

BY WOMEN—FOR WOMEN.

Brief sketch of the Philanthropic Institutions Maintained by Omaha Women. To devote an issue to the interests of Omaha women and omit therefore the record of their philanthropic and charitable work would be like leaving Miss O'Ferrall out of "Trilby." Just when, in the progress of the ages, the fence was built between women and men, with philanthropy on the one side and politics on the other, no one knows, it is, however, an almost ironical rule that church work is in the hands of the women.

CITY MISSIONS.

The oldest existing Christian organization in Omaha is the City Mission, whose two decades of existence make it comparatively venerable. Started in a small way as a Sunday prayer meeting, it has been steadily forward, doing untold good in a quiet, unostentatious manner. Its first institution was the sewing school, still carried on in the rooms of the Tenth Street Mission, where many a girl has learned the use of a needle under the instruction of some of Omaha's best known women.

YOUNG LADIES' HOME.

The latest institution for or by women in Omaha is the Young Ladies' Home, North Seventh Street, in charge of Miss Enright. It is especially designed as a temporary home for the young ladies of the city, and as a cheap boarding place for women clerks, etc. This article does not aim to be complete, but it is compiled from such data as was received. Some organizations failed to make any response, and as this was not intended as a fanciful sketch, they are necessarily omitted or cursorily mentioned.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Is the Woman's Club a Factor in the Indifference to Philanthropic Efforts? My Dear Mrs. Ford—Yesterday I was invited to attend the Women's club. The room, with a capacity of 400, was crowded with intelligent and earnest women. They gave the entire afternoon to the service and the pleasures of the club, and I am told that they will each spend several hours this week in the same way. Today I have attended the monthly meeting of the oldest philanthropic association of women in the city. There were twelve present, and the meeting was very successful.

THE SINFUL WOMAN.

"Up for the Rarity of Christian Charity." "O for the Rarity of Christian Charity," said the Sinful Woman, as she sat upon the bench, passing by the beauty and gladness of the bright Spring sunshine. Not as one whose life is pure, and to whom the sunlight is only a counterpart of the brightness in her heart, but as one whose sin has come out into the light of day, seeming all the more dark because of the great contrast with the light.

HOME EXTENSION.

College Settlements and the Benefits Derived from Them by the Residents. There is no question about the philanthropy of the present age. It is progressive, it is aggressive, it is insistent. It is the reformer of the gamut of human existence. It has turned its restless, prying, crooked little question mark into the hitherto sacred precincts of the home, and has demanded that it, too, should fall in line. Philanthropists claim that Christian men and women fall in their duty to mankind when they have extended the jurisdiction of their Christian homes would exert in the city out into the country; that no other Christianizing force can compare with that which comes from the home.

THE NEED OF A CRECHE.

The need of a creche or day nursery had long been apparent in the fall of 1887. The Omaha Charity association was organized and steps taken to erect a building for this purpose. This was finished and opened in February, 1888, and is now a well equipped and located as it is just opposite the new public library. It has been a wonderful help to the poor women of the city who were unwilling to part from their children, and who remain at home all day. It is also a boarding house for motherless children. About twenty-five little ones are cared for every day.

HOME FOR THE AGED.

The Nebraska Home for the Aged was incorporated in 1891, and has at present seven inmates, one man and six women, from 69 to 91 years of age. Mrs. J. M. Gant is president of the association. Any aged person may, by the payment of \$300, be cared for during the remainder of his life. But as far as possible the aged are received. The widow of Chief Justice Gant died not long ago. As for all other charitable organizations in the city, the Omaha Charity association is the best support for this institution to enable it to carry on its work.

HOMES FOR UNFORTUNATE WOMEN—THE OPEN DOOR.

The women of Omaha have not been indifferent to the needs of their unfortunate sisters, as is evidenced by the fact that there are four places of refuge for the fallen. The Open Door, which was started by Mrs. G. W. Clark, was the first to offer shelter to the unfortunate, was established in 1888, and has since that time been a Christian Temperance Union. Hundreds of girls have been saved from a life of shame during the seven years of its existence, and more than 100 little orphans have been adopted. The work has always been supported by voluntary subscription, and almost wholly to the indefatigable labors of Mrs. Clark. Two years ago it was made independent of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and is now managed by a board of men and women.

WOMAN'S WORK IN ENGLAND

Some Phases of the New Philanthropy as Seen in Great Britain.

IMPROVEMENT IN EDUCATION METHODS

Changes in the Laws Concerning Property—Women as Factory Inspectors and Poor Law Guardians—Revival of Home Industries.

In the good old days of which some folk love to speak, the only idea of helping one's fellow man was to hole out gifts. Even now in that old country on the east of the Atlantic, where the Anglo Saxon race was cradled, there are many strange bequests extant.

In some parishes a weekly dose of loaves is given to the widows at the door of the church; in others blankets, coal, soup, etc. are regularly given from funds left long ago. There are also foundations of various kinds—almshouses for the aged, free homes for the orphan, and every parish district has its poor house, to which any one born in the district is admitted, housed and fed when in need.

But leaders of thought and work are beginning to realize that the true way of helping our fellow men is to help them to help themselves. We find all sorts of schemes tried to enable the shiftless, the ignorant, the needy, to become self-helpers.

In the little island of Britain, as in this great and glorious republic, "philanthropy" is becoming less and less a giving of alms to the poor, by the great to the humble, and more and more a raising of the race, a wiping out of class distinction, an endeavor to secure individuality on his own legs and bid him "help himself."

Two great women's organizations in Britain, the Women's Liberal federation and the British Women's Temperance association (affiliated with the Women's Christian Temperance union) are working along these lines, especially in the matter of factory work, and recognize that their first aim should be to teach women to think. Both are teaching women to understand that there is a big world open to them at the factory doors, and that needs uplifting and regenerating. Booklets, and indeed big stirring novels, are written, telling of the dark blots in our civilization, and many a woman, who would not have been a bright young maiden, is giving herself to work for her fellows. Hence the college settlement, where educated girls and women live in the slums and spend their lives in the uplifting of humanity. Hence our girls' clubs, where girls who have leisure and education meet for their evening hours, and are given such training as is also given and is necessary to lessen the fearful mortality caused by long hours of confinement in work rooms, stores or factories.

Improved legislation for factories has been another advanced step. "A factory" is no longer a name for a place where five women or children are employed. It is now illegal to employ any children under 14, and such work as is done in the factory is done by children of 6 or 7 worked ten or twelve hours a day. Only four years ago it was stated by one of our own leaders that in asking for women to be appointed as factory inspectors, women showed their ignorance; they might possibly be appointed as assistants, but the inspectors' work is many ways unsuitable for women. Today England has women factory inspectors employed at the same salary as men, and our home secretary (Mr. Asquith) has appointed several women as factory inspectors.

Women now have a right to money they earn. Formerly their husbands had control of it all. Women sit on our school boards, on our parish and district councils, and as guardians of the poor.

The great curse of Britain—drunk—is attacked by both these associations, because it is felt that until this evil is rooted out education will be of little benefit. The B. W. S. A. has opened one inebriate home to prove that drunkenness can be cured. Improvements of every kind are being made, and it is only a matter of time before the evils which fifty or sixty short imprisonments fail to touch. Great women's meetings have memorialized our home secretary on this question, urging him to found homes for the inebriate, to which persons shall be committed for terms of not more than one year, and there employed in suitable occupations and treated as diseased persons rather than as criminals.

Another work of the new philanthropy is the opening up of new careers for women. The Horticultural college in Swanley, Kent, begun but a few years ago in a very humble manner, is now turning out women florists, gardeners, basket growers and mushroom tenders, thus putting a pretty and congenial trade into the hands of women. The new industries of the spinning and weaving are another trade which is beginning to attract attention, while clerkships in our postal, telegraph and government offices were opened to women on equal terms with men, save on the one question of pay. Why does a woman receive less money for work equally good and equal in quantity? Does the question suggest a further thought? How do some of the girls in our dry goods stores and other places live on the wages they receive?

"Lady Dilke, aided by a whole band of workers, is trying to remedy this evil strictly from the point of view of the philanthropist. It is now covered with a network of women's trades unions. Strange to say, the women themselves are the greatest hindrance in the way of their own betterment. They are not so much interested in their own betterment as they are in the betterment of their fellow women. Many pay their subscriptions irregularly and are indifferent. Still, nearly every trade is now organized, and it behoves without exception the men to hold the women in their endeavor. They realize how fatal to their interest is the class struggle of women and children.

The old boarding school, where accomplishments, carriage, demeanor were the main subjects taught, has been replaced by high schools, where a sound education is given at about one-fourth the cost of the old private establishments. In these schools girls are prepared for the universities and fitted for life as heads of good businesses, doctors, lawyers, etc. The misery of six daughters at home, cavilling and carping, prinking and envying is fast becoming a thing of the past. Daughters have their calling as well as sons and are becoming educated accordingly. Even in the homes of the aristocracy girls are commanding a free hand—a profession, a life's purpose other than the mere society life and weary waiting for a suitable man.

Ancient history tells of woman-governed states; these passed and man ruled. The new philanthropy shall bring in neither patriarchy nor matriarchy, but a greater, nobler, higher race made possible by a more perfect motherhood in which man and woman shall work together in home, in commerce, in the state and in the church.

LOUISA B. BYLES.

It seems impossible to estimate its power for good in a community, when we consider how many, disheartened by failure in some smaller field, have been inspired to renewed efforts in the larger one. "To touch the path of those who are strong, 'to touch life with an upward impulse.'"

No person who has been actively interested in charitable or philanthropic work can deny the facts stated in the above letter. We have all felt, but too keenly the weakness and impotence of the small number of members and consequent lack of enthusiasm.

It cannot be denied that a large number of women follow the fashions in their social and domestic life, and in their philanthropic work as well. A certain "mission" or "charity" becomes as truly a fad as a new coat of sleeve or skirt or a peculiar shade of hair.

It must be admitted, too, that despite the concession that altruism is a natural and prime constituent of woman's nature, too many women, however sincere, are in their philanthropic efforts by home or family line. Those who see further and are intelligently convinced that no sphere less than God's world should satisfy American women must overcome the influence of the more or less petty calls, the most pious cries for help, because they are so few that time and strength fail to meet the demand.

However one views the club as an outsider because other calls have been more imperative believes that the cause of this apparent indifference is further to seek than in the fact that the club is in the other direction, because a woman can hardly have her horizon enlarged without a broadening of her sympathies and a widening of her sphere. It is not the territory, in the way peculiar to her sex.

I said apparent indifference, advisedly, because it is not indifference, but, as far as it exists its cause is not far to seek. "In union there is strength" always. If women were united for the purpose of philanthropic work, their power would be irresistible. But social and especially denominational differences separate them into multitudinous small and comparatively weak organizations, expending a large part of their strength they have to maintain the struggle for existence, and having comparatively little to devote to the cause which they are organized to promote.

But the processes of evolution are at work as continuously in the social as in the physical world. The club, which has been the fact that in the former man has a larger opportunity to help on the progress by intelligent and voluntary selection. In 1888, when the first women's club was organized, it was a mere gathering of women who felt that they were being crowded out in the great life struggle, to study the principles that underlie the success of their more fortunate neighbors, and instead of being against them, they were for them.

Will it not be well when our religious and philanthropic bodies accept and incorporate the principles of our body politic? "United we stand, divided we fall."

MARY DE VOLL.

Do women's clubs interfere with philanthropic or missionary work? In my opinion, no, because club life teaches inexperienced people to think independently and to work unaided. Most women's clubs have been formed in the last ten years, and in the twenty years, but philanthropic and missionary work has also increased in that time. As self-reliance in thought and action has grown, there has been a corresponding increase in others. There is an old argument that if women were educated they would neglect their families. The truth is, they arrange, manage, and accomplish more in the former times.

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