



A CLUB that helps—whom and how? There are so many clubs that help. There are those that help the climbers to climb, for instance. The Porteous is none of these. Others help the poor to remain poor. There is no charity about the Porteous. You can't really appreciate its ways and means unless you visit it. Then you can hear it speak for itself. You will realize that it helps a lot of brave, cheery, self-supporting girls to be braver and cheerier. Mrs. Cornwall has written:

"Try mentally to look into the faces of the members of the Porteous Club—young girls' faces; full of life, instinct with the capacity for enjoying life.

"And then remember that these girls spend the long day in the grind of office, shop, factory, faithful monotonous service of one kind or another. Sick or well, fair weather or foul, they must be at the daily routine, many of them earning a bare pittance in return for their labor.

"In many a case the pittance has to be earned not alone for self-support, but to aid the aged relative or the young brother and sister who cannot help themselves.

"And they plod on and on, but mere plodding does not absorb their faculties. The desire for self-culture is upon them. In their young hearts stirs the American instinct to forge ahead, the American faith that there is a higher place in the working and social scale for every one who earnestly seeks to rise. Strong in this faith they allow themselves no waste time, but spend their few leisure hours in the effort to fit themselves for that higher place."

Now, Mrs. Arthur Cornwall is the good fairy of the little club and she has been ever since its beginning. Never a Wednesday evening but finds her in the club-rooms in the Supreme Court building; so she ought to know all there is to know about the aims and hopes and methods of the work.

The club is named for Mrs. Janet S. Porteous, who has played Lady Bountiful from its birth in 1898. The club was formed then by the California Club and the motto adopted was, "Not what we have, but what we share." Mrs. Porteous lived up to the motto as much as the girl members are expected to do, and since she found herself blessed with many of this world's goods she did a great deal of sharing. For the first two years she furnished copy rooms for the girls over in South Park, and with these as headquarters the work got under promising headway.

But the location was not altogether convenient. Many of the members found it remote and one of them says with a reminiscent shiver, "It was such a spooky walk to the car I used to be afraid when I had to go alone, and I met somebody one night that I'm sure was a foot-pad—he had that expression." So for the better convenience of everybody the club moved to Larkin street and has remained there ever since, within easy reach of several car lines.

For the girls come from here, there and everywhere, from Point Lobos avenue to the heart of town, from North Beach to the Mission. They come from all sorts of professions, too; one is a hairdresser, another a milliner, another answers to your "Hello" every time you pull up a certain private exchange.

That is the one requirement if you want to enter this club—you must be a wage-earning girl. The age limit is drawn at 25, so evidently the Porteous Club does not consider that girlhood may pass beyond that crucial point.

The graceful, dignified girl who explained that she was a hairdresser brought her sister along the other night as a visitor.

"She wants to join the club," said a member, "but she can't. She doesn't work," and there was a deal of pride went with it.

The Porteous girls work all day and when night comes they seek the little clubrooms for relaxation. There is both pleasure and profit in what they find there.

On Wednesday night comes the sewing class, which Mrs. Cornwall conducts. But what she teaches them is only a part of what they learn. They give each other all sorts of points. One girl is a professional milliner and she showed the whole club how to make and trim its own hats. Every Easter hat that those girls wore was made by the wearer at not more than a dollar's cost and some of the creations were enough to keep every neighbor's eye off his or her prayer book. There was a "sausage hat" of rose pink mulline that turned feminine hearts bitter

with envy and it cost—listen, oh perpetrator of Easter jokelets—it cost 83 cents!

When sewing night comes the girls gather in the sitting room, where there are comfortable chairs to be drawn up around a big table. All sorts of pretty things are made by the deft fingers. There are Battenberg lace handkerchiefs and collars that your Pacific avenue beauty might ache to possess. There are

useful things made, too; just now bath towels are being wrought from the heavy salt sacks that the grocers don't want. The ends are embroidered in gay red cross stitch and the towels are precious to a housekeeper's heart.

"What I want the girls to realize above all is that they can have prettily appointed homes for very little money," says Mrs. Cornwall. "It's all nonsense to be discouraged just because you can't call in the swellest upholsterer in town and give him carte blanche. I know, because I furnished a simple little country home myself once. Do you see that old bed?" A plain old wooden bed stood in a corner, its varnish entirely worn off, its

An up-to-date club that helps



THE SECRETARY AT WORK.



MRS. ARTHUR CORNWALL, FAIRY OF THE CLUB.

of happy culinary ideas now, and perhaps some lucky man will profit by these same ideas later on.

Strawberry night comes once a year, and then the fragrance of preserving ascends from the little gas stove and floats out faintly through the corridors of the building whenever the door is opened. One happy night in June the girls all roll up their sleeves, don their aprons and put up strawberry preserves better than anybody ever tasted. They have a delicious recipe of their own—so delicious, alas, that only one member who took home a jar of it was able to report on how it "kelt."

The girls take a tremendous pride in their clubroom. They never leave it, no matter how late, without every dish being clean and put in place, all the tag-rags and scraps brushed up, all the furniture in place. Their curtains must be spotless and their furniture dustless to come up to their standard.

Physical culture classes are open to them and there is nothing more refreshing after long hours of standing behind a counter or sitting at a telephone than a little bracing exercise on the rings or with dumbbells and clubs.

Think of all these privileges to be had for the fee of twenty-five cents a month. What other club offers so much for so little? What it lacks in worldly wealth it makes up in other ways. Girls give a helping hand to one another. The spirit of friendliness prevails. One girl whose mother has died and who is left alone and sad says: "I thought there wasn't anything to live for at first. But now I've joined the club and I can hardly wait for the meeting times to come."

The club is entirely independent now, looking bravely after its own interests. But it has many friends of greater prosperity than its own and these have helped cheer the little rooms with pretty and useful gifts. Rugs, chairs, tables, curtains, lamps, china, books, palms, glasses, a clock, a sewing machine, tea—all these and more appear on the long list of gifts. The world has been good to the Porteous Club, for the world is always inclined to copy after Providence and help those that help themselves.

The club is governed by officers chosen from and elected by the club members. Miss Louise Bemmerer is the president and she swings the gavel with a parliamentary precision that would put to shame the officers of some larger clubs.

Vice president, secretary and treasurer are all drawn from the ranks of the girl members and each looks after her duties with the greatest punctiliousness. A business meeting takes place once a month and then the girls put on their most seriously businesslike faces. But during the sewing and the cooking and the hat trimming the faces are anything but serious and the tongues go as fast as the fingers.

Although self-improvement be the aim it is not to be supposed that the girls do nothing but learn to take themselves seriously. They have their social pleasures as well. Mrs. Porteous recently invited as many of them as possible to spend a happy day with her at her country home. A trip up Mount Tamalpais is another pleasure which a friend has given them. Then they play hostess themselves and entertain like society women of experience. On Saturdays and Sundays they always keep open house for their friends. Twelve members of the California Club look back to the pleasant memory of a dinner given them by the girls, who cooked and served every dish themselves. Every now and then a dance comes off, and then the piano and the feet fly. The corridors of the building make the best kind of a dance hall and it would be hard to say which are the happier—the girls or their lucky guests.

Bird fanciers are predicting a vogue for the peacock. They say that people who can afford it have been lately buying hundreds of them for their country places. Ornament is one consideration, but there is another thing that recommends the brilliant creature in a more practical way. Some one discovered not long ago that there is no watchdog equal to the peacock as a guardian against thieves and marauding tramps. Perched on the roof of an arbor or outbuilding of the estate, a peacock will announce in shrill, discordant notes that can be heard a mile away the presence of suspicious-looking strangers within the grounds.

posts full of nicks and dents. "I bought it of a junk man and some night I am going to show the girls what can be done with it. We'll scrape it clean, then paint it red all over, and in the end decorate it with some dainty sprays of marguerites, and you'll see a bed that would lull anybody to sweet slumber."

"What will you do with it after it's finished?"

"Well, in such cases the girls usually draw lots for a thing that they've all worked on; but in this case I want to keep it at the club. You see there are times when a girl is detained down town by a pressure of work and she lives so far away that it's hard to get home; so it would be a boon to her to have a place where she could sleep near her work. As it is, the girls often drop in here and get themselves a meal in any emergency. The gas-stove is always ready, you see."

Sure enough, in the other room is a