

to be an elderly lady of charming manners but entirely without a knowledge of parliamentary usage and of a confirmed dilatory habit. Business sessions were delayed in commencing because the president was not present and they were prolonged beyond the time of closing because the president was ignorant of the methods of expediting and closing discussions. Yet so strong is the influence of position this good and pleasant, but impossible lady, who is the wife of a former ambassador to Germany, was reelected to the office of president. Many women are unaccustomed to consider the fitness of a feminine candidate for the office she desires to ornament herself with, and contrariwise are so in the habit of voting for or against a candidate because the woman has held the office one term and expects it again, or because she is a lady of rank and wealth or for some other irrelevant reason, that these few remarks on Mrs. Uhl's unfitness, will probably be considered impertinent, though nobody who was present at the St. Louis meeting can deny their truth.

One of the most important results of club life is the power of discrimination that women are gaining. A president of a large society requires executive ability. She must have habits of promptness, of quick decision and of accurate discernment. She may have wealth, position and a gracious presence but a president can get along without these latter ornaments and the former are absolutely necessary. The musical clubs are of more recent formation than the literary clubs and musicians are said to be artistic and dreamy rather than businesslike and prompt or exigent in any way. Wherefore the Amateur club's irresponsible president may do no more than mildly irritate the performers whose numbers are set forward an hour or so because she is unavoidably detained at dinner. But the time will come and is fast approaching when no woman who does not possess the prerequisites of knowledge, promptness and perfect comprehension of the specific duties of her position can be elected to the presidency of any federation of clubs musical or otherwise.

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#### The Bridal Tour.

The custom which many of the Spring brides have inaugurated of not going on a journey is a wise one. It outwits the rice throwers and trunk decorators, for where is the use of filling a bride's hair with rice if she is to stay at home where everybody knows she is a bride without the rice. Mr. and Mrs. Richard Harding Davis were married in the house they were to remain in for a few weeks after the wedding and they enjoyed the triumph of bidding the wedding guests farewell. Though thinking on the poor little brides and the badgered bridegrooms who have been pelted from the bride's parents' home by handfuls of rice and dissolute old shoes, it was magnanimous in Mr. and Mrs. Davis not to throw things at the departing guests.

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#### The Sheriff.

The number of candidates for county offices is increasing. Every day a new candidate for sheriff or clerk of the district court confidently announces himself with the salutatory that he could not help, it his friends were so insistent and the supply of really good men so short. Sheriff Trompen expects to be renominated for a third term. I hope the members of the convention will consider Mr. Trompen's character and disqualifica-

tions for the position before making so palpable an error as his nomination. A sheriff should have a judicial temperament. He has, if not finally absolute, at least immediate and temporarily despotic authority over helpless prisoners. If the sheriff be a spiteful, vindictive man who will use his position to punish prisoners who before their incarceration or after it, may have offended him, he is eminently disqualified from any authority over his fellow men however the latter may have offended. There is more than one instance in which Sheriff Trompen has used his office to punish those who have offended him. For instance, more than a year ago The Courier, in response to many letters from mothers and fathers, began an attack on the gambling rooms which in spite of the law were run openly and apparently without fear of the police or of the sheriff who are employed for the enforcement of the laws regulating vice. The sheriff replied to the effect that gambling inside the town was not his business but that of the mayor, chief of police and of the policemen. Later the G. A. R. encampment was held at the fair grounds and gambling booths were run as openly as cigar or pop corn stands. The sheriff was on the grounds but until his attention was called to the open violation of the law again and again by the Courier gamblers were not molested. The real trouble was, I have heard, that a gambling concession had been sold to them by the local managers of the assembly.

Such a bargain could have had no influence upon a conscientious sheriff, for a concession to cheat or steal can not be sold even by a church warden. Martin Luther knocked out indulgences a long time ago. The reluctance with which the Sheriff finally advised the proprietors of the gambling booth that they must stop business created a suspicion that he had had an understanding with the director referred to and it was this growing suspicion that finally forced him to order the gamblers off. Since that time the sheriff who is paid a salary to see that law and order is enforced in this county and not for idling or winking at crime has refused to deliver to The Courier those legal publications marked for The Courier by the attorneys who send them to the sheriff's office, thus admitting that he did not approve of an influence which drove the gamblers out of business and was willing to use the power vested in him as sheriff to punish a publisher who insisted that the law be enforced.

Secondly a sheriff should have sufficient education to make him comprehend the affairs and business of men. Mr. Trompen is grossly ignorant, with an ignorance which narrows and deepens his prejudices. There are also facts in regard to the acceptance of illegal fees in his administration of the sheriff's office, not generally known to the public but which should be carefully considered.

#### The City Improvement Society.

In view of the number of inquiries concerning the origin and work of the City Improvement society of Lincoln from women in other towns, who wish to do something to clean and improve them the president of the Lincoln society has asked me to print an account of it, that future correspondents may be answered in less time.

The Lincoln City Improvement association was organized about two years ago by Mrs. Matilda R. McConnell, Mrs. M. D. Welch, Mrs. H. H. Wheeler and others. They were induced to form such a society by the

success of similar ones in other places and by the dirty, weed-grown, spit-covered city of Lincoln.

The society organized and elected Mrs. McConnell as president. She appointed committees on cleaning streets and alleys, on waste paper and refuse, on side walks, on sanitation, on weeds and still another, on school grounds. Even persons most jealous of what they are pleased to call the intrusion of women into public affairs admit that the appearance of the city is much improved by the patient and persistent work of these committees. Especially has the work of the committee on school grounds been valuable. It has made slightly playgrounds of squalid yards, it has taught the little children that the grounds are theirs and that papers and rubbish are a disgrace and offense. This committee had the easiest and pleasantest work to do because children are natural reformers and propagandists. They believe in a millennium and when we become as little children, they and we will accomplish it. The children picked up the papers, stopped making chalk pictures on dead walls and became judges of nicely kept grounds. The total enrollment of public school children in Lincoln is 6,496 and when 12,992 hands went to work picking up the fragments of letters which the stupid brutal, grown people continued to scatter to the winds the city improved immediately so that even the stupid, selfish, grown people who had scattered papers and refuse with the remark that the women and children would be pleased to have something to do, were ashamed and especially when the stupid people's own children endeavored to show them the enormity of the offense they were committing against the community. In this work Mrs. Seamark who lives in the neighborhood of the Park school has been especially successful and that school yard is one of the prettiest and neatest in the city.

The Patron's Association has grown out of these efforts to impress the children and their parents with the importance and potential value of their relation to the material city. The patron's association has become a permanent institution in every school district. The meetings bring parents, teachers and children together and sympathy, knowledge and love are fostered. The school grounds committee with the help of the Patron's association by means of school entertainments raised sixty dollars at the Elliot and one hundred and fifty dollars at the Park school for the purchase of trees and employment of labor. At the Patron's association meetings, refreshments are served and the social feature of the entertainment brings the parents of the children in a neighborhood together and unites them by a common bond—the solicitude for their children. In the meetings the little child is in the centre and he teaches the fathers and mothers the silliness and artificiality of caste and the little barriers they have chosen to erect against their poorer or richer neighbors. For the poor are often more tenacious of irrelevant distinctions than the rich.

In the department of street and alley supervision the most marked improvement has been made in the matter of paper. The bill-posters, who formerly tore off the paper from the boards, and thrust what would go into their push carts, and left the rest to blow about the streets, have responded after many appeals and some threatening of the penalty made for such offenses, to the society's efforts. This reform of the bill-posters and the children's crusade has effected the

most important changes in the aspect of the city. During these two years of city cleaning, the members of the society have had the cordial and cheerful co-operation of the street commissioner and health officer. If the street commissioner, mayor and city council had been even passively opposed to the object and efforts of the society very little could have been accomplished except with the angelic children. The side walk committee was early discouraged and accomplished little because the law compelling lot owners to keep their side walks in repair is defective and renders the ordinance inoperative. Two years ago in response to the representations of the weeds committee the council spent five hundred dollars cutting them down. Last summer the council ordered the construction of cans for waste paper and refuse. These were placed on the busiest corners and are of great service as receptacles of banana peeling, envelopes and things that the stupid, selfish and slovenly still throw on the walks. However, their usefulness would be increased if they were emptied oftener.

Not the most apparent effect of the efforts of the society, but one of the deepest importance is the understanding of the hitherto not fully appreciated efforts of the city officials to do the duties they were elected to perform, but which can never be accomplished without the co-operation of the citizens. Heretofore the city officials have been strangers to the housekeepers of the city. But the keeping a city clean and restraining the disorderly from breaking the ordinances is much like the duties of a housekeeper and the mother of a family. The spring elections resulted in the election of a mayor who was the choice of most of the housekeepers of the city. The City Improvement society invited him to talk to the members at a recent session, about the city. The mayor accepted the invitation and talked so sensibly and modestly that every member went home with a new idea of the duties and difficulties of a mayor and a great deal of respect for the dignity and power of the office. This summer members of the council, and excise board, the chief of police, the street commissioner and Mayor Winnett are to be invited to address the society. All of these men are unusually able and honest. It may encourage them to know they are being observed by the housekeepers of the city and it will be of educational advantage to the women to become acquainted with those upon whose faithful performance the suppression of vice, the regulation of saloons and the protection of minor boys depend. If the City Improvement Society had accomplished nothing more than such an entente cordiale between the officials and the households of the city there would be reason for congratulation. Mrs. Taylor, the present president, of the society is a student of economics and a teacher of economics in the State university. Under her inspiration the society will begin the study of city charters and a comparative examination of American and European municipal government including the relative power possessed by council and mayor, the latter suggested by the American tendency to centralize more and more power, appointive and executive, in the mayor, and by the growing power of the council in Europe.

The members of the City Improvement society feel that they have only made a beginning. The city is still very dirty, littered with papers, disfigured by weeds, and the side walks, public buildings and street cars are filthy with spit. But the council is composed of clean, intelligent, conscien-