

### "At the feet of Gamaliel."

THE topic of the time, all over the world, is without doubt the forthcoming International Congress of Women, which is to be held in London in the coming June. From whence came the inspiration? Indeed, that is easier to tell than whither the issue goeth! The International Idea first originated in the fecund American brain—that fertile source of the world's progress—and it is to Mrs. Cady Stanton that we owe the suggestion, made some fifteen years back, that an international convention of women interested in obtaining the franchise for their sex should be held in Washington, as a peculiarly appropriate method of celebrating the then approaching 40th anniversary of the famous first Woman's Rights Convention, which was held in '48, in Seneca Falls, New York. Received into the mind of Miss Susan B. Anthony, the idea expanded into that of celebrating the 40th anniversary by holding an international meeting of all kinds of women's associations—educational, religious and philanthropic, as well as political—as all these societies undoubtedly owed their existence to the work done by the heroines of Seneca Falls, forty years before.

Passed to the brain of Mrs. May Wright Sewall, the idea added to itself the thought of permanence and extension, and when the time came for the Washington celebration (in 1888), Mrs. Sewall unfolded to her associates a plan providing for triennial gatherings in Council of delegates from women's organizations in the United States, and for a Quinquennial Council to be composed of delegates from the affiliated National associations, in every part of the world. This states-

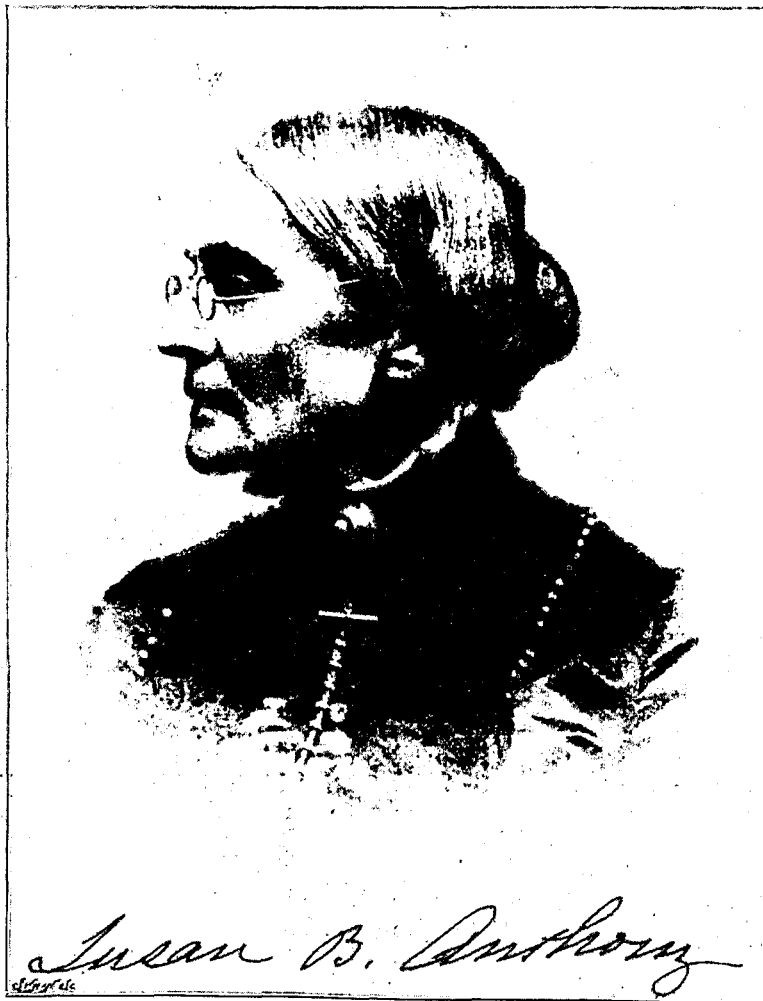
manlike suggestion met with a favourable reception from far-seeing intelligent women—both in the States and abroad—and at the Meeting convened at Washington the seed was sown of the great tree of Federated Womanhood, which in the last decade has sent up sturdy sprouts in many lands, though the ambrosial fruit thereof will be for the gathering of other hands than ours. And yet some fragrant blossoms may redden in our time. Would that I had been at that sowing of the seed, when, after the earnest fashion of their forebears of July, 1776, these Daughters of the

Revolution set about "making the Constitution." We have it on record that before the delegates separated the International Idea was put into concrete shape, officers were chosen, and the recommendation adopted, that the general officers of the National Council of the United States should at once issue an address to the women of all nations, irrespective of race or creed. Time has already verified the faith which led the Constitution Committee to report:

"We are strongly in favour of such a Federation, believing it will incalculably increase the world's sum total of womanly courage, efficiency, and *esprit de corps*, that it will widen our horizon, correct the tendency to

an exaggerated impression of one's own work as compared with that of others, and put the wisdom of the experience of each at the service of all."

Since that memorable meeting of pioneers in Washington, the Quinquennial Congress has been held first in Paris in 1889, and again at Chicago at the time of the World's Fair in 1893, and it was at this Meeting that I had the pleasure of being present as a delegate from the Royal British Nurses' Association, and at which I was honoured, together with Mrs. Fenwick Miller, by the request of the International Council, to initiate a



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