



Thirty years ago men in the large cities were the only class of people who can be said to have enjoyed the privileges of clubs. There was for women only an occasional meeting of a Doreas society, and the club woman of today would treat such gatherings with a fine scorn. Albeit such a short time has elapsed since the first woman's club was started, Sorosis of New York bears the proud distinction of being the pioneer. These organizations have become so universal, spreading over the length and breadth of the land, that foreigners now class them among our distinctive "institutions," and they are a recognized factor in modern social evolution.

It is interesting to note the change public opinion has undergone in the last few decades in regard to the literary work of women. Formerly a woman who attempted literary work of any kind was promptly dubbed a "blue stocking" and her methods criticised to such an extent that she became reticent and exclusive, and the modern woman's literary club still shows traces of this feeling in its unwillingness to give information to the press.

Just what gave birth to this new order of things it is difficult to explain. Whether it was the demand made upon women for organized effort during the civil war, or whether it was simply the growing tendency of people to band themselves together, whether for pleasure, study or charity, is not known. This is the age of syndicates, trusts and clubs. Organization is the one great and efficient means of accomplishing anything, and this fact women began to realize when they were relieved of much of the drudgery of their home life by the introduction of machinery to spin cotton, to knit stockings, and to sew, and they had time to look up and away from their own hearthstones.

Now the number of clubs and the diversity of their objects are subjects of wonderment and have rendered desirable not only state federations, but a National Federation of Woman's Clubs, and who can tell how soon we may expect to have an International Federation of Woman's Clubs?

Of course there are scattered here and there objectors to this new order of things, who ask, "What doth it profit a woman to go to a Mothers' club to study child culture if meanwhile her own children have to be left to the care of an ignorant nurse, who frightens them into obedience and is careless of their health, or what boots it for her to spend hours at a cooking club and then not be able to produce doughnuts such as mother used to make?"

But time and close observation of actual results will quiet this class of objectors, as it did those other conservatives who protested that college education would unfit women for being good housekeepers and mothers. It is not those women who deprecate but those who magnify their office as homemakers, those who realize the tremendous issues involved in their task that seek a personal connection with all forms, interests, opportunities and possibilities of life. What less equipment will suffice for the rearing of human beings, whose mental constitution is the most difficult of all studies, and whose physical, mental and moral health depends upon the knowledge and application of all sciences?

That close student of our American civilization, De Toqueville, long ago said, "If I were asked to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of the American people ought to be attributed I should reply, 'To the superiority of their women.'" If that keen-sighted observer of forty years ago could revisit us doubtless he would be surprised at our social evolution along the lines then so faint as to be unnoted by ourselves and would predict that the American woman is likely to become more and more a powerful shaping force in American civilization.

THE WOMAN'S CLUB.

The Only Wisconsin Women's Club That Owns Its Own Home.

The initial meeting of the Woman's club of Wisconsin was held at the residence of Mrs. Alex Mitchell, Oct. 6, 1876, under the leadership of Miss Mary Mortimer. Mrs. Julia Ward Howe of Boston arousing enthusiasm by a talk on women's clubs. Permanent organization followed, the government and plan of work, through committees, being substantially that of today, but with more conservative effort, the first two years being mostly devoted to Egypt and India. A digression to class work followed, a number of subjects being studied during the three years, as art in Italy, etchings and engravings, elocution, Shakespeare, geology, botany, with three courses in parliamentary tactics, under the direction of Maj. Roberts.

The sixth season, with a membership of sixty, class work was abandoned, the lines again converging to the general meeting on alternate Thursdays, from October to June, under the auspices of seven committees, art, literature, history, education, science, miscellaneous and social, each being responsible for literary exercises of a high order. While the club has never actively engaged in charitable or philanthropic work, it has many times given an impetus to movements of the kind, through discussions, and the formation of committees.

The club had suffered from the limitations imposed by a change in place of meeting from year to year, until in the tenth season there came that outburst of activity that evolved the first woman's stock company, "The Athenaeum," which as an independent organization later furnished the desired club home. This enlarged the usefulness of the club and

caused a greater demand for membership, and three years later it was limited to 200 resident members.

Always conservative, the Woman's club has never aimed to secure social prestige, and whatever social influence has accrued to it, is the result of conditions inherent to its growth.

The officers of 1895 are: President, Mrs. H. W. Finch; vice-presidents, Mrs. C. J. Dexter, Mrs. Samuel A. Field; secretary, Mrs. O. W. Robertson; corresponding secretary, Miss Alice G. Chapman; treasurer, Miss Annie Hsley.

The programme of the season indicates a partial return to the original plan of consecutive effort, half of the afternoons being devoted to Spanish topics, while a successful new departure has begun by arranging five rare musical evenings with one lecture under the auspices of the club, the culminating effort being the securing of Ysaye for the enjoyment of all who care to attend.

A retrospective glance shows a carefully laid foundation with a growth, year by year, in methods of work and breadth of thought, together with a greater catholicity of spirit, a firmer sense of harmony, and a gentler courtesy, all of which must be blended in a truly representative club.

The Athenaeum is deserving of special notice. When the stock company was organized and incorporated in October, 1886, it won the unique distinction of being the first woman's stock company for the erection of a building in the world. The building was completed November, 1887, primarily to provide a home for the club, but on the business basis of payment of rent, it had other stated objects. One was to make a "center for literary, science and musical culture." It had also a financial object. That this threefold purpose has been accomplished is seen in the delightful club environment, in the constant use of the building for classes, lectures, musicales, receptions and in the payment of annual 5 per cent dividends to the stockholders.

The officers of 1894-95 are: President, Mrs. James L. Peck; vice-presidents, Mrs. B. K. Miller, Mrs. H. H. Camp; secretary, Mrs. Edward R. Vilas; treasurer, Mrs. W. A. J. Upham.

MRS. JAMES SYDNEY PECK.

A CLUB OF CHINA PAINTERS.

Keramic Artists Who Have Won Distinction in Their Exhibits.

The Wisconsin Ceramic club was organized in March, 1893, and is a branch of the National League of Mineral Painters. Its object is to promote friendly intercourse among painters with the mineral palette, the improvement of ceramic art, as well as the encouragement and assistance of an American school of ceramic art. The membership is limited to fifty active members, the requirement for membership being a knowledge of mineral painting or modelling.

The club gives one reception and exhibition of its work annually, at which each member is required to exhibit no less than three and no more than ten pieces. The club exhibited work at the World's Columbian exposition, where not a single piece was rejected and five awards were received. Its first annual reception was held at the residence of Mrs. H. O. Frank, and was an undeniable success. The last exhibitions were made at the Milwaukee Industrial exposition, and at the exhibit of the National league of New York, at which the club received a prize for the best execution of monthly studies. The club has pleasant rooms at the Builders' exchange building, where some of the members may be found daily at their interesting occupation.

MRS. ARTHUR E. MOSS,
Secretary.

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.

The Milwaukee College Endowment Society Is Assisting That Cause.

The Milwaukee College Endowment association was organized in the autumn of 1890 to assist the trustees of the college in raising the endowment fund of \$75,000. Through its efforts a considerable sum was subscribed and paid to the treasurer of the college. Realizing that its work could be continued, and that the intellectual activity demanding study classes and lectures, should be centered at the college, articles of incorporation were adopted in February, 1892, and Mrs. Hannah Pierce Vedder was elected president. The object of the association is two-fold: First, to endow one or more professorships in Milwaukee college; secondly, to promote the higher education of woman.

The recent calendar shows a membership of 250, divided into sections for the study of science, literature, economics and applied education and philanthropy. The programmes have been varied with the highest local talent, and that of Beloit college and the universities of Chicago and Wisconsin.

The danger of losing the "unity in diversity" has been guarded against by pledging the whole association to hold six informal meetings annually for the purpose of mutual discussion and consideration of the advancement of education and culture. Animated by the broad spirit of the National Federation of Woman's clubs, the association joined the federation and sent its delegate to the convention held in Philadelphia in May, 1894.

Through the courtesy of the trustees of the college, the meetings of the Endowment association are held in the south annex of the college. Remote from the noise of railways or the usual city din, through the green approach of its private entrance, there are few class rooms better adapted to study, debate and lecture courses. Through the association funds and gifts of friends the rooms have been suitably decorated and furnished, and were opened on the occasion of the reception given to Mrs. Louise R. Upton, who took charge of the college in September, 1894.

The last annual report of the association shows that the fund has grown to