

praises of the enjoyableness of the walk. It chanced that a nurse-maid in the service of one of the ladies of the party was in attendance in the room, and heard most of the conversation. After lunch she was dispatched on her daily walk with one of her young charges. The girl, never having been in the direction of Broadstairs, and the conversation she had heard at the lunch table still in her memory, conceived the idea of going to Broadstairs and back *by way of the sands!* thinking, no doubt, that it was far more pleasant than the dusty path through the corn-fields. She had accomplished more than half the distance when, the little one becoming weary, she started to return, and, somewhat to her astonishment, found they were alone on the beach. However, they strolled along unconcernedly, the child stopping occasionally to gather the many colored shells that were abundantly scattered around, until she became aware of the shortening day by the long shadows thrown by the cliffs on the water. Looking seaward, it seemed to her that the water was nearer than when they had passed before; but as yet, knowing nothing about the ebb and flow of the tide, imagined no danger. Slightly quickening her pace, however, she took the child's hand to hurry her along. What was her dismay, on turning a projecting buttress of the cliff, to see the broad strip of sand over which they had walked earlier in the day now dwindled to little more than a bridle path, and that close to the base of the cliff! The horrid truth now flashed upon her—the tide was coming in upon them, and unless they could get round the headland, which marks the southern limit of Ramsgate Harbor, before the tide covered the sand, they were lost. Vain hope! The swift waves were lapping her feet even now; but taking the child in her arms, the girl started on a run toward the goal, nearly half a mile distant. But fatigue overcame her, burdened as she was, and besides she could see that a few rods farther on there would be no footing for her, and that long before she could reach the headland the water would be many feet deep. Long and loud did she call, and the child mingled its cries with hers; but none heard—none saw. Even had any one heard, it would have been impossible to see them from the summit, the slightly retreating tops of the cliffs effectually hiding anything which happened to be close under their base. From seaward their chance of rescue was equally precarious; hidden as they were in the spray and shadow, not the strongest glass could have picked them out, even had any one been on the watch.

She cast a hurried glance around for some floating thing to which they might cling—some stone or projection in the face of the cliff. She thought she saw a few projecting shrubs growing out of a ledge of the cliff which, could she reach, would at least take them out of the reach of this devouring element which now threatened their destruction. Tying the little one in her dress in front of her, she commenced to draw herself toward the coveted resting-place by the aid of a few tufts of grass and the slight projections of the cliff. Little by little she neared it, and at last reached it, but it was a ledge hardly a foot

wide, and she had still to support herself and the child by clinging to the tufts of grass and wild flowers that waved above her head.

She found she could not long remain here—even now they were drenched by the spray that dashed upon the rocks a few feet below—so, after a few minutes' rest, she commenced her perilous ascent once more, literally scaling the face of the cliff by a path which, at any other time, would have made her dizzy to look at. Up! up! she climbed, the loose stones and gravel falling behind her at every step.

At length, as by a miracle, with hands torn and bleeding, her dress in tatters, but with the child safe, she reached the summit, and fell fainting on the ground.

Meantime, the fears of those at the cottage had caused search to be made, and they were shortly afterward found and cared for.

The town of Ramsgate, so called from being built in the depression or "gate" between two chalky hills, possesses the largest artificial harbor in England. It is formed by two stone piers, upwards of 2,000 feet long, jutting out into the sea at nearly right angles to the shore, and forming an inward curve at their seaward extremities. The shelter thus formed is available for the largest vessels, and is an invaluable harbor of refuge to the immense amount of shipping passing up and down the Channel, whose frequent storms and heavy seas render it at all times difficult for navigators; and Ramsgate Harbor is the Mecca of many a drenched and hungry crew.

## The Old and the New.

BY N. J. T. B.

**T**HE old life—the life of the body,  
Weary, and weak, and old,  
Dreading the rain of the autumn,  
Dreading the winter's cold;  
Fearing the clouds as they gather,  
Drifting across the sun,  
Dreading the change that cometh  
When the work of the earth is done.

**S**TRANGE is the life of the mortal,  
Bending, although he hath trust;  
With a brow that is furrowed with anguish,  
Bending toward the dust;  
Locks that grow white as the snowdrifts,  
Form that grows weary and old,  
Passing away through the autumn,  
Away through the winter's cold.

**B**UT, lo! thou weary-eyed mortal,  
Look upward! for heaven is true;  
The clouds they shall break and scatter,  
Above them the sky is blue.  
You are travelling on through the autumn,  
Passing the white drifts of snow;  
And you surely shall yet reach the spring-time,  
Where the valleys bud, waken, and blow.

**W**HEN do not grow sad in the shadows;  
Do not heed the long cold,  
There cometh the dawn of the spring-time,  
When you shall be nevermore old.  
Out through the darkness of night-time  
Your feet must travel to-day,  
To reach the glad dawn, with its brightness,  
Past shadows of night-time's decay.

[Read before a Meeting of the Committee on Science of  
Sorosis.]

## Committee Work in Women's Clubs.

BY JENNIE JUNE.



Y those who are unacquainted with Women's Clubs—who have never attended their meetings, and know nothing of the interior activities of such associations—they are constantly met with the observation that they have no purpose, that they do no work, and have no interests beyond meeting together and having a "good time;" a kind of taking for granted, and basing objections on their own assertions, which very many persons are apt to indulge in; and perhaps it is natural at least that women should look at clubs in this way. As yet few of them have a correct idea of what organization means. Their experience of it has been confined mainly to church societies, sewing societies, charitable societies—societies drawn together and held together by a special bond of union—devoted to the carrying out of a single object, to which all the energies are applied.

The Women's Club has not this element of strength—it has no single object in which all the members are interested, to which they are all bound in a spirit of loyal devotion and religious zeal.

Men's Clubs hold together through motives of self-interest. Their club life is the home-life of many of them; it furnishes them with luxuries not obtainable under any other circumstances, and with constant and more or less congenial companionship. No Women's Club has yet been able to provide itself with a luxuriously appointed house in which it exercises sole right of proprietorship, they never assess a member, they cost their members very little, and for what is paid give generous return. Still the absence of the single object, and the lack of a home, are drawbacks to unity, and to the strength which grows out of fixed and harmonious purpose.

"Why not furnish an object, then, in which all will be interested, and for which every one will be willing to work?" is asked.

Because this is contrary to the very genius of club life. Clubs differ from societies in this respect: in being complex, composed of many individualities, all of which work harmoniously, though in many different directions. No club of men could be made to put all their efforts into a "School," or a "Hospital," or a "Home," even though the members were, individually, largely interested in educational and philanthropic objects, for the reason that each one would have his own particular hobby, which he would desire the rest to ride. And if this is true of men, it is ten



times more true of the women of a Woman's Club. The novelty of the situation, firstly, brings together women largely of ideas. Secondly, it is women who create and sustain, or obtain the sustenance for, nine-tenths of the charities—in short, do the unpaid work—and being themselves always afflicted with poverty, for they do not hold the money-bags, the temptation to urge others to join forces assumes the form of an absolute necessity. But a Club is and must be a free agent; it is not to be turned into an Asylum or a Refuge, and yet it must furnish a sufficient amount of interest to supply equally those who have scarcely any active life outside of it, and those whose lives are full and running over with light, and warmth, and blessing.

How can this be done?

Some Women's Clubs bring to their aid an advisory committee of gentlemen, and depend mainly upon papers from outside, both from men and women, to supply the intellectual stimulus and entertainment of the members. The committee work, so far as it is done at all, is without special reference to the furnishing of mental provision for Club meetings. It is a fact that should be borne in mind in reference to Sorosis, that when it started it had no precedent to follow—it had to make its own rules for its own guidance; and it says something for the way in which these were thought out in the beginning, that no important change has been made in them during the eleven years of its existence.

The great point, however, was this: how is the life of the Club to grow and be rendered permanent without a fixed home, or the one central and all-pervading object of interest, which, in the shape of a pastor's dressing-gown, flannels for the South Sea Islanders, or dolls for an Infant Asylum, had been the pivot upon which the united action of women had heretofore turned.

The central principle of the Club from the beginning, and its abiding inspiration, was Unity and Loyalty. Whatever was done by one was to serve the interest of the whole—it was to be Sorosis, not its individual members, first, last, and always. It was also self-centered, standing alone, doing its work, whatever it might be, alone; kindly, hospitable, gracious, with a welcome for women from afar and women that were near, but acting always on its own responsibility, managing its own affairs, and asking neither help nor advice from the outside world.

The wisdom of such an experiment as this had to be tested—made the subject of experiment, before its wisdom, or even its practicability could be decided upon. Old methods were gradually giving way to new ones, and the ordinary woman, though of average intelligence, whose education was finished twenty-five years ago, began to feel herself at an immeasurable disadvantage beside the college graduate, and desired to learn something of the world into which she had been born, and in which she had been allowed to grow, and live, with partially shut eyes.

The division of membership into committees representing the Activities of Women, and the assignment to each one of club work duty and responsibility, was the method

adopted by Sorosis for establishing itself upon a permanent footing, and securing the goodwill and co-operation of all its members.

And now what should the work of these committees be? "Literature," "Art," "Science," "Education," "Philanthropy," "Music," the "Drama," "House and Home," were all represented, and to these have been added of late years "Business Women," and "Journalism." What should the work of all these be? What duties should be imposed upon them, in the economy of the whole, and in the working out, and development of a broader, and more complete womanhood?

To illustrate various theories by practical effort was impossible. A club may inspire and encourage all enterprises, but it cannot found hospitals, or asylums, or build dramatic colleges, or musical schools. Each part of the structure is entitled to as much life, liberty, and happiness, and the broad cultivation of the whole must not be neglected for the special devotion to one particular part. What then could be done but make each one subsidiary to the whole, and the whole helpful and stimulative to each part? It was soon discovered that knowledge in special directions was very limited—that thought was not well formulated, that expression was feeble, that utterance was inexact, and that what was known was often just enough to inspire timidity, not to give mastery. From the committees and their work should come enlightenment.

What was not known individually, could be learned collectively. Each committee, in the hands of a good and efficient chairman, should organize itself into a class, collect facts in regard to its department, develop ideas, explode worn-out traditions, and help to form new, and strong, and true opinion. All this they could bring in the form of papers to the club, and the discussions upon these would help still farther to exhibit all sides of a subject, and educate each one into correctness of thought, and freedom and aptness of speech.

Instead of adding another to the small shops already in existence for the distribution of mental and moral wares gratis, Sorosis proposed to increase its own efficiency in every direction, by making itself better acquainted with what had already been done, what was being done, what could be done within the limits assigned to every mortal, and every society of mortals.

From the Committee on Education, for example, could be learned what advances are being made, not only in the education of women, but also in the methods of education pursued by the world at large. New ideas, which are apt to be received with enthusiasm because they are new, are, by a committee of thoughtful women, intent on discovering the truest truth, and with no personal prejudices or private ends to serve, weighed, and sifted, and given their proper place and value. Traditions, on the contrary, which have the respectability of habit and custom to sustain them, have a deeper hold with women than with men, and step in to modify and control, to a certain extent, both judgment and action.

Other committees naturally start with the

same broad outlook, the same endeavor to inform the Club upon the general facts which belong to its department, the same calmness, candor, good judgment, and freedom from prejudice in dealing with the conclusions to be drawn from them. The field of each one is sufficiently broad, without treading on the domain of the other, and the work is better and more usefully done within the proper limits, than by skirmishing all over its own and everybody's ground, as it must be said is too much the manner of us women.

I have been told of a Committee on Literature, also an offshoot of a Woman's Club, that met, read, a few miscellaneous newspaper items, and then glided off into a general talk which began with the "Woman" question, and ended with the trials ancient servant girls. "Did you say this was a Committee on Literature?" asked a visitor. "Yes," was the reply. "I have heard nothing in regard to literature, or literary subjects," remarked the guest. "Well, we have not as yet decided just what branch of literature to take up," answered the member, who was also the chairman. "But," pursued the investigator, "has your work no relation to your Club, its life and growth? is it quite independent?" "Oh yes! quite independent," returned the other, "we have not thought yet of making it in any way useful to the Club in general—in fact, we have not been asked."

Committees on Literature are favorite ones with most Women's Clubs. They feel that they are on safe ground.

In one upon which I myself once inadvertently dropped, "Chaucer" had been the subject for desultory and comparatively uninterested reading and comment for four months. The Club meanwhile had had papers from clever men and clever women outside of its ranks, but its actual work was of the most desultory description, and tended neither to inform the members nor consolidate its interests.

Competition is the life of everything; why not of Club Committees?

Has one committee a right to absorb the whole strength of the Club? is asked. Certainly not; and if one committee does, it only shows that the others have been idle. A club that has, like Sorosis for instance, ten standing committees, appeals to every element, and ought to present at the close of each year, a complete and thoroughly well-rounded epitome of what has been thought, and what has been done in every department. The great trouble is, that while every one is willing to hear and get the result of other people's work, but few like to go through the labor which lies back of any real achievement. Actual committee work is "so dull, and stupid, and uninteresting," say the majority. "It is all very well to come together and have pleasant social meetings, and hear good papers, but to collect facts and discuss theories which one doesn't half understand, is a very different thing." The Club itself is the body, the committees are its members; labor, strength, help, influence, should be, as nearly as possible, equally distributed. Where the majority are supine and inactive, one may show with advantage what may be done, and even if the strength is used which



of right belongs in some other channel, there is no cause for complaint. But in the strength that is employed, and the work that is done, the welfare of the whole body, its interests, its dignity, its honor, should be of the first importance, for it is from it that the strength is derived by which the offshoots flourish. There should be a noble ambition therefore in each committee to surpass the other, in work which would tend to the enlargement, the consolidation, the glory of the whole.

There is no necessity either for adhering to strict, rigid, or arbitrary lines. No person or set of persons can lay down absolute rules for the government of one who is equally a free agent with the rest; the only thing that is necessary is recognition of the fundamental principles of Unity, Honor, Loyalty, and subordination to self-imposed law and the will of the majority, upon which permanence and growth in associative movements depend. Suppose a Musical Committee conceived the project of a great musical conservatory, free to girls, as the one thing needful in the city of New York. Suppose at the same time our Committee on Education wished to open free classes for instruction in mathematics; the Committee on Science to institute a course of lectures: the Committee on Philanthropy to found a "Home" for something or other; the Committee on the Drama, to get up a school of dramatic art; the Committee on Art, free classes for teaching decorative and industrial art, and so on—these things could not be done; for to do any one of them would tax the strength and resources of the club in such a way, that to the carrying out of the plan it would have to devote all its energies. Suppose the will-power and influence in one direction sufficient to do this, the associative body would be no longer a club, but a society for the advancement of one specific and limited object, always making desperate efforts to get together small resources for accomplishing an undertaking that was probably being much better done in some other and more self-reliant way.

The work then of Club Committees, while broad as the universe, must be limited by the strength, by the equal and harmonious direction of rights and privileges and by the desire on the part of each one to do what is done for the benefit of the whole. There is no reason however, why the capacities of each one should not be enlarged, or why they should be limited to the showing to which time or circumstance confine it in the club. The point is simply this, that the work done in committees should be subordinated, to a certain extent, to its club work, and planned to render its club work more compact, more distinctive, more thorough, and more reliable.

From a Committee on Music, for example, may be obtained not only much of the pleasure of social meetings, but solid information in regard to musical culture, voice development, music as a profession for women, its physical, mental and moral essentials, statistics in regard to vocalists, the percentage of success, and how it compares with other arts and professions. There is also an interesting question in the difference between the singing voice of different nations, and what effect the physical and

climatic variations have to do in producing these differences.

Take next "House and Home" Committee, which deals with household matters generally; ventilation, the modern apartment house, as compared with the isolated dwelling, of country houses, as compared with city houses, of boarding, as compared with a family home, of sanitary requisites, of improved methods, of the intelligence needed in using them, of household government and expenses, the care and management of children, and direction of servants, and the whole system of architecture, as relating to family wants and convenience, is open, and offers a field, in addition to others which have been more or less trodden, from which much that is of importance to our daily lives may be gathered.

Is there one active element, indeed, that a Club can afford to lose? The work of the Committee on Philanthropy, though it may not be of a kind to be trumpeted through the newspapers, is a perpetual benediction on the rest of the doings, and, though the occasional donations dispensed through its means are a less important part of its work than the wider knowledge that is gained of what can be best and most usefully done to alleviate seemingly inevitable woes, still it is a part that the majority most readily appreciate; for we all know how much easier it is to excite sympathy than to act justly—how prone the world is to generalize from the single facts of individual experience, and become filled up with small attempts to cure great evils, while the broad, universal principles, upon which the universe is founded, are ignorantly disregarded. Knowing all this, we may well wait a little, as well as work; give time and thought to social problems, and weigh carefully all that comes to us before attempting a remedy for what we only partially understand.

More than by any other agency, Sorosis has been built up by the admirable work done in its Committees of Art, Education, Science, Literature, and the rest; and if the belief is expressed that more united, systematic, and earnest effort—a better understanding of the possibilities contained in them—would produce still more satisfactory results, it is only giving voice to the universal law of growth, which springs from order, obedience, and honest, patient endeavor.

## Women of Italy.

NAPLES, ITALY.



OMAN is making for herself so wide a breach in the ancient walls of prejudice that surround her—her importance as a factor in the world's sum of happiness or misery is being so clearly demonstrated, and so intimately felt—that it is with a certain sense of curiosity one hears advanced, in this year of our Lord 1878, the theories of the dark ages concerning her condition and capabilities: a sort of antiquarian curiosity, which may be further gratified

by comparing the old with the new opinions of the country; for, even in this ancient land, the new leaven is at work. Nations live by periods. Italy—though now sadly in the background—was, in former ages, the cradle of female development. In times when writers in other countries doubted the existence of a soul in woman, Gaetana Agnesi occupied a professorial chair in the University of Pavia, and taught physics and mathematics. Laura Bassi, at Bologna, discussed publicly the planetary system, and Di Yele, at the age of sixteen, published a treatise on differential calculus which confounded mathematicians. Later, Vittoria Colonna, Gaspara Stampa, Giustina Micheli, Isabella Albrizzi, moved the world with the profundity and versatility of their genius.

In the long period of intellectual and political slavery that followed, Italy lost her place in the vanguard of female progress, and it is only of late, under the fostering influences of liberty and unity, that mental activity among women again manifests itself. Marchesa Colombi (*nom de plume* of the wife of one of our well-known journalists) has recently published a novel with the title "*In the Rice-fields*," in which the customs of the peasants of Lombardy—the prejudices, hates, loves, sufferings of a life passed in the miasms of the rice-fields, are described with a power that recalls the rural stories of George Sand. Neera, Virginia Mulazzi, many others whom I might name, have risen of late to celebrity. But I will mention only a name beloved, not only for rare attainments, but for philanthropy—Erminia Fusinato, who died recently in Rome. A powerful thinker and graceful writer, she dedicated her life to the advancement of knowledge, organized in Rome—stronghold of papal ignorance—the common schools of the municipality, and was so great a benefactress that it was proposed to create a decoration expressly in her favor.

All of which is *apropos* of the lecture on *Literary Women*, delivered by Professor Dalbono of the Royal University, before the Philologic Club of Naples, some time since. This club, as the name indicates, is an organization primarily for the culture of languages, and secondly of thought. English, French, Italian, Russian, and Modern Greek, are taught in classes, accompanied by *conversazione* intended to put the knowledge gained to a practical use. Weekly *conferenze* or lectures are given by (more or less) able professors. The subject chosen by Professor Dalbono proved unusually attractive, and sufficed to fill the pleasant hall of the club with a throng of eager listeners, mostly ladies—Madame De Sanctis, wife of the Minister of Public Industry, Baroness Nicotera, and other celebrities were present.

Instead of a review of those grand writers whose works have illumined the last two centuries and made life richer and nobler, Professor Dalbono regaled us with a dissertation on the Inferiority of Woman, which, however unexpected, was not devoid of interest, such as the study of any "fossil remains" might awaken.

Beginning with the obsolete Latin grammar of the universities, he quoted one of its first