

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

"Jack of all trades, master of none," and "every man to his trade," are allowed to be wise old saws, but few think of applying them to women, or womanly work. The average Canadian woman is expected to be mistress of all feminine arts from the execution of a *Sonata* to the making of a stylish suit or cooking of a delicious dinner; and this too almost intuitively, for except with regard to the *Sonata* she has had but little practice or instruction. She has probably studied music for about two hours daily during ten years of her life—allowing sixty-five days yearly as holidays, she has spent six thousand hours learning how to execute that *Sonata*—how many hours is she likely to have devoted to the making of dresses or dinners? She may indeed have made some dresses, but we fear, few dinners; and yet it is more important that she should be a good cook than an amateur dressmaker. Dinners must be cooked every day, dresses need not be made oftener than twice a year; and good dress-makers are more plentiful than good cooks. Of course every girl should know how to sew, but sewing is not dressmaking, and dressmaking is not darning, patching or mending. Many a girl can make a stylish suit, who cannot darn a stocking nicely or mend a garment neatly; and these are the branches of sewing most needed in a family.

As to the dressmaking, most women believe themselves possessed of good taste—armed with a paper pattern they think they can clothe themselves as elegantly as a denizen of Paris or a pattern of Worth; but what is the result? Can you find more dowdy-dressed women anywhere than in Canada? Not long since we saw it stated that the young ladies of Montreal were better dressed than any others in the Dominion. If "better" means more expensively, they may be for they wear silks, satins and velvets; furs, flowers and feathers in quantities and qualities more suited to their mothers than to themselves; but young girls should be dressed simply, or at least *appear* to be dressed plainly. Our American cousins who once erred in this direction have learned through travel and contact with refined people of the old world that good taste demands simplicity in a young girl's attire. But home-made dresses require a great deal of trimming to cover their other defects. The best patterns will not teach a novice to cut and fit; neither is it possible that she shall have the knowledge that comes of experience, as to suitability of materials or shades, and adaptability of styles and colours, and in these points the modiste is more likely to have good taste and judgement than her customer. Practice makes perfect and the woman who studies fashions and figures, styles and stuffs, from one year's end to the other, is more likely to show good taste and sound judgement than she who merely rushes into the business when she happens to want new dresses for herself or her daughters. It seems a pity that well-to-do women should spend so much time in shopping, sewing, and studying fashion plates, to the neglect of other and more important duties. But I can't afford to order any suits! exclaims the economical woman "Why I can have a dress of better material and much more trimmed for the price I would pay for a plain suit at the stores." Well even if this be so she would do better to take the plainer suit and save time and trouble. Think of the hours she will spend poring over the fashion books to find out what will suit her, when a good *modiste* could tell better in five minutes; think of the afternoons she will fritter away matching stuffs and choosing trimmings, and vexing the soul of the dry goods clerk because she does not know how much she wants, or can't make up her mind as to what she *does* want, and finally decides to take some patterns home to show to her sisters, or her cousins, or her aunts. (Mr. Carsley did well to make a firm stand against that feature of shopping). Then think of the long days shut up with a sewing girl, who probably knows as much, or as little about cutting and fitting as she does herself—for the poor girl can't afford to know much at the wages she will get in Canada—with such an irresponsible assistant one feels that she must give all her time and thoughts else the costume may be spoiled. Nurse must keep the children away lest they interrupt the work, or soil the material. The cook or maid-of-all-work may make and serve the dinner as seemeth good to her (and probably *bad* to the family). If friends call, "not at home" is their greeting. The children become quarrelsome left to their nurse; the cook gets careless left to herself; friends are disappointed—and all for what?—that our suits may be made of more costly material and more elaborately trimmed than those which we might order to-day and don to-morrow, without costing us a stitch or a care; and we believe the store costume would be the most elegant, and probably the cheapest costume; for it is woman's nature to fritter away money in small amounts, but not to pay it out in large sums; and we have yet to find the woman who can tell the price of her home-made costume. She will tell you the price of the material per yard, but she is not quite sure how many yards she has used, for she bought too little at first, and had to get some more, and then she had some left; it is rather too good, but she will make a dress with it for one of the children. If you count up the cost of the silk, ~~stain~~ ^{stain} ~~be~~ ^{be} ~~fringe~~ ^{fringe} ~~trimming~~ ^{trimming} she will be astonished at the amount, but if the total approaches the price of an ordered suit she will console herself with the reflection that it is a much finer suit. As to the linings, buttons, braids, &c., she will not consider them worth mentioning, although they cost at least a dollar or

two; then a sewing-girl for so many days, and her own time and her neglected house and children and friends, and the headaches and backaches that she has had; and the pleasant walks and talks with children and friends, and hours of quiet reading and study that she might have had—and don't you think her home-made suit has cost too much? You see we don't believe in the domestic economy that slaves and saves and scrimps and "squeezes the dollar till the eagle screams," as an evening contemporary poetically recommends. We believe in the domestic economy that gets the best out of life that our means may afford. Let us have coarser clothes and finer manners; plainer food, more daintily served; less show and more comfort; but our homes will never become more refined, nor our children's minds and manners better cultivated, until the mothers, the home-makers, give themselves more leisure for study and thought, and more time to the training of their little ones. If a woman must save in either way, she would do better to nurse her own babies, or perform part of the housework rather than sacrifice herself to the sewing. Indeed many a mother and her family would be healthier and happier if we could but exorcise the demon of the sewing machine from her home. But there—we shall rouse the wrath of the sewing machine makers. By the way, what will the Princess do with her fine sewing machine? and why was it given to her? and if some poor woman had a starving family, and could earn their living with the aid of a sewing machine, how many would she get?

THINGS IN GENERAL.

WOMAN'S TRUE SOURCE OF STRENGTH.

The strength of women lies in their heart. It shows itself in their strong love and instinctive perception of right and wrong. Intellectual courage is rarely one of their virtues. As a rule, they are inclined to be restless and excitable, allowing their judgments and actions to be swayed by quick emotions of all kinds, but, above all, it is in their hopefulness and their endurance that they find their chief power. Who is the last person to give up hope in the case of the member of the family who has apparently gone altogether to the bad? What mother or sister with deep and ardent love for such will ever cease to cherish hope or to endure suffering on their account? The patience of women is proverbial, and their whole lives are bound up in their affections. Few people will deny that love in one form or another makes up the beauty of life to women. It enters into all she does. Any work outside her immediate circle is undertaken most often from pure desire to help some one else to know something of the mysterious happiness of love. Unlike men, women chiefly look for personal intercourse with those for whom they are working. If their interest lies among the poor, they are desirous of sympathetic personal acquaintances with them; and very little good work of lasting kind has been done by women without their own influence of love being brought to bear on the individual case. Without dwelling on the greater physical weakness of women in general it is a fact that their brains are more easily deranged, and unless they change greatly they are apt to deteriorate in essential womanly qualities if thrown much or prominently before the world. They are seldom fitted to rule, emulation and jealousy being generally strong in their character, while their feelings and judgments are often rapid in the extreme. It is in the heart, therefore, that a woman will more especially feel the effects of Agnosticism whether those effects be for good or evil. Her head may gain in grasp of logic and in clearness of view; but if her heart, with all its powers for good, is weakened and discouraged, she will gain little ultimately by the spread of the new views. When the heart is dispirited, or thrown back upon itself, the action that springs from it tends inevitably to fall lifeless to the ground.—*Nineteenth Century*.

AGNOSTICISM AND WOMEN.

It is acknowledged on all sides that Agnosticism is gaining ground among men. It is not so thoroughly realised that in this case it must in the long run equally gain ground among women. This side of the question is not one that is often raised. Men do not see willingly that which they dislike to see, and there can be little doubt that the spread of Agnosticism among women would tend to make them discontented with the quiet home life which is often their only lot. It would, moreover, increase tenfold the cry of women for the right of employment in the more active lines of life at present denied to them. Men prefer to hope that women will be slow to drive logic to its ultimate end; that they will still cling with womanly inconsistency to all that is refining and soothing in the old creeds; and that the new and colder lights of their husbands and brothers will only serve to eliminate from those creeds the elements of superstition and fear which are now considered so debasing. But now when woman's intellect is valued more highly than it has ever been, they will not long be willing to hold a belief that is not shared by men. The strength of women lies in their heart. It shows itself in their strong love and instinctive perception of right and wrong. Intellectual courage is rarely one of their virtues. As a rule they are inclined to be restless and excitable allowing their judgments and actions to be swayed by quick emotions of all kinds, but, above all, it is in their