

P R E F A C E .

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ELIZABETH CADY STANTON, SUSAN B. ANTHONY, AND
MATILDA JOSLYN GAGE.
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IN preparing this work, our object has been to put into permanent shape the few scattered reports of the Woman Suffrage Movement still to be found, and to make it an arsenal of facts for those who are beginning to inquire into the demands and arguments of the leaders of this reform. Although the continued discussion of the political rights of woman during the last thirty years, forms a most important link in the chain of influences tending to her emancipation, no attempt at its history has been made. In giving the inception and progress of this agitation, we who have undertaken the task have been moved by the consideration that many of our co-workers have already fallen asleep, and that in a few years all who could tell the story will have passed away.

In collecting material for these volumes, most of those of whom we solicited facts have expressed themselves deeply interested in our undertaking, and have gladly contributed all they could, feeling that those identified with this reform were better qualified to prepare a faithful history with greater patience and pleasure, than those of another generation possibly could.

A few have replied, "It is too early to write the history of this movement; wait until our object is attained; the actors themselves can not write an impartial history; they have had their discords, divisions, personal hostilities, that unfit them for the work." Viewing the enfranchisement of woman as the most important demand of the century, we have felt no temptation to linger over individual differences. These occur in all associations, and may be regarded in this case as an evidence of the growing self-assertion and individualism in woman.

Woven with the threads of this history, we have given some per-

sonal reminiscences and brief biographical sketches. To the few who, through ill-timed humility, have refused to contribute any of their early experiences we would suggest, that as each brick in a magnificent structure might have had no special value alone on the road-side, yet, in combination with many others, its size, position, quality, becomes of vital consequence; so with the actors in any great reform, though they may be of little value in themselves; as a part of a great movement they may be worthy of mention—even important to the completion of an historical record.

Several chapters of contemporaneous history have been contributed by friends in the Old World, giving various steps of progress in different countries of Europe, which will appear in the Second Volume.

To be historians of a reform in which we have been among the chief actors, has its points of embarrassment as well as advantage. Those who fight the battle can best give what all readers like to know—the impelling motives to action; the struggle in the face of opposition; the vexation under ridicule; and the despair in success too long deferred. Moreover, there is an interest in history written from a subjective point of view, that may compensate the reader in this case for any seeming egotism or partiality he may discover. As an autobiography is more interesting than a sketch by another, so is a history written by its actors, as in both cases we get nearer the soul of the subject.

We have finished our task, and we hope the contribution we have made may enable some other hand in the future to write a more complete history of “the most momentous reform that has yet been launched on the world—the first organized protest against the injustice which has brooded over the character and destiny of one-half the human race.”