

THE LADY AND THE TIGER: *Women's Electoral Activism in New York City Before Suffrage*

S. Sara Monoson

In 1894, twenty-six years before national woman suffrage in the United States, a political club called the "Woman's Municipal League" emerged in New York City. The women of the League sought to take part in heated mayoral electoral battles raging at the time. By 1901, acting independently as well as in alliance with prominent men, the League had secured for itself a distinct, integral role inside the movement to wrest control of City Hall away from the professional politicians of Tammany Hall and deliver it to "good government" reformers.

The League's part in these contests has gone largely unnoticed as well as unexplored, despite the fact that its active members included such central figures in Progressive Era United States history as Josephine Shaw Lowell, Margaret Dreier, Lillian Wald, and Maud Nathan.¹ This study therefore reports the history of the League's political activism in considerable detail.

The League's electoral activism during the years 1894 to 1905 provides vivid evidence of women's independent, direct, and effective involvement in mainstream politics long before they got the vote. By the last quarter of the nineteenth-century women were players in municipal politics in New York, as shapers of welfare, education, and sanitation policy, for example. As members of charities and religious organizations they often advised or lobbied elected officials. But involvement in a political campaign was highly unusual in this period, and the establishment of an autonomous women's political club was even more so. In Chicago, for example, Hull House women participated in three campaigns in the 1890s to oppose an incumbent alderman they believed to be corrupt. Their modest efforts were coordinated, however, by the "Hull House Men's Club."² This study examines the peculiar set of political developments, cultural assumptions, and class conflicts that made possible the League's independent work in the specifically electoral dimension of New York City politics.

More precisely, this article shows how reform's rhetoric of nonpartisanship figured in League women's negotiations of the tension between a claim to political participation based on women's moral superiority and the view that women's special moral talents rest, at least in part, on their exclusion from the sphere of politics. During this period of rapid urbaniza-

tion and industrialization, concerns such as education, sanitation, public health, and police and fire protection came within the purview of municipal government. Civic reform groups asserted that deliberations on these problems needed to be independent of partisan maneuverings or "politics" if they were to be resolved satisfactorily. League members agreed and claimed that by virtue of women's greater moral sensitivities their participation would enrich these deliberations. The old, "dirty" business of politics remained no place for a lady. But the new, "clean" arena of nonpartisan work on city problems was, they asserted, women's territory as well as that of progressively minded men. And since this nonpartisan territory was meant to include City Hall, campaign work was not off limits.

The logic of nonpartisanship was also constraining. The League chose, for example, not to link its cooperation with the reform coalition or endorsement of and labors for a candidate to his stand on suffrage, even though the League's founder was a supporter. Both League members and their male allies considered linking these issues to be in conflict with women's claim to be nonpartisan, disinterested advocates of reform.

The interaction of class and gender figure significantly in the story of the League. On the one hand, League women's participation played a crucial role in the reform coalition's efforts to enlarge its class base, and gender played a central part in the reform movement's efforts to articulate its candidate's agenda and goals. On the other hand, reform politics did not stretch the class limits of these elite women's feminism. The League did not seek to include working-class, immigrant women in the ranks of its members. Instead, these women were viewed as the beneficiaries of the League's (and reform's) work.

Finally, the story of the League is particularly useful for thinking about the inadequacy of a separate-spheres framework for the analysis of Progressive Era women's activism. This standard framework suggests that women's extensive, organized public activity during this period focused on moral and social issues while the world of politics remained exclusively male. The activities and ideology of the League—and, perhaps, much of men's and women's activism of the period—are better illuminated, however, if we think of the ascribed spheres of men's and women's lives not as static but as expanding and contracting at different historical moments for particular reasons.³ League women did not consider their electoral work an incursion into an established male sphere. Rather, they understood themselves to be engaged in a struggle to pry open a new field of "nonpartisan" public space for debate and agitation on city affairs and to claim for women an indisputable right to a permanent place in it. That is, they aimed to redefine the proper business of (municipal) politics and adjust the parameters of women's sphere as required by the new times.

The Origins of the League in the 1894 Campaign Against Tammany

The rhetoric of the urban reform movement of turn-of-the-century New York City loudly proclaimed that a war between the forces of moral, rational, efficient "good government" and corrupt, evil, "machine politicians" was raging in their city.⁴ While this "reform ideology" certainly obscures the complexity of many real political struggles of the day,⁵ it provides a means to discover why, how, and which women became involved in the movement.

The New York Tammany Society was a private political club which became the seat of Democratic Party machine politics in nineteenth-century New York City.⁶ In the words of one contemporary commentator, it was not itself a political party but "an association of men who make a business of politics."⁷ Tammany managed to be both powerful and popular, controlling City Hall by means of an extensive patronage system (in the 1870s one out of every eight voters in New York City was an employee of the city), a strong position on the rights of immigrants and public works projects, and an unofficial welfare system which provided a modicum of relief to the poor in times of acute distress (financed mostly by kickbacks from municipal contractors). It was common knowledge at the time, moreover, that the money obtained in this and other illegal ways also enabled Tammany men to get rich off politics. In 1900, for example, a state corruption investigator asked Tammany Boss Crocker the pointed question, "So you are working for your own pocket?" to which he replied simply, "All the time."⁸

The reform "movement" was made up of a loosely knit patchwork of anti-Tammany New Yorkers. It included civic groups which acted as self-appointed voices of "respectable opinion" (their members included journalists, social workers, clergymen, charity organizers, philanthropists, and college graduates), independent and anti-Tammany Democrats, and Republicans. Each element had specific interests. Independent Democrats wanted to undermine Tammany's control of the local party organization. Republicans sought power in a city where they were perpetually in the minority, even though the party was in control of state government. Civic groups sought to rationalize the growing municipal bureaucracy and bring the conduct of government affairs into line with their principles. This is not to deny that each was concerned with the material improvement of urban conditions of life. All shared the conviction that Tammany's dominance of city government seriously impeded progress on the pressing problems facing the rapidly growing, industrializing city—police and fire protection, sanitation, health, heat, light, water, educational and recreational facilities, and transportation.⁹

When the election returns of 1888 revealed for the first time that a unified opposition could beat Tammany, various anti-Tammany forces began to consider "fusion," that is, collectively putting forward a single slate of reform-minded candidates. The public rhetoric of the civic groups dominated the Fusion effort as their very general commitments enjoyed broad support and effectively "papered over" the considerable differences represented in the fragile coalition.¹⁰ The civic groups pressed the need to install "expert administrators" who would remain independent of political parties and bosses, men chosen solely for their business ability and personal integrity. But the issue of "efficient administration" would not likely suffice to catch the attention of the mass of voters, let alone sway them over to reform. Tammany's ties to the daily lives of the voters of the tenements amounted to a strong bond. The reformers had to attack this bond and they knew it.

In January 1894 an opportunity emerged. A state-ordered investigation of the Police Department in New York City by the Lexow Committee exposed Tammany's complicity in widespread police corruption. Later that year the opposition organized what was called the Committee of Seventy. The Fusionists now had a tangible issue on which they could agree and which could arouse the voters—corruption. The rhetoric of the reform coalition charged, for example, that Tammany's mismanagement of city affairs caused the spread of disease, the deterioration of public hospitals, schools and parks, and the proliferation of "urban vice" (prostitution). Reverend Charles Parkhurst of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, a member of both the Lexow Committee and the Committee of Seventy, declared that Tammany had turned the city into an "open cesspool" and that reform was an exercise in "municipal sewerage."¹¹ His pronouncements sparked criticism of his use of the pulpit, but he was relentless. He made headlines for two years first with controversial accusations about police protection of prostitution and gambling rings and then with his vindication after the Lexow Committee report was issued.¹²

Josephine Shaw Lowell, founder of the Consumers' League and leading force behind the creation of the Charities Organization Society, in short, the "grand dame of [New York's] social reformers,"¹³ favored the movement to turn out Tammany and transform municipal politics in New York. Lowell was born into wealth and a family tradition of philanthropic activity. Her family were radical abolitionists.¹⁴ Her husband, Col. Charles Russell Lowell of Boston, was killed in the Civil War during their first year of marriage. A widow at age 20, she devoted her energies to charitable causes. In 1876 (at 37) Governor Tilden appointed her the first woman Commissioner of the New York State Board of Charities (a post she held until 1899). In this capacity she published a number of reports and gained

considerable public recognition.¹⁵ Her interest in the 1894 election was rooted in the conviction that the state's resources had to be enlisted in the struggle to better the material (and moral) conditions of the lives of poor women. Lowell observed in 1903, for example, that the wealthy needed no Health Department to "save them from disease; their houses are not invaded by prostitutes; they can get fresh air and sunlight without the help of the Tenement Department . . . their children are educated whatever may be the condition of the public schools"; but that the poor were utterly dependent upon "upright, intelligent and devoted city officials for everything that makes life bearable."¹⁶

Lowell was drawn to support the anti-Tammany coalition on the basis of its platform, chiefly its proposals for civil service reform. But in order to take up an active role campaigning for William H. Strong, the Fusion candidate, Lowell faced challenges quite different from those of her male associates. A woman's place in social reform organizations and as a public spokesperson for and "expert" on these matters was reasonably well established by this time. Electoral activity, however, remained taboo. Lowell had to devise a gender strategy before she could publicly act to influence the coalition's electoral strategy and contribute to their success at the polls.

It is in this context that the moral claims expressed by some clergy in the reform coalition of 1894, especially Dr. Parkhurst, emerge as significant factors in the story of the League. Supporting municipal reform was identified not merely as a political act but as a moral duty. And it was this type of rhetoric that enabled Lowell to construct a gender-based rationale for campaign activities. She did not need to assert the identity of men's and women's public roles. Instead, she could argue that women's essential difference from men—their superior morality—made them appropriate actors and allies in this particular fight. She explained that she founded the League at Parkhurst's suggestion to assist in the 1894 campaign against Tammany Hall, "on the ground that the questions involved were moral and not political, and were, therefore, as essentially the concern of women as of men."¹⁷

Lowell's representation of the League as founded at a man's "suggestion" in order to render "assistance" should not obscure the fact that the League was an independent political club and not the woman's auxiliary to a men's group. Its formation in 1894 was, as one original League member recalled, "a most radical step."¹⁸ It is also crucial to note, moreover, that Lowell did not argue that the questions involved were moral as well as political but that they were moral and not political. By denying that the campaign was political Lowell believed that she could suppress the controversial issue of women's relation to politics even while

League women campaigned for candidates. Certain circumstances in New York City politics combined to make precisely such a paradoxical position plausible. Male reformers commonly conceived of the realm of "politics" quite narrowly as that of partisan maneuverings for power. Also, reform rhetoric insisted that partisan concerns had no place in the conduct of city affairs and represented the coalition's candidate as "nonpartisan." In this climate League women had only to draw on male reform ideology—accept that the realm of "politics" was limited to partisan activity and that reform was a nonpartisan cause—to be able to claim that their own activity under the banner of reform was "not political."

The League clearly viewed the legitimacy of women's place in the arena of campaigns and elections as contingent upon the nature of the particular contest. In addition, reformers relied in part on the participation of women to define the issues of the campaign as "above politics" and moral, or at least to press this message with certain voters. This congruence of interests shaped the development of the League's activities. The efforts of League women to insist on the legitimacy of their involvement in the campaign reinforced the rhetoric that reformers relied on to draw working-class, immigrant voters into the fold. For example, in 1894 the League sponsored a mass-meeting in support of reform at Cooper Union's Great Hall—a major political event of the election campaign. By sponsoring this political rally the League not only gained recognition but was thought to lend authority to reform's claim to be waging a moral campaign, one that could legitimately ask voters to disregard the powerful ethic of party loyalty.

This congruence of interests was, however, tenuous. Men could (and did) forcefully make appeals to working-class voters' "moral convictions." In addition, well-connected, highly respected women such as Lowell certainly could have exercised quite a bit of influence behind the scenes. Indeed, this is what we might have expected to have been the case.¹⁹ Instead, Lowell promoted a public, visible role for women in reform campaigns. This decision reveals her feminism. If reform's success at the polls was important to Lowell, so was the ability of women to claim a role in having brought this victory about. She was politically aware enough to see early on that such a claim would be crucial to women's ability to demand inclusion in what was perceived to be (potentially) an emerging, altogether new political order.

The position adopted by the League was limiting. It accepted back-room struggles over the selection of a Fusion candidate as off limits. These negotiations apparently too closely resembled partisan deal making. The League was also in a difficult position on suffrage. Male reformers "expressed anxiety about the participation of women, fearing that they might

then ask reformers to support their demands for suffrage."²⁰ But the women chose not to link the two matters. In this way they were able to maintain their membership in the coalition and use this position to extend their influence on individual city problems, perhaps benefiting the cause of suffrage indirectly. One popular argument against suffrage concerned women's fitness for the vote. League members perhaps hoped to demonstrate by their example that women were indeed not merely sufficiently but exceptionally "fit."

The reform coalition was successful in the fall of 1894 (following the depressionary winter of 1893-94). The Fusion candidate, William Strong, defeated Hugh J. Grant, the incumbent Tammany candidate and New York's first Irish-American mayor. During Strong's tenure the League remained inactive. But in anticipation of a heated battle for his reelection in 1897 the League regrouped. The League's membership from 1894 through the election campaign of 1897 amounted to little more than a handful of "respectable" (society) women personally assembled by Lowell. These early associates of Lowell's included such dynamic women as Lillian Wald (Head Worker at the Henry Street Nurse's Settlement), Maud Nathan (President of the New York Consumers' League and Jewish leader),²¹ and Mrs. William Schieffelin (President of the Women's Auxiliary to the Civil Service Reform Association). They aimed for the League to function as the political hub of women's activism.

At this time, a sizable group of male reformers from the civic clubs formed the Citizens' Union to serve as the nucleus of the electoral efforts of the (male) leaders of the reform coalition. Professional, self-defined "middle-class" men were heavily represented in this new organization.²² The Citizens' Union aimed to field an entire municipal ticket in 1897 headed by the incumbent Mayor Strong.

Participation in the Low Campaigns of 1897 and 1901

Since the election of 1897 would determine the first mayor of the consolidated city of Greater New York (Brooklyn and New York were to merge January 1, 1898), for reformers it raised "the most fundamental issue presented in any election since the Civil War."²³ To complicate matters, while Mayor Strong's administration had cleaned up much of the corruption exposed by the Lexow Committee and had improved municipal services, it had also managed to be unpopular by rigorously enforcing statutes relating to gambling and Sunday liquor laws. Strong refused to stand for reelection, leaving the newly formed Citizens' Union without a candidate and the Fusion cause in trouble. After much debate, the Citizens' Union settled on the former reform mayor of Brooklyn and current presi-

dent of Columbia University, Seth Low.²⁴ But there was no Fusion as the dissenting Democrats as well as Republicans both fielded candidates against the Tammany candidate, Robert A. Van Wyck.

The League aimed to be a valuable ally of the Citizens' Union. Its activities in this campaign remained, however, largely symbolic. It was, for example, a key actor at the mass-meeting held at Cooper Union's Great Hall to kick-off Low's campaign on October 6, 1897. In addition to being the event's official sponsor, the League was a very visible participant. One scholar reports that several members of the League (though he mistakenly refers to them as members of the Citizens' Union auxiliary) were seated next to the candidate on the stage and that 500 women were among the 2500 people crowded into the Hall. He observes:

This was a gathering of the wealthy. But in behavior, in tone, and in the prominence of so many women it resembled the annual meeting of the Mission and Trust Society far more than it resembled a meeting of the City Club, let alone an ordinary political rally.²⁵

The Citizens' Union had clearly planned for women to be highly visible on this occasion. Mrs. Seth Low was seated next to the candidate throughout the event. This does not indicate that men orchestrated the League's activities. It seems likely that, having failed at achieving Fusion, the Citizens' Union was eager to represent itself as having as broad an appeal as possible. Reaching voters' moral sensibilities over the head of party loyalty was going to be necessary if the Citizens' Union was to have a chance. The alliance with the League and the physical presence of so many women at this rally dramatically represented precisely this aspect of the Citizens' Union's appeal.

Some League members, it should be noted, were the wives of prominent men. League members Mrs. William Schieffelin and Mrs. Fulton Cutting, for example, were the wives of leaders of the Citizens' Union. The League's leadership and membership always, however, included women who were in no way related to prominent men. Neither Lowell, nor Wald, nor Nathan were related to the men in the coalition. Instead, they were activists with independent reputations who sought to be part of the effort to beat Tammany. In addition, it is interesting to note that Lowell was a widow, Wald was single, and Nathan had a very supportive husband (he was an active suffrage supporter) and no children—her only child died in 1895 at age eight.

Wald's recollection of a small but instructive failure during the campaign of 1897 in her book *Windows on Henry Street* (1934) reveals the importance of her early work with the League to her growing political sophistication. In preparation for a reform event, Wald was charged with

making the arrangements to rent a meeting hall normally used by pro-Tammany politicians and owned by a Tammany supporter. Reformers had a large turnout but found that the owner had rented them a room without chairs and that Tammany had planted hecklers in the crowd. The speakers Wald had arranged also proved less than adequate. "Never was there a sadder failure," Wald wrote. But this failure was a valuable experience. Wald herself added, "Alas, we know better now than we did then what an election requires!"²⁶

The women's efforts were not sufficient to make up for the Citizens' Union's failure to gain Democratic, Republican, German, and labor support or for its failure to reach out to the new Eastern European Jewish and Italian communities.²⁷ Van Wyck defeated Low. Following this defeat the Citizens' Union considered adjourning until the 1901 election but chose instead to become a permanent organization and remain on the scene between elections. The League too decided to remain active between elections. In 1898 it formalized its organization (adopting a constitution and electing officers) and redefined its aims. The constitution identified "to secure active support for such movements and candidates as may give promise of the best government for the city without regard to party lines"²⁸ as the object of the League. Clearly the League was claiming a role in the municipal reform movement. But precisely what role did these women expect to perform?

The "great service" women can render to the reform movement is the "maintenance of uncompromising ideals," Lowell declared in a speech in 1899.²⁹ While it may be appropriate for the professions of law, business, and medicine to have their own queer ethics, she explained, compromise on political matters is a sign of moral weakness. It is, moreover, a weakness to which men are far likelier than women to succumb since, in her view, struggling for a livelihood interferes with the development of moral sensitivities. As a result of women "being shut off in the main from the struggle for existence," Lowell argued,

There has been one great gain, their more acute moral sense . . . I claim that as a class they have a more sensitive moral instinct than men as a class . . . The consciences of men are greatly influenced by the circumstances under which they must earn their livings . . . [and] it is entirely natural that women, not having been subject to the strain of such circumstances, should have a normal conscience, and consequently a clearer moral sense than men.³⁰

Lowell thus considered women ideally suited to perform an important political function, that is, to stir the consciences of male voters. Women were to care about good government, inform themselves, and engage both

men and women in conversation about the issues, all the time aiming to use the "acute moral sense" bestowed upon them by their sheltered, uncorrupted lives to clarify the moral dimension of public questions. In the movement for municipal reform, women could perform this important function and make effective appeals to voters "by reminding the men with whom they have influence of the great issues at stake . . . and begging them to do their duty as citizens."³¹

Most women were, however, participants in the "struggle for existence." Working-class women of this period not only cared for children and did strenuous housework but often toiled long hours for meager wages in factories or at home (doing "homework," for example, piecework for the garment industry). Moreover, the struggle for existence was carried on by consumers as well as producers. Married women charged with converting wages into food and other essentials surely experienced this task as part of a struggle for existence when money was at all tight, let alone woefully inadequate.³² Lowell's argument suggests, then, that it is not women in general who are ideally suited to perform this important public function but only a small group of women—namely, affluent women—who find themselves so peculiarly empowered. The argument suggests that only women whose conditions of life are so structured can acquire "true" gender identity and therefore perform their special public function.³³ And indeed the League did not recruit members among working-class women. Working-class women were not viewed as appropriate public agitators, leaders, personifications of the "moral cause."

It is important to stress that rekindling the moral sensitivities of the populace, and specifically the electorate, was not a peripheral task in the view of the reformers. Rather, it was at the very heart of the reform movement. The reformers, as one scholar has emphasized, "envisioned government as a drama for the demonstration of moral principles. They viewed it as incomparable educator and, in the moral sense, instrument for good." Good government, they were convinced, would emerge "from the restoration of proper moral standards within each individual."³⁴ Reformers therefore were concerned to appeal to each individual conscience. A recognized claim to special skills in this regard would give the women of the League a power base inside the reform movement.

The League's plan of action for the years between the elections of 1897 and 1901 was to secure support for reform among women and to expand its membership. Lowell sought to attract younger women of means and education to the cause of municipal reform. Her method was largely word of mouth in the social reform circles. Among these new members was (Miss) Margaret Astor Chanler, Lowell's successor as president of the League. The expansion of its membership came, moreover, at a fortuitous

moment. The excessive corruption of the Van Wyck administration³⁵ catapulted moral issues to the forefront of the next reform campaign, prompting the League to seize a substantial role in 1901.

Unlike the unsuccessful Low campaign of 1897, in 1901 various anti-Tammany forces combined under the Citizens' Union to produce a single Fusion ticket headed by Low for Mayor. Tammany, however, produced a surprising and clever nominee, Edward M. Shepard, whose acceptance shocked many reformers.³⁶ The reformers consistently defined their goals in terms of raising the standards of politics. By nominating Shepard, Tammany appeared to be doing just this. Shepard had been a reformer in Brooklyn before its merger with New York and an opponent of Tammany.

Reformers knew well that even with the danger of splitting the anti-Tammany votes removed, they would have to sway a sizable number of Democrats to win. Shepard, in contrast, made the most of an appeal to party loyalty. He attacked Fusion's claims to nonpartisan status, asserting that Low was a Fusion/Republican candidate. An ability to fend off this attack, along with the need to shake working-class, immigrant attachment to Tammany, was going to be crucial to the success of the Fusion ticket. The League's participation in the campaign proved an important factor in the coalition's ability to do both. It helped to define the issues raised in this election as "above" party politics and reform as a "nonpartisan cause." The League also effectively expressed reform's promise of social reform, a key element in its effort to attract working-class and foreign-born voters over to reform.³⁷

The League's independent campaign for the Fusion ticket began in March 1901 when it participated in a "Women's Mass-Meeting to protest against protected vice" at Carnegie Hall. The women at this meeting were from a variety of social and religious clubs and organizations. They issued a set of resolutions which the League then used as "the basis of an agitation."³⁸ The League aimed in this campaign to be a practical as well as symbolic force for reform. Following the Women's Mass-Meeting and before the ticket was announced, the League addressed as many meetings of other women's groups as possible and generally publicized reform. As Maud Nathan, perhaps the League's most accomplished public speaker, recalled: "I spoke to small groups in fashionable parlors. I spoke at mass meetings at Carnegie Hall and Durland's Riding Academy. I was heckled by huge audiences at Cooper Union. I mounted soap boxes at street corners. I went down to the Russian Jewish quarters on the East Side and spoke to groups of women who had confidence in me as a co-religionist."³⁹ Her speeches on the East Side had to be translated into Yiddish. She reported that Minnie Rosen, a young woman who had worked in the sweatshops and whom Nathan knew from her work with the Consumers'

League, did the job. It should be emphasized, moreover, that Rosen was not a Municipal League member. Rosen was determined and skillful—she later became a labor organizer. But she was a new immigrant and lacked a social background, let alone one comparable to Nathan's. Nathan was not only affluent but a *fourth* generation American. Her great-grandfather, a Rabbi, attended President Washington's inaugural ceremonies.⁴⁰

The major and most influential project the League undertook once the ticket was announced in 1901 was clearly designed for male as well as female consumption. The League organized the compilation, publication, and distribution of a piece of campaign literature that the Citizens' Union was later to refer to as "one of the strongest individual factors in the success of the Reform Movement" in 1901.⁴¹

Facts for Fathers and Mothers, a sixteen-page pamphlet significantly addressed first to fathers, that is, voters, proposed that Tammany's tolerance of police corruption was threatening the safety of the city's youth both rich and poor, but especially poor. It offered graphic stories of the sale of young girls and the exploits of young boys drawn from the writings of respectable and prominent figures such as District Attorney Bishop Potter, sitting judges in the City of New York, and members of the University Settlement Society and Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Most read like sordid tales laced with moralizing commentary. The statement by the district attorney regarding the operation of the "cadet system" in the city was designed to shake up parents, especially immigrant working-class parents. It told of the various methods used by young men—including marriage and the pretext of employment as a domestic servant or of a date—to lure women to "disorderly houses" where they were raped, held against their will, and forced into prostitution. It also told of how the police were "constrained" from helping the victims because of "political influence." Patrolmen "dare not interfere with the perpetration of this awful wrong because of the fear of the severest discipline."⁴² Another part of the pamphlet, District Attorney Philbin's warning, appealed to better-off parents who assumed their children to be immune from dangers regularly encountered by working-class, immigrant children.⁴³

While moral outrage at the problem of "protected vice" informs every sentence in *Facts*, the League was concerned that its "agitation" might appear to be a puritanical anti-vice crusade and repel rather than attract immigrant, working-class voters. Lowell wrote to Everet P. Wheeler at the Citizens' Union in April 1901, "We are taking up the vice question only in its connection to good government in this city," continuing that she *feared*, however, that "too much solicitude" on the issue might "inaugurate a *real* anti-vice crusade"⁴⁴—that is, one driven by religious rather than political motivation—that would cloud the issue of good government and civil

service reform with that of the legal enforcement of morality. Keenly aware of how dearly the enforcement of puritanical liquor laws cost Mayor Strong, the pamphlet carefully indicated that reformers did not wish to impose puritanical laws on the public.

It is likely that the pamphlet focused on "white slavery"⁴⁵ for two reasons. First, the League was determined to distinguish its voice from that of the moral crusaders who also favored reform. The League differentiated between favoring an end to police protection of the business of prostitution and the introduction of puritanical legislation. The opening paragraph reads in part:

The question presented is not the "suppression of vice." The question is not whether the vicious can be made virtuous by law. . . . The fight is against those who use their control of the city government to make procurers of our young men and harlots of our young women.⁴⁶

Second and most important, the issue of "white slavery" was a real and present fear in the immigrant communities. It was certainly the subject of concern among Jews of the Lower East Side—a fact well known to reformers of the Settlement Houses, including Lillian Wald and Mary Simkhovitch, who were also at this time members of the League's campaign committee.⁴⁷ Tammany men were, moreover, obviously associated with Jewish prostitution. A brothel at 102 Allen Street, for example, was in 1900 controlled by (Jewish) men with a well-known Tammany connection. It was owned by Max Engel, brother of Martin Engel, "the omnipotent political boss of the local eighth ward in the Tammany Hall democratic empire."⁴⁸ The League hoped the pamphlet would sway others, of course, but seems to have targeted this community. *Facts* features cases concerning Jewish victims (abducted and abused girls and boys turned into "cadets" or "procurers") and Jewish villains aided by corrupt policemen. Perhaps it concentrated its efforts on this community because Nathan and the settlement workers in the League both knew and commanded resources in this area and expected to have some influence with these voters.

The League's pamphlet was also a key element in the Citizens' Union's strategy to appeal to the numerically significant Eastern European Jews on the Lower East Side. Judge William Travers Jerome, the candidate for district attorney and Citizens' Union's "star campaigner on the Lower East Side," declared to his audience, "I do not believe you can stop prostitution. But if there is one ounce of manhood in you, however, you will stop the police growing rich off the shame of fallen women. Is the honor of Jewish women sold for brass checks nothing to you?"⁴⁹ Judge Jerome is a featured "witness" in *Facts*. But the reform coalition evidently considered *Facts* to have a wider appeal as well. An extraordinary order for 900,000 copies was

placed by the League ten days before election.⁵⁰ This number exceeds the total number of votes cast in the election. One newspaper reported that this was the largest printing order of its kind for delivery within six days ever issued in the city. "It was necessary," the paper further reports, "to communicate with 38 different papermills, 12 envelope factories, and 16 printing offices before the order could be given out."⁵¹ Clearly *Facts* was thought to be a valuable campaign document.

The business details of the publication of the pamphlet were managed by the League through a special committee of five headed by Mrs. William H. Schieffelin. The pamphlet was published by the City Club and enjoyed a wide distribution. It was mailed to every registered voter in the boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx. In addition, as one contemporary observer noted, clergymen distributed thousands to their congregations, and the Working Girl's Clubs, the Teacher's College, and the Nurse's and University Settlements "aided the good work." Even "fashionable milliners," he added, "are reported to have helped the cause by enclosing a pamphlet in every package and handbox they sent out to their customers."⁵² In the newly incorporated borough of Brooklyn the Women's Health Protective Association and other anti-Tammany groups distributed *Facts* widely, sometimes "from carts." In addition, "100,000 copies of a German newspaper containing the contents of the pamphlet were circulated by messenger boys in the German districts in Manhattan."⁵³ It is likely that *Facts* was distributed in German neighborhoods not by women but by newsboys because popular opposition to political activity by women was particularly strong among German Protestants. The approximately \$20,000 needed for printing and distribution came from both the League and other sources (City Club, Citizens' Union, WHPA of Brooklyn). The League's contribution was raised chiefly through appeals for donations printed in newspapers, announced at political meetings, and made by clergymen in the course of their services.

On election eve Seth Low said:

The women's movement is one of the strongest factors in convincing the people of the merit of the platform on which I stand. It is a splendid movement, and is going to assist the cause to the greatest extent. The pamphlet *Facts for Fathers and Mothers* is a most powerful campaign document.⁵⁴

That the moral force of womanhood behind the candidate was thought to be a great asset is also apparent in a cartoon circulated by reformers during the campaign. A giant woman wrapped in a banner announcing her as the "Motherhood of New York" is depicted with a broom sweeping "Tammany Hall," "disorderly houses," "blackmailing police," "the spoils sys-

tem," and "corrupt ward men" off the island of Manhattan along with dust and dirt. The caption reads, "Now for a Clean Sweep."⁵⁵

In the election of 1901, Low received 296,813 votes to Shepard's 265,177. In the end, as commentators have suggested, the moral issue of protected vice, and not the appeals for "good government" or expert administration, provided the margin of victory. Impassioned pleas to voters to save their sons and daughters from Tammany's contamination persuaded many New York voters. Low's biographer reports that the victory was made possible because Democrats, especially on the Jewish Lower East Side, went for Fusion. *The New York Times* estimated, he notes, that over 43,000 Democrats voted against Tammany, and he adds that it is fair to say that the election turned on the issue of protected vice.⁵⁶ Two authors, one writing in 1917, the other in 1982, agree that the issue of protected vice played a significant role in the success of the Low campaign. In 1917 an anti-Tammany tract observed that in 1901 the "flagrant immorality under which young girls of the tenderest age were often decoyed into lives of shame [made a] deep impression upon the public mind, especially in the densely populous East Side of New York City."⁵⁷ In 1982 a scholar observed that the Citizens' Union coalition used the anti-prostitution issue to "eke out" a narrow victory.⁵⁸

These authors recognized the critical role played by anti-protected vice rhetoric in the 1901 campaign. Only the polemical 1917 work, however, noted that the League's widely circulated *Facts for Fathers and Mothers* was the centerpiece of the campaign to press this issue with the voters. Unlike more recent scholarly studies, however, contemporary feminist Harriot Stanton Blatch did not overlook the importance of women's efforts to reform's electoral victory. Blatch stated that Low's victory demonstrated "how strong woman's power really was when aroused."⁵⁹

A long account of the League's campaign efforts in 1901 was read at a 1902 National Suffrage Convention in Washington, D.C., though not by a League member.⁶⁰ The League itself, it must be stressed, continued not to take an official stand on suffrage. This was a strategic political decision. Individual League members were outspoken supporters. The League took no position as an organization in order to protect its stature as a "disinterested advocate of the public good." Members were eager not to appear to be demanding anything for themselves in return for their support of reform. They were also concerned not to provoke opponents of suffrage and possibly cost reform votes.

With the reform victory in 1901 the League expanded, setting up branches, or district organizations, in Manhattan and Brooklyn Heights and charging membership fees. It also began publishing a monthly newsletter, *The Woman's Municipal League Bulletin*. Largely due to the

formation of the district organizations, between 1901 and 1903 the League's membership grew from under 30 to over 250. And, due to the appearance of the *Bulletin*, we know more about its activities. We know, for example, that during this period its members began monitoring the performance of city departments, conducting social investigative work, and testifying in Albany on legislative matters. Committees were set up to study various problems and make recommendations to the new administration. Issues that commanded attention included the expansion of parks, the condition of public schools and tenement houses, public health and sanitation, the treatment of female offenders in prisons and patients in asylums, the installation of ice water fountains in public places, and controls on billboard advertising.⁶¹ An investigation of employment agencies carried out in cooperation with the College Settlement Association was set in motion in 1902 and attracted Margaret Dreier to the League.⁶² The investigators documented that the agencies were often fronts for pimps and that unsuspecting new immigrant and southern black girls and women seeking (chiefly domestic) employment were routinely victimized. Dreier formed a League "Legislative Committee" and, along with other League members and male allies, drew up model regulatory legislation which included calling for the establishment of a State Commissioner of Licenses. She also testified in Albany. The bill passed in 1904.⁶³ Dreier's work on this issue has been credited with directing "her heretofore unfocused interests into a specific concern for women workers."⁶⁴ It was at this time that she became a member of the executive board of the newly formed New York branch of the Women's Trade Union League, an organization of which she became national president in 1907.

The League's expansion clearly indicates that League women did not consider women's influence in municipal affairs to be a temporary necessity aimed at putting good men in office. Rather, the expansion represents its members' efforts to secure for women a continuing role in municipal reform efforts, that is, a permanent place on the public, nonpartisan municipal landscape. It indicates League women's interest in sustaining a realm of nonpartisan activism in anticipation of its ability to open up a promising route to women's influence in public affairs. The language of the revised constitution of 1902 confirms this. It adds "to promote among women an intelligent interest in municipal affairs" to the earlier explicit goal of securing "good government."

The League's expansion did not, however, include involving working-class women in League activities. The League wanted to improve working conditions and protect poorer "sisters," even educate them in the value of reform and evils of Tammany,⁶⁵ but not include them in positions of moral leadership. This role affluent and educated women reserved for them-

ves. One contemporary admirer of the League reported in *The Woman's Journal* that the 1901 campaign was "an opportunity for the women of education and means to come to the rescue of their less fortunate sisters in the slums and crowded tenements of the great city."⁶⁶

Expanded Participation in the Low Reelection Campaign of 1903

In 1903, the League's immediate purpose was to keep Low in office. This was going to be difficult as the Tammany candidate was a strong challenger. Low's victory in 1901 had marked the end of Richard Crocker's career as Tammany Boss. The new boss, Charles F. Murphy, curtailed flagrant disregard for honesty and morality and respected the call for expertise in fields such as public health, education, and finance. Tammany's candidate, David McClellan, reflected these new principles; he was a college graduate and a widely respected five-term United States congressman.⁶⁷

Now able to draw on considerably more resources than in previous years, the League became extensively involved in this campaign. This was despite the fact that Lowell fell ill in 1902 and had to reduce her activities (she died in 1905). An established part of the reform movement, the League set up a thirty-one-member campaign committee to coordinate the efforts of its members in districts all over the city. This committee included Margaret Chanler, Maud Nathan, Lillian Wald, Mary Simkhovitch, philanthropist Grace Dodge, and Bessie Van Vorst (who, along with Marie Van Vorst, investigated working conditions by taking positions for a time).⁶⁸ The League also maintained a central campaign office and several district offices. Staffed by women who spoke the languages of the immigrant neighborhoods and worked long hours daily, these campaign headquarters opened sometimes weeks before election. League publications boast that great effort was expended to find speakers of every language relevant to the neighborhood to staff the offices. At these offices the women of the League prepared literature for distribution, instructed voters on how to register, supervised paid staff, and generally publicized and promoted the cause. The *Bulletin* reports, for example, that branch

Campaign Headquarters were opened at 72 Avenue C on Saturday, October 24th, and remained open from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M. daily until Monday, November 2nd, in charge [*sic*] of Dr. Jane Berry and Mrs. Wendell. A Woman was employed to be present from opening to the closing, to distribute campaign literature. She spoke Yiddish, German, Hungarian and Slav. Meetings were held every evening with addresses in English, German and Yiddish, the average attendance being 75.⁶⁹

Reports submitted from the Bleeker Street District (where Italian speakers were present) and the Heights and Riverside Districts (where fund-raising efforts proved fruitful) are also included in this *Bulletin*. Members further report that the League was quoted daily (through the month preceding election) in the New York papers, including many foreign-language journals, and that Mark Twain was among its well-wishers.⁷⁰ No project comparable to the compilation of a lengthy pamphlet like *Facts* was undertaken. Instead, members relied on the Citizens' Union for literature. League members did, however, produce and distribute two special notices; one promoted registration, the other extolled the good work of the Health Department under Fusion.⁷¹ In addition, the League covered its own expenses and contributed \$7,445 to the Citizens' Union campaign fund.⁷²

The most vivid illustration of the development in the League's involvement is the role it assumed in a major Fusion political rally held at Carnegie Hall in October. The League did not simply sponsor this mass-meeting but ran it. Margaret Chanler, now president of the League, *presided*, and both she and Maud Nathan (who was now also the President of the Consumers' League of New York)⁷³ were featured speakers. A few days before the October 27th event, *The New York Herald* carried the headline, "Women to Hold Meeting for Men."⁷⁴

The League's work for Fusion was not without incident. At one point, candidate for district attorney Jerome told the League something to the effect that women do not belong in political campaigns.⁷⁵ When he appeared at the League-sponsored Fusion rally, Chanler admonished him, "We didn't like what you said to us." Jerome then went on to explain that he had been misunderstood. He meant to say that "When a campaign is purely one of politics a woman is out of place in it. But this campaign is one of decency and morals and woman's place is decidedly in it."⁷⁶ Jerome was applauded, papers reported the repair of their relationship, and the League conducted campaign work.

The availability of more resources than it had had in previous election campaigns cannot alone account for this great increase in the extent, intensity, variety, and visibility of the League's campaign activities in 1903. The circumstances of Low's renomination must also be taken into consideration.

Some members of the reform coalition had vigorously opposed Low's renomination on what a contemporary called "the personal issue"—that is, the man's personality. Low's personality "is not very engaging," an admirer noted, mocking those who would take this as a measure of the mayor's fitness for office. He continued: "Mr. Low has many respectable qualities, but these never are amiable. 'Did you ever see him smile?' said a politician who was trying to account for his instinctive dislike for the

mayor. . . .⁷⁷ Low was simply not an *exciting* candidate. In addition, public indignation at the opposition's corruption could no longer be counted on to arouse usually apathetic—but numerically significant—independent voters. As a result, reform strategists sought to arouse interest in reelecting the reform ticket by exploiting the moral issues that had served them so well in 1901. To do this they turned to the women in the movement. R. Fulton Cutting of the Citizens' Union exclaimed at a public meeting held at the City Club on June 4, 1903:

The situation of the present campaign is quite different from any hitherto experienced. Heretofore popular indignation against existing conditions has carried us to victory. But we have had now an era of good government, the best the city has ever had, and in times of prosperity the zeal of the ordinary man flags . . . We look to women to arouse these people from this apathy and to bring them to the polls. We need the women to throw the sentiment, the moral element, into the campaign.⁷⁸

Male reformers looked to the women for these purposes for specific reasons. First, male reformers believed that moral rhetoric would have great weight coming from women. In addition, women pressing the moral issues reduced the risk that the candidate himself and male leaders might appear effeminate in the eyes of voters. Partisan political participation was at the time a sort of barometer of manhood, and "party politicians often spoke of reformers—those men outside of the party—in terms that questioned the reformers' masculinity. . . . [they] commented approvingly on candidates who waged manly campaigns . . . and disparaged nonpartisan reformers as effeminate."⁷⁹ In addition, Cutting's call to women to "throw the sentiment into the campaign" was surely as much an effort to define for women the boundaries of their participation as it was an admission that reformers needed women to articulate their goals and agitate effectively. But mostly they looked to the women because the women's efforts had been effective in 1901.

Maud Nathan's speech at a Carnegie Hall mass-meeting is a good example of the gendered nature of Fusion campaign rhetoric in 1903. The hall was decorated with multiple copies of the Citizens' Union poster "Our City"—a Statue of Liberty-like portrait representing Womanhood and meant to symbolize the fine and honorable condition of the city under Low. Nathan was the only woman on the program and specifically represented the Municipal League. The papers reported that she created "a sensation"⁸⁰ with her version of the Stockton story, "The Lady and the Tiger." She compared the predicament of its main character, a gladiator in an arena who must open one of two doors knowing that a lady waits behind one

and a tiger behind the other but not knowing which is which, to the choice before New York City voters in 1903. One paper reported that Nathan prompted thunderous applause with the following question:

The emblem of the Citizens' Union is Woman typifying honor, virtue and peace. The emblem of Tammany Hall is equally appropriate—a tiger, waiting to sink its fangs into the people. I ask you gladiators which you are going to choose, the lady or the tiger?⁸¹

Other speakers at this highly publicized and much talked about meeting included such prominent men as R. Fulton Cutting, Jacob Riis, William Travers Jerome, and Cyrus Sulzberger. But Maud Nathan made headlines: "The Lady and the Tiger Play Important Role in Election"; "Lady or Tiger? Women's Question: Municipal League Asks Whether Fusion Emblem or That of Tammany Shall be Victor"; and "Lady or Tiger: That is Issue of Present Campaign, Declares Mrs. Nathan."⁸²

Reform lost in 1903 to the Tammany candidate, David McClellan. Among the factors that contributed to this turnaround was the considerably cleaned up image of a new Tammany that had been carefully constructed by the new boss, Charles F. Murphy. In a short time Murphy had managed to use Tammany's resources to impose new principles that enabled it not only to win in 1903 but to dominate the city's mayoral politics for the next thirty years. Also important, however, was Tammany's success in discrediting the notion of "nonpartisan expert administration" as covertly classist. There is far more than a kernel of truth in the following oversimplified argument:

Mr. Low is a Republican, who believes that a few eminently respectable gentlemen, divinely commissioned, are better able than the people themselves to govern them. Government of the masses by the classes . . . that is what Mayor Low typifies. He means well no doubt, but he is the opposite of a Democrat—an aristocrat.⁸³

Reformers did not merely oppose the corrupt politician and his machine, wishing simply to replace bad men with good, but aimed to change the occupational and class origins of decision makers.⁸⁴ The women of the League were no exception. As early as 1898 Lowell remarked that "It is the belief of the League that the business of the city [should be] put into the hands of experts [and that the work of the city departments] be confined to persons fitted by character and education to perform it."⁸⁵ Low's record of appointments provided ample evidence with which Tammany Democrats could attack his administration on this score. For example, one-third of Low's forty-six-member board of education were listed in the social register. And headlines such as "Fashion Asks the Vote of Poverty: In Stunning Tailor Made Mrs. Nathan Goes Campaigning As Seth Low

Worker" probably did not help matters. This particular headline, as a matter of fact, upstaged the support of a popular labor organizer. The subheading reads, "Minnie Rosen, Leader of Strikes, Assists Ably in Proselytizing."⁸⁷

The defeat of reform in 1903 at the hands of male voters likely made suffrage appear in a new, more urgent light to some League members (though I have not been able to find any explicit discussion of such a matter in League documents). Mary Ritter Beard makes precisely this point in her 1915 discussion of women's involvement in municipal reform efforts:

[Women] have had to enter political contests in order to place in office the kind of officials who had the wider vision. . . . Sometimes . . . women have campaigned . . . and the ticket has been defeated. . . . Women who have experienced these political reverses have often become ardent suffragists, because . . . having been unable to influence the votes of men, they have acquired the desire and determination to cast the necessary ballots themselves.⁸⁸

Alice Stone Blackwell, writing in *The Woman's Journal*, used the defeat to suggest how women's votes can make a difference. She stated confidently that Tammany would not have been returned to power had women voted.⁸⁹

Though demoralized after Low's defeat in 1903, the League did not disband. Through the coordinated efforts of the district organizations and central office, League members continued on a "permanent and uninterrupted basis" to work on the "city problems" that had been the focus of their energies between the campaigns of 1901 and 1903.

Partnership in the Jerome Campaign of 1905

In the 1905 election the Citizens' Union did not name a mayoral candidate. Democrat McClellan had run a respectable administration during 1904-1905, displaying a measure of independence from Tammany Boss Murphy. The Republicans put forward a little-known candidate with virtually no chance to win, William Mills Ivins.⁹⁰ The 1901 Fusion nominee for district attorney, William Travers Jerome, had been returned to office in 1903 despite Low's defeat, however, and was seeking reelection in 1905. Unable to secure a nomination through either the Democratic or Republican party, Jerome organized a petition drive and procured an independent nomination, establishing himself as a true nonpartisan candidate. The Citizens' Union endorsed his candidacy. But as Nathan recalled, "there was widespread prophecy that Jerome could not possibly be elected."⁹¹ In addition to both party organizations being against him, voting a split ticket was a complicated procedure at the time. Voters could

easily invalidate their ballots by improperly marking it in an effort to vote for the mayoral candidate of one party and yet go with Jerome for district attorney.

Jerome was well liked by the League for his dramatic, highly publicized anti-prostitution raids and vigilance in attacking corruption. His independent candidacy aroused considerable enthusiasm among League women for planning a campaign. The League set up an eighteen-member campaign committee. This time, however, there is no evidence of any district organizations being involved in the effort. Instead, it seems that these eighteen women formed the core of the League's campaign workers. Again its members included well-known women such as Maud Nathan, Lillian Wald, Mary Simkhovitch, and Margaret Chanler. New members this year included Margaret Dreier and social worker Frances Kellor.⁹²

The League's campaign committee was highly organized; five committees are listed in the newsletter—finance, press, distribution of literature, speakers, and ballot instruction. One reporter commented, "It is no longer talk, talk, talk with these women; it is a systematized campaign, mapped out and carried out with the brains, intelligence, and keen forethought of a political party."⁹³ And the League made major contributions to the Jerome victory. On their own initiative members produced and distributed a mass of campaign literature. Nathan devised a program to educate men on how to split a ticket. The League also organized and supervised a good deal of the leg work involved in displaying posters all over the city. In addition, it provided many groups with speakers. The first two projects mentioned were, however, most significant.

The literature produced by the League included an eight-page special issue of the *Bulletin* carrying the headline: "Why New York Women Stand Back of Jerome." This *Campaign Bulletin* functioned as a pamphlet much as *Facts for Fathers and Mothers* had in 1901. It featured graphic descriptions of immoral behavior thwarted by the tireless efforts of the district attorney. Advance copies were sent to the press and received generous attention. Three hundred thousand English copies were distributed (in Sunday papers, on the street, at rallies for all mayoral candidates, and through newsstands at one cent a copy). The additional 50,000 German copies, however, were not prepared or distributed by the League but by the Jerome organization. Other material supplied by the League included leaflets with such titles as "Jerome's Work," "Lest We Forget," and "A Last Appeal," all of which were produced in four languages. The League also arranged for the distribution of a Yiddish copy of a Rabbi's endorsement of Jerome.

The League devoted considerable energy to Nathan's idea to give instruction to voters on how to split the ticket. Nathan composed and distributed a letter to employers asking for permission to station volun-

teers ready to instruct employees during breaks and lunch on how to mark ballots.⁹⁴ She carefully indicated that no politics would be discussed and no specific candidates promoted. Fifteen department stores allowed the volunteers on the premises. Other businesses allowed written literature to be made available to employees. Interestingly, while the whole idea was Nathan's and the League coordinated the action, men usually staffed the booths. "The men who acted as instructors were from the Citizens' Union and went at the direction of Mrs. Nathan."⁹⁵ But when the Citizens' Union could not keep up with the demand for instructors, the League provided some.⁹⁶ In addition, the League supplied 20,000 copies of the leaflet "How to Split the Ticket," which was translated into four languages and distributed at rallies. This strategy proved effective and important. Jerome's victory was considered "remarkable, since every vote he received reflected either a split ticket or an abstention from the mayoral contest."⁹⁷

During the campaign the League successfully secured the cooperation of the Jerome organization. One reporter, for example, noted that the fact that League members "have been, are and will be a mighty factor in the re-election of William T. Jerome as District Attorney is conceded not only in words, but by practical cooperation by the men who have been running Mr. Jerome's campaign."⁹⁸ After Jerome's victory the League was concerned with receiving not only thanks but clear recognition of women's demonstrated value as partners in the campaign effort. This is evident from Nathan's actions and words at a banquet to celebrate the Jerome victory given by the chairman of the Citizens' Union.

The Citizens' Union invited the officers of the League to attend the banquet. Nathan asked to read her cousin Emma Lazarus' poem "Victory" to the gathering and was scheduled to do so. There were more than three hundred men present, as the Citizens' Union had invited not only its officers but all members who had actively participated in the campaign. Nathan was seated next to Jerome but became increasingly irritated while listening to a succession of male speakers. She recalled, "I grew more and more amazed and more impatient. There had been no mention made of the Woman's Municipal League."⁹⁹ When Nathan rose to read the poem she chose first to speak extemporaneously about what the women workers in the campaign had done. Before reading the poem, she stated pointedly:

Heretofore we have been permitted in the galleries of your banquet halls to listen while men orators flattered the ladies and glorified themselves. But you will observe gentlemen, that tonight we are dining with you.¹⁰⁰

Nathan was applauded and asked to continue. She added a joke. "I could have made a better speech but . . . had no trouser pockets into which to

plunge my hands." This brought a wave of laughter as every man who had spoken had kept his hands in his pockets ("probably groping there for ideas," she added when recalling the event in 1933).¹⁰¹ Nathan's speech was delivered "with captivating eloquence," and the whole event was reported by *The World* under the headline, "Woman Captures Jerome Jubilee."¹⁰² Attention to her words, however, reveals that she meant to point out women's capture of an indisputable place in reform politics. Her words suggest that League women saw the boundaries both of woman's sphere and of politics to be expanding, changing, intersecting. In the newly created space of nonpartisan political affairs, men and women were to be full partners and recognized as such. The League's account of the campaign in the *Bulletin*, for example, boasted that not only did its campaign workers feel "the pleasure of comradeship and enthusiasm of their own organization . . . [but also gained] the hearty recognition of their work by the members of Mr. Jerome's force and the Citizens' Union."¹⁰³

In 1905 League campaign activities again gained the attention of the supporters of suffrage, who cited them as proof of women's fitness for the vote. A *New York Herald* reporter argued that the work of the League in the Jerome campaign for district attorney was good evidence of the absurdity of Grover Cleveland's opposition to suffrage.¹⁰⁴

A Different Pattern of Activity After 1905

The League remained active and maintained a sizable membership after 1905.¹⁰⁵ But the focus of League activities changed during these years. Investigative work on the condition of streets, schools, tenements, parks, prisons, hospitals, and food markets had originally impressed the leadership of the League as a means to develop among women an interest in municipal affairs and the skills necessary to be influential. It provided a means of collecting "facts" which would persuade the volunteers and voters of the rationality and necessity of electing the reform ticket. The investigative work thus *supported* the campaign efforts. But in the years following 1905, rather than look to candidates to usher in coordinated efforts to ameliorate all problems, the League turned its full attention to individual problems. Its focus on this route to influence for women is evident in the weekly newsletter *Women and the City's Work*, which the League began publishing in 1915, the year of a failed New York State referendum on woman suffrage. The newsletter reports on the efforts of numerous committees (for example, Streets, Foods & Markets, Legislation, and Ice Water Fountains) but only occasionally mentions or endorses candidates for government office (and always because they support legislation favored by the League).¹⁰⁶

The League successfully transformed itself from a unique political club into one of the many highly organized groups of social policy "experts" and advocates active at the time. This change came at a time when Tammany was not only dominant but actually receptive to recommendations put forward by such groups.¹⁰⁷ The change did not represent the dissolution of the League but a considered judgment as to the best way to promote desired reforms. The work of the League's Committee on Streets during the years 1909-1915 is a good example of the League's new strategy. The League pressured the city department, the sanitation workers themselves, and the public to keep city streets adequately clean. The League employed a woman to investigate the conduct of the foremen, drivers, and sweepers, encouraged League members to inspect their districts and report problems, and distributed flyers to residents. On the basis of the findings of the investigations, moreover, League district organizations awarded medals at a public ceremony to the men of the Street Cleaning Department who did the best work.¹⁰⁸

The shift in the focus of the League's work had consequences for its membership. The campaign committee of the League had functioned as the political nucleus of women's greater reform efforts. It involved leaders of such women's organizations such as the Consumers' League, the Henry Street Nurse's Settlement, and the Health Protective Association; women members of the Social Reform Club (which was composed of both women and men); leaders of the women's auxiliaries to the Civil Service Reform Association and University Settlement Society; leading philanthropists; and the wives of prominent men. Without a campaign committee the League had nothing in particular to hold women like Nathan and Wald. They both commanded great resources for effective social investigative and lobbying efforts as, respectively, president of the Consumers' League and head worker of the Henry Street Nurse's Settlement as well as through their considerable personal connections. They also came increasingly to view suffrage as the most promising route to change and became very active in that campaign. League members after 1905 were mostly women for whom the League was their primary association.

It is interesting to note that while the League caught the attention of supporters of suffrage as early as 1902, during the first New York State referendum campaign (1915) a prominent opponent interpreted the League's activities to his advantage. The head of the New York State Association for Manhood Suffrage, one-time League ally Everet P. Wheeler, cited the League's work as an example of the kind of influence women can exercise without the ballot. In his view, suffrage would taint women's natural purity and thereby rob them of a source of power in public affairs. His references to the League had to be highly selective, however. He did

not mention the campaign work done in 1901, 1903 or 1905. Nor did he refer to the League's more recent work. Instead, he focused on its earlier, more modest efforts.¹⁰⁹

In the years after the Jerome campaign, Nathan, Dreier, and Wald went on to press their specifically feminist as well as general concerns in openly political and partisan ways. Margaret Dreier became the president of the National Women's Trade Union League and an important figure in the National Progressive Party and suffrage movement. Wald became a highly respected political activist and ardent suffragist. Both the national Democratic and Progressive parties sought her endorsement. In 1912, for example, she declined to preside over the National Women's Organization of the Democratic National Committee, despite her support for much of Woodrow Wilson's platform. "As a suffragist," she wired the Committee, "I feel it is illogical to assume even a minor responsibility for a platform that has no suffrage plank."¹¹⁰ After 1912 she joined the legislative committee of the New York State Convention of the National Progressive Party. In 1916 she left the party to support, with Jane Addams, Wilson on the peace issue.¹¹¹ Maud Nathan was invited to be president of the New York State Suffrage Association early on but declined because of her obligations with the Consumers' League. She was, however, the first vice president of the Equal Suffrage League of New York City. "I was glad," she recalled in 1933, "to have the opportunity of coming out boldly and identifying myself with the movement."¹¹² Beginning in 1913, Nathan chaired the Suffrage Committee of the National Progressive Party, overseeing the organization of state committees nationwide. She also went, as delegate, speaker, and interpreter, to conventions of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Margaret Chanler, later Mrs. Richard Aldrich, also became a public advocate of suffrage, "taking up the affirmative" in public debates in the city. It is likely that each of these women's experiences with the limitations of "nonpartisan" activity contributed both to their recognition of the need for women to take up these more explicitly partisan political battles and to their own personal determination to do so.

After the enfranchisement of women, the League was invited to be part of a federation of various civic clubs. This would have involved relocating to the Town Hall where central executive offices were to be housed. But while the League favored this offer, it decided to accept another. In 1923 it chose to merge with the Citizens' Union. A League publication explained that before enfranchisement "it was considered impossible for non-voting women to use the same methods in civic work as those employed by men" even if they had identical goals. Now, however, there was no longer any reason for the two organizations to continue to work as two separate units.¹¹³ This is of course an unsatisfactory explana-

tion because, as we have seen, League women had increasingly used the same methods as men during the period 1894-1905. The independence of its organization had been, moreover, a crucial factor in its members' ability to develop these skills and put them to work in significant ways. I suspect, therefore, that financial distress was an important factor in the decision to merge with the Citizens' Union.¹¹⁴ League papers identify unexpected delays in making the Town Hall space available to them as a factor in its decision to merge with the Citizens' Union. As the League was having other financial difficulties,¹¹⁵ this should be interpreted to mean that maintaining its own offices was a burden.

Conclusion

The League was, during the years 1894 to 1905, an autonomous women's political club. As a separate institution it proved an important source of social and political power for its members, because it provided a "means of allying with male reformers and entering the mainstream of the American political process."¹¹⁶ Its campaign activities during these years offer vivid evidence of effective action by organized women in mainstream electoral politics fifteen to twenty-six years before suffrage. The League's campaign efforts also supply valuable evidence of the early political activities of Margaret Dreier, Lillian Wald, and Maud Nathan, illuminating the development of their political interests as well as skills.

The importance of the work of the Woman's Municipal League in the campaigns of 1894 to 1905 must not, moreover, be overshadowed by the organization's more ordinary later history. The League's efforts to shape the terms of political discussion in these campaigns tell a story about the strategies some women devised to negotiate the political landscape in turn-of-the-century New York City. League members did not conduct a foray into a male "sphere of life." Rather, in their view, they participated in a "movement" to open up new, nonpartisan political space and to assert women's indisputable right to traverse this new territory. League women understood themselves to be engaged in a struggle to redefine the proper business of municipal politics and to adjust the parameters of women's sphere as required by the new times. The women of the League cleverly exploited developments in male politics to gain for women more power in the collective life of the city. The strategy they employed betrays, however, the class limits of these elite women's feminism. The story of the League's electoral activism is thus of enduring interest. It shows up the inadequacy of a separate-spheres framework for analysis of Progressive Era women's activism¹¹⁷ and provides clear and dramatic evidence of women's efforts to shape mainstream political discourse years before suffrage.

NOTES

¹ This is in part due to the obscurity of the extant evidence. Surviving papers of the League are scattered throughout a number of collections in several libraries (details appear in the notes). However, accounts of some of the electoral activities of the League can be found quite easily in the published papers of Dreier and Lowell as well as in Nathan's autobiographical work. See "The Woman's Municipal League" in William Stewart, *The Philanthropic Work of Josephine Shaw Lowell* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 416-445; "Regulation of Employment Agencies," in Mary E. Dreier, *Margaret Dreier Robins: Her Life, Letters, and Work* (New York: Island Press, 1950), 18-23; and "Campaigning for Civic Reform" in Maud Nathan, *Once Upon A Time and Today* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933), 166-174. The story has remained hidden, it seems likely, because scholars have failed to pursue available leads. David Hammack, for example, observes that the women of the social reform and charities organizations of the period "constituted a notable untapped resource, [that] only political movements . . . allied with the charities and churches could make use of" (*Power and Society: Greater New York at the Turn of the Century* [New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1982], 143), but does not proceed to explore how precisely such a movement—the municipal reform movement—actually did involve women. Instead, he takes at face value men's club records that speak of women in the campaign as assistants (see n. 53, 347). Richard Skolnik makes the same error in *The Crystallization of Reform in New York City 1890-1917* (Yale Ph.D. dissertation 1961, University Microfilms 1971) even though he found records of the existence of the Woman's Municipal League (see 166, 167, 282, 322, 325). Skolnik grossly underestimates the scope of the League's activities and influence. Another study of the Progressive Era, Paul Boyer's study of reformers' efforts to exert a moral influence on the "urban masses," includes an account of League founder Josephine Lowell's "career" but fails to follow her from the Charities Organization to the Municipal League (*Urban Masses and Moral Order in America 1820-1920* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978]). Richard McCormick even asserts that "nonelectoral methods were the only possible avenues of political expression for all women" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (emphasis in original). See *The Party Period and Public Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 274.

Some feminist scholars have noted the work of the League. Ellen Carol DuBois reports that Lowell formed the Municipal League, that "women were conspicuous in the reform campaigns of Seth Low," and that Harriot Stanton Blatch supported Low for mayor in 1901. See her "Working Women, Class Relations, and Suffrage Militance: Harriot Stanton Blatch and the New York Suffrage Movement, 1894-1909," *Journal of American History* 74 (1987): 34-58. Other brief references appear in Marilyn Gittell and Teresa Shtob, "Changing Women's Roles in Political Voluntarism and Reform of the City," *Signs* 5 (Supplement 1980): S67-S78, and in Nancy Schrom Dye, *As Equals and As Sisters* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980), 36-37.

² Jane Addams reports that the first campaign was a (successful) push to elect an honest man to the city council to counter-balance the alderman's influence. In the following year, Hull House actively opposed the reelection of the alderman himself. But the hostility which greeted Hull House's "idealistic appeal" to voters surprised members. In addition, Addams continues, the campaign was of no real

use against an official whose popularity at the polls was rooted in voters' indebtedness to him for jobs. In the third campaign, Hull House exploited moral issues and "made a serious impression on his majority" but did not beat the alderman. See *Twenty Years at Hull House* (New York: MacMillan, 1910), 315-323.

³ The spheres may, of course, also expand and contract in different ways and at different times for women of different classes or races.

⁴ This rhetoric appears in classic form in Lincoln Steffens' 1904 work, *The Shame of the Cities* (New York: Peter Smith, 1948).

⁵ See Samuel P. Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," in *Progressivism: The Critical Issues*, ed. David M. Kennedy (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 87-108. The complexity of the political struggles of the day is well documented by Hammack (*Power and Society*) and by Skolnik (*The Crystallization of Reform*). For discussion of the origins of these struggles in the antebellum period see Amy Bridges, *A City in the Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁶ For a good short discussion of machine politics see Martin Schefter's "Machine-Reform Dialectic" in *Political Crisis/Fiscal Crisis: The Collapse and Revival of New York City* (New York: Basic Books, 1985). For a discussion of Tammany see Gustavus Myers, *The History of Tammany Hall* (New York: Boni & Liveright, Inc., 1917).

⁷ Hartley Davis, "Tammany Hall, the Most Perfect Political Organization in the World," *Munsey's Magazine* 24 (1900), 61.

⁸ Also see George Washington Plunkitt's, "Honest Graft and Dishonest Graft" in William L. Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1963), 3-6.

⁹ For a discussion of the broad views of reformers of the period see Samuel P. Hays, *The Response to Industrialization: 1885-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 104-109.

¹⁰ Hammack, *Power and Society*, 143.

¹¹ Vigilance League pamphlet, *Our Fight With Tammany* (New York: n.p. 1895), cited in Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order*, 165.

¹² For more information about Parkhurst see Skolnik, *Crystallization of Reform*, 149-155.

¹³ Gerald Kurland, *Seth Low: A Reformer in an Urban and Industrial Age* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971), 146.

¹⁴ Josephine's brother, Robert Gould Shaw, commanded the first black regiment sent into action from the free states during the Civil War. He died in action in 1863.

¹⁵ For more biographical information see Stewart, *Philanthropic Work; "Josephine Shaw Lowell," Notable American Women 1607-1950*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1971), 437-439; *The Woman's Municipal League Bulletin* 4 (May 1906); "Address of Seth Low, Chairman of the Josephine Shaw Lowell Memorial Committee on May 21, 1912," Box 150, Folder "Miscellaneous," Seth Low Papers

(Division of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Butler Library, Columbia University, NY); and the *Dictionary of American Biography*, S.V. "Lowell, Josephine Shaw," Vol. II.

¹⁶ Josephine Shaw Lowell, *Woman's Municipal League Bulletin* 2 (October 1903), 2.

¹⁷ Josephine Shaw Lowell, "The Women's Municipal League of New York City," *Municipal Affairs* 2 (1898), 465. DuBois mistakenly reports that Mary Putnam Jacobi was co-founder of the Women's Municipal League along with Lowell ("Working Women," 45). The League's own publications identify Lowell as the sole founder and I have found no evidence of Jacobi being involved in the Municipal League. Jacobi and Lowell were, however, both founding members of the League for Political Education (a pro-suffrage group), also born in 1894. In addition, Jacobi and Lowell did work together, along with Maud Nathan, in the "earliest days" of the Consumer's League of New York City. See *Life and Letters of Mary Putnam Jacobi*, ed. Ruth Putnam (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), 378-381.

¹⁸ Nathan, *Once Upon A Time*, 106.

¹⁹ This is also what Hammack suggests was the case. "Mrs. Josephine Shaw Lowell, who had led in the creation of the Charity Organization Society, also became one of the Citizens' Union's chief political managers" (*Power and Society*, 143). Hammack notes that significant numbers of women played a part in local politics through social reform groups, but he misses entirely the very existence of the Woman's Municipal League.

²⁰ Skolnik, *The Crystallization of Reform*, 167.

²¹ Maud Nathan was a director of the Hebrew Free School and an active member of the New York section of the National Council of Jewish Women. In 1897 she was invited to read her paper "The Heart of Judaism" at New York's Temple Beth-El in place of the sermon. This was said to have been the first time a woman played such a part in an American Jewish service. See "Maud Nathan," *Notable American Women*, 608-609, and clippings in the Maud Nathan Papers (Schlessinger Library in Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA).

²² Kurland reports that a check of the *City Directory* reveals that "of the 165 founders of the Citizens' Union, 40 were lawyers, 28 businessmen, 24 merchants, 20 professional men, 14 bankers, 11 labor union leaders, 6 manufacturers, 2 were classified as workingmen, 20 were not classified by a profession" (*Seth Low*, 364).

²³ From a reform pamphlet cited by Kurland in *Seth Low*, 92.

²⁴ Note that Low was also the president of the University Settlement Society.

²⁵ Hammack, *Power and Society*, 116.

²⁶ Lillian D. Wald, *Windows on Henry Street* (Boston: Little Brown, 1936), 59-60. Cited in Doris Groshen Daniels, *Always a Sister: The Feminism of Lillian D. Wald* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1989), 53. Daniels maintains that this took place during the 1901 campaign. This cannot be right, since the reformers were successful in 1901 and Wald finishes her anecdote by remarking on how irritating it was to see Tammany supporters celebrating their victory the very next day. Low lost in both 1897 and 1903 but as 1903 was a reelection bid, I think her story makes most sense in the context of the events of 1897.

²⁷ Hammack, *Power and Society*, 116.

²⁸ 1898 Constitution of the Woman's Municipal League, cited by Lowell, "The Woman's Municipal League of New York City" in Stewart, *Philanthropic Work*, 417.

²⁹ "Relation of Women to Good Government," an address to the YWCA (6 February 1899), in Stewart, *Philanthropic Work*, 435-445.

³⁰ Lowell, "Relation of Women," 443.

³¹ Lowell, *Woman's Municipal League Bulletin* 2 (October 1903): 1.

³² See Paula E. Hyman, "Immigrant Women and Consumer Protest: The New York City Kosher Meat Boycott of 1902," *American Jewish History* 70 (1980): 91-105; Dana Frank, "Housewives, Socialists and the Politics of Food: The 1917 New York Cost-of-Living Protests," *Feminist Studies* 11 (Summer 1985): 255-285.

³³ Christine Stansell explores the conflict between laboring and privileged women hinted at here but during an earlier period. Consider the following: "Sympathy for their working-class sisters and a rudimentary perception of the debilities they shared with them did motivate female charity workers and reformers. Ultimately, however, the bonds of womanhood depended on notions of 'true' gender identity based on a particular class experience, and sympathy for the 'virtuous' working-class woman—she who conformed to the ladies' standards—was conferred at the expense of all the 'vicious' who did not. The vision of universal sisterhood elevated bourgeois women and their imitators above misogynist ideology, but left unchallenged—indeed perpetuated—misogynist views of the mass of working-class women" (*City of Women: Sex and Class in New York 1789-1860* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986], 219).

³⁴ Skolnik, *The Crystallization of Reform*, 78.

³⁵ See chapter 29 of Myers' *History of Tammany Hall*, where he discusses the documentation of corruption by the Mazet Committee.

³⁶ See Skolnik, *The Crystallization of Reform*, 257.

³⁷ Richard McCormick, *From Realignment to Reform: Political Change in New York State, 1893-1910* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 123.

³⁸ Lowell to Everet P. Wheeler at the Citizens' Union, 24 April 1901, Shepard-Low 1901 Campaign Scrapbook, Citizens' Union Papers (New York Public Library). The text of the resolutions can be found in the Shepard-Low 1901 Campaign Scrapbook, Citizens' Union Papers.

³⁹ Maud Nathan, *Once Upon A Time*, 168.

⁴⁰ See *Ibid.*, 21-23 and Appendix 1, 2, and 3, and "Maud Nathan," *Notable American Women*, 608-609 for more biographical information on Nathan. Of particular interest, her sister, Annie Nathan Meyer, was a founder of Barnard College and her cousin, Benjamin Nathan Cardozo, became a Supreme Court justice.

⁴¹ *Woman's Municipal League Bulletin* 2 (November 1903): 13.

⁴² *Facts For Fathers and Mothers*, published for the Woman's Municipal League by the City Club of New York (October 1901), 11. This is the same document that Edward Bristow mistakenly refers to as "Facts for New York Parents" in his

Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery 1870-1939 (New York: Schocken Books, 1983) at n. 12, 150, and n. 27, 155-156.

⁴³ Consider the following passage from page 11 of *Facts*: "To the residents of all parts of this city, of whatever social station, it may be said that they cannot rest in any fancied security from the perpetration of such wrongs against members of their own families. The youths engaged in this practice do not wear any badge or sign indicating their horrible vocation, but present the appearance of an ordinary New York man, and seek their victims in the parks and in all other places frequented by the general public."

⁴⁴ Lowell to Wheeler, 24 April 1901, Shepard-Low 1901 Campaign Scrapbook, Citizens' Union Papers.

⁴⁵ For a critical discussion of the reformers' definitions of and concerns about white slavery and prostitution see Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

⁴⁶ *Facts*, 3.

⁴⁷ Wald's Papers (New York Public Library) form a good part of the source material for Bristow's chapters on the United States in his *Prostitution and Prejudice*. Bristow presents compelling evidence for the critical importance of this issue inside the Jewish community at this time. Less than a decade later, moreover, a dramatic vice crusade swept urban America. Prostitution and in particular "white slavery" became the objects of a nationwide hysteria. For a good discussion of the progressive reformers' work in this period see Roy Lubove, "The Progressives and the Prostitute," *The Historian* 24 (May 1962): 308-330.

⁴⁸ Reported by Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, 146. See also Irving Howe, *The World of Our Fathers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 96-98.

⁴⁹ Cited by Hammack, *Power and Society*, 156.

⁵⁰ Clipping No. 1479 (28 October 1901), Committee of Fifteen Papers (New York Public Library). I have not been able to determine how many were already in circulation.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Oswald Garrison Villard, "Women in New York Municipal Campaign," *The Woman's Journal* (8 March 1902): 79.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Clipping, Reel 1, Volume 2, Maud Nathan Papers.

⁵⁶ Kurland, *Seth Low*, 139.

⁵⁷ Myers, *History of Tammany Hall*, 290.

⁵⁸ Hammack, *Power and Society*, 156.

⁵⁹ Cited by DuBois, "Working Women," 45-46.

⁶⁰ A transcription of the speech by Oswald Garrison Villard appears in *The Woman's Journal* of March 1902, 78-79, under the title "Women in New York Municipal Campaign."

⁶¹ Only the last is mentioned by Skolnik in his account of the activities of the Woman's Municipal League during the Low administration (*Crystallization of Reform*, 282).

⁶² See Dreier, *Margaret Dreier Robins*, 18.

⁶³ Margaret D. Dreier, *Bulletin* 2 (June 1904): 1-3. See also Nancy Schrom Dye, *As Equals and As Sisters: feminism, the labor movement and the Women's Trade Union League*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1980), 36-37.

⁶⁴ Dye, *As Equals and As Sisters*, 35-37.

⁶⁵ Clipping "Mothers Appealed To," Scrapbook, Maud Nathan Papers.

⁶⁶ Villard, "Women in New York Municipal Campaign," 79.

⁶⁷ This characterization of the change in Tammany is drawn from Hammack, *Power and Society*, 170-171.

⁶⁸ See Mrs. John Van Vorst and Marie Van Vorst, *The Woman Who Toils, Being The Experience of Two Ladies as Factory Girls* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1903).

⁶⁹ *The Woman's Municipal League Campaign Bulletin* 2 (November 1903): 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷¹ Wald was particularly impressed by the employment of the first school nurse in 1902. She called the appointment "the first municipalized nurse in the country or, so far I know, in the world." See "History and Development of Visiting Nurses," Speech at Teachers' College, 6 February 1913, Wald Papers.

⁷² Treasurer's Report, *Bulletin* 2 (November 1903).

⁷³ Nathan's history of the Consumer's League, *The Story of an Epoch-Making Movement* (1926), was reissued in 1986 (New York: Garland Press).

⁷⁴ Clipping in Scrapbook (October 1903), Maud Nathan Papers.

⁷⁵ I have not been able to find a report of his exact words.

⁷⁶ Clipping, "Jerome Tells Them Their Participation in This Campaign is Warranted," Scrapbook (October 1903), Maud Nathan Papers.

⁷⁷ Steffens, *The Shame of the Cities*, 279-306.

⁷⁸ *Bulletin* 1 (July 1903): 1-2.

⁷⁹ Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics," *American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984): 628.

⁸⁰ Clipping from *The Herald* (Lexington, KY), Scrapbook (October 1903), Maud Nathan Papers.

⁸¹ *New York Herald*, 28 October 1903. Clipping in Scrapbook (October 1903), Maud Nathan Papers.

⁸² Clippings, Scrapbook (October 1903), Maud Nathan Papers. Nathan provides her own account of the event in her *Once Upon A Time*, 171-172. However, she tells the story as if it were part of the campaign in 1905 rather than 1903. She has collapsed the events of 1903 into those of 1905, eliminating any mention of the defeat of mayor Low—though victory of district attorney Jerome—in 1903

⁸³ From *The Journal*, cited in Kurland, *Seth Low*, 192.

⁸⁴ Hays, "The Politics of Reform," 97.

⁸⁵ Lowell in Stewart, *Philanthropic Work*, 97.

⁸⁶ Reported by Skolnik, *The Crystallization of Reform*, 266.

⁸⁷ Clipping, Scrapbook (October 1903), Maud Nathan Papers. Minnie Rosen was a garment worker and organizer with the early International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

⁸⁸ Mary Ritter Beard, *Woman's Work in Municipalities* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1915), 46-47.

⁸⁹ *The Woman's Journal*, 14 November 1903, cited in Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement 1890-1920* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965), 63.

⁹⁰ McCormick suggests this can be explained by a deal made by Republican Boss Odell to trade mayoral votes for assembly ballots. See *From Realignment to Reform*, 207.

⁹¹ Nathan, *Once Upon a Time*, 169.

⁹² See Dreier, *Margaret Dreier Robins*, 20. Kellor later became a leading advocate of the "Americanization" of immigrants. Hays reports that in 1912 she "persuaded the Progressive Party to propose federal action to promote the immigrant's assimilation, education, and advancement; later she prevailed upon a few wealthy backers to finance a Division of Immigrant Education within the federal Bureau of Education." Hays, *The Response to Industrialization*, 103.

⁹³ "Women Tell of Their Work for Jerome," *New York Herald*, 5 November 1905.

⁹⁴ Notices were also sent to the Settlement Houses and settlement workers arranged to instruct voters on splitting the ticket. "Women Tell," *New York Herald*, 5 November 1905. Nathan provides the text of the letter to employers in *Once Upon a Time*, 169-170.

⁹⁵ *Bulletin* 6 (January 1906): 8.

⁹⁶ Nathan, *Once Upon a Time*, 170-171.

⁹⁷ McCormick, *From Realignment to Reform*, 208.

⁹⁸ "Women Tell," *New York Herald*, 5 November 1906.

⁹⁹ Nathan, *Once Upon a Time*, 173.

¹⁰⁰ *The World*, 17 November 1905. Clipping in Scrapbook (November 1905), Maud Nathan Papers.

¹⁰¹ Nathan, *Once Upon a Time*, 174.

¹⁰² *The World*, 17 November 1905. Clipping in Scrapbook, Maud Nathan Papers.

¹⁰³ Helen Arthur, *Bulletin* 6 (January 1906): 9.

¹⁰⁴ The reporter commented as follows: "As if, in refutation to th[e] reply of Mr. Cleveland's to the query, 'Would woman suffrage be unwise?' the women of New York City have risen in a body to down 'bossism' and purify the city government, to protect their homes, their children, the community at large, against the misrule of the 'Tiger. . . .' That the great bulk of women may not be prepared to exercise the suffrage today the leaders in the suffrage movement admit. That they are making great strides toward proving their fitness for the gift of the ballot cannot be gainsaid by the thinking man or woman who has visited and investigated the headquarters and workings of the women who are running what is called 'the educational campaign' [for Jerome]. . . . It might be well for the idol of the Democratic party to ponder the meaning of this woman's uprising. . . ." "Women Tell," *New York Herald*, 5 November 1905. Cleveland's "Would Woman Suffrage Be Unwise?" appeared in *Ladies' Home Journal* 22 (October 1905): 7. See Kraditor, *Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement*, 16-17, for discussion of Cleveland's article.

¹⁰⁵ For example, its letterhead from the period 1910-1912 lists seven officers, fourteen directors and eight district organizations.

¹⁰⁶ While I have found no evidence of a sustained campaign effort undertaken by the League in the years following 1905, Wald and Dreier did use their positions as the heads of the Henry Street Nurse's Settlement and National Women's Trade Union League to bolster candidates from New York City in 1912 and 1913. In 1912 both Wald and Dreier endorsed Henry Moskowitz, a National Progressive Party candidate for Congress from the 12th District. Moskowitz was a founder of the East Side Settlement House movement and investigator of the disastrous fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in 1910. Wald praised his honesty and devotion to the public good; Dreier pointed to concrete gains he had helped labor to attain. He lost. (*Settlement Journal* 8 [1912]: 1-3.) Moskowitz campaign fliers are in the Wald Papers, as is a clipping about Dreier's endorsement from *The Independent Progressive*. In 1913, Wald was active in a Fusion challenge to Tammany, though in her capacity as head of Henry Street and not with the League. See "Women in the Campaign: Miss Wald Tells Why They Are Against Tammany," *The Evening Post*, 3 November 1913.

¹⁰⁷ Wald, for example, found Tammany product Alfred E. Smith to be a political friend in later years. See Daniels, *Always a Sister*, 57.

¹⁰⁸ Woman's Municipal League Papers (New York Historical Society).

¹⁰⁹ See "What Women Have Done Without the Ballot" (1914) and "Suffrage Campaign Address" (30 October 1915), both in Box 8, Folder 8, Wheeler Papers (New York Public Library). Seth Low also opposed suffrage. He feared enlarging "the ignorant vote" and loss of the "unselfish" contribution of women if the franchise were to be extended to women. See Low's letter to Alice Hill Chittenden, President of the New York State Association to Oppose Woman Suffrage, 11 October 1915, Box 128, Seth Low Papers.

¹¹⁰ Western Union Telegram, 10 August 1912. Reel 1, Wald Papers.

¹¹¹ See Daniels, *Always a Sister*, 57.

¹¹² Nathan, *Once Upon A Time*, 176.

¹¹³ "The Proposed Union of the Woman's Municipal League and the Citizens' Union," *Women and the City's Work*, 15 May 1923, Box T-3, Citizens' Union Papers.

¹¹⁴ It was intended to be a true merge. The "Report of the Committee Appointed to Coordinate Activities of the Citizens' Union and Woman's Municipal League" (16 June 1923, Citizens' Union Papers, Box T-3) specifies in detail which committees of the League were to persist and which not, as well as which were to be expanded, etc.

¹¹⁵ In 1914, the League's central office had dismissed paid secretarial help for financial reasons. See "Minutes of Meetings," Woman's Municipal League Papers.

¹¹⁶ Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Hull House in the 1890s: A Community of Women Reformers," *Signs* 10 (1985): 676.

¹¹⁷ See also Nancy F. Cott, "What's in a Name? The Limits of 'Social Feminism'; or, Expanding the Vocabulary of American History," *Journal of American History* 76 (December 1989): 809-829.