

Clubs and Club Women

WHAT ARKANSAS CLUB WOMEN ARE DOING

LESSIE STRINGFELLOW READ, Chairman Publicity, Arkansas Federation of Women's Clubs in Southern Woman's Magazine.

Why do you men laugh so at us women?" inquired a prominent Little Rock club woman many moons ago of an equally prominent man.

"Because you are such jokes," he replied with smiling eyes.

"But why are we such jokes?" persisted the woman.

"Because you take yourselves so seriously," said he.

We did take ourselves seriously in the early days of clubdom. We had to because no one else would.

We do still take ourselves seriously. We must because the world is giving us such serious work to do.

But there is a difference between yesterday and this year, and it is that we women have learned to apply the saving grace of humor.

We can now see a joke as well as be one. And laugh at one, even if it is on ourselves.

In laughing with them when they laugh at us we soon disarm men of their mirth.

And men in Arkansas have long since ceased to laugh at us. Rather, they earnestly seek our aid in their enterprises; encourage us in our aims; cooperate with us in every good cause.

The world, I know, has a way of whoning up a thing when it can't lurch it down. Also there is a shrewdness in the masculine mind which takes cognizance of the fact that the principle of solidarity underlying any form of manifestation, even feminine, makes that form a power to be reckoned with—wiser still, a power to be co-operated with, and from time immemorial man has turned to women for help.

But I prefer to believe that man's recognition of women's clubs as something worthy of his respect is based upon bigger and better things than just a "way of the world" or a certain shrewdness. It is, I think, the understanding that the federated club movement is a co-operative undertaking sublime in its ideals; a belief that united womanhood is a body standing in the forefront of progress, willing and able to meet and divide the force of any opposition which lies ahead, and to mother the whole wide world.

For men have found that because of federated clubs there are better schools, better arts and crafts, better legislation for women and children, and a broadening intelligence and a more comprehensive point of view for every American woman; and therefore in the next generation, for every American man.

It is for better homes, better schools, better arts and crafts, better

legislation for women and children, and a broadening intelligence for every woman in Arkansas that the Arkansas Federation of Women's Clubs is working today.

Like most state federations and the general federation, its administrative work is done through departments and subdepartments, art, civics, education, library extension, legislation, home economics, civil service reform, health, social and industrial conditions being some of its divisions, each with its subdivisions. Special departments have been added as follows: Good roads and club extension, scholarship loan fund, peace, waterways and forestry, history, S. I. A., school hygiene, Camp Fire girls, child welfare.

The 10,000 who compose this organization come from the city and rural community, from the ranks of high school girls and dignified college faculty, but they are all working for a common cause, "a higher type of citizenship, a better public spirit, a more alert social consciousness."

Presiding over the whole is a magnificent woman who exemplifies the state federation motto, "Courage, Courtesy, Culture," and who can do Moore work, in Moore ways, in less time and with less effort than any executive who has served the organization during its twenty years of existence.

But Mrs. Moore is ably assisted in her every effort by seven district presidents as skillful and efficient as the numerous chairmen who conduct the varied activities and interests of the diverse departments, and both she and the officers and chairmen have behind them to a man—I mean to a woman—in every undertaking that motley ten thousand. And their arms are reaching out to embrace the farm woman, to bring her into the fold and to tell her that all work and no play makes the rural Jill a dull girl, just as all play and no work makes the idle woman a useless Jill; and these two the federation is fast bringing together for their mutual good and the gain of democracy.

A news letter sent out by the United States Department of Agriculture in November stated that approximately 60,000 county girls and 30,000 farm women of the South are now being reached by home economics teaching through Smith-Lever funds.

President J. C. Futrell of the University of Arkansas stated not long ago in an address before the women's clubs: "Undoubtedly the passage of the Smith-Lever bill in Arkansas was effected through the insistent demand of the federated club women." And



MISS MAE MARSH

With "The Birth Of A Nation," Howell Theater, Wednesday and Thursday, February 14th and 15th.

the women did not lose interest in Smith-Lever work after the passage of the bill. They began co-operating with the county agents all over the state; and if Arkansas' proportionate number of that 60,000 girls and 30,000 women have been reached, Arkansas' club women are in a large degree responsible, and this fact has been stated in an open letter of appreciation by the acting director of the extension department. Nor does the interest of club women in rural stop there. When the demonstrators teach the country girl how to can her products, the club women find a market for her wares. One instance will illustrate this:

It has been estimated that Arkansas sends \$3,000,000 out of the state annually for canned foodstuffs. This will stop, in a measure, now, since the 10,000 club women stand pledged to "Buy home-grown and home-canned products." Recently at Searcy the grocers would not buy home-canned products and contracted with their wholesale people for several months

ahead. The canning club agent found herself with 10,000 cans of her girls' product for which there was no market. She appealed to Searcy club women. Telephones soon began to ring. Every woman in Searcy, it seemed, wanted 4-H brand of tomatoes and fruit and would accept none other. One enterprising merchant caught the spirit of the club women and purchased the agent's entire ten thousand cans.

Quorum courts in Arkansas were slow to appropriate for girls' demonstration agents. That is, they were until delegations of club women descended upon them, demanding agents for girls as well as boys. Now fifty-seven counties are well organized for demonstration work, and the prize-winning boys and girls on their annual trips to the cities are always entertained in club women's homes. Thus many rural lads and lassies have learned much of a daintier way of living and have become imbued with higher ideals of home. The club women of Arkansas are directly re-

sponsible for the establishment of the Home Economics department of the state university, and in many public schools over the state they have established this department and maintain it at their own expense where school funds are not sufficient. Housewives' leagues regularly inspect groceries, meat markets and stores where lunches are served. The leagues hold public lectures by physicians on pure foods and sanitation, and city federations in many towns serve nourishing hot lunches to school children in winter. During great Baby Week the state-wide campaign for child welfare was waged so energetically that it is said the baby death rate for the year has been noticeably lowered. The high cost of living troubled club women in Pine Bluff until they hit upon the plan of putting "business on a cash basis. A grocer with whom they conferred immediately lowered prices on the agreement that all would pay cash for what they bought, and an attractive little grocery car now brings his supplies to them every morning.

The average club woman of Arkansas has brains, energy, character and personality, but best of all, persistence. The last-named quality was exhibited in Clarksville. The town had a railroad station—"denot," we say in Arkansas—of which it was not proud. The road was written to and asked for a new station. It replied with a polite refusal. The women wrote with a like response, in popular parlance, "N-thing doing." The denot was a disgrace, the club women thought. What did they do when they got the road's reply? Give up? Get discouraged? Get the jumps? Not a bit of it. They got the denot! First, they asked why the road wouldn't build the much-needed station and were told it couldn't afford to buy the new site. The desired site cost \$5,000. So the women went to work to get that \$5,000. The men were not enthusiastic, but looked on tolerantly and finally a while later a holding hand. But the women didn't let her for all that money. They bargained for much and baked far more. But they got it. Then they bought the site, having the deed made out in the name of the civic club. Next, they told the railroad attorney. The road built the women their denot as a memorial to determination, and it stands today on their own grounds but, according to officials it is the first time in railroad history that such a thing has been done. Encouraged the Clarksville club women continued in state endeavors and have since spent \$5,000 more in public improvements. So much for \$10,000 and one little town!

Arkansas club women believe in the City Beautiful. They have not found it sufficient to make clean-up week state-wide, to hob-nob with health officers to the ends that public and private premises are clean; they must be made beautiful with bloom. Helena, the home of the beloved state president, Mrs. Moore, hit upon something in the beautification line, which, so far as I know, is "new under the sun." The Twentieth Century Club appointed a chairman of rose clippings. She clipped and she clipped, and soon she had 2,000 rose cuttings. Then the club had a party—called it Rose Tea—and invited the town. When everybody came, he (only it was mostly she) listened with interest to an expert Florist (I use the capital because he was imported for the occasion) who had made a specialty of rose culture and who explained how to grow roses from slips. Then the club women hostesses displayed rose slips, all neatly tied in little bundles and labeled, and guests were told to take what they wanted as souvenirs. Next, a college girl who had just returned from a horticultural school near Philadelphia talked charmingly upon landscape gardening and the possibilities of transforming, by right planting, an ugly duckling of a town into something altogether lovely. She displayed pictures, before and after, as proof. When the guests had had tea and were saying good-by, they had had "such a lovely time," they cried a plate asking mutely for an offering. Everybody felt so happy that a generous donation was left for civic improvement, and the season following Helena had over 1,000 more rose bushes than she had the year before. In Helena rose tea will be of regular recurrence, until it rivals Little Rock as the Rose City.

Whatever else Arkansas club women are interested in—and they are interested in everything, it seems, when one makes a survey of their work—they are bending their efforts to aid education and their energies to wipe out illiteracy in Arkansas. The chairman of education precipitated a storm of protest when she sent out to every club president in the state a circular letter properly filled with scolding and humiliating statistics. Investigators proved the chairman's figure correct, although anything but comforting to contemplate. The federation is now attempting to raise the standard of rural schools (1) by becoming acquainted with rural teachers, (2) by inviting teachers to club women's homes for a discussion of plans, (3) by offering suggestions for immediate betterment of country schools, (4) by sending free books and magazines in traveling libraries into rural districts, (5) by using every means of enforcing the compulsory education law, (6) by working ceaselessly for a law allowing a larger mill tax for school purposes.

The club women control a number of free scholarships over the state and have completed a \$4,000 endowment for two free scholarships in the state university. They are at present raising a scholarship endowment fund which has already placed one girl in college and which, when completed, will furnish to any deserving boy or girl who lacks means money without interest for a college course, the same to be returned by the student following graduation. In raising this fund the plan is to collect \$1 from as many

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state university alumni reached.

Three clubs maintained for mountaineers, and working mothers are in Texarkana the club open eight months of the kindergarten at an annual \$650.

Arkansas has no law the practice of midwifery, blindness is incident to a midwife, club working a bill to introduce legislature looking to a practice. They are visiting nurse, for an the feeble minded, now housed with the insane, advocating the enactment and injunction laws law of Iowa, making responsible person owning or renting immoral purposes.

Going back to school, done by 400 members a schoolgirls' club in Fort work in dress reform, have adopted the middie skirt as a regulation school taboos party clothes and ruffles. The result was enrollment of poor girls hitherto stayed away from cause they "could not dress girls" and an increase ship on the part of all girls "thought less about more about books."

Cultural things of life lected by Arkansas of Literature, music, art were the four things featured twentieth annual convention state federation just in Bluff, where reports show tension in all those lines. libraries and rest rooms, children's story hours established. Music clubs of fostered the first state in the South. Arkansas of music was the first affiliated with the national clubs are striving to be credited in schools and to of regular curriculum, has been purchased, city music has been established. Music clubs of fostered the first state in the South. Arkansas of music was the first affiliated with the national clubs are striving to be credited in schools and to of regular curriculum, has been purchased, city music has been established.

Arkansas in 1918 is to be wide pageant of glad possibilities. But with arts being urged we are ing for the fundamen that the Arkansas flag a state where every some, where every child women's joy. It is their A few years ago Arkansas flag, an oversight discovered. A. F. W. C. delegates to biennial were asked to bring to that convention. A held by club women in which signs were submitted. The flag was selected by the adopted by the legislature. Its blue diamond marks a diamond state; its three stars its number as a state to the union; its red field its patriots. Arkansas their flag, and they love the thirteen stars. But they place the flag of the and above that they raise "the Master, Christ," with "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

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"She ought to. She got the first act," replies a stemporary.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch

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