

WOMEN'S
Christian Temperance Union
Of New Zealand.

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"For God and Home and Humanity."

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 St., Fendalton, Christchurch.

TREASURER:

MRS BENDELY, Aratonga Avenue,
 One Tree Hill, Auckland.

Omelai Organ:

"The White Ribbon."

Editor: Mrs Peryman, Port Chalmers.

Associate Editor: Mrs Evans, M.A.

Business Manager: Mrs Peryman,
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**DIFFERENTIATION IN THE EDU-
 CATION OF GIRLS.**

In a letter inserted in last month's "White Ribbon" by Miss Chaplin, President of Women Teachers' Association, reference was made to the articles in recent numbers of this journal on the above subject. Our correspondent is in error in saying those articles had reference to the report on education of girls adopted by the Council of Education. That report had never been seen at our office, and the articles were solely a protest against the University Senate's action in making domestic training compulsory for girl students for Matric.

We are in agreement with much that our correspondent urges, but it is the bedrock principle of sex differentiation that we object to. The W.C.T.U. in the past have always striven to open every door to women. It is a retrograde step to make the difference on the ground of sex and not of ability. The men of the past said that woman's place was the

home, and so they shut all the doors leading to a liberal education and the learned professions against her. We should be false to the noble women who endured obloquy and shame in their fight for equality of opportunity for our girls if we allowed that equality to be taken from them. Once admit that there should be a difference on the ground of sex, and then it is only a question of degree to go back to the early Victorian period of education. We believe that all difference should be on the ground of **ability**, not of **sex**. We do not believe that woman's place is the kitchen, neither do we agree with the Kaiser's dictum that women are only good for "the church, the cradle, and the kitchen." But we endorse heartily the words of our leader, Frances E. Willard: "If I were asked the mission of the ideal woman, I would say it is to make the whole world homelike. The true woman will make home-like every place she enters, and she will enter every place in this wide world."

We understand that the attempt to make Domestic Science compulsory for girls does not commend itself to the younger teachers, but is supported by the older, and presumably more conservative portion of the teachers.

Dear Madam,—I have read with interest Miss Chaplin's letter in your issue of May in defence of differentiation in the education of boys and girls. There is much to be said on both sides of the question, but does it not all hinge on the view taken as to the main aim in education? If that aim is to cram each child's mind, as far as possible, with a variety of facts on a number of subjects, and to develop a certain amount of dexterity in various branches of manual work, possibly differentiation is necessary.

But if the aim is to cultivate a desire to explore, to so present various subjects to the children's minds that a desire to know more is created, and then to lead them on to find out and think out for themselves, there can be no need for differentiation.

Your correspondent says, "The education of both boys and girls is a matter of the deepest moment. In considering that of the girls, there are three aspects to be noted:

- (1) The **citizen** aspect.
- (2) The **home** aspect.
- (3) The **wage-earning** aspect.

Our women must be trained to be good citizens, good mothers, and capable workers."

True, but are not these three aspects of equal value in the education of the boys? Should they not be trained to be good citizens, good fathers, and capable workers? Is not the same training necessary for both? The qualities that go to make a girl a good citizen are also needed to make a boy a good citizen. It is just as necessary that a boy be a good father, and have high ideals of parenthood, as for a girl, but I doubt if this result will be attained in either by a course of domestic training.

There are some women who, having thought seriously, and I think not superficially, on this subject, would recommend that in all our schools there be no differentiation; that boys and girls alike be taught needlework, laundry, cookery, woodwork, and every other subject contained in the primary school syllabus; and that the differentiation, if needful, be on account of ability, not sex. It is never a handicap for a boy to know how to cook a wholesome meal and wash or mend his own clothes. Hundreds of our boys now in the trenches would be only too thankful had they known more of these subjects. Nor will it ever be anything but gain to any girl to know how to use a hammer, saw or spade. There are few housekeepers but at some time or other find it necessary to use all of these tools, and to have learnt how to use them properly, and also how to take care of them, will be a distinct gain.

These subjects, however, though desirable, should not be considered anything but secondary. The chief aim, and the one always to be kept before the teacher, should be the development of the child's intelligence, the cultivating of a child's desire for knowledge, or, in other words, for **truth**; and the training that will help each child to think for itself, not simply to believe what it is told.

Lastly, I agree with your correspondent in that "during the years of adolescence the influence of a capable woman teacher" is most desirable, and I would add that at that time a woman teacher, capable of directing the girl's thoughts of marriage and motherhood into pure and lofty channels, would be of inestimable value to the individual girls and to the nation. But it is not necessary for that teacher