

What the Young Woman's Christian Association is Doing



GETTING BILL FOR LUNCH

HEALTH BY EXERCISE
An Evening Gym Class

MISS LILLY H. STRONG
Gen. Sec. in Her Office

THE ART OF SEWING — DOMESTIC SCIENCE

LEARNING THE SCIENCE OF COOKING — DOMESTIC SCIENCE

CHINA PAINTING INTERESTS

—MAY MAY BUNCH IN THE CAFE

BETWEEN one and two thousand young women visit each day the Young Women's Christian Association building. A thousand is a conservative estimate, and the days when this number is exceeded are more frequent than the days when it is not reached. These figures give at once some idea of the number to whom the building at the corner of St. Mary's avenue and Seventeenth street stands as something more than club and in many instances more than home. The number doesn't give a definite idea of the scope of the work, however, for the thousand visitors each day include many who are there for the first time, many who come only occasionally as well as those by whom the association is visited each day.

To call the institution a woman's club is to apply a term which is too narrow. It is a woman's club, but it is much more than that. It includes many of the advantages which such a club would offer—and more—but it has not the selfishness of the club—it offers its privileges to member and stranger, both. The stranger is, in fact, the one to whom the association ministers largely and in many ways, making the stranger at home in the city.

The reason which brings the thousand and so young women to the building are many; so many that their diversity would surprise the person to whom the letters Y. W. C. A. mean chiefly a tall, imposing building, with a cafeteria and a cafe, where you get "splendid eatings," reception rooms, a library and an auditorium where lectures and musicals are held. This is even a more complete idea than the one many have of the scope of the work.

To many the association figures chiefly as a place where a great many go for the noon luncheon, where shoppers, too, find a break in the ardors of purchasing wardrobes for self and family.

A lot of people, young business women, shoppers, visitors in the city and business men, too, do visit the cafeteria or the cafe and with apparent satisfaction. But this, while it is one of the most conspicuous departments because it appeals to the most universal habit, the habit of eating, is but one—and not the most typical one—of the many activities.

Scope of Work Large.

Many other people likewise know the department which concerns them—the department which calls them to the association for class work or to assist in other work. A few people have some idea of the diversity of the work done by the many departments and the importance of each in making the association fulfill its mission of meeting the needs of the young women in the city.

To the people who have only the superficial—or, to substitute a more truthful word, the outside—estimate of the association, the building is the center of a business enterprise. They see the lunch room during crowded hours, and they are frequent, and think what a good thing this must be, an "institution which is well established and doing well." They look at the roll of membership—3,521—and, estimating the receipts at a dollar a member, see another certain source of income. Then they hear of the sustaining memberships at \$5 a year, the life memberships at \$100—and these are not as numerous as they should be—and see another definite source of income.

This is the superficial idea—we will not be unkind enough to say the general idea—and not consistent with facts. The self-supporting departments of the association, and those which will eventually be self-supporting, are few in comparison with those which give, give, give, to the work of bettering conditions for the girls in the city, meet some of the many needs and receive nothing but the satisfaction of knowing that the work is reaching out into and making itself of value in the civic life. In other words, the self-supporting departments are few, the depart-

ments which must be sustained are, if anything, more important in the fulfillment of the association's mission, and are many.

Lunch Department Popular.

Conspicuous among the departments which "pay" as the business world understands the word, is the noon lunch department. The income from this department in the year 1910 was \$39,591.27; the expenses \$32,979.33. The average daily attendance, of which the picture gives some idea, is 800. The size of this department is told in the figures, but the excellence of the cuisine is only hinted to the wise who realize since so many come and come again, have a regular habit of coming, it must emphatically be meeting the pleasure of its public.

The well equipped gymnasium with its apparatus for games, drills and all sorts of gymnastics, its swimming pool, baths, dressing-rooms, etc., is likewise deservedly popular. When its classes grow to the right proportions, when there are as many classes as there should be, it, too, will be self-sustaining, but at present the maintenance cost exceeds the receipts—\$1,662.93 and \$1,307. The picture given above shows one of the evening classes in a characteristic drill.

Domestic science and domestic arts, the two distinctively home-making assistants and especially to the business woman, are departments which charge a small fee for the classes, but the fee is proportionately so small that as yet the income does not meet the expense. As is shown in the picture above the cooking laboratory is well equipped and the classes are well attended, indicating, emphatically, the importance of the work and the demand for it. The department gives good, practical and expert instruction in the basic science of cooking and as such ministers to the stability and happiness of many future homes. The discrepancy between income and what must be paid out is not large and is growing smaller each year. In 1910 the receipts were \$1,161.78 and the expenditures \$1,469.86.

The kindred department, domestic arts, which teaches the simple and complex forms of sewing, meets a great need, too, but its fee does not cover the expense of the maintenance. The money way of telling the year's work in the domestic arts department is, receipts, \$246.16, and expenses, \$558.60. Eventually both of these departments will, it is hoped, balance more equally.

For the young woman ambitious to increase her education there is splendid opportunity offered in the classes, for which special instructions are obtained. Classes in the languages, classes for the study of history, literature, painting, psychology, in fact, a diversity of subjects. These classes are practically self-sustaining, as none is organized with less than a specified number of pupils and the instructors give their services for a certain percentage of the fee.

Girls Directed to Work.

This is the list of the departments which have an income and it is short as compared to the list of those which give for assistance of the individual, the good of the community.

The employment bureau is in charge of what is decidedly one of the most important branches of the work done by the association. The secretary in charge of this not only renders valuable assistance to the girl looking for a chance to earn her living, to the employer looking for good service, but acts many times as mother confessor and encourager to the girl. In this same department a directory is kept of rooms to which the stranger in the city may be directed. Figures do not tell the complete story of the activities of this department. Figures do not tell of the numerous conferences where discouragement becomes, "Very well, I'll try again and I will make it a go this time." An element in the department's efficiency is this ability to reach and enhearten the lonely and it is an element not included in the year's report. Many conferences which lead indirectly to employment are

held. These are not listed. The number which is given as the record of the year's work—"382 were directed to employment"—includes only those who were definitely sent to these definite positions which they accepted. During the last year the boarding house director sent 769 to rooms.

This is a department which touches directly the girl who comes to the city and wants a place to live, and a place to work to earn her living. It is a vital department. It gives its services. It has no income. It has to be supported. It must be supported by outside assistance.

A kindred work, in that it deals with the stranger at the city's gate, is the Travelers' Aid. This secretary, who meets the trains, meets the worries of the inexperienced traveler, answers the queries of the perplexed and directs the lost to shelter, has a large clientele. Expert travelers who find it simple to get the right train, to find their way even in strange cities, people accustomed to the great world and its ways, have little or no idea of the puzzle and anxiety it offers to the inexperienced journeyer. The Travelers' Aid knows that for the many a railroad journey offers grave and harrowing perplexities. She meets the traveler whose friends have failed to meet her. She finds the friends or gives the traveler shelter until they can be found. To say she rendered assistance to 5,559 people during the year 1910 is an incomplete record and does not indicate to how many

more she gave reliable information and direction, for how many more she solved perplexities.

Classes for Foreigners.

The classes for foreign speaking girls are important elements in the association's making of good citizenship. English is taught, arithmetic and other subjects as there is a demand for them.

The extension work of the association is another branch of great importance. The secretary of this holds meetings, organizes clubs among the girls and young women in the various factories and industrial centers. These organizations meet sometimes at the building, sometimes at their place of work. The extension work is in reality taking the privileges and opportunities which the association offers to the girls who, for one reason or another, have not come to it. After their organization they usually do come to the association. There are three clubs which meet every week. They have a membership of 200. The meetings include social entertainment, gymnasium exercise, Bible study and the study of different topics. There are two clubs among the juniors. One of these meets at the building Saturday afternoons. The other meets at the Park Wilde home Monday afternoons. These clubs have their social meetings and to them the association brings a new element in life, a new enjoyment, a new ambition. This department has no income except the satisfaction of important work done.

The religious work of the association includes many Bible study classes, meetings held Sundays and during the week and an effort to develop the spiritual side of the life of the girl in the city.

The association building is in itself an important factor in the city life. Many meetings are held there. Meetings of missionary societies, meetings of the Women's Christian Temperance union, meetings of the directors of various charitable organizations. The auditorium is in demand for entertainments, but these are a source of income.

Important in the building is the rest room maintained. Here the tired woman snatches a few minutes' nap during her nooning and goes back to her work as "good as new." The room is popular, too, with the shopper who has found shopping exhausting and fatiguing.

Skilled Workers in Charge.

All of these activities, the administration of such a diverse mission requires many skilled and specially trained workers. These the association has. Its departments are headed by women with special talent for the work in hand, and women who have given special study to the problems of their work. At the head of the efficient staff is the general secretary,

Back of these trained workers, the staff of secretaries, stands the board of directors, public-spirited women who give of their time and wisdom for the guidance and furtherance of this work whose importance they recognize. But the trained workers mean salaries and this explains again why it is that the association with its sources of income, as detailed above, must ask the public for assistance in sustaining its work. The cost of maintaining the work in the year 1910 was something over \$57,000. Of this amount \$5,000 and more must be raised by special subscription. The association would like very much to raise it by increasing the number of life memberships, which are \$100 and of which they now have only 93. There are seventy-five sustaining memberships.

The regular memberships at the close of December numbered 3,521, 1,000 members more than last year at this time. There is a campaign now to increase the number to 4,000 before the annual meeting which is to be held January 23.

This is a big institution, this Young Women's Christian association. It is doing a big work in your city. That you may realize something more of the width of its appeal, visit it some evening at 7 o'clock when it is about time for the classes to begin. If you have visited it heretofore only at meal time and seen only the rush to the cafeteria or the cafe on the fifth floor, you'll get an entirely new idea of what it means to different people.

Miss Lilly M. Strong is the general secretary of the association. The staff of assisting secretaries includes: Miss Flora S. Keeney, assistant secretary and educational director; Miss Ida H. Meicher, business secretary; Mrs. Ina Mixer, director of lunch; Miss Ora E. Johnson, membership secretary; Miss Sabra Wilson, employment secretary; Miss Ethel G. Hendee, industrial and extension secretary; Miss Harriet F. Schaeffer, office secretary; Miss Florence Liljeors, assistant office secretary; Miss Theodate Wilson, religious work director; Miss Florence, D. Alden, physical director; Miss Margaret Coffin, domestic science director; Miss Gertrude Sly, domestic arts director; Mrs. Clara Mead, travelers' aid.

The board of directors are: Mrs. W. R. Harford, president; Mrs. George Tilden, vice president; Mrs. J. M. Alken, second vice president; Mrs. R. G. Schaeffer, recording secretary; Mrs. Edward Johnson, corresponding secretary; Miss Hallie Hood, treasurer; Mrs. A. W. Bowman, Mrs. J. P. Bailey, Mrs. J. R. Webster, Mrs. Clement Chase, Mrs. G. W. Cherrington, Mrs. G. W. Garloch, Mrs. E. A. Parmalee, Mrs. C. C. George, Mrs. J. P. Lord, Mrs. D. W. Morrow, Mrs. C. A. Sherwood, Mrs. G. W. Wickersbank, Mrs. H. J. Kiraschtein.

Rome's Queer School

A school of an entirely novel type has recently been started at Rome, says a writer in the Wide World magazine, and has already given very good results. This "open-air" academy differs from the German open-air schools, inasmuch as it is essentially traveling, whereas the school at Charlottenburg, for instance, is composed of a number of pavilions. The combined satchel and desk carried by the pupil only weighs ten pounds, and therefore no fatigue is caused through carrying this on the back. The pupils, together with their master, wander from one part of the outlying country districts of Rome to another. The desk is placed on the ground, the blackboard is fixed up and the lesson begins. It is very practical, and the pupils are able to do their lessons in any place, as they carry with them all that is required. It is held in Rome that this form of instruction will do much toward doing away with the large number of illiterate persons in the vicinity.