

MARYLAND Suffrage News

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DEDICATION

To the poor women without homes, to the little toilers who should be in the schools and playgrounds, to the white slaves in their tragic bondage, and to the children who die, these pages are dedicated! May every woman who is not too idle to have a thought, or too vain to have a soul, or too rich in gold to have a heart, join in the great struggle for women's freedom!

Purity, Liberty, Justice—these we must work for!

WHY THE CARAVAN

HUMAN emotions are the same, whether the individual lives in Maine or Maryland. Garrett county people came ten miles to see the hikers of 1914; St. Mary's residents drove the same distance to see the prairie-schooner expedition of 1915; Howard county marvelled at the activity of the army of suffrage workers that tramped for converts last August; Charles county viewed and applauded the pilgrims who traveled 350 miles to honor the first suffragist. Stir the imagination of a group, and you get attention; gain publicity for the "human interest" stories of a campaign, and you gain sympathy; put up a logical suffrage argument, and you make converts.

All these things were accomplished by the caravan expedition of the Just Government League in the lower counties. The history of Margaret Brent, the romance of the prairie schooner, the publicity given by the daily press, and the efficient work of the caravaners made a combination of factors which left Southern Maryland pulsing with the votes-for-women story. Harford county is not less than Charles, St. Mary's and Prince George's. The caravan is on—on with the caravan.

ANOTHER PROP GONE

ONE of those "privileges of woman" whose possession, it is said, ought to prohibit her from having even so much as desire for the vote, has been accounted the receiving of alimony. Here comes along a new set of facts which puts 6354 men into the same "privileged class." These are not new cases brought about by the new and restless woman. They are cases recorded within the United States divorce courts from the year 1887 to 1906. And they are actual receivers, not merely seekers, of alimony. The latter class would add another 2000 to the number. The aggrieved wife who seeks support from her ex-husband gets it in about 72 per cent. of the instances. The aggrieved husband gets about 2 per cent. less often.

Now, this is not a suffrage State custom. The greatest number of male alimony receivers hails from Ohio, that State which the "antis" claim as one most bitterly opposed to woman suffrage. In fact, none of the older suffrage States shine in this list at all. Incidentally, it may be news to the antis to learn that the greatest field for divorce is not inside suffrage territory, but in the north central division, where nearly half of all the divorcees in the United States were granted in the two decades in question. So these extra privileged men, who should be reminded that they are jeopardizing special advantages by using their ballots, are found to be 673 in Ohio, 443 in Michigan, 243 in Nebraska—all States which have recently refused the ballot to "privileged" women.

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THE WOMAN OF LEISURE AND SUFFRAGE

By MONA G. COCKEY.

CURIOS as it may seem, there are thousands today who are doing literally nothing with their lives. They are women of leisure, some wealthy, some poor, who are squandering existence.

Yet survival itself depends upon constructive activity. All things, the human mind included, must mature or degenerate, for nature decrees that not an atom in the universe shall be motionless for a single instant.

From this inexorable law there is no appeal. When, therefore, a woman feels that she is not widening her field of knowledge, not strengthening her power of reasoning, she has ample cause for alarm. A process of actual decay is going on in her brain. It is worse than useless to console herself with the notion that she is simply remaining the same. A cancer patient might just as well hope to escape the tortures of this dreaded disease by merely insisting that it is some other ailment that is consuming him. Because of this universal law the woman's mind is either a vital, growing organism or a sickly, dying one.

Few women of leisure, however, realize this basic principle of existence. Consequently, they are often pre-eminent examples of mental deterioration. Being without the stimulus of responsibilities, they are subject to prolonged periods of mental lethargy. The adult mind, with a natural capacity for fundamental knowledge, is fed on nothing but trifles, until starvation gradually overcomes it.

Two causes are largely responsible for such brain destruction. First, long-established habits of indolence prevent the woman of leisure from attempting any intellectual effort; and secondly, a mistaken idea that even the most frivolous occupations are legitimate activities permit her to account for her days with shopping and theaters, card parties and dancing classes. Indeed, she clings to this pernicious view with the tenacity of a bulldog, and one is forced to believe that she is still incapable of differentiating between progressive and retrogressive motion.

There are countless women, especially under thirty, who are in the most modest circumstances, yet who have a wealth of time at their disposal. Such women owe themselves and society a definite debt. It is incumbent upon them to feed their brains with ideas which will prevent them from stagnating and starving, and to accomplish their share of the world's work.

What each woman's portion is to be she herself must decide, for it can never be any smaller or any greater than her own heart. A membership in a suffrage club and attendance at suffrage meetings, however, would open up many lines of thought and many opportunities to the girl who is seeking to develop her own mentality and serve her fellow-men at the same time. Suffrage would offer her a chance to do things that are really worth while, things that bring comfort and relief, inspiration and assistance to humanity.

And surely there is more joy and exhilaration for a normal young woman in doing an act of mercy or in defending the rights of her less fortunate sisters than there is in attending a ball, a football game or a sewing club.

Then, too, life suddenly becomes wonderfully full of meaning and fascination for a youthful suffragist. History, sociology, political economy, philanthropy, science, education, even current events and the daily papers, take on a new and absorbing interest. The long, restless hours between engagements which used to pass so tediously are filled to the brim with eager efforts for the welfare of thousands of women and children. There is no more time for bitter introspection and brooding. She is soon too well informed to be narrow, too sympathetic to be selfish, too occupied and concentrated to indulge in pettiness.

For the young woman of leisure, suffrage means the exchange of the unimportant and transitory nothings of her life for the great, glorifying, permanent and fundamental things which extend so far back in the history of man and reach so far into his future that each fact is surrounded with the glamor of mystery and pregnant with the inspiration of a gigantic principle. It means that she renounces her existence as a nonentity in the world and becomes self-sacrificing, courageous, efficient—a really human creature, with a right to the respect of her contemporaries.