

Plummer, Mary R. Excerpts from “Reform Department Report, April 26, 1902.” Chicago History Museum. Chicago Woman’s Club Records. Box 21, Folder 4.

“...The Committee on County Institutions, Mrs. Geo. M. Moulton, Chairman, has done some remarkable work this year. Realising, that while the ideal was to clear the Poor House entirely of its child life, the Committee faced the situation that this ideal had never been, perhaps never would be, achieved. Therefore, first it gave its main effort to taking out such children as might be placed elsewhere, and these number 42 during the year. Think of it! Forty-two little ones started on the road to a healthful happy useful life where at the beginning of this year there seemed no hope-nothing but a life of pauperism, disease, and crime.

There is, however, a small percent, that because of incurable disease cannot be taken by any institution, nor is there an opportunity of placing them in families. These afflicted little ones have had no less the thoughtful care of this Committee, and after untiring work, it reports, that they have the promise of the President and Commissioners of the County Board, that a separate building with ample grounds for play and work, separated entirely from the other buildings and grounds will be completed this summer.

Beside this the Committee has distributed during the year among the unfortunate inmates of Dunning 2000 bunches of flowers, books, magazines, newspapers and pictures; also pieces of silk and calico for making patch work to the aged women and the mildly insane, who otherwise would have say day by day; week by week; month by month; with folded hands, and idle brains. The Reform Department justly feels proud of the work of this Committee.

“...Our elected representative to Protective Agency, Mrs. Lytton, having resigned, Mrs. Geo. Bass has filled her place. So well has her work been done, that the Agency has elected her one of its Vice Presidents. She reports, that there have been on average of 253 calls per month at the office, and 190 of these received active help. So many cases of outrage upon the persons of little girls are reported as to bring home to the department a conviction, that either the law upon this point is insufficient, or that there is maladministration of it. Surely this is a wrong, which especially stirs the hearts of women.

Miss. Bartelme, Public Guardian of Cook County, has brought to us the causes of her little wards in such a way as to touch the springs of our laughter and our tears. She has presented the needs of homes for the boys awaiting admittance in the navy department, and the longing of little lonely hearts for companionship and friends. Mrs. Wm. Sterling answering this last appeal invited several of Miss. Bartelme's little folks to tea with her one Sunday afternoon to her own and their intense satisfaction. Others will follow her example next year."