

**CHICAGO COMMONS:
VOL. I: NO. 1-6, NO.
11, WHOLE NUMBER
23, WHOLE NUMBER 24**

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VARIOUS

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CHICAGO COMMONS

A Monthly Record of Social Settlement Life and Work.

Vol. I.

APRIL, 1896.

No. 1.

CHICAGO COMMONS.

140 North Union Street.

CHICAGO COMMONS is a Social Settlement located two doors from the southwest corner of Milwaukee avenue and North Union street.

As explained in the second clause of the Articles of Incorporation of the Chicago Commons Association, filed with the Secretary of the State of Illinois:

"2. The object for which it is formed is to provide a center for a higher civic and social life, to initiate and maintain religious, educational and philanthropic enterprises and to investigate and improve conditions in the industrial districts of Chicago."

VISITORS, singly or in groups, are welcome at any time. Milwaukee avenue cable and trolley cars pass the door. The residents make special effort to be at home on *Tuesday* afternoon and evening, which are usually busy and interesting occasions, exemplifying well the more formal and public work of the Settlement.

RESIDENCE.—All inquiries with reference to terms and conditions of residence, permanent or temporary, should be addressed to Graham Taylor, Warden.



CHICAGO COMMONS.

VIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT RESIDENCE.

OUR PURPOSE AND SCOPE.

We cannot better formulate our conception of the purpose and scope of the social settlement than in the words of the initial statement of them published when we entered into residence, verified by every phase of our life and work at the Commons and attested by the approving citations of settlement workers both in England and America:

The purpose and constituency of the Settlement have gradually defined themselves. It consists of a group of Christian people who choose to live where they seem to be needed, for the purpose of *being* all they can be to the people with whom they identify themselves, and for all whose interests they will do what they can. It is as little of an

organization and as much of a personal relationship as it can be made. It seeks to unify and help all other organizations and people in the neighborhood that will make for righteousness and brotherhood. It is not a church, but hopes to be a helper of all the churches. It is not a charity, but expects to aid in the organization and coöperation of all existing charities. It is not an exclusive social circle, but aspires to be a center of the best social life and interests of the people.

It is not a school, but proposes to be a source and agency of educational effort and general culture. It is non-political, yet has begun to be a rallying point and moral force for civic patriotism. It is non-sectarian, but avowedly Christian, and openly coöperative with the churches.

The most subtle temptation of the settlements is gradually and even unconsciously to substitute the easier, impersonal attitude and methods for the harder, personal consecration and service. The elimination of personality from "charity" and philanthropy, as from business, is one of the greatest curses of

the age. It has made much of our industrial life inhuman, and not a little of our charity and philanthropy really such hard and harmful things that the very words have become hateful to those who are occasionally forced to depend upon them, or worse still to accept them as substitutes for social and industrial justice. The settlement movement will lose its motive should it ever be content to become institutionalized, or less than a corporate personality—a ministering body of the Son of Man.

"He who shall introduce into public affairs the principles of primitive Christianity will change the face of the world."—*Dr. Benj. Rush.*

"NOT WHAT WE GIVE."

"Lo, it is I, be not afraid!
 In many climes without avail,
 Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
 Behold it is here—this cup which thou
 Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now:
 This crust is my body broken for thee,
 This water His blood that died on the tree:
 The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
 In whatso we share another's need;
 Not what we give, but what we share,—
 For the gift without the giver is bare;
 Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
 Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me."

—From *The Vision of Sir Launfal*,
James Russell Lowell.

Our Neighborhood Life and Work

THE KINDERGARTEN.

The starting point and basis of the educational effort, and also of the social redemptive work undertaken at Chicago Commons, is in the kindergarten. Its history, which we hope to tell with some detail in a later issue, is one of providential opportunity, of self-sacrifice and earnest devotion on the part of its workers, and of instant and unreserved response on the part of the neighborhood. About seventy little ones are enrolled, and the effect of the effort thus far upon the children and their homes is too obvious to be misunderstood or mistaken. The kindergarten takes advantage of the association with a large household in the work of the children for the house. Almost every day they prepare the vegetables for the Commons table, and as occasion arises they wash dish-cloths, scour pans, polish silverware and render other service in a blessed outgoing of happy and free-hearted helpfulness. In conducting the work of this kindergarten, Miss Bertha Hofer puts into practical effect, both for the children and for the young women who assist her, the principles mastered in the Froebel-Pestalozzi house of Berlin, Germany, of which she is a graduate.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH.

The relations of the Settlement to the Church are peculiarly close and happy. While the Commons proposes to give all the help it can to all the churches of the neighborhood, its affiliation with one of them is of uniquely reciprocal value. The Tabernacle

Church is five blocks west of us, at the corner of Grand avenue and Morgan st., and is the only English-speaking congregation in the ward. Its pastor and his family have resided at the Commons from the beginning. Most of the residents attend its services. Sixteen of them have belonged to the church, ten are still in membership. One resident is Sunday-school superintendent. Another is the head of the Industrial Schools, the children's Sunday evening service, and church visitation. Another teaches a week-night adult Bible class. Many members of the congregation frequent the Commons, and with the cooperation of the pastor and trustees a children's chorus of 350 voices is in excellent training at the church. So far from being what many suspect the settlements to be—a proposed substitute for the churches—Chicago Commons has no higher aspiration than to help the Church to become more of a social settlement in each community for the social unification, the Christian neighborliness and the spiritual fellowship of all the people in that "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" in which the Kingdom of God consists.

SANITARY WORK IN THE WARD.

The interest of Chicago Commons in the sanitary conditions of its community is displayed in the fact that the city's ward inspectorship of streets and alleys is located at the Settlement, being held by Herman F. Hegner, a graduate of Chicago Seminary, who finds a social ministry in the practical evangelization of the menacing garbage boxes which line the streets and alleys, and require for their proper cleansing unceasing vigilance. Every day the inspector is required to cover his territory, reporting upon the faithfulness of the garbage contractor and his scavengers, and by tactful precept and counsel, and occasional exemplary firmness, urging the people to cleanliness and care. The result has been such that in the recent wholesale inspection and complaint by the Civic Federation, the Seventeenth ward was one of the few escaping criticism.

In addition to the street and alley inspectorship, five tenement house inspectorships are located with us. These are volunteer officers, and thus far the press of other duties has minimized the activity in this field, but plans are making for a more thorough pushing out along this line, and much it is needed.

INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC UNION.

No part of the week's activity at the Commons is more far-reaching or attracts wider interest and attention than the meeting held every Tuesday evening in the assembly room by the Industrial and Economic Union. Here, as brothers, individualist, socialist, anarchist, "single taxer," and others, representing every shade of social and economic philosophy, meet for the discussion of the vital issues of the day. Space is not at hand for the extensive description of this work; suffice it to say that the interest and attendance constantly increase, and serious discussion is the rule. Among the recent speakers and topics have been Clarence S. Darrow, on "The Social Outlook;" Dr. C. A. F. Lindorme, on "The Scientific Basis of Equality;" O. A. Bishop, on "Socialism;" Mrs. Catherine Waugh McCulloch, on "Social Purity;" William Howard, president of the Longshoremen's Union, on "Duties of Labor Leaders;" F. M. Wilkes, on "Relation of Socialism to the Single Tax," Stoughton Cooley, on "Proportional Representation," and John Loyd on "The Church and Social Reform." Topics in prospect are "Single Tax in its Relation to Socialism," "Hereditarity," "Intermarriage."

CIVIC FEDERATION.

In the year of its existence and activity, the Seventeenth Ward Council of the Civic Federation has more than excused its existence. In many ways the moral tone of the ward shows the effects of its efforts. The chief feature of its history thus far, however, has been its strong influence in the politics of the ward. In the aldermanic election a year ago the Federation, organized as a "citizens' party," came within a scant margin of electing its independent candidate against the machine nominees, and the politicians of at least one party in the ward showed by their readiness to nominate a better man this spring their wholesome fear of the activity of this well organized and determined body of incorruptible citizens.

In the campaign which is at its height as Chicago Commons goes to press, the Federation, separately organized as a ward branch of the Municipal Voters' League, has endorsed the Republican candidate, Magnus C. Knudson, and is actively in the field to elect him, and to defeat the present alderman, whose official record is, to say the least, unsavory.

THE WOMAN'S CLUB.

The Chicago Commons Woman's Club, although of comparatively recent organization, is already a strong feature of the neighborhood life. The Club meets alternate Monday evenings for discussion and entertainment, and the membership is growing. The Club has heard addresses on important themes; for instance, Mrs. Cook on the proposed Bible reader for the schools, and Miss Wilson on Chicago architecture. The most original and far-reaching action of the Club thus far is a resolution addressed to the Seventeenth Ward Council of the Civic Federation, asking what the Club could best do to fulfill its avowed purpose—to improve and uplift the tone of the neighborhood. This resolution is in the hands of the Federation's municipal committee, and it is expected that some real benefit will accrue through the cooperation of the two bodies.

MUSIC IN THE SETTLEMENT.

Chicago Commons bids fair to become a musical center in its community. In every possible way it is assisting to this end. In the kindergarten the piano is used to accompany games, marches and other exercises, and chords serve for signals in place of the bell of the older school days. Every opportunity is improved of bringing good music into the clubs; sometimes the Italian boys, for instance, will gather solely for an evening of singing. Mrs. Cara Gregg teaches a number of pupils on piano, mandolin and guitar, and by no means insignificant is the impression of the hymns of the daily prayer service, and the vocal and piano music incident to the home life.

The musical expression of the week culminates, however, in the People's Chorus, which meets on Thursday evenings, in the kindergarten rooms, for the study of the best choral music under the direction of Miss Mari Hofer. A concert was given recently with great success, and the chorus increasingly reaches the hearts that long for good music.

OUR POPULAR PROPAGANDA.

The public presentation of the cause for which Chicago Commons stands, in common with most other settlements, is a primary part of its work. The Warden, sometimes

accompanied by one or more of his fellow-residents, has met many large and eagerly inquiring gatherings for this purpose. Since January 1 the story of the settlement motive and movement has been told in many churches, colleges, clubs and social gatherings, in and out of Chicago, as far as Toledo, Ohio, where a course of four lectures was delivered; at the Michigan State Young Men's Christian Association Convention, and in the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral of Cleveland.

Large numbers of men, many from the industrial classes, including some bodies of organized labor, attended these regular or special occasions and participated with employers in freely and frankly discussing the vital interests at issue. One of the most interesting of these gatherings was held under the auspices of the Men's Club of the First Congregational Church of Elgin. The large chapel was filled with a fine body of men from the great shops, who, together with a few of the employing class present, dispassionately and most earnestly discussed the labor movement, the history and present significance of which had been presented. The church that thus mediates and educates is entering upon a new lease of power and service.

In addition to work of this kind, every other opportunity is welcomed to foster the spirit of conciliation. The Sunday afternoon meeting at the Central Y. M. C. A., conducted by the Warden, with the assistance of one of the residents, has this in mind, and "Christian Aspects of Current Issues" is a general topic whose applications to varying themes, representatives of many classes meet there to discuss. Important as is the local and neighborhood phase of our work, we feel that our mission calls us to every place where men are reaching out to attain unto the exemplification of brotherhood.

CHICAGO COMMONS ASSOCIATION.

The legal tenure of the little household property of the Commons is provided for, and the acquisition of the title-deed of our residence is invited, by the incorporation, under the Illinois law, of The Chicago Commons Association. The personal and representative character of the trustees is sufficient guarantee of the business management of the funds committed to our care. David Fales, Esq. (Lake Forest), and Prof. H. M. Scott (West Side) represent the Seminary board of directors and faculty; Thomas P. Ballard (Evanson) and Charles H. Hulburd (North

Side) are also members of the City Missionary society's board of directors; John S. Field (Knickerbocker Ice Co.) and J. H. Strong (U. S. Life Insurance Co.) represent Plymouth Church; E. Burritt Smith, Esq. (South Side), is an officer in the University Church, and a prominent legal representative of the Civic Federation; Edward Payson (Oak Park) is treasurer and Graham Taylor (Professor of Christian Sociology, Chicago Theological Seminary) is president of the Association and resident Warden.

OUR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP.

The support of Chicago Commons is to come, if at all, from the faith and free will of those who believe enough in what it stands for to sacrifice whatever its service may cost that the residents cannot pay. It has already cost no little faith and sacrifice to stand in the breach financially, while this contributory constituency has been slowly rallying to the support of the work. But our associates in the settlement motive and service are already a widely scattered company of people in all walks of life, in many different denominations, who have become interested in many ways and give many small amounts. Some of them constitute Sunday-school classes, Endeavor societies, men's and women's organizations, social clubs and churches who have taken out memberships in the name of their associations. The contributions are both occasional and regular, the latter being paid in installments, monthly, quarterly and annually. Some of the contributions are given to the specific branches of the work in which the donors are specially interested, e. g., the kindergarten, the industrial training, the Christian work and consolation among the poor and insane at the Cook County Infirmary, the various branches of church work with which the residents cooperate. Upon these associate members we wholly depend for the \$3,500 needed to maintain the work, having no endowments or funds from any other sources whatever. Not half of this sum has yet been guaranteed, the balance of the cost being carried by the Warden's personal note at bank. Every dollar received by voluntary offering saves the time and strength which soliciting costs, to the actual work which needs every resident worker. No membership fee is named; each associate being left free to offer whatever faith and free will prompt.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL ECONOMICS.

In the last week of April (27 to May 2, inclusive) is to be held the Spring session of the Chicago Commons School of Social Economics. The sessions will be held in the lower rooms of the Settlement residence. The general topic of the Spring session will be "The Social Function of Education," and a program of rare excellence is preparing, as will be seen in the announcement that the list of speakers will include President George A. Gates, of Iowa College; President H. H. Belfield, of the Chicago Manual Training School; Col. W. L. Parker, of the Cook County Normal school; Professors Albion W. Small and George H. Mead, of Chicago University; Miss Josephine Locke, of the Chicago schools; Miss Amalie Hofer, of the *Kindergarten Magazine*; the Rev. D. M. Fisk, Ph. D., of Toledo, Professor W. B. Chamberlain, of Chicago Theological Seminary; Professor W. L. Tomlins, of Chicago, and others.

Rarely will so brilliant a gathering of educators discuss a more vital matter, and Chicago Commons ought to be a Mecca that week for all who are interested in the subject of education. The summer session of the school, last August, was characterized by an aggregate attendance approximating 1,500, and including teachers, ministers and others who welcomed the privileges of the occasion.

INTER-SEMINARY ECONOMIC CLUB.

Students from five theological seminaries have welcomed the opportunity offered by the Commons to discuss economic and industrial topics, and twice a month have met in the kindergarten room, organized as the Interseminary Economic Club, to talk over these things with representatives of various interests. The attendance of students has varied from thirty-five to seventy-five, and most interesting and profitable have been such topics as "The Duty of the Community toward Arrested Boys," opened by Mark Crawford, warden of the Bridewell; "Relation of the Minister to Social Purity," by Mrs. Catherine Waugh McCulloch; "What the Community has a Right to Expect of the Church," opened by William Howard, president of the Longshoremen's Union, O. A. Bishop and Dr. C. A. F. Lindorme; "Condition of Some Unorganized Working People," by Mrs. Florence P. Kelley, State factory inspector; "Social Possibilities of the Settlement Movement," by Prof. Graham Taylor and other residents of the Commons.

COMMONS NOTES.

—There is great need of more games for the boys—especially crokinola, which is unceasingly popular.

—A gift of several framed engravings, by Mrs. E. W. Blatchford, of Oak Park, is appreciated by residents and visitors alike.

—Our daily vesper service is greatly aided and enriched by the Century Company's gift of 60 copies of the *Laudes Domini* hymnal.

—Among our chief needs we count a flag staff and flag, by which, every day, we might give an object lesson in American citizenship and loyalty.

—George M. Basford, of Oak Park, has interesting work ahead for his class of boys in the form of ambulance drill, modeled somewhat after the service on the English railroads.

—Many of our thoughtful visitors remember us after they are at home again, and packages of games and magazines following upon their visit very practically bespeak their interest in our work.

—The beautiful Christmas gift of the *Sistine Madonna* by the residents of Hull House is an unfailing source of delight to us, not only for itself but for its significance of cordiality and fellowship in service.

—A sand pile in the rear yard is one of the things we need, and the children, even the older ones, look forward to the day of its being put there. A couple of good loads would do a great deal in this direction.

—As soon as the weather permits, the kindergartners mean to start a bit of a garden outside. This will perhaps be a beginning for the unbroken summer session of the kindergarten, now out of the question.

—A feature of home administration at the Commons is the volunteer "door service" by the residents, with a view of making the welcome at the threshold a personal one, representing the cordial greeting of the family.

—Friends of the Commons in various directions are promising us flowers in the summer. No one who has not lived amid entire absence of beauty can appreciate what flowers mean in the dingy river wards of Chicago. And we know where to put them to do much good.

CHICAGO COMMONS.

A Monthly Record of Social Settlement Life and Work, especially in the Industrial Districts of the City of Chicago.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

Twenty-five cents per year. Single copies sent to any address upon application. For larger numbers, special terms may be obtained on application.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS

Relating to this publication should be addressed to the Editor, JOHN P. GAVIT, Chicago Commons, 140 North Union Street, Chicago, Ill.

VOL. I. CHICAGO, APRIL, 1896. No. 1.

The kindergarten owes much of its outside interest and support to the cordial endorsement and assistance of the *Child Garden* and *Kindergarten Magazine*.

We extend greetings in advance to the new organ of the Christian Industrial League, *Industrial Life*, shortly to be issued under the editorship of the Rev. A. Lincoln Shear.

When manual training is in operation with us, the boy question, we expect, will be well nigh settled. Give a boy earnest work to do with his hands or his brain and you need not provide further against mischief-making.

INTRODUCTORY.

The first number of *Chicago Commons* is issued without promise for the future, except in the statement of our desire that it shall be helpful in explaining to those whom it may concern the motive and the progress of social settlements in general, and of *Chicago Commons* in particular. It is expected to issue in the first week of each month, and to present a view of work for the humanizing and uplifting of social conditions in the "river wards" and other industrial sections of Chicago, as well as in similar districts in other cities. It is our desire to have the paper reach the hands of those having sympathy with their fellow men of every class and condition, and especially those of every person who stands ready to help in the effort toward the betterment of the conditions of our common human life.

Upon this platform we modestly come forth, the friend of every effort making to help men and women and children to be their best

selves. We purpose to avoid controversy and yet reserve the right of comment and criticism upon those things obstructive of or hostile to the principles and purposes for which we stand. We ask the help and encouragement of our friends and the friends of our work, and will try, if not always to command success, yet always to deserve it.

THE SETTLEMENT NAME.

When in search for the Settlement's name, we groped for weeks after some title which had at its root, if not in its form, that good old English word *common*. For the idea of the sharing of what each has equally with all, and all with each, of what belongs to no one and no class, but to every one of the whole body, is the idea underlying not only this word and its equivalents in many tongues, but the very conception of that community and communion in which society and religion consist, and which constitute the essence of the settlement motive and movement. The baptismal day came, when the name had to be forthcoming, for strangely enough the "printer's devil" himself was at the door demanding it for official announcement in the annual statement of the Sociological department. A friend in need appeared indeed, as we alighted from an elevator on the top floor of a sky-scraper, on the afternoon of the last day of grace. In desperation we suddenly "held him up" with the demand for a name. But he was equal to this, as he had been to many another emergency; for he mused and mulled a moment over our preference for something common, and, as he stepped into the car "going down," said, "Call it *Chicago Commons*." It was done, and better than that moment knew was the name builded. For its popular lineage was really behind it, woven through English history. As the freemen of the race organized in their early shires, municipalities and guilds, and later on combined to form one body representing the whole people, so the represented people, without any primary distinction of class, came to be known as "the Commons." To this ideal of social democracy, the name adds the suggestion of those few patches of mother earth still unclaimed as private property, which at least afford standing room equally for all, irrespective of pecuniary circumstances or social status.

So we called our household and its homestead "*Chicago Commons*," in hope that it might be a common center where the masses

and the classes could meet and mingle as men and exchange their social values in something like a "clearing-house" for the commonwealth; where friendship, neighborhood and fellow-citizenship might form the personal bonds of that social unification which alone can save our American democracy from disruption, cloven as it is under the increasing social stress and strain; and where that brotherhood of which we talk and sing may be more practically lived out and inwrought, as it must be if Christianity continues to be a living faith and its churches the people's fellowship.

GRAHAM TAYLOR.

It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of the settlements in making public opinion in matters relating to industrial disturbances. Particularly has this been the case recently in relation to the strike of the garment workers in Chicago and in the general question of the sweating system. In this matter Hull House has been foremost, calling and through Miss Addams conducting the great anti-sweating meeting of March 8 at Central Music Hall, and making a strong and telling appeal for arbitration in the clothing strike. Miss Addams's address in favor of this arbitration, made before the Central Council of the Civic Federation, March 19, was admirable and fairly settled the question of the standing of the Federation in the matter.

A welcome addition to our residential and working force comes in the person of Dr. Mary Edna Goble, a graduate of the Illinois Training School for Nurses and of the medical department of the University of Michigan. Dr. Goble will have charge of the tenement house inspection and of the instruction in household sanitation, first aid to the injured, etc. Through her medical skill the Settlement will come into more vital touch with its neighbors in their homes, and into closer co-operation with the Illinois Medical College in the Commons dispensary work for the poor.

The residents of Chicago Commons have decided upon Tuesday afternoon and evening as the weekly occasion upon which they will make special effort to be at home to their friends. This is not intended to restrict visitation to that day, for interested friends are always welcome, but in order that those com-

ing from a distance may be reasonably assured of finding the residents at home and comparatively at liberty.

Through the courtesy of N. H. Carpenter, secretary of the Art Institute, in co-operation with Mr. French, the Institute's Director, the residents of the Commons have free access to the exhibitions and lectures at the Institute, a privilege which has been thoroughly availed of and appreciated.

We mean to regard as "preferred" names upon our mailing list, all settlements, and to send CHICAGO COMMONS as a matter of course to all such. In return, we ask for all reports, and, so far as possible, all printed matter issued by settlements in the course of their regular work.

Canon Barnett's recent papers in the *Fortnightly Review* and the *Nineteenth Century*, on social settlements, should be familiar to all our readers. Canon Barnett may fairly be called the Moses of the settlement movement, and his utterances on the subject are to be regarded as authoritative.

The schedule of classes and clubs in the Plymouth Winter Night College gives a good idea of the work which has been going on in the educational department of the settlement. It is now undergoing revision preparatory to the beginning of the new term of the college work.

Christian Endeavor Societies in parties have been among our recent visitors, including two groups from Evanston and one from the Woodlawn Park Presbyterian Church. Couples and trios of Endeavorers are almost daily callers.

A four-page leaflet, bearing a picture of our residence, and describing our work somewhat fully, has recently been published, and is on hand in sufficient supply. We will gladly furnish copies to any one upon application.

"The remedy for social discontent and dynamite bombs is Christianity as taught in the New Testament."—*Prof. R. T. Ely.*