

cost from about thirty shillings to four pounds, and this is quickly recouped at the rate of nine shillings per day, the smallest sum given for two gross.

The chief difficulty with which the punnet-makers have to contend is the uncertainty as to the crop of strawberries, and the consequent demand for their baskets.

Taking one year with another, however, the earn-

ings of a family are considerable, and if they could only be induced to become thrifty there should never be a needy person in all the fruit districts; but here, as elsewhere, the money easily earned disappears as quickly, and the fleeting pleasure of a day's holiday, or the glory of brilliant clothing, scarcely seems an adequate return for the many hours spent in winter over the work of punnet-making.



### TEACHING BY CORRESPONDENCE.



THE system of instruction by correspondence has been attracting a good deal of attention lately, and its usefulness is becoming year by year more generally understood and acknowledged.

A few notices of the system have appeared from time to time in various periodicals, but these have chiefly dealt with it from the promoters' and observers' points of view; and it occurs to the present writer that a few observations on it from the parents' point of view might not be without interest to readers. His experience of it in his own family enables him to offer these with confidence, for five of his children—four boys and a girl—have been educated under it, so far as English subjects are concerned, whilst attending schools taught in French on the Continent, or moving about from place to place.

The correspondence classes they joined were those of the late Association for the Higher Education of Women in Glasgow, now affiliated to Queen Margaret College at that place, and of which Miss Jane S. Macarthur (of 4, Buckingham Street, Hillhead, Glasgow) is the honorary secretary. These classes, although primarily intended for girls, are open to boys, and also to women and men of any age. Instruction is given not only in all the subjects prescribed for the Glasgow University Local Examinations, but also in a number of subjects outside the University programme.

The subjects taken by the writer's children were English grammar, arithmetic, history, English composition, and literature. Once, when no other teaching was available, they included French and German. One of the boys also took logic when preparing for a public examination.

The charges were moderate, and did not in the case of any one subject exceed £1 11s. 6d. for the annual six months' course, which lasted from November to May.

The system, as is now pretty generally known, consists in sending out beforehand a "plan of study" for the course in each subject, showing the heads of reading for each fortnight, on which the fortnightly examination paper, to be forwarded to each student by post, will be set. Three days are allowed for answering the papers, which are to be returned by post to the

tutor. It is obvious that the success of this system of instruction, like any other, depends mainly on the efficiency of the instructors, and this fact has been fully recognised in selecting the tutors for the Glasgow classes. As far as the writer can venture to express an opinion, the selections have been good. He has always been much struck by the pains taken by the tutors to encourage the efforts of the pupils, and not only to guide them in the acquirement of knowledge, but to educate their minds. Much skill, too, has generally been shown in arousing the pupils' interest in their work, and the return of the corrected fortnightly papers with the tutorial remarks on their margins has always been an event of considerable excitement in the family.

On the whole, it may fairly be said of this system of education, that where very good *visû voce* instruction is not available, it forms a thoroughly good and economical substitute. Its disinterested and enthusiastic promoters do not claim more for it than this, for they do not pretend to compete with satisfactory oral teaching, and they may well be content with the usefulness of their work even when so limited.

To illustrate its usefulness, it is only necessary to suggest a few cases of common occurrence in which classes taught in the ordinary way cannot be resorted to. A pupil may be in a foreign country, or in a colony, or in some out-of-the-way place where there are no classes at hand of any sort, or he may be delicate and unable either to attend public classes or to pay for private lessons, or he may have some exacting employment which hampers him in regard to time, or he may be of too advanced an age (many of the Glasgow pupils are of this kind) to attend boys' or girls' classes with comfort or propriety. In all these and similar cases, the correspondence classes supply a want that can be met in no other way.

The writer is deeply sensible of the benefit he has himself derived from these classes in having the education of his children made possible when ill health, foreign residence, and sometimes frequent movement, presented difficulties that without them would have been insurmountable. He sincerely hopes that this briefest of records, giving the result of his own experience, may be of service to others in like circumstances.