

the best governed people in the world, because, with few exceptions, they care a great deal more about the programme of the government than the menu of the cook.' 'The pleasures of the table,' says Max O'Rell in his *Jacques Bonhomme*, 'are within the reach of all classes in France. The working people are better off in England than in France, but they are not so well fed or so happy. They spend their money in superfluous instead of spending it in necessities. The English women of this class go in for a lot of cheap finery; the French ones go in for sound linen. What the English working classes throw away in bones, scraps, and vegetables, would suffice to nourish a poor French family. I assure you that with a vegetable soup, a stew, some cheese or fruit, and good bread, these people dine remarkably well at two or three pence a head.' Dr. Johnson had within his massive, elephantine frame much unconscious food-philosophy of the Brillat-Savarin order. He once declared that a man who could not get his dinner well-cooked was not to be trusted with the more important affairs of life.

Nearly three years ago Mr. Grace—of New York—a brother of Dr. Grace of Wellington—determined to start an institute for the benefit of those of his workers and their families whose opportunities for advancement were very limited. He mentioned his purpose to one of his workmen, and the latter said to him: 'If you will found a school or an institute where young women can be taught intelligently the duties of a housewife, you will confer a blessing upon them and upon many who may be dependent upon them for comfortable and happy homes.' This was done, and with happy results. Some of our convents have taken serious and systematic steps towards restoring the balance between the ornamental and the useful in the education of our girls, and many of them have steadily insisted on their pupils learning the useful arts of cookery, housekeeping, etc. But the problem seems to have been solved upon a vast scale by some religious communities in Catholic Belgium, who have dotted the country over here and there with *Écoles Ménagères* or Schools of Housewifery. The initiative of this important educational reform was taken some few years ago by Father Temmeiman. The schools were inaugurated by private enterprise. They are aided by the State, and supplement the education of the primary, and to some extent, of the secondary, schools. The course of instruction is comprehensive to a degree. The ornamental is not excluded, but the useful is set in the very forefront of the curriculum. A good general education is imparted; but 'miss in her teens' is also initiated into the mysteries of dressmaking, washing, ironing, cleaning, mending, cooking, needlework, dairying, poultry-rearing, bee-keeping, farm accounts, and—scientific agriculture! If the young lady has a bent for a commercial career, she is amply provided with a due outfit of special knowledge for the desk or workroom. This is indeed the glorification of the useful. And all this, be it noted—with board and lodging thrown in—for such an unconsidered trifle as £10 a year!

The Belgian schools of Housewifery are an object lesson in educational methods. In the first place, they have dealt what we trust is a serious blow to the lop-sided system which looks merely to the intellectual and ornamental side of a girl's education. The Belgian Sisters fit the pupil not merely for the drawing room and the social circle, but also for the sterner work of life—for the due performance of the plain domestic duties which add a charm to the poorest cottage home. But there is another aspect in this comparatively new departure. The practical curriculum of the Belgian *Écoles Ménagères* has opened up a new and vast field for woman's industry. These schools are sending back into the farm houses of that thriving little State an army of highly trained and economical workers who must be counted with in the already keen competition for the world's markets. A few years ago—we think it was in the beginning of 1898—the London School Board began to adopt on a modest scale some of the methods that had met with such conspicuous success in the religious communities of Belgium. When will these colonies fall into line with a movement which, we hope, is destined to at length effect a much-needed reform in the educational methods now in vogue in our midst?

THROUGH the courtesy of a friend we have 'CIVIS' AND THE discovered that 'Civis' is still permitted once 'N.Z. TABLET.' a week to drag a limited length of tether in the back-block columns of the *Otago Daily Times*. In last Saturday's issue he objects with watery vehemence to the comment made in our issue of March 7 on the cruel policy of 'short rations' adopted as a military punishment against the Boer women detained in British camps whose husbands are on commando. Two straightforward courses lay before 'Civis' in dealing with our remarks upon that unpleasant theme. (1) It was open to him to prove—if he could—that our statement of the 'short ration' fact was incorrect. If he could succeed in doing so, our deductions would have collapsed like the roof of an old shanty when the walls are

blown away. Or (2), admitting the official statement of fact upon which our comment was based, he might have advanced—if he could—cogent reasons for holding that our inferences were unwarranted. Perhaps it is unreasonable for us to expect so eminently rational a proceeding from the melancholy jester whose highest achievement is to spot and freckle the bald illiteracy of his 'Notes' with fossil 'goaks' of the period of the Old Red Sandstone. At any rate neither of these sensible courses commended itself to 'Civis.' He has boldly run away from the question and from a safe distance of side-issues directed an out-of-range fusillade of sounding verbiage against the irredeemable chuckleheadedness of that bold, bad man with the bold, bad pen—the editor of the N.Z. TABLET.

The question between 'Civis' and us regards certain military punishments. Moreover, it regards these military punishments in circumstances in which they are ordinarily at their worst: (1) in time of war; (2) inflicted in an enemy's country upon people placed under the stern rule of martial law; and (3) for the purpose—as British newspapers have stated—of compelling the surrender of numbers of male Boers who are still at large with Mausers in their hands and very much *de trop* upon the veldt. The military punishments inflicted upon the Boer women and children to whom we refer were chiefly two: (1) On a vast scale and over a wide territory they were compelled to witness the burning of their homes and the wholesale plunder or destruction of their property; (2) they were then interned within the lines of British camps and picked out from among all other women of their nation for a policy of 'treatment' by short rations. Good old Aulus Gellius tell us in his *Noctes Atticae* how the ducks of Pontus thrive and waxed fat on doses of deadly poison that would kill the king of all the microbes. The crude romancer of the outer sheets of the *Otago Daily Times* evidently fancies that his readers were all born on the first of April; for, in effect, he asks them to believe that the officers who—to the disgust of our manly colonial troops—carried out the house-burning business in such a masterly fashion would be likely to make the short-ration policy so uproariously enjoyable that the Boer *wrods* and their little ones would not alone *not* suffer any inconvenience thereby, but might even be possibly expected to grow fat upon the process! Perhaps this is one of 'Civis's' pleiocene witticisms. If so, it is either very coarse or very cruel. If, however, he desires his vague and wobbly statements to be taken seriously, let him prop them up by an appeal to verified facts. Till such facts are forthcoming we leave him, with Aulus Gellius, to talk to the marines. It requires little knowledge of military discipline to know that, even at its best, and where practised upon a friend, the military punishment of short rations in war-time is no jesting matter. As practised on Boer women and their children, it would defeat its purpose if it did not cause some degree of distress. And 'to distress with hunger' is a definition given in our standard dictionaries of the verb 'to starve.' Nobody who is ever so little acquainted with military life—especially in war-time and in districts subject to martial law—needs to be reminded of the alternatives that are open to hungry women and young girls amidst the perils and temptations of even the best-conducted military camp. If British mothers and daughters had been detained on short rations in the Boer camps with a view to compelling their main relatives in Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking to surrender, we should have heard a fine buzz about it—and very rightly, too. We entered a protest against General Weyler's adoption, in Cuba, of a system similar to that which is now being followed by British officers in South Africa. If our memory serves us right, 'Civis' likewise condemned then a system which now finds favor in his sight. It evidently *does* make a difference whose ox is gored.

We raised our voice against the cruel policy of short-rations Boer women, partly on the general grounds of ordinary humanity, partly on the plea that it is a violation of the recognised usages of civilised warfare. Recent or relatively recent manuals of international law—such as those of Leone Levi, the *Manual of Wars on Land*, etc.—show that the civilised law of our time is set hard against (1) the looting, plunder, or needless and wanton destruction of the private property of an enemy, and (2) against all cruelty, or the infliction of suffering merely for suffering's sake. (3) International law or civilised custom also provides that non-combatants are to be treated as neutrals; and 'in actual practice,' says Leone Levi (*International Law*, 2nd ed., p. 280), 'women and children, the old and the sick, physicians and surgeons, who do not take arms, are not enemies.' (The italics are ours.) Moreover (4), except in the case of difficulties of commissariat, it is against the recognised practice to place prisoners of war upon short food-rations. Now, in South Africa the usages of civilised warfare have been violated (1) by regarding the Boer women and children as enemies, and (2) by according them, in the matter of food, worse treatment than ought to be meted out to able-bodied male Boers taken prisoners upon the field of battle. We advocate humane treatment of women in war. 'Civis' opposes