

THE GIRL AS A NATION BUILDER

What Is Being Done for Our Girls



The Auckland Y.W.C.A.

ON the right hand side, and about half way as you go along Upper Queen Street, stands a handsome brick building. It is imposing and dignified, solid yet alert, with its inviting entrance, and generous swing-doors—a centre of activities of which few people seem to know anything very definite. It is an open club-house for girls and women. For them are all sorts of privileges. Are they very tired with shopping or business? In the rest-room they may relax at their ease. Do they require lunch or tea? There is the *cafeteria* with its appetising well-cooked food, its white tables, its glorious harbour view.

Is a girl lonely? She will find friends, sympathy, help and advice here. All are hers for the asking. Is she a stranger requiring direction? She need go no further. No matter what she wishes to know, the smiling secretary in the enquiry bureau is ready to answer any question. She is there for that purpose, and many hundreds of questions are answered by her between the working hours of 9 a.m. and 9.30 p.m. each day.

The moment one steps into the spacious lounge with its quietly tasteful settees grouped around a table covered with piles of magazines, one realises that here is a pleasant home—nothing less.

It is a home away from home. From Mrs. G. H. Wilson, the large-hearted president, Miss Griffin, the

general secretary, and her large staff of assistant secretaries, radiate sunshine, brightness, alertness and courtesy. They are reflected in every department, and almost without realising it, one instantly feels at home.

Everybody feels it. All day visitors stream in, sure of sympathy. They come early, and their requests are varied. One wishes to leave a parcel; another a baby, while she goes shopping; another seeks lodgings; another wishes to borrow a needle and cotton. Someone telephones to ask

the time. And so it goes on all day.

In the well-appointed kitchen the domestic staff is busy preparing for the luncheon hour, when between two and three hundred business girls are every day supplied with a well-prepared mid-day meal, which may vary from a full-course dinner to a cup of tea and scones, the charge for which is most moderate. It is certainly interesting to be told that the number of meals served during last year was 80,530!

Then there are invitingly sunny corners in which to do fancy work or to read. The magazine table has a call of its own, and the rest-room awaits the tired girl with its atmosphere of quiet and beauty.

But it is at five o'clock that the building

hums with activity. It then becomes a perfect beehive. A new stream of girls comes in for tea, chiefly of those who are remaining in town to attend the evening classes. That these are popular is evident from the numbers that are enrolled.

In the big gymnasium on the ground floor, splendidly equipped with dressing rooms, lockers, and shower baths, three classes are held every evening by Miss Fisher, the physical director, and in each class the attendance varies from twenty to fifty or sixty. Every type of girl may be found in every class. The United Hockey Clubs have their classes, with strenuous exercises for endurance. There are workroom groups, industrial groups, and business girl groups. Domestic helpers—those angels of the house, are there, too—of every age from fourteen years upwards.

Nor are older women neglected. There are morning classes where matrons learn how to keep themselves young, fit, and lissome at fifty. There are afternoon classes for the girl of leisure, also Saturday morning classes for tiny tots from six to twelve years, and for older ones from twelve to sixteen years of age.

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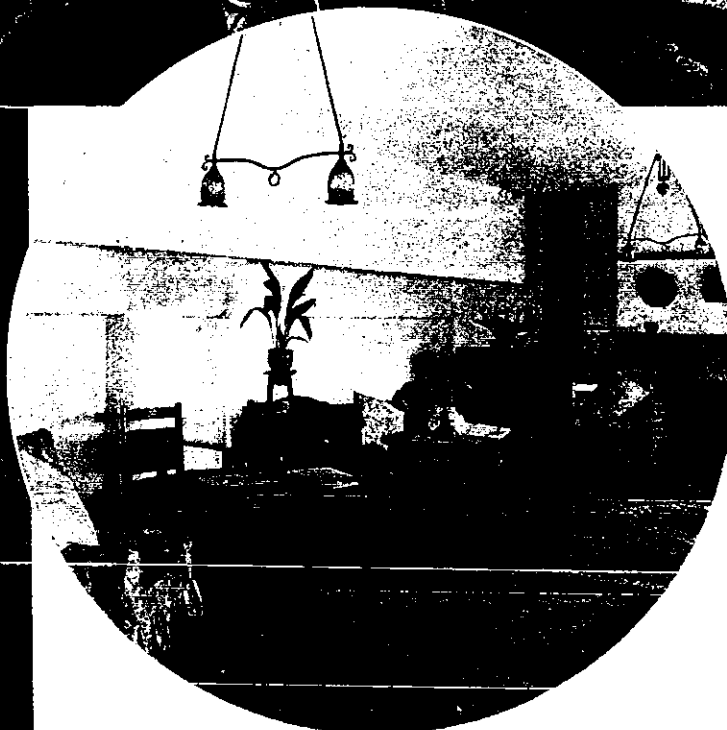


The Auckland Y.W.C.A. Building in Upper Queen Street, showing the fine entrance.

The members of the Girls' Department meet in these delightful rooms for debates or study.



Looking down from the balcony recess, the glorious view across Auckland City includes the graceful spire of St. Matthew's Church and the clock tower of the Town Hall. Beyond lie the blue waters of the Harbour and Rangitoto Channel.



A quiet half-hour in this pretty rest-room soothes jangled nerves and tired brain.