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Home Economics in Great Britain

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The instruction in cookery is given by demonstration on the part of the instructor, followed by a practice period for the students. The products are disposed of in the lunch room, where luncheons are served daily to about two hundred and fifty students and faculty. Very little is taught of the science of nutrition, but the technique of cookery, and particularly fancy cookery, is greatly stressed.

For example, subjects such as food stuffs and their uses and principles of diet planning are only incidental in a course of 13 lectures on Hygiene, which includes as well household, clothing and personal hygiene.

The course in Housewifery (they pronounce it House*if'ery) was very interesting. The head of that department, in answer to my question about the content of the course, replied, "Everything except how to lay out a corpse." After inspecting her domain, I was almost inclined to agree with her. The work rather corresponds to our Home Management house. The girls have a suite of rooms, which they occupy for two or three weeks. During this time they have a great variety of lessons and tasks. Cleaning and polishing brass, copper and silver, mending, knitting, papering the walls, making curtains, renovating furniture, upholstering—these are only a few of their duties. They do not have a child to care for, however. For instruction in Housewifery there is a house containing a sitting room, bed-room, three kitchens, scullery and bathroom and a residence that where six girls live for a period of two or three weeks, depending on the enrollment.

The work in clothing includes courses in Dressmaking, Needlework, Embroidery and Millinery. There are seven courses in knitting (ten lessons), patching and mending (10 lessons). In the Dressmaking courses they do much making of patterns by the drafting method. They objected to our modelling method, when I mentioned it, on the grounds that it necessitated having two persons working together, so they continue their very laborious methods. The garments were very carefully made, and while I did not see any finished garments modelled, they looked very nice.

There were courses in Handicraft, including the following subjects: Household Repairs, Home Upholstery, Leather Work, Raffia Work, Basket Making, Batik Work and Repousse Work. Laundry Work, House Bookkeeping, Home Nursing, and a Catering Kitchen were some of the other activities. The Catering Kitchen, as well as serving for parties, put out luncheons which were called for and taken to various business houses daily. The day I was there the chief preparation was that of Haggis, which as everyone good Scot knows, is an event of importance.

The school building was rather large, having originally been a large house, and as the school grew adjoining houses were added to the original one. The building, consequently, was very badly arranged—in fact, there was no arrangement at all, but the various class rooms were connected by long, narrow passages until the whole place was like a rabbit warren. The staff was surprisingly numerous—about fifty, as I remember. There were five hostels, or dormitories, and a field for games. There was also a separate establishment for the training of nurses for children, where living quarters are arranged for twenty children and twenty students.

I think the main difference was in the status that Home Economics occupies in the two countries. The fact that so many of their girls are there for the purpose of receiving training as lady housekeepers and servants illustrates that fact very well.

Whilst we converse with what is above us, we do not grow old, but grow young.
—Emerson.