INSTRUCTION BY CORRESPONDENCE

NE is so frequently asked by earnest students as well as by the curious and incredulous, "Do you know anything about teaching by correspondence? Are correspondence classes really of any use?" "On what system is instruction by correspondence here conducted?" etc., &c., that it has been thought well to say a few words on correspondence teaching. The subject has already become one of general interest, and although a few years since instruction by correspondence would have been looked upon with suspicion and as the Utopian idea of some enthusiasts, it has now become a recognised system of education in this country. Every educational paper, either by advertisement or otherwise, brings to the notice of its readers some facts connected with correspondence teaching, and there is scarcely an existing examination for which preparation is not offered by these means.

It must be understood, however, that the first instruction by correspondence is not suitable to the very young; it presupposes a certain amount of knowledge and some power to work alone.

The boys and girls of the present day have much to be thankful for; they have better chances of securing success in life than their parents and grandparents ever had. It is impossible to improve upon the education of the sexes from the improved methods of education among our great middle classes; but the superior advantage remains with the girls. Life is not always so kind to the boys, more especially as far as chances of being fairly well taught, but it is only of late that girls and women have had any important share in these privileges; hence the enormous disproportion which exists between the cultivated men and the cultivated women of our country.

The object of this article is not, however, to assert what may have been, but to find fault with our ancestors for not having discovered that girls require as good teaching as boys, but steadily to face an existing evil, and to improve and apply the remedies for it. Few will deny that instruction by correspondence steps in here most opportunely. How many girls there are who, having been provided with the best possible education within their reach during their school days, yet find themselves very badly informed on many subjects with which their younger sisters at school are quite conversant! How many of these would gladly fill up the spare hours of the day, or contrive to arrange some time to work themselves over what might have been defective teaching, if they only knew how to work, what books to work at, what are the special things to notice, &c., if they could depend upon the guidance, sympathy, and hearty co-operation of a well-qualified and cultivated mind! Many a one has given up in despair, and with very much regret, that study from sheer inability to work entirely alone, and wishing most strongly there were some means of getting help. These thoughts are not always expressed, but many an earnest and earnestly tot will respond to our suggestion. Happily this cloud is passing away, the evil has found a remedy; only, unfortunately, all those who work will not be able to avail themselves of this system for the present, and yet realize the great value of many points of view, a conviction in which apparently many persons share, otherwise how can one account for their continuous extension, for the recognition they merit? We can hardly realize of what a variety of subjects, and from their establishment in connection with our universities? Let us examine somewhat the origin and nature of this mode of teaching.

It cannot be doubted that the idea of teaching by correspondence has arisen from the enormous extension of examinations, more especially competitive examinations, connected with our universities, but outside the universities themselves—those that are known as the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations. Candidates for both the junior and senior examinations are generally either at school or under regular home instruction; but then the higher examinations open to both sexes above the age of eighteen years can seldom be said to apply to pupils under regular instruction. As a matter of fact, a large number of candidates presenting themselves for these examinations are dealing with the very subject of becoming teachers. It is almost an essential now in every good school that the teachers shall give proof of their own culture by the possession of some university degree or certificate.

London, Cambridge, Oxford, St. Andrew's, Edinburgh, and Dublin have each put forth their own schemes of correspondence for women; and the certificates of each university have a monetary value, hence the desire to obtain them, and the growing need of preparatory work among those who are no longer schoolgirls.

This will also account for the general close connection between those of correspondence classes and other useful examina-

The following examinations require not only the possession of a certain amount of exact knowledge, but also the power of giving out that information in a definite, correct, and scientific manner.

Now one sees the advantage of regular and methodical work, of forming the habits of writing, in a given time, clear, full, and clearly expressed answers to given questions—a habit which can only be acquired in the majority of cases by continued practice. Let us see what this implies, and in what world knowledge to begin with; then much attentive reading, some thought, some power to condense, some power to reproduce, &c. Each one who devotes a little time to this work, and in the case of those already engaged in teaching this is a great consideration, hence saving of time becomes an important item. Again our correspondence teaching steps in with help. The line of thought is planned for the student, the subject for reading is fixed; it may be sometimes the books, the syllabus in the book, the subject for the student; is it fixed, the time of examination, and the questions on the subject of study with which the student must be conversant; it that fits in with that with which will be given at the time of examination, and the questions on the subject of study with which the student must be conversant; it that fits in with that with which will be given at the time of examination, and the questions on the subject of study with which the student must be conversant; it that fits in with that with which will be given at the time of examination, and the questions on the subject of study with which the student must be conversant; it that fits in with that with which will be given at the time of examination, and the questions on the subject of study with which the student must be conversant.

Those who are not very strong correspondence teaching must be given a great boon. One can select one's own time for working—the hours of the day, and days of the week; it is not much more frequent than twice a month, sometimes only once, therefore there need be no pressure or over anxiety.

Thus the variety of subjects which may be thoroughly grasped by an industrious and intelligent student; these are so numerous that it would be almost impossible to make an exhaustive list, while of the few subjects for which one can select one's own time for working—the hours of the day, and days of the week; it is not much more frequent than twice a month, sometimes only once, therefore there need be no pressure or over anxiety.

So far we have dealt chiefly with the practical and disadvantages of teaching—a method which we, the most eminent practical people, see to be extending on all sides of us; but to secure the very best results we must consider the work of the teacher and student. Correspondence teachers may be able to do a great deal, may know a great deal, but they cannot work wonders, and must not expect the teacher to do all the work. The student can do no harm by passing an examination by joining a class a month or two before the examination, or by giving the best possible answers to the teacher's questions and exercises; yet no harm is done in because a university professor sees questions. Everybody knows that there is no royal road to learning, but whatever is worth
WOOL CROCHET.

Cotton crochet answers very well for ornamental purposes, but wool crochet is preferred by the well-sighted and the real matter-of-fact worker. With wool the steel hook is replaced by a wooden one, sometimes tipped with a knob, but of that more anon. As to the stitches, we may divide them into two great classes: those similar to the stitches employed in ordinary crochet, and special stitches which vary very much. With the first kind articles are made such as shawls, square and half square, comforters, cuffs, hoods, andolly's smart dresses, &c. Not very long ago I was surprised, whilst in a large linencloths', to watch the ready sale of little socks in open square crochet, sold at the trifling price of 6d. per pair. If it once closed with such a bargain, and handed over my purchase to a poor woman, who has since told me how useful were the new socks to her baby—the very thing for the summer, so light and airy; and the best of all, too, they washed and dried in no time, without shrinking.

1. However, among all the plain stitches the triangular treble is decidedly the favourite, and with it almost any article can be shaped. To work it, you may either crochet in straight rows, in slanting ones, or in a square, starting from a centre hole and setting the corners by working two groups of trebles into one stitch. In the same way shape also the point of a half square shawl.

The slantwise method being, perhaps, the least familiar, I have chosen this for the first illustration.

A glance at it will show you that the triangular stitch is made up of doubles instead of trebles, and that the groups are worked between each other and separated by one chain. Commence by a single group, increase at every row until you have the required width across, then decrease in the same proportion till there is but one group again, thus forming the square. At the end of every row make one chain to serve as the foundation-stitch for the group worked into it above. Commence one chain, three doubles, into the next separating chain beneath; crochet back by a row of single to the point where you first started, and make one chain to commence the next. This row of single crochet, by doubling the line at the top of the groups, adds great strength to the work, and renders it very suitable for a sofa blanket.

I will now explain to you quite a different mode of making this stitch, which perhaps you will find quicker. Crochet a chain of twenty-five; this will give you the depth of a nice border. 1st Row.—Raise all the loops, as in crochet treble. 2nd Row.—Draw the needle through five of the loops at once, make five chain; repeat from * four times. The line finishes by five loops taken together; add five chain to replace the five stitches pulled into one at the commencement. Thus you form the bias. 3rd Row.—Raise twenty-five loops, like in 1st row; repeat 2nd row, and so on.

Another way of reproducing open and dense crochet is shown in fig. 2, where balls alternate with holes, giving the effect of raised square crochet.

To make the balls, proceed thus: crochet a foundation chain with any even number of stitches, then, and making four, twist the wool round the needle and pierce it into the fifth; draw the wool through, twist it over, and draw through again; twist and draw through for the third time, leaving seven loops on the needle; hang the wool through all these at once, and cut the ball by one chain, another chain to separate the balls, then begin the next one.

Balls are still more effective on opaque surfaces, such as the one given in fig. 3.

For this make one row of double crochet, hang the wool and commence again for the first line; * five double crochet into the sixth; work one loop treble (including the wool twice round the needle), one treble; repeat from *. You have now a row of spaced scallops, each separated by five double crochet. Break off the wool again, and in the second row set the scallops into balls thus: make double crochet with wool control, then take the first and last chain of the scallop on the hook, and draw the wool tightly through these as well as the loop on the needle; the scallop then doubles into a clump or ball. Five more double crochet; set the next scallop in the same way, and so on to the end. In the third and every alternate row work a scallop into the centre stitch of the intervening five chain. A closer and richer-worked result is obtained by making balls at every fourth instead of every sixth-stitch; this is the kind adapted for reproducing the diamond and other designs on squares or stripes for quits, sofa and carriage blankets, harness cover, borders for vests, hoods, babies' and ladies' boots, &c.

This kind of crochet is sometimes called ribbed crochet, but the real ribbed, or Russian, is more furrowed and alike on both sides. It is worked like double crochet, pricking the hook each time in the back of the chain,—i.e., the part which runs on the forefinger of the left hand while holding the work. Each row is turned with one chain, and we work a stitch, and this change of sides causes a ridge and a hollow of every pair of rows. Indeed, ribbed crochet is a capital stitch for every