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The Literary Digest for November 22, 1924

FOUR NOTABLE WOMEN VICTORS IN THE ELECTION



MRS. MIRIAM A. FERGUSON
Governor-elect of Texas



MRS. NELLIE T. ROSS
Governor of Wyoming



MRS. FLORENCE E. S. KNAPP
Secretary of State, New York



MRS. MARY T. NORTON
Member of Congress from New Jersey

WOMAN'S "BIGGER DENT IN POLITICS"

THAT THE "DAY OF WOMEN in elective positions has definitely dawned," is the deliberate conclusion of the *Chicago Daily News*, after reviewing the successes of women candidates in the election. Only four years after the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, observes the *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, "woman has demonstrated that she will have her share of all the offices, and will not be content with less than her full responsibility in serving the public." Or, in the *Milwaukee Journal's* briefer phrase, "women have made a bigger dent in politics." First of all, Wyoming, the first suffrage State, rises logically and consistently to the occasion by presenting the first woman Governor of a State of the Union. For Mrs. Nellie T. Ross, nominated by the Democrats to succeed her late husband, and victorious in the election despite the Republican landslide, begins at once to serve out her late husband's unfinished term. Mrs. Miriam A. Ferguson of Texas thus becomes by a narrow margin the second instead of the first woman Governor, as the term for which she was elected does not begin until January 1. Yet some editors can not help reflecting that Mrs. Ferguson's victory is the more significant since she had to make an actual contest in both primary and election campaigns, and finally came through with a 40,000 plurality. And the *Boston Transcript* is impressed by the fact that the Texas woman's "authority will extend over a region much larger than France, and more than five times as large as England, with a population greater than that of Ireland, and resources far beyond those of the German Reich. It will be a position as proud as that of many famous queens of the past." The election of Mrs. Mary T. Norton of New Jersey, a wet Democrat, seems especially significant to the press, because she will be the first woman member of Congress from the East. It will be remembered that Jeannette Rankin, the first woman Representative, came from Montana; Miss Alice Robertson, from Oklahoma; Mrs. Winnifred Mason Huck, from Illinois; and Mrs. Mae E. Nolan, from California. The only other woman to sit in the American Congress, editors remember, was the venerable Mrs. Rebecca Felton, who occupied a seat in the Senate for a few hours, as the appointee of the Governor of Georgia. To come back to this month's election returns, we note that among other successful women present are New York's first woman State official, Mrs. Florence E. S. Knapp, elected Secretary of State; Mrs. Emma Eaton White, reporter of the Supreme Court, Indiana's first woman official; and a number of women legislators in New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Nebraska and Illinois.

Of all these victories the most significant in connection with "the future status of woman in politics" are those of Mrs. Knapp in New York and Mrs. Norton in New Jersey, in the opinion of the *Philadelphia Record*, which reasons that "when a conservative Eastern district recognizes feminine capacity for legislative affairs in such a striking way, the time is not far distant when the title 'Congresswoman' will cease to be a novelty." But to the *Milwaukee Journal*, the gubernatorial victories of women candidates seem more important, for "a governorship, because of the executive capacity required, is a more important public office than any American woman has occupied." Therefore, we are told, "if Mrs. Ross or Mrs. Ferguson displays ability to govern, the cause of American women in politics will be advanced immeasurably." A writer for the *Consolidated Press*, Mr. O. L. Scott, agrees that in this election the feminine "advance was in a new quarter toward executive responsibility in politics, while the fight for legislative representation marked time." In fact, by this advance upon the State executive mansions, women have taken a step toward the White House. The Governors of Texas and Wyoming, we read, "will be just one jump from the Presidency, as heads of States are next in executive responsibility to the Chief Magistrate of the nation. If they measure up to the demands of their task and solidify their advance so that others of their sex may step up with them in elections to come, the road to the Presidency will be smoothed considerably for women." And a glimpse backward over our political history reveals the fact that of our 29 Presidents 14 were first Governors of States or Territories.

"The majority of women being natural-born housekeepers, why shouldn't the infinite detail of a Governor's office appeal to the female of the species?" asks the *Birmingham News*, adding that "every woman who ever filled her job fully as head of a home has had excellent training to be Mayor and Governor." But the *Syracuse Post-Standard* can see little real recognition of woman's ability to rule in the fact that Mrs. Ferguson "ran for Governor to vindicate her husband," and Mrs. Ross was elected as a testimony to the popularity of her deceased husband, just "as the widow of a Congressman from California and the daughter of a Congressman from Illinois were elected to Congress." The *Cincinnati Enquirer* goes a step further, asserting that neither Mrs. Ross nor Mrs. Ferguson has ever in her life "executed anything more constructive probably than baking a pie or making a bed"—"Texas and Wyoming taxpayers reasonably may be expected to learn that the maudlin ineptitude they have exhibited is extremely unprofitable."

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