

OPTIONAL SUBJECT

DOMESTIC SCIENCE

The study of domestic economy and the practice of housework have become, at the present time, an almost obligatory part of the education of young girls. Teachers should, therefore, give to this subject all the importance which belongs to it. They should see to it that, in classes where these lessons are organized, the programme laid down be exactly followed by the pupils.

It is precisely on this account that this optional subject has been singled out for special attention.

First elements of domestic economy with useful applications.

Organization of the home.—Care of the home.

Furniture: of the kitchen, of the dining-room, of the bedroom, of the reception room, etc. Care of furniture.

Tableware: in what it consists, care and washing of same; kitchen requisites: what they are, care and cleaning of same.

Heating and lighting: practical advice.

Sweeping and dusting.

Care of linen, bedding, clothes, boots, shoes, and furs.

Washing and ironing.

Food: qualities of the different food substances, of the principal beverages; what should be done to keep them from spoiling. General information on cooking.

Hygienic meals, of what they are composed. How to lay the table, the cover, to serve, to clear the table.

Needlework.—Sewing. Mending. Marking. linen. Crochet. Embroidery.

Cutting out, making up the most simple articles of clothing.

In all that concerns the organization of the lessons in this subject, teachers are allowed the greatest liberty. These lessons, however, should be restricted to general principles, with simple, practical applications.

In organizing this course teachers should be influenced principally by the practical side of the subject.

Let teachers acquire a true, an exact notion of the most urgent needs of families—realize what, later on, will probably be the condition of life of the pupils now confided to their care, and let the lessons given be such as will fit the pupils to successfully meet the expected conditions.

Minute distinctions would be out of place in giving instruction in this subject. Teachers are strongly advised to follow a well-graded method and to unite theory with practice. When certain practical exercises cannot be performed by the pupils themselves, they should at least be required to observe others performing them, care being taken to make them note even the details. But the why of things, the explanation of the reasons of the different things to be done, are not less useful. Otherwise the course would lose its educational character. As it is the education of the mistress of the house, of a housewife, that it is desired to effect, the teaching should never be such as would be given to an apprentice. The preceding sentence indicates the surest way to elevate the teaching of domestic economy, and even of housework in the eyes of both pupils and parents, and thus to destroy the prejudice which exists against it.