

CLUBS.

(Continued from page 3.)

needed to supply deficiencies. Here I might steal Mrs. Stoutenborough's thunder by speaking of the benefit it is to the library to have its weakness exposed as they always are by the research that the clubs make along special lines.

When not a member of the club, the librarian may write at about the time of its first yearly meeting, asking for the course of study to be pursued by the various departments, in order that she may anticipate their needs in her book orders. Strangely enough we find that this request is not always graciously received; but when ignored, as it may be, turn to the president for help. A personal plea from her may be efficacious in persuading the heads of departments that they are helping themselves while aiding the library.

It has been possible for us, because of a very pleasantly arranged reference room, to set aside, for the exclusive use of clubs, some small alcoves, where are placed a few carefully selected volumes withdrawn from circulation. This really gives the books a wider use than if each club woman took one home on her card. The volumes are changed from time to time to suit the requirements of the course of study. Mounted photographs (in one instance a very interesting collection) owned and used by the clubs in their work have been hung in the alcoves, making the rooms both attractive and useful.

In a library such as ours, where general access to the book shelves is not allowed, it is well to issue a card granting that privilege to leaders of clubs, and to high school teachers and professional people who may find it an advantage to go direct to the stacks. We also issue extra book-borrower's cards to club leaders and to school teachers, with the stipulation that they be used only for the holder's special line of work.

Things which means the setting aside of some rule, or the granting of some special privilege are not all we may do for the club woman in the library. What I wish to add to this requires almost more than the courage of my convictions; it is of the more personal dealings of the librarian or reference attendant with the women. It has been said by a member of the craft that "the mental dexterity of a lawyer, the manners of a diplomat, and the patience of a saint are qualities which the librarian must cultivate if he would cleverly comprehend the inquiries put to him." And certainly it is as easy to believe of women as of Voltaire's "men," that they "employ speech only to conceal their thoughts; for diffident, as well as conceited, seekers after knowledge waste hours by not divulging the exact object of their search. We all revolt at the thought of haunting crimson placards, reading, "If you don't find what you want ask for it. We are here to help you." But how are we to insist that patrons of the library be specific in their requests? "Library talks" given by the president of the club would seem the simplest way of reaching the women; or the librarian herself might speak at some general assembly of the club, giving a practical illustration of library methods. The use of card catalogs, Paine's, the Cumulative and annual literary indices and even the use of the indices in books and works of several volumes must be shown all without any superciliousness; for the club movement is comparative new in the west and women who have been for years out of school may be pardoned if they waste time over a table of contents or even turn laboriously page after page in their search, instead of using the index which belongs to every well arranged work. For our object is to give the best help to the club members in finding their material readily, not by merely opening each book at the desired page, but by developing the power of using intelligently the means put at their service.

If I have shown a dangerous tendency to follow the example of Fennyson's brook, you will pardon me, I know. The subject is one capable of much discussion; but discussion in the form of a monologue comes finally to interest only one person, so I will no longer "chatter over stony ways."

MRS. SMILEY.

"WHAT CAN THE WOMAN'S CLUB DO FOR THE PUBLIC LIBRARY?"

"The Woman's Club movement but one it is true among the educational forces in the world, had its beginning in the thought of association for mutual assistance and self-development, and then as a natural growth from that

came the thought of association to help others."

Today it stands for higher education, sympathy and usefulness. It has said to women everywhere—"There is work for you which can not be done except by Association, both for yourselves and others. Work together it matters little under what form or name; and then with mutual aims and sympathies stimulated to noble ends do those things which duty dictates and your opportunity allows."—and gradually the members of this organization are learning that there are other lessons in life for them to read besides the stories in the little old "Horn Book"; the work of Woman's Clubs is indissolubly connected with education and co-ordination of forces and concentration of plans must be the watchword, if success is attained. The so-called "progressive woman" it seems to me, asks for no more than a full opportunity to develop all her reserve powers in helping on the world. A few days since in a neighboring state I heard a bright woman say—"Women are often held up to ridicule because they are so ready to condemn, so impatient of delay, so anxious to convert everybody right now, and she said that she was reminded of what Henry Ward Beecher once said when some new and worthy object to benefit humanity was brought to his notice—"The cause is just, the object is all right, now bring on your fanatic to carry it out."—and she had some times thought that the women of to-day must be called the "fanatics" to help in some of this work that is to be done to benefit humanity. Professor Lombroso says "The duty of woman in the social evolution is to direct charity and public education." Is not this a responsibility worthy of the highest powers of womanhood and second only to motherhood?

We read that it was considered an epoch in many of the older states when neighborhood and village libraries began to be common. This was more than a hundred years ago and Noah Porter tells us that the establishment of a village library was considered as natural and almost as necessary as the setting up of a grist mill or town pump.

Today in at least one state—New Hampshire—every town is now required by law to establish and maintain a free public library. Until recent years we have had but few libraries in the west outside of the well equipped libraries of the larger towns and cities. Now however, libraries are rapidly coming into existence in the smaller towns and villages. Many of them directly through the instrumentality of the Woman's club, for this organization and the public library should be and in most cases are invaluable allies and work together for the good of the community. The real value of some of these small libraries may not be appreciated in this generation.—When John Harvard bequeathed half of his estate and his library to the struggling seminary in the wilderness, no one foresaw the Harvard university of today.

In Iowa the library spirit is particularly active among Woman's clubs. Of one hundred and eighty clubs belonging to the State Federation nearly one half are doing something for libraries. And what is true of Iowa is true of other states. In every little village and hamlet where a woman's club has existed for a time, we are pretty sure to find the circulating library and free reading room. Library boards testify that the circulation of books and the consultation of reference books have greatly increased since the organization of the Woman's club.

Let us glance for a moment at the work that the women in Kentucky are doing in this library movement.

"For the fiscal year of '97-'98 the state was divided into five club districts. The first district had seven library stations the second four, the third three, the fourth four and the fifth three. The plan of work for the committee was to collect books suitable for the mountain districts and to send the same securely packed in strong wooden boxes, averaging fifty-five volumes to a box, made of heavy seasoned boards, securely fastened with screws and locks and on arrival are used as libraries. Six months are allowed for use of books. Some delay was occasioned at first by the suspicion of the mountaineers who feared a money consideration for the use of books. They were slow to believe that the library was free. The boxes travel over the mountains by wagon or down the river in push boats in April or October." Surely no one could read this report sent out by the chairman of library work in Kentucky without feeling these women have rendered back to society something of what they have received. The following extract from one of the librarians tells the story of a good work in

these out-of-way places, in the mountain districts. "It was tersely stated by one of our miners when the little library room was opened, 'Now we can have some better way of getting a little recreation than going to Jellico and getting drunk.' Our seats are empty powder kegs; the tables made from old doors fastened on top of barrels; but even with these homely surroundings good work is being done and aside from the intellectual advantages there is a moral one as well." After reading this report and similar ones, one would hardly ask the question—of what benefit is woman's clubs?—and in Kentucky this organization of women is an educational factor whose power is felt from east to west in this old commonwealth.

Turning from the sunny southland let us see what the women are doing in the pinnacles of Wisconsin.

In her report before the annual meeting in 1897, Miss Stearns said: "The Wisconsin Free Library commission depends upon the woman's clubs more than upon any and all other agencies combined to aid in its work of establishing free libraries in Wisconsin. Since the State Federation was organized, no less than eighteen free public libraries have been established, within our borders; and the organization of six of these may be directly attributed to the interest aroused by woman's clubs. Four of the libraries in the state are being maintained by these bodies."

Mr. F. A. Hutchins (whose name is familiar to every librarian) of the Wisconsin Free Library association says: "In most of the states of the Union woman's clubs are doing more than the librarians in the establishment and spread of travelling libraries."

If there was time I might speak of the good work of club women in other states along this line of library interests, in New Jersey, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Kansas and Missouri, but I wish to call your attention to the work in your own state. You are all familiar with the workings of the circulating library supported by the Nebraska Federation of Women's clubs, that have sent books to the homes of women living in isolated communities. Women who rarely catch a glimpse of the higher level of what seems to them life's rugged road; it has sent reference books to members of country clubs who do not have access to public libraries, enabling them to pursue certain lines of study in their clubs which would be impossible without these books and at the same time they have created a desire in the minds of other members of the family to possess "good books."

Who shall say that this club movement is not missionary in spirit and while proclaims no creed, it is willing, yes eager, to help those who are less fortunate than themselves.

What can the woman's club do for the public library in our small towns? I know of no better answer to this question than the practical workings of the Monday club in Wayne, Nebr. Ten years ago a little band of women, twelve in number organized a woman's club. There was no public library in the town and but few private libraries. The club dues are one dollar for initiation fees and ten cents for monthly dues. The fines are twenty-five cents for unexcused absences and five cents for tardiness. These dues and fines together with a small amount made by giving one or two entertainments each year represents their income. But all the money they make has been used to purchase books for their public library. Today they have between seven and eight hundred volumes. These books are used by country people as well as town people. The fee of five cents per week is charged for use of books and they may be retained two weeks. All the money made in this way goes to the purchase of new books and replacing old ones. A member of this enterprising club wrote me a few weeks since—"We aim to buy only the best books and I am sure we have done a little towards cultivating the public taste for good reading, besides placing many good books at the disposal of those who could not have read them in any other way." One more illustration. The Syracuse Woman's Club, a few years ago a citizen of that little town by personal effort and solicitation secured some books and old magazines, placed them in the town building and gave one evening each week to their circulation. Last year this good man was elected to a County office, which compelled him to leave Syracuse and the little library was left without a "guiding star." The Woman's Club, a new organization looking about to see what it could do, towards bettering community life, discovered that the library was an open door.

A committee waited upon the town council and they promised to provide a

room and a librarian one night in the week. In less than one year those women have put 160 good books into that little library. Does this seem like a small number to this Association? It represents more than we can express. Next year when you come to your library meeting, I trust there will be a librarian at Syracuse and that she will share these good things with you.

If there was time I might tell you of other clubs interested in helping public libraries in their respective towns. At Columbus, Gering, and Nebraska City, are women who are shining examples of that old saying "Awakened souls cannot afford to be selfish."

There is one phase in your work in which I am especially interested. It is the corner for the boys and girls. Our club women may assist in sending special collections of the best children's books and I am sure you would be glad to arrange the corner so as to make the books available and attractive as well. A very practical method of showing an interest in the village library is that adopted by a book club not a thousand miles from here. Each member of the club buys each year a volume of the best current fiction. These books are passed about among the members of the club until the close of the year when they are given to the Public Library.

The members of the Woman's Club in Nebraska, are not slow to appreciate the lesson of the hour co-ordination and I believe the time will come—indeed it is not far away, when each club will set aside a certain sum of money to help the Public Library in its respective town and together with this association, we may send light into the dark and forgotten places through "the medium of pen and ink friends whose charm is their unchangeableness."

BELLE M. STOUTENBOROUGH

DR. LEONHARDT'S

ANTI-PILL

Cures Constipation.

Biliousness, nervousness and the pill habit. Action not followed by constiveness, Doubt it? Try it. Sample free. Druggists, 25c. or address ANTI-PILL CO., Lincoln, Neb.

FOR LADIES

Queen quality
Shoes for \$3
at

Sanderson-Schureman
THE FOOT FORM STORE
DAVIS

1213 O Street.

H. W. BROWN
Druggist and
Bookseller.
Whiting's
Fine Stationery
and
Calling Cards.....

127 S. Eleventh Street.
PHONE 68

The Rock Island playing cards are the slickest you ever handled. One pack will be sent by mail on receipt of 15 cents in stamps. A money order or draft for 50 cents or same in stamps will secure 4 packs. They will be sent by express, charges prepaid. Address, JOHN SEBASTIAN, G. P. A., Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific R'y, Chicago.