OAKLAND'S SOCIETY ART CLUB

"YOU are very respectfully requested to put aside the entire week commencing with the 18th for the benefit of the hard laborers of the Oakland Assn. Art Dabblers No. 1."

Such an invitation certainly is a snare and a delusion to the uninitiated, but to the young people of Oakland's smartest of the smart set it is looked upon as a great joke and is valued for just what it is worth.

For be it known that the Oakland Assn. Art Dabblers No. 1 is nothing more or less than a gathering of society girls who have made up their minds to devote at least a few hours each day to something that is truly well worth while. To this end they have written so many "Am dreadfully sorry, dear Mrs. White, that I cannot lunch with you, but I had already promised to spend the morning with several friends," that their families have ceased to smile and are quite beginning to take them seriously.

Up in the 1200 block on Jackson street stood a barn that for the want of something better to do acted as a storeroom, with seventeen dozen different things tucked away in every available corner.

Barns that possess lofts, especially when there are skylights in the roof and a few windows on the side, never go begging very long, and Miss Laura Prather suddenly spied it and wondered why that wouldn't be just the place for a studio where the frivolous many could be locked relentlessly out and only the chosen few admitted.

"Come down to-morrow to lunch," she 'phoned to six girls. "I've a project to expound."

Between courses she finally told of her find, and the luncheon broke up in a wild dash for the Dyer barn, which, by the way, wouldn't deign to admit even to itself that it had ever been other than a charming studio excellently equipped as to light and comfort.

On the floor is a light matting, but it is almost entirely covered with Japanese straw mats, with now and then a more pretentious one borrowed from some one's room in good faith, but conveniently forgotten to be returned.

The beauty of the loft is a great brick chimney that is built into one corner, and that lends not only substantial warmth, but an air of great luxury.

Drawn cozily up as though inviting a chat are two big old-fashioned armchairs, each one made eminently respectable and fit looking by a tapa cloth being carelessly thrown over them "just as though we had so many we didn't know what to do with them and not because the chairs were ragged," cheerfully remarked Mrs. Nelson Phelps, giving away state secrets with the utmost unconcern.

One corner is just a lazy one, built not only to look pretty but for a lazy stretch during recreation. The couch, rolled up against the wall has a backing of Hawaiian mats, with a jumble of beads, fans, baskets and palms tacked up almost any old way and in any place.

At the foot of the couch stands a small table which holds a good-sized quaint, old lamp with one of those great flower shades, that used to be all the rage and that are wonderfully pretty, besides being useful as well.

But the crowning feature, as far as visitors are concerned, is a hospitable looking tea table, laden down with Chinese willow ware, a dapper looking brass tea pot and a few pieces of silver.

There almost any morning in the week one may find from eight to ten easels in place and the girls in the depths of oils, water colors and charcoal, all working away as though their bread and butter depended upon it, instead of varying their lives, that are one continuous round of social gayety.

When Jean Hawley, as dainty as a rose, steps into her carriage and drives off apparently for a spin, one would never dream that she goes directly to the studio, takes off her hat and coat, and dons an apron that makes her look like a schoolgirl, for she is a little lady, and as she puts it, "falls in neatly all over." She wears loose rubber gloves that give her perfect freedom, and the oils, as varied in hue as the colors of the rainbow, may cover her from head to foot without disturbing her equilibrium in the least.

Her work is bold and very free and she is especially apt at catching the expression which is the keynote of portrait work.

Lexie de Fremery, daughter of the Dutch Consul, works in charcoal, but as she devotes the greater part of her time to the pipe organ, which she plays like a master, her artistic ability has been laid aside somewhat, and she has only taken it up again recently.

Jane Rawlings is an old hand, both at water colors and with her pencil. Her style is more impressionistic than any of the others and she has but to make a few bold strokes before one sees that she understands what she is about.

Mrs. Nelson Phelps is the life of the place. From the moment she comes trudging up the stairs until she leaves she keeps up a perfect fire of witticisms. "I always find it necessary to bring a loaf of French bread along," she said, "as my work generally is so dreadfully bad."

She sketches rapidly, but is so hard to please that it keeps her busy most of the time rubbing out and doing over. Now and then when she gets something which especially pleases her she inveigles her sister, Mrs. Brigadier General Funston, into going down with her to see her work, and there is no doubt that she is as clever with her brush as she is with her repartee.

The little lady who comes in quietly and goes straight to work is Louise Mahoney. She is not there to waste a bit of time and her progress had been most marked. From early until late she stands before her easel putting down and studying its effects.

Laura Prather has painted miniatures for a number of years, but is now trying her hand at effects larger and in oils, something entirely new and strange to her. Of course, she has had the advantage of sketching from life and can easily get a good likeness, but painting life-size in oils and miniatures in water colors are vastly different and she is almost a stranger in a strange land.

Belle Mhoon Magee and Mary Dunham are both enthusiasts over drawing and vie with each other when in town, but at present Miss Dunham is in Europe and Mrs. Magee has just returned from a trip, though one sees her climbing the narrow stairs with her same old time regularity.

And models! What do you think they do for them? Hire them as any other art club does? Certainly not.

The Oakland Assn. Art Dabblers has hosts of friends, and obliging ones as well, so that is the meaning of the little invitations that "respectfully request" the putting aside of a week.

On Monday morning at 9 o'clock the model—last week Elsie Fry and the week before Carolyn Williamson—is on hand ready to mount a velvet throne that stands in the center of the room and to stay there with one or two stretches until 10:30, when she comes down and is given some fruit as a reward of merit. At 10:45 she commences her pose again and work stops a little before 12.

The models held a long secret conference and finally decided to strike on one thing. Pose they would, and for a week straight through, but when it came to standing up they simply wouldn't. The wages were not high enough and the hours too long.

At 12 all work is put aside, and out come sardines, potted meats and pickles and tea is brewed over the fire that burns just to make things cheerful and sociable. Sometimes their friends drop in upon them and bring along a generous supply of salad or cake, and the barn is turned first into a banquet and later into a dancing hall, with one and then another acting as an entire brass band.

When the girls work they work, and when they play they play, and as a consequence Anne Bremer, who goes over on stated days to criticize (and she does it unmercifully, too) says they are getting along beautifully, a fact recently proved, as there were two pictures hung in the last salon, the first product of the popular Oakland Assn. Art Dabblers No. 1.

The Business Life According to Christ

BY F. W. TROWER,
President Men's Sunday Club.

There are plenty of Christians who put on their Christianity on Sundays along with their silk hats and their frock coats. It is a part of their fine feathers.

Now, this is exactly the thing that it seems to me Christ never intended his teachings to result in. He did not lay down laws for only one-seventh of the time. He did not teach beautiful lessons for us to follow when we have time, when the following of them does not interfere with our "real" business concerns. If the teachings of Christ are good for Sunday, then they are good for every one of the seven days of the week, and they will not wear out, either, if we use them constantly. That is where they differ from the hat and the coat. Instead of growing threadbare with use they will improve, growing better for their steady application.

The thing to be considered is this: Cannot ordinary business affairs be carried on in accordance with all the rules of Christianity? Cannot a man carry his Sunday goodness into his shop or office the other six days? Cannot he prosper, make money, be successful in a worldly way, and still live up to the highest ideals of honor? Cannot he be a true Christian in his home, in his relations with friends and family?

It was because these questions arose in the minds of some young men of Oakland that the Men's Sunday Club has been formed. An outline of its aims is given in a statement made by Owen Hotle, pastor of the Eighth-avenue Methodist Church.

"In an invitation sent out by a self-appointed committee of five men representing as many callings the men of East Oakland, of every shade and form of faith, were invited to come together for mutual discussion and help on subjects of vital importance to every man and citizen. It was a getting together of honest men, with honest questions of right thinking and doing in the everyday concerns of life. An organization was formed and the men decided to take up a systematic study of the teachings of Jesus on matters of everyday affairs. They took no stand as to the position of Jesus as a theological character, but simply recognized him as a teacher who spoke on questions of worldwide concern, and they wanted to know what he had to say. No one pledged himself to a thing. Each studies with the club members, reaches his own conclusions and acts on his own judgment.

"In joining the club a man does not commit himself to follow these teachings unless he desires to do so. The men feel that there is but a very vague and ill-conceived understanding of Jesus Christ. Many of them are members of churches, many have no relation with any organized Christian work. It is simply a going 'back to Christ,' and not to creeds nor to theologies for his message to the world.

"For the first series of ten discussions they are taking Jesus' conception of human society and its organization. The only question that they will keep before themselves is 'What was Jesus' thought on this question?' Riches, poverty, treatment of the poor, relation to law and politics are some of the phases of the subject now being handled.

"The object sought in all these studies will be the personal application of these teachings, leaving the individual member to choose whether or not he will follow them."

There you have it—"the personal application of these teachings." It is this personal application that the Christian is always in danger of forgetting. Perhaps this is because Christianity is so old now that it has become more a tradition than a real, present matter. The newness of a thing passes and we grow hazy about it. What we need is a good waking up to make us realize that these old truths are just as important now as they were twenty centuries ago.

The discussion of fine theological points, of abstract questions, has occupied a great deal of time in religious societies and organizations of all kinds. That has its value of course, but it is what the club is trying to break away from just now. We are not going to pay any attention to the debate as to whether Jonah swallowed the whale or the whale swallowed Jonah. We don't care to find out how many angels can dance on the point of a needle. We are going to leave all the contentions on history so far as it does not concern our twentieth century life. We are merely investigating the history of Jesus Christ's life in order to find out in so far as we can how we can live better lives here and now.

These questions will be discussed openly among all the club members with no idea of instruction from any one person. Each one will be left to follow the line of argument or not as he chooses. But we hope for good results.

There is the question of enemies, for instance. Can a man have enemies and still be a Christian? I believe that he can, for if he is living in a way that he knows to be honorable and some man comes along and tries to inveigle him into dishonesty he may be obliged to make an enemy of the scamp if he pursues his righteous course. But this is all open to argument. It will be discussed in the club.

The point of making money is the sort of thing that is bound to come up. Can a man make money, become wealthy and still be honest in the finest sense of the word?

Giving to the poor, helping those who need a boost in life, treatment of both friends and enemies—they will be discussed.

I think the discussions will show, too, that a man can live with Christ in his heart every day of his life and still live happily and prosperously.