



MRS. ADELAIDE HOODLESS

Adelaide Hunter was born in 1857 on a farm near St. George in Brant County, Ontario, the youngest of twelve children. Her brothers were university men, and Adelaide grew up in a home of culture and uncompromising presbyterian ethics; grew up, too, with all the social graces that come of natural charm and a gentle background.

In 1880 she married Mr. John Hoodless of Hamilton. Tragedy struck when her first baby died at the age of eighteen months. She felt that if she had known more about how to take care of a baby she might have saved him; also, when it was discovered that the milk delivered to her home was not safe for babies, she felt she should have known that, too. So, she headed a campaign for clean milk in her city; and began her crusade for Home Economics education for girls.

In 1889 she became interested in the Hamilton Y.W.C.A. and furthered its efforts to teach girls better methods in household affairs. In 1896 while addressing a meeting of the Farmers' Institute which was held in Guelph, she suggested that if such an organization helped the farmers of Ontario to produce better stock and crops, that a similar organization should assist farmer's wives to be better homemakers. Erland Lee, a young farmer from Stoney Creek in the Niagara peninsula, invited her to come to his locality to present this suggestion. The outcome of the whole thing was that, at a meeting held in Squire's Hall at Stoney Creek on the 19th of February 1897, the first Women's Institute in the world was organized. One hundred and one women attended this meeting. In 1960, 64 years later, Canada boasts a membership of 80,000 members, and the movement has spread all around the world.