

**KENTUCKY FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS
SCHOOL BETTERMENT FOR KENTUCKY**

Relation of the Public Schools to Kentucky's Commercial Development

BY MRS. R. N. ROARK
Chairman of Educational Committee K. F. W. C.

WOMEN AND THE SCHOOLS

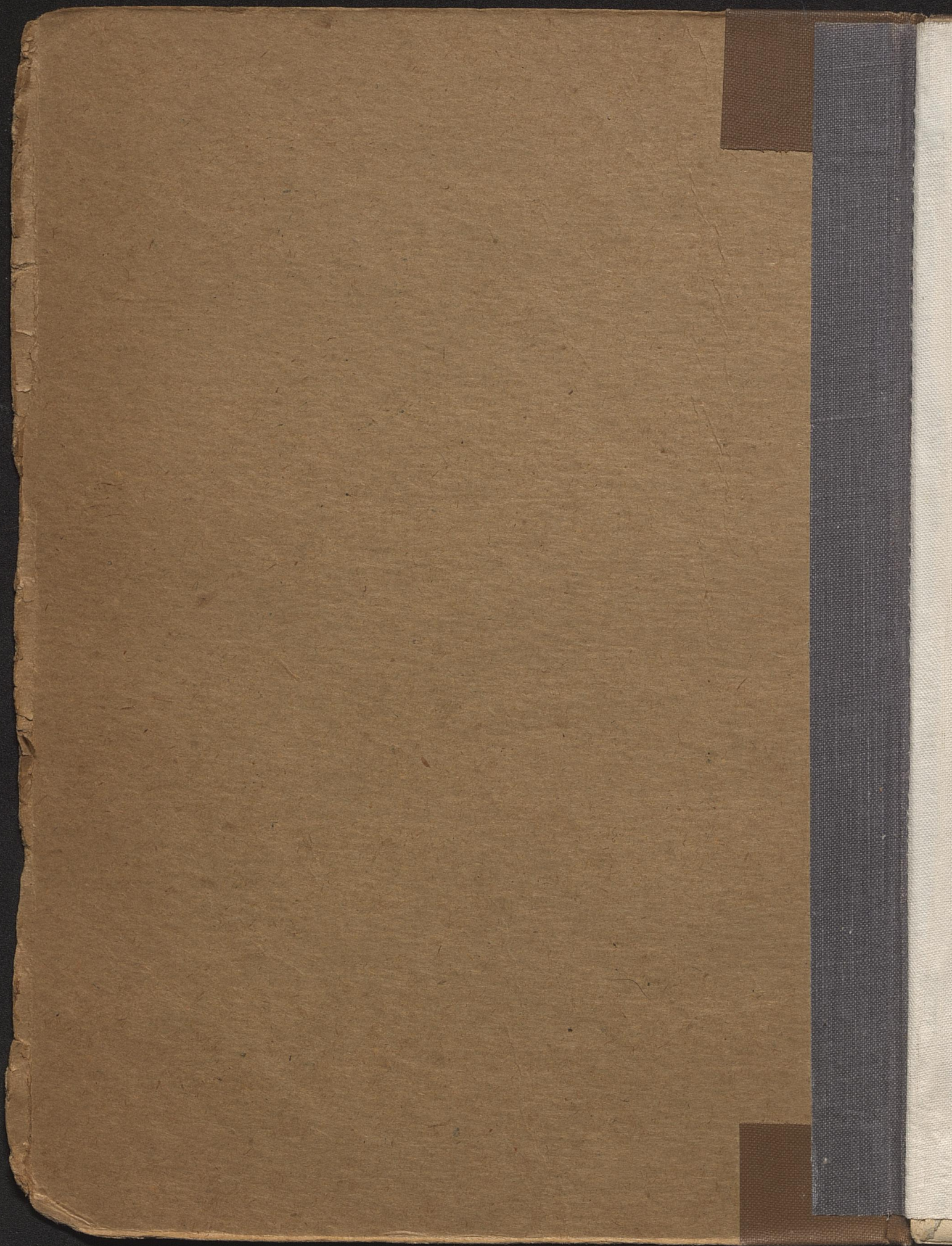
BY MRS. DESHA BRECKINRIDGE
Chairman of Legislative Committee K. F. W. C.

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Commercial Development**

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At the morning session of the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs, held at Shelbyville, June 14th, 1907, the following resolution was offered by Mrs. Minor Simpson, of Lexington.

"Whereas, The Women of Kentucky are deeply stirred by the educational needs of the State, and deplore the illiteracy and badly equipped school buildings, the short average term, the poorly paid teachers, and the alarming fact that over half the children of school age are out of school; and

"Whereas, We believe the remedy for these conditions lies in the voting of local taxes, in securing earnest and disinterested persons as school trustees and members of city school boards, in the merit system for teachers, and in other reforms, the means towards which must be found in an enlightened school electorate, and

"Whereas, We realize that all efforts of women in behalf of schools are feeble compared to the power they would exert if included in the school electorate; therefore

"Resolved, That, while not abating any of our efforts to improve the schools by the indirect means now open to us, we also exert ourselves to the utmost to secure the school suffrage for Kentucky women, and here reaffirm the position taken at former meetings of the K. F. W. Clubs in asking this suffrage of our State."

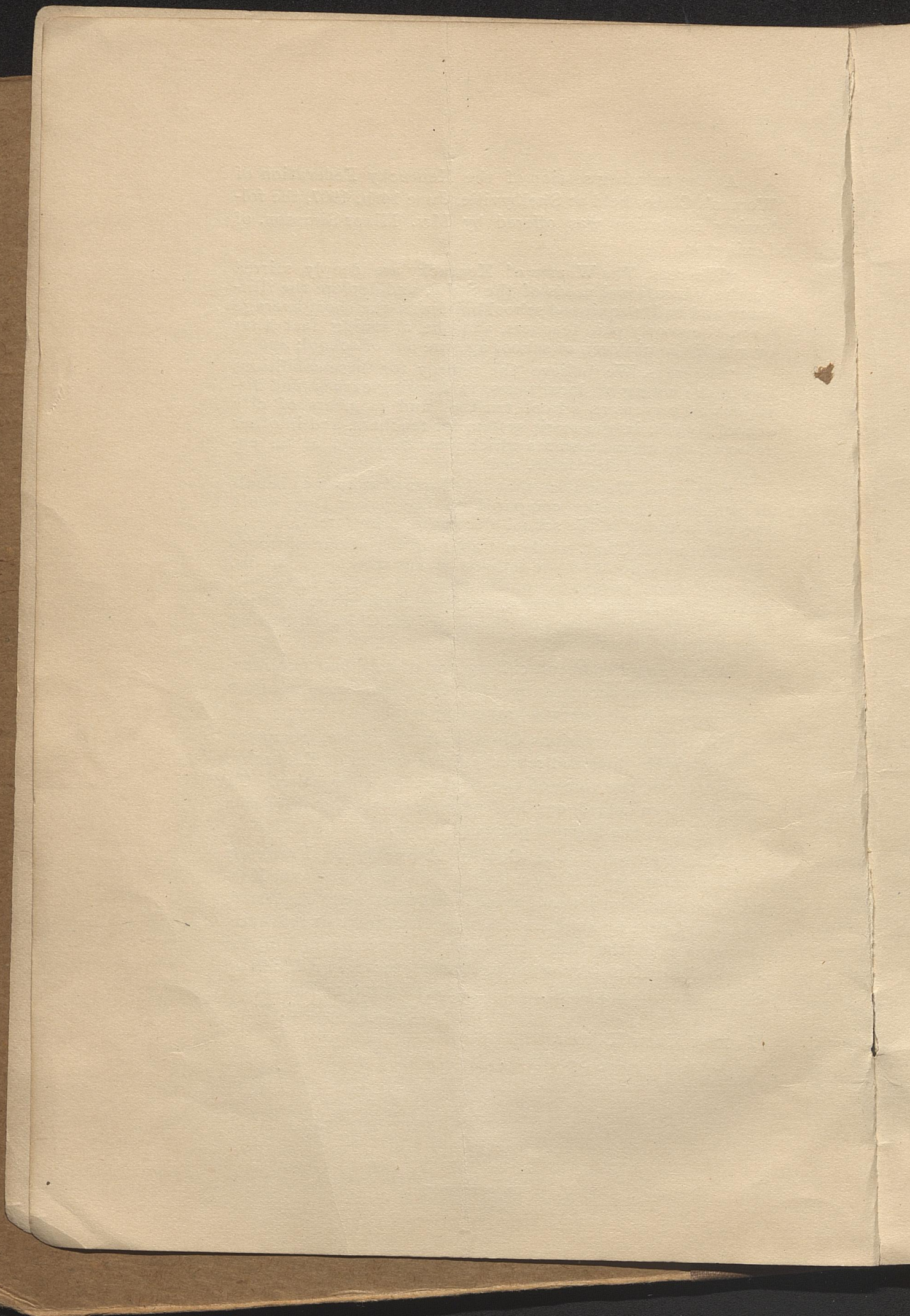
After an amendment calling for educational qualifications had been accepted by Mrs. Simpson, this resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority.

Since then the various Clubs over the State, composed of over eight thousand representative women of Kentucky, have endorsed the voice of the Shelbyville convention. To this has been added our leading educators, and other men of thought in the highest places of honor.

The attention of the General Assembly at Frankfort has been most respectfully called to the resolution of the Kentucky women, and its endorsement most earnestly requested, to the end that by direct means, as well as indirect influence, the women of the State can work for and secure a higher standard for Kentucky when again the education roll call of States must be answered.

FRANCES SIMRALL RIKER,
President K. F. W. C.

HALDON HELM HARDIN,
Corresponding Secretary.



RELATION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO KENTUCKY'S COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

Address Made by Mrs. R. N. Roark at the Louisville Meeting of the Kentucky State Development Association.

It is an especial privilege and honor to bring to you the greetings of the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs, an organization of eight thousand women.

We are profoundly interested in the development of our State, in the work you are doing. The preservation of our forests, the enrichment of our soil, the improvement of our farm products, the development of our mines, the building of good roads, the opening up of new railways through our hermit regions, the introduction of multiform manufacturing plants,—all these interest us. We appreciate their untold value to our State.

In this industrial and commercial age, with its intense activity, and intense competition, we want Kentucky prepared to enter the contest among the States for commercial and industrial supremacy—and we want her to win! It is well to ask ourselves, what must we possess, what must characterize us as a people, before we can hope for success? Is it not well directed industry,—skilled labor,—a ready power of initiative, directed, controlled, driven by a certain ideal of material success—an ambition that will triumph over poverty, unfavorable environment and innate laziness? History proves that ignorance and illiteracy are absolutely incompatible with commercial and industrial achievement. The average height of our intelligence, the average skill of our labor, the average industry of our citizens, the average standard of living of our entire people—these determine the economic position of our State. A trained citizenry insures wealth and all that civilization means.

The world has long known and paid tribute to the charm and beauty of our cultured people. Our writers, artists and

statesmen belong to the whole nation. We do well to be proud of their achievements. I know of no State west of the Alleghenies that has so enriched our national literature, no State where the social life is so alluring. But while this is true, we must remember that it is not the supreme height of culture and genius that determines the greatness of a State—but the average training and intelligence of the whole people.

1870-1900

During the past twenty-five years our towns and cities have made commendable progress in the improvement of their schools. Sentiment has changed. The public schools are now the pride of our towns, and while much remains to be done for their betterment, with the awakened interest now noticeable in them, we can feel sure of their continued growth. But we have all this time forgotten the rural localities. The country school has been neglected and ignored.

It is due to this criminal neglect that Kentucky ranks thirty-seven in the descending scale of illiteracy, counting the whole population, as compared with other States, or forty-second when we estimate only the white population.

Decrease in
Negro Illiteracy.

The negroes flock to the cities and towns there and get the advantage of some sort of schooling. It may be that they appreciate what a little education will do for them more than do the ignorant whites; the fact remains that illiteracy among the negroes in our State has decreased during the past twenty years 30.3 per cent, while the white illiteracy has decreased but 9.1 per cent (general decrease 13.9 per cent). This is not only true of Kentucky, but of every Southern State.

Decrease in White Illiteracy from 1880 to 1900:		per cent.
	Virginia	7.4
	Mississippi	8.6
	North Carolina	12.2
	South Carolina	8.8
	Georgia	11.3
	Florida	12.1
	Tennessee	13.6
	Alabama	10.2
	Louisiana	2.5

Arkansas	13.9
Texas.....	7.8
	per cent.
Virginia	29.1
Mississippi	26.1
North Carolina.....	29.8
South Carolina	25.7
Georgia.....	29.3
Florida	32.2
Tennessee.....	30 1
Alabama.....	23.2
Louisiana	18
Arkansas	32
Texas.....	37.2

Decrease in Col-
ored Illiteracy
from 1880 to
1900:

In every instance the decrease in the percentage of negro illiteracy has been twice as great, and in several States even greater, as has the decrease of white illiteracy.

We rejoice that we have this indication that the negro is rising. We would in no way lessen his advantages. Rather, we would multiply and improve his schools and give him the practical training that will fit him for his work, such training as is given by the great leader of the negro race at Tuskegee. The safety of the whites, the development of our State, can be secured only by training every child, black or white, to be a self-supporting producer.

To appreciate that the rural school is the pivoted point of the whole question of State development, we must remember that we are a rural people. Over 87.5 per cent. of our entire school population lives in the country and, if the great majority of these children are trained at all, the country schools must do it. If we can once get the 600,000 country children enrolled in our schools, get them to attend regularly and furnish them trained teachers, good buildings and all equipment necessary for a school, it will put Kentucky a half century ahead and do more to lift up the State than anything else.

**The Pivotal
Point.**

We have to face the painful fact that less than half our school population attend school; that many of our country schools are worthless; that the average pay of \$32.00 does not always secure trained, competent teachers. The problem

would be easier if these neglected people always wanted good schools, if they wanted their children trained. We must not only improve the schools—but in some instances we must actually create a desire for them and an interest in them. In the majority of instances, however, people are hungry for an education and parents are glad to make any sacrifice to secure the benefit of a good school for their children. But it requires a sympathetic imagination or actual observation to realize the helplessness of our illiterate poor for self-elevation. Dr. Scovell may send out his bulletins that tell how to enrich the soil, what crops pay best, how to improve the trees and stock, but these people get no benefit from them. They can not read. Their loss is the State's loss.

The School Improvement League.

The Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs realizes that the country school is the strategic point in this battle against illiteracy. Following the example of the Southern States, we are forming School Improvement Leagues. These are organizations of trustees, patrons and children for the sole object of bettering the grounds, buildings and equipment of the schools and quickening an interest in education. Already these leagues have accomplished great good in our State. In several counties entertainments have been given and goodly sums realized for libraries and equipment. Play grounds have been laid out, trees planted, yards cleaned up, pictures and books secured, and a fair beginning made for bettering the conditions of a number of rural schools. The work has been started in thirty-four counties. If we can once get the people organized and get them to feel a personal responsibility for their school, get them to actually do something for its betterment, they will begin to take pride in it and it will soon become the center of life of the community.

The next step will be to vote a local tax to still further improve it. We are not greatly addicted to voting taxes in our State, and our attitude on this question must change if we would see Kentucky prosper. More than 69 per cent. of all funds raised for education in the United States is raised by local tax. In Massachusetts more than 95 per cent. is thus raised.

Kentucky is the second wealthiest State in the South, second only to Texas, yet in the matter of local tax she is far

behind the poorer States south of us. In Virginia 47 per cent. of the school fund comes from local tax, while in Tennessee it is 80 per cent. Our State is liberal in her State per capita; it may be too liberal, as it seems in the more prosperous localities to deaden the nerve of local effort.

Regarded solely as an economic measure, it is found that the liberal spending of money on the rural schools pays. During the past six years in North Carolina the rural school property has increased in value 71.2—while in the towns the records show the marvelous increase of 219.2 per cent. This has had its effect on all the property in these localities. Better school houses have increased trade. Better schools have increased the material needs of the people. What in an ignorant community is a visionary dream of luxury, becomes a necessity where the community has come in touch with the broadening influences of educational advantages. The story of the wonderful quickening of trade and industry in the Southland, due to the educational revival, remains to be written. In North Carolina during the past year four hundred and thirty-three new country school houses have been put up—and in the entire South,—not counting Kentucky,—over 2,500 new rural schools. In several of the States, as in North Carolina, these have been planned by the best architects and have been approved by the State Superintendent. Material prosperity follows a liberal and wise expenditure for schools.

Economic Results in Other Southern States.

To receive the best returns for money invested, we believe we will do well to imitate the Southern States and lessen the number of our school districts. Tennessee has recently reduced the number of her rural schools six hundred and thirty, but increased her teaching force for them two hundred. This gives these consolidated rural schools the advantage of several grades; enables them to have, in place of a number of mediocre buildings, one commodious and well equipped; to employ trained teachers and put them on a par with the urban schools. The cost of carrying the pupils to and from school under safe guidance has been found to be so small as not to be appreciable, while the benefit of a well equipped graded school is incalculable. In these consolidated rural schools the elements of agriculture and manual train-

Consolidate Districts.

ing are being introduced. Children are trained to skill in the doing of useful things. After they complete the rural school course they can pass up to the County High School and on to the University. A number will do this. The great majority will stop with the high school course, or even with the rural school, but they will have received such a training along the practical lines that they are fitted to go on the farm and make a success of it and thus develop our State.

The consolidation of rural schools and the system of County Agricultural High Schools are comparatively new in the South.

**Kentucky Must
Help Herself.**

Our sister States in the South have had liberal financial aid from the Southern Educational Board, and with this money they have put hundreds of speakers in the field, have scattered thousands of pages of facts and figures broadcast, and have aroused and invigorated atrophied ambitions, and undeveloped public sentiment until the whole Southland is aflame with the desire and purpose to make public schools reach all and be worthy of all.

But Kentucky has not received one cent of money, hardly one word of encouragement, from outside her borders—nor does she need these. Kentuckians can carry their own burdens if once aroused to the consciousness that they have burdens to carry. The Educational Improvement Commission carried out a brilliant and successful campaign for the establishment of State Normal schools, drawing its funds from the slender pockets of public school teachers. The Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs has undertaken a campaign for the betterment of school houses and grounds—through the School Improvement Leagues—depending, so far, for its funds on the club women of the State. The marked and immediate results of these efforts, even with the meagre funds used, prove clearly that public sentiment in Kentucky only awaits the impulse of organization to move with irresistible momentum along all lines of educational advancement, and that our State,—the second richest Commonwealth in the South,—does not need to stand on the highway, jostled and pushed by the quick-step of States, holding out her hands, a suppliant for alien help. If we

could but touch the nerve of sympathy, money for the forwarding of this work of arousing public thought and feeling to the level of action would be generously contributed.

Is not the honor of our State so dear to us that we will subordinate every other interest to this paramount issue?

The chains of illiteracy bind the humble, unskilled toilers to drudgery and degradation with fetters that only an aroused people can break. In thirty-eight counties of our State, as the men march up to the ballot box on election day, every fourth man has to look at the emblem at the top of his ticket to know how to stamp his ballot. Surely a realization of the ignominy of this enslavement of free born, white Kentuckians will fire us to action. The loss to our State of wisely directed industry, of productive skill due to our past neglect of the rural schools cannot be estimated. Since the great commercial currents are rapidly shifting their course from the East to the South and West, and undreamed-of opportunities for material development are rapidly coming our way—opportunities that will be multiplied many times when the Panama Canal is completed,—we must see to it that the children of Kentucky are fitted to do their part in the world's work.

Women and the Schools.

Address Made by Mrs. Desha Breckinridge at Winchester Meeting of Kentucky Educational Association.

I am not at all sure that the subject I have chosen, "Women and the Schools," is an important one. It seems to me that perhaps the subject that ought to be discussed in Kentucky is "Men and the Schools." Men are responsible for the schools we have and for the schools we have not. They alone have the power to improve the school laws and through them to better the condition of the schools. So long as women are denied all participation in school management, it seems more or less futile to discuss the subject of women and the schools. Yet the school men have invited five of us womenfolk here to-night to speak on some phase of the subject, "Women and the Schools." They seem to have come to the conclusion that something is to be gained by getting women and the schools together. And I admit that I am very hopeful that this discussion may result in advantage both to women and the schools—that after all my subject may turn out to be important.

To Indict a Whole Sex.

I do not mean to rehearse here the dreary figures that proclaim Kentucky's deplorable educational status. The scandal has gone abroad—we all know more of it than we like to know. It has been said that it is impossible to indict a whole people—that where we find a whole community, or in a State that seems indictable, there is always some excuse or justification for the situation. But it occurs to me that it may be possible to indict a whole sex, and if in Kentucky we have to indict one sex or the other for our educational conditions, we shall have to indict the male sex. If our public school system has failed to reach our people, it is to the men of Kentucky we must go for explanation, to the sex which writes school laws, establishes schools and, as a rule, super-

intends them. It is true that women are allowed to teach in the schools, once established; in fact, over 75 per cent. of our Kentucky public school teachers now are women; but it is self-evident that we cannot hold these women responsible for the illiteracy in Kentucky—we might rather hold them responsible for the literacy! Probably every one of us in this audience to-night who knows how to read and write was taught to do so by a woman. Of course it is not quite fair to say that the men of Kentucky are responsible for its illiteracy and the women for such literacy as exists. But I maintain that the general statement is perfectly fair; that we must now hold the men, who have heretofore felt themselves perfectly sufficient to the management of school affairs in Kentucky, responsible for the fact that Kentucky, instead of leading the educational procession, now brings up a sorry rear.

In the early part of her history, Kentucky led the way, educationally, as in other respects. The first State carved from the western territory, the first State to grant manhood suffrage, her constitution was a model for the constitutions of the other Western States. For over half a century, from the days of the Kentucky Resolutions, through the days of the Missouri Compromise, Kentucky's statesmen molded national policies. Kentucky founded the first library and the first college west of the Alleghanies, and it was in this early half of her history, when she led the way educationally, that Kentucky granted the first school suffrage to women, in the year 1838. In the nearly three quarters of a century since, she has granted little more; one grant to women of cities of the second class was afterwards rescinded. In the meantime thirty other States and Territories have granted school suffrage to women, most of them on equal terms with the school suffrage to men; and while Kentucky has stood still in the matter of school suffrage, she has also stood still in the educational world; and the other States have gone forward

I think it will be profitable for us to compare briefly the educational status in Kentucky with the educational status in the States which have granted school suffrage to women. Seven of these lie east of Ohio; the rest are included in the North Central and Western Divisions—the great Northwest-

**When Kentucky
Led the Way.**

**Kentucky Com-
pared With
States Having
School Suffrage
for Women.**

ern territory and part of the Spanish domain. I have put together some figures comparing Kentucky with the North Central and Western Divisions, in which are found the great body of States having school suffrage for women. I have in each case compared Kentucky with the State having school suffrage for women that made the best showing, and I want to say that I could have proved my point just as well if I had compared Kentucky with the State having the worst showing, so far is she below the average; naturally, however, I have taken the most striking figures. However, I do not believe the figures I have gotten, which are merely the ones I could get with the least difficulty, prove the case nearly as well as it might be proven. The truth of the matter is that any of the multitudinous sets of educational statistics that may be adduced would prove it. The figures I have touch upon illiteracy, length of school term, amount of schooling given each child of school age, per capita expended for educational purposes, and teachers' salaries. These seem to me the most indicative features in the educational situation of any State.

Kentucky compared with States of North Central and Western Division (Census of 1900):

Per cent. of illiteracy of total population 10 years of age and over: Kentucky, 16.5; Nebraska, 2.3. Native white 10 years of age and over: Kentucky, 12.8; Washington, 5.

Expended for schools, per capita of total population (1903-4): Kentucky, \$1.19; Washington, \$6.96.

Average number of days schools are kept: Kentucky, 100; Minnesota, 169.

Average number of days' schooling of every child between 5 and 18 years: Kentucky, 40.3; Colorado, 103.3.

Days of schooling received by each pupil enrolled: Kentucky, 55.6; Washington, 116.9.

Average wages paid to teachers: Kentucky—Women, \$39.18; men, \$50.90. Nevada—Women, \$63.39; men, \$103.47.

Specific Comparisons.

Some more specific comparisons might bring the thing even more convincingly to our consciousness. Local interest in the schools, educational status in fact, may be measured with some accuracy by the amount of local taxation. In the State of Michigan, where the women vote on school matters

on equal terms with men, the amount spent on education per capita based on average attendance is \$23.60; in Kentucky it is 8.59. In Michigan more than 70 per cent. of all the money raised for educational purposes is raised by local taxation; in Kentucky only a little over 32 per cent. is so raised. In Wyoming, where two generations of women have voted on equal terms with men in all elections from school to presidential, the whole cost of the public schools is raised by local taxes, the State tax being devoted to the State University. Think what a university we might have in Kentucky were this the case here! In some tables of adult illiteracy we find Kentucky with over 14 per cent. of illiteracy and Wyoming with less than 1 per cent. In one table of illiteracy among children we find Wyoming the first of all the States and Territories of the Union, while Kentucky is forty-second.

In all Kentucky counties we pay a considerable school tax when we pay our State taxes. In pauper counties more than is paid comes back; in the wealthiest counties a part of it comes back; but in no county is the State per capita so large that it should not be supplemented by a local tax.

Now, in my own county of Fayette, where the total assessment for the year 1906 was considerably over \$34,000,000, and where the amount raised in county taxes for all other purposes was \$186,733.31, there was raised for school purposes in the county just \$2,309.49. In a county of the wealth of Fayette that seems to me to indicate a condition of almost complete apathy as to our rural public schools. Some of our white districts pay as low a salary to teachers as \$26.48 a month. While five white districts and one colored one have a longer term than the State law requires; they get it by making a good bargain with the teacher; not a single one supplements the salary from its own pocket. Of more than 2,600 children in our county schools this year, but 23 pupils, I am informed, were graduated, less than 1 per cent. And graduation, means only that they have completed the work of the fifth grade of our city schools in Lexington. While the white children in the city of Lexington are offered two years of kindergarten, eight years in the common school and four years in the high school, with nine months to the year, the county children are offered at best—and about 1 per cent. of

Fayette County.

them receive this much—five years of schooling. If this is true of a Blue Grass county, where, as might be shown, conditions are rather unusually good, what sort of comparison would our average Kentucky county make?

Cause and Effect.

To return to our general comparison, I am told that in a recent table of illiteracy, every State having school suffrage, for women, with a single exception—Pennsylvania—stood above every State that did not have school suffrage.

Now I do not say that these conditions in these numerous States are the result alone of school suffrage for women, or even that they are ~~not~~ the result of that. Mrs. Roark has suggested that it may be simply that school suffrage for women is one of the natural results of general enlightenment, instead of school suffrage for women being the cause and general enlightenment the effect. But I do call your attention to the fact that, whether cause or effect, educational advance and school suffrage for women go hand in hand from Massachusetts to Washington; that when Kentucky was blazing the way for the West educationally, she was blazing the way in school suffrage for women; and as the West has come to the front educationally, leaving Kentucky behind, she has also gone to the front in granting school suffrage to women. Moreover the recurrence of these two things happens too frequently for it to be mere coincidence, and I think anyone who studies the situation must grant, from the figures merely, that school suffrage for women has been a distinct factor everywhere in improving educational conditions.

**Testimony of
Superintendents
of Education.**

Next to the testimony of facts, perhaps the testimony of men most intimately connected with educational affairs in each State, is the most convincing evidence. I have recently examined letters from twenty-one State Superintendents or commissioners of Education, whatever the title of the executive educational officer of the State may be, in regard to this subject. A letter was sent out containing certain questions. It was intended that the replies to the first might furnish an answer to some of the foolish objections brought to school suffrage for women. The school superintendents were asked, "Do the bad and ignorant women vote in greater numbers than the good and intelligent?" "Does the school suffrage make women unwomanly?" "Does it

compel them to neglect their duties as wives and mothers?" Then they were asked if it had any good or bad results, and the crucial question, the one which allowed them to really give some indication of the working of the law, was this: "When there is a contested election with any important issue involving the interests of the school, do the women vote in any considerable numbers, and can you give any instances?" Four of the replies were from New England, three from New York, New Jersey and Delaware, and the rest from Ohio and the States west of her. The least encouraging replies naturally come from the "effete East," so we will take them up first.

Of all the letters, that from the superintendent of New Hampshire is the most non-committal. He does not know whether the bad and ignorant women outweigh the others, or whether women are forced to neglect their home duties, and when he is asked if they are made unwomanly by it, he says he "only knows one woman well enough to tell—his wife—and that she does not vote." Think of the narrowness of that man's circle of feminine acquaintances; that in all the State of New Hampshire he should know but one woman well enough to know whether or not she has been made unwomanly by a great State movement! He apparently does not know whether there have been any good results or bad ones, but thinks if there are any they are evenly balanced. Why he thinks that, I am sure I cannot tell. But when asked if women vote in any considerable numbers when an important issue is involved, he says, "Frequently, and usually carry the issue to the advantage of the schools, from my point of view." So he does know one thing besides his wife, and it is a thing that it seems to me might almost destroy that even balance of results. The Vermont superintendent is nearly as non-committal. He does not even tell us whether or not his wife votes, and I should like to know. But on one question he speaks positively,—when asked if the bad and ignorant women vote in greater numbers than the good, he says emphatically that there are no bad or ignorant women in Vermont. This is reassuring, for there must be some ignorant men in Vermont, judging by the information displayed by the school superintendent on a subject with

The Effete East.

which we might expect him to be conversant.

Connecticut answers the questions as we would have her answer them, but thinks a larger amount of suffrage would stimulate the women to more interest in the schools.

Massachusetts answers as we would have her, and says that better persons are chosen to school boards because of women's votes, and that "in two contested elections recently women have come out in large numbers and in both cases the results of the election have been in favor of the higher standards of school administration."

In New Jersey the women vote on all school matters except for boards of education. New Jersey is bound by the fetters of the past. This school suffrage cannot be given to women without an amendment to her constitution. But it is quite evident from the letter of the superintendent that he considers the amount of school suffrage that women have exercised has been a great advantage to schools and that he would welcome more.

I shall pass over New York, Delaware, Ohio and Illinois in order to save time. But as we go west things warm up considerably. In reply to the first foolish questions we get emphatic answers: "Decidedly no," "Assuredly not," and "By no means." Nebraska says that the vote of the good and intelligent women far outweighs that of the bad and ignorant. Several other States give practically the same testimony. Wisconsin says that the school interests of the State have been materially benefitted. Kansas says that candidates for school boards who are unworthy have been defeated by the women's votes. When asked if instances can be given of important elections carried by women's votes, Colorado says "Several," evidently too numerous to give in detail. Nebraska says "In the voting of school bonds where better school buildings were an absolute necessity, the bonds could not have been carried without the votes of the good and intelligent women; the instances are too numerous to mention." North Dakota cites the City of Fargo as an instance. Wisconsin says that in the City of Madison the vote for a \$250,000 bond issue for high schools was carried by the vote of the women.

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Most of the letters, as will be gathered, are from men. President Roosevelt's Conversion. One cannot go through them and have left any doubt of the opinion of these men as to the advantage to the schools of having women participate in school management. Some of them have been converted, perhaps, as was President Roosevelt, by special instances. You remember when he was Governor of New York, and was asked why he believed in school suffrage for women, he said that Oyster Bay had long needed a good schoolhouse, but that she could never get it until women were admitted to school suffrage. But it is quite plain in most cases that such specific examples have not been necessary to convert State school superintendents. The advantage of women in school affairs is to them a self-evident truth.

If Kentucky wants to get back into the line of march educationally, I think that she must realize that she needs all the work and all the help that can be given her, both by the men and by the women of the State. A large number of our Kentucky women are now much aroused over the educational condition. A large number, too, are personally interested in the schools because, as mothers, they are concerned—more concerned, I may venture, than the fathers—in the education of their children. I think there is waiting, gentlemen, for your use in Kentucky, a great reserve force in the interest of Kentucky schools if you will but avail yourselves of it. A Pull All Together.

It is but lately that the school men have become enthused with the idea of calling on Kentucky women to help them better school conditions. Now, it strikes me as the height of impudence for the men of Kentucky to offer us caresses and cajolements with one hand and a blow and an insult with the other; to call on us to form ladies' aid societies in the interest of the schools, to come to the rescue of the swamped school men of the State, and at the same time to say by their law that we are not fit to participate in school affairs. Yet there was offered at our last Legislature a county school bill which deprived Kentucky women of the last vestige or school suffrage, which they had enjoyed since the year 1838. And, still stranger, that bill was endorsed, I understand, by this very association. I was not present at

the meeting, but I cannot believe that the bill was read; that those voting for it were aware of this provision.

We all know that we need new school laws in Kentucky, and we are fairly well agreed that we should make the county a unit for school government.

Now, would it not be the fairest thing, the wisest thing, the most expedient thing, the best thing for the schools, that when this law is framed it should be free from sex-conscious provisions; that all persons over 21 years of age should be by it made eligible to vote in all school elections and eligible to office for all educational offices; that it should deal not with the men of Kentucky, nor the women of Kentucky, but with the people of Kentucky in behalf of the children of Kentucky.

If the men of Kentucky are capable alone of managing our school system—if they desire to do it alone, without the help of the women—if they are self-sufficient, then let them say so, and let them tell us to-night to go home to our kitchens and leave school matters to them. But if they are beginning to feel that they are as other States are—that they need the help of their women, then let them write down this desire in their law, let them grant us equal fellowship with men, let them embody in the law the answer to the question of the Michigan superintendent, “Who is more interested in the welfare of the children? Who has a better right to have something to say as to how the schools shall be conducted than the mothers of school children?”

I have, with many other women in Kentucky, done in recent years what I could in the interest of our public schools, and in forming an educational sentiment in my community. But I believe that I speak for a large number of Kentucky women, I know that I speak for myself, when I say that it is impossible for me to throw myself as ardently into the struggle to improve the schools of Kentucky while there is open to me only the slow and painful method of indirect influence, and while I am ever conscious of the fact that I am not considered, by the very men who ask me to help them, capable of voting for one of the 5,000 illiterate school trustees of the State—it is impossible for me, under these circumstances, to work as I would work were I granted by the school laws of Kentucky a real chance to help the schools and to try once more to bring Kentucky to the end of the educational procession at which she belongs.

The Relation of the Public Schools to Kentucky's Commercial Development.

Address Made by Mrs. Desha Breckinridge at the Louisville Meeting of the
Kentucky State Development Association.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Mentally I put the accent on the latter, for I do not often have the opportunity of speaking to gentlemen. I am much more in the habit of speaking to Women's Clubs. But to-day I shall try to talk up—or if your chivalry prefers, down to the level of gentlemen. Do you remember the diary of the Eton boy? One entry read thus: "Arose this morning at 7:30. Made my toilet. Ate my breakfast. Talked to mother of things that she could understand." I shall try to-day to talk to you of things that men can understand. I was advertised, I believe, to speak on the subject of school suffrage for women; I could speak to you on that subject for several hours, if there was any way to hold you here while I did. But I am not going to. I am going to speak on this subject: That the greatest business need of Kentucky at present is the improvement of our educational conditions; that, however important and however urgent the revision of the State's tax system may be, it is neither more important nor more urgent than the education of our people.

I have rarely been in an assemblage of this size in Kentucky that there was not some male orator present to explain to the audience what a fine people Kentuckians were, and are, and ever shall be. And I fully agree with these male orators; yet, some times in the last few months, it has seemed to me that perhaps the mission of us Kentucky women was to go about the land making ourselves disagreeable, saying unpleasant things, puncturing the bubble of self-complacency of the average Kentucky assemblage. A Southern speaker

some time since, who was about to say things not usually said to Southern audiences prefaced his speech thus: "I love my South far better than those who flatter her more." We women believe that we love Kentucky far better than some of those who are flattering her more. If we despaired of Kentucky we should not flaunt her shame. On the contrary, we believe that all Kentucky needs is to become fully aware of the facts, to arouse herself to the conditions that exist, in order to remedy them.

Kentucky
Illiteracy.

I may be excused then for re-iterating some of the statements of Kentucky's illiteracy. There is the familiar table that says in a list of 50 States and Territories ranked according to their percentage of illiteracy in the population 10 years of age and over, we rank thirty-seventh by our total population, forty-second by our white population and forty-third by our native white population. Nor is it comforting to know that we cut down our per cent. of illiteracy considerably more in the decade from 1880 to 1890, than in the decade from 1890 to 1900. We have reason to believe that we shall make a much better showing in the present decade. But, gentlemen, we cannot afford to take any chances on that census of 1910. It has been recently said of some of us who are using these educational statistics of Kentucky, that we are doing our State injustice; that we are stating half-truths. We have been reminded, too, that there are excuses for existing conditions; reminded that Kentucky came in for no share of the school lands given to the Western States by the Federal Government, territory already ceded by Virginia, mother of Kentucky, to the Federal Government; that these lands on which State universities and splendid public school systems have been built went only to States entering the Union after 1880. We have been reminded that Kentucky labored under the institution of slavery; that she suffered from the war and from reconstruction. Some ten years ago when in talking to a Chicago man I advanced the fact of the Civil War as an explanation of some condition in Kentucky, he suggested that Chicago had had a fire since then, and that she had nevertheless built up a fair degree of prosperity and commercial activity in the years intervening. Since then I haven't used the war much as an argument, and it seems to me it is time

that we ceased to explain our educational status by the war, the institution of slavery, reconstruction or land grants of the last century.

There are other ways in which we are in the habit of excusing our illiteracy. We say it is not fair to compare us with the States north of us, because of our large colored population. But when we see that it takes our colored population to bring us up from the rank of forty-second to the glorious one of thirty-seventh in the black list, that argument falls to the ground. Then we are in the habit of laying it on our mountain whites, for whom for some reason we of the Blue Grass and the Beargrass seem to feel no responsibility, who, we seem to forget, are as much Kentuckians as we. Now I am not coming down here to give you Beargrass statistics. I do not belong to the fighting sex. I have no desire to carry the war into Africa. But as for my own section, the confidence that lay the blame on the mountain section has been sadly shaken by some figures fished out of the census by a gentleman living in Eastern Kentucky. It seems that in the Blue Grass counties of the State—"counties famed for their wealth, their good roads and their historic families"—such counties as Fayette, Boyle, Clark, Mercer, Scott, Shelby; they are not all purely Blue Grass counties, but there is not one that is not partly Blue Grass. . . . And the statistician tells me he did not take the worst Blue Grass counties; that he spared us a little. . . . In these 10 Blue Grass counties there are but 92 fewer native, white, illiterates than in the whole State of Maine, nearly twice as many as in the whole State of Massachusetts, more than twice as many as in the whole State of Nebraska. Some way that made me feel even more illiterate than when I was told I stood forty-third!

And when I was told that in 1900 there were over 65,000 illiterate white voters in Kentucky, at least twice as many as the largest plurality in any recent State election, I could no longer wonder that political conditions in Kentucky are other than we could wish them. Gentlemen, if leaving out of the question the ignorant or the venal colored vote, the balance of power in Kentucky is held by the ignorant white vote, how can we expect honest elections! It takes intel-

ligence to be honest; it is not an easy thing. Especially in public matters; how many of you know men who, though perfectly honest in their private relations, are still dishonest in political matters, some times realizing it and some times not realizing it. The ignorant vote can be swayed and bent; it is usually a solid vote, which is to say an unintelligent vote; it presents temptation for manipulation. To illustrate, leaving our own sections out of the question, most of the mountain counties vote Republican, because the fore-fathers of the voters before them voted Republican; it saves thinking. And now and then one of these counties votes pretty solidly Democratic, because there has arisen a leader of force and brains and cunning, and not overburdened with scruples perhaps, who corrals the voters for the Democratic party. Neither elections nor election laws will rise much above the average of our voters' comprehension of honesty.

**Not Caring
About Our Rural
Schools.**

In Fayette county a little over one-half the children shown on the school census are enrolled in the county schools. And of this number—2,600—but 23 were graduated last year; less than 1 per cent received such education as our county schools afford. With an assessment of over \$34,000,000, Fayette county spent but little over \$2,000 on building, repairing and maintaining her school houses last year.

I believe that the situation in Fayette county may be taken as typical. While we are giving our children a good deal of schooling, possibly not all the right sort in the towns of Kentucky, we are neither thinking nor caring about our rural districts, where more than three-fourths of our children live. Now, merely from a selfish point of view the city man should take account of the rural schools. The population of the cities is constantly being recruited from the country, and these country boys are of value to the city very much in proportion to the way they have been educated and trained. A prominent business man of New York recently made an investigation of the commercial worth of an education, and published his conclusions. He declared that a grammar school education adds 50 per cent to the value of a man, a high school education 100 per cent and a college education 300 per cent. Then the city merchant must rely

largely on the people of the country as consumers of his wares, and he will find always that the best educated country people are the best consumers. The illiterate has few wants, a low standard of living, and, as a rule, little with which to supply wants if he had them.

This is a small and selfish view point. To realize the importance of the thing not as city men nor as country men, but as Kentuckians, we must go back to some of the fundamentals. We must go over those axioms of Horace Mann's to the effect that: "An ignorant people not only is, but must be, a poor people," and that "Such a thing never did and never can happen as that an intelligent and practical people should remain permanently poor." When we begin to bank upon our natural resources, we must recall his illustration from the history of Spain: that, "Within the last four centuries the people of Spain have owned as much silver and gold as all the other nations of Europe put together, yet at the present time, poor indeed is the people who have less than they." With some of her natural resources Kentucky is behaving in as wasteful a manner as Spain did. We must repeat to ourselves that the average worker in Asia earns 3c a day, the average worker in Russia 14c, in the United States 48c and in Massachusetts, that discourager of nations by reason of her perfections, 87c. And that Asia spends nothing for public education, while Massachusetts spends a larger sum per capita than any other community in this country of equal property valuation.

Value of Educa-
tion in Dollars
and Cents.

nd
ts.

When we come over from Asia and get as near home as Europe the most striking illustration of the cost of ignorance is found in Russia. A writer on Russia has recently said that the financial and commercial future of Russia will be determined by the condition of Russian agriculture; and that it will take 25 billions of money and a century of time to set Russia on her feet agriculturally. In Russia there is so little education that only eight per cent of the population can read and write. In Germany the value of education, and the education that fits for life is so well understood, that in parts of the empire we find a most complete system for the teaching of agriculture, beginning with the school garden in the elementary school and going through the

Russia and
Denmark.

higher agricultural colleges. In Russia the average yield of the acres is just one-third of what it is in Germany.

The other side of the picture is best shown perhaps in Denmark. "Twenty years ago Denmark was one of the poorest nations in Europe. Now in the per capita wealth of its people it is, with one exception, the richest; in the general distribution of wealth it stands first." Denmark inaugurated and carried out a wonderful system of public schools with industrial training; her rural schools include dairying, poultry raising, fruit growing and all forms of agriculture in their curriculum; the peasants of Denmark have taxed themselves rich. Danish farmers sell to England every year butter that brings them \$30,000,000, and eggs from Denmark bring 30 per cent more in the markets of London than home-grown eggs.

In Kentucky.

In Kentucky with every advantage for dairy farming, with the grass that the States south of us do not have and with such a climate that we do not have to shelter our herds in the winter as the States north of us do, we are yet importing ~~the~~ large part of the butter we use. And the northern creameries are doing us the favor to send us their rendered butter, not good enough for the northern market. In many respects we are simply living on our natural resources. We are raising up the richness of our land and sending it out of the State for others to make the profit. We have been plundering the wealth of future generations in the destruction of our forests. We are cutting down this timber and sending it out of the State—to Michigan, for instance—and they are sending it back to us furniture and selling it to us. We are raising potatoes and sending them to Boston, and in that intellectual center they are making them into Saratoga chips, and sending them back and selling them to us at a profit of 400 per cent. And so with most things. We are content to do the rough work of the country, the unskilled labor which is poorly paid we do, and leave to others the further handling. If you should wipe out Louisville and Covington and Paducah, all of which are on the edge of the State, you would practically wipe out the manufacturing of the State. Even our wheat, except for one large establishment in Louisville, and one or two smaller ones in Lexington and

the interior, we send out of the State, and buy it back as flour. The tobacco situation, which in some parts of the State is bordering on civil war, is perhaps due to the fact that we have been content—with only sufficient exception to prove the rule—to grow the tobacco and pick the worms off, and let others do the handling. And in the development of our natural resources, the opening up of mines, building of railroads, buying up and development of timber lands, we have been content to let the outsider make the greater part of the profits. The foreigner has usually engineered these large undertakings; and who will dispute that in the development of the mental traits necessary to organize and carry on large business undertakings, education, generations in fact of mental training, is a large factor. In our own town the local men who first built our street railways sold at a loss to Baltimore men; and when they had made a success of it, local men bought it back; and later sold out again to a Philadelphia syndicate. Only one of the interurban roads running out from Lexington has been built by local men. Even when it comes to day laborers, we are not always able to furnish them. A contract which would have distributed \$30,000 in our community was lost a short time since because the men could not be found to do the work. And this does not indicate a shortage of men, but rather that so low a standard of living prevails among our uneducated laborers, that they are content to work a few days in the week and to subsist for the rest of the time on the profits of that. Lexington is not now exporting manufactured products to Chicago as she once did.

We shall not get into the line of commercial development in Kentucky until we get back into the line of educational development. We must realize that "economic civilization moves forward only as the whole mass of activity becomes more efficient." Every class of the population depends on every other, the highest on the lowest. Are you a lawyer? Your dirt shoveler will never pay you a large fee; but a trained man who works machinery may. Are you a physician? The same is true. Are you a merchant? Your untrained shoveler can never buy much from you with 70 cents a day. But a man who earns \$4 a day is worth having

What We Must Do.

as a customer. Are you a railroader, etc., etc.? Kentucky will not come into her own until we have an ideal of universal education and begin to realize it. Even the high training of a small class of people profits us little. What will it avail you to find a few experts in the State who will evolve a perfect system of taxation (?) if the legislators at Frankfort do not represent a constituency who can appreciate this tax system. Neither our laws nor our political and industrial conditions will rise above our people. We need not wonder at bad election laws, or laws that give us partisan, political boards of control for our charitable and penal institutions, or suicidal laws of taxation, while the mass of our people remains where it is intellectually. We have got to educate our people as the forward States are doing if we wish to keep up with them industrially. This means a reasonable tax system; it means good roads; it means a good common school within the reach of every child in the rural districts as well as in the cities; it means consolidation of schools; it means that in these common schools there shall be industrial and agricultural training, and that they shall lead up to county high schools, agricultural and manual training high schools, which shall bridge the way to our highest State institution of agricultural and mechanical training.

A Comparison.

It is profitable to make some comparison in the amount spent for education in Kentucky and in States that have made a greater industrial progress. It is curious how exact is the ratio over this country in the per capita amount spent for education and the per capita earning capacity of States. Mr. Marks has made a comparison with two of our neighbor States just north of us. He has shown that for every \$1.00 that Kentucky spends on education, Indiana spends \$1.45 and Ohio \$1.87, and that for every dollar earned per inhabitant in Kentucky, Indiana earns \$1.57 and Ohio \$1.75. A comparison was recently made for a State just south of us. The amount spent on education in Tennessee, in the United States at large, and in Massachusetts were compared; then their earning capacity was compared. Then the argument was pushed in: "The average wage earning power of the people of Massachusetts is \$250,000,000 a year over the average wage earning power of an equal number of people elsewhere.

For this, Massachusetts spent \$10,000,000 a year when these wage earners were in school. Was it a good investment?"

When we come to compare Kentucky with Massachusetts —and I do not want anyone to tell me it is not a fair comparison! It is a fair comparison. Massachusetts did not have the school lands the Western States have had; she must go down into the pockets of her people for whatever she spends on education. Nor has she the natural resources, climate, mineral wealth or agricultural resources that many of the Southern and Western States have. When we come to compare Kentucky with Massachusetts, we find that Kentucky spends on education per capita of total population \$1.10 and Massachusetts spends \$5.87. That the value of manufactured products per capita of population is in Kentucky \$33.22 and in Massachusetts \$171.99.

Kentucky and
Massachusetts.

Now, because of what does Massachusetts hold her trade supremacy? Some of you will say because of the protective tariff. And if the Ship Subsidy bill had been passed, some of you would certainly have said because of the ship subsidy. But I believe she has gotten it, and held it in spite of disadvantages, because since the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers she has had an ideal of universal education, because the education of every child of the Commonwealth has been a religion with her. And all the time that she holds to this ideal she is advancing her conception of what education is, she is fitting her education to the present day needs of her people.

An act creating a Commission on Industrial Education was approved and became a law in Massachusetts in June of 1906; I wish every Kentuckian could read it; it would be a liberal education. This act creates a Commission—and they hastened to appoint a woman on it—that should employ experts in industrial and technical education; that should study the needs of the State; and then by popular lectures spread a knowledge of these needs; that should "intiate and superintend the establishment and maintenance of industrial schools." Cities, towns, districts might combine to maintain industrial and agricultural schools, the State bearing part of the expense on a scale graduated according to what the locality itself spent for education. Night schools were to be maintained for adult workers; part time day schools for

young wage-earners that the study of "the principles and the practice of their art might go on together." And even more illuminating than the bill were the speeches made in the Massachusetts Legislature when the bill was pending. The Massachusetts people showed a conscious understanding of what their trade supremacy rested on. They quoted the industrial and technical training given in Germany, and they argued that if Massachusetts wished to hold her own in the markets of the world, if she wished to prevent her home markets from being flooded with things "Made in Germany" she must educate the hands and brains of her workmen as Germany was doing. Massachusetts competes with the South—and the term is too flattering to the South, in the cotton textile industry because of the skill and intelligence of her people. We may almost say that the textile industry in the South is due to Massachusetts people; to capitalists who have planted mills in the South with the cotton and the fuel at their elbows and the cheap child labor that humane legislation prevents their using in their own State. Massachusetts knows better than to use up her own children; she is educating them. And we let her come South and put our children into the mills and turn us out from them a generation stunted in mind and body, illiterate and commercially valueless. And in spite of these elements of economy in the South, Massachusetts mills still run profitably. And why? A Northern manager of a cotton mill near Augusta, Ga., when I questioned him about conditions in the mill, told me he was obeying the child labor law—he could afford to, it was a very mild one—and told me how they had reduced the hours for all their workmen, and raised the wages. "Soon," he concluded, "we shall be paying such wages and requiring such short hours, that we shall be able to get skilled operatives here from Fall River, Massachusetts!" He found it profitable to come South for the cotton and the fuel, but he knew it would be more profitable to import high priced, intelligent labor from Massachusetts than to use cheap, illiterate Southern labor.

A Pull
Altogether.

Now if Kentucky is not only to keep pace with the other States, but also to make up the great gulf that now separates her from them, it will take the best efforts of every Kentuck-

ian, of our whole people pulling together—I mean specifically of her women as well as of her men. We can not afford to exclude one-half of the adult population from management of and interest in our schools. Time was when Kentucky led the way. She first granted manhood suffrage, she wrote the constitution that was the model on which the constitution of the States carved from the northwestern territory were formed. From the days of the Kentucky Resolutions to the days of the Missouri compromise her statesmen molded national policies. She founded the first library and the first college west of the Alleghenies. And in the early half of her history, first of any State in the Union, in the year 1838, she granted school suffrage to women. To-day the women of Kentucky have practically no more suffrage than the women of 1838 were granted. And in the meantime more than thirty other States have granted school suffrage to their women, most of them on the same terms that it is granted to men. And you will find from Massachusetts to Washington that wherever school suffrage for women exists, there educational conditions are the best. In most of these States illiteracy is at the vanishing point, local taxes for schools are at the maximum. The testimony not only of statistics but from the highest authorities, the State superintendents of public instruction, as to the value of the women to the schools is overwhelming.

To be sure, in Kentucky you let us do the teaching in the public schools, over 75 per cent. of it at least; and in consequence we are apt to say that men who manage the school system and sometimes mismanage it, are responsible for Kentucky's illiteracy, but the women who compose the teaching are responsible for such literacy as she boasts. We are about this as a bandmaster who favors us in Lexington during the trotting races was about his cornet playing. On one occasion, after he had looked on the wine, he was bragging that he was the best cornet player in the world. "Have you ever played in competition with such an artist as Liberatori," some one asked, "and been adjudged the best?" "No," he said, "but I am the best. You do not need to prove it. I am willing to admit it." You do not need to prove to us

that we deserve the credit for the literacy of the State, or that we could materially help you in righting Kentucky educationally, if we were given equal opportunity with you; we are willing to admit it.

**What the People
Did in Virginia.**

I am going to speak for just a minute of the way the whole people have worked together in Virginia. They have not yet asked the women into the work there as they should ask them and as they will ask them, but they have gladly accepted all the work the women would give in the educational revival they have carried on, and it has been much. In 1904 the Richmond Education Association when it had grown to over 1,000 members became the Co-Operative Education Association of Virginia. They began forming school improvement leagues, as we are trying to do in Kentucky—it was a part of a big educational movement. In two years they had formed 243 local leagues; now the beauty of these leagues is that you not only have the people in every little school district affected working for cleaner school houses and better school yards and longer terms and better paid and better trained teachers, but after a little you have a public sentiment in every corner of the State that initiates and compels better school legislation and pushes the State on to real educational advance. In May, 1905, there was inaugurated by the Co-Operative Education Association of Virginia what is known as the May campaign. A hundred speakers, a governor, senators, journalists, lawyers and business men were sent out to stump the State in the interests of education. Over a thousand local speakers took part in the campaign. The press went into the cause with its whole soul; 172 papers printed regularly educational matter supplied them. And one of the consequences was that every candidate that fall, from sheriff to governor, was running on a platform of good schools and good roads.

In the Legislature that met in January over 300 bills in the interest of education were introduced. The amount set aside by the State for salaries of elementary teachers was doubled; a loan fund for building district schools was created; any district might borrow from this fund on ten years' time at 4 per cent—and it is the history of such funds here and elsewhere that not a penny has been lost; the very

cause of education seems to insure honesty. The sum total of that legislative session and of the educational campaign may be stated as longer terms, better salaries and higher standards for teachers, increased local taxes and county high schools. Under the provisions of a high school bill that was on "the Lord helps him who helps himself" plan, that aided any community in proportion to the amount it aided itself, in less than six months, as reported at the Education Conference in Lexington in May, from September of 1906 to March, 1907, 139 high schools were established. And Kentucky hasn't a single county high school!

Now, in conclusion, if we are "convicted of sin;" if we realize fully the state Kentucky is in educationally; if we are convinced that progress of every kind in our State depends primarily on the better education of our people; if we are ready men and women working together in equal dignity to put all our energies to getting ourselves out of the present situation, I see no reason to despair. The fact that Kentucky has led the forward movement of the past should encourage us, not discourage us. What Kentuckians have done Kentuckians may do. To me the inspiration of the past seems to call to the inspiration of the future. I think every Kentuckian may pronounce with the English poet that invocation to the

Spirits of old that bore me,
And set me meek of mind,
Between great deeds before me
And deeds as great behind!

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