

AT THE SIGN OF THE MAPLE

A NEWS DEPARTMENT MAINLY FOR WOMEN

MAKING A CLUB MAN OF THE SOLDIER

By MADGE MACBETH

IF the Laurentian Chapter of the Daughters of the Empire never had done, and never should do, another bit of work, its existence would be amply justified in the inauguration and maintenance of the Soldiers' Club.

The need of some such institution began to be felt as soon as it became evident that Ottawa was to be a sort of "half-way" station, a temporary home for many hundreds of Tommies who were strangers in the Capital and who had nothing to do when off duty but tramp the streets. To Mrs. Crombie, the Regent of the Chapter, the solution was so apparent and obvious, that she lost no time in putting it on a practical basis.



MRS. CROMBIE.

Regent of the Laurentian Chapter I.O.D.E., Ottawa.

The first step, naturally, was the securing of a home. The Merchants Bank having an unused building, in the very heart of the city (corner of Sparks and O'Connor Streets) at its disposal, generously turned it over to the Chapter, and firms and individuals responded quite as generously to the requests for furnishings. This included the usual accessories for writing and reading rooms, a billiard room,

a concert hall and general lounge, a tea room and a kitchen.

A systematic division of the work was the next step of the Chapter, whose seventy-five members were then divided into committees. One undertook quite a formidable correspondence, the object of which was to solicit papers and magazines for the soldiers' use—these letters going direct to the publishing companies and not to private individuals; which means that bran new, up-to-date periodicals are largely in evidence instead of months-old, handled publications. Here, again, ready response met the efforts of the Chapter, and all the leading magazines and papers may be found at the Club.

Another committee visited the hospitals, taking books, cigarettes and so on, to the boys who were ill. One might hint that the number of patients increased fearfully after this committee had been established a short time, but that would hardly be fair. Beside, when the entertainment committee got to work and gave concerts in the Club for the soldier boys, every man jack of 'em who could get there—got!

With the leaving of the first draft for the front another committee was formed—a committee whose pleasant duties consisted of writing letters to the men in the trenches; and many a "Daughter" to-day treasures the answers she has received from the boys, who have little time for polite amenities, but whose happy memories of the Soldiers' Club and whose gratitude to the women who are giving so much time and thought to it, made them anxious to keep in touch with the institution.

Beside these, there is the Canteen Committee, composed of all the members of the Chapter, in turn. Each week two conveners are appointed and they select fifteen assistants. The conveners manage the menus, etc., and the assistants wait on the men. The Ottawa Club is unique in many respects, but especially in regard to its canteen, and as far as I know it is the only one entirely self-supporting. Presiding over the kitchen is a highly paid autocrat, under whom is a well paid helper, and under her is yet another salaried employee. Beside these three, there is a janitor; and the wages for these four come out of the canteen funds. From four until nine-thirty daily, except Saturday and Sunday—when the hours change to two until nine-thirty—soldiers may get tea, coffee, milk, cocoa, eggs, pies, ice cream, sandwiches, cake and the like, at prices ranging from five to ten cents. As many as four hundred a day have been served!

The fifteen assistants of the conveners wait on the boys and deem it a privilege. No wonder! They have a noble example in Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Connaught, who has taken her place behind the canteen counter and who seemed delighted to be filling cups, plates and incidentally—

soldiers, with food. That she wasn't recognized by many of those she so graciously served only rendered the situation more charming—except, perhaps, for those who discovered her identity, later. Then, aghast, they travelled back step by step over their past frivolous conduct, fearing it was not all it should have been, in the presence of a Duchess!

Our Royal Governor-General is a frequent visitor at the Club, and none is more welcome. He comes informally, unannounced, not as a Duke, but as a soldier. He and the Duchess presented the Club with two handsome clocks. The Princess Patricia is also a visitor. She is especially interested in the Chapter, being the Hon. Regent. The other officers are: Mrs. Crombie, Regent; Lady Egan, first Vice-Regent; Mrs. Arthur Sladen, second Vice-Regent; Miss Sparks, Recording Secretary; Miss Grace Drayton, Corresponding Secretary; Lady Broden, Treasurer; Mrs. D. J. McDougal, Standard Bearer; Councilors, Mrs. Hazen, Mrs. Pugsley, Mrs. Hugh Fleming and Mrs. Schreiber.

The Club applied for and received licenses to sell cigarettes and stamps; the writing rooms contain an abundance of stationary. There is a piano and a gramophone and—quite apropos of nothing—there is an orderly loaned by some regiment to keep order. His duties are very light.

THE Club's entertainments are too popular to be overlooked. One of the most memorable was that given in the summer at the time the Chapter presented two drums and two bugles to the 77th. The concert was arranged by the men, and the performers were taken, mainly from the regiment, with a few appreciated numbers by Ottawa girls. Preceding the concert was a banquet given by the Chapter, to which every soldier in town was invited; following was a supper.

Not to be outdone by the ladies, the Engineers presented the Club with a cheque for one hundred dollars, and the Signal Corps expressed their appreciation in the form of a handsome silver loving cup.

Lord Richard Neville, A.D.C. to His Royal High-



MRS. ARTHUR SLADEN.

First Vice-Regent of the Laurentian Chapter I.O.D.E., Ottawa.



H. R. H. THE PRINCESS PATRICIA.

Hon. Regent of the Laurentian Chapter I.O.D.E., is greatly interested in the success of the Soldiers' Club and is a frequent visitor.

ness, presided at a recent concert. Lord Richard is a relative of Lady Dorothy Nevill, whose books present a most charming picture of five reigns, and as chairman he was most satisfactory, expressing what the men themselves felt, but could not put into words. Indeed, it would be difficult to overestimate the benefit and popularity of the Soldiers' Club, both officers and men continually evidencing their appreciation and thanks to Mrs. Crombie, Regent of the Chapter, and to whom the inauguration and success of the institution is largely due.

The Way of the West

IN one of Mrs. McClung's collections of short stories, there is a delightful account of how the "Twelfth" was kept in a joyous mingling of green, orange, red, white and blue. The story was called, appropriately enough, "The Way of the West," and it has remained ever since as a breezy chronicle of the manner in which prejudice and folly are swept away by the wind of the West. The writer, who has been visiting Toronto for the past fortnight, is an exponent of Western warmth and exhilaration, with an oratorical gift which makes her a valuable adherent to any cause. Mrs. McClung's Massey Hall lecture on "The War That Never Ends" made thousands of friends in Toronto, for it is no idle compliment to say that everyone who meets or hears Mrs. McClung is immediately a personal admirer. I do not care the least fraction of a farthing about a vote, and would consider woman franchise an undeserved burden. But, if Mrs. McClung would like votes, she should have a whole basket of them, tied with pink ribbon and accompanied by Killarney roses.

Years ago, that book from the prairies, "Sowing Seeds in Danny," made us both laugh and think, and the writer who can accomplish such a double effect is to be cherished and encored.

The Other Languages

THERE are ever so many uncomfortable things being said about the necessity for studying foreign languages and the general lack of Canadians in this respect. After we have fought, in (Concluded on page 20.)