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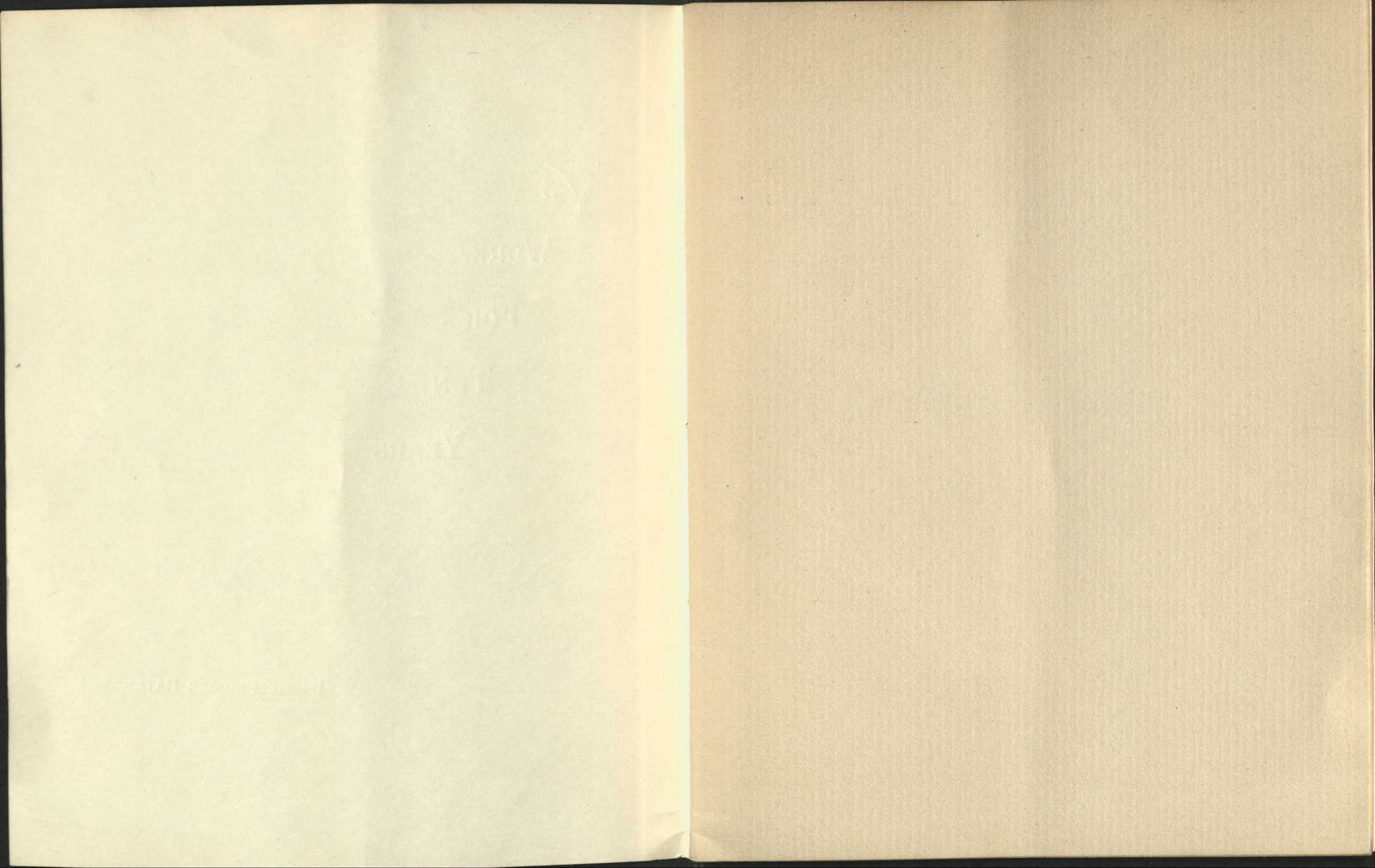
WORK

FOR

TEN

YEARS

LOUISE PROSSER BATES



Our Tenth Anniversary.

Freely ye have received, freely give.—Matt. 10: 8.

THE new parlors in "The Trocadero," so well arranged and exquisitely furnished, were the scene of a gathering on the evening of February sixteenth, 1892, which in the history of Providence was certainly unique. The Young Woman's Christian Temperance Union celebrated the completion of its tenth year and enjoyed a delightful and entirely successful anniversary.

Before the exercises of the evening the members of the Union and invited guests, to the number of over five hundred, were presented to the President, Miss Nellie B. Pearce, and three Vice-Presidents, Mrs. William H. Thurber, Miss Grace E. Atkins, and Miss Eudora E. Joslin. After that pleasant ceremony, full as it was of gracious welcome, happy congratulation, and friendly encouragement, the Athena quartette opened the formal program by a vocal selection.

Miss Pearce then introduced Mrs. Louise Prosser Bates, one of the founders of the Providence Y. Union, who read an admirably written and comprehensive history of the society from its inception, in the minds of three young women, to its enlarged work of the present year, showing its efforts for the entertainment and improvement of young women in our city, and the work that has been accomplished in other branches of its activity.

Dr. E. B. Andrews, of Brown University, followed, prefacing his address with his congratulations. He said in brief: "Christianity is designed to do not only an individual work, and, through it, a social work, but a social work *directly*. For this work woman is peculiarly adapted. Once the impression prevailed that there was something wrong about a woman if she attempted anything outside the narrow domestic circle of her life. The time of such erroneous notions has gone by.

God has devised an immense work for woman, upon which she may enter and do good in the world, such as no one else can do. There is great need of her in the temperance work especially. She is a

skillful organizer, and she has the courage and persistency essential to the culmination of whatever she may originate. Women, in the past, have been too much in the background; they are, in this age, coming forward into the light, and exhibiting to the universe indispensable talents that too long have been allowed to slumber through the influence of ignorance, prejudice, and undervaluation."

After another selection from the quartette, all were invited to partake of refreshments served in the adjoining hall.

Every member was encouraged by the success of the evening to begin a new year with stronger purpose to extend the work of the Union and add greater results to those already attained.

B. M. B.

TEN YEARS' RESUMÉ.

Written and Read on the Tenth Anniversary of the
Young Woman's Christian Temperance
Union of Providence.

BY

LOUISE PROSSER BATES.

THE history of an organization for any number of years can be scarcely more than a collation of its annual reports, especially when these reports have been written by one hand all those years and preserve a continuity. However, a few facts in regard to the origin of the Young Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Providence, and a calling attention to its growth by a passing reference to its most important work, may not be wholly uninteresting on this its tenth anniversary.

Thirteen years ago, if one could have looked into a certain room in a South End boarding-house, Boston, one might have seen three enthusiastic girls

sitting at tea about a little table. All students—two at a neighboring college and the other at an art school, they lived in a sort of German student fashion, “eating themselves” at morning and night and dining out. The tea-table thus became the place where notes of the day’s work and happenings were compared, and discussions on almost every topic that pertains to mankind were carried on. Opinions were freely formed and frankly expressed. Among such topics the temperance question could not fail to appear. The trio were constant attendants on Dr. Gordon’s church, and were directly under the influence of Mrs. Gordon, president of the Massachusetts Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. At that time, also, the Crosby doctrine of moderation was rampant and the St. Botolph’s Club, with its elegant apartments and ministerial support, had just been formed. Boston was full of excitement. At this time also the Boston Young Woman’s Christian Temperance Union was formed, and these three young women became members of it. Not very active members, for Commencement and departure from Boston were near at hand, but, nevertheless, zealous ones.

On returning to Providence their enthusiasm and zeal did not diminish, and soon had an opportunity to declare itself. Mrs. Frances J. Barnes, beloved of all

young women, and national superintendent of the “Y’s,” visited Providence, and, at the close of an address on Young Women’s Unions, pleaded that one might be formed in this city. The enthusiastic young artist, who was present with a friend, gave both their names, together with those of her Boston comrades, as a nucleus of such a society.

The news of a Union spread rapidly, and several informal meetings were held under the leadership of Mrs. G. F. Martin and Mrs. Smith. On February fourteenth, 1882, seventy-one young women met and appointed a committee to draw up a constitution and nominate officers. At the next meeting the constitution was read, adopted and signed, and officers were elected, Miss Harriet C. Peirce, one of the Boston trio, a young woman of conspicuous ability and energy being the president. At first a vice-president was elected from each church. Afterwards three vice-presidents were elected, and a board of managers, one from each church.

During the first year the meetings were more or less literary in character, and largely attended, 130 being present at one meeting. The desire to grow and accomplish, that has always characterized the organization, showed itself in the beginning. Plans were laid to arouse interest in and increase the membership of the Union; to form also an associate

membership. In order to be thoroughly posted the young women studied the temperance question in all its aspects, moral, physical, and political. They had talks, discussions, and readings. They read the best books and articles they could find on the subjects, and studied the laws, national and state. Aggressive work was attempted the first year among the children, and a band of "Careful Builders" was formed which lasted several years, and had for its work temperance instruction.

But the particular interest of the society lay in young women, and in the report for April seventh, 1883, we find the first intimation of their special work. The subject of the meeting had been "Coffee-houses, their History and Work," and at its end we find reported: "Our president named a committee to see what can be done for the homeless girls of our city." A few meetings later the subject is, "The Use of Tobacco among Women," and at the next a resolution is made, "That we hire two small or one large room, and furnish them so that they will be pleasant for girls to eat their lunches in; a woman shall be in charge and furnish tea and coffee at a reasonable rate." Inquiry had revealed the fact that in most of the large houses rooms for girls to eat their lunches were so obnoxious for various reasons that a girl would go to a restaurant and buy a cream cake,

or something equally unsubstantial, in order to have a pleasant place to stay at noon. The desire on the part of the young women was to furnish a room and hot drink, where girls might feel perfectly free to bring a lunch from home.

The summer vacation suspended operations for a while, but in the fall the work was entered upon with vigor. Eight hundred dollars was the amount estimated necessary for the year, and it was hoped to raise this amount before beginning operations. In December a large room on Broad street was hired and furnished with the help of kind friends, and the cup and saucer sign, announcing a "Tea Room," placed outside. Plans were laid for classes.

At the second annual meeting Miss Harriet Peirce, who had served the society so ably and acceptably, resigned on account of ill-health, and Miss Emma Durfee succeeded her.

The work of the Union for 1884 was concentrated largely on the Tea Room. We find in the reports such items as these: "Receipts from the Tea Room for the first two weeks about eleven dollars; for the third week, five." "Fifteen coffee tickets may be had for fifty cents at the Tea Room." "*Resolved*, That we have crackers for sale at the Tea Room." "*Resolved*, That we have chocolate at five cents a cup."

The topics for the meetings were still full of interest. Instruction concerning temperance in the public schools received much attention. Classes in bookkeeping and physiology were formed at the Tea Room. In May of this year the average number attending the Tea Room was thirty.

The following fall Miss Durfee resigned, and Miss Annie Budlong was elected president. Cookies were added to the bill of fare at the Tea Room. The total contributions to the room for the year had been \$1,180.00; expenditures, \$749.00. The room was also furnished with a book-case.

At the third annual meeting the Tea Room had taken firm root. The income began to exceed the expenditures. A gift of fifteen dollars from the patrons of the room to the Union is noted. At the fourth annual meeting the Tea Room has become an established fact, and we find a balance of \$716.23 to its account.

It had been deemed advisable to add soups, chowders, and other nourishing food to the bill of fare, there was such a call for them. This necessitated a kitchen, a cook stove, and a cook, and a search for more commodious quarters began. It was finally decided to hire an adjoining room in the same building. Finally the books outgrew the book-case, and one more room was hired for a library. During the

following years patrons kept increasing, until one day last year 511 were accommodated in one day. This number includes only those who bought lunches. Others, equally welcome, use the room who bring their own lunches.

The rooms are furnished plainly and comfortably, with small tables, rockers, a piano, work-baskets, etc. The library has a table well supplied with books, periodicals, paper and pens, and a library of 635 volumes. In place of the matron, five persons now have charge of the rooms. The quarters are very cramped for the work, and a change must be made before long. The Union has quite outgrown its surroundings.

In January, 1887, we find that \$500 of the Tea-Room money is to be placed in the bank as an emergency fund, and in June of the same year a charter is obtained from the State in order that the Union may hold and convey real and personal property to the amount of \$20,000. Thoughtfulness for girls at the Tea Room led to thoughtfulness in other directions, and a plan was devised to hire a cottage at Buttonwoods where girls might pass their vacations for the sum of three dollars a week.

For four years this work has gone on, and two hundred or more girls have had the benefit of a cheap, healthful summer outing. It is said that several of the girls were skeptical as to the amount of

food they might receive for that price, and privately furnished themselves with the nutritious cracker to make up deficiencies. One girl said she made up her mind to be satisfied with the salt air. No one can estimate the good done these girls by the simple privilege of living in the pure, sweet air for two weeks. Their surprise and delight over the wild flowers were beautiful to see. Now Rest Cottage has entirely outgrown its surroundings. More room for more girls is the constant cry. Money has been collected, part of a sum to build, and plans have been drawn up, but the place has not yet been selected. An extract from the annual report of 1891 will give better than words of mine can the results of this work: "Four years ago, the plan was an experiment, undertaken with hopes and prayers for success. Now, with four summers of success behind us, and an earnest desire to continue in a better way, we want a home of our own, instead of being obliged to rent one: a house large and convenient enough to accommodate a few more girls at a time, and also to make it possible for some members of the committee to stay with the girls, making and keeping the true spirit of home, even if it is but for a summer. We want to be able to stretch out a helping hand to our less favored sisters, not only giving them physical rest and enjoyment, but 'In His Name,' whom we represent, letting the sunshine of a help-

ful, happy life, into the saddened, darkened lives around us."

In the winter of 1890 a call came from Olneyville for a Tea Room there. The history of its beginning is much the same as that of the first room. It is hoped to reach many of the mill girls through this room and diminish somewhat the beer drinking so prevalent in that community. In addition to this work temperance literature has been distributed in all directions. Books and periodicals have been sent to life-saving stations, to persons in the country, and wherever there was a need. Personal work has been done in finding employment for girls and boarding places.

The Union has also proved its financial ability, the amount of business transacted for last year being considerably over \$10,000.

There have been only five presidents, and their influence is now scattered in different directions. Miss Peirce, now Mrs. Fuller, is in Ripon, Wisconsin; Miss Durfee, now Mrs. Wade, in Chicago; Miss Budlong, now Mrs. Hersey, in Denver; Miss Fannie C. Thompson, of Providence; and Miss Nellie B. Pearce is still our beloved president.

One secretary, Miss Hale, always bright, helpful, and fertile in resources, served us for nearly ten years, and is succeeded by another equally faithful. The originator, the enthusiastic artist, Miss Alice

Budlong, now Mrs. George M. Hersey, has carried her enthusiasm and her exquisite China painting to Hartford. Twenty-five of the original members are still on the list. Some have gone home to rest. Others are still working in our schools and elsewhere, carrying an influence with them that cannot be but helpful.

However great the known results of a work like this may be, they are only a small part of the actual results. No one can estimate the influence of such a work on those engaged in it. Beginning with girls just entering womanhood, ten years of thoughtfulness and care for others can but have enriched their lives to a wonderful degree.

Believing in total abstinence as the only absolute preventive of drunkenness, they are ready to put their hands to whatever will stop the traffic. If education will help, they will teach; if prohibitory law, they will work for *it*; if nourishing food and attractive rooms will counteract the influence of bar-room, they will do all in their power to furnish these, not forgetting the "good times" that every girl ought to have part in.

And now, with bright hopes for the future, they enter upon the second decade of work, believing with Paul, "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

