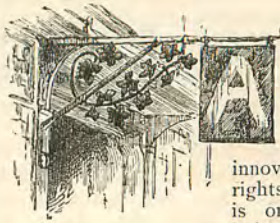


SLOANE GARDENS HOUSE.

By ANNE BEALE.



RESIDENTIAL Club for Ladies" sounds, on the first hearing, like an

innovation on the rights masculine. It is only a humble imitation, and provided

the fair sex abstain from wearing waist-coats and shirt-fronts they may have their club at will, so say the lords of creation. And they have it. Other women's clubs there are, but not "residential;" and this has been provided by the Ladies' Dwellings Company, and is a sample of others to follow, should it prove as useful and successful as it deserves to be.

Sloane Gardens House is situated at 52, Lower Sloane Street, and is a palatial dwelling of many storeys. Its handsome red-brick frontage attracts the passer-by, and people who have known the neighbourhood in the past will look with astonishment on a building that seems to have arisen, if not like a mushroom in a night, at least in an incredibly short period. And it is not one of your jerry-built dwellings, but a substantial residence framed for much endurance. That cheap institution, a halfpenny omnibus, conveys us to its precincts in no time; in other words, takes us from the top of Sloane Street to the Square, whence a minute's walk brings us to the heavy doors of this our club.

We are warned to close them after us, which makes the place appear more home-like than do the "mansions," with their various flats and ever-open doors. Nevertheless, this is a mansion to all intents and purposes. In the hall is hung an index, with the names of the residents thereon, and the announcement of such as may be absent at the moment. On the right is an office, in which stands a neat maiden ready for service. Here are pigeon-holes for letters and parcels, one being appropriated to each tenant; and should all the rooms be occupied, the waitress's position is no sinecure, since one hundred and thirty ladies may find accommodation, both public and private, here. As regards the public portion, there are large dining-rooms, drawing, writing, and music-rooms set apart for general use. That is to say, there is one music-room, and most of the ladies must be thankful that there is only one, and that musical instruments are prohibited outside that shrine dedicated to Euterpe. "Let us have quiet, at least," say the in-dwellers; so sewing-machines as well as musical instruments must rest from 10 P.M. to 8 A.M.

Some may be inclined to complain that their room is, consequently, not their castle; still, when we visit the private apartments we find that it is essentially so. It is almost impossible, in a brief sketch, to give an idea of the working of a place like this. It was originated by philanthropic people for the aid of ladies of limited means, but is in no wise a charity. Unfurnished rooms are charged from 7s. to 13s. a week, and are so constructed as to serve for bedroom and sitting-room; though any lady may rent more than one if she is so inclined. A curtain drawn across a sort of alcove, in which the bed is placed, effectually conceals the sleeping portion, and renders the rest of the apartment a sitting-room, to which friends may come, both male and female. The artistic arrangement of these homes, their ornaments and pretty furniture, betoken the lady, and it must

be pleasant to feel that, after a day's work as her own bread-winner, she has a place of her own to return to which is neither boarding-house nor lodging.

Without trenching on their privacy, we may venture to imagine the workers who dwell in Sloane Gardens House—the authoress, governess, clerk, artist, typist, and what not? Young and old seek its shelter equally, and we will hope, strive to "bear one another's burdens," and to lighten the darkness of each other's paths when opportunity offers. It would be impossible to estimate what sympathy may effect in a congregation such as this.

It is said that women cannot "dwell together in unity"—but here they dwell separately, so there is less chance of discord. Moreover, they are not compelled to remain, nor are the directors obliged to keep them. A fortnight or week's notice to quit on either side without "rendering a reason" is all that is needed in case of disaffection; and alas! we are none of us perfect, and do not always attain the standard of our referees; for of course references are required.

On the uppermost storey we find furnished cubicles let for 4s. 6d. per week, which, though small, are still their owner's "castle," but will scarcely admit of being converted into a sitting-room, like those already described.

There is a large staff of servants, but their service is necessarily restricted. Included with the rent is the removal, once daily, of the slops and ashes, and one daily cleaning of the grate; also a fortnightly cleaning of rooms and windows. Further service demands extra payment.

In each of the long corridors there are two bath-rooms and a plentiful supply of hot and cold water. Indeed, the ingenuity of architect and directors must have been taxed to the utmost of their brain-power to bring so many appliances together.

Efforts have been made before this to provide suitable homes for ladies of slender incomes, but none, we are inclined to think, so advantageous. What one of the directors said at the second annual meeting, held last May, appears to contain the whole truth and gist of the matter. We quote a short paragraph from his long and exhaustive speech. "The object of this building was not charity, nor to make the lady tenants objects of charity, but to build, with a philanthropic object, a house which could be managed upon commercial principles, and would return a fair dividend to those who invested their money in it; at the same time giving to a certain class of ladies, for whom very little, if anything, has been done, the chance of living comfortably and in a place they can consider as their home, at a very low rate of rent, and with good, wholesome food, at a much lower price than they could get it elsewhere."

That blessed modern contrivance, a lift, floats us down from the topmost corridor to the large dining-room, where this last-mentioned object is carried out. A very appetizing odour pervades this apartment, which is 50 feet by 27 long and broad. It is filled with small, square tables, covered with unblemished diaper, and has the general effect of the club-room, which it really is. Three or four neat parlour-maids are in attendance, and as the ladies troop in by ones, twos, and threes, and seat themselves in solitary or dual state, they are quickly served. The small square tables belong to the "castle" afore-mentioned, and are as strictly private as the most rigid of misanthropes could desire. Yet not of necessity so exclusive,

since a lady may invite her friends, masculine or feminine, to share it and the meal with her. She may even, by a previous arrangement, have a table reserved for the occasion; but she need not mix with the multitude. As Thackeray might have said, "No undue familiarity, my dear madam. It breeds contempt."

The time allowed for meals is sufficient to give a margin for those who cannot be punctual. Early rising is not *de rigueur*. A lady may breakfast at 7.30 with a due regard to her digestion, or scramble through it at 9.15, when the meal is supposed to cease. She may have a substantial meal, with bacon, fish, ham, or egg, for sixpence; or she may prefer her tea, cocoa, or coffee without other food than bread-and-butter, and pay fourpence for it; or she may get porridge or bread and milk for twopence or threepence respectively. It must be confessed that these charges are not exorbitant; indeed, some of the shareholders complained, at the annual meeting, that the tariff of prices was too low. Let the ladies be thankful that they are not raised.

Being invited to luncheon, we are able to say from experience that the soup, boiled beef, vegetables, and pudding are excellent. One of those delightful lifts silently responds to the calls for "soup, cold meat and salad, hot meat, etc," and plates of steaming condiments come up from the magnificent kitchens below with a rapidity that would have taken the breath away a century ago. The charge for luncheon is from 4d. to 1s., according to individual requirements. The dinner hour is from 7 to 8, and the charge 1s. Supper from 8.30 to 9.

We do not forget the afternoon meal, which is taken in another and somewhat smaller room, also provided with separate tables; 3d. is the charge for tea and bread-and-butter, and the hour from 4.30 to 5.30.

We have been thus minute, in case any of our readers should feel disposed to try a residence in Sloane Gardens House.

We are interested in guessing at the various ages of the ladies whom we see at luncheon. Many are young, and do not waste much time over their meal. Some come in in bonnets, others in aprons. Most of them appear to belong to the toilers and spinsters of this great city; but some, we fancy, rejoice in the *otium cum dignitate* of a settled income, and can be idle at will. To hurry off as soon as you have eaten, betokens business; to remain long at table, the non-necessity of work. In the former case, especially, it must be an inestimable boon to have your meals ready to the moment, and not to be expected to partake of them unless so inclined; which means, that you only pay for what you consume. You may have one meal a day or five, at will, and be in no danger of getting into debt; for payment is made after each repast, and the secretary who receives it is indifferent as to whether it comes to her in copper or silver.

So much gratuitous thought and labour have been expended on this scheme for benefiting gentlewomen of small or moderate incomes, that it demands our gratitude to those who have succeeded in raising this substantial fabric upon what seemed an uncertain foundation. If this first effort prove a success, we shall see others made elsewhere; but the directors are wise not to involve the Company in fresh plans until this has been thoroughly tested. There are still some shares to be taken up, if any one should feel

disposed to invest their spare pounds in the undertaking; and there are still some vacant rooms to let, should any ladies wish to make application. The house is well heated, and a pleasant sense of warmth pervades the long corridors.

Naturally, a casual visitor sees things superficially, and doubtless the numerous residents will not endorse all that one who views the place for the first time feels inclined to say in its favour. Still, the bare facts we have ventured to put on paper are incontrovertible, and some of the ladies whom we have encountered express themselves as quite satisfied with their home in this small parish. It is very satisfactory to find how much may be made of little, and how greatly the artistic taste of the present day tends to beautify the "minute" as well as the "vast."

The rules for the inmates are simple but stringent. The rent must be paid weekly, in advance. A tenant desiring to make a complaint must state it in writing to the house committee; and—here we come to a halt, for we almost break down when we read, "Dogs, cats, or other pet animals, are not allowed to be kept in the house." This is heart-breaking! Still, what would become of

the establishment if over a hundred cats and dogs mewed, barked, fought, and patrolled at their own sweet will? It would be worse than the hundred sackbuts, dulcimers, etc., which are also interdicted. The individual is merged in the multitude, and in these days of liberty to make all sorts of noises it is delightfully restful to enter Sloane Gardens House, and to be quite sure you will not be pursued by the fashionable violinist.

A glance into the reading-room endorses this opinion. Here perfect silence is enforced, and proof given that women can hold their tongues on occasion. It is nearly full of ladies, who are reading, or writing, or possibly engaged in composition, undisturbed by extraneous influences. Thus, the inmates of the house have the advantage of the public rooms over and above their private sitting-rooms.

In most of the latter the time-honoured kettle on the hearth speaks pleasantly of afternoon tea, which can be imbibed at will, either in the general tea-room or "at home." Friends can be entertained, so to say, in dining or drawing-room, and no lady need appear in public if she prefer her "cup of tea" alone or with guests in her own apartment. It would seem that the liberty of the subject has been

well considered. But if she cannot boil her own kettle and prepare her own tea, she must pay for extra attendance.

For rules and regulations, anyone needing further information should apply to the Lady Superintendent, since it is impossible to supply all details in a paper such as this.

It seems to us that the Ladies' Dwellings Company have succeeded thus far in carrying out the objects they had in view when they published their first prospectus. They were briefly stated in the following terms: "To supply suitable house accommodation, at reasonable rents, to ladies of small incomes, where, while retaining their entire independence, they may live better and with greater economy than in lodging-houses of the ordinary type; and to provide good food, regular meals, and suitable attendance at the lowest remunerative prices."

Similar mansions will be built elsewhere when this philanthropic Company see their way to make further ventures; but they are too wise to run the risk of failure. Hampstead has been already suggested, and, if circumstances prove propitious, may be the next site of a Ladies' Residential Club. We wish "peace and goodwill" to all concerned.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EDUCATIONAL.

A WORKING GIRL.—I. Certainly we can still recommend *The Handbook of the English Tongue*, by Dr. Angus, but we are not sure whether or not it be too advanced for you. The price is 4s. 6d.—2. Respecting back numbers and plates of this magazine, you must make all enquiries and give all orders at the Publishing Office, and direct to the manager of that department, 56, Paternoster Row, E.C.

A NEW SUBSCRIBER.—If not really strong in health you are not eligible for admission as a nurse in any hospital, and in any case you are still too young to get into even a children's hospital. Your having passed your exams. given by the St. John's Ambulance Classes is a good step in advance; and whether as a child's nurse, or one in a hospital, you would do well to get the little manual by one of our writers, *Sick Nursing at Home* (1s. 3d. bound—Gill, 79, Strand, W.C.).

FLORIE W.—We very strongly recommend you to give up the idea of being trained for a profession so beset with temptations, and little conducive to a life of Christian usefulness and personal spirituality. "Lead us not into temptation!"

CAUTION.—The age at which lady pupils and ordinary nurses are received at the various hospitals and training homes, and the terms on which they enter, differ in each case, and are not uniformly the same in the several institutions. In children's hospitals they receive pupils as early as twenty-one years of age. There are at least seventeen hospitals, infirmaries, and institutions in London where the intending nurse can be trained, as well as many in the provinces. "Caution" appears to us to be of a fault-finding disposition. She will have to get the better of this, and of a tendency to uppishness, before she enters any institution of this description.

ART.

L. W. D.—"Poker work" is another name for burn-wood engraving, an article upon which has appeared in this magazine. The instrument employed is a platinum pencil, the point of which is kept red-hot by means of air passed over spirits. The apparatus is quite simple, and costs 14s. 6d. "Poker work" is executed upon wood; the outlines of the design are burnt into the wood with broad, full strokes, and the shading effected by firm "cross-hatched" lines. But little knowledge of drawing is required; and it is not necessary to take any lessons to acquire the art. It may be applied to door and cabinet panels, picture frames, bellows, stools, boxes, etc., and these are to be purchased ready for burning at any artist colourman's, or even at large linendraper's shops.

O. B.—For water-colour painting on glass, mix the paints with pure water, and fix your outlines by means of a thin layer of French varnish, diluted with spirits of wine.

EXILE.—The climate has much to do with the cracking of your pictures. The oil in the paints dries up in hot countries. Mix Robertson's medium with your colours while working, and try to avoid painting when a dry, hot wind is blowing. Lechertier & Barbe's paint is the most to be relied upon.

MUSIC.

JENNY.—The standard works of certain composers, such as cantatas, marches, and sonatas, are styled classical, such as those of Beethoven, Handel, Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Weber, Rossini, etc., who were universally acknowledged as having produced works of the highest class, and who are regarded as authorities in the art and science of music.

MOUSEY.—It takes years of patient mechanical labour and careful practice in order to play either the violin or piano well enough to give pleasure to persons of musical taste and culture; but in a few months' time "Mousey" may have learnt sufficiently well to amuse herself, and to have ceased to scrape the strings after the manner of beginners, so as to trouble the nerves of musical auditors.

SCOTCHIE should read a page of music every day until the difficulty of reading be overcome. We know of no other plan.

M. D. F.—We believe that many teachers adopt the method which you describe, and if not specially trying to your nerves and head it is a matter of wisdom not to interfere with it. But in reference to this "if," you must decide for yourself.

IGNORAMUS.—Playing the guitar would be more quickly acquired than to play the piano by means of self-tuition. The instrument is a difficult one for the execution of pieces, but easy as an accompaniment for the voice. Cheerful as well as plaintive music can be obtained for it, but comparatively little has been arranged for it.

MARIE AGNES.—The dot placed after the "A" in the treble is probably a misprint, as it prevents the bar from being played in triple time. So of course you failed in discovering a solution of your difficulty.

WORK.

INTERESTED READER.—I. We thank you much for the directions you give for a knitted bordering for trimming underlinen—Cast on eight stitches. First row—Slip and knit one, make one, knit two together, knit one, make two, knit two together, knit one. Second row—Knit three, purl one, knit two, make one, knit two together, knit one. Third row—Slip one, knit one, make one, knit two together, knit two, make two, knit two together, knit one. Fourth row—Knit three, purl one, knit three, make one, knit two together, knit one. Fifth row—Slip one, knit one, make one, knit two together, knit three, make two, knit two together, knit one. Sixth row—Knit three, purl one, knit four, make one, knit two together, knit one. Seventh row—Slip one, knit one, make one, knit two together, knit seven. Eighth row—Cast off three stitches, knit four, make one, knit two together, knit one.—2. The only cure we know for ingrowing nails on the feet is to cut the nails down in the centre and scrape from the quick (at the root of the nail) upwards to the dip in the centre with a fine pen-knife or scrap of glass so as to make the nail thinner there than at the sides. This will have the effect of making the sides bend upwards, instead of tucking in downwards into the flesh. Be very careful not to scrape it so thin as to make the nail crack down the centre.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A "G. O. P." ADMIRER.—You should have discovered the state of your feelings at least two years ago. Why did you not accept the man's proposal conditionally? If you felt a growing dislike to him it would be your duty to let him know, even after a three years' engagement, that the choice of holding you to your promise, and all the responsibility, should be left to him. But if it be a less grievous case, and you really like and respect him, it seems too late now to measure the amount of your romance and affection, and to break your pledged word. Consult your mother.

CHÉRIE and ELAINE.—The great Queen of ancient Egypt, Cleopatra, was the daughter of Ptolemy Auletes, and reigned twenty-four years. She was born B.C. 69, and destroyed herself that she might not fall into the conqueror's hands (Augustus Caesar), B.C. 30. At her death Egypt became a Roman province. The two obelisks, improperly called "Cleopatra's Needles," were erected by Thothmes III. at Heliopolis, about 1600 years before Christ. One of these was removed to Alexandria by Augustus Caesar about 23 B.C., and lay embedded in the sand by the sea-shore until brought to England, where it arrived January 27th, 1878. It was acquired for Great Britain by Sir Ralph Abercrombie in 1801, but not removed; offered again by Mehemet Ali, and again by the Khedive, in March, 1877.

A GIRL WHO IS NOT CONCEITED.—We are glad you are deficient in a very unlovely characteristic; but after all, perhaps it would be a sign of lunacy if you were! Your handwriting is fairly good, but your spelling is bad, and offers no reason for "conceit." Lord Byron wrote the stanzas on "the Bridge of Sighs," Venice.

FORGET-ME-NOT.—Leaving off sugar and sweet things entirely, and reducing your quantity of tea, may do you good. Read also the articles by "Medicus" in our paper.

SURLY BOB had better lay the state of the case before the person who wishes to marry her. If he be satisfied that will be the best answer to her query. At the same time she must consider whether she will like to add to her responsibilities, or regards herself as a suitable person to pass her life in "single blessedness." The best foundation for marriage to rest upon is respect and mutual esteem in high moral character and worth.

JULIA GREENHORN.—"Daffodils that come before the swallow dares"

is a line from Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, Act iv. "Music that gentler on the spirit lies Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes"

is a line from Tennyson's *Lotus Eaters*.

PATRICIA.—Valentine and Orson were the twin sons of Bellisant, sister of King Pipin, and wife of Alexander, Emperor of Constantinople. Orson was carried off by a bear, who suckled him with her cubs. He became the terror of France, and was called the "Wild man of the forest." He was ultimately conquered and reclaimed by Valentine, and overthrew the Green Knight, and married the daughter of the Duke of Aquitaine.