HOW THE HOME-BUILDERS’ CLUB IS TO BE ENLARGED INTO A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION: BY THE EDITOR

The organization of the Home-builders’ Club—concerning which quite a good deal has been said in former issues of The Craftsman—has borne fruit throughout the country in a goodly number of Craftsman houses. Every now and again news comes to us of another house built from Craftsman plans and harmoniously furnished throughout, which perhaps has been standing for two or three years without our knowledge, and we find that such houses, and the families who have occupied them, have been exerting a quiet, powerful influence among their neighbors. Not only has such an environment reacted upon the inmates of the home to bring out a truer expression of their better selves, but it has also exerted a like influence over scores of visiting neighbors and friends. The little leaven has worked, and is still working, to leaven the whole lump.

The many letters of grateful appreciation that have come to us from old time Club members have set us thinking. Evidence, multiplying upon every side, of the quickening of a general desire for a saner mode of life, have urged us to act in a more definite and larger way. And there is an insistent note in the letters coming to us from the owners of Craftsman homes of the joy they find in being the agents to their friends of a kind of revelation. Heretofore the attitude of the Club has been passive. The work has been done mainly by example, but the access of zeal that comes from converting others has kindled the missionary spirit. And we believe that many will be glad to gather under their roof from time to time a little group of friends, and to work and plan with them for the development of a home life that shall be an evolution of their best and truest selves.

A number of plans already have been suggested: One that finds especial favor with us contemplates gathering into local Chapters, in various neighborhoods, little circles of engaged girls, brides, and perhaps a sprinkling of young matrons, who are definitely interested in the idea of home building. Of course, membership will be purely voluntary. Each group will be made up of friendly members of the same social set or circle. Meetings will be occasional, or at stated intervals,—as the majority may desire,—and a delightful informality will attend all of the proceedings. It is thought that active membership in each local Chapter should be confined to prospective homebuilders, but persons owning their own homes will be eligible to honorary membership. It will be a great pleasure to us to hear in a personal way from any of our readers who would like to receive a certificate of honorary membership in the national organization. We also wish to extend to all who would be eligible for honorary membership an invitation to act as organizers of local Chapters among their friends and associates. We hope there may be a keen competition among readers of The Craftsman in various localities to be the first to found a local Chapter. No doubt there will be several clubs in each of the larger towns and cities, and these will be designated by number in the order of their application for charter privileges.

The Craftsman mail service has been organized for the benefit of the Club. We feel that this unique Bureau affords in itself a reason for the existence of the Club. The object of the members will be to assist one another by mutual discussion and social intercourse in working out an ideal home. Many will wish to take up one or another of the arts and crafts in order that the appointments of their prospective homes may be given an expression of their own personality. The mail service of the Club, through its Bureau at the headquarters of The

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Craftsmen, will furnish the members, without charge, designs and complete instructions for needle work, leather work, metal work, in fact, all of the arts and crafts that tend to home decoration. Advice, when desired, will be offered regarding the best materials and the sources from which they can be obtained. Purchases, even, will be made upon request, the services of an expert shopper in these lines being available to members without any fee or commission upon our part.

Moreover, the range of questions that will be admitted covers the entire decoration and furnishing of Craftsman homes. The treatment of woods, metals, fabrics of all sorts, wall coverings, floor coverings, color schemes, and even landscape gardening and the proper care of lawns and grounds, will be among the many subjects upon which expert advice will be given if needed.

In brief, any problem that can engage the thoughts of engaged or newly married people concerning the ideal home they hope to have may be submitted to the Club by personal letter, and it will be our pleasure to see to it that the best possible solution is suggested. Moreover, many Chapters will no doubt wish to add a literary element to the friendly social hours of the meetings. While the hands of the workers are engaged in needlework or other crafts, papers can be read and various discussions held under suitable leadership. The editorial staff of the Craftsman will regard it as a privilege to assist in planning literary work of this sort, suggesting recommended readings, sending lists of books and referring inquiring members to every available source of information. Papers, of course, cannot be actually prepared to be read at these gatherings. Every craftsman must work out for himself something that will be, in a real sense, his own, but all proper assistance will be cheerfully afforded.

The proposed mail service of the Club will be an individual privilege, conveyed by the certificate of membership and assured by means of attached coupons. Each of these, if detached and mailed with the letter of inquiry to the national headquarters of the Club, will entitle the holder to an answer, full and explanatory, to any one question he may wish to ask. We have instituted this because much perplexity, embarrassment, and unnecessary expense could be spared intending homebuilders, if expert advice could be made available. How often are hardwood floors or other expensive interior decorations ruined by improper treatment, which can be made right only by submitting to additional expense. How often are inharmonious effects in color or injudicious combinations of all sorts discovered only when it is too late to find a remedy,—except through the waste of what has been done and the cost of new appointments. Another difficulty encountered by people living in the smaller communities, and less populous sections of the country, is that of obtaining proper supplies for work that is being done,—or just the one thing needed to complete an otherwise perfect decorative scheme. It is just because we know of no other way in which these problems can be effectually solved that we have deemed it wise to undertake the trouble and expense of organizing a Bureau for this purpose.

The Homebuilders’ Club will afford a means of registering those who desire to avail themselves of these privileges. Without some such formal organization and mutual understanding, comparatively few persons would feel free to ask the Craftsman for personal assistance in this fashion. There is a natural independence about us as Americans that makes us hesitate to impose our wants and wishes upon others, no matter how freely we may feel that they will meet our requests. But where there is an explicit agreement the case is otherwise. We have accordingly defined the limits and conditions within which this privilege will be accorded, and these we will be glad to communicate by mail to those interested.