

## TRAINING FUTURE HOUSEKEEPERS

By Mrs. J. D. MacMillan

Probably no time in the history of the world has house-keeping—good housekeeping—been regarded as such a rural business occupation as at the present time. In the past house-keepers were supposed, like Topsy, to "just grow." There was so little else for women to do but housekeep. Girls stayed at home and helped their mothers or took service in other homes under housekeepers or mistresses, and in due time, married and applied the knowledge thus gained to keeping their own homes and training their daughters. They knew nothing of domestic science—hygiene entered not into their thoughts. How different, how complex is the housekeeping of to-day. Science and invention have made great strides in the past thirty or forty years and we can imagine the astonishment of the house-keeper of say forty years ago if she could look in on our modern housekeeper some morning and see her place upon the breakfast table a piece of metal, attached it in some mysterious way by a cord to the wall, and proceed to make toast or cook bacon on the said piece of metal. And her astonishment would be increased if, after breakfast was over, the modern house-keeper proceeded to talk into a box on the wall and to issue various orders for supplies for the day's provisioning. Imagine her complete amazement when later the said provisions arrived in a vehicle drawn neither by men nor horses, but by an invisible (but not unsmellable) power.

The business of housekeeping has indeed made notable progress since the days of tallow dips and spinning wheels, but there is much yet to be done before it is recognized as one of the most dignified professions open to women, and it is the housekeeper of to-day and to-morrow who will have to help to attain to that end.

Most men have theory that woman was created to keep house for man, and that therefore all women should be born housekeepers and should take it as her natural vocation in life. Never was there a more mistaken idea. One might as well say that all singers could sing grand opera or that any man could build a house simply because he was handy with saw and hammer. Often the man of the house would be found, if put to the test, to be a better housekeeper than his wife, while she if thrown upon her own resources, might develop a wonderful aptitude for business that would carry her to a success far beyond any he could ever accomplish. While, however, the genuinely "born housekeeper" is not as universal as many people imagine her to be, women are so adaptable that something almost just as good may be trained and molded from any quick-minded and intelligent young woman, but while the woman with a natural instinct for the work will cling to her household goods to the end of her life, the other will fly to more congenial work at the first opportunity.

In training housekeepers the work should be made as attractive and interesting as possible. The fundamentals—order, economy, and thoroughness, are perhaps taught better by example than by precept.

It is little use telling a child to do this and so if it sees its teacher calmly ignoring her own advice. Order may be called the great indispensable of good housekeeping—economy and thoroughness are its natural sequences.

An orderly home no matter how plainly or even poorly furnished, is always attractive, and has a marked influence upon its inmates, especially the young. I do not use the word order in its narrow sense. A house in which everything is set neatly and precisely just so and is expected to stay just so is a chilling and repressive place—smooth and polished but cold. By order I mean regulation, system.

Teach the young housekeeper why as well as how—explain the principles which underlie the process. She will soon come to understand why certain things should be done in certain ways to produce the best results.

Train her to do her work with the least possible expenditure of strength and energy—to save herself as much as possible. The necessity for this is apparent when we consider that a housekeeper who is also her own cook has to prepare and cook at least three meals a day for three hundred and sixty-five days in the year—1,095 meals a year—and for year after year. The amount of mental and physical labour this involves is appalling.

Nevertheless our young housekeeper should be trained to look upon good cookery as a fine art, an art that she cannot thoroughly master without knowing something of the chemical composition of the various foods and the uses they serve in the system. Some wise person has said scientific housekeeping is neither beneath the attention of the refined nor beyond the reach of the uncultured. It is the duty of the rich; it is the salvation of the poor; and another has said, "The number of inhabitants who may be supported in any country upon its internal products depends as much upon the state of the art of cookery as upon that of agriculture."

A very important part of the training is the management of money—how to spend to the best advantage in buying household supplies. Here the experienced housekeeper will shake her head and sigh. She knows, who better, of the pitfalls that have been dugged for the unwary feet of the young housekeeper, the mistakes she will meet, the things she will buy that she does not need—the money she will spend on things that "look all right," but which she will discover later sadly belie their looks—the things she buys that are, she is assured by the suave salesman, just as good as something she knows to be reliable. In the innocence of her heart and her ignorance of the way of the business world, she believes most all she is told.

This part of her training she usually pays for in hard cash. Whether she pays too much or not depends on her own business ability, and on whether she has had previous experience in the management of her own pocket money. And just to add a touch of lightness to the weightier matters in the training of our young housekeeper, it might be well to hint that

most men prefer a pie artist to any other kind, and that while he

"May live without poetry, music or books,  
Civilized man cannot live without cooks."

It is interesting to speculate on the housekeeping of the future. In a few years the inventions and labour-saving devices which we now regard as so wonderful will probably be obsolete. Inventions and devices still more wonderful will have taken their places but what they will be we cannot even imagine.

The trend of the day is to specialize. Will it be applied to housekeeping? And why not? The woman of to-day is a restless creature. Her children, her husband and her home are still the most precious things in the world to her, but they are not her whole world. She, too, wants "a place in the sun," and when she gains it it will not mean, as so many people seem to think, that the world will be turned topsy turvy, and she the most frivolous thing upon it. Rather will responsibility add to her seriousness and she will step forward into a quieter, simpler, saner way of living, keeping her house, extending hospitality to her friends, and training her children, her daughters to be housewives, her sons to be husbands, and both sons and daughters to the duties of true citizenship.

## CLOTHING CLUB WORK

The former bulletin on "Garment Making" has been revised under the title of "Clothing Club" and is now ready for distribution.

Copies of the bulletin will be forwarded to specially interested Institute members, and a copy will be available for each girl taking up the work of the club.

This literature is prepared to assist girls in knowing how to plan, select, make and care for her clothing. The object of the club is briefly:

- To teach elementary steps in sewing.
- To teach girls to patch, darn and take daily care of clothing.
- To help them plan, select and make simple garments.
- To develop an ability to judge, demonstrate and exhibit.
- To teach girls to dress simply and attractively.
- To interest them in personal appearance (posture, grooming, clothing).
- To encourage the daily consideration of personal health.

### MEMBERSHIP:—

Junior—The members shall be between the age of ten and twenty, inclusive.

Senior—The members shall be between the age of twenty-one and twenty-six, inclusive.

Note—Juniors and Seniors may work together with the Seniors undertaking more work, if considered advisable. Separate membership records should be kept.

Leader—A girl, club member or woman with a knowledge of sewing and gift of leadership may act as leader for this project, teaching and directing the sewing. She will be responsible for addresses and discussions for each meeting, either giving them herself, securing outside assistance, or arranging for club members to do it under her direction.

### Care of Clothing

Proper care of clothing will improve the appearance and lengthen the service of all garments. Some girls appear neater and more pleasing in old garments than others do in new, simply because they take the time and trouble to keep their garments clean, mended and free from wrinkles.

Garments should be aired, brushed if needed and carefully put away every time they are taken off in order to keep them fresh and free from wrinkles. Dresses and coats should not be carelessly thrown down but placed on hangers as soon as they are removed.

Dresses, undergarments and accessories should receive definite care and attention, as outlined in this section of the bulletin.

### Repair of Clothing

Clothing must be kept repaired if it is to give service and look neat. Garments should be mended promptly and carefully as soon as a worn place appears. Neat mending and proper care of clothing are necessary if one desires to always make a good appearance.

Much valuable information is given in this club bulletin

## WHY I BELONG TO THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

The following interesting answers to the above roll call will point to some of the practical values of Women's Institutes.

1. I get good practical hints from other members on housekeeping, gardening, etc.
2. A great deal of pleasure from the association with my fellow members, whom I might meet about once a year if it were not for the W.I.'s.
3. The programs being planned ahead are usually a source of education, as we have to do some studying to find answers to contests and roll calls.
4. Each member has a chance to exercise her own particular talent in some of the numerous contests.

5. As long as I can find the 25c I shall be a member of the W.I.

1. Because I get new ideas.
2. I get out and meet with my neighbours.
3. I can do a little to help.
4. I can see what splendid things the Institute is doing.
5. I go home and have something new to think about while I work.

1. Because it relieves the monotony of every day work to meet my neighbours and enjoy a social hour.
2. Because we learn so much from each other.
3. Because of the many helps provided us by the Ontario Dept. of Agriculture.
4. Because we meet those of congenial tastes and desires similar to our own.

## Aids in Sewing

Looking back fifteen or twenty years it is brought very forcibly to our attention how fortunate we are in the facilities we have for making beautiful clothes for ourselves.

To-day practically every woman has at least one good fashion magazine. Even though one may live in a very remote section of the country she knows almost as soon as her city sisters what are the prevailing styles.

So great is the advance in the service to be gained in the modern pattern with its printed directions and construction guides that it is a simple thing to select a design in keeping with fashionable good taste, and develop a most gratifying result by following the directions given.

But most helpful of all is the modern sewing machine which is practically noiseless, equipped with several new attachments which simplify the work and give an accuracy and uniformity of result. In fact seams flow like magic, and finishes undreamed of, are becoming possible to anyone who will persevere in learning to use them. Hems, tucks, ruffles, binding and braiding—all those attractive details that contribute so much to the beauty of the work are easily and quickly done because the modern machine has made them as simple as the more familiar seams and stitches.

The attachments may be used with the ease with which one uses the scissors. A hem is turned, or ruffles formed, or pleats are made, as simply as a pan of biscuits is browned, merely by using the conveniences that are included in the little box of attachments.

One of the latest attachments for the machine is a clever device which can be operated while using the machine which notches the edge of the seam, also recently there has been placed on the market a new type of scissors with a notched cutting blade which pinks or notches the seam as it is being cut, thus finishing the edge before the garment is basted. Each of these articles is practically the same price, and serve the same purpose.

Every machine should be treated as a friend to which you will give the consideration its needs require. Many sewing machines know only abuse and neglect.

The equipment necessary for the proper cleaning of the machine consists of a piece of cheese cloth, a large screw driver and a stiletto.

Only high grade oil should be used and one one drop should be applied to each bearing, and each point where there is any friction. Many household oils are not suitable for sewing machine use.

When planning a thorough oiling, remove the upper thread, slide plate, bobbin, bobbin case, needle and presser foot. Put one drop of oil into each oil hole and joint. If the machine has been idle for several weeks and runs hard, it is probably due to gummed oil. If this is the case all working parts should be carefully oiled with kerosene or gasoline which will loosen the gummed oil. Run the machine rapidly for a few minutes and wipe thoroughly with a piece of cheese cloth. Then oil all working parts with high grade sewing machine oil. A second oiling after a few hours of use is advisable whenever kerosene or gasoline has been used.