

THE AUCKLAND WOMEN'S CLUB

A Centre of Social and Intellectual Life

by MRS. ANDREW DUNCAN



The raised ceiling gives a feeling of space in the beautiful lounge: creamy-tinted walls and cool tones of blue and soft purple combine to form a club-room of infinite charm. On the dais may be seen the gramophone presented by Mrs. Wilson.



Mrs. W. R. Wilson, First President of the Club.

FOR some time women in Auckland had felt that the establishment of a Club was a kind of duty that they owed themselves, and it was through the efforts of Mrs. W. R. Wilson that the Auckland Women's Club was founded some three years ago.

An ardent enthusiast in all that concerns women's work, gifted with a most gracious personality, Mrs. Wilson launched the Club with much *clat*. The delightful flat which housed it in Swanson Street, with its artistic decorations and restful atmosphere made it an immediate success.

This was due entirely to the ceaseless efforts of Mrs. Wilson and her able committee, and it was at once evident that her charm, eloquence and persistence in overcoming all obstacles made the former a model president. She was also fortunate in associating with herself the gifted women who presided over the various educational and social circles into which the Club divided itself, and thus ensured their smooth running success.

It was perhaps her untiring devotion to her presidential duties that depleted her strength to such an extent that Mrs. Wilson recently withdrew from all activities, in order to take the rest that she had so truly earned.

Among her pet schemes was the formation of a general library, which already numbers close on a thousand volumes, and is continually being added to.

Mrs. Parkes, the Club's new president, brings plenty of enthusiasm and experience into the work. As the senior vice-president, she is fully conversant with its details, and is greatly impressed with the possibilities for usefulness which the Club affords.

In the course of a chat with the writer, Mrs. Parkes indicated a few of the activities the Committee are anxious to introduce. "We would like," she said, "to arrange half-

hour luncheon talks on interesting and instructive subjects, much in the same way as is done at the Rotary Club. Whenever possible, notable visitors either men or women, will be invited to give an address, thus bringing the Club into touch with similar movements in other parts of the world.

"Women are becoming accustomed to the Club idea, and begin to realise their individual responsibility in order to ensure success," continued Mrs. Parkes, "but of course we are only at the beginning of things. The amount of work expended by women individually for the betterment of society is enormous, but so little of it is effective. If women would only realise the might and extent of their influence when properly organised and co-ordinated, how very much they might accomplish in the solution of those social problems which now, more than at any time, threaten the peace and prosperity of the world."

In order to provide the members with pleasant opportunities for self-improvement, quite a number of so-called circles have been in existence from the Club's inception. These include civic, musical, dramatic, literary, art and crafts circles, in each of which original talent is warmly welcomed. There is also a garden circle, whose members gather on appointed days at the well-cared-for garden of some enthusiastic horticulturist, who acts as cicerone, and answers recondite questions on floral and other gardening lore.

Mrs. Parkes explains that these circles are in no wise competitive with similar societies already in existence, but have been formed to encourage interest in various subjects. At these meetings, which are both entertaining and instructive, individual talent and aptitude are developed, thus rendering members more effective when taking part in other and more public spheres.

Until recently the Club's activities were

somewhat hampered by lack of room, and it has just moved into a spacious and more easily accessible flat in Queen Street. Here a wonderful transformation has been worked. In the lounge, which is spacious enough to seat all the members on special occasions, the floor has been laid specially for dancing. Quiet restful tones, and a very simple but adequately effective scheme has evolved a most charming *tout ensemble*.

Just white and black touches of blue, that is all, but how satisfying is the result! The raised ceiling, with its dark-stained beams, the creamy-tinted walls with the frieze of dull soft blue, the casement curtains of dull blue and black, Indian rugs on the floor, while "comfy" couches and settees repeat the same note and emphasise the artistic atmosphere. Pictures of course—also flowers arranged with grace. On the small raised platform stands a quaintly handsome table, of which the members are justly proud. It is a gramophone, and is the gift of their first President, Mrs. Wilson.

Does a member wish to write letters or entertain her friends at bridge? There is a cosy little writing-room and library, and adjoining is the card room. At the other end of the lift-hall is the large lunch and