

WOMEN AS LAWYERS

Miss Etta Maddox And Other
Women Before Committee.

HEARD WITH ATTENTIVENESS

Forcible Arguments Presented For
Opening The Doors Of Legal Prac-
tice To All Who Are Competent.

[Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.]

ANNAPOLIS, Md., Feb. 20.—Miss Etta H. Maddox, of Baltimore, who recently graduated at the Maryland University Law School and was refused admission to the bar on account of her sex, made a strong appeal to the Senate Judiciary Committee this afternoon. A bill making legal the admission of women to the bar has been introduced in the Senate and is now in the hands of the committee.

Accompanying Miss Maddox were Mrs. Ellen Foster, of Iowa, a member of the bar; Miss Laura Clay, of Kentucky; Miss Gail Laughlin, of the New York bar; Mrs. M. B. Thomas, of Maryland, and Mr. H. B. Blackwell, of Massachusetts.

The hearing took place in the Senate chamber. Most of the Senators were present, besides a great many other persons.

Senator Spencer C. Jones, who is distinguished as one of the handsomest and most gallant men in the State, made no secret of his intention to vote for the bill, and if Miss Maddox had asked him it is believed he would have made a speech.

President Hubner sat in his own chair behind the committee, and regarded the delegation of ladies with a countenance which beamed with sympathy and good intentions toward their bill.

At the close of the hearing Senator Bryan told the ladies that the committee had listened to them with pleasure and profit; that they would consider the bill with care and, he hoped, decide upon it with wisdom.

Miss Maddox introduced each of the speakers with appropriate remarks, most happily expressed.

Practiced With Her Husband.

Mrs. J. Ellen Foster, of Iowa, was the first speaker. She told of her own admission to the bar in 1873. She studied law, she said, to keep her husband at home and practiced in partnership with him. While engaged in practice she cared for her children.

Dr. Cora Eaton, of Minneapolis, said that the test of genius is to know when to act, and Maryland has now an opportunity to enact a law which will be historical. She did not ask it as a matter of chivalry, though she had always heard of the chivalry of the South, but as a matter of right. It is not a revolution, but an evolution, and the admission of women to the Maryland Bar will surely come.

Kentucky To The Rescue.

Miss Laura Clay, president of the Equal Rights Society of Kentucky, was introduced as a genuine Southern woman. She said her maternal grandfather, Elijah Wenfield, was a Marylander and that she is no stranger to the methods of Maryland thought. "Kentucky is indebted to Maryland," she said, "for much of its civilization and Kentucky treats women most liberally. Civilization is measured by the advancement of the woman. We do not undervalue chivalry and do not think the chivalry of American men, North and South, can be beat, but I appeal, in the name of justice, for the right of women to earn their bread. It is a matter of strict justice. The State is injured when it makes it harder for any woman to make a living."

A Brilliant Plea.

Miss Gall Laughlin, a practicing attorney of New York, was the next speaker. She was most simply and becomingly dressed in black with a lace collar and cuffs. She said she was asking for nothing new, but simply that Maryland should return to her ancient spirit of liberality; for the first woman to practice law in the United States was Mistress Margaret Brent, of Maryland, 250 years ago. She gave her experience as a practicing attorney and said there is nothing in the way of it. In 88 States women are admitted and only in 7, including Maryland, are they excluded. In five the question has not arisen. Miss Laughlin reviewed the decisions upon the subject and made a legal argument of decided force and ability. She stated that in France, India, Canada, Japan and other countries women are admitted as lawyers. There are many who prefer to be represented in the courts by women and it is their right to have them. In the schools women have stood highest and have been declared to have the best legal ability of their classes. If the people don't want women lawyers they will get no practice. All the women are asking for is the opportunity to use the abilities they have to promote right and justice. From time immemorial the law has been typified by the figure of a woman. The speech was an earnest and most forceful one and was heartily applauded.

The Only Man.

Henry B. Blackwell, of Massachusetts, said: "This is not a question of woman suffrage. It is simply whether a woman, entirely qualified, will be permitted to practice in the courts. You should not put a slur on the women of Maryland by saying they are inferior to those of other States." He reviewed the history of the admission of women to the bars of various States, and declared that a Southern State, Missouri, has the honor of being the first to admit them.

In conclusion Miss Maddox thanked the committee for their courtesy and the Maryland men who were present for their attention to the speeches which had been made.