

## SCHOOL OF DOMESTIC INSTRUCTION.\*

That good housewifery is not instinctive only too many women have sadly found. And yet how often do we act as if it were as natural for a woman to know how to wash and bake, to clean and sew, as for a dog to know how to bark or an infant to cry. A girl who has never held household reins marries, and has charge of a house; cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing, sewing, and nursing await her inexperienced hands. Many are the failures, the perplexities, the mortifications she meets with. Her maid is probably quite as ignorant, having had no opportunity of seeing how work should be done; and so the home struggles on with but sorry comfort for all.

To remedy this state of affairs women are rousing themselves. Schools and classes for practical instruction in all housewifery arts are everywhere springing up. And not only will the homes be benefitted; the individual labourer, be she mistress or maid will be qualified to command respect and take her place as one of the skilled workers of the world.

Such a school has been in existence in Christchurch for some time. Wishing to learn something of the success attending the efforts of the promoters, I called one morning on the lady superintendent. Unfortunately it was holiday time. I had therefore no opportunity of seeing the classes actually at work, but Mrs Gardner kindly gave me all the possible information.

The fees are exceedingly moderate—classes for children, girls engaged in business, and domestic servants, 5s per term; other classes, 10s 6d per term. This fee admits to one two-hour lesson per week, and the hours are arranged so as to suit all comers—morning, 10 to 12; afternoon, 2 to 4; evening, 7 to 9.

Every morning a complete dinner is cooked, for which each pupil has to prepare some one dish (and have it ready to time), the good things concocted in the afternoon and evening classes being somewhat less substantial.

Several young men are preparing for up-country life by attending the evening classes.

In the laundry, the whole process of sorting, soaking, washing, and ironing clothes is gone through, while special attention is paid to the getting up of such varying articles as shirts, dresses, and laces.

Needlework is another important department. Instruction is given in all branches. Dressmaking is taught with use of the Columbia fitter.

Any girl who chooses to take a thorough course of instruction at the school will, of course, receive a certificate to that effect.

Though only in its infancy, the school numbered over 120 pupils last term—a most gratifying beginning. Space limit prevents further particulars, but we certainly advise those who wish to thoroughly prepare their daughters or themselves for household duties, as mistresses or maids, to call, inspect, and enquire for themselves.

## Query and Answer.

"C" writes, asking—How can busy W.C.T.U. members assist Band of Hope work?

If the busy member be not too busy, to devote a little time to helping the children learn recitations or dialogues, there are few Band of Hope superintendents who are not glad to find the children letter-perfect when they volunteer a "piece." Suitable recitations being somewhat uncommon, it is a good plan to cut or copy out and keep such verses and rhetorical passages as commend themselves, so as to offer the children a larger choice than their own books give. It is possible also, by personal influence, to ensure a larger membership, and more regular attendance, at Band of Hope meetings.—RURU.

"A Member" writes asking how the Federation scheme is to be worked out.

I imagine that the first step will be to form a local council, composed of all suitable women's organisations in each centre. The matters of forming a national council and of federating with the International Council may perhaps be held over until Mrs Sheppard returns to the colony in January next, when full and explicit instructions will probably be given.—L.

## WOMEN IN FRENCH PRISONS.

In a recent number of the *Nineteenth Century* is an article on the above subject by Mr Spearman, which evidences that in France they do some things better than in England. Mr Spearman says: "Serious endeavours are made, not only to humanise her, but also to raise her self-respect. She is encouraged to support her present position as an atonement to society—which she has offended; and to her family—whom she has disgraced. She is not treated as if she were dead to all family affections; on the contrary, frequent communication with her family is considered of the very greatest assistance in the work of reformation. Prisoners may see their relatives twice a week, and though they may write only once a month, there is an absolute discretion left with the governor to allow more frequent communication. The hair of female prisoners is not cut. Nursing mothers and those who have children born in prison are allowed to have the care of the little ones till the latter reach the age of four,

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