

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

This column will be edited by an experienced housekeeper who has read the best works and articles on the subject and also studied it from a local point of view. The questions of young housekeepers will be answered carefully, and useful suggestions on the proper management of servants and households will be thankfully received from ladies who may be willing to help each other.

The following letters have already come to hand:—

DEAR SIR,—I think we ladies of Montreal should get up a Domestic Economy Club, after the fashion of your Political Economy ditto. Why shouldn't we have pleasant luncheon parties at the Windsor, after which we could discuss the affairs of our household as you do those of the country? I think it would be a pleasant and popular way of exchanging opinions, and might be prolific of good results. Please tell us how we should set about organizing such a Club, and what rules and regulations would be necessary to the proper carrying of it on, and much oblige

Yours truly,

Amelia C.

It would be easy enough to get up such a club, but it could best be done by a number of ladies who are already socially acquainted; and in that case luncheon parties at each other's houses would be pleasanter. The trouble in getting up public clubs of ladies usually is, that they require to be exclusive, and it is hard to know on what basis membership may be allowed. Gentlemen are not usually so finical as to small social distinctions.

SIR,—I quite agree with "Euphrosyne" as to the necessity for cooking schools, and I think it would be well to get up two or three in different parts of the city, so that servants attending the evening classes might not have far to go. We have many ladies in reduced circumstances who would gladly give instructions, and who could do so efficiently. The question is how shall we go about the matter. Where shall we meet to discuss it, and what amount should be subscribed towards starting the schools? I think when once opened they might be made self-supporting, or nearly so. We might also do a good work by forming one or two free schools for the poor, where they would be taught plain, economical cooking.

Will somebody please enlighten us on this subject?

A Long Suffering Housekeeper.

SIR,—I see in last week's SPECTATOR that "A. H." wishes to draw attention to our many excellent private schools, and also to the superior musical advantages which Montreal affords. I quite agree with "A. H.," and I am glad of this opportunity of discussing a question that has often puzzled me. It is this, Why do so many of our wealthy people send their daughters to the old countries to be educated? What advantages do they obtain there that could not be had in Montreal? and do they return to us superior young ladies, from a mental, moral or social point of view, to those who have been home-educated? I should be glad to be enlightened on this subject, for I have often wondered why people should deprive themselves of the pleasant society of their young daughters, and also deprive their daughters of the sweet home influences, and true heart-love that can never be obtained among strangers. Some mothers have told me that it is in the expectation that their daughters will meet with a better class of companions than could be found in Montreal schools; but is this really so? Are the young girls who attend the boarding-schools patronized by Canadians so much superior to our city school girls? and if they are, must it not be a great trial to young ladies when they are obliged to return and reside in Canada, where they must necessarily associate with these very girls who are not considered good enough to go to school with? If anyone knows of any superior advantages to be obtained in the old country schools we should like to know what they are, as it would be better for us to improve our home schools rather than allow so much money to be sent out of Canada yearly; besides, it is not well that our young girls should be taught to despise Canada and Canadians at an age when they are apt to form life-long impressions.

Hoping that some one may be willing to discuss this subject, which is more important to our country than may be apparent to superficial observers,

I remain, yours respectfully,

Euphrosyne.

Enquiries will be made as to the cost of starting these schools and carrying them on, and ladies who may wish to help in getting them up are requested to send their names to the Editor of the Domestic Column. Should we succeed in establishing these schools, they would not only prove a boon to housekeepers, but would also afford pleasant and profitable employment to ladies in reduced circumstances who now find it difficult to earn a respectable livelihood.

A lady who has kept house for over twenty years tells us that she has found it almost impossible to train the ordinary servant girls of the period, as they generally rebel against instruction, and give so much impudence while receiving it, that one is forced to give up in despair and take whatever kind of service may be given until a change can be made, which change will possibly be for the better in some respects, and probably for the worse in others. Occasionally one may find a young girl who is willing to be taught, but it requires an infinity of patience and painstaking, and a great sacrifice of time, to teach an ignorant girl the little niceties and neatnesses requisite in the proper management of a refined household.

One of the most important points in a well-ordered home is the proper serving of meals and waiting on table. This duty, although very simple and easily taught, is especially repugnant to many servants. Some will not even attempt to learn, and others, while professing to do their best, persist in doing their worst. It seems an easy matter to distinguish one's left hand from the right, but this many girls never will do, and plates and dishes are handed and removed, now from one side, and now from the other, until we sometimes think that if they would only always go to the wrong side (which in this case would be the right) it would be a relief.

But some really do find it puzzling at first to remember the proper side on which to serve. It is said that a butler of the officers' mess, during the time of Washington, never could remember which was the proper side, until he was told to always go to the side the buttons were on. This rule worked well until it happened that a guest, who was a French officer, had buttons down both sides of his coat. Teddy was puzzled for a minute, but his Irish wit enabled him to master the situation. Looking around with a broad grin he suddenly passed the dish over the officer's head and held it with both hands straight in front. We do not meet with many who are so anxious to do right, and at the same time so stupid as poor Teddy; but we should be careful not to blame a girl until we are quite sure that she is not doing her best. If we could only make our servants understand how highly we estimate such simple services, I fancy they would be more anxious to render them properly; but some girls imagine that we are, what they call putting on airs, when we require to have the waiting on table done decently and in order. And yet people who have been nicely brought up would prefer a plain meal nicely set and served to a sumptuous one when served in a slatternly manner. Waiting on table might easily be taught at the cooking classes, and servants would learn at them more willingly than from their mistresses.

THINGS IN GENERAL.

CRITICS AND NOVELISTS.

The assertions of people who vow that they do not care for adverse criticism are rarely to be accepted. A friend of mine, a charming writer, though not a novelist, went out of his way lately and wrote a novel. There was nothing he liked so much as a real sound "slating," he informed me; it did a book immense good if it were only hot enough; and looking in the *Standard* I found a notice of his novel which I fancied would please him. It is always one's friends who call one's attention to notices of this sort, and especially as he said he liked them—I at once pointed out to him that he had got just exactly the very criticism that he had been pining for, hot and strong. He said, "Capital," he was very glad, and took the paper. Having read two or three lines he laughed, and said it was "first rate—just the thing to sell the book." He read a few more lines and pronounced them "excellent," but rather less so than the beginning. A little further on my friend observed, with concentrated sarcasm, that "it was a pity the critic did not write grammar;" and then I felt convinced that the notice did not please him so much as he had anticipated. When about half way through I observed him pause, and he remarked that the critic was an "ignorant idiot who did not know what he was talking about;" and finally he raved, used strong language, and sat down to write an indignant protest to the editor.—*Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News.*

WINDFALLS.

The hope of a "windfall," of some unexpected and unreasonable accession of unearned wealth is a very widely spread one, probably as widely spread among those who value money and have not enough of it, as the habit of day-dreaming, upon which such anticipations are in the long run based. The notion that somebody unknown may leave them a legacy, or that they will succeed in a speculation they are going to attempt, or that some valueless piece of property will one day reveal minerals, or be wanted by a company, or in some way "turn up trumps," is with many men and women incurable, and with some gravely affects the course of their lives. We have known at least one man and two women with whom such an expectation altered decidedly their own conception of their own position in the world. It does not, however, often do them harm, and it probably indicates a buoyancy of temperament and tendency towards hope which are antiseptics; but it is odd to notice, if you are curious about the nooks and corners of the human mind, how little the idea is affected by probabilities or experience, or even sober, realistic judgment. The man may be perfectly well aware that he has not a rich relative in the world, that he has no property with possibilities, and that he shall never speculate, and may be convinced that he has to depend upon his earnings or upon his means; and still there will linger in his mind a fancy, not Micawberish but just as vague as Micawber's, that somehow something may happen and his windfall may arrive, and he will read a story, such as Charles Dickens delighted to put in *Household Words*, of such a windfall happening, with a sort of personal pleasure. Actual experience will not encourage him much, for windfalls, properly so called, are very rare. Properties are sometimes unexpectedly large, and sometimes fall to a very distant relative, but the writer can recall but one verified instance of a windfall true, pure, and simple. A doctor, now some time dead, a man of singular charm of manner and simplicity of character, did lose his whole property by the failure of a company, did relate his misfortune to an old invalid lady in a railway train whom he had never seen before, and never saw again, but whom he assisted kindly on her journey, and did receive from that old lady by bequest the amount of the lost fortune. That is as good as any story from "Midshipman Easy," and is, as we have every reason to believe, exactly true. It is about as likely to happen again as thirteen trumps