

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

OBSERVATION

By Elizabeth-Ellen Long

On wings of gossamer goes the fly,
 The hop-toad wears a jeweled eye,
 Lizards are carved from greenest jade,
 The serpent's back is rich brocade,
 In veils of lace the spider hides
 And fish have sequin-patterned sides,
 The mouse's coat is velvet-soft,
 Twin rainbows lift the moth aloft,
 The beetle's shell is ruby glass,
 The snail trails silver through the grass,
 The caterpillar has gold bars
 And glow-worms shine like little stars,
 For howsoever small or low
 They are, or in what paths they go,
 You'll find but few live things abroad
 Without some beauty-mark of God!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Britain's First Women's Institute

WHEN the Welsh woman, Constance Davies, was writing her recent book, "A Grain of Mustard Seed," a history of the first Women's Institute in Britain which was Llanfairpwll Institute in Wales, she wrote to Miss Edith Collins of the Ontario Women's Institute Branch for information about the movement in Canada. Miss Collins received a copy of the book and we find her assistance acknowledged in the preface.

Mrs. Davies tells of the difficulty Mrs. Watt from Canada had in getting the Llanfairpwll women interested in organizing an Institute, and of the help given her by Mr. Nugent Harris, Secretary of the Agricultural Organization Society, and later by Sir Horace Plunkett and Col. Cotton. It is interesting that just as Erland Lee called together the women of Stoney Creek to hear Mrs. Hoodless speak, Col. Cotton convened the meeting of the women of Llanfairpwll at which the first Women's Institute of Britain was organized. This was in 1915, one of the blackest years of the first world war when the food blockade threatened Britain with starvation. Naturally for the first several months the Institutes worked mostly on food conservation, and the art of canning or "bottling" was introduced to Institutes that soon began to sprout up all over the British Isles. Sketching the development of Llanfairpwll Institute through the years that followed, Mrs. Davies writes:

"From 'Top-hat Cookery' to 'The Mabino-gion', from 'The Dangers of Flies and Rubbish Heaps' to 'Bolshevism', from 'The Profitable Keeping of Goats' to 'Modern English Poetry', the pendulum swings in enthusiastic abandon. Behind this catholic taste lies, not the foolish fancy that all knowledge can be imbibed in afternoon sips, but a healthy, human desire

to touch life at as many points as possible. It presents the intellectual and recreative opposite to the Institute's more practical affairs. We can see reflected in the range of subjects, the same mental span that encompasses the forming of a Clinic, the managing of a War Savings Association, buying a new hall, helping the Red Cross and Y.M.C.A. to pay their bills, securing the services of a dispenser for the village and making collections at a football match. For these women the world is their oyster, always of course excluding religious dogma, party politics and all forms of sectarianism." (Ed.—An interesting statement, this, on planning programs and projects.)

A good part of the book is given to a record of minutes of meeting and these tell an interesting story of the progress of the first British Institute from its organization up to its Coming of Age Party in 1936. (Some of our Ontario historians have found their old minute books very helpful when they come to prepare a program for a Golden Anniversary.) We read that at the meeting when the Llanfairpwll women planned their twenty-first birthday celebration they had a talk on "The Conservation of the Countryside" and that they sent a letter to the parish council asking that something be done "to stop people throwing litter about the roads." And that the program at the anniversary party would include a charade—perhaps something of the nature of our skits recalling Institute history. Truly the Women's Institutes of Britain are very like our own.

"Beware of desperate steps; the darkest day
 Lived till tomorrow, will have passed away"
 —William Cowper

"Every crucial experience can be regarded
 as a setback—or the start of a new kind of
 development."—Mary Roberts Rinehart.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LUCY ANN

By Rachel Albright

Lucy Ann was the queerest one—
 Not to talk when her work was done.
 Not to gossip, with cups of tea
 And an ancient crony for company.
 But to sit in her blue percale,
 Calmly watching the white clouds sail;
 Never heeding the old wives' tales,
 She who'd weathered a thousand gales,
 Loosed no word from her withered lips
 (She with life at her finger tips)
 But aware that the friendly trees,
 Lilac bloom and anemones
 Were her kin she would gently turn
 From the bitter tongue poised to burn,
 And would lift her eyes to cerise-tipped wings,
 To the loveliness of silent things!
 Lucy Ann was the queerest one—
 Not to talk when her work was done.