UNREGULATED COMPETITION SELF-DESTRUCTIVE.

A MAXIM often heard, but, like other maxims, commonly used without reflection, asserts that "competition is the life of trade." An inquiry addressed to a recognized expert in such matters, Mr. A. R. Spofford, the accomplished and almost omniscient Librarian of Congress, disclosed the fact that he was totally unable to trace its origin, and that in his opinion, like Topsy, it was never born, but simply "growed." "I much regret," he said, "not to have it in my power to assign any authorship to the phrase 'Competition is the life of trade.' All the reference books fail to contain it. Very probably it is one of the thousands of proverbs which pass current without a father." W. W. Story, in his "Conversations in a Studio," well says that "phrases and formulas rule the world more than ideas. They are easy to say; they have a gloss of truth; and they save the trouble of thinking." He describes some of them as "a sort of Liebig's Extract, put up in a portable can, and capable of dilution into infinite twaddle."

This comment is quite appropriate to the maxim just quoted. In some simple period of Anglo-Saxon history—perhaps after observing the stimulating effect produced upon a village mercer by an opposition establishment presenting a larger choice from newer goods, or perchance in view of a better wagon or a faster horse purchased by a cross-country carrier to enable him to equal the service tendered by a progressive rival—the thought was conceived that "competition is the life of trade." The phrase was easy and the idea attractive: its truth under certain circumstances was undeniable. The saying passed into common circulation, and finally became dignified with the appellation of a Maxim with a capital M, in which capacity it has long done service. It has been quoted in the ephemeral utterances of the press and in the solemn deliverances of the courts, and has been treated on all hands as expressing an incontestable verity. Its use has often been pushed so far as to imply the condemnation of any opposite idea; and judges have once and again assured us that, whereas it is an established maxim that "competition is the life of trade," the

inference is irresistible that any contract or agreement which imposes the slightest restraint upon competition is against public policy, and therefore illegal and void.

Yet if those who use the phrase so glibly, and who dilute its application so infinitely, would but pause for a moment, and reflect, they would see that it was as easy in the first instance to have said that "competition is the death of trade;" and, if that turn had been given to the thought, all its consequences and inferences would have been reversed. The village mercer who bought heavily and sold with little profit, in his anxiety to hold his own against the encroachments of his enterprising rival, very likely found himself before long a bankrupt. The poor carter, amply able alone to handle all the traffic of his route, after the purchase of his new horse and cart was to be seen carrying only half-loads, and receiving lower rates upon what business he was able to retain. A compromise was perhaps arrived at before either party was absolutely ruined, by which one bought out the other at a sacrifice; or, more probably, the two formed a partnership (or trust), by which their competition was effaced.

These simple examples show the danger which lurks in generalizations. "Competition is the life of trade;" "Competition is the death of trade:" one phrase is as true as the other. For all that appears, it was a toss-up which of the two should become current as the expression of a general thought. The public may often say that "competition is the life of trade," while at the same moment the competing traders or manufacturers themselves, behind their doors, are groaning that "competition is sure to be their death;" and the latter view, in turn, may be accepted by the public as correct when one of the competitors has been forced from the field and the other pushes for the advantages of his victory.

Competition is war. It may be war to the knife, fierce and deadly: it may be a gentlemanly contest with foils and masks, or padded gloves. At times it is waged at every point relentlessly; again it is confined to a single phase of contact: but, however conducted, in its essence it is war; and when carried to its extreme conclusion it means financial ruin to one or the other of the contestants. No actual war has yet been waged with repeating-rifles, magazine-guns, smokeless powder, and dynamite; but modern arsenals are filled with them. In the industrial strife which characterizes the exit of the century, a universal competitive warfare exists, in which the use of similar destructive agencies is clearly obvious. A new and exaggerated impulse has

been given to the violence of competition. Men rush to and fro in the market-places, and the world is distracted by their contests. Every active vocation exhibits a continual conflict, and the fallen are found on every side. Is this persistent warfare a blessing, or a curse? Is competition as it now presents itself a force to be encouraged and developed, or to be put in harness and controlled?

The history of the English common law shows that fundamental changes in its principles and rules have been introduced from time to time to meet the requirements of advancing civilization. Progress in this direction has been cautious and slow. The English as a race are highly conservative, deeply grounded in what they term the "good old principles" that governed the nation in the "good old days" of the indefinite and sluggish past. But from time to time they have been confronted by a revolution; revolutions not always taking the form of physical warfare, but more often accomplished through legislative processes by the uprising of majorities. Illustrations of this abound, some of which are cognate to our subject. For many centuries, "engrossing," "regrating," and "forestalling" were very serious matters. Following the analogy of the Roman civil law, by which persons who monopolized grain and other products of the earth were denounced as *dardanarii*, and severely punished, a statute was enacted by Parliament in the reign of Edward VI., in the year 1552, which defined the three offences named above, and provided penalties appropriate to their enormity. This was the law of England until 7–8 Victoria (1845), when the statute of Edward VI. was repealed. The time had arrived when it became obvious that the ancient theories would no longer answer. Through the necessities of enlarging trade and commerce, business methods had arisen which the ancient law held criminal: one or the other must give way, and the law was accordingly reversed to meet the demands of the commercial public. Yet the thought on which the statute of Edward VI. was grounded had so long controlled the English-speaking race, that even at the present day the practices referred to are offensive to many, and the absence of punitive legislation is frequently deplored.

"Engrossing" was the offence of buying up large quantities of corn with the intent to sell again. It was said, that, if this dangerous practice was permitted, one or more men could raise the price of provisions at will. The general engrossing of any other commodity, as well as grain, with intent thereafter to sell it at an unreasonable price, also came within the condemnation of the statute. The evil apprehended

was the modern "corner," which the law endeavored by futile penalties to prevent.

"Forestalling" consisted in buying or contracting for merchandise or victual on its way to market, or dissuading persons from bringing their goods or provisions there; any of which practices, it was said, makes the market dear to the fair dealer.

"Regrating" was the crime of buying corn (meaning grain) or any other "dead victual," and selling it again in the same market or within four miles of it, so as to raise the price. It was considered an offence against public trade, because the price of provisions advanced with each change of ownership. It is evident that our modern boards of trade and produce exchanges would have little use for their diversified machinery under such a law as that. Lord Coke gave a scope even broader than this to the crime of regrating, which he defined as including every practice or device—by act, conspiracy, word, or news—to enhance the price of victuals or other merchandise. The monthly crop bulletins of our Department of Agriculture would often have been indictable in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The farmers of that day may well have wondered where their rights came in, finding themselves liable to punishment for advancing prices when the crop was short.

The abandonment of these and other restrictive laws, and the substitution in their place of absolute freedom in business methods,—leaving producers and dealers at liberty to fix their prices as they could, subject to the control of what was called the "great law of supply and demand," or, in other words, subject to the regulation imposed by unrestricted competition,—was a revolution indeed. As the power of competition became perceptible to economists and statesmen, it was adopted as the panacea for all industrial evils. It was clearly adequate to the control of wages; for the supply of labor has generally exceeded the demand, and has constantly increased, especially in view of the rapid introduction of labor-saving machinery in every direction. It was competent to prevent over-reaching in the price of manufactured articles; for the production of goods at a heavy profit immediately led to the establishment of rival manufactories by the score. It was even able to control the price of food; for the world was wide, and modern transportation facilities enabled the surplus products of one country to meet the destitution of another, keeping prices everywhere substantially upon an even keel. Competition was welcomed as the world's deliverer. That it was sure to keep prices

down was the sufficient argument; that it was equally sure, in the end, to breed industrial calamity by forcing prices down too far, was not perceived: the few who pointed out the danger were ridiculed.

The nineteenth century has been dominated by this idea: every thing having a tendency to restrict the force of competition has been frowned upon and condemned. The maintenance of absolute freedom in competition has been a public war-cry, and often a rule of jurisprudence. Laws have again and again been devised to prevent the least amelioration of competitive conditions. Every effort has been made to give to competitive forces the fullest scope; and the public—meaning always that part of the public not engaged in the particular conflict in question—has come to believe that it has a right in its own general interest to require the prompt suppression of all attempts at interference with competition, claiming it to be the life of trade, and an absolute necessity to the welfare of the State. The question of the right or the wrong of a general belief is always a fair one, and the particular belief referred to may properly now be challenged in the light of experience. How has it worked, and how is it working?

It seems probable, that if Adam Smith were to come to life again to-day he would be quite surprised at some of the results of theories which he took a prominent part in formulating. His attention as a keen observer would be at once attracted by many things which have so quietly grown up among us that their tendency has not been generally perceived.

For example, we have become accustomed to the fact that labor organizes everywhere. The price of labor is no longer a market-price, established by competition, in which every applicant for work is let alone, and is free to make his own bargain with his employer: on the contrary, it is controlled by a vast network of trade unions. Carpenters, masons, compositors, weavers, switchmen, firemen, engineers, tailors, boot-makers, hatters, even miners, and stevedores—all manual workmen who may by any stretch of courtesy regard themselves as skilled laborers—have combined among themselves, against their employers and against the world, with the avowed object of increasing their wages, controlling accretions to their number, shortening their hours of work, and in every way minimizing the effects of competition. Daring spirits among them have conceived the idea not only of extending this organization through every class of workmen, skilled or unskilled, but also of combining the whole into a universal federation, which, as "Knights of Labor," shall control the production of

the world; and every year discloses progress in this direction through the association of new labor groups and the rendering of mutual aid and support between existing sections.

Manufacturers also, of every kind, are constantly found agreeing among themselves to control the constant tendency to depress prices below a just remuneration for invested capital and skill. The number of known associations of this character can be reckoned by hundreds, embracing the producers of almost every kind of article used or consumed by the public at large, from cradles to coffins. The modern "trust" is only one form of this development, originally named from the organization of a board of trustees who held the titles to the property of the constituent members in an actual trust relation for the benefit of all; but the name is now frequently applied to all forms of associated production in which several manufacturers combine to regulate their competition with each other. The invention of the "trust" proper, as applied to the manufacture and sale of oil, copper, lead, sugar, etc., aroused great opposition by reason of the opportunity afforded for concerted operations upon a gigantic scale; but notwithstanding the severe denunciation expressed against manufacturers' syndicates, and the continued attempts to put them down by legislative prohibitions, upon the theory that they are conspiracies against the public good, their formation quietly proceeds day by day, and their strength is constantly increased as new opportunities are seen for advanced efficiency.

This movement, moreover, is by no means confined to the two fields of labor and capital. Lawyers frequently agree upon a minimum schedule of charges. Medical schools teach the avoidance of competition among practitioners through rules prohibiting the solicitation of patronage and the depreciation of fees, inculcated under the alluring title of "medical ethics." Livery-stable proprietors in every village tacitly or openly agree upon their rates. Coal exchanges everywhere make prices for fuel by the season. Insurance companies establish by concerted action the premiums to be demanded, and enforce their agreements with severity. Millers and miners unite in fixing prices upon their products. Railways agree upon their tariffs and classifications. Ranchmen establish a so-called "trust" to regulate the sale of live-stock. Rival packing-houses concur in maintaining profitable returns upon the sale of their product. Farmers unite to protect themselves against the middlemen who distribute their crops through the markets of the world: by holding back their surplus

from immediate consumption, and in other ways, they are able to some extent to remedy a pressure which they feel to be unjust, but which is simply the result of unrestricted competition in the open commerce of the day. While the agricultural interests have perhaps been slower than others to introduce the policy of combination for mutual support, the signs of the times are clear in indicating that the farmers now perceive their opportunity, and propose to push it to the utmost limit.

Incidentally it must be conceded that there are evils as well as advantages apparent on the face of this universal movement in restraint of competition. What is one man's gain is another's loss. Examples of unreasonable exaction arising from cupidity and greed, have not been wanting. While every one is ready to admit, as an abstract proposition, that it is right that others should receive a fair recompense for what they produce or sell, nevertheless the determination of the question of what is a fair and what an extortionate remuneration depends altogether upon the observer's point of view. Thus these alliances of labor, trade, and capital, have at times furnished opportunity for unreasonable demands; and well-founded complaints have arisen of unjust advantage taken when competition has for a season been circumscribed.

Yet there is much truth in the counter-claim that such instances in the end correct themselves, and that no combination has yet been made, or perhaps ever can be made, of sufficient breadth and strength to maintain itself in exorbitant exactions. And unquestionably such combinations afford opportunity for the introduction of great economies in the processes of manufacture and distribution, by means of which prices charged to the ultimate consumer have again and again been very materially reduced. The saving of waste is a factor of great importance to be considered in weighing the advantages and disadvantages of co-operative production, and one in respect to which the statistics are often extremely startling.

Such considerations, however, are superficial only. The fundamental fact which lies at the root of the matter is this: that unrestricted competition as an economic principle is too destructive to be permitted to exist; it has been pushed away from every industrial calling. As in actual war the writ of *habeas corpus* is suspended, and martial law replaces the processes of civil courts, so in the stress of unregulated competition, which is in fact a universal commercial warfare, necessities have arisen which know no law, and under which every

effort to maintain the existence of unrestricted competition has broken down. Legislators who make laws from the standpoint of the politician are appalled by the number of votes found in organizations of working-men, meeting behind closed doors, for the suppression of competition. Manufacturers in self-defence either seek out cunning devices to evade the law, or secretly organize to defy it. In a word, the theory which attempted to forbid all efforts to control the force of competition has found itself unable to withstand the pressure of commercial necessities: it has been over-ridden by actualities that cannot be ignored. The force which was welcomed as a protective and regulative social agency has developed a power for evil requiring rigid measures for its control. Competition is like steam and electricity, the two great mechanic agencies of these latter days, which are useful almost beyond conception when subjugated and restrained, but which scatter destruction and death when uncontrolled.

This result, now clearly defined, has not been unforeseen by intelligent observers. The truth that unrestrained competition is essentially self-destructive has been clearly pointed out by men whose thought is worthy. Unfortunately most men do not think worthily, or do not think at all: they are ruled by phrases, and they catch the crude ideas of others as they fly.

Compare the very recent utterances of the highest tribunals of two States in respect to railway pools,—a form of protection against the ruin involved in unregulated competition, which has been prohibited by law so far as interstate commerce is concerned, and in many of the States as well.

The Supreme Court of Louisiana writes as follows:—

"It is too clear for further argument or illustration that the first, the lasting, and inevitable result of the agreement to the public was to stifle competition; and, as competition is the life of trade, the effect of the contract must necessarily and inevitably have been injurious to public interest, and hence it was contrary to public policy. . . . American jurisprudence has firmly settled the doctrine that all contracts which have a palpable tendency to stifle competition, either in the market-value of commodities or in the carriage and transportation of such commodities, are contrary to public policy, and are therefore incapable of conferring upon the parties thereto any rights which a court of justice can recognize or enforce."

On the other hand, the Supreme Court of New Hampshire says:—

"When pooling contracts prevent an unhealthy competition, and furnish the public with adequate facilities at fixed and reasonable rates, they are beneficial, and in accord with sound principles of public policy. . . . The public interest is

not subserved by competition which reduces the rate of transportation below the standpoint of fair compensation. . . . Arrangements and contracts between competing railroads, by which unrestrained competition is prevented, do not contravene public policy."

So in respect to other industrial combinations. While the general rule of decision in American tribunals has unquestionably been in line with a case in Ohio, in respect to an association of salt manufacturers,—which held that the inevitable tendency of such contracts is injurious to the public, and that on grounds of public policy the agreement in question could not be enforced,—nevertheless a recent case in Massachusetts decides that—

"A combination between manufacturers, intended not to restrict production, but simply to maintain a fair and uniform price, and to prevent the injurious effects to producers and customers of fluctuating prices caused by undue competition, is not in restraint of trade or against public policy."

These protests against the prevailing current of decision in the United States find support from England, where judges have widely disagreed, but where the inevitable disaster consequent upon unregulated competition was perceived earlier than in this country.

Light may perhaps be thrown upon the subject by looking for a moment at the history of monopolies under the common law. Originally the farming-out of exclusive privileges was considered a perquisite of the king and a legitimate source of his revenue. The sovereign was accustomed to issue letters-patent on all occasions where money was to be made therefrom, conceding to particular persons absolute monopolies of various kinds, especially of the right to carry on particular descriptions of traffic. In this view a monopoly was defined as "an exclusive right granted to a few of something which was before a common right."

These grants became so frequent during the time of Queen Elizabeth, and gave rise to so many complaints, that she was finally obliged to withdraw many of the most obnoxious, after a long contest, in which a monopoly of the right to make and sell playing-cards had been held by the court to be against the common law. In the reign of James I., an act was passed preventing their creation in future, except for limited periods, in the case of copyrights, and patents for new inventions.

An exclusive grant of a privilege new and original, not restraining any person or corporation in any liberty or trade before enjoyed by them, was not, strictly speaking, a monopoly. Grants of this descrip-

tion have been numerous; for example, the right to construct and operate a tramway in a city street. No one had a right to do this until the franchise was first conferred: and from the very nature of the case the grant was generally exclusive; for the use of the same street by two competing lines of railway could not often be tolerated. So of the right conferred upon a water company to supply water through pipes laid under the streets of a city, or for the distribution of gas, steam, or electricity. The attempt which has been made at times to regulate the prices of these necessary articles through competition has uniformly proved a disastrous if not a ridiculous failure. Gas companies, for example, became extremely and unexpectedly profitable. The public demanded competition; permits were granted to rival companies, and pipes and mains were duplicated; prices were rapidly reduced; the point of profitable production was soon passed; one company or the other was forced to surrender; a sale or consolidation was effected; a re-organization took place, in which the cost of the unnecessary plant was fully represented; and the public thereafter had to pay rates required to satisfy the holders of the enlarged capitalization for their aggregate investment, besides having been subjected to the annoyance of needless injury to the streets. Mr. Charles Whiting Baker, in his interesting work entitled "Monopolies and the People," tells us that this farce has been repeated in at least twenty cities in the United States, and in every case with the same result. In matters of this kind the true policy unquestionably is to protect rigidly the exclusive nature of the grant, and, as a condition precedent thereof, to impose a right to control the price of the service rendered within a reasonable limit, which, in default of other agreement, should be a judicial rather than an administrative question.

There are many other enterprises of even larger scope,—such as bridges, canals, telegraphs, and railways,—which are commonly termed "monopolies;" and the public would probably be better served by maintaining their substantially exclusive character, conditioned upon their being subject to proper and reasonable supervision in the matter of tolls and facilities. A new railway cannot be constructed in England as a competitive agency merely: it must be shown to answer a general public need. The pursuit of a contrary policy in this country has led to disastrous consequences.

The opportunity to impose proper restrictions has been overlooked, unfortunately, in many cases, in the hasty granting of charters and concessions; and, in lieu of attempting to re-establish the rights of the

public by negotiation or by legislation within proper limits, an effort has been made to obtain regulation indirectly through the application of universal competition. As in every other industrial domain, this effort has failed and will fail. It is a very serious question, and one by no means to be cavalierly dismissed, whether a wiser policy than the present may not be found in extending the system which has worked and is working well in many instances; whether monopoly under suitable supervision and control might not often be substituted with profit for the industrial fetich of the nineteenth century known as "free and unrestricted competition."

However this may be, the fact is clear, that in spite of public misconception, and in defiance of ill-considered decisions, and statutes born of superficial thought, the regulation of competition is to-day considerable. This regulation is voluntary and self-assumed in each department of industry. It is truly republican in that it rests upon the consent of the governed. If "healthy competition" be a proper phrase, there must also be a competition which is unhealthy: this alternative has been ignored by the makers and the expounders of the law. As a necessary consequence, each industry has found itself compelled, in self-defence, to take up the subject within its own membership. Measures have been everywhere adopted to subdue and ameliorate the evil results of inordinate and excessive competitive strife. Has not the time come for a reversal of the legislative attitude? Would it not be well for Congress, State Legislatures, and the Judiciary to cease their futile attempts to maintain unqualified freedom of competition, and substitute therefor a recognition of the right of every industry to combine under proper supervision, and to make agreements for the maintenance of just and reasonable prices, the prevention of the enormous wastage consequent upon warlike conditions, and the preservation of existing institutions through the years to come?

Unless this course is adopted, a social convulsion may fairly be apprehended, forced by the universal and necessary repudiation of existing laws and rules of decision, and by the general formation of combinations without their pale. Even now lines are being drawn which array different parts of our land against each other upon considerations of purely sectional interest, growing out of the preponderance here or there of this or that special form of industry. Yet the very agitators who take the lead in movements of this character, while denouncing combinations which they conceive to be against their right,

insist upon the formation of organizations of the same essential character for their own protection in the social struggle. Every person who thinks he finds a hundred forms of oppression directed against his peace, sincerely believes his own similar organization to be a necessary and salutary expedient for self-defence.

The regulation of competition is a very different thing from its suppression. Attempts to restrain its force are commonly denounced as if designed to extinguish it altogether; but in many cases its existence can be best preserved by its efficient regulation. As a dominating social principle, competition is indispensable, and can never be effaced.

Another so-called aphorism, said to have fallen from the lips of Sir Robert Stephenson, has been perverted to the misguidance of many. Coming from the father of the English railway system, his remark—that "when combination is possible, competition is impossible"—has been treated as an admission against interest, and forced to applications the farthest possible from his thought. Every observer may now perceive, if he will but use his eyes, that the mere possibility of combination does not make competition impossible; more than this, that actual combination does not put an end to competition, unless it is so complete as to efface individuality of action. Combinations to that extent may be made; for example, a purchase removes one of the competitors from the field; a partnership combines titles and purses, and makes previously hostile interests identical; a corporation sometimes effects even broader unification. Strange to say, such coalitions as these have been regarded as legitimate. It is only in cases where the union stops short of the complete extinguishment of competition, that so-called "public policy" has interposed its prohibitions. In a speech delivered in Montreal, Sir Robert argued cogently against the encouragement of reckless competition in railway building, and pointed to amalgamation as the remedy. What he evidently meant by the remark first quoted was, that, when combination is possible, the continuance of disastrous competition may be avoided.

Combinations which are less than actual consolidations do not extinguish competition: they regulate it with more or less efficiency, and they often go so far as to suspend its operation in respect to one or more important features of the strife, for example, the price paid or the time consumed. But as long as the employer or the purchaser has a choice, so long there is competition; and the independent agencies which are preserved will stretch their remaining freedom to the

utmost limit. A reaction is presently perceived; the competitive strife increases until its renewed violence requires government once more. Thus the production and labor and traffic of the world are each subject to a constant fluctuation. The natural tendency towards free competition is opposed by the effort to ameliorate its violence. On the one hand, an occasional physical amalgamation occurs: on the other hand, bankruptcies sometimes take place.

Either of these results, however, is extremely exceptional. In the vast majority of cases to-day, competition is regulated, and its very existence is in fact preserved, by means of agreements or understandings between the competing parties. Compacts of this nature are often secret; they are usually considered as merely honorary, that is, as not enforceable at law: yet their existence is so universal and so necessary, that without them the wheels of trade would cease to turn. The actual working of the opposing forces in each industrial vocation may be likened to the pulsation of a mighty engine. The piston slides backward and forward in the cylinder, driven in one direction by the almost irresistible tendency to compete bitterly, and in the other by the instinct of self-preservation, which demands that the deadly strife be controlled. In rare instances a cylinder-head blows out, or an escape-valve breaks, involving a temporary stoppage of the machinery; but in the usual course of events this ceaseless alternation moves the commerce of the world.

When once the true condition of affairs is appreciated, the amelioration of many existing difficulties will be possible. A broader and more statesmanlike treatment of the subject would let both these hostile forces equally alone. It would cease the vain attempt to suppress contracts for the reasonable regulation of competition. It would give to agreements in restraint of its destructive tendencies the dignity of right. It would tear away the veil of secrecy which now surrounds such compacts, by removing the necessity for secrecy. It would terminate legislative discriminations against intelligence and capital. It would put upon the same footing trusts and labor unions, railway pools and farmers' alliances, manufacturers' syndicates, insurance boards, associations of ranchmen and of packing-house proprietors, in short, all forms of industrial agreements intended to prevent the ruin which attends unregulated competition. In *quasi* public matters, the State might exercise a supervisory control for the prevention of extortion, affording at the same time the reciprocal protection to investments which justice requires; but the right would be conceded to

the members of each department of our complex social system to enter into contract obligations of federation designed to temper the violence of the destructive forces which oppress them.

This right has been demonstrated as essential by the fact that such agreements are universally and usefully employed, in spite of persistent efforts to put them down. They are justified by their results, as well as by sound reason. The policy of undertaking, by legal barriers, to prevent the regulation of competition, has been fully tried, and found wanting.

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THE WORK OF WOMEN'S CLUBS.

A SOMEWHAT silent but active revolution is in progress among the women of the United States, by which the old conditions that consigned them to inferiority and subjection to men, are gradually being changed. American women are leading their sex throughout the world to a higher life by their work in every State of the Union. One of the principal means by which this revolution, or "reformation" as some call it, is to be finally effected, will be through the women's clubs that are becoming so numerous.

To whatever extent women's clubs may grow, there need be no fear that they will be used for any thing but good. The distinction that nature has made between the dispositions of women and men, together with the treatment to which women have been subjected throughout the ages, has acted upon their habits of thought in such manner that now, when women band themselves together to achieve some common end, their impulses lead them so strongly to be helpful that their united work takes on an entirely different character in many ways from the associated work of their brethren. In nothing is this divergence shown so plainly as in the clubs of the two sexes. While the clubs of men consist usually of luxuriously appointed apartments, with card-rooms, bars, restaurants, bowling-alleys, and billiard-rooms for the comfort and enjoyment of the members only, women's clubs always have a basis of philanthropy, even when instituted for merely social purposes. How far the clubs of women are different from those of men is evident from the earliest of their organizations, founded while the air was still resonant with the demands made by the advocates of both sexes for the fitness of women to help manage the government they were forced to obey, as well as directly or indirectly taxed to maintain. It was in the year 1868—a time when Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Horace Greeley, Lucy Stone, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Julia Ward Howe, George William Curtis, and others were making every effort to obtain the right for women to stand on an equality with men industrially and socially, as well as politically—that the New England Woman's Club took shape in the house of Dr. Harriot K. Hunt at Boston.