

experiment—the difficulty, while not so definite, has been almost as serious. Until the days of the modern hospital, the medical practitioner had only the most imperfect opportunity for thorough observation of the patient. Not merely did he see his patient only in a fragmentary and irregular way during the time his services were in requisition, but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he had little or no accurate knowledge of what took place after his services were dispensed with. Of anything like that minute and unremitting observation which is the key of so many of the great achievements in the biological sciences generally, the practice of medicine, up to a comparatively recent time, except in a few signal instances, offered hardly a trace.

In modern days there has been an enormous advance toward supplying both these deficiencies, and with it there has come that magnificent progress of medical science and practice which is reflected in the conquest of some of the most deadly diseases and in a decisive reduction of the general death-rate. The sciences of physiology and chemistry, as such, have contributed greatly to this result; but preëminently important have been, on the one hand, systematic experimental research conducted through the use of the lower animals as subjects, and on the other hand the thorough organization of the modern hospital, in alliance with the medical school and the system of trained nurses. Laboratory research, amply endowed and directed with perhaps unprecedented perfection of system, has been the line on which the Rockefeller Institute has thus far worked; now it is aiming to push the idea of the hospital as a means of investigating disease to a degree of efficacy never before attained.

WOMEN'S CLUBS.

We believe that most readers will agree with us in the assertion that the current magazine literature of social progress and social reform is, as a general rule, anything but cheerful reading. This is not to make any accusation against it, or to deny to it high merit and great usefulness; it is simply a statement of fact, and of a fact that is natural enough. One may be delighted, for example, to learn all about what Judge Ben Lindsey has done for the

children of Denver and of the country and for the purification of Colorado politics; and yet the reading of his story of the Beast and the Jungle is certainly not an exercise calculated to raise one's spirits, unless one's cheerfulness is of the Mark Tapley variety. It is fine to be told of the thousand ways in which work is being done to improve the condition of the poor, but it is a rare thing nowadays to come upon any such account without having the sins of the rich, and the shortcomings of society in general, thrust at us with quite as much emphasis as either the misfortunes of the poor or the success of the men and women who, with so much unselfishness and so much intelligence, devote themselves to this or that work of progress. All this, though it may sometimes be sadly overdone, doubtless tends to edification; what we are remarking just now is simply that it seldom makes cheerful reading.

The immediate occasion for this remark, however, is an article to which it does not at all apply. In the *Century* for this month, Miss Hildegard Hawthorne gives an account of the General Federation of Women's Clubs which presents a most pleasing picture of a group of activities that we all know something about, but the scope, variety, and importance of which are probably very imperfectly appreciated by most people. What strikes one particularly about it is the wholesomeness of the spirit in which the work is done, the catholicity of the aims represented, and the salutary effect which, in the vast majority of cases, it must exercise upon the women engaged in it, no less than upon the community at large. What the women's clubs busy themselves with cannot be better indicated than in the graphic words in which Miss Hawthorne portrays the activities represented in the Federation:

It reaches all over the land, and starts the people to making their homes, their yards, their streets, squares, and parks clean and beautiful. It provides playgrounds for children and rest-houses for weary mothers. It seeks to keep the child out of the factory and mill, and to improve the schools. It brings travelling art-galleries to places that never had the chance to see a good picture, and establishes yearly exhibitions. It has free and loan scholarships for both young men and maidens, and provides opportunities for them after they have been graduated. It works with men to pass good laws and restrain lawlessness, to conserve the great natural resources of the country, to clean rivers and harbors, and

redeem their banks from ugliness and neglect. It sends lecturers on art, literature, civics, and household economics wherever they are called for, and it inspires the desire for them; moreover, when necessary, it gladly pays their expenses. It is non-sectarian and non-political, and though both suffrage and anti-suffrage clubs shelter under its broad wings, the Federation remains impartial.

Not the least of the merits of the Federation is its genuine and spontaneous promotion of a true spirit of democracy. This has been a marked feature from the beginning, and it would not be easy to estimate the beneficial effects that have flowed from it, especially in view of tendencies of the time working in quite the opposite direction. Miss Hawthorne tells the story of a most interesting episode which not only illustrates this spirit of democracy, but also serves as an excellent example of the twofold good that the work of a woman's club is capable of accomplishing—the good that the workers aim to do, and the good that inevitably comes to themselves from the doing. In the canal zone at Panama there existed a social condition of such unrest and discontent within our colony of canal-builders as to give the Administration at Washington great concern. President Taft had the happy thought of applying to the Federation of Women's Clubs for assistance in the situation, and the result was that Miss Helen Varick Boswell was sent to the Isthmus to see what could be done. She found the women not only consumed with *ennui*, but also divided into numerous social cliques which would have nothing to do with each other. All this she promptly set about transforming:

She went to each of the eight large towns in the Canal Zone, met the women, talked to them of their duty to the community, organized clubs in each place, and got acquainted with everybody as a first step to making them all acquainted with one another. Women of all social grades joined these clubs, each of them finding an interest in one or more of the four departments, the home, the educational, the philanthropic, and the entertainment. Incidentally they found one another, and presently liked one another. They worked together for the common good. They taught the native women how to cook, they began to take the children in hand, they studied the best methods of living in the tropics, and on the hygienic perfection created by the men they superimposed beauty and charm.

It is not necessary to imagine that all of the 800,000 members of the clubs composing the Federation are either giving or receiving such benefits as Miss Hawthorne's article describes, in order to be deeply impressed with the

value and importance of this remarkable development of the last few decades. The change in domestic conditions has been so widespread and so profound that an enlargement of the sphere of women's interests and activities has been an inevitable consequence. Of the entrance of women, by the hundred thousand, into industrial and business fields formerly occupied by men only, we have heard a great deal, and we all recognize that, for a vast body of women, this has been an unquestionable necessity. Their participation in political government through the suffrage is now the subject of one of the most interesting struggles of the time. Intermediate between these two fields may be placed that occupied by the activities of the women's clubs, which, at their best, must be recognized, by lovers of the old order as well as champions of a new, as furnishing at once a wholesome outlet for natural and beneficent impulses and an unexceptionable means of accomplishing many objects of the highest value to the whole community.

JOHN BROWN.

Of all the men who have held, for some brief space of time, the eye of the American people, none has evoked more diverse estimates of his character, motives, or achievements, or stirred more deeply or lastingly the fountains of enthusiastic praise and bitter hate, than John Brown of Osawatimie. The student of American history finds him acclaimed, on the one hand, as the saviour of Kansas, the chief agent in negro emancipation, and the one sure forerunner of the civil war; and, on the other, denounced as a half-crazy religious enthusiast running amuck in the modern world, a fanatical leader of wild and hopeless enterprises, a criminal, and even a murderer. A whole literature of books, poems, and magazine articles, and a still larger volume of myth, tradition, asseveration, story, and prejudice, have grown up about this extraordinary person. Men and women who never saw him, and who would have fled in terror from his presence, have vied with his companions and intimate friends in describing his appearance and habit of life, or in analyzing his mind and appraising his work, or, more easily, in acclaiming or denouncing him. It would be hard to find, in the history of any country, a man whose actual operations of a public sort covered so short a time or so small an area, who, nevertheless, for what he did, or planned, or intended, has been at one moment spurned as a criminal and a fraud, and at the next

elevated to a rank with such as are rated little lower than the gods.

So far as the text and notes of Mr. Villard's handsome volume* show, no pains has been spared to produce a biography both accurate and complete. Not only has he, with lavish disregard of labor and expense, literally swept the field of documents and personal testimony, but he has traced Brown's life from day to day throughout the entire active period of his career, gone minutely over the ground on which he operated, and tested every printed or verbal statement with the rigid thoroughness of a laboratory investigator. Doubtless the immediate result of it all will be to stir rather than lay controversy; those persons, and they are many, whose misstatements, aspersions, or extravagances are here exposed are certain to be forward in their own defence; but at least we have here a book, and the only book, in which the unquestioned facts of John Brown's career are completely exhibited. If the author's conclusions differ from the conclusions of others, he cannot be charged with either withholding or distorting the evidence upon which they are based.

The early life of John Brown, here for the first time searchingly examined, shows a curious blending of the good and the questionable. Of honorable New England ancestry, though not a Mayflower descendant, Brown came to manhood through the rough experiences of the frontier, with little education or personal discipline, but with clean morals, an acquaintance only too intimate with frugality and hard work, religious convictions rivalling those of the most austere Puritan of the seventeenth century, and a stern conception of fatherhood which ruled his family with a rod of iron. He was for a time a postmaster under the second Adams; but an invincible fondness for speculation, entire freedom in the use of other people's money, bankruptcy in 1842, and repeated suits for irregular financial transactions of an unpleasant cast, make his record as a man of affairs one of suspicion and failure. As a member of the firm of Perkins & Brown, wool merchants, at Springfield, Mass., he showed virtually complete incapacity for business, while a trip to Europe in 1849 netted a loss of about forty thousand dollars. When, at the age of fifty-five, he threw himself into the Kansas struggle, he had, save in a few minor transactions, failed in everything he had undertaken, aroused in more than one quarter uncomfortable suspicions as to his honesty, and succeeded in earning only a meagre living for himself or his family.

Just when John Brown conceived of the idea of freeing the slaves is uncer-

tain. Mr. Villard, who examines the question with care, is unable to find documentary evidence before 1840 of anything more than a family agreement among the Browns to oppose slavery; or until after 1846, when Brown removed to Springfield, of a deliberate intention to use force. The abolition movement under Garrison, with its consistent opposition to forcible measures, did not appeal to him; nor was he at any time, save after 1850, particularly in touch with either the political or the moral agitation of the slavery question which stirred the country after 1835. "In 1851, however, the policy of armed resistance becomes much more clearly developed; the man of war is now emerging from the chrysalis of peace" (p. 50). Mr. Villard thinks that the moving influences here were, first, contact with the zealous abolitionists of New England, many of whom were not at all averse to fighting; and, secondly, the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. Whatever the cause, however, Brown had passed, before the Kansas struggle opened, from simple moral opposition to slavery, such as many Northern men felt, to a conviction that slavery must be destroyed by force, and that he was divinely commissioned to lead the onslaught. From this point the course of his thought to Harper's Ferry, which was almost certainly in his mind before 1854, and to Kansas as an intermediate ground on which the virtues of guerrilla warfare might be tested, was an easy transition. The plan was fixed by 1855, when he removed his family for a second time to North Elba; and from then until his death, with dependence upon friends as his only important means of livelihood, he was a man of one idea, an enthusiast unselfishly devoted to a great cause.

Of John Brown's spectacular career in Kansas, the salient point for the historian and the moralist is, of course, the Pottawatomie massacre. Thanks to Brown's son, Salmon, and to his son-in-law, Henry Thompson, Mr. Villard is able to present for the first time an accurate account of what took place; and the story in all its detail is worthy of careful perusal. It seems now unquestionable that the plan of attacking the pro-slavery squatters was conceived by Brown, with the active encouragement of H. H. Williams, who himself designated the men to be killed, and with the assent of the majority of Brown's followers; that the unfortunate victims were accurately described as "brutes and bullies," though later declared to have been peaceable and of good character; that the delay of twenty-four hours near Dutch Henry's Crossing was not due to the reluctance of one of the party to proceed, but to the necessity of rest after a night's march and a day of work and travel; that two of Brown's sons, while probably protesting, submit-

*John Brown, 1800-1859: A Biography Fifty Years After. By Oswald Garrison Villard. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. \$5 net.