

**ANTI-SUFFRAGE ESSAYS  
BY MASSACHUSETTS  
WOMEN**

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Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women by Ernest Bernbaum

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**ERNEST BERNBAUM**

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# **ANTI-SUFFRAGE ESSAYS**

**BY**

**MASSACHUSETTS WOMEN**

**WITH AN INTRODUCTION**

**BY**

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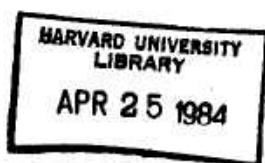


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*Gratefully Dedicated*  
*to the 295,939 Massachusetts Men*  
*Who, on Election Day, 1915*  
*Endorsed the Anti-Suffrage Sentiments*  
*of the Women of Massachusetts*





## INTRODUCTION

### THE ANTI-SUFFRAGE VICTORY IN MASSACHUSETTS

The essays in this little book are by anti-suffrage women who were prominent speakers, writers, and organizers, in the campaign of 1915. They voice sentiments which gained the largest measure of popular support ever accorded in the history of Massachusetts politics.

The largest number of votes any political party polled in Massachusetts before 1915 was 278,976. The anti-suffragists polled 295,939. Since 1896 there has been but one instance in which the voters gained a plurality amounting to 110,000 votes. The anti-suffragists won by 133,447 votes. Alton B. Parker's defeat by Theodore Roosevelt in 1904 is commonly regarded as typifying political annihilation; but the suffragists in 1915 did not poll as many votes as Mr. Parker, and the anti-suffragists polled 38,000 more than President Roosevelt at the height of his popularity. Such outworn words as "overwhelming" and "landslide," which have been regularly used to describe victories not half so great as this, understate the

actual extent of the anti-suffrage triumph. The pronounced aversion which Massachusetts showed towards Horace Greeley in the presidential campaign of 1872, and towards William J. Bryan in that of 1896, scarcely exceeded that which she feels towards the suffragists today.

The grounds of this aversion are so numerous that it is difficult to determine which of the many causes of the anti-suffrage victory were the most powerful. In my opinion, however, Massachusetts men defeated woman suffrage chiefly because (1) they discovered that nine women out of ten did not want to vote; (2) they knew that the creation of a large body of stay-at-home voters would result in bad government; and (3) they grew disgusted with the temperament, the notions, and the methods typical of the few women who clamored for the vote.

For at least two generations suffragists have been spending a huge amount of energy and money in spreading their doctrine. Contributions, mainly drawn from a few rich women, have enabled them to send professional speakers into every district of the state, to distribute tons of "literature," to supply the press with a constant stream of "news" written from their point of view, and in general to advertise their claims in the most lavish way. A propaganda so subsidized would have been successful decades ago if sound principles and common sense were on its side. But to their consternation the suffragists found that the vast majority of Massachusetts women turned a deaf ear to their

plausible appeals, and that their strongest opponents were those of their own sex.

Suffragists continued to talk about what "we women" want. But men presently began to see that these women had no right to pretend to represent their sex. Even their own claims as to the number of women supporting them showed that they represented only between 5% and 10% of the women of Massachusetts. At least 90% of the women—either by open opposition, or by a marked indifference to the subject—showed that they did not believe in woman suffrage. It became obvious that no general statement could be more emphatically true than that Massachusetts women did not want to vote.

When this truth was insistently pressed upon the suffragists, they were apt to call the indifferent women "unenlightened." This was felt to be an insult rather than an explanation. The average Massachusetts man does not think his mother, wife, and sister "unenlightened"—certainly not on the suffrage question. She has heard and read the suffrage notions again and again. He knows that if she felt that man was her oppressor, or that the welfare of herself or her family would be increased by her enfranchisement, she would say so. She is a sensible, observant woman, who knows what she wants, does not hesitate to ask for it, and usually gets it. But she was not asking for the ballot. It did not take her long to see through the suffrage fallacy that "only those women would need to vote who want to." She realized that the vote would mean