

There was plenty of space in that laundry. Tall windows, and a lavish sufficiency of ventilators. The whole floor was covered with a grating of narrow wooden staves, slightly round-edged, so that waste water could flow off easily, and the washers be saved from wet feet.

Some outlines of practical engineering must, of necessity, have entered into the training (the training extends over two years) of the Sisters of Rochus—for here machines reduced hand labour to a minimum, and the Sister present gave us so lucid, terse and spirited an explanation of the motive power and general working of the laundry machinery, that it was, indeed, a realization of a 19th century ideal: "*No work is below the greatest attention of the highest intelligence*"—certainly not scientific washing! "Civilization by soap" is, indeed, a reality—if we include the other good things that domestic symbol of purity naturally suggests. Here, certainly, its beneficent tyranny was evident.

From the laundry we adjourned to an upper department, where the atmosphere suggested an afternoon in the Sahara. This was the drying chamber. What struck me at first was the heat, and a number of narrow, vertical beams in a wall facing us. We ascended the platform immediately adjoining them by a few steps; and the Sister pulled. At once the beam she grasped came out, proving to be the outside support of a great rack, on which the clothes were drying. The remaining regiment of beams belonged to similar racks.

We did not stop to be parched ourselves, much as we admired this admirable drying-loft.

I forget how few hours it took to disinfect, clean, dry and mangle the entire wash of a pavilion. I know it seemed an incredibly rapid affair, requiring few hands, and a great deal of steam.

The large, light store-room for the linen was the one place in which pine-flooring was allowed. There was an enormous table, too, of the same creamy-white material, smelling faintly of soap, and suggesting cutting-out and sorting, and peaceful sisterly chats on needling afternoons.

"Do you use no calico at all?" I asked when the Sister showed me piles of snowy linen ranged with that methodical regularity that marked all other arrangements.

"Oh, no!" the answer sounded half disdainful. "Nothing but linen."

The linen of Hungary has a peculiar interest for anyone in sympathy with the history of domestic crafts. For the manner in which the peasants spin their flax (without a wheel, and with distaff only) may be studied in the Egyptian section of the British Museum among the quaint figures of artists who lived 5,000 years ago.

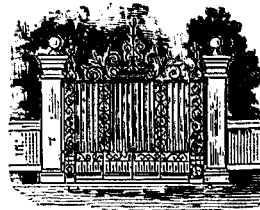
The suggestive title of "*Dearest Sister*" has been given to the Matron of Rochus. This venerable lady directs both the older and the new Hospitals, acting by deputy when she has to leave either.

"Is it not like the entrance of some big hotel," she said, smiling, as we stood together in the tessellated hall.

A gentle—and most truly justified—pride underlay these words, which were, indeed, but an expression of the noblest pride our century knows—that of caring fitly for the suffering.

Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



THE Duchess of Albany has expressed her intention of being present at some of the lectures for ladies on Domestic Hygiene to be given in the Parkes Museum, Margaret Street, under the auspices of the Sanitary Institute.

The *Queen* says:—"The installation of the first lady who has been elected to the office of mayor within the limits of the British Empire has taken place, and, as it is a precedent which probably may be followed in other cases, it may be desirable to put the facts on record. Mrs. Yates, the lady who has been elected by the ratepayers of Onehunga, Auckland, New Zealand, has been installed in her office with the usual ceremonies. The retiring Mayor, Dr. Esson, presented his lady successor with the mallet, which he said he had found useful in keeping order during the deliberations of the Council, and he concluded his retiring speech by asking his successor to bear constantly in mind the motto which was written on the back of her official chair, which was 'Be just and fear not.' Mrs. Yates (we are not quite certain whether we should say her ladyship, for, although a Lord Mayor is addressed as his lordship, it is doubtful whether a Lady Mayor should or should not be addressed as her ladyship) replied to the speech of her predecessor without any hesitation or nervousness, and informed him that she did not need to be reminded of the motto, 'Be just and fear not,' as she had carried it into effect during her previous life. She stated that she meant to carry out her duties to the very best of her ability. She happened to be the first Lady Mayor in the British Empire, but she hoped that her election was only a beginning. Evidently, the Lady Mayoress—we beg pardon, the Lady Mayor of Onehunga—is a woman who has full confidence in her own ability to carry out the duties of the office to which she has been elected. In her speech she asked if any man present could say that his house was not better with a wife in it, and why should the same remark not apply to the Council of Onehunga? And she paid a not very glowing tribute of respect to her predecessors when she stated "that they had tried men in the Council for seventeen years without the co-operation of women with unsatisfactory results, and they would find the affairs of the borough would be looked after more efficiently with a woman at their head."

A number of ladies met last week at the office of the Gentlewomen's Employment Club, in Lower Belgrave Street, London, to consider the feasibility of obtaining more co-operation among women engaged in social and philanthropic work in London. Miss Janes said that in seventeen provincial towns unions of women workers already existed. Similar co-operation, she thought, might be obtained in London. A reference library of books and pamphlets bearing upon matters of interest to women is being formed at the club, which is a centre for various kinds of women's enterprises.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)