

# CLUB NOTES

## THE WEEK'S REVIEW

Each succeeding meeting of the Lincoln Woman's club is marked by a notable increase of enthusiasm. In both department and open sessions there is a sincerity and earnestness of purpose on the part of the members that goes far toward counteracting the tendency toward superficiality which characterizes the modern education. Especially fortunate is the club in its president, Mrs. Bushnell. Unselfishly devoted to the duties of her office, with unlimited tact and a cordial, yet unassuming manner, "her ways are ways of pleasantness and her paths are paths of peace." The department leaders are not required to be pushers and carriers as well. Discussions of all subjects are spirited, and the Socratic method of teaching is rapidly growing in favor, with most gratifying results.

The meeting on Monday afternoon was in charge of the home department. Following the parliamentary drill the program was opened with two selections of "home" music, "Sounds From Home," by Gungl, and Baumbach's arrangement of "Home, Sweet Home," which were delightfully played by Mrs. Wurzburg. Her interpretation is poetic, but still more noticeable is the wonderful singing tone which she secures with such apparent ease and which is the despair of all amateurs and many professionals. An aria from Mozart was sung by Miss Gericke, accompanied by Mrs. Wurzburg.

Yielding to urgent solicitation, Mrs. Sawyer reluctantly consented to repeat a paper on "The Home," which was recently presented before her department. The appreciation of this paper was manifested by a motion to perpetuate it in print. Following is the address in full:

Suppose we could erase all homes and all home life. Every trace of civilization, all the business, industry and invention in the world would be obliterated. As from the earth man derives everything needed for the support of physical life and comfort, his food and clothing, also the support of animal life which contributes to his necessities, in like manner from the home comes everything, both good and evil, which builds up or destroys human progress, human safety, human happiness, human society.

A perfect home is not a short-lived institution; it does not begin with a marriage vow and end by death or divorce. It is inseparable from the preceding generation, and if not continued by a succeeding generation that is growing out of the past and reaching into a future, is incomplete, imperfect. Hence a home without children is not a perfect home; for parents and offspring are the links which connect one generation with another. Nor is a perfect home after the plan of a boarding house, simply a place to eat, sleep and dress, where the inmates come and go with no concern for each other, although the world is full of these dangerous counterfeits of home.

When we attempt to enumerate, or pause long enough to think on the achievements of the present century, the hosts of truly great men and women, all the advantages which come from inventions and the products of manufacturers, of our educational and artistic opportunities, the refinements, comforts and luxuries of daily life, though overwhelmed by their magnitude and infinitude, we should remember it is the home which has supplied the energy, the brains, the wisdom, the people to originate and execute all these.

On the other hand when we reflect on the daily enumeration of crimes and misdemeanors, on the multitude of shiftless, worse than good-for-nothing human beings, who infest society, on crowded penitentiaries and reformatories, on the swelling ranks of irresponsible, incompetent men and women

seeking positions, we must also admit the fact that the home is equally responsible for persons in these conditions which are incontrovertible proofs that somewhere and somehow, some one has failed in the discharge of responsibility or blundered in the performance of duty.

Then there is an intermediate class, also the direct product of home influence—and too large a class it is—of those who are a sort of human parasite. They live on others. They are good, that is, they are not criminals—they do the world no special harm, but they do the world no specific good. Their virtues are negative, and as there is "no thing" they can do for themselves or for others, they are truly "good-for-nothing."

Every person enrolled in either of these classes—good, bad or indifferent—was once somebody's son, somebody's daughter.

Accepting the statement that the home is responsible for social conditions, it follows that the home-maker is responsible for the home and its output; hence it is impossible to over-estimate, magnify or exaggerate the importance and responsibilities of the home-maker.

We look upon generals of armies and commanders of fleets as occupying important and high positions; but what of the individuals who determine the weal or the woe of the future homes and society—those who contribute to the current of the life of a community the strength and vigor of true manhood and womanhood, or who vitiate, taint and weaken it with corruption and inefficiency? Verily it is no trifling thing to be a home-maker. Honors, titles, wealth, fame are but baubles compared with such jewels as Cornelia boasted of, for sons and daughters with characters shaped and made valuable by home training make the world richer, better and brighter, and are jewels that shall shine on through their influence long after bits of gold and gems have flashed in their last ray of sunlight.

In the home there is a division of labor and duties as immutable and fixed as the law of sex. The husband or father builds from without, and the wife or mother from within. In discussing the ethics and duties of home it is necessary in the outset to concede that upon the one who builds from within depends the larger share of the inspiration and responsibility of results. She it is who ministers to the body with food and clothing, who forms and trains character, who makes the weal or the woe of the inmates. Hence it is that problems of the home are distinctively "woman's problems," which man cannot settle for her. She must work them out for herself, not by shirking duty, not by pointing out the failures of private or public agencies, as schools and churches, not by cowardly fleeing responsibility or shifting it to hired underlings.

There has been more or less interest in the Schley investigation to determine what constitutes efficiency or inefficiency in an officer holding a position of high honor and responsibility. The home-maker, whether she will or no, is sooner or later arraigned before a tribunal from whose decision there is no appeal, and compelled to give in her evidence. She must show to what extent and in what direction she has influenced society.

One source of imperfect homes is a false notion of home and married life. One who by the marriage vow assumes the title of home-maker simply to be supported and taken care of, that is, accepts a valuable consideration with no intention of giving an equivalent in return, or one who talks of her ignorance and inefficiency in the management of a home as something to be

proud of, rather than as a cause for chagrin, or one who considers it a cause for congratulation not to have children to preserve and perpetuate the home and exemplify what miracles may be wrought by high ideals and the development of character—such persons do not know the happiness or meaning of a true home and do not deserve to be happy. Osbourne says: "I pity from my heart a man who has a purposely helpless wife. She is shackles on his feet, a palsy to his hands, a burden on his shoulders, a thorn in his side, a dagger to his heart."

We hold before our boys the goal of statesmanship, of business acumen, and urge preparations to meet competition in the scramble for honors and fortunes, and use every incentive to urge preparation to meet the functions of manhood. Why should not girls be taught that different, but no less honorable duties await them in the making of true homes, and that preparation and training are honorable and necessary.

Home-livers are not home-makers; neither are those homemakers who publish their mistakes and faults in divorce courts, not those too selfish to make an effort to know what is the true purpose in life, not those who care only for what they can get out of this life so long as they are not compelled to put anything into it, not those whose desires are satisfied with the ability to buy all they want, not those who debase and minify the duties of home, who put no workmanlike instinct and pride in what they do, and who actually degrade a noble profession to make it what they call it—drudgery. There can be no drudgery without a menial to perform the drudgery; and if a woman has no more pride than to class herself as a menial, she would not make a very good queen even though she were given a throne. Admitting that cooking and cleaning are the main duties of the home-maker, she who is truly a queen no occupation can make less a queen, while she who lacks a true queenly character no amount of pretending or making-believe can endow with one drop of queenly blood. One thing most needed is a higher ideal of home-making. One writer has said, give us mothers and homemakers of fine, heroic ideas, and the homes and the children in them will be all right; but it is folly to expect a heaven filled with saints when a selfish woman occupies the throne. When mothers first feel a sense of responsibility for their own character, their own strength of will, their capacity for unselfishness, an ambition and courage to meet duty in a masterful way, a determination that whatever rights are denied them, they will above all do their part to create a perfect society—if to such virtues are added the power of education and educated society—then may women hope to bring to its highest uses the divinest institution of humanity—the home.

It is easy to discern a splendid progress in machinery and inventions, but it is not so easy to demonstrate that the homes are equally turning out better and more valuable products. However, the very fact that woman herself is looking into these problems of the home, is taking careful observations of social and family life, is searching for the reservoirs of health and happiness and usefulness, is evidence of progress and development.

Has college life made better mothers and housekeepers? It certainly has increased their sense of responsibility about assuming the duties of home; they are not the unfortunates most frequently found in divorce courts, or bewailing unhappy marriages, or complaining of lack of harmony in the home, or the lack of respect and appreciation of children. An engine may be never so perfectly finished and polished, yet without the motive power of steam and a skilled engineer to manipulate the levers, the engine is of no use. But, being equipped with controlled power, polish and newest appliances will not lessen its usefulness. So if a home-maker has a determination to make a good home, has sufficient will power to create and execute plans, the friction of the machin-

ery will not be augmented because she is cognizant of the laws of the physical and economic world, or has her ideas up-to-date in science, or knows how to find the shortest distance between two points.

Each succeeding generation should be helped by the experience of the preceding. Sons and daughters should be started on life's journey better equipped with ability to do, than were their parents; not obliged to wade through the same slough of despond, helplessness and ignorance in order to reach the wicket gate of success.

Scores of mothers have learned the lessons of home-making in the hard school of experience, wasting time, strength and happiness in groping for or stumbling on the best way to do things, all on account of proper and early training; yet, strange as it may seem, even some of these best mothers let their daughters grow up helpless and ignorant of the first principles of what constitutes a happy home, cheating them out of later years of happiness because spent in groping, blundering and experimenting. Most of these lessons should be learned before girls are fourteen, and looked upon as just as important a part of education and quite as much of an accomplishment as music and dancing. Why is it not as much of an art to put good food on plates as to put pretty paint on them? Why may not one be as proud of planning a dinner as of designing a sofa pillow? Why is not a pan of delicious light biscuit as artistic as a Battenburg dolly?

The true home-maker is one who commands the home as a general commands an army, who plans the campaigns, who locates enemies and constructs fortifications before an attack is made, who is never trapped by emergencies, who sees that every one has a duty to perform and that he performs it, who is mistress and generalissimo of all the details and daily routine of the practical workings of the home, whose rule is absolute and final because wise and thoughtful, who with cheerfulness and the powerful reserve force of good common sense which comes into play in emergencies meets her duties courageously and always victoriously.

"No clever, brilliant thinker she,  
With college record and degree;  
She has not trod the paths of fame,  
The world has never heard her name.  
Home is her kingdom, love her power;  
She seeks no other wand of power.  
Around her childish hearts are twined,  
Who find all purity and good  
In her divinest motherhood.  
This sad old earth's a brighter place,  
All for the sunshine of her face;  
And hearts are happier where she goes,  
Because her smile a blessing throws."

It is worth a great deal to have both courage and ability to do necessary but not always agreeable things. Most of us are very reluctant to break away from old habits, to decide what is the best thing to be done and then to do it, to cultivate the right spirit of doing, which is a quiet acceptance of duty, and then to realize the best of which we are capable.

Leaving out of consideration those women who refuse after marriage all of the responsibilities as well as the comforts of a home, there still remains a large class who assume the command of a home with little or no training. A mother is short-sighted and unjust who subjects her daughter to the ordeal of learning how to keep house after she is married. True, she may learn, but she will never feel the esteem and deference for her mother that comes with the confidence of knowledge, or the respect inspired by gratitude.

Much more is exacted from a home-maker in modern times than was required in the old-fashioned days. The change made in the outer world by inventions is paralleled by the demands made upon woman's time and strength outside the home. Church, society, self-improvement have more than superseded spinning, weaving and brewing. The result is to crowd into a dozen years events which once would have made a life history. Days, weeks, months and years are whirl-