

ILLINOIS FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

The assembly has given to Illinois the honor of being the first state to ratify the constitutional amendment granting the full franchise to women. Gov. Lowden's signature is assured, inasmuch as he urged ratification in a special message.

The action of Illinois will be promptly followed by the required number of states, for the sentiment of a majority of the American people is clearly favorable, conceding the fears of the south and the conservatism of the east. Indeed, it would be strange if democratic America, with its high standard of education, its faith in human freedom, and its high conception of woman, should stand out against a tendency exhibited in much more conservative countries to extend the franchise and to turn to women for counsel and increasing co-operation in public matters.

That enfranchisement will bring the millennium, we do not expect, nor do the leaders of the woman suffrage movement expect or predict it. Where the franchise has been granted by state action certain benefits have appeared, but on the whole women have been found to follow the cleavages which divide men. They are, perhaps, more interested in questions of civic morals. We are inclined to believe they will approve legislation of moral regulation and social discipline more generally than men. They will make prohibition permanent, we suspect, and we can hardly blame them for this general tendency. Women have been submitted to stricter social discipline than men have accepted for themselves. They have had imposed upon them a narrower and more rigid code. They have recognized the advisability, if not necessity, of these restrictions, but it is natural they have felt that what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander.

The alarmed male is likely to overestimate this tendency, which will vary among women voters as among men, according to local traditions, customs, and conditions. It will not be possible to plot the curve of female influence as expressed in the voting power for many years, but in any case the demand of woman for the vote has been founded on justice to her as an individual rather than upon any assured theory of expediency. If America chose to enfranchise all men regardless of educational or other tests of fitness, there was little reason for refusing to give the ballot to women. Steadily, following the democratic current of the times, this consideration has gained ground, and it has culminated, naturally enough, at a time when the intelligent service of woman and her unescapable share of sacrifice have been impressed upon the public mind. It would not be accurate to say the franchise is now to be given women as a reward for their splendid effort and unflinching sacrifice in wartime, but certainly it is a recognition of the importance of their contribution to the great enterprise of civilized society and of their vital interest in our common fortune. It has been granted because it has come to be recognized as a "square deal" that women, no less than men, have the right to have a say in the laws which rule them and in the choice of agents to administer these laws.

It has been a long fight and a hard one. At this moment of success it is well to recall the sacrifices it cost the pioneers of the movement, when ridicule and hostility covered the champions of the cause and the goal lay far away. It has been an appropriate incident of the last fight that the victorious amendment bears the name of Susan B. Anthony.