

able? Can it be cured or mitigated? Is it the fault of the system, the teachers, the homes, or of the population? If the system does not produce manly boys and womanly girls, the public school is not the bulwark of freedom and the advance guard of civilization that orators sing it.

LITTLE CHILDREN OF THE HILLS

[BY MARTHA PIERCE.]
For The Courier

III.

Alfred rode out in the gray morning and climbed up the tall red-topped hill southwest of the camp. His father rode in the other direction. He was going to set traps for the wolves which had been worrying cattle at the Bar M. Three days ago word had come to ride to the Bar M ranch with his traps and poison. This morning he had sent Alfred to take up all the traps still set in the hills bordering the valley of Little Bear creek, with instructions to bring them to the Bar M in the evening. Had he looked over his shoulder he might have seen the sturdy, shaggy little pony, carrying the wild little figure up the steep hill.

It was a gray morning. The mists filled the hollows between the hills, usually Alfred could see miles up and down the valley. But all he could see at this hour was the shifting fog. Out of the silver sea the high hills reared their crimson heads. The cool, delicious morning air blew freshly across them, and above, the eastern summits a dim gold, struggling through the gray, heralded the day. With a whoop of joy, born of health and simple physical delight in the out-of-doors, Alfred began the descent at a racing gallop, which was reckless enough, considering that the pony might at any moment put one of his sure little feet into a gopher's hole and send his rider head-long. But Alfred was not terrified by any possible danger, and no experience had taught him caution, and that hard teacher had mercy on him this morning.

When he topped the farthest hill, the sun had turned all the silver to gold. A meadow lark flew up at his feet, whistling clearly. He imitated it gayly, and chuckled at his own success, when the puzzled bird answered him again and again. Shy rabbits stood on their hind legs, cocked forward their long ears and surveyed him intently. A brown doe leaped up from a hollow, where she had slept, and fled before him. He gave chase with loud hallooing as long as she ran in his assigned direction. When she turned aside he reluctantly forsook her. Alfred carried no gun when alone. That, his father would not allow, lest worse disaster should come upon him than any threatened by the wild creatures of the hills.

So, Alfred rode until he came at last, when it was near noon, out upon the hill-top from whence he could see all the valley of the Little Bear. The hills a half-mile across the valley seemed so near that he might have tossed a pebble across. But the cattle drinking in the clear stream in the midst of the green meadows looked small and far away. Alfred took his bearings, and struck into the hills again, following the course of the valley farther north. When he had found the traps, he dropped from the saddle, threw the reins over the pony's head, letting them trail on the ground. Every hill horse knows that this means, "Wait here until I come." Then, having eaten his lunch, he crossed a small hillock and took up the first trap. Leaving it, he went still further on and found the second. He took this one, and, returning, brought both and hung them over the saddle. There was still a third, which he found with little difficulty, though

you or I would have walked directly into it, so cleverly was it covered with earth, so cunningly was the earth made to seem as undisturbed as the hills had been before the hunter set foot within their lonely reaches. Alfred stooped over the trap and felt for the chain. Suddenly he felt his wrist gripped by the steel jaws. The trap was heavier than the others, and with all effort he could not loosen it from the ground with his free hand. Neither could he reach the stake at the further end of the chain. Mechanically he felt in all his pockets for the wrench, though he knew instantly it was not with him, but in the beautiful cat-skin bag which hung at the side of the saddle. The child sat down by the trap. Made to hold a strong wolf, it was strong enough to hold him, he knew. The little brown pony was too far away to hear his voice. Otherwise all would be well, for it came like a dog at his call. He knew that by this time his father must be twenty miles away, at the Bar M. He would not miss his son until night had fairly fallen, nor grow uneasy at his absence until it had worn well on toward its middle watch. Meanwhile the wolves would be out in the hills. Alfred shuddered. Already he could see the death circle narrowing. He knew the ways of wolves too well to wonder what might come at the last. He knew. He remembered as he sat there, dully and miserably, that except his father, of all those who knew him up and down the green valleys, none knew whither he had gone or when he might return. And the little brown pony, with the long reins trailing on the ground, would stand waiting for his little master, until—until the wolves set upon him. Alfred shuddered again. The warm, golden afternoon sun poured down upon him. A herd of cattle passed by a quarter of a mile to the right, going across the hills in solemn order to the water gap. Soft-footed rabbits crouched and gazed at him with wide, scared eyes. Far up in the blue an eagle wheeled in wide-sweeping circles, so wide-sweeping, Alfred thought, that he might look down, now upon the brown pony, patiently waiting, now upon Alfred, lying hopelessly on his back, with his arms flung out. The one held fast in the strong steel-trap, slowly swelling and purpling, ached bitterly.

After a long time evening came. The sun seemed to fall, once he began to descend, so swiftly did he go from the watching boy. The purple twilight closed around him and the stars came out, shining white and steadfast in the far, deep sky.

Quite worn out with his long afternoon of pain and despair, Alfred fell asleep, though he had planned, in his fear of the gray wolf pack not to close his eyes. The moon swung slowly up the sky and looked down on the dark hills and the sleeping boy. It was quite silent in all the highlands, for it was yet too early for the rallying cry of the wolf pack, or the howling of the coyotes.

Even in the boy's sleep his arm ached bitterly, and he dreamed again the dream which often before had made his life-currents freeze. This was always that his father's big pet rattlesnake had at last taken him unawares, and set its fangs in his hand. He was wakened suddenly by a touch on the free hand, a cold, clammy touch which frightened him in his waking more than the dream in his sleeping, he sprang up, crying out in his fear. "A dark shape loomed big through the darkness. Then in answer to Alfred's cry came a low familiar whinny. It was indeed the pony. He had broken the law of the hill horses, the law of the trailing bridle-rein, which says, "Wait here until I return," and come from his waiting place

across the hillock in search of his little master. Sobbing with relief, Alfred put out his little free hand and patted the shabby brown neck. Then, coaxing him closer, he felt along his side for the cat-skin bag, in which, in the midst of his treasures, was the little wrench with which he was wont to open the traps.

Free, he hurried across the hills to the valley of the Little Bear. There was the ranchman, Bob Lee, not more than five miles along the beaten road, whom Alfred knew of old. He thought of warm-hearted Mrs. Lee and more particularly of the bread and butter and raspberry jam which she had given him the last time she had entertained him in her clean kitchen. She was one of the few women up and down the valleys whose motherly instincts overcame her natural hatred for dirt and snakes, so far that she always took the homeless child into her house when he came that way.

How good to the eyes of little Alfred were the lights in the window of the ranch house, as he and the brown pony pounded swiftly along the dusty road under the stars. And a little later, when the dream of the bread and butter and raspberry jam came true, he was quite contented and happy again. And how sweet and deep was his slumber, on the pallet spread on the kitchen floor, and generously shared, as soon as Mrs. Lee was safely up stairs, with the mongrel dog, who whined at the door. Quite as sweet and deep as the slumber of Mrs. Lee's little son, in his clean, white bed under the eaves or your sleep, my friend, in yours.

CLUBS.

Edited by Miss Helen G. Harwood.

CALENDAR OF NEBRASKA CLUBS

- January
- 26, W. S. C. - Civil Government..... North Bend
- 26, Zetetic c. Literature..... Weeping Water
- 26, Round Table, Fr. literature..... Crete
- 26, History & Art c. German philosophers.....
- Edward
- 26, Fin de Siecle c. Colonial history..... Seward
- 28, 20th Century c. Civil War..... Pawnee City
- 28, W. S. C. Music..... Lincoln
- 29, Fortnightly c. Germany 1848..... Lincoln
- 29, W. S. C. Napoleon..... Columbus
- 29, W. S. C. Educational institutions of the U. S. Wakefield
- 30, Sorosis, English literature..... Tecumseh
- 30, Friends in Council, Fr. sculptors..... Tecumseh
- 31, W. S. C. Music Day..... Auburn
- February
- 1, Athenae c. Gothic architecture..... Lincoln
- 2, Review & Art c. Rubens..... York

G. F. W. C. Officers for 1900-1902.

- President—Mrs. Rebecca D. Lowe, Georgia.
- V.-President—Mrs. C. T. Denison, New York.
- 2d V.-Pres'd't.—Miss Margaret J. Evans, Minn.
- Rec. Sec.—Mrs. Emma Fox, Michigan.
- Cor. Sec.—Mrs. G. W. Kendrick, Pa.
- Treas.—Mrs. E. M. Van Vechten, Iowa.
- Aud.—Mrs. George H. Noyes, Wis.
- Directors—Mrs. Edward L. Buchwalter, Ohio; Mrs. Charles W. Fairbanks, Indiana; Miss Margaret J. Evans, Minnesota; Mrs. Margaret J. Lockwood, District of Columbia; Mrs. Annie West, Massachusetts; Mrs. W. J. Christie, Montana; Mrs. W. J. Coad, South Dakota; Mrs. William Streeter, New Hampshire; Mrs. R. L. Priddy, Kansas.

N. F. W. C. Officers for 1900-01.

- President—Mrs. Draper Smith, Omaha.
- Vice-President—Mrs. Durland, Norfolk.
- Rec. Sec.—Miss McCann, Fremont.
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- Treasurer—Mrs. Cross, Fairbury.
- Auditor—Mrs. Page, Syracuse.
- Librarian—Mrs. Stoutenborough, Plattsmouth.

Almost every week a new club is heralded into existence. The organization of a new club indicates either a need or ambition among a certain number of people. The club has become the means of personal expression in the world of women. To those who are already becoming morbid as to the wo-

man of the Twenty First Century and are holding ideas gruesome to the very extent of predicting that in that age man may not even be allowed to select his own neckties. An investigation of the purpose and purport of clubs should be somewhat of an alleviation to afflicted feelings. It is a difficult if not impossible task to accomplish single-handed much in the way of charity, city improvement, or to gain a little recreation or culture, unless one is an inhabitant of a city or a university town. Clubs, owing to their organization and the co-operation which makes existence for them, have put much within the reach of almost every woman that not many years ago seemed entirely improbable. Clubs are the outward expression of the needs and aspiration of the women of the present day. Each year their work is becoming more practical and more scientific, less fairy-like and less superficial.

Greetings and good wishes may be always extended to new clubs that have a useful purpose. Mrs. Hermann J. Hall of Chicago, formerly Chairman of the Art committee of the General Federation and in a large measure responsible for the successful art meetings of the Milwaukee biennial has formed a new society "the National Outdoor Art Association" of which she has been chosen president. The headquarters of the association will be in Boeton. Mrs. Hall in speaking of the organization says:

"There is a great work to be done by a national organization of women all interested in preserving the beauties of the part of the country in which each one lives. It is time to go into the small towns. There destruction is waged against the natural beauties of scenery by the relentless progress of industry and economy. The Woman's Auxiliary of the Outdoor Art Association will act as information bureau to its members everywhere, and as it is affiliated, will have the services of the leading landscape gardeners of the country. Everything that concerns the improvement of our outdoor surroundings in an artistic sense will be among the interests of the Auxiliary. One of our particular aims will be to enlist property-owners to get away from the conventional style in planting these grounds."

The Fremont Woman's club is urging a public library for Fremont with energy and ability. The tremendous and organized effort it is putting forth must meet with pleasing results. A committee of five has been appointed from the Woman's club and business men to arrange for a mass meeting to be held on Thursday, January 31st. Another committee was appointed to interest the secret societies in the undertaking. Last Sunday and next Sunday the ministers of Fremont will preach upon the value of a library to a community.

Miss Laura D. Gill, A. B., A. M., a graduate of Smith College, was chosen dean of Barnard College at a meeting of the trustees. The deanship has been vacant since the resignation of Mrs. George Haven Putnam, a year ago.

Meedames Harriet MacMurphy and Lillian Gault, delegates to the recent convention of Women's clubs held in the interests of the Louisiana Purchase centennial, at Kansas City, presented their reports to the Omaha Woman's club at the regular meeting on Monday afternoon.

The ladies were enthusiastic in praise of the cordial reception accorded them in Kansas City, and stated that Nebraska had been honored by the appointment of Mrs. MacMurphy as secretary of the convention. This state was also one of the foremost in the number of delegates sent.

The secretary, Mrs. Kennedy, read an