

Teachers and Mothers.

An address is printed in the club department of this issue, which, besides deploring the ugliness of school interiors, the bad lighting arrangements and the illiteracy of teachers, suggests that these features can be improved by club women.

The country schools of Nebraska are dreary and ugly, and usually the light shines into the faces of the pupils instead of over their rebellious little shoulders; but the teachers, I think, are unusually intelligent and cultured.

By chance the editor of *The Courier* has had the good fortune to see the teachers, year after year assembled in the state conventions held at Lincoln. In the mass and as individuals Nebraska teachers are distinguished by an acute intelligence not easily duplicated by members of any other profession. Every profession is weighted by men and women who practice it by favor rather than by merit, but teaching is so arduous and the salary so small that most of those who continue in the profession possess especial qualifications for their work.

Only the cleverest and most conscientious teachers attend the conventions and it may be that I have been dazzled and impressed by the flower of culture annually exhibited in Lincoln and by the teachers of Omaha, Lincoln, and Crete with whom I have a personal acquaintance. Perhaps Mrs. Blair the author of the address meant teachers in some other state like Indiana or Missouri.

As to the influence which women can have upon the aspect of the school rooms, I think Mrs. Blair overestimates it. School buildings are erected by school boards which are generally very jealous of their authority and the boards are elected by men. A few years ago a lady of Lincoln contributed some pictures to be hung in the school room of the city. When the pictures were about to be hung the board objected to the subjects and then to the nails which must be driven into the hard finished walls. Nobody seems to know what became of the pictures.

It is an oratorical ruse frequently quite valuable and effective to ascribe the government of the world to woman, lovely woman, but when these same orators have been elected by the inviolate vote of the people as members of the school board they are apt to consider a suggestion from the woman's club or from the city improvement society as an example of female impertinence and summarily disregard it.

Women in Nebraska can vote for members of the school board, but the woman's vote is usually inconsiderable. Special elections poll a small vote, and for the same reason, women will not vote at all until they can vote for the men who assess their property and spend the taxes as they see fit.

Can we actually accomplish the reforms Mrs. Blair blames us for not having already effected? If the state federation or union of all the thoughtful, really benevolent and charitable women in the state means anything, it is something outside of their own culture. School-days are over and life is at the meridian for most club women. More than learning, much more is the joy of being a real part of the machinery or motor of life in the community. The delight of the erudite is insignificant compared to that era of exultation and satisfaction experienced by the human fragment who has heretofore been of no account and by a sudden assertion finds his hand on the lever of things. The hero of a serial story just concluded in *The Century* is a dilettante who is suddenly endowed with a fortune. He decides

to use it in making destinies for other people, to change the course of history and save a principality of the old empire from being absorbed by the German Emperor. He fails, as a greater map-maker than he, failed at Waterloo. But in a less conspicuous way every one who has been in the current of human affairs has been stimulated and cheered by feeling, that he responded to or stemmed the current of life.

It is perhaps worth the while of the club women of the state to reflect, not sentimentally but practically, on how they can best improve the very ugly school rooms. It seems to me that the school keeping would be neater and more attractive if there were women on the school board. It is quite within the power of the women to elect women on the school boards. A concerted movement of this kind might be more effective than hanging a few pictures on bleak school-room walls which is almost all that the aspiring, unselfish women have been able to do. Then as the teachers are women there may be one member, at least, on every school board who will comprehend the teacher's struggles, and hopes as well as the needs of the children.

Mrs. Blair's topic is fruitful and a general discussion of the question suggested by her address might produce large results.

The Right to Labor.

Olive Schreiner in the current *Cosmopolitan* contributes an essay entitled "The Woman Question." Graphically she tells the story of woman, how at first she did the work of the fields, how she built the houses and made the clothing while the males fought to keep her and the products of her labor from passing into the possession of alien tribes. When nations were organized and political boundaries established and the men were released from continuous military service they gradually drove the women into the house after they had built it for her and their children. The women of old were still content for the house-frau baked and brewed, bore children, wove their clothing and was an essential factor of the activities of life. The modern woman of means leads an active life in society and club but she does not cook, sweep, wash, weave or sew for men. The wives of clerks board and have the same objections to bearing children. In consequence women are discontented and men are angry. On page 11 and 12 of this issue Mrs. Peattie's opinion on this subject is reprinted. Consonantly with Olive Schreiner she believes that the trouble is in depriving the women of work.

Every human being is entitled to a job. Not the anguish of love denied, nor the loss of fortune, nor the world's scorn, nor the desertion of friends causes so sharp, so mortal a pang as the withdrawal of work. Even the old horse, feeding in a lush pasture looks enviously at the young horse whose harness is outlined with white foam, straining to his load.

If she be not bearing children, if she be not contributing her part to the daily work of the world woman is as discontented as man out of a job. The machine of the world goes smoothly only when all its parts accomplish that for which they were designed. So long as she is a busy, well nourished necessity to a few, woman is happy. As a decoration, a pet, as an occasional interruption woman will never be satisfied. She will continue to kick up a rumpus and if it disturbs what is called the commercial world it does not matter. The world I am considering is bigger. It includes the commercial world and several others.

The big world runs that way. Protests and threats will not change a sewing machine into a machine for planting potatoes, and no discourse will make a human being satisfied with himself and the world who is not a useful member of society.

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The Arch.

The inspiration of noble architectural forms is illustrated by the arches erected for the auditorium. This segment of a circle is constructed of pine boards bolted and braced together. The homeliness of the material does not effect the nobility of that noble leap. The protestant cathedral so long in course of erection in New York City is being built around an arch that rises up like a monument surrounded by less imposing and less immortal architectural forms. It is doubtful if the cathedral when completed will be more beautiful than the arch, which, without ornament and revealing its whole, structural simplicity, attracts the eyes of the people.

The arch when erected as a memorial of a battle, or of a great statesman has also another quality which we are slowly learning to appreciate the value of. It is a symbol of triumph, of strength, of greatness. Men do not live in it nor have offices in it. They do not use it as a depot or as a train shed. It is a symbol like those piles of rocks the Mosaic herders built in memory of an ascension or of an occasion when God talked with the priest. So that in time to come when their sons, in wandering over the mountains and valleys, shall come upon this pile of stones, they may stop: "This is the place our fathers told us of where a voice that was God's spoke to Moses or Elias." The heap of stone was an unworthy monument of brave deeds and of great men. But the fact that the nomads piled them up for nothing but a memorial of a man and an event was evidence that they had the sense of race and of the continuity of man, that one generation desired the men of the next and of all subsequent generations to remember the deeds of their fathers. Have we as deep a pride, as sound a conception of the effect of history upon the men who are making it? We build hospitals and institutions we are obliged to have and call it by some hero's name. That is like giving coats and shoes and haircuts to our children for Christmas presents. The American navy deserves an arch which can be used neither for the sick or the well, for business or pleasure, nor for education. It may even be in the way of traffic and thus, from a purely utilitarian point of view be worse than useless. Nevertheless its erection as a symbol of what Americans can do, as a sign that we do not forget, as a memorial to bravery even unto the latest generation, is enjoyed upon us as a race.

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Chief of the Fire Department.

With the arrival of Mr. Clement the new fire chief from Omaha, the citizens are glad to recognize an entirely new departure in municipal appointive officers. The office Mr. Clement holds is connected vitally with the lives and the fortunes of the inhabitants of this little city. Before making the appointment the cities of the west and the northwest were searched, not for a republican who was expecting a place for helping to elect a republican president, but for a good fireman. Of all the men who were available Mr. Clement, of Omaha, had made the best record. He will find a loosely organized, poorly disciplined, but well set up company of firemen. In be-

ginning the work he has the good will of every thoughtful citizen. Nobody knows his politics and no one whose opinion is valuable cares whether he is a populist, democrat, or republican if so be he can put out fires. Mr. Wiedman has shown the real kindness and sweetness of his disposition by frequently expressing a determination to put no stumbling blocks in the new chief's way. If the members of the council who are disappointed that their candidates were not appointed, would exhibit the same conscientious liberality the improvement of the service might be hastened.

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The Brick Intersections.

The *Courier* told you so when the brick was bought and the isolated intersections laid. In spite of this protest and others almost as strenuous from councilmen and citizens Mr. George Woods induced the council to buy the brick before it had been decided what the districts should be paved with. In putting in the brick intersections on Eleventh street where the property owners have signed for asphalt the purpose to defeat their wishes is apparent. Anticipating the present situation when intersections are needed to connect blocks whose owners are willing and anxious to pave, and there is no money in the intersection fund, *The Courier* remonstrated when the brick was contracted for. But those were the days of Graham and Woods and the general protest was unheeded.

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Kipling's Potboiler.

Stalky & Co., Mr. Kipling's new serial just being published in book form, is catching it from the critics. Comparing it with other books of boy's experiences at school it does not come up to grade. The three boys, one of which is himself and the other two, his chums, are offensively conceited and selfish. In the whole rather long book there is not a sentence or a phrase that attacks the heroes to the readers. Let us hope Mr. Kipling has not portrayed himself and his friends justly and exhaustively. The boys I have known, though not of the Sunday school book, hero sort, possessed redeeming qualities. Underneath the boyishness and faithful worship of physical force there existed inchoate tenderness and a capacity for devotion to a mother or sweetheart or to their country. These Kipling cubs have the fierceness and selfishness of young grizzlies with a purely human and most overweening conceit which is constantly intruded. The few thrashings administered by the "Head" are thorough and help to restore the balance of things and satisfy sensibilities which the little animals constantly offend.

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Italian Opera.

There were some peculiarities in the recent presentation of *Carmina*. *Rigoletto* and *Il Trovatore* by the Lombardi company. In the first place the continual and star part the prompter took was unpleasant to an American audience which is in the habit of being sung to by singers like DeWolf Hopper and Lillian Russell who cannot sing, which is accustomed to endure placidly actors like Eddie Fay and thousands of sou-brettes who cannot act. But an American public is not accustomed to hearing the prompter in a loud husky voice precede the prima donna and tenor as well as the less important singers, through the opera. When Signora Estafania Col'amarini was singing her exquisite solos and acting superbly the prompter, stationed just behind the piano, and in front of the stage, kept a perfectly audible line ahead of her. An American prima donna would have stamped a pretty foot in demanding the suppression