

# AT THE SIGN OF THE MAPLE

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## MIDSUMMER MADNESS

It is hot. Oh, but it is hot! So hot that even filling this page is an effort. Formerly there has been the question of what we could leave out rather than what we could put in, for the burden of our song at the Sign-of-the-Maple has been, "What Women Are Doing." Now it would be much simpler to tell what they are not doing, but that is a task too difficult for a hot day. Then let us be personal for once and speak of what we, using the editorial plural, are not doing. This "we" is supposed to include the editor-in-chief (who is removing his waistcoat), the sub-editor (who is blinking at the light), and so on down to the smallest office boy who is holding his head under a tap in the basement. (That is what the rest of us would be doing if we hadn't studied Latin and didn't know the meaning of "infra dig.") Oh, it is a busy little office! So much for what we are doing—what we are not doing is far more important. We are not canoeing, or sailing or swimming, we are not even drinking lemonade and lying in hammocks (though that is our favourite outdoor sport.) There is only one thing that appeals to us more just now, and that is ice-boating.

BUT the chief thing that this particular member of the staff (the one we would call "I," were we less dignified) is not doing is this: We are not writing the uplifting, educational, patriotic and inspiring article which it was our intention to write. We are writing about the subject uppermost in our

poor fellow, but not from drowning. He died a natural death from D. T.'s or T. B.'s or M. D.'s—the last, I think.

NOW that is a simple story, one you could easily read while sipping lemonade or sailing or smoking a cigarette. The last activity is mentioned on the chance that there are a few men who sometimes, literally speaking, invade the sacred precincts of the Sign-of-the-Maple. We hope they do, and for this reason never mention such subjects as winter underwear, in case they might be embarrassed. It would shock us all, indeed, to have such a subject introduced at this time of the year, when our thoughts dwell fondly on ice clinking in tall glasses.

WHEN in doubt as to what to write about, use scissors and paste-pot. Alas, the women's pages are teeming with activities, patriotic and otherwise. Even the "Household Hints" fails to rouse our interest, although various energetic methods of keeping cool and still more strenuous means of looking cool (which involves spending most of one's time in the laundry) are chronicled. As a last resource we open an ancient envelope—marked "fillers," and read that in spite of the heat hundreds of Canadian women are making munitions in Canada and 700 millions (or is it thousands, in England). We pass these statistics hurriedly by and at last find some facts that not only we, but you, dear reader, will be thrilled to learn.

Despised Dust Makes Beautiful Half the World. "Nothing is so useless as dust, you say. The old burial ritual, 'Dust unto dust,' typifies the total absence of value considered to lie in the particles of earth.

"But this dust that you kick and regard as an annoyance is really indispensable as well as ornamental. It beautifies nature, since it, swimming in the air, is responsible for the blue of the sky. Without it there would be no beautiful sunsets or sunrises. Deserts and mountains would be colourless without it to break up the light rays in the atmosphere. Wallace, the naturalist, says: 'One-half the beauty in the world would vanish with the absence of dust.'"

What a comforting thought! If only the soldiers who marched without water-bottles at Camp Borden had known that this same dust that filled their throats, eyes and nostrils was really responsible for the bright blue sky, there would have been no riots. If motorists could only realize that we are indebted to dust for our beautiful sunsets, they would use more delicate language and cease to demand that roads be oiled. But to continue:

"So much for its picturesque qualities. Far more important is its characteristic of giving us diffused daylight. Without dust the sky would appear to be completely black and the stars on all sides of the sun would be shining brightly.

"The tiny particles flying in the air halt and shatter the solid light rays of the sun and spread them over a wide territory. There would be painful scorching light in the direct play of the sun and blackness everywhere else. In the front yard there would be glaring sun and inside the house midnight blackness."

Just think of the electric light bill!

"Our lives would be totally different were there no dust. We should have by necessity grown into different beings, far removed from any likeness to our present form."

We should all be fishes most likely, and that is a cheering thought for 90 deg. in the shade. So cheering that we will raise ourselves, cease to write this midsummer madness and,

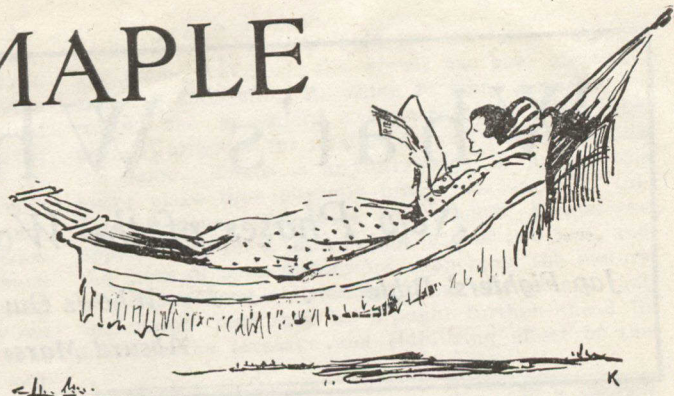


minds: Heat. We admit that we should be telling you about the lovely new hospital for the mentally deficient at Whitby, about the wonderful work the Women's Emergency Corps are doing.

We might even write about the Orangemen's parade and take some comfort in the fact that we did not have to wear a frock coat, a silk hat and various decorations in velvet and gold and march in it, and about tag days, for though we are all dreadfully tired of helping or declining to help in them, they still made money. On July 14th the women of Toronto raised \$25,000 for the Secours National, and the French Patriotic Society were very successful in Victoria.

Oh, we aren't lacking in topics! The only one that pleases us in the least is the Fresh Air Fund—and we haven't sufficient energy to hunt up statistics. Suppose we did, why, if the heat continues you would be too hot to read it, or anything else that is truly informative. Much better to wait for some salubrious day when we feel a passion for the welfare of humanity. And you a thirst for knowledge instead of—well, how should we know?

THE main thing is to write something that is easy to write and easier still to read, that can, in fact, be read while you are canoeing or sailing or doing any of the nice things that we would like to be doing. You could hardly read it while you are swimming, and yet I knew a man who did. On very hot days in Muskoka he used to take three air cushions, a book and a pipe and lie on top of the water. We asked him why he didn't read on land, and he said the book was too dry. He's dead now,



in the dim seclusion of our homes, follow the example of the youngest office boy and turn on the cold water tap.

## Clubwomen's Work

WHAT is your conception of a typical club man, and what of a representative club woman? We conceive of the club man as one who pursues the line of least resistance and the club woman as one who "kicks against the pricks." The great difference lies not in sex, but in the purpose of clubs. The man's club is primarily for sociability, sport, or refreshment, the woman's for concerted activity. There has been a recent increase in clubs for women, run more or less on the same lines as those of men, but these remain chiefly lunching clubs, and were not represented at the National Federation of Women's Clubs, in New York, where twenty thousand women delegates represented two and a half million useful American women.

THE work accomplished by these women is the domestic drudgery of the nation. The Federation of the Northern and Western States are actively engaged in teaching foreign-born children and their parents the American standards of life, sanitation and domestic economics; the Dakota women have concentrated upon efforts to lighten the drudgery of farmers' wives; the Wisconsin club specialize upon the health of children, free clinics for babies, and eugenics. Illinois has more women in its club than there are soldiers in the regular United States army: ten thousand of these are giving all their time to social service. Twenty thousand clubwomen in Texas are working for good roads. The ambition of the clubwomen in the South is to wipe out illiteracy by 1920.

IN addition to these activities there were reports from the department for vocational training for girls. There was not a single report from a Brown-ing Club, no one, it seems, has been studying the origin of Shakespeare's plays. Poetry, art, music and classical literature were ignored, for these women devote themselves to the real business of life. Neither was church work chronicled. The women told of how many babies had been saved by the introduction of clinics and rural nurses; what had been done in connection with the conservation of forests—every line, from canning pears to the development of rural drama leagues; but no one woman reported what the women of her state were doing in churches or Sabbath schools. The majority of clubwomen believe in suffrage, but no suffrage league is admitted to this Federation.

During the ten days of the Federation about eight lectures were given each day by experts on every imaginable subject from baby culture to prison reforms, from peace to preparedness, from the conservation of forests to the canning of pears. Very little notice was taken of the real work accomplished by

this Federation in the daily papers, which chronicled chiefly its social functions, but in an interesting article in "The Saturday Evening Post," Corra Harris tells of the real value of the meeting, from which the above information has been selected.

Canadian women are engaged in the same activities. The greater part of their time is given to patriotic work, but domestic economy and child welfare must never be superseded.

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