

# A Plea for Civic Betterment

The following paper was read by Mrs. E. L. Jones to the Civic Section of the Woman's Club:

The ideal city should give its inhabitants as many of Nature's comforts as are consistent with city life. Pure air, should be the first consideration, for without it, public health is endangered. An unlimited water supply certainly comes next, for purposes of drinking and cooking, for putting out fires, and for keeping vegetation in a state of freshness and bloom; this is absolutely the only danger or famine Charlotte can suffer from or anticipate. "Water, water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink."

Trees, shrubs, vines and flowers should be planted and tended both by public representatives of the people, and by the people themselves as individuals. As in the Southern towns, as well as the old New England towns, appreciated this duty well—their long avenues and streets were lined with elms, maples and beautiful oak trees. In the far Southern cities, the cottonwood and palm trees were used for shade on sidewalks, and in many a double row of trees down the centre of the streets were seen; and the grounds of large or lesser extent, showed examples of carefully-tended shrubs, and rare specimens of trees requiring particular care.

Who does not remember the grandmother's garden bordered with artistically-cut boxwood, and symmetrical hedges and arches, as well as the flower-beds and borders of flourishing plants? This, one notices particularly now—in our capital city—such beautiful beds and borders of plants and young trees. There I watched the planting of a small slip of a maple tree. A 2x3 foot hole was dug, about two feet deep. This was half filled with chip manure, the other half ground, drainage and richness. Then the tree was placed in, the roots carefully spread out, the hole filled with water and before the water had all soaked in the earth was being gently tamped in, to fill the hole and pack around the tree. There they seldom lose a tree so planted. Here I notice we trust to nature, ignorance and want of care—just dig a hole, dip the root in, and fill her up, as an old darky planting trees at the South graded school several years ago said in reply to my question. Some of these trees lived, and are very fine ones, and some died. But with our wonderful climate and with the afore-said careful planting, the "professor who knows it all" should have lost none. A tree so planted in December or January, or even February and March, has time, in our mild climate, to spread and nourish its little rootlets and later put forth its leaves, casting shade to protect these same little rootlets from the scorching sun of July and August.

This department of the Woman's Club believes, had the city had a few women on its park commission, who knew something of planting and beautifying the magnificent row of cedars (100 or more years of age) on the Monroe road, back of Elizabeth College, would never have been cut down, just to widen the road a few feet. Truly this is a sad condition, for there are none like them left. Nor would those handsome cedars in the old cemetery have been trimmed up "paint-brush fashion," and that impossible, impassable huge mound of this sacred spot and that terrace of shrubs! In this climate it was, and is, laughable to those who know. We, who love Charlotte, are distressed to see affairs in this line, and we, the men will learn better by the time the Woman's Club is twenty years of age, and will select a man and a woman from this section who knows of our beautiful flora, and who will use them instead of planting foreign plants, which need care and water constantly, and unfortunately get none, or get none in this case.

A feature of our park commission should be a woman's auxiliary—women who know something of planting, would perform effective service.

What is more beautiful than our dogwood tree? With its glorious, pure-white flower, every blossom turned heavenward! Yet two years ago, when the park commission took charge of the seventh street parking around the old waterworks, an observant lady, one of the pioneers, one might say, and one devoted to nature, counted forty-seven of those flourishing trees, young and old, cut down. They make our woods glorious when in flower, give fine shade when in leaf, though not a word is said when they are cut down, and when their leaves are gorgeous in coloring, and later when many other trees stand naked, they are covered with bright red berries, which our birds delight in eating. There are many others of like beauty, which, if given some care would live with those of Hawaii.

With the growth of larger cities, this matter of tree-planting has been very much neglected until recently. The complications of modern civilization, the tubing under the streets for drainage, the crossing and re-crossing of the electric and electric wires, the network of other wires overhead, the immense high buildings and the excavating way out under side-walks for "jail-room" as they call it, have all tended to make the life of trees and shrubs difficult. The spirit of the age has been to cut them down—they are in, the way, beautes of fifty or more years, or worse, let them decay, and with a little cutting away of old bark when decay sets in, a little cement and tar over the heart-wood, in a few years nature will have grown over the tar and cement a new bark so nearly perfect that the old decayed place can hardly be noticed. But down they go, without feeling, it be to any manufacture. Many a grand old tree has been sacrificed to a new trolley line, or a block of buildings, apparently without causing one pang of regret to the mind of any one concerned.

Of very recent years, however, people have begun to see this is a mistake. Perhaps the oldest and oldest of travel has caused the beauties of European towns and cities to awaken comparison in the minds of those able and willing to exert themselves for public good.

In European towns, particularly in those of Germany, it is a law that for a mile from the town line, all approaching roads shall be closely shaded, and one may (as I am told) from seeing the long avenues of stately trees, while yet in the open country, of the approach of a city. Every city has its system of parks, both larger and smaller, which abound with beautiful and rare shruberies and trees as well as in specimens of animal life, are invariably one of the sights of the place visitors are recommended to see. A friend of mine, speaking of Cologne, said any visitor who does not see the beautiful "Ring-Strasse" or system of small streets that extend around that city, or who omits a visit to the "Flora," a small but exquisitely-arranged park, where the orchestra plays every afternoon, and where seats in plenty, under the trees, tempt the population to enjoy the delights of outdoor civilization, has missed one of the most

charming experiments of that interesting old city.

Why, then, do we work up this plan? Small parks here and there before our town grows to its twenty-mile-square limit, which we Charlotteans know it will do in as many years? The Woman's Club must be the power behind the town authorities who are so busy now digging up the streets, so slow putting them down again. The Civic Department of the Woman's Club must be the active agent for our future city clean and beautiful, helping make it a truly a "Queen City."

Our city dark commission or association, could be of invaluable public service in securing the establishment of numerous small parks and playgrounds in the various part of the city. It sounds like a strong movement for recreative sanitary purposes, but the charms of the natural features of the suburban landscape could be so preserved, for there are many beautiful spots in and around Charlotte. The project sounds like a magnificent one, but on the plan of Cologne girdle, the city now with a connecting series of parks and parkways or drives would be beautiful, particularly with reference to the banks of the several minor water courses or creeks. The idea is well within the bounds of practicability, and would be of immense hygienic value. Some of these streams are already becoming so defiled through the effluent of neighboring mills emptying dye water, etc., into them that they are now a nuisance and are endangering the health of our city.

This proposition would convert them into a grand and enduring beauty, and a rural pleasure ground for the surrounding population and avert a danger generated by noxious swamps and unclean water and from a water supply pollution. Just let any one be impressed with the desirability of some improvement for the community where they live, and a way can be found to give it an opportunity.

Among American cities, Washington, Hartford, Conn., Salt Lake City and Boston are taking the lead in this respect, looking after the natural beauties of their streets, parks and surroundings.

Commonwealth avenue, Boston, is magnificently laid out with a park-like center; Augusta, Ga., and Columbia, S. C., also have streets with trees grown to a fine size, and are luxuriant in foliage. They have plenty of space in which to develop and, although paved to within two feet of the trunk seem to thrive. The beautiful trees of Lafayette Square, Washington, D. C., are noted, also the historic elm of the Boston Common are well preserved, and in the Public Gardens behind the Commons are shown fine specimens of trees.

Boston, New Haven and Hartford are particularly favored with having had public-spirited citizens, who have left large bequests for the purpose of increasing their park system. With the money leading to parks, where specimens of trees from all parts of the globe are shown, so far as is possible in a far Northern climate, with a label on each tree giving information as to its name, are the results of this public-spirited citizenship so much needed in our own city. Hartford has special pride in its rows of elms, and North Carolina cut-leaved maples, and carefully tended grounds of its private homes both large and small. Salt Lake City streets are noted for their fine large cottonwood trees. The growth is largely due to the wonderful irrigation system used in Salt Lake City. Duane Park in New York is beautiful, principally because of its fine shade-trees and the grass kept so green under their wide-spreading branches with plenty of water.

Many New York men stand as the extreme type of American city citizen, who allowed the modern spirit of extreme utilitarianism to interfere with everything that has not directly tended to its material welfare. The ugliness of its incoherent and haphazard architecture, the great gaps where empty lots are being held until an enormous price can be obtained, the elevated road and surface lines that traverse the city from length to length make it difficult to imagine that city becoming harmonious or beautiful as a whole. But once upon a time, even in New York, there were trees even in the thoroughfares, but now this beauty is gone, and the ugliness is accentuated by a condition of utter shadeslessness through the business portions and most of the residence sections.

I understand the tree-planting association of New York is now taking the matter in hand, and with a woman's auxiliary is looking the situation squarely in the face. This, we must hope here, where shade is so much needed. Some step must be taken. Many, many blocks of our side or back streets, as we call them, are destitute of trees. This, the city should look after, soliciting the assistance of property owners, and for members of the public-spirited Woman's Club, it would soon succeed in making this town one of noted beauty. The present private body of citizens realizes that not only in the sense of being injured by a total absence of trees, but that the freshness and life of the air are much lessened as well. The office of foliage is to consume the carbonic acid gas in the air, and to purify it for human breathing.

On West Trade street we have magnificent oaks, one especially standing alone, a veritable monarch, at high noon casting a shadow one hundred feet across the sidewalk. This tree of such immense growth, beauty and shade is a source of pride to all who see it. I overheard a bit of conversation on the sidewalk near the Southern Railway station, that aroused my attention. Two men, bags in hand, waiting for our very frequent and regular street car (car generally comes every twenty minutes, and this twenty minutes service is a station where more passengers arrive than in any town between Richmond and Atlanta) one man said: "Grand day and in God, man! I would call this Polk town, judging from the number of poles I see up the street." And on they slowly walked waiting for the car. But the remarks certainly opened wide the writer's eyes. I looked and looked again, and counted and counted again; and sure enough it did look like a "pole town." Poles stuck in all between the trees, on the corners, two side by side, sometimes three together, and I counted fifty-three of those unsightly poles between the railway station and a little above Mint street, which was as far as my eyes could see. Fifty-three poles in about eight hundred feet—no pole to every fourteen or fifteen feet! Think of it! And in the town we want to be so beautiful, isn't the time ripe now for the beginning of doing away with these unsightly poles, before our permanent paving is laid? Could not the poles be done away with at very little expense now, compared to the cost of wires put underground? The beginning should be made at

once—and around the square. Surely our "city-fathers" and "young Business Men's League" will not allow the expense of permanent paving without a system of conduits being laid now, so in a year or more these unsightly poles can go. It is to cost the city thousands of dollars to lay eight blocks of utilithic paving. Are right-minded citizens going to do this without at least having this conduit system placed first? We certainly could and would not handle our own business so carelessly, so let the poles go. Then, too, there will be some trees saved, for each pole represents a once beautiful tree.

It is suggested that owners of vacant lots convert them into temporary parks, and if they cannot afford the expense, that they shall be helped to do so out of a common fund. Owners of houses are urged to plant trees, either in the street or in front or behind in their lots.

In some instances in our town, the absence of trees in front of houses seems to suggest a fear on the part of the owner that the foliage might obscure the architecture. They are apparently oblivious to the fact that trees would enhance the beauty of the place.

The private citizen in any place may do much to the improvement of his or her own town in this respect. To begin with, if there is a fine tree on the lot where he or she expects to build, certainly place the house in such a way that the tree may be preserved. If one builds in an open lot, with a certain amount of expense, have trees transplanted by cutting around the roots carefully and bringing some soil with them. I know personally a gentleman who changed a neglected lot, without a sign of vegetation, into a smiling little park with evergreen shrubs and some really large varieties of beech and elms, in this way in two years' time.

There can be no more public-spirited way of giving or of leaving money than to plant trees, and to bring trees to streets or squares. One or two such bequests will arouse such interest in the town or city that private citizens will look about to see what they themselves can accomplish and the general interest in Arbor Day will take a practical turn.

When one stops to think of it, this calling the children's attention to the value and necessity of having the trees, is one of the most powerful agencies we can employ. If they are trained to enjoy them, taught something about them and their value, they will not outgrow this; and when they in turn become citizens, they will care for the beauty and health to be found in our maples, elms, poplars, and last, but not least, our grand old oak trees.

**GREENSBORO CLUB ORGANIZED.**  
Mayor Brandt Elected President of the Gate City Baseball Association—Fund to Back the Team to Be Raised—A State High School League Arranges Games.  
Greensboro, Feb. 2.—Despite the unfavorable weather, a number of baseball cranks of this city assembled in the Elks' Club last night and formed the Greensboro Baseball Club. An organization was perfected by the election of the following officers: L. J. Brandt, president; S. N. Cone, vice president; W. L. Underwood, recording secretary; C. G. Wright, J. E. Cobb, E. F. West and E. A. Brown, together with the president, the vice president and the secretary, treasurer, comprise the board of directors. The office of secretary and treasurer will be filled later. President Brandt tomorrow will appoint a soliciting committee to raise \$2,500 to be used as a guaranty fund in backing the local team. It is probable that James M. McKeavitt, of Grand Rapids, Mich., will be engaged as manager. Mr. McKeavitt was captain of the Lynchburg, Va., team in 1906, when that team won the pennant. Last year he managed the Danville, Va., team, winning second place for Danville in the Virginia League.

**His Only Sister Very Ill—More Property Purchased.**  
Special to The Observer.  
Durham, Feb. 2.—C. W. Johnston, one of the best-known citizens of Orange county, who has represented that county in the Legislature, was in the city yesterday on his way to Apex to attend the bedside of his only sister, Mrs. Mariah Royter, who is now 82 years of age. The information that Mr. Johnston received was that his sister was very close to death and that she could not recover. He went from here on the Durham & Southern road to attend her bedside.

The Union Station Company has purchased from the Durham & Southern road a strip of land the width of the present union station property and running through to Roxboro street. It has not been announced to what use this additional property will be put. It will give the union station probably one-third more ground than has been included in the old property.

**THE WEATHER.**  
Washington, Feb. 2.—Forecast for Monday and Tuesday:  
Virginia, fair Monday, not so cold in north and extreme west portions; Tuesday fair, warmer; fresh west winds becoming variable.

North Carolina, fair, continued cold Monday, warmer in extreme west portion; Tuesday fair, warmer; light to fresh west winds becoming variable.

South Carolina, fair, continued cold Monday; Tuesday, fair, not so cold; light to fresh west winds becoming variable.

Georgia, fair Monday, not so cold in northwest portion; Tuesday fair, warmer; light to fresh north winds becoming variable.

West Florida and Alabama, fair Monday; Tuesday, fair, warmer; light to fresh north winds.

Mississippi, fair, warmer Monday; Tuesday, fair, warmer; light to fresh east to southeast winds.

East Tennessee, fair, not so cold Monday; Tuesday, fair, not so cold; light to fresh north winds.

Louisiana and Texas, partly cloudy and warmer Monday, showers at night of Tuesday; light to fresh east to south winds.

West Texas, local rains Monday; Tuesday, fair, colder in north portion.

Arkansas, fair, warmer, rain at night of Tuesday.

Tennessee, fair, not so cold Monday and Tuesday, except possibly rain Tuesday in west portion.

Kentucky, fair, not so cold Monday and Tuesday, except possibly rain or snow Tuesday in west portion.

West Virginia, fair, not so cold Monday and Tuesday.

**OFFICE LOCAL U. S. WEATHER BUREAU.**  
Charlotte, Feb. 2.—Sunrise 7:21 a. m.; sunset 5:33 p. m.

**TEMPERATURE (in degrees).**  
Highest temperature ..... 28  
Lowest temperature ..... 19  
Mean temperature ..... 24  
Deficiency for the month (in inches) ..... 22  
Accumulated deficiency for month ..... 1  
Accumulated deficiency for year ..... 1  
Total for 24 hours ending 8 p. m. .... 6  
Total for the month ..... 6.17  
Accumulated deficiency for month ..... 2.29  
Total for the year ..... 6.25  
Accumulated excess for the year ..... 1.89  
Prevailing wind direction, N. W.  
W. J. BENNETT, Observer.

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"Phone 7."  
"WE NEVER CLOSE."  
**NURSES' REGISTER**

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**INTEREST ON SAVINGS DEPOSITS FROM 1ST OF FEBRUARY**

All Savings Deposits made between now and 5th February will bear interest from the first day of February.

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**BANKING BY MAIL**, send check, money order or currency by express and we will send you pass book with entry therein.

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10-room residence, modern, No. 9 East 12th St. .... 25.00  
6-room cottage, modern, No. 3 Woodlawn avenue ..... 18.00  
5-room cottage, 201 Fox Street ..... 15.00  
6-room cottage, modern, 390 E. 7th street ..... 22.00  
5-room apartment, modern, Jackson Terrace ..... 25.00

**CAROLINA REALTY CO.,**  
No. 5 West Fifth St.  
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B. R. LEE, Secretary. J. P. LONG, Sales Agent.  
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Office 203 N. Tryon St.

**Young Mother and Son Burned to Death.**  
Special to The Observer.  
Raleigh, Feb. 2.—Mrs. J. M. Underwood, a young white woman, aged 21 years, and her 2-year-old son were burned to death near Raleigh yesterday. The woman's husband, a farmer, was at church when the fire started, and with the congregation rushed to the house, which was near the church. No screams or cries were heard, but in the ashes were found the charred bones of the mother and her 2-year-old boy.

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435-acre farm in Steele Creek, about 8 miles from Charlotte, for sale. Sale includes live stock and full equipment of farm implements. Price.....\$13,000  
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100 acres in Sharon, with good buildings ..... 3,000.00  
21 acres 6 miles west of Charlotte on S. A. L. Ry. .... 1,500.00  
76 acres 4 miles north of Charlotte on A. T. & O. Ry. .... 8,000.00  
125 1/2 acres 7 miles north of Charlotte ..... 2,400.00  
125 acres 1 1/4 miles south of Davidson College ..... 5,000.00  
101 acres 9 miles west of Charlotte, 1-1/2 in timber ..... 2,650.00  
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72 1-2 acres near Sardis Postoffice ..... 3,000.00  
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6-room cottage, in splendid locality, recently remodeled; a bargain at ..... \$3,000  
7-room cottage, in Second Ward ..... \$4,250  
5-room cottage, E. Seventh St., lot 49x150 ..... \$1,750

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Bank and Trust Company Stocks.  
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