

The Costume Club.

A SMART AMERICAN GIRL'S HAPPY IDEA.

HUNDREDS OF TROUSSEAUX ARE PROVIDED EVERY YEAR BY "COSTUME CLUBS."

What is a costume club? It rather suggests an association like the Christmas goose and turkey club, where you may pay so much a week and receive a smart new costume, after so many contributions. But it isn't.

It is merely a delightful and friendly custom of American girl chums to "club together" and help one another with dressmaking, hat trimming, and turning old garments into new.

When an American young lady, as they are so fond of calling themselves, sees her wardrobe getting shabby, she says to her circle of friends:

"Girls, I must summon the Costume Club."

And her friends at once volunteer for sewing and sewing service, and in a very few days their friend is rigged out with a charming trousseau.

It is a capital plan at all times. But when a girl is going to be married, and has not a fortune to spend, it is truly delightful to belong to a costume club.

Perhaps one girl has a talent for trying on. Her special skill is placed at the disposal of her friends. The successful fitter, perhaps, can't trim hats. In return for her services as fitter she gets her millinery made by another girl who is a perfect genius at headgear, but could not fit a blouse or drape a skirt to save her life.

There is safety as well as talent in numbers. A party of girl members of a costume club, meeting together for dress purposes, evolve most charming novelties. They put their heads together, discuss dress and colour schemes, and devise very attractive gowns. The club subscribes for one or two good fashion papers, which all have the benefit of. It is a club rule that the members must avoid dressing alike. Their ambition is to find the style best suited to each "girl costumer," as the members are usually called.

Such clubs are a boon and a blessing to those who live in villages and small country towns. The local dressmaker is not always a very skilful person, and a girl with a small dress allowance cannot afford to go to a more ambitious outfitter. If she can produce her own gowns and millinery so much is saved, and consequently she can afford to wear prettier things.

By combining the tailoring talent and sewing skill possessed by a dozen girls, most charming costumes may be achieved. Each girl learns some valuable "wrinkle" from all the other girls. And it is surprising what capital dressmakers and milliners

the members of a costume club become after a few months of working together. Each vies with the other to "cut out" a costume without an inch of waste, and half a dozen clever young brains combined can renovate a worn gown, and put a wonderful amount of style into a hopelessly old-fashioned skirt or blouse.

Girl readers of the "Graphic" cannot do better than form some costume clubs. It is a splendid way to "pass time" in the country and to achieve pretty clothes without extravagance.

Neglect of Home Making.

We are wont to think, perhaps, that women in England are still hopelessly old-fashioned, and that the problems brought into home life by the changed attitude of women there-to have no existence. However, from a series of letters on the subject of "The Decay of Domesticity," lately published in a London daily paper, we are led to believe that the vexed questions of "modernity" are as disquieting there as here.

It is noteworthy, too, that the most of the letters which have been written both by men and women have either taken the extremely masculine, conservative view, rating the non-domestic woman as selfish, idle, etc., or have argued from the radical, "new woman" standpoint, scorning the small duties of home as unworthy the consideration of intellectual and gifted members of the gentler sex. One woman, however, brings a contribution which is so carefully considered that we think it quite worth while to quote part of it. This writer contends that if the domestic instinct among women is indeed dying out, the present superior opportunities for the cultivation of the mind are not to blame for it. "It is not owing," she says, "to the fact of woman's wider ambition and greater activity, but to the fact that these have not included 'home training'—that is, the training of every girl for her duties, firstly as a mother, secondly as a house orderer, which will be hers until St. Paul's cathedral stands on its spire and waves its foundations. At present she 'fukes' the whole business of child-rearing and training, with the help, perhaps, of an anxious mother, an ignorant nurse, and the local practitioner. The lessons of higher morality, sound logic and hygiene (all necessary to her own as well as to child education) are quietly left out.

"Likewise does she fuke her house-keeping, here with the help, frequently, of her 'best friend' and the cookery book. If she has not 'picked up' housekeeping at home there is nowhere else for her to go and learn it, so she starts without it.

"What we don't learn to do we do

badly; what we do badly we do unwillingly; what we do unwillingly we are glad to exchange for the 'pleasures' and the 'sports' that are now deplored as usurping the place of home happiness. And certainly this happiness would be obtainable if, through home training, the perfecting of our homes became an easy possibility instead of a hopeless struggle.

"The woman who is born with domestic faculties, and who takes to keys and ladders as a duck takes to water, is almost invariably a happy woman, not to speak of the happiness which she confers on those about her. And she is not necessarily the 'mere drudge' that we hear so much about. The methodical woman has time for everything, as well as place for everything, and will never rattle her keys in the drawingroom, so to speak, as the distracted, incompetent housekeeper will.

"Then (I hear the adversary's voice), 'would you have every woman trained as a child educator and housekeeper to the exclusion of all else?'"

"Certainly not." "Women may be roughly divided into four classes:

- 1. The average woman who hopes to marry and does marry.
 - 2. The average woman who hopes to marry and doesn't marry.
 - 3. The exceptional woman who possesses some special gift or inclination and who marries.
 - 4. The exceptional, gifted woman who does not marry.
- "To whichever of these four classes home training is not a necessity it is

at worst no disadvantage. It will not unfit any woman for any other calling whatsoever. It must assist the most determinedly undomestic of women in those details of life which there is no avoiding. To the first of the four (the average married woman) it would be of inestimable value. To the second it would also be of value in adding to the list of profitable professions already open to the average spinster, enabling her, as it would, to undertake the home duties of the third class, the gifted but married woman, who would be only too thankful for trained and competent help.

"And on the fourth class, the gifted single woman, it is hardly necessary to say that home training will have left few marks, but that she will find her own happiness in her own gifts. At present woman is very busy ploughing man's field, regardless of the neglected condition of her own field—as fine and profitable as one, any day. Let her look at it."

Names and Their Meanings.

(From "Girls' Christian Names," by Helena Swann.)

Ethel—Signifying "noble." Before the Norman Conquest it was a Royal name in England.
Helen—Giver of light. Helena, Elaine, Eleanore, Eleanor, Ellen, Elinor, Lena, Nelly, Nell, Lenora, Lenora, Annore, and Anora are a few English versions of the name, whilst in Ireland they have the pretty forms of Eileen and Aileen.
Katharine—Spotless purity. Catherine, Kate, Kitty, Katie, Katty, Kathleen, Catherina, Katreu, and Rina

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