

At the Sign of the Maple

A DEPARTMENT MAINLY FOR WOMEN

Woman and the Exhibition

By MARGARET BELL

EVERYTHING seems to be tending toward broader interests. The bit of archaism which once pronounced woman's sphere as that world which revolved around saucepans and spinning wheels, is fading into oblivion. It may be the spirit of progression in this age, it may be the desire for competition with the sex which is generally supposed to do things, it may be independence, but at any rate it is something. And it has entered the minds of Canadian women, and evinced itself in the exhibits at the only annual National Exhibition on this continent. Even the bronzed Indian women, with high cheek bones and



The Women's Building at the Canadian National Exhibition. This year the women's work was the most varied and attractive ever displayed.

straight, black hair, who sell beaded nothings along the Midway, seem to have the spirit of the times.

But the greatest evidence of woman's widening interests were to be seen in the different buildings. One naturally expects to see beautiful workings in silk, laces and embroidery. One naturally expects to find stalls for the sale of articles which appeal to women. But there is more than this. There are evidences that women take a distinct and important part in making the Exhibition what it is. They help in the art department; they manage luncheon rooms; they assist in the social entertainment which is a distinct feature of the institution. It is not a man's show any more than a woman's show. To be fair, we may say it is a happy and successful combination.

THE new Women's Building at the Canadian National Exhibition, which was opened last year, has ceased to be an experiment. There are several rooms well filled with skilfully-made products. They are in tremendous profusion and represent a vast amount of annual labour, feminine taste and artistic skill. There are competitive classes for children's works as well as for women over sixty, over seventy and even over eighty. There is plain needlework, the most complicated designs in lace, and so on through the long list ending up with book-binding, wood-carving and china painting. Every article shown is supposed to have been produced since the date of the previous exhibition.

Upstairs is the amateur photography and art—not all by women and hence somewhat incongruous. It seems strange to find amateur art by men and women in a women's building. When I asked about it, they told me they had no other place to put it. But to me it was a discordant note, although one could not fail to be impressed with the high standard of the work. A case full of special hand-made laces in the centre of this art room added further to the incongruity.

On this upper floor is a private tea-room in which the Women's Committee entertain the guests of the Exhibition Association every afternoon. These five-o'clocks are very popular. One day was devoted especially to the entertainment of the women who are members of the city press.

In this building was also a lunch and tea room, opened by the Ladies' Work Depository, an organization which has been making steady progress for thirty-two years. Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Connaught is Patron of this society. The large balcony of the Women's Building, which looked out across Lake Ontario, provided a comfortable place for serving afternoon tea, and the dainty linen on both lunch and tea tables solved a great problem, so great, in fact, that over two thousand people were catered to every day of the Exhibition. After all, one seeks long and carefully, to find a lunch room where the meat course is not displayed in huge flat pans, sizzling over an open fire, which faces the parade ground of prize animals.

A NUMBER of women from provinces other than Ontario stood on the balcony tea-room and debated as to what the Ladies' Work Depository really was. Perhaps they will pick up this issue of the COURIER. The Society was formed to provide employment for women who wish to dispose of their work. There are only two objects, to benefit the workers, and to raise the standard of needlework. Ten per cent. commission is charged on all sales, merely to meet the expenses of the Depository. The Board of Management consists of a number of women who are enabled to give considerable time to the Society. It will be gratifying to some of the dear old grandmothers who visited the Exhibition to know that the art of needlework has not been discarded by the so-called Society class, for bridge parties or poodle dogs.

The Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire were well represented at the Exhibition. As one approached a large building, one noticed a large sign telling that the lunch-room there was presided over by that Order. The proceeds will be used later for the relief of poor tubercular children.

Women, women everywhere. Indeed they were. Their interests must be many and diverse. Smartly dressed women paused a few moments before some money-producing scheme on the Midway, and tossed a ring or threw a ball. They chatted with the fat woman whose waist measures sixty-seven inches, they bought all manner of indigestibles and tossed coins at dirty-faced youngsters. A noticeable trait was their great desire to know how and why. The machinery building was crowded with them, and the attendants plied with a perpetual stream of questions. Some of them displayed knowledge of science and mechanics, some asked for particular demonstrations. Two exceptionally well-dressed women picked their steps through the mud to the Cattle Building and Exhibit, and knew the breed of every cow which they saw. They

were Englishwomen who were not ashamed to tell their pet hobby. And the humble wife of the farmer saw them and was a little more contented. That seems to be another characteristic of the twentieth century woman. She must have a hobby.

BUT no matter how far she may wander along the paths usually chosen by men, woman will be essentially feminine, ad infinitum. A great line assembled in row for the grand-stand, the day the Royal visitors were to occupy a box. A rush was made for the seats nearest the enclosure beribboned



Mme. Nazimova, who has abandoned Ibsen and is touring Canadian cities in modern comedy. At present she is appearing in "The Marionettes."

off for the guests of honour. And when the mauve hat of the Duchess first appeared over the heads of the crowd, and Princess Patricia's large black one obscured the aide walking next to her, the interest bubbled over in a confused over-tumbling of chairs. And isn't it always understood that curiosity is an essentially feminine characteristic?

Recent Events

THAT waywardest of all roads, the "Romany patteran," recently coincided with the king's highway when the Duke of Connaught and party



A Stall Presided Over by Dusky Indian Women who Found Ready Sale for the Gaudy Beadwork Articles on Exhibition.