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file women suffrage

OFFICE OF THE DEAN
Arthur W. MacLean, A.B., LL.B., J.M.
45 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston

October 1, 1930

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
Bethel,
Connecticut.

My dear Miss Tarbell:-

During the decade ended August 26th last, women have enjoyed the inestimable privileges of exercising the elective franchise and of equal opportunity for participation in matters of government with men in this happy, contented and prosperous country of ours. It is still too early, however, even to begin to assess the results or to recognize at all adequately the wholesome benefit or value of woman's part in American government. But it may be stated with entire justice that women have been eager to assume the burdens of citizenship consequent upon their right to vote and to hold office and, furthermore, that their influence has been constructively and intelligently directed for our common felicity.

It was said in earlier times, "The hand that rocks the cradle guides the nation." That expression was our tribute of love, respect and veneration for our splendid American motherhood. With women enfranchised today, we may soon change it to read: "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the nation." Be that as it may, the American woman has now come into her own with unrivalled and hitherto unprecedented oppor-

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tunities for accomplishment within her grasp. She dispenses justice from the Bench, sits in our halls of legislation, both State and Federal; governs city and State, prosecutes crime, and is entering the arena of finance and corporate business. Her earlier contributions to the world of letters, the stage, the teaching and medical professions, and the fine arts are conspicuous, distinguished and of long standing.

With characteristic liberality, American manhood welcomes her entry into professional avenues not readily open to her formerly, particularly that of the Law. Ten years ago, the women lawyers of America were few in number; today, they are several thousand. That women should turn to law in considerable numbers is easy to understand. No other professional study touches life in all of its human relationships so intimately or excels it as a mental stimulant in developing logical methods of thought and expression. No other offers so helpful a basis for a business or administrative career or so useful an equipment for public service. Some, accordingly, seek its benefits to increase their efficiency in various pursuits but the greater number enter the legal profession to gain a livelihood.

For almost a quarter of a century, Portia Law School has been functioning as a teacher of law to women. It is the only law school exclusively for women in the world and its standards and successes are noteworthy. To maintain these, and to improve them whenever possible, is our continuing purpose. To that end, we are now establishing a Prize Endowment Fund to stimulate the efforts of our students and, in addition, to emphasize the necessity for further legal research which, in the light of modern progress, is practically indispensable. Portia is not an "endowed" institution but is dependent wholly upon the returns from the use of its plant. Hence, we can do little by ourselves in establishing the Prize Fund which, we are firmly convinced, would lead to purposeful achievement in our undergraduate and post-graduate schools alike.

We are old-fashioned and conservative enough to believe that only women should be invited to aid women in this enterprise. And so we are writing to a

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very limited number of women who have achieved distinction and position in the realms of art, letters, society or philanthropy to honor us with a donation for a purpose which, we feel, must have for them a very special appeal. We should be delighted, in this connection, to enroll you among our patronesses.

We do not require a large amount from any one person. A donation of one hundred dollars, invested at four per cent, would enable us to award one prize of twenty dollars every alternate year over a period of twelve years, and leave a small balance. We have four classes, with a day and evening division to each, and one day class in our graduate school, making nine classes in all. It is our hope and expectation to be able to offer at least one prize to each of these classes annually. Prizes based on gifts of one hundred dollars will bear the name of the particular donor and will be awarded in her name. Owing to the nation-wide prominence of those invited to subscribe, we believe our students will react psychologically thereto and strive harder to gain a prize offered by a woman of distinction than they would for its mere value in terms of money. At the same time, we are not unmindful of the added prestige to the School which your patronage would bring.

Of course, we shall accept with thanks any smaller sum you may desire to contribute to our Prize Fund, and will place your name among the patronesses of Portia. We extend to you a cordial invitation to visit us at any time and we are sending you, under separate cover, our catalog for 1930-31, from which you may obtain full information of our work and activities.

Very cordially yours,

Arthur W. MacLean

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