, but he was true to the red rose and did not fail us. It gave him a disgust for Legislative work and he would never go back, thereby the state lost a very fine man.

After the ten day recess, the Suffragists seemed more bitter and more violent than ever. One day they placed picket flags all around the green in front the State House. They brought dozens of young girls with daffodils and tried to persuade the various legislators to put them on. They were, to be perfectly frank, a rather low type of women, who were brought into the state, to picket and lobby for the passage of the Bill.

All sorts of tricks were tried but fortunately did not succeed. One day we had a wire from Mississippi, whose Legislature was in session, stating that they had passed a Bill for votes for women. This, of course, was a serious outlook for us. However, Mrs. Hall of Dover, had friends in Mississippi, to whom she instantly telegraphed for information on this question. The answer came back, "No truth in the report." The situation was saved.

One morning, however, as I came into the State House, I saw Doll Short, a member of the Senate, talking to one of the prettiest suffragists. His voice was low and dulcet and I heard him say to her, "What does my little lady bird want this morning?" I knew as far as we were concerned it was all up for us and I expected the Senate would immediately follow him. We were all on edge and lobbied incessantly, to keep the interest of the men whom we knew were our friends. I longed for twenty young beauties with which to captivate them, but I had to fall back on my good staunch

married women instead.

Just about this time, who should arrive on the scene but deValera; that man certainly has the power of meddling wherever he goes. He talked to one man until two o'clock in the morning, and fortunately the only way he got rid of him, was to show him the pledge he made to me and to say, "You would not have me break my pledge to Mrs. Thompson, would you?" so this danger passed by.

Mr. McNabb was asked as to why he preferred me to Mrs. Hilles. He remarked, "I would rather sink with Mrs. Thompson than swim with Mrs. Hilles." This information Mrs. Hilles used sometime later when Mr. McNabb was running for City Councilman; she took occasion to get even with him by making a strong speech against him from the steps of St. Paul's Church at Fourth and Jackson Streets. The end was not very agreeable for the boys of the neighborhood showed their feelings by throwing eggs and squashy tomatoes at Mrs. Hilles and her companions, driving her away and breaking up the meeting.

When the Bill was finally brought up, we had gained two more votes over the original number. The final question which was voted upon, was not the votes for women but whether the question should be brought up again for a general vote. Again we gained two votes, as our people all voted against reconsidering the Amendment. It was a day of great excitement, and a general stampede ensued; men shouted and waved their hands and women cheered. I was picked up bodily and set upon a table in the center of the room. I was forced to make a speech which I did with great joy, and after receiving a huge bouquet of red roses, we were photographed. Mine was taken with a smile on my face such as popular aviators use to-day and it turned out good and was published all over the country.

The session closed the 18th of June, after much excitement and the expenditure by the State of quite a sum of money. After I returned home, I received a newspaper clipping of my photograph, underneath of which was written in a scrawly hand,- "Shut your mouth and stay home for a while".

Such is fame!

The Anti-Suffrage women gave a luncheon to those gentlemen of the Legislature who had treated us so courteously and been such good friends. Mrs. Saulsbury and Miss Hayes offered their beautiful home for a midday reception. At the close of the session, the Legislators repaired to a delightful meal, consisting of deviled crabs, roast ham, chicken salad, ice cream, cakes and rolls. Mr. Hart was the guest of honor and I appeared on his arm, in my best. A good time was had by all and I am sure that among the men we made no enemies,- in fact about five years later, as I was walking up Market Street, I met Senator James W. Robertson of Wilmington. He joined me and as we walked up the street, he said to me, "Mrs. Thompson, when are you going to run for office?" I said, "I do not believe I will ever run, Senator, why do you ask?" "Well, he said, "I always made up my mind that if you ever wanted anything in this State, I was going to vote for you. You are a good fighter, but you have always fought fair and anytime you need help call on me." I appreciated this remark very much.

Old Mr. John Saulsbury of Dover was one of our staunch friends; he never missed a day at the Legislature. His tall, gaunt figure and his gray hair, gave him somewhat of a likeness to Don Quixote. On one occasion one of the pickets asked Mrs. Hilles who we were. Mrs. Hilles replied, "Beauty and the Beast". She hated Mr. Saulsbury as he was so strongly opposed to their

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side.

On the whole, this suffrage fight was one of the most interesting and amusing affairs I ever participated in. It gave me an insight into human character; an understanding of how to get on with people and the assurance that the price of success with the Legislature is eternal vigilance.

The final day of the Session, I drove straight up to Judge Gray's to tell him of our success; he was just as pleased as I was and I feel sure that he thought my "bonnet" had a great deal to do with our winning.

Unfortunately, that summer our plans were made for a trip in the West, and during that time, the Suffragists ran wild. They played the same ruse in Connecticut as they did in Delaware about Mississippi, only there was no one to refute it and they put it over. They claimed that that gave them the majority needed in the United States Legislature for the success of the Amendment. Other states fell before their furious onslaught; the Munsey millions of which they had full use, came into play and a tremendous drive was made all over the country to rope in the weakest states. Delaware was the only Republican state that refused to ratify the Amendment.

The Hon. Thomas F. Bayard at the opening of the meeting introduced me saying I and my Mother before me were born in Delaware and I therefore a native Delawarean,- that our cause was a just one and that we certainly had the right to our own opinions. I have always felt deeply grateful for his kindness to me at this time. At the close of the session I filed our expense account and it was less than three thousand dollars. I asked Mrs. Hilles to do the same, for her side, but I never received any answer and so

ended the biggest political fight ever held in the State of Delaware.

On the ten day recess I was so full of the caucus and the splendid way our party had backed me that up at the Alumni House at Concord, New Hampshire, I wrote a parody called:-

"The Laws of Dover or How Henricus held the Caucus"

In addition to this Epic, the following by Hon. Daniel

O. Hastings, was written:-

O generous Mary, dauntless Mary,
Of Anti-suffrage fame,
It can't be true
It will not do
To leave aloof your name.

It was not Henry, it was not George
That turned the clever trick
It was Mary here
It was Mary there
That made the members stick;

Now be real true, be Wilson blue
Let George and Henry out,
Let Mary shine,
Oh, woman devine;
And watch the Antis shout.