

## **"The Prairie Star," Volume 1, Number 2**

"The Prairie Star" was a weekly, handwritten, literary publication produced from January through April, 1857, by the Topeka-based Kansas Philomathic Institute (also known as the Philomathic Literary Society). The literary club, which included male and female members, met weekly to read essays and poems aloud, which were then collected, recopied, and published as "The Prairie Star." Maria M. Martin, wife of Dr. Samuel E. Martin, edited the paper. Transcription by Emily Jane Stoll.

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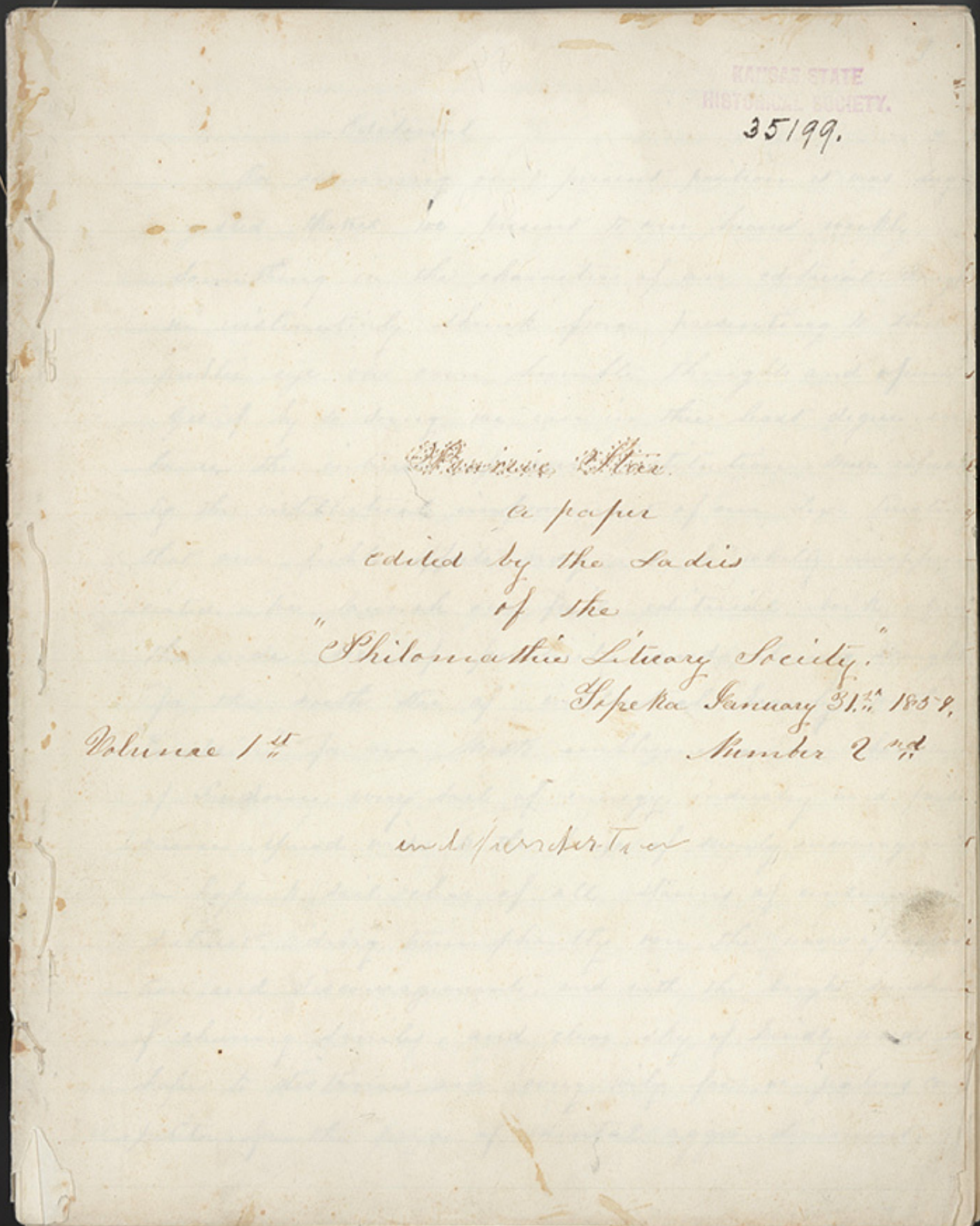
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## Editorial

On assuming our present position it was suggested that we present to our readers, weekly, something in the character of an editorial. Though we instinctively shrink from presenting to the public eye our own humble thoughts and opinions yet if by so doing we can in the least degree, enhance the interests of our institution, more especially the intellectual improvement of our sex, trusting that our feeble efforts may not be wholly unappreciated, we launch our frail editorial bark, upon the wide sea of publicity, and steering straight for the north star of intellectual bounty, with "Excellence" for our motto emblazoned on our banner of Freedom, every sail of energy, industry and perseverance, spread wide to the breeze of kindly encouragement we hope to sail clear of all storms of censure or distrust, riding triumphantly on the waves of opposition, and discouragement, and with the bright sunshine of cheering smiles, and clear sky of kindly words we hope to distance our every wily foe, or jealous competitor, for the prize of mental aggrandizement.



In accordance with the above suggestion, we have endeavored to select some subjects suited to the present times and circumstances, upon reviewing the subjects in our minds we have thought a few glimpses at the intellectual women of our own fair land not inappropriate, and perhaps instructive to us. In so doing it cannot be expected, that we should present to our readers, new or original ideas, but in grouping together a few of the truly gifted of our sex, we will take a cursory glance at their distinctive talents and virtues, rejecting the evil, imitating the good. That while seeking for higher intellectual attainments, we forget not the more tender, pious ties and duties - <sup>that</sup> which cluster round the position of Mother, Wife and Sister. <sup>a separation</sup> Take the Creator has so prominently formed her for, He to woman's light to make bright and joyous the domestic fire-side, enlivening with her smiles, calming to peace the troubled feelings of man, smothering the asperities of his nature, gently wooing him the stronger, to become not only the protector of her more feeble nature, to provide for her physical wants, to ward off any evil that may cause the sensitive chords of <sup>his</sup> heart to harshly vibrate, but to be indeed the companion, he as the Oak. She the Vine, even as

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the oak gives strength to the drooping vine, so the man in his strength, strengthening her, as the vine giveth beauty to the oak, so woman by her pure faith, tender sensibilities, unselfish devotion - giveth beauty to the man, forming a perfect union of strength and beauty, intellectually, morally and physically shedding upon all around a pure, wide better influence. Even as the towering oak without the clinging vine casts a dark shadow about, sustaining feet by his awful grandeur, is man without the beautifying effects of faith and love, and woman, as the <sup>tender</sup> ~~drooping~~ vine here - lifeful in itself, yet seeking strength and <sup>protection</sup> ~~power~~ from another source. Thus would we compare man and woman intellectually, and while we do not seek to leave the sphere so peculiarly our own, where we wield an influence wholly ours, we do desire, and will seek to elevate and enlarge our mental capacity. We do not acknowledge woman's intellectual <sup>capacity</sup> inferior to man's, except as one is in a greater and more thorough degree cultivated. Take man and woman infants in the cradle, surely, what difference can you discover in their intellectual capacity; train these same children in

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in the same manner. Being that female mind to dwell on things as gigantic as ever man dwelt upon, what is the difference? Man with a deep, long, earnest reasoning woman, with her peculiar perception faculties arrive at almost the same conclusions. Tell me then of your Milton, your Byron, your Shakespeare, a Franklin, a Fulton or Morse. I see and the noblest, but of all our record Washington, and we as the weak love the strong will bow in deep, unutterable homage to those giant minds, and yet while man in his peculiar sphere thinks his thoughts, acts his acts, beings beneath his control every element of nature, will we gathering strength from his strength, encouraged by his success, place our feet upon the base, and prepare to mount the "hill of Science", not as competitors with the stronger man, but yet about with an intense love of goodness and truth, will we strive to advance higher in the scale of morality and intellectual elevation, that in our own peculiar sphere we may exert a wide influence for good, and by our mental attainments manifest a well directed interest and companionship in mans pursuits, that in combining the two may be formed a perfect whole.

## The History of Topeka

Beautifully sits our young thriving town of Topeka upon two gently swelling knolls of the Kaw river valley. Two years have passed away since she came into existence. The trees have but twice dropped their leaves, since the camp fire of the red man was extinguished, and himself banished from the place he loved so well. The echoes of his war songs yet linger lovingly in the old forests which skirt the Kaw. And the soft whispers of the dusky warrior as he woo'd his bride smother the starlit - hesant, seem still to linger around us, in the soft moon lighted evening air. Their marks are all around us. Their well worn war trail can still be distinctly traced through our town, and their rude stone towns can still be seen upon surrounding peaks, uncouth monuments of the races we have so ruthlessly treated. Two years ago and here all was wild and solitary, but there came a change. On the 29. of November 1864, came four strangers, gay, warm and sunny were they, for many a long stretch of prairie had they crossed, and into the depths of many a ravine had they plunged, in search of a

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spot for a home, their hearts thrilled with joy as they  
 caught the first view of Sapoka. However, though it  
 was, lit up by the gorgeous tints of a setting sun, and  
 as they took in the beauties of their situation at a glance  
 "Eureka" "I have found it," burst forth from satisfied  
 hearts. An hour after and a large camp fire extending  
 its flames amid the boughs of the old forest trees,  
 shedding its glare around, combatting with the in-  
 creasing darkness, sound roused the beasts disturbed  
 by the unusual scene, and <sup>the</sup> fiery eyes of "Sapok", were  
 peering in from the ~~darkness~~ <sup>darkness</sup> upon the uninvited stranger.  
 But what cared they? Tired nature must have rest,  
 and wrapped closely in their blankets, Morpheus whis-  
 pered them from all care of the morrow, picturing to  
 them in dreams the rich growth and future prosperity  
 of their new found homes. It was no time to linger for  
 winter was upon them, so on the morrow night heartily  
 did three four pioneers proceed to work, the merry ring  
 of the axe sounded through the woods and thicker  
 and faster flew the chips from those old growing  
 trees, as thoughts of future prosperity urged these  
 hardy New Englanders to redoubled exertions.

To be continued,



## Reflections

What Painter can picture, or Poet describe anything half so beautiful, as the light flung autumnal clouds as they appear to flit through the blue ethereal vault of heaven. now changing, at times assuming the form of mighty ships, with outspread sails floating to the breeze, again, we see their form a mighty phalanx, like two contending armies about to begin the work of death, again, dark clouds are seen to rise, we hear the low muttering of distant thunder, as it comes growing darker and darker, in majestic grandeur, spreading farther and wider until all nature shinks beneath its threatening frown, yet how awfully sublime and beautiful, whilst it thus portentously hangs, the lightning's livid glare flashes forth its fiery forked tongue illuminating the heavens from the East even unto the West. again, the storm is past the <sup>dark</sup> clouds have rolled away, giving place to others tinged with gold and purple, and every other color which imagination can picture or pen describe. The sun is just setting, shrouding its last beams in a flood of glory upon earth, and nature's beauties, clouds are flitting from East to West. North to South, returning in



due time to freshen the earth with genial showers  
which cause springs to burst forth and the rivers to flow,  
and "fertilizing" the arable waving at a distance under  
blowings on the road. Who but an atheist in obsecrating  
the beautiful phenomena of Nature, can deny  
the existence of a great first cause, of a mighty "I Am!"  
and that explains, the earth is indeed beautiful, and  
so that made it must be beautiful.

"Eusty"

A simple ditty  
By an L. B. C.  
By a sweet little hillside  
On a fair sloping hillside  
Lonely and gay.  
Where flowers up springing  
Sweet perfume were flinging  
I wandered one day.

The breeze light blowing  
The brooklet swift flowing  
On to the sea.

The sun shining brightly  
The birds singing lightly  
All welcomed me.



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As lilies reclining  
A bright garland twining  
I sat 'neath an oak,  
And a day watch dimmed sleeping.  
A low sound of weeping  
On my startled ear broke,

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And a wild bitter wailing  
This the morning air sailing  
So wildly there came,  
And the heart seemed might break.  
But few words were spoken  
And ever the same,

I peeped round the hillside  
And thence by the hillside  
A farm I could see  
And in solitude straying  
These words he was saying  
I'm a poor O. B. C.,

We have two answers to Gahunda's advertisement  
published in our last week's issue.



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Answer to Gabunda

Dear Star,

I noticed in your columns last week an advertisement signed Gabunda. I have that given to me may be I was instantly attracted by it for what reason I cannot tell. Although I have had plenty of offers since I was sixteen, yet I have always sighed for one who was congenial to my tastes and feelings. And though from your own description you are not very handsome, yet what is beauty? Though I flatter myself I possess no small share of it myself. To convince you of the fact I will describe my personal appearance. I am rather tall and slight in fact one of my admirers once declared my figure was perfect. My hair is nearly black, and floats over my shoulders in long wavy curls. My complexion is slightly brunette. I have large hazel eyes, a quiver nose, and a very small mouth. I am just 20 years of age, and my parents are very rich. By the way you said nothing of your own wealth in your advertisement. I hope you are rich for Papa and Mama always intended I should marry a rich man.



I can play the Piano, Harp, Guitar, and Melodion  
and although I am rather deficient in knowledge  
of housekeeping, that would be overlooked by a  
kind and devoted husband.

Yours

Sophia Stanton

P.S. I would like to know if you are an  
Iowan, as I should judge so by your name.

S. S.

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Up the wide chimney leaps the flame  
Side on the faggots higher  
On such a cold night 'tis a comfort to see  
A couple of gossips taking tea  
With scandal and toast by the fire.



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Answer to "Gahunda"

My heart swelled with expanding joy as I listened last Saturday eve to the eloquent thoughts of the interesting "Gahunda". This thought I is the congenial spirit for which I have so long sought in vain. There is one in whom I can confide and trust. Your description of yourself was not expressive of much beauty, yet a true and loving heart can appreciate the lasting beauties of your mind. As for my own personal appearance, I am not very handsome, though called by some "decidedly pretty". I am rather below the medium height, with beautiful auburn hair, although a hateful old back, probably an O.B.C. said the other day, that my figure was dumfy, and my hair red enough to set Topika on fire. The ugly old villain, My complexion is fair, and my eyes a longwashed blue which are admired very much. To be sure a wicked young man remarked yesterday, that they looked like a mixture of skim milk, and dish water, but he is one of the fast young men" and therefore not much of any body. On the whole I consider myself just the thing to brighten the cheerless fireside of Gahunda, as capable of cheering his heart, and mending his clothes, of smothering his temper and his humor.

and of performing all duties which are dictated  
by true and sincere affection. I nearly forgot  
to tell you concerning my wealth, which con-  
sists of legacies I expect to receive some time  
from my numerous rich relations, at present:

"Silver and gold have I none."

"My riches are the treasures of the mind  
I heart all generous true and kind".

And if these will satisfy they are affixed to the  
adorable "Gahunda". I shall expect an answer soon

Yours till death

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"Gloria"

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## Thoughts of a leisure hour.

In this great and growing city  
Which the people call Topeka  
On the glowing morning train  
Where the birds are sweetly singing  
When the flowers in summer bloom  
We have built our peaceful dwellings.  
From the city, from the mountain  
From the riverside and woodland  
From the suns, and homes of childhood  
To Topeka, we have wandered.  
If you ask me its position:  
If you ask me its condition:  
If you ask me what its prospects:  
I should answer, I should tell you.  
By a large and flowing river.  
On a graceful sloping hillside.  
Stands the capital of Kansas.  
Not a trade, or nice profession  
But is here well represented.  
There is not a warm heart loving  
Not a character so noble  
Not a character so sinful.



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But find here congenial spirits

Then win clubs in members.

O. B. C. and O. M. C.

Which I think would be much better

If of them we would be living

And just have the two united.

"Literary Institutions"

For the town a reputation

Which New England towns and cities

Might with all their wisdom envy.

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Which the oldest town of Kansas

Might with all their pride have wished for.

And our glorious "Temperance Union"

May its pledges never be broken.

In the days years of the future

Look on with a glance prophetic

With a glance of good prophetic

Of that noted town, Topeka

In that glance, methinks I see

Many buildings fair and stately

Some to divine consecrated

Some to God and more to Mammon.

And the Capitol of Kansas

Shines among the rest in triumph.

"A Topeka Day"



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## Home.

A good home is all one can wish for in this our earthly resting place. In the long and tedious hours of sickness, how pleasant it is to think that we have a place in which to stay and call our home.

There are a great many who do not appreciate a good home, and think nothing of it while away from it, while others cannot for a single day content themselves away from home. How many things we may learn by listening to the friendly conversation,

and how pleasant it is to have our friends around us in our homes. How much better it is to spend our evenings at home, with true and loving friends

than in unmeaning gaieties, selfish and unprincipled associates of the wine cup or gaming-table. When traveling are not our last thoughts at night and first in the morning of the home we have left, and when separated from the loved spot, does it not seem as tho' we must return to the home of our childhood, let us then think of our homes, to which if we are true, we shall at some future time perhaps, be entitled to a better home in Heaven.

Then let us all endeavor to make our earthly homes a happy one. "Ellen."

Br.

## The Lonely Grave

'Twas twilight on the prairie  
The day's last crimson light  
In western skies had faded  
Before the coming night  
The evening dew was trembling  
Upon a lonely mound  
And wildly blew the breeze  
With low and dirge-like sound.

No prairie flowers adorned it  
No birdlings sang around  
No busy bee was humming  
Above that grassy mound.  
But all was gloom and silence  
No living thing was there  
No ray to break the shadow  
No light that was bright and fair.

No costly Brian Marble  
Stood there to mark the grave  
No sadly drooping willow  
Above the dead to wave.



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Yet was there not a being  
In lonely sadness left;  
No heart to mourn the parting  
Of dearest love bereft.

WY

There came some noble chieftain  
One of the red man's race  
In solitude is lying  
Beneath that lonely place.  
There came some brave young warrior  
There met a fearful doom  
On fairy footed maiden  
Lay shrouded in the gloom.

Whom may be lying  
Upon the Kansas plain  
Some being must be lonely  
Some heart must bleed in vain.  
But none can tell who slupeth  
There cometh never care  
No none can tell who weepeth  
The one that lieth there.  
Lucia Lee.

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## A Temperance Sketch

### The Sister's Appeal.

"Promise me my brother, Oh! promise me," thus pleadingly urged a fair young girl as reclining on her couch at early dawn, she gazed tearfully up into the face of a noble youth, who with sad and earnest look was gazing mournfully down upon that fair young face. "Promise me brother Oh promise me," she repeated as the silent tear stole gently down her cheek, and the brother murmured half audibly as he buried his face in the pillow. "Forgive me sister and don't betray me." On the calm evening hour the gentle girl had left the cheerful social circle, and with a bounding heart sought her room, passing by her brother's room his deep laborious snoring attracted her attention, pausing at his door, the fumes of spirit sent a pang of anxious foreboding to her heart, entering her fears soon to fully realize there lay an idealized brother sleeping the deep unnatural sleep of the inebriated, around the sad sickening efforts, passing to cover up the effects of intoxication that no other eyes might

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See them, with a cry of heartfelt grief she sank  
upon her knees by his bedside with the supplemen-  
tary cry, "Oh! Father!", reaching her own room  
broken sobs alone told the anguish of that  
sister's heart. "Alas! Alas! my father", as the effects  
of that strong passion wore off the brother awakened,  
instantly his eye fell upon the scene around him  
truly no heart but a fond sister would thus be  
prompted to hide his disgrace from others eyes.

With fear and confusion he sought his sister's  
couch. In a disturbed slumber she lay, occasionally  
broken by a deep sigh. The tear stain still upon  
her cheek. In a low whisper the brother spoke,  
"Sister," making and gently turning her fair  
arms around his neck, she repeated, "Promise  
me brother never to touch it again. But sister  
was only wine, and some confecti<sup>onary</sup> I ate which  
made me sick, and the rays would make me  
drink all I took to nauseate." but don't betray  
me, still the sister plead, "Promise me never  
to yield again," and he ~~and~~ he answered ear-  
nestly, "I will not" - smiling through her tears  
with strong faith in his solemn promise, the  
sister bade him "God speed" and in future silently

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watched that loud breaths came in his pathway  
with gentle smiles and earnest, kindly looks. Chiding  
him to pursue the wiser course, and with the summary  
of that solemn promise, and beseeching look was  
strong to say "No" "I never drink", and shun the  
enticing bowl, with its inevitable consequence of  
indulgence, ruin of body and soul.

Sisters be faithful: let your motto ever be  
"Touch not. Taste not. Handle not," in thought  
word or deed.

"Minnie"

John

There will be a meeting of the "Lafayette  
Temperance Union" at Union Hall, Wednesday  
Evening February 4. We hope all our citizens  
will be present, and by decided action against  
the liquor traffic, manifest that "Minnie's"  
motto is theirs, Ed

We have some articles which ~~cannot~~ we  
cannot insert  
have not room for in this week's issue.

Ed