

The Home

A Factor in Morals

Not only is the surgeon the artist making straight that which was physically crooked, but it is only a question of time when the surgeon will be called upon to make straight that which we have been apt to think was a crookedness of spirit. Physicians have clearly proved the relation between the stomach and morals, and the liver and theological views. Now the surgeon steps in and shows the limitation which the physical imposes on the mental. Ears are unstopped, eyes are unclosed, the range of vision increased, and it is only recently that operations on the brain have released the vocal chords, have cured disease that promised insanity. Prophets see the day when one of the aids to morals will be the surgeon's knife. Brain-surgery is in its infancy. It is quite logical, in view of the marvelous results wrought in this field, to suppose that at some future day a mother will call the surgeon to her aid in the moral development of her children. She will not struggle for years with their moral delinquencies; she will take her child to the brain specialist and say: "Doctor, I find that Johnny has a tendency to purloin; he is also given to misleading his brothers and sisters where it is to his advantage. I do not want him to be that kind of a man;" or, "Doctor, I find that Alice has a tendency to exaggerate: it is difficult for her to stick to facts. I am sorry to admit it, Doctor, but, unless something is done, Alice will be a liar." The doctor does not hesitate. Each tendency indicates the pressure on a particular spot in the brain which affects a particular set of nerves. The offending part is removed; both children become models of truth and integrity. With the surgeon as the æsthetic and moral aid to regeneration, we shall soon develop a perfect race of human beings. Health, we are learning, is a matter of food and sanitation, and morals largely a matter of brain-formation: why, if a man's orthodoxy is a question of his liver, and his temper a matter of his nerves, why is it not true that his morals are, to a degree at least, a question of the formation of his brain? Will not this view of the subject make us more just in our relations to each other, and infinitely more just in our relations to the criminal? We will not leave him to the mercy of a politician, but put him in charge of a scientist who knows his mental deformity and will treat him for his disease.

Morals and æsthetics are closely related. Are we not cultivating our tempers, that the proper lines may be written by Time? Are we not, on all sides, hearing of the necessity of healthful living as an aid to beauty? Now, when much of the evil is a question of brain-matter and its proper distribution, is it not true that surgical science is of vital importance to human perfection, to the elimination of moral disease?

The Boston "Journal" gives the following account of a dinner given in Danvers, Mass., 1714:

After ye blessing was craved by Mr. Garrich of Wrentham, word came that ye buck was shot on ye Lord's Day by Pequot, an Indian, who came to Mr. Epes' with a lye in his mouth like Ananias of old. Ye council, therefore, refused to eat ye venison; but it was afterwards decided that Pequot should receive forty stripes save one, for lying and profaning ye Lord's Day, restore Mr. Epes ye cost of ye deer, and, considering this a just and righteous sentence on ye sinful heathen, and that a blessing had been craved on ye meat, ye council all partook of it but Mr. Shepard, whose conscience was tender on ye point of ye venison.

The Place of Women in Municipal Reform

By Mary E. Mumford

What is the city but the larger house in which we dwell, in which, under wise control, each member must so live as to contribute to the general welfare? Good city government is good housekeeping, and that is the sum of the matter. The experiences of the woman's narrow sphere are the same on the wider plane. If she follows her broom into the street, she is confronted with a problem upon which she has been at work for centuries, and she has well learned the principle that the prime condition for the remedy of dirt and all uncleanness is first to see the same. No doubt all will agree that the peculiar sensitiveness to dirt and disorder which is hers by native instinct and long training should be brought to bear upon every part of a great city. She should be an active ally of the street-cleaning department, and every district might have a woman supervisor with authority to insist that stray papers shall not lie on the pavements, that back alleys shall not be strewn with garbage, that unwholesome odors shall be traced to their source, and nuisances abated. I know answer will be made that this is, in part at least, the function of the police force; and no doubt they have honest intention to carry out the orders given them, but, as they are men, these are duties for which they have no aptness or liking, and many of them, I am afraid, if called to account, would retort in the spirit of the boy who said his "grandmother made a fuss about a grease-spot if it wasn't any bigger than your hat."

The beginnings of woman's city housekeeping have already been made in several large towns under the name of Women's Health Protective Associations. To read the reports of what they have done inspires one like the history of the old crusades. These voluntary organizations have taken in hand investigations into school hygiene, tenement-houses, sanitary inspection of stores, condition of streets and cars, offenses of gas-houses, slaughter-houses, disposition of stable refuse, garbage, etc. They have made themselves wholesomely respected and feared by men who had defied the orders of the law and the petitions of the people. I am not prepared to say whether this agency should be officially attached to the city government, but it should certainly be a permanently organized force employed for the civic good.

Now, our municipal home once cleaned, we may begin to beautify it, in which work the woman would, by natural right, have an important share. Art commissions of men and women should look after the adornment of the city, make parks and open spaces, secure good pictures and ornaments for public schools, encourage a better architecture, and prevent the imposition on an unsuspecting public of monstrosities in painting and sculpture.

It goes without saying that women should have large share in the control of school affairs. It is as the mother, as the natural educator of the child, that it is not only her right but her bounden duty to follow her little ones into the school-room and know every detail of their training there. No reasonable person would deny this. The people have over and over again expressed their approval by making women eligible to school boards and giving them the vote for school commissioners. Yet they have little to do with control of education. The reason for this I find in the fact that, with a few very honorable exceptions, in every large town or city the sacred function of education has been made the football of politicians. It seems as if we are sometimes willfully blind in refusing to see that education is a science which cannot be administered by Tom, Dick, and Harry with any expectation of proper development. We are throwing our money away, which is serious enough; but, worse than that, we are throwing the precious time of our children away, and robbing them of the proper preparation for life. A board of lawyers might as well attempt to give medicine to a suffering community, as a board of chance citizens expect wisely to direct the great interests of education. It is the most important science in

the world, and the most undeveloped and complex. Only experts should dare administer it, and they may well enter upon such a solemn responsibility with reverent fear. The men and women on school boards should be of the highest character, and remain long enough in office to make a conscientious study of the great problems offered for their solution. Only women can give the time required for such work; but the politician has pre-empted the school board, and he takes excellent care that no element so useless to him as an independent, single-minded woman shall find a place thereon. He holds the fort with such ability that, after a struggle of many years, the women school directors in all the cities of the Union could probably be counted on the ten fingers. Boston, which has been called the most highly civilized city of the continent, has four women in a committee of twenty-four. Chicago and New York have had a small representation, but I believe the latter has now shelved all the female members of its School Board. Philadelphia has two women in a board of thirty-seven, and among the four hundred and fifty local directors elected by the people but one is a woman.

There is another phase of city life which calls loudly for the help of the gentler side. It is in the ministry to the low and the degraded, in which department of civic government there is heroic work to do. With the new attrition among women there has arisen a new sense of sisterhood and a deeper feeling of responsibility among the more fortunate for those of their own sex who are in the dire struggle with poverty, degradation, and crime. The day has not come yet, but, believe me, it is not far distant, when woman will ask that the care and reformation of her unfortunate sister shall be placed wholly in her own hands. It is being forced upon her attention that here lie problems with which, with all their wisdom and good intention, men have not the power to deal.

The first step to this end was taken when the women in various cities demanded the appointment of police matrons, who should care for women and children brought temporarily to the station-houses. The Chief of the Department of Public Safety of Pittsburg reports: "To the matron is assigned the duty of making personal examination, of searching female prisoners—duties heretofore necessarily performed by the sergeants or police officers, but which, from motives of modesty, generally met with resistance upon the part of the prisoner. With the advent of the matron such methods have been changed, and better results obtained in a peaceable and dignified manner. In many cases the matron has succeeded in finding the female prisoners places of employment; others were placed in homes or charitable institutions. The intercession of the matrons with the magistrates has been beneficial, mitigating what would otherwise have been a hard and cruel sentence." A letter written recently by a citizen of New York, a considerable authority in social questions, says of police matrons: "We have ten in the city, and they are now an established fact. They were appointed at the persistent agitation of well-known ladies, whose view of the matter was, of course, to a large extent based on sentiment." He goes on to say that, though the police are not very favorable to the movement, he thinks the gain to the cause of humanity more than justifies the expenditure. I quote him here to emphasize his remark, made a little slightly, perhaps, that the demand of these ladies was "to a large extent based on sentiment." He says the truth. It is this quality which woman would bring to the affairs of government—a quality which public administration sadly needs. For why this government? Not simply for clean streets, to avoid the cholera, and to punish crime. In the lesser household of the home, in the larger household of the city, the aim is the same—to work out the highest good to all concerned, the advancement of humanity.

The constant tendency of man is to build a machine to do his work for him. The woman force is not of this kind. It is ever individual, ever sympathetic, and, in good works, originaive. If woman comes into your counsels, it will be as the silent force opposed to the machine—the machine in contracts, the machine in politics, the machine

in education, the machine in charity. She will disturb your set routine and your cast-iron law. She will work for ideals; they may seem to you chimeras, but in the end you will approve them.

But woman has proved herself, even from your point of view, thoroughly practical, executive, and, in administration, economical. Nearly one hundred charities and societies in Philadelphia are managed by women alone; woman's work in the World's Fair has shown the world that she can handle large interests with genuine business ability, a fact attested in all our large cities in the work done by Women's Christian Associations and other important enterprises.

In this paper I have confined myself to but one view of this question—woman as the home-maker, and, through that function, her relation to municipal government. I do not forget that she has material interests at stake, that she is a very large property-holder in every city in the land; nor am I unaware that municipal suffrage is slowly creeping across the country from the plains of the West, and that it will, for good or for evil, soon be in our hands. It will not find us unprepared, for intelligent women are everywhere studying civics and the social problems of the day.



Another Hint from the West

Every year the sentiment of American housekeepers grows stronger in favor of the desirability of eliminating the laundry-work from the housekeeping routine. It compels discomfort and disorganization in every home not provided with a regular laundry and laundress. To the house of one servant it means positive discomfort. The mistress must perform the servant's ordinary work, or it must go undone; the home is the menial of the wash-board, suds, and irons; dinners are the remains of yesterday; and the whole routine of the home is broken because of the importance of this department of the household service. When the laundry-work is done outside the home, the one or two maids can be held to higher standards, the work can be arranged with much surer feeling that injustice is not being done. Two days of heavy work leaves hardly any but the strongest women in condition to take up another day's work of sweeping and cleaning with enthusiasm.

The past winter ought to show the possibility to housekeepers of combining to secure co-operation that would improve the conditions of housekeeping in America. In Indianapolis the laundry-girls have formed a co-operative company, and are meeting with success. Why could not housekeepers form a co-operative laundry association, and secure the relief, the freedom, which this would give?

It would be worth the attention of a church with a large mission field, which implies a demand more or less urgent for charity or its equivalent in wages, to start a laundry that would employ its unemployed, and furnish wages that would make charity unnecessary. The stockholders should be those who would agree to furnish work. The aged could earn at least a part of their support by selling such service as they could to the laundry. The workers could be encouraged to become stockholders, and the untrained woman of executive ability, who is now the problem of a half-dozen rich members, could find a field for her unemployed talent.

Prices in laundries are beyond the reach of limited means; the work could be done and living wages earned if the prices were less per dozen, and care in the work were guaranteed. It is not refreshing to have one's clothes returned by the outside laundress smelling of the week's dinners of the apartment, in which they have been washed, ironed, and aired; with the concentrated essence of cheap tobacco in every fold.

Laundry-work and family baking will be taken out of the homes in America when American housekeepers combine to secure the least friction and annoyance for the money expended.