

THE WOMEN'S CLUBS IN THE MIDDLE WESTERN STATES

BY MRS. JOHN DICKINSON SHERMAN,

Recording Secretary of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

In setting forth "what the women's clubs of the middle West have stood for during the last decade," and giving "a résumé of the results of their work in the public sentiment of this region respecting education, the standard of home life, the industrial position of women, the protection of childhood, and the moral and esthetic life of the community," the subject must be considered from several viewpoints. The club movement as it stands today is the result of an evolution, and is still in an evolutionary stage.

A long step forward in the evolution of the club movement in the middle West — for the purposes of this article the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, and Ohio — was the organization of the clubs into state federations and the union of the clubs, either directly or indirectly through the state federations, with the General Federation. This step was taken about a decade ago — by Iowa in 1893, by Illinois and Ohio in 1894, by Michigan and Missouri in 1895, and by Indiana in 1900. To review the work of the last decade, therefore, is in a sense to review the work of the General Federation in the middle West.

It must be remembered, however, that the middle West has a club history which goes back to a period long antedating the organization of the General Federation in 1889 in New York. In some cases this history dates back to the '50s, as in the case of the Ladies' Library Society of Kalamazoo, Mich. (1852), and the Minerva Club of New Harmony, Ind. (1859). In the '70s powerful clubs — the Chicago Women's Club is a good example of the type — were doing work in the middle West that had compelled their recognition as semi-public bodies. These clubs joined the General Federation and took up its work, but they neither lost

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their own individuality nor abandoned their own particular purpose.

The Middle West Club, as organized a generation ago by women of middle age, was primarily a club for the educational and intellectual betterment of its members. In many cases the daughters have followed in their mothers' footsteps, and this type of club is strong in numbers and membership.

The second stage was marked by the organization of clubs devoted to the benefit of the local community or some particular part of the community and by the enlarging of the scope of the work of existing clubs to include some phase of public endeavor — a movement away from self-culture and toward service.

The third stage is the acquisition of sufficient power through organization and united effort to make the clubs a strong factor in municipal, state, and national affairs. The full realization of this power and its responsibilities has only just come to the mass of the club women. Henceforth their motto is concentration of purpose and united action. Co-operation is the order of the day among the clubs, as elsewhere.

It must be kept in mind that these several stages of development are in a sense co-existent, inasmuch as many clubs are successfully working out the three-fold mission of benefiting their members, bettering the local community, and co-operating in state and national activities. These conditions call for a consideration of the club movement from several points of view. For it is evident that the club movement stands for many things: — the various kinds of mutual benefit extended by one member to another and by one club to another; the local endeavor of the individual club to benefit the community or some particular part of the community; the purposes that have animated the state federations, and the impulses that have come to the individual clubs and state federations through the General Federation. This gives large variety to the scope, and produces an enormous total of work accomplished in almost innumerable ways.

As it is difficult to set forth all that the club movement stands for, so it is impossible definitely to bound its accomplishment. For the influence of the clubs upon the community has been both direct and indirect. As to the direct influence a definite statement of results may be made. The indirect influence, while possibly no less effective, cannot be even approximately measured.

The club membership of the middle West is relatively large. There are more than thirteen hundred clubs, with a membership of over 75,000. However varied the purpose of the individual club, the mass of the membership has stood for certain cardinal principles of American life that make for the good of the community — such things as education, better schools, patriotism, temperance, and the protection of women and children. Even when they have not taken the initiative or publicly co-operated, the consistent attitude of these thousands of club women on these questions has been a vital factor in the growth of the community.

When women have worked openly for these and other things of value to the community they have sometimes worked alone, often in co-operation with public governing bodies, and not infrequently against the opposition of lawmaking bodies. When the women undertake at their own expense a work that does not call for legislation and can by no possibility infringe upon the rights and privileges of the man, there is always official tolerance, frequently approval, and sometimes co-operation. In general, however, when a work calls for a diversion of the public funds, or requires the sanction of legislation, or seeks to change the existing laws, it is looked upon with indifference or hostility by the powers that be and the lawmakers.

Here is a case in point: The club women of Illinois established, supported, and developed the traveling library system until it reached such proportions that they felt that the state should assume the burden and the responsibility. They therefore offered the libraries, amounting to ten thousand books, to the state and presented a library extension bill to the Legislature. The measure was defeated; in fact, it never had a chance of passage. The fact that club women in the middle West have secured the legislation that they have is the best possible proof of the strength of the club movement.

Where there is active co-operation between the clubs and organizations of men, or between the clubs and governing bodies, sometimes one and sometimes the other takes the initiative. It is often difficult, therefore, to determine the share of credit to which each is entitled. It is also frequently true that laws directly in the line of work of the clubs have been passed without the initiative or even the co-operation of the clubs. These conditions should be

kept in mind; the score to the credit of the club women is long enough without adding debatable items.

The middle West is not a homogeneous territory, from the viewpoint of the club movement. Different conditions in different states have created different needs, and consequently different lines of work. It is not possible to say that all of the middle West is equally interested in the amelioration of child labor, for example, or in forestry, or in juvenile courts and probation laws. And Indiana would be the first to cry out in protest were one to say that all the states are equally interested in art and literature.

Having thus cleared the ground, one may begin to set forth what the club movement in the middle West stands for and recount what has been accomplished. And it is not necessary to attempt to set forth in detail what the club movement stands for. The count of what has been accomplished is sufficiently comprehensive, since there has been accomplishment in every line of work. It is sufficient to say, in passing, that the clubs of the middle West stand for all that the General Federation stands for, and more, for they co-operate in the work of the central organization and in addition have their own particular and peculiar missions.

The work of the General Federation is largely done through its standing committees. To name these committees, therefore, gives at a glance the main divisions of the work to which it stands pledged. They are: Art, civics, civil service reform, education, forestry, household economics and pure food, industrial and child labor, legislation and library extension. Most of these divisions are broadly inclusive and stand for manifold activities. Thus education as understood by the General Federation means, among other things, better schools and more of them; vacation, manual training, industrial and cooking schools, compulsory education and the Juvenile court.

The club movement, considered from the viewpoint of its effect upon the membership, may be dismissed in a single paragraph. No intelligent person can doubt that the club has been a blessing to women. It has appeased a mind hunger. It has been a liberal education to many women, both in general culture and the conduct of affairs. It is largely the training of the club that has made possible the manifold activities of the club movement.

The rank and file of the club women of the middle West

form a truly admirable body of women — loyal, sincere, and thoroughly in earnest. Well to do, well informed and capable, unhampered by the very rich or the very poor, the flower of every community, they are at once an aristocracy and a democracy of brains with the watchword, "The Home, Patriotism, and Good Government."

The most promising investment for the good of the community is the education of the coming generation and into this investment the federated club women of the middle West have poured a wealth of time, effort, and money. They have labored whenever and wherever the opportunity offered — on their own initiative, in co-operation with school and municipal bodies, and in conjunction with other organizations. They have been active in every phase of the educational question — the public schools, compulsory education, child labor, and the Juvenile court. Women have served on boards of education, and as county and state superintendents, and state university trustees. The clubs have secured and even forced the passage of educational laws. In fact, so manifold have been the activities of the clubs that the ground can be covered here only in a general way, with the citation of a few notable cases of special endeavor.

In working for the cause of education the club women have not neglected the things that too often seem petty and sentimental to the men of affairs. They have endeavored to bring the school and the home closer together through mothers' clubs, child study circles, and social intercourse. They have tried to cultivate the esthetic sense by gifts of pictures and casts, by the artistic decoration of schoolrooms, and by prizes for flower culture. They have worked to make the schoolhouses and grounds pleasing as well as useful. In the direction of bigger things from a material viewpoint the credit for many new schoolhouses belongs to the women. The establishment and maintenance of free kindergartens are common; in many cases — as in that of the Under Age Free kindergarten, originally established as a charity by the Wednesday Club of St. Louis — these schools have grown to be notable institutions. Manual training has had a good friend in the clubs; united club effort in Iowa, for example, has established it in six schools in the last two years. Ohio crowned five years' hard work with the success of securing legislation for four normal schools in 1902 and appro-

priation for two. The women of Ohio also helped to win a very notable victory in the campaign to revise the school code after the modern methods obtaining in Chicago and St. Louis; it was the club woman and the educator against the politician

Compulsory education is of course a vital factor in education, and the middle West club women are entitled to a very large share of the credit for the existing laws. In Illinois the bill that became a law in 1897 was drawn up by a joint committee from the State Federation and the Collegiate Alumnae association; it is a good law, providing for attendance between the ages of 7 and 14 for sixteen weeks, twelve of which must be consecutive, and for truant officers. The Iowa women secured a law providing for sixteen weeks of attendance. The Missouri Federation, after two unsuccessful attempts through co-operation, prepared its own bill, got it through the Senate and then united with the friends of another similar bill and secured the law. In Indiana the legislative committee has recommended that the compulsory school age be raised from 14 to 16. Illinois club women have been largely instrumental in removing all inconsistencies between the compulsory education and child labor laws. It follows as a matter of course that the middle West clubs have been active in the movement for parental, truant, and industrial schools, which are a natural and necessary outgrowth of the compulsory education crusade. A notable case in this line of educational work is the raising of \$40,000 by the Chicago Women's club, through its members and friends, for the Glenwood industrial school for boys, a model institution in the country near the city.

An interesting contrast with compulsory education is the work of the vacation school. So interesting is the contrast that it is worth while to set forth with some detail the operations of a notable vacation school undertaking by the women's clubs of Chicago. In 1896 the Civic federation opened one vacation school — the first in Chicago. The next year one was maintained by the Chicago University settlement. In 1898 the women's clubs took up the work, and the Chicago vacation school committee of women's clubs opened five schools. The last two years this committee has maintained eight. There is a vacation school board with a club woman president and secretary; the other members consist of eight club women and eight men. Since 1898 the club women have con-

tributed nearly \$25,000 to the support of these schools. Last year they gave \$4,321, an increase of \$300 over the year before. This money was contributed by more than fifty clubs in the city and its suburbs. Individual contributions amounted to nearly \$2,000. The Chicago board of education appropriated \$5,000 toward the payment of salaries of teachers. The total enrollment was 6,583, and the total average daily attendance was 4,360. The cost of maintaining eight schools five weeks was \$10,335.63. The cost per capita, based on the average daily attendance, was, therefore, \$2.60, and on the total enrollment, \$1.56. Nearly a thousand dollars was expended on excursions. Twenty-eight nationalities were represented. The Italians led, with 1,424, and the Jews were a close second, with 1,408. The Germans were third, with 1,074. Other nationalities with noteworthy enrollments are: Bohemian, 670; Irish, 434; American, 373; Norwegian, 270; Swedish, 269; Russian, 246; Polish, 214. The only per cent of enrollment above twenty is in the case of the Italians and Jews. The highest per cent of enrollment of the other nationalities mentioned is 16 for the Germans and 10 for the Bohemians; the others range from 6.59 for the Irish to 3.25 for the Poles. The American per cent is 5.66. These eight vacation schools could be filled many times over. At some of them the rush on opening day is something astounding and terrible. When the school in the Ghetto was opened last year a mob of 1,500 men, women, and children fought in front of the building for a chance to enter, and three policemen were powerless. Every day of the term a crowd stood at the front door waiting for some child to drop out through sickness. Probably 15,000 children were turned away from the eight schools. It is estimated that thirty vacation schools would no more than do the work that eight are trying to do. Comment on this situation is unnecessary.

Thus it is seen that there has been consistent and persistent effort along all lines of educational progress. There have been many noteworthy examples of special endeavor. Three of these may be mentioned as examples of the almost infinite variety of educational effort. Accepting as axiomatic the contention that the school child cannot put forth his best intellectual effort unless well nourished physically, several Chicago clubs are furnishing luncheons in high schools, where the noon recess is short. One club, the

Englewood Woman's club, has made such complete arrangements that it is able to serve hot and well cooked luncheon to 430 pupils in twenty minutes. Four years ago the Michigan State Federation pledged a memorial loan fund of \$5,000 for the benefit of women students in the University of Michigan. The fund is a memorial to Mrs. Lucinda Hinsdale Stone, the "mother" of the Michigan federation, and the first woman upon whom the university conferred the degree of LL. D. The fund has been raised and paid into the hands of the university regents. School Children's Aid, a society that has grown out of the Chicago Woman's Club, furnishes needy children with clothes and thus keeps them in school; the society is eleven years old and every year has collected from \$7,000 to \$9,000 for this purpose.

In any discussion of the standards of home life in the middle West a serious and perplexing problem thrusts itself to the front — the homemaking-housekeeping-domestic service problem. It is serious because it threatens, especially in the cities, to substitute apartments in a family hotel for the old fashioned home. It is perplexing because we have no servant class, because working women are generally unwilling to accept domestic service as a means of gaining a living, and most of all because the woman heads of families are doing little to improve the situation. The plain fact is that the present day American housekeeper is with difficulty convinced that she has anything to learn and that she has any responsibility outside of her own family. She groans over the drudgery of housekeeping and is in despair over the domestic service problem, but she makes little progress toward lightening her own burden, and does nothing at all toward improving the general situation. The only ray of light to be seen — at least in the middle West — is in the work that the club women are doing in the line of household economics. Here we have abandoned the old theory that woman needs no training in the art of homemaking, and comes by the necessary knowledge through inheritance and natural ability, and that each woman is sufficient unto herself. We feel that homemaking is the one thing above all others for which we are responsible, that we alone can elevate it, and that we must work out our salvation through scientific investigation and co-operation.

An object lesson in the most advanced thought of the middle

West club women is the School of Domestic Arts and Science of Chicago, established and managed by club women. Last year it had 1,100 students. Each year there is an exhibit of household work, at which a special effort is made to bring out labor-saving devices and the things that will make housekeeping more intelligent, easier, and more interesting. The underlying idea is that the common sense of the American homemaker will in time lift this work to a professional basis through scientific investigation and the contact of the theoretical worker and the practical housekeeper. In combination with the Chicago Kindergarten institute there is a course in which young women are trained in the care of the child as well as the administration of the home. Students and trained teachers from this school go out among those too poor to attend classes, teaching the best use of utensils and material, the cutting of children's clothes, and the trimming of hats. Prizes are given to the housekeepers and cooks of the city.

In all six states there is evidence of genuine and widespread interest, which is shown in a variety of ways. Ohio is preaching the addition of a fourth R to the existing system of education — the R of right living. Iowa reports twenty-one clubs taking household economics as the course of study for the entire club year. Indiana has adopted the slogan "Pure Food and Right Living." In Missouri the practical kitchen committee of the Domestic Science Club of Livingston County has prepared blue prints and details of a model kitchen to cost no more than a piano; these plans have been sent on request all over Missouri and to Minnesota, New Jersey, Arkansas, Kansas, Illinois, and Indiana. The Michigan women aided in securing the appropriation for a \$90,000 building for the Michigan Agricultural College for the exclusive use of women studying domestic arts and science. Everywhere the women have been instrumental in establishing courses and departments of domestic science in all sorts of educational institutions from the vacation school to the university. In Illinois, for example, five years ago a new school of domestic science was opened at the University of Illinois, where the first school of the kind in the United States and possibly in the world was established in 1870; three years ago a domestic economics department was opened at the University of Chicago; in 1903 James Millikin of Decatur completed a half million dollar university in which a domestic

science department has a prominent place; the Bradley institute at Peoria, founded by Mrs. T. S. Bradley, has an extensive department in two divisions; the Legislature has placed household economics in the five normal schools of the state, all the high schools of Chicago and vicinity and of many other cities have domestic science courses; two years ago the American School of Household Economics, a correspondence school, was established; Lewis institute, Chicago, has a domestic science department.

This activity would seem to indicate that the club women of the middle West are sincerely endeavoring to undo the work of their sisters who have "degraded kitchen work and placed a social ban on all women who dare take it up as a means of livelihood," and that a halo will yet be placed on the head of the "woman with a broom" as well as of the "man with a hoe."

As to the pure food department of household economics, the work of the club women of the middle West must be measured rather by promise than by performance, inasmuch as they, as well as the General Federation, have been stirred to activity only in the last two years. In general the shocking conditions which have been lately revealed are largely due to a shamefully lax enforcement of the existing state laws. Illinois has a fairly good law and a food commissioner. Indiana club women have secured a state laboratory of hygiene under the control of the board of health, charged with the duty of examining food and drugs and aiding in the enforcement of health laws. Michigan has a law administered by a state dairy and food commissioner; its dairy laws are fairly effective. Missouri has been interested to the present only in the protection of its dairy interests; the club women of the state are now pledged to a local pure food crusade. Ohio's law is fairly satisfactory and the women have been satisfied to work for its enforcement. Iowa's law covers only dairy products; the women intend to present a pure food bill to the next Legislature.

In addition to lax enforcement of the existing laws the lack of uniformity in the several state laws is a very unsatisfactory feature. The absence of a national pure food law was of course the worst feature of a bad situation. The operation of the new national law will cause a most radical change in the conditions. Governmental regulation of interstate traffic will put a stop to the shipping of adulterated and spurious wares from one state to an-

other and the unscrupulous manufacturers and dealers of the big cities will have to stop poisoning consumers in other states. The club women of the several states will then have a fair field and a chance to work out their own salvation by enforcing and amending existing laws and by creating new legislation. But their strongest weapon lies in the fact that the women do the buying of food supplies for the family; in its final analysis the pure food question must be answered by the wives and mothers. The club women of the middle West have here a glorious opportunity and a noble work ready to their hand. They must educate the ignorant woman as well as appeal to the educated woman who buys. United refusal to buy impure foodstuffs would of course bring about a pure food millennium without the aid of the law.

As to the relationship between the club movement and the industrial position of women in the middle West, there is little to be said except from a philanthropic viewpoint. Much is being done in the several states to bring about closer relations between the club women and the working women. In Ohio, for example, the club women are going into the factories and making a thorough study of conditions by personal acquaintance with the women operatives. A typical philanthropy is that of the Klio association of Chicago, an organization of women that serves meals at cost to 1,000 working women a day. The quarters include rest and sick rooms and a reading-room with a library of over 1,000 volumes.

To the club women of the middle West belongs the honor of bringing a new element into jurisprudence in the Juvenile court law. If the whole club movement of the six states in the last ten years had accomplished nothing else it would still be well worth while. The Juvenile court is an instrument for good whose tremendous power is only beginning to be felt. The first court was established but seven years ago, yet already eighteen states have adopted the Illinois law, either in whole or in part. While the Juvenile court is not a cure-all, and is an instrument and not an end, it is the best solution yet devised of the problem of dependent and delinquent children in crowded communities. It is perfectly safe to say that within a very few years it will be in every considerable self-respecting city in the United States.

The old idea was that the child, like the adult who had broken

the law, must be tried and punished. The new principle is that even if the child has violated the law the state must act as a wise and just and merciful parent, and so deal with the case that evil tendencies will be eradicated and the juvenile offender educated into good citizenship. Perhaps the spirit of the law may be condensed into the phrase, "A square deal for the child."

The movement that has brought about the Juvenile court had its beginning in the Cook county jail in the city of Chicago. Under the old conditions the police courts and jails swarmed with children, who were herded with mature criminals. For several years the Chicago Woman's club had been maintaining a school in the Cook county jail, and the conditions that obtained convinced the club members that the system was not only foolish but wicked. They determined to make an effort to secure a distinction in the eyes of the law between the mature criminal and the irresponsible child. The club secured the services of an able jurist, the late Harvey B. Hurd. He drew a bill, which was indorsed by the Chicago Bar association and passed by the Legislature. The new law went into effect in 1899. The Juvenile court statute sets forth the power of the state to exercise through its courts of chancery its guardianship of the child. It establishes this guardianship over two classes of children—dependents and delinquents. A dependent child is not only one who is homeless, destitute, or abandoned; it is also dependent if it has not proper parental care, and if its home, by reason of the fault of its natural guardians, is not a fit place for it. A child is delinquent not only when it violates the law, but also when it is incorrigible, when it consorts knowingly with criminals, or when it is growing up in idleness and crime. The age limit of the original law, 16 years, has been raised to 18. The court does not sit as a court of law, but of chancery. The court merely assumes the guardianship of the child, and does not punish the delinquent, when not paroled it is sent to some reformatory institution. The traditional accompaniments of a law court are done away with; the chancellor is judge and jury, and practically all the machinery. This is the gist of the Illinois law of 1899, the basis of most of the laws of other states. Colorado made an important addition in the delinquent parent law, providing for the punishment of offending parents by the Juvenile court. Illinois in turn adapted this provision to local conditions.

In this new court the power intrusted to the presiding judge is enormous, but it is a characteristic of our American people that when an occasion arises the man is not wanting. This occasion has brought out at least two men of striking genius — Judge Ben B. Lindsey, of Denver, and Judge Julian W. Mack, of Chicago. Without attempting to compare the two men, one may say that the former does his marvelous work under more favorable conditions. Judge Lindsey, for example, has heard about two thousand cases in four years; Judge Mack hears about eight thousand cases a year. Judge Mack cannot personally stand in the place of parent to several thousand children; the intermediary is the probation officer. Most of these are women, and the club women have not only raised money for the payment of their salaries but have seen that the positions were filled with the right kind of women. Each officer is in charge of a district and about fifty boys. This officer visits the child's home and requires frequent reports from him. The plan in most states is to make the probation officer a paid employee of the court, the supposition being that the work of volunteers is not generally satisfactory. Indianapolis, however, has developed the volunteer system to a high state of efficiency under the Indiana law. There there are about 150 officers, and no one officer has more than three children under his charge; often there is but one. Recently in Chicago Judge Mack has supplemented the services of the regular officers by making probation officers of the members of the Visiting Nurse association, who last year ministered to fully seven thousand sick people in poor families — another beneficent work which the club women encourage with moral and financial support. Other cities in Illinois, including Springfield and Rockford, have Juvenile courts. In Iowa the Congress of Mothers, belonging to the state federation, took the lead in securing the Juvenile court law of that state. Ohio's law was passed in 1904, and the credit is largely due to its club women, the passage of the law having formed one of the paramount issues of club work in that state. The Michigan law, passed by the last Legislature, has been declared unconstitutional. The club women are preparing a new bill to be presented in 1907, and are pledged to see the fight through. Missouri has Juvenile courts in St. Louis and Kansas City, and to the united effort of the club women is due the existence of the law.

Out of the work of the Chicago Juvenile court has grown a new movement with the purpose of waging war on those conditions and persons contributing to the dependency and delinquency of children. It has just been organized and has hardly yet begun operations. The organization is chartered by the state under the name of the Juvenile Protective League of Chicago. The purposes of the league cannot be more concisely and comprehensively set forth than in the language of the charter, which is:

1. To organize auxiliary leagues within the boundaries of Cook county.
2. To suppress and prevent conditions and to prosecute persons contributing to the dependency and delinquency of children.
3. To co-operate with the Juvenile court, compulsory education department, state factory inspector, and all other child helping agencies.
4. To promote the study of child problems, and by systematic agitation through the press and otherwise to create a permanent public sentiment for the establishment of wholesome, uplifting agencies, such as parks, playgrounds, gymnasiums, free baths, vacation schools, communal school settlements, and the like.

Much is expected from this body. The board of directors numbers twenty-seven, and contains men and women prominent in Chicago reform work. Among them are Judge Mack, Judge Richard S. Tuthill, Judge Mack's predecessor in the Juvenile court; W. L. Bodine, superintendent of compulsory education; Miss Harriet Fulmer, president of the Visiting Nurses' association; Graham Taylor of Chicago Commons, and Mrs. Joseph T. Bowen, who has given so generously to Hull House. There are also lawyers, police magistrates, and several prominent club women on the board. The work will be localized through the organization of branches, each branch exercising a direct supervision over a specified territory. The league will act as an aid to the police authorities in the suppression of vicious dance halls, disreputable fruit stores and ice cream parlors, and other resorts where children are exposed to dangerous influences; it will also be prepared to carry on independent prosecutions. An element of strength is that the work of the league will be entirely voluntary and no financial assistance will be asked. There will be no hired agents, the members taking upon themselves the burden of seeing that the laws framed for the pro-

tection of children are enforced. It is most devoutly to be hoped that out of this beginning will grow a movement destined to be as widespread as that of the Juvenile court.

Nor does the work of reclaiming and protecting the child stop here. The preliminary steps have been taken toward the organization of a National Juvenile Improvement Association, which is intended to be truly national in its scope. It is to be organized on lines suggested by Judge Lindsey, of Denver, and prominent in the movement are Judge Mack and Miss Jane Addams, of Hull House. All these facts would seem to indicate that society in general, and especially in the middle West, is beginning to awaken to its responsibility toward the child. These facts concerning the Juvenile courts and the movements growing out of their successful work are set forth beyond their proportionate length for the reason that some of them are new and because of the infinite possibilities that they suggest.

The protection of childhood is a cause very dear to the hearts of the middle West club women, and their efforts have been largely instrumental in bringing about comparatively favorable conditions in this territory. Child labor is a problem of national interest and importance, yet it is one that must be solved by each state for itself—a fact that adds many complications to an already intricate question. The conditions in the middle West are comparatively favorable because in general the child labor, compulsory education, and Juvenile court laws, which are complementary parts of the whole scheme of protection for the child, have been brought into fairly harmonious relationship. All of the six states have compulsory education laws; all have Juvenile court laws except Michigan, where the law enacted has been declared unconstitutional, and all have child labor laws—in Iowa the women got a law through the last Legislature and it went into effect July 1.

In Illinois, which stands third in manufactures among the states, the women have been both active and successful. The Illinois child labor law, which they were largely instrumental in securing, is generally regarded by humanitarians as the model law of its kind in the United States. It is also admirably enforced, there being nineteen factory inspectors, of whom six are women. The decrease in ten years is remarkable. In 1895 there was one child employed for every twenty-one adults; last year the propor-

tion was one to sixty-five. Last year there were 1,001 convictions in prosecutions for violations of the factory laws. Naturally there has been a large increase in the school attendance. The club women disposed of a bugbear when they promised scholarships to the children of dependent widows and in conjunction with the Consumers' League carried on investigations that showed this class to be very small, only eight being found in Chicago in two years. The Illinois women have also been largely instrumental in promoting measures that have resulted in a home for delinquent boys, a home for juvenile female offenders, classes for the deaf, and parental schools.

Indiana club women have recently secured an amendment to their child labor law prohibiting more than eight hours a day for children under 14 who are allowed to work in certain circumstances. They are working persistently for several other amendments. They have secured the passage of an anti-cigarette law. Michigan has a pretty good child labor law, which is generally enforced. There are two women factory inspectors. The women have secured women physicians in state institutions for women and children. In Missouri manufactures are increasing and the child labor law is being found to be unsatisfactory in several particulars. The women are working to remove conflicts between the factory laws and the compulsory education law; they also want stricter enforcement. Ohio is working in the direction of amending its child labor law by shortening the hours of labor. The women have lately secured legislation in behalf of the girls' industrial school and are making the introduction of modern methods in that institution an issue of the club work in the state.

Two bills that the club women of Illinois succeeded in getting through the last Legislature will materially increase the protection which the law is able to give to female children. One bill, presented by the Protective Agency for Women and Children, an offshoot of the Chicago Woman's club, made crimes of indecent offenses against children. To the credit of the Legislature it may be said that not a dissenting voice was raised. The other bill, presented in the name of the federated club women of the state, amended the existing statute by raising the age of consent from 14 years to 18. The course of this bill through the Legislature is worth a more extended review than can be given it here, inas-

much as it affords a good illustration of the difficulties met by women when they undertake to create new legislation that directly affects dominant man. The age of consent in Illinois had been 14 years since 1887. At every meeting of the Legislature since that year an amendment raising the age had been presented and had been smothered in committee. This bill narrowly escaped a like fate. It was introduced in the Senate and the Senators were practically unanimous in their promises to vote for it; of course, their mental reservation was "if it ever gets out of committee." The women in charge of the bill were allowed to plead their cause. Two features of the meeting were that many members of the committee who had promised support were "unavoidably absent," and that a lawyer from Chicago, who was not required to disclose the interests he represented, was allowed to make an elaborate attack on the proposed amendment. It quickly became evident that the committee would not favorably consider the raise to 18 years. On a compromise at 16 the result hung in doubt until the friendly chairman — Senator Juul, who introduced the bill — decided a tie vote on the motion to report the bill. Once before the Senate, the Senators stood by their promises and the bill was quickly passed unanimously. In the House the bill met with a reception far from friendly. The committee refused to hear the women in charge of the bill, and the program was silence and secrecy. The House committee, however, did not dare to kill the bill, and contented itself with adding several minor amendments apparently intended to afford loopholes of escape to offenders. When the amended bill was returned to the Senate the women, believing the amendments to be innocuous and regarding the raising of the age by two years as a substantial victory, requested that it be passed. The Senate vote was unanimous.

The amendment has now been in force for more than a year. It has been a great aid to all the organizations interested in protecting young girls and convictions have been frequent. Here is a remarkable case in point. A habitual offender against young girls, who aimed to keep out of the clutches of the law, misbehaved with five girls, two of whom were over 14 and under 16 and three under 14. He was prosecuted under both of the new laws — under the age of consent law as to two of the girls and under the crimes against children law as to the three. He was

sent to the penitentiary for a long term. His mistake consisted in his ignorance of the action of the Legislature; under the old conditions he would have escaped without punishment. In this connection it may be hazarded that ignorance in certain quarters of the introduction of the age of consent bill in the Legislature was its salvation. At any rate, so general was this ignorance that prosecutions continued in the police courts under the old style for some time after the amended law had gone into effect. The club women were actually obliged to print both laws and post them in police stations and police courts.

In this connection it should be stated that the very first legislation undertaken by the Iowa State federation was in 1894, when it petitioned the Legislature to raise the age of consent in that state from 15 to 18 years; the age was raised to 16. The Indiana federation has put itself on record that it stands for the raising of the age of consent in Indiana from 14 to 18.

The middle West club women have educated themselves in art, and have also made a brave effort to educate the coming generation. The traveling art collection and the art library have been a valuable agency in their own education. The art committee of the Illinois federation sent out four traveling art collections about eight years ago, and this is believed to be the first trial of the system. The scope of this system has been greatly enlarged. For example, Illinois, which may be taken as a typical state, has sent out a fine loan collection of American pottery and a loan collection of etchings and paintings; also three art reference libraries, the gift of the Arche club. Each art program at the annual federation meeting is an illustration of the course of study recommended by the committee, and for four years an arts and crafts exhibition has been held in connection with this meeting. In the direction of educating the school children the activities have been varied. The Indiana motto in the education of the young is "At least one good picture in every schoolroom in Indiana." The Ohio federation is pledged to promote art as a regular part of the state educational system. Iowa, which reports forty clubs devoting the entire club year to the study of art, gives art exhibitions for the benefit of the schools, and buys pictures for schoolrooms. The Chicago Woman's club raised an endowment fund

of \$1,500 for the Art institute for the benefit of girl graduates of the city high schools.

Civic improvement has been a popular form of activity among the clubs and every sort of public housecleaning has been undertaken in every kind of community from the country town to the big city. The club women have, among other things, cared for cemeteries, removed garbage, planted trees and shrubs and flowers, cleaned and sprinkled streets, distributed seeds, improved vacant lots, abated public nuisances, established and maintained parks and playgrounds, induced railway officials to beautify station grounds, and founded hospitals. If civic beauty is a tangible asset, the club women have added a great sum in the aggregate to the wealth of the community. In addition to this expenditure of time and effort, the total of their contributions in actual money to movements for civic improvement in the middle West in the last ten years runs into the millions.

Nor have the clubs confined their efforts to the physical community. They have attacked objectionable measures and championed good ones. Everywhere they have stirred lax and negligent municipal and state administrations to activity. Everywhere they have co-operated in important movements. The club women of Chicago, for example, were an important factor in the recent movement in that city that raised the saloon license fee to \$1,000 and thus gave the police department 1,000 more men, and will ultimately result in limiting the number of licenses to one for each 500 of population. In several of the large cities of the middle West are individual clubs of such large and influential membership, of such manifold public activity, of such fruitfulness in admirable offshoots that they may be truly termed great civic institutions. The temptation to set forth in detail the record of these civic institutions in the last decade is strong; they deserve well of the nation.

Civil service reform became a part of the club work of the middle West four years ago. The club women took it up in the belief that the permanence of many of the results they were achieving could not be assured except upon the basis of civil service laws embodying the merit system. They have, therefore, begun the work of educating the younger generation to an appreciation of its importance. They have also been making considerable in-

vestigation into the conditions in county and state institutions where civil service does not obtain, and have done a good deal of tentative work that will count later. The Indiana federation is actively working for a law for civil service in county and state institutions. The Missouri women expect to present a bill to the next Legislature. The Illinois women were largely instrumental in the passing of a law for civil service in state institutions. In general it may be said that there is an appreciable advance all along the line; extensions of civil service are frequent and violations of its spirit invariably evoke strong protest from the public.

Forestry is another comparatively new department of middle West club activity, at least as to the scientific phase of the question. Arboriculture and tree planting for decorative purposes, however, have long been a favorite work, and the club women have been largely instrumental in bringing about the general observance of Arbor day. As to scientific forestry for economic reasons, the interest varies in the several states. Iowa has a small amount of forest land and has shown little interest. Missouri has no law and does not regard forestry as a pressing question. The other four states, however, have ceased to regard forestry as merely "an academic question, impossible of commercial application." The Illinois club women introduced several forestry bills in the last Legislature without success, and will probably try again in 1907. Ohio has little forest left and can have no reserves until it creates them; the work in that state is along the line of wood lot tree planting. The Indiana club women are very much interested and are working for extension of the state forest reserve and increased appropriation for experimental work. Michigan, which has suffered shamefully at the hand of the lumberman, has a forestry commission and a large forest reserve; the club women are co-operating to bring about conditions that will make reforestation possible.

The traveling library has been a tremendous educational agency in the middle West. It was primarily intended for the benefit of the club women themselves, but its influence has been far reaching. Out of the movement have come state library commissions, permanent libraries of various kinds, and state appropriations. To the clubs is due at least the larger part of the credit for this wonderful growth. The Iowa women have been very active; the state library commission controls 12,000 volumes in trav-

eling libraries, of which 6,000 volumes are divided into miscellaneous libraries of fifty each, the remainder forming reference libraries. The state appropriates \$6,000 annually. The clubs have established eighty-one free public libraries and maintained many of them. In Mount Pleasant, for instance, the women, after supporting a free library for twenty-five years, have secured a tax and have turned over their 7,000 volumes to the city. Indiana has also accomplished much. Among other things the women secured the passage of a library bill in 1901 under which forty towns were enabled to accept Carnegie libraries. In Michigan the clubs co-operate with the commission; there are sixty traveling libraries and the state makes a liberal annual appropriation. In Ohio the women succeeded in 1897, after two years' work, in getting an appropriation of \$8,000 for the circulating of the state library at Columbus through the state; there are now 925 cases of from twenty-five to seventy-five volumes each in circulation. Missouri, which has forty traveling libraries, attempted to get a library commission bill through the last Legislature and failed. The disappointing failure of Illinois with its 270 libraries has been told.

This fragmentary and prosaic recital does scant justice to the record of the club movement in the middle West in the last decade, and of course it merely scratches the surface of the problems that confront the club women. In view of the facts here set forth there is no need of comment; they speak for themselves.