

# At the Sign of the Maple

A DEPARTMENT

MAINLY FOR WOMEN



A Class of Grade Eight Girls Taking a Lesson in Cooking in the Domestic Science Room, Alexandra School, Winnipeg.

## Homemakers in the Making.

BY MARY S. MANTLE.

FIFTEEN pairs of eyes peered anxiously into fifteen pots simmering over fifteen gas jets, as the warning was given, "Don't cook them so fast that they will break before they're done." And a few minutes later fifteen little cooks were either proudly or sadly exhibiting the results of their efforts to "coddle" apples.

The sun streamed in through the high windows of the Domestic Science Room at the Alexandra School, Winnipeg, on to the long tables, forming three sides of a square, around which were grouped Grade 8 girls busy with their cooking-lesson; while in the centre of the square thus formed stood a dining-table and four dining-room chairs. Each girl had her own allotted space at the work-table, her own gas jet, and in the drawers in front of her were all the utensils she needed in an ordinary way for the lessons to be given—two saucepans, little bowls, knives, egg beater, wooden spoon, and so on, a complete, well-chosen equipment. Cupboards, filled with the necessary china and glass for serving, stood along one wall. Sinks, large gas stoves and a serving table occupied the end of the room facing the blackboards, which were used freely throughout the lesson. The equipment provided for a class of twenty-two pupils, but sometimes a class would number as many as twenty-five. The girls were divided into groups of fours, and at the close of the cooking lesson one of the quartette was named as house-keeper, one told off to do the washing up, another the drying, while the fourth scrubbed the tables and swept the floor. Part of the house-keeper's duty was to see that the sinks were clean, and the two serving tables likewise.

### Always Asked—Why?

"WHY do you bake bananas in a granite pan, Katie?" The lesson for this particular day was on fruit.

"Cos it's better than tin," answers Katie.

"Why?" A reason is demanded for the faith that is in her.

"Cos the acid in fruit has an effect on the tin."

There was no mistaking that it was a twentieth century answer which another girl gave to the question, "Why do we cook fruit?"

"To kill the germs," she said, eagerly, with awe in her tone. Evidently to her "germs" were very much alive!

There are two Domestic Science Rooms in the public schools of Winnipeg, the one mentioned at the Alexandra School, which has been in operation for about seven years, and one at the Aberdeen School, started a little over a year ago. Miss Black, a graduate of the Macdonald Institute, Guelph, is in charge of the former, and her bright, lucid way of teaching is calculated to make the work interesting to her pupils. She faces a different class morning and afternoon each day throughout the school

week, and even has an overflow class on Saturday morning, teaching in all about 220 girls. The time allotted for the work, half a day a week for each girl, is not enough to satisfy some of the enthusiasts, but they are encouraged to try at home the recipes they have been taught at school, and to report the results.

### "They Love Making Things"

"WILL you please taste this?" said a voice at my elbow, and I turned to find one of the pupils handing me a sample of Cranberry Mold made in class that morning. An expression of satisfaction after tasting it evidently emboldened another maiden, for she approached me, saying, pleasantly, "Wouldn't you like my coddled apple; I cooked it myself?" There was pride in her tone, and laying it down before me she retired to her seat, amid half suppressed giggles from one or two of her companions. No doubt about it; those girls had learned their lesson well that morning! And it was a fruitful lesson, in more senses than one.



THE HON. MRS. ERIC CHAPLIN,  
With her two sons, Anthony and Niall. From a Painting exhibited in the galleries of the Royal Institute of Painters.

—The Bystander.

Besides the dishes mentioned, the class commenced the cooking of prunes. This process, being a long one, would be completed, and the prunes served by the afternoon class. Throughout the teaching emphasis was laid on the theory of what they were doing, and clear explanations given as to the reason for every move. Some searching questions, too, found their way down the ranks. At every lesson the girls are given two cards to take away with them. On one of these is a summary of the theory of the lesson for the day, while on the other are recipes fitting in with what has been taught. If they attend regularly, by the end of the term every girl has a pretty complete cookery book, and has learned at least one or two recipes in each department of cookery.

"They do love making things," said the teacher, as my eye travelled round the room, and I remarked on the keen interest all were taking in the matter in hand. "Most of them take good care not to miss a cooking lesson."

"I see you believe in sitting to work when it is possible," I said, glancing at the stools provided for the girls.

"Why not?" she asked. "Is there any virtue in standing to pare apples when you might sit and do it? There are so many things one can do just as well sitting as standing if care is taken to have a stool of the right height."

"Another thing I believe in," she continued, "is teaching them to use few cooking utensils, making one do every bit of work for which it is fitted. We try to make use of the very simplest equipment possible, such utensils as would be found in any and every home."

"Wouldn't you like to see the frying pan superseded by the fireless cooker?" I asked. "If most of our 'frys' were turned into stews, fireless cooker stews, shouldn't we be all the better for the change?"

She waxed enthusiastic as she replied, "The fireless cooker! Ah! I do believe in that, thoroughly believe in it."

### At Home

THE pupils of the domestic science classes at this school will hold "at homes" for two weeks shortly before the close of school next year. Parents and friends will be invited to come, to mark, learn, and even to inwardly digest the results of domestic science training in the public schools of the city. Another idea which may be carried out before school closes is the cooking and serving by the scholars of a full-course meal, at which members of the School Board will be the guests of honour.

With development as rapid as it is in Western Canada the problems connected with the administration of schools must be many and pressing; yet one cannot help voicing a wish, which is the wish of many, that domestic science and manual training shall, as soon as possible, be extended to all pupils from Grade 6 up; and that it shall be