

# THE CANADIAN BUSINESS WOMAN'S CLUB

## Interesting Account of a Valuable Organization for the Business Woman

By "CLAUDE R. VANE"



MISS MARY LEAN  
PRESIDENT



MISS M. E. MYERS  
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

"TWO hundred and forty—three hundred and ten—there are about three hundred and seventy-five seats. Certainly we will not have to move from *this* hall for a while at least."

The bright-faced girl who spoke was the President of the Canadian Business Woman's Club of Toronto. I was an early comer and we stood together at the back of the auditorium in the new University School.

"How many members has your club already?" I inquired.

"Over two hundred and sixty," she answered, "we used to meet in the Assembly Hall of the Ogden School, but we have outgrown that now."

"This will be too small for us, too, some day soon," said an optimistic voice beside us, and the President turned to greet another early comer.

I moved up the aisle and, taking a seat, observed the members as they came. The general meetings are open only to members of the club, and I watched them arriving, usually in groups of three or four, sometimes alone or in couples. Enthusiasm certainly was not lacking.

"We have thirteen new members already tonight," one girl whispered, as she dropped into a vacant seat beside a friend.

Being alone I studied those about me. Half-an-hour before, the Secretary had explained that the qualifications for membership were limited to two—the payment of the annual fee (fifty cents), and the fact of being a business woman of Toronto.

"What constitutes a 'business woman'?" I inquired.

"The constitution of the Club says 'self-supporting'," was the answer.

It was certainly broad enough. There was no election, no system of introduction required, and only a nominal fee. Necessarily many of the members were strangers to one another; they came from widely varying homes, and their work differed greatly. This club in which they joined forces for increased education, power and pleasure was their only common ground. Yet both during the gathering of the audience and in the few minutes of social intercourse at its close I was impressed with their frank camaraderie—their spirit of *esprit de corps*. No one who entered the hall alone left it without words of greeting—not from a reception committee or officers appointed for the purpose, but with a feeling of generous comradeship by other members of the club.

As the meeting gathered, I found my chance to talk with the President.

"There are about forty-thousand business women in Toronto," she said. "Our membership is small compared to that, but we hope that it will soon be much larger. Although the Business Woman's Club came into existence last March, we have had practically only four or five regular meetings, and many of our plans have hardly begun to work themselves out as yet."

"What are your plans?" I asked.

She laughed. "Oh, I dare say that they vary with each individual member, and you must remember they may never materialize."

I listened with interest while she spoke of the chief aims of the Club—a union of business women for the chance of hearing good speakers and discussion of public questions of the day, for opportunities of combined study, of pleasure and social intercourse. The story of the Outing Circle I found delightful. Any member of the Club may be a member of this circle and its object is suggested by its name. In April and May there are long walks for its members and tramps through the woods; midsummer brings lake trips and picnics; autumn, corn-roasts and nutting parties; and winter its skating and snow-shoeing. The Outing Circle has already given one very popular social evening for the members of the Club, which I am told they are planning to repeat in the near future.

Another unique feature of this original association is the Reading Circle. As in the case of the Outing Circle it is open to all members of the Club. Once a month this general circle has an illustrated lecture by one of the University Professors of the city. It is re-divided into smaller circles or groups of ten, each choosing its own subject of study under its own leader. Already circles have been formed (their leaders chosen by the Executive of the Club) selecting for study Ancient History, Canadian History, Biography, Browning and George Eliot, while that under Miss Helena Coleman has decided to devote itself to miscellaneous study and follow its own sweet will as to the course pursued. This limiting of the number in each circle makes for individuality and freedom of intercourse and must add

much zest to the work both for leader and students.

The December meeting was addressed by Dr. Gilmour, warden of the Central prison, his subject being "The Causes of Crime, Its Treatment and Prevention." Surely he has never had a more interested or attentive audience! Earnest faces showed how much his words meant to the listeners, and more than once he was interrupted by applause—quite as heartfelt as the louder clapping which the men of an audience usually supply.

"I wonder," pondered one of the girls I knew, as we walked down the aisle together, "I wonder just why Dr. Gilmour took the time and trouble to tell all that to us. Did he think we could help it? I wonder if we *could*?"

The club has already been addressed by President Falconer, Mrs. Agnes Knox Black, Canon Cody, Dr. Pakenham, Mrs. Falconer, Dr. Coleman, and others.

A Visiting Circle searches out the members of the Club who are ill, and also maintains a look-out for strangers who may wish to join. Of course the size of the Club makes it impossible for this circle to keep in any personal touch with its members, but every member of the Club is requested to forward



MRS. H. C. PARKER HONORARY PRESIDENT

the names of any whom she knows to be ill and these are promptly visited by some member of the circle.

"Have you met Mrs. Parker, our Honorary President?" someone asked at the close of the meeting, and when she replied in the negative I was promptly carried off to be introduced. I found her surrounded by a crowd of eager girls and we—and they were still talking when the janitor came to close the hall. The little knot went out together and at the door there was a chorus of good-nights. Later I had the privilege of talking to Mrs. Parker of this, her pet



AN OUTING PARTY OF THE C.B.W.C.

scheme. To her its helpful side, the spirit of friendship, of mutual assistance, stands large.

Its success at any rate seems assured. Already inquiries have come from other Canadian cities, Vancouver, Halifax, Port Arthur, asking for information with the aim of starting some similar association in

the near future. Even the smaller towns, one would think, might work out some such scheme for themselves.

Later may come a club-house where members can dine or lunch, and entertain their friends, or spend a quiet hour over book or magazine. But for the present such plans stand in abeyance before the more immediate work of the Club. For the time being, it is an association of business women for the purposes of fostering true patriotism, securing opportunities of hearing prominent speakers, affording a means for the study of literature, science and art, the discussion of questions of the day, and social intercourse and out-of-door pleasures.



### A Good Message

By JOYCE WARNCLIFFE

LISTEN a while, you women whose life is spent mainly in looking after a home. Let another woman tell you how you may eliminate much trouble and work from your ceaseless round of duty. Here is the secret—get rid of every article in your home which is neither useful nor beautiful, and do not burden yourself with a superfluity of the latter.

Begin to-morrow with your morning's work, and as you go from room to room look, if possible, with the eyes of a stranger upon your own belongings. You know that you have many articles which are neither beautiful nor useful, but still you tolerate them because you have become accustomed to them. Perhaps you have *too many* beautiful articles, so that the eye is surfeited and confused, and your home resembles a museum. You may lack that refinement of air shown by the tasteful selection of a few beautiful ornaments. You know that a bunch of many kinds of flowers thrust together into one bouquet does not present the artistic beauty of a few flowers of the same sort loosely arranged. To-morrow, as you stand upon the threshold of each room, look about it and say to yourself, "How many things in this room could my family and myself do without easily, and yet lose nothing of service or beauty?"

Take those ornaments off your piano. They look unnecessary. Take away many of those draperies. They are insanitary. Your windows were meant to let in sunlight, and you are trying to keep it out. Leave only enough draperies to add a touch of beauty to your home. Look at the pictures on your walls. How many of them are really good? How many please and elevate you? Take down all that do not fulfil these conditions. Why have sofa pillows against which no one dare lean? And why have so many of them, that you must needs place them on the floor, as I have seen in some homes? Why put your friends' photos on mantels, tables, and every available spot? Don't you know they only make it harder for you to dust? Why not put them all away in some suitable place? You do not parade your feelings to strangers; why do you expose to any stranger who may enter your home the faces of dozens of your friends and relatives? Show them only to those whom you wish to see them; otherwise keep them for sweet sentiment's sake, but keep them put away.

Look at your floors. How many of the mats and rugs do you need? How many seem to be placed there simply to aggravate the male portion of your home? Are your windows so full of plants that you dare not open them in frosty weather? A beautiful plant is a joy to behold; but remember that your lungs need fresh air, and your own body is more important than any plant.

If we could but take to ourselves some of the ideas held by the Japanese, we might profit. There is no superfluity of ornament in a Japanese home. One beautiful ornament is placed in a prominent position in a room. To-morrow it is put away, and another takes its place. No surfeit of beauty there, but a thorough appreciation of it, nevertheless; and a home much easier to keep in order than many of our Canadian homes.

In the preparation of meals, too, you can at the same time save yourself much work, and your family much indigestion. Enough is as good as a feast. Then why load your tables with a countless variety and your family with countless stomach troubles? To-morrow will be a happier day for you if you will rid yourself of superfluity. Your dusting, washing and cooking will be easier; your nerves will be steadier; and consequently you will be happier.