

# Women in Business

**T**HE Women's National Book Association is a unique organization, founded a few months ago in the interest of the women who are engaged in the book-selling business and its allied lines. Publishers, authors, book buyers and book sellers—women who have been demonstrating for some time that there is no more of a sex line in the book business than in the ballot—are members of the organization which has grown out of the desire of a number of women to promote greater efficiency in the merchandising of books and to give women their proper place in one of the most important of the country's industries.

The organization has closed its first season, having celebrated the occasion at a banquet which was held during the national convention of the American Booksellers' Association. Several hundred men and women, leaders in many avenues of endeavor which go to make up the book business, were there in testimony to the tremendous growth of women's influence in the industry—from the time the manuscript leaves the hands of the author until it is placed in its finished form in the library of the reader.

It has not been so long ago that women first began to hold positions of importance in the book-selling world, but those days have given way to a new era in which women are joining hands with men in making a better place for books in the world. Thirty-eight women attended one of the morning sessions of the American Booksellers' Convention, and there is evidence that the number of women delegates will be greatly increased by the time of the next gathering.

The first year of the Women's National Book Association has been a memorable and a busy one for the members of the association. Outstanding features in the association's activities have been the social functions, with their formal programs of speakers, and the monthly gatherings held in the Sunwise Turn Book Shop, where matters of mutual interest to women booksellers have been threshed out in informal discussions. There have been talks on such subjects as advertising, the overhead expense of book selling, the art of selling books, the mail-order book business, juvenile book questions, and numerous other topics vitally interesting to the book trade. These meetings have been an open forum for the mutual benefit of the women who have succeeded in establishing themselves as bona-fide book sellers.

Unlike many national associations which meet in disconnected units and are national in name only, the Women's National Book Association is national in fact as well as in name. The entire proceedings of these fortnightly meetings are taken down in shorthand and the transcribed copies sent broadcast to every member of the association, permitting them to enjoy a mail-order participation in the meetings. In this way distant chapters of the association get the full

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benefit of their membership, and, in turn, are invited to give expression to their own ideas and make suggestions for the mutual benefit of the members of the association.

**T**HE association claims as its natal day November 13, 1917, when fifteen keen-visioned women, alert to the opportunities offered women in the business of merchandising books, met together and created the national association, elected officers, and mapped out a busy year's work. The officers who have guided the destinies of the association since its inception are: Mrs. Pauline C. Sherwood, president; Miss Lulu Jacobs, secretary; Miss H. J. Pfanstiehl, treasurer. The chairman of the Membership Committee is Miss E. F. Widman; of the Publicity Committee, Miss Martha Kramer; of the Entertainment Committee, Miss Madge Jenison.

Book Association. It was our idea to bring together in one unit all the allied professions of the book trade in order that greater scope and strength might be given the activities of women engaged in these various professions. The association can be made to serve as the mouthpiece and organ of the various units in all of the matters which are of common interest.

"There is always a bond of mutual interest between the members of the various professions engaged in the making and selling of books. The author, the publisher, the book seller are mutually interested in the success of each other's work, and it is our idea to get all three together for the discussion and consideration of common problems and matters of general interest. Our plan of keeping each member of the association in close touch with the work of these meetings has contributed greatly to the solidarity of the common interests of women in the book making and selling industry. The requests for membership are coming in so rapidly that it will not be long before the out-of-town members will be taking an active part in the planning of the year's programs, though they may be thousands of miles away. Our aim is to abolish distance in the building up of our organization.

"It was decided to make our programs exclusive women's programs for a time, at least, and we have had many delightful surprises in finding so many women holding positions of great responsibility in the various avenues of our profession. We hope to bring to the front women who have achieved success in the allied field of books, but who have been too modest to make known their achievements. We shall probably adhere to the rule of having women speakers for some time, as a means of stimulating greater interest in the work of the association among the members themselves.



MRS. PAULINE C. SHERWOOD

MISS LULU JACOBS

No more enthusiastic member of the association can be found than Miss Jenison, who, with Mrs. Mary Mowbray Clark, rules the affairs of the Sunwise Turn Book Shop, where the National Association has held many of its meetings. Miss Jenison's enthusiasm about the capabilities of women in the professional life of the country and the opportunities presented in the book trade, together with the inspiration of the suffrage parade of last year, which marked another red-letter day on the calendar of women's activities, were responsible, in a measure, for the existence of the association.

"Miss Jenison says that it was while every one was planning for the big suffrage parade last year that I discovered how unorganized were the women in the book-selling profession. I wanted to march in a group with members of my own profession, but I discovered that there was no such organization. This discovery set some of us to thinking and planning, and out of this planning came the Women's National

**"T**HE women are demonstrating that they can stand by each other, and are developing a spirit of professional pride which speaks well for the future of the members of the association. Our book store is a little more than two years old, and we were the first women in New York City to open an exclusive book shop; but women generally have stood by us splendidly. I must say that in the beginning the publishers and the men who knew something of the book business were not encouraging in their estimates of our projects. They all agreed that an exclusive book shop would hardly pay. We believed then that a book shop such as ours could succeed, and we still believe it. But an exclusive book store must be rightly handled to be a success. Book selling is not mere commerce. The more one understands human nature the better one is qualified to sell books. If you regard books as ideas and ideas as equipment, the whole face of the world changes for book selling."