

Future of the Grand Army

Written for The Bee by
Commander R. S. Wilcox

THE Grand Army of the Republic is a "last man's club." The members are rapidly dropping out. When the last veteran is gone the Grand Army will cease to exist, except in the memories of an ever-grateful people.

Propositions have been made from time to time that the life of the Grand Army be prolonged by extending its membership to include sons of veterans and the Spanish-American war veterans. However plausible may be the reasons advanced, this will never be done. The veterans of the great civil conflict are so distinct from those of any other war that assimilation is as unwise as it is unnecessary. Organizations of the veterans of the revolutionary, 1812 and Mexican wars have not been perpetuated by the addition of an outside membership and there is no good reason for doing so in our organization. After the old boys in blue are gone no society will be needed to keep alive the memories of their valorous deeds. They made it possible for the United States of America to become the greatest nation upon the face of the earth and a united, intensely patriotic country is their noblest monument.

The wavering ranks are thinning fast. Father Time is reaping his own and one by one the veterans are being gathered to



GRAND ARMY MEN LINED UP AT PLATTSMOUTH.

their fathers. Ten or fifteen years from now civil war veterans will be as scarce as Mexican war veterans are today. The average age of the veterans is 60. Some of those who entered the army during the closing years of the rebellion, and many of them went in at 12 to 14, will be with us for some years to come. But it cannot be a great while until the last post is mustered out by the Great Commander. Then other loving hands will drape the charter in mourning and no more will the roll be called until the final muster-out in eternity. Statistics contained in the reports read

at the thirty-fourth annual encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, held in Chicago on August 29-30, 1900, show how rapidly the veterans are going. The membership gradually increased from the organization of the first post in 1865 until the high water mark in membership was reached in 1896 when the total in good standing was 405,483. Each year since has seen a steady decline. Last year the number was 278,962, and for the present year the figures will be even smaller. The loss by death at the present time is about 3 per cent and other causes make the rate of

decrease much higher. The figures for the department of Nebraska are in proportion. The membership on June 30, 1900, was 6,145. Now it is barely 5,800. There remain, of course, comrades who are not members of the Grand Army, but as the years go by they realize to a greater extent the need of fraternalism. The membership is being constantly added to from that source, though not to a sufficient extent to offset the death roll.

The passing of the Grand Army means the dissolution of an organization that has no equal in its unique objects and mem-

bership. It is a fraternal and reminiscent order and the greatest patriotic society in the world. The comrades are all growing old, and with increasing infirmities there is urgent need of a closer touch and larger sympathy with and for each other.

Much has been accomplished in the thirty-five years of the Grand Army's existence. The widow and orphan as well as the old veteran himself have been cared for. Through its efforts national cemeteries have been established and battlefields marked with suitable monuments. Systematic efforts have been made with great success for the introduction of patriotic civics in the public schools.

In all its work the Grand Army has been ably assisted by that band of noble women, the Woman's Relief corps. Wherever there is a corps a good post will always be found, and many posts would be compelled to give up the struggle if it were not for the loving help of the women. Their unselfish work, watchful care and loyal devotion are known to every comrade.

The Grand Army veteran is nearing the end and his work is mainly done. It is his aim to so live that his example will inspire our youth with a higher patriotic love of country and thus secure a citizenship worthy of this great nation.

R. S. WILCOX.

Physical Culture for Women

Written for The Bee by
Helen Woodsmall, Physical Director Y. W. C. A.

THE Young Women's Christian association stands for all that is progressive and up-to-date in the educational and physical development of young women, and in a large and well-organized association such as we possess here in Omaha the physical culture department constitutes one of its most attractive features. The fundamental aim of this department is the promotion and maintenance of health, and the association feels that "physical training and spiritual loftiness are not two duties, but parts of one duty—that of living the completest life which it is possible for one to live." The young women of today are realizing more and more that they must be strong in body in order to properly perform the duties assigned them in life, and therefore must have systematic physical training.

The physical culture work in all the Young Women's Christian associations of this country has rapidly increased in importance during the last ten years. Beginning in almost every instance with a small room and only a few members, the work has steadily grown in popularity until now it has reached such proportions that most of the associations have provided large and well equipped gymnasiums under the direction of competent instructors. There are evening as well as day classes in order that the business women, the women at home and the school girls may all avail themselves of the excellent opportunities offered.

Upon entering any one of these classes each member is given a thorough physical examination, which includes the anthropometric measurements and examination of heart and lungs, thus enabling the director to know what work will be best adapted to each pupil's needs, and also how much she can stand. The class work given in these association gymnasiums consists of military marching, artistic gymnastics, games and the use of heavy and light apparatus. Clubs, dumbbells, wands and bar bells are classed under the head of light apparatus. Special attention is given to free-hand gymnastics, known as the Swedish system, and which consists of successive movements in flexion, extension, etc., of the legs, trunk, arms, pelvis and



Y. W. C. A. BASKET BALL TEAM.

every exercise is definitely known, making it of great benefit in correcting special faults, such as spinal curvature, flat chest, weak back and round shoulders.

One main object of physical training is to increase the efficiency of the circulation and respiration, for if these two fundamental functions of the body are in good working order the muscles will meet any reasonable demand. In all our class work the condition of the chest is given special attention, correct methods of breathing being a very important feature of the work; also the proper pulse and carriage of the body as affecting the condition of the vital organs and their functions are always insisted upon. For an example of incorrect posture take the average girl between the age of 12 and 15, or the formation period, and notice that she carries the weight of the body on the heels, with hips and chin forward instead of weight on the balls of the feet and chest leading. The sooner these faulty positions are corrected the easier they are to overcome.

What Comes of It.

Some of the results of physical education, including all the different systems, taking the best from each, briefly given are: Better health, greater strength, co-ordination, symmetry, endurance, grace and the improvement of the observation, memory and

attention. Clumsiness and awkwardness generally are only signs of want of nervous control over the muscles. After all, grace is simply muscular control and this is gained by concentration of the will on exercise taken by command. Thus the muscles are trained to respond more readily and easily to the will, thereby gaining greater self-control and self-reliance as well as organized thinking and concentration of attention, qualities so essential to success and which are in constant demand through life. These same qualities very materially aid in the formation of character, the aim of all true education, of life itself.

Degrees of Exertion.

A woman will rarely ever be found who takes systematic exercise every day who is not strong and healthy. By this we do not mean simply the daily walk, which is excellent, but not sufficient. Care, however, should be taken not to overdo. Women very frequently say they cannot take exercise. This is because they have not given it a fair trial. Having so much nervous energy, they are inclined to go beyond their strength by taking up something new, such as rowing or long rides on their bicycles, without first preparing for such active work through the use of simple exercises. Basket ball, tennis, walking and general gymnasium work will make a vast difference in a girl who before was languid, never ab-

solutely ill perhaps, yet never well. A few months of such work will make her forget she ever had such a thing as nerves and she will begin to learn how much joy there is in life. Our Omaha association recognizes the fact that physical exercise judiciously taken is essential to the average girl and it has therefore provided every means for such training.

Local Work is Growing.

During the last two years our gymnasium department has made rapid progress, in-

they have sufficient exercise from their home duties, a fact which is not disputed. However, systematic physical training brings in a different set of muscles from those used in the routine labors of the home. The devoted mother who daily practices some system of training finds these labors of love less fatiguing, at the same time bringing a spirit of rest and exhilaration into the entire household.

Basket Ball a Feature.

During the last two or three years bas-



HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' BASKET BALL TEAM.

creasing its membership from forty-four to 250, the present enrollment. The objects, character of work done and the effects are practically the same as those just described. There are large classes of high school girls and children. Their intellectual powers will be much stronger for having developed the physical side of their nature, and, besides, in them lies the hope of the future woman for better health and more perfect bodies. There are also morning classes for married women and evening classes for the business girls. Those who are indoors during the day and have little or no exercise find an hour spent in the gymnasium proves a delightful recreation, and, by thus working off an excess of nervous energy, a feeling of rest, both physical and mental, is experienced. This is particularly applicable to the home keepers, who are so often heard to say

ket ball has become an attractive feature in gymnasium work. In our own Young Women's Christian association gymnasium the two best teams have played several match games before the public, as well as having participated in the tournament given recently by the gymnasium girls of the University of Nebraska. This tournament was of unusual interest, as it was the first ever held in Nebraska. The exhibition Friday night closed the indoor work for the year. Immediately following will be the outdoor sports, which proved so delightful last year. The outdoor work consists of tennis, quarts, bicycling and outing parties, for we believe 'tis better to hunt in fields for health brought, Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught; The wise for cure on exercise depend; God never made His work for man to mend.

HELEN WOODSMALL,
Physical Director.



PUNCHING THE BALL—Y. W. C. A. GYM.

neck. No weights are held in the hands, so each part of the body does work in proportion to the strength of its own muscles, for it moves only by its own weight. The work increases in strength according to the increase in power of the lungs, heart and digestive organs, so that it may be suited to both children and adults. One principal law of the Swedish system is unity, which means that movements must be so given that in developing one part the growth of another is not decreased. Each movement has some defined physiological value, so that the effect of