

She needed the faith, because the opening of her class was accompanied by a chorus of scorn and derision. "Are

Hamilton mothers no longer able to teach their daughters how to cook?" asked the Hamilton Spectator. And the suggestion made frequently in letters to the editor, from public platforms, and even from some pulpits, was: "Why doesn't she stay at home and look after her own family?"

It is difficult to appreciate fully what Mrs. Hoodless accomplished until we remember the social prejudices of

her time. Although she eventually won a great many people over to her cause, at no time during her life was she ever free from criticism and even calumny. But as she herself said, there were magnificent compensations.

The first thing Mrs. Hoodless' school demonstrated was that domestic science education was not just a matter of cooking and sewing. "Domestic science," she explained on many occasions, "is the application of scientific principles to the management of a home. It teaches the value of pure air, proper food, systematic management, economy, care of children, domestic and civic sanitation and the prevention of disease.

It calls for higher ideals of home life and more respect for domestic occupations. In short it is a direct education for women as homemakers."

Just as the determination to start these classes had been one of the main reasons she accepted the presidency of the Hamilton YWCA, the same aim next prompted her to found the YWCA of Canada so that the knowledge of her Hamilton classes might spread to other YWCAs across Canada.

As an indication of how far in advance of her time Mrs. Hoodless was, many of her speeches, delivered 60 and more years ago, still read very much like yesterday's editorial or next week's address by a child psychologist to the local PTA. Long before the First World War and the motor car had torn the Victorian home asunder, she was preaching the vital importance of a stable home to a stable society. She blamed "the rising tide of lawlessness, the empty churches and the disturbing increase in divorce statistics" on the weakening of the home ties.

"The management of the home has more to do in the moulding of character than any other influence, owing to the large place it fills in the early life of the individual, during the most plastic stage of development," she said on one occasion. "We are, therefore, justified in an effort to secure a place for home economics, or domestic science, in the educational

Mrs. Hoodless

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institutions of this country." Among her often-used axioms were: "You purify society when you purify the home," and "A nation cannot rise above the level of its homes." And she was fond of quoting Herbert Spencer's theory that "The welfare of the family underlies the welfare of society."

One of the first people Mrs. Hoodless won over to her side was Mr. Ross, who later became Premier of Ontario, and it was on his suggestion that she undertook a strenuous program of addressing various school boards throughout the province. In the period 1894-96 she made 60 such addresses, all in addition to her work with her classes in the Hamilton YWCA, not to mention the care of her husband and three children.

Meanwhile, the National Council of Women (which she helped organize) was sponsoring her household science education program in other parts of the country, with particular success in Nova Scotia, where a domestic science course was introduced in the teacher training school at Truro in 1897.

As a result of her Ontario campaign, a number of Ontario centres decided to introduce domestic science into the school curriculum. This created a demand for teachers, to meet which Mrs. Hoodless expanded her YWCA classes into the Ontario Normal School for Domestic Science and Art in Hamilton, with financial help from Lord Strathcona — the Ontario Government still being reluctant to spend any money on this new-fangled notion.

Within a few years this school had grown to such proportions that, as Mrs. Hoodless put it: "It seemed insignificant to have it depending upon the efforts of one woman, so I appealed to the Department of Education to take it over

as part of its regular teacher training system."

The government agreed to run the school if Mrs. Hoodless could see that it was properly housed, so she went to the Montreal tobacco millionaire Sir William Macdonald, who donated \$125,000 for a school building attached to the O.A.C. at Guelph, and in 1904 the Macdonald Institute was opened, with Mrs. Hoodless herself as one of the lecturers.

During these years, too, she worked tirelessly to help organize the Victorian Order of Nurses. Even in this her single-minded campaign to further the education of women is discernible, for the Order would bring to women in their homes some of the basic facts of hygiene and nutrition.

In the meantime, still another of Mrs. Hoodless' organizations had come into being. In the winter of 1896 a young farmer from Stoney Creek, Erland Lee, had heard Mrs. Hoodless argue that if men could find benefit from banding together to work and study, women could do likewise. Impressed, he asked her to speak at a meeting in Stoney Creek. Mrs. Hoodless agreed. The upshot was that on Feb. 19, 1897, 101 women responded to her call to form an association dedicated to building a better nation by building better homes.

Thus was formed the first Women's Institute. The movement has now spread throughout all Canada and across the seas. When the representatives of the Associated Countrywomen of the World met in Edinburgh last August, one of the first items of business was to pay tribute to Mrs. Adelaide Hunter Hoodless whose inspiration sparked the movement which now embraces six million women in 27 countries.

This was but one of the tributes recently given to a remarkable woman whom most people have been inclined to underestimate for too long. Early this winter, *Continued on opposite page*

erated Women's Institutes of Ontario purchased, for \$11,500, the old Hunter farm near Brantford, where Mrs. Hoodless was born. The intention is to turn the farmhouse and three-acre property into a national historic site in honor of the institutes' foundress.

Earlier last year, on May 13, the Canadian Post Office issued a special postage stamp commemorating the world-wide organization which Mrs. Hoodless founded. However, her name did not appear on the stamp, and the women's institutes are renewing an earlier request that a Hoodless stamp be issued this year commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of her death.

Mrs. Hoodless died on Feb. 26, 1910, stricken by a heart attack in the midst of her work. While addressing the Women's Canadian Club of Toronto on the need for a larger and more advanced teachers' training college in domestic science, she faltered a few minutes after the start of her speech, took a sip of water, and collapsed on the platform where she died within a few minutes. She had barely finished her 52nd year, but she had lived long enough to have received international recognition for her work. A few years earlier a British publication had picked her as its Most Distinguished Woman of the Year. And in 1909 the Directors of the Carnegie Technical Schools asked her to inspect their work in the United States and make a report with recommendations.

After her death, even the Hamilton Spectator, which had criticized her so sharply a decade earlier, was able to say: "She had the prophet's vision of what ought to be, and nobly took upon herself the burden of being the voice crying in the wilderness." ●

**Adelaide Hoodless dared
to call running a home important**



O.A.C., Guelph, Ont.
This portrait of Mrs. Hoodless is at Macdonald Institute