

land, an account of our travels through the mission together, and how we found it generally; and I am happy to say, the work has been progressing nicely ever since. As high as fifty additions have been reported in a month, and our report for the year ending December 31st, 1896, showed a net increase of 261 souls. Between thirty and forty Europeans have been added in Australia and Tasmania since Elder Gardner's return, a number of whom have emigrated to Zion.

I have been on the go almost continually, having visited all parts of the mission except the Wairau district at least once, and some two and three times over.

There seems to be a general demand for Elders. We have sixty-one now booked, five more are supposed to have just arrived in Australia, and we could use a good many more if we had them.

The semi-annual conference of the mission has just been held in Waikato. It had been postponed on account of scarcity of food. Twenty-three Elders were in attendance, and perhaps two hundred and fifty to three hundred Saints and friends. We were blessed with good weather, though it looked very threatening. Ten meetings were held in three days, besides the Elders' meeting, which lasted six hours and a half. The conference was particularly noted for the peace and quietude which prevailed throughout. The Lord favored us with His Spirit in rich abundance. Much valuable instruction was given, and we had a time of general rejoicing, and one long to be remembered. A Maori band was in attendance, which favored us with a number of selections between meetings.

Elders C. H. Embley and Moroni Lazenby were released to return home by the March boat. They will have been away three and a half and two and a half years, respectively.

The general health of the Elders remaining is first-rate, so far as I am posted; and they are earnestly endeavoring to do what they can to acquit themselves honorably and acceptably before the Lord.

From the 28th to the 31st ult., a terrible rain and wind storm prevailed in and around New Zealand, causing much destruction of property and some loss of life. Trees were thrown down and uprooted, chimneys, fences, etc., thrown down, and many yachts and other boats cast ashore. A captain was killed near Napier. The first mate got his leg broken, and four of the crew were badly injured. Another captain was killed in Auckland harbor. I happened to be near Te Aroha, Hanrahi at the time, and fortunately in good quarters. The river is higher than for years. Crops are badly damaged on the lower lands, in some instances being washed out, and in other cases buried up. Falling timbers changed the course of freshets and the water in some houses was from two to four feet deep, running out of the windows. The best of furniture was all afloat, and one man is reckoned to have been damaged to the amount of £200. Eels were washed down out of the mountain streams in great abundance, and people around the streets gathered them up for food. Another three days' rain is prevailing now.

The fore part of the season was very dry, and people began to fear their

crops would be a failure from drouth; and they are very light.

I expect to start south next week, and to attend conferences in Poverty Bay, Waiapu, Mahia and Hawkes Bay districts, and reach Wairarapa to hold our general annual conference of the mission, on April 4th, 5th and 6th.

My health is good at present, and I have been greatly blessed of the Lord thus far, for the multiplied and complex duties which I have had to perform, for which I feel truly grateful to Him. It has been indeed a great testimony to me, the manner He has opened up the way before me, and has blessed and magnified me as circumstances and my labors and responsibilities have required.

Some one was thoughtful enough to send me a good many papers of different kinds this morn, some of which I sent to the Auckland Reading rooms, for which the manager seems quite grateful.

E. F. RICHARDS.

### DOMESTIC SCIENCE.

"Be firm one constant element in luck  
Is genuine, solid, old Teutonic pluck."

With the bright spring sunshine irradiating every lurking bit of dirt or dust in the house, every speck on the window panes, or stain on the curtains, the chateleine feels a stirring of the spring fever, that threatens to break out at any moment in a virulent attack upon her household redoubts.

Already for her the air is filled with a vague foreshadowing of carpets up and out, curtains down and washed, bookcases emptied and, dusted, furs whipped and packed away, and flannels relegated to their summer quarters.

In her dreams she hears the swish of the scrubbing brush, the resounding blows on the swaying carpets, and the pleasant rat-tat-tat of the tack hammer.

She sees her windows crystal clear, the pantry shelves immaculate and orderly, her soft blankets and fresh counterpanes as white as snow, the new position in which the bed is to be turned, the interchange of places between the bookcase and the couch, the reversing of the carpets, the sweet order of drawers and closets and cupboards. She breathes in anticipation the wholesome sweetness of a house as fresh from cellar to garret, as soap and water and blossom-laden air and sunshine can make it, and she can scarce restrain her eager soul from entering the lists at once.

To all such a word of advice is, "Wait!" If your house is dusty, you have plenty of company, for your neighbor's is doubtless the same. If your Penates perched up aloft, are a trifle dingy, never mind. Better for them to wait until warm days are assured than the attack of pneumonia or rheumatism that is only too apt to wait upon the extra ambitious housewife. In this climate, it is seldom safe for a family to cut themselves loose from the base of supplies of fires and flannels before May 1.

In the interim, however, much may be done that will expedite the final attack. Closets may be cleansed and straightened, boxes, bundles, drawers and trunks looked over, the fresh splashes, covers and draperies made ready, and a generous supply of munitions for the general fray be laid in.

Then all preliminaries adjusted, with

the blooming of the cherry-trees, the work of restoration and readjustment may be pushed forward with no delay, and no menace to health.

The much-derided prune, long and unfavorably known in conjunction with the cheap boardinghouse or Do-the-boy's Halls, is receiving recognition at the hands of expert cooks, under whose ministrations it emerges, a totally different result.

It is now believed that the prune, to be at its best and sweetest, needs no sugar, only the long, slow cooking to develop its own flavor. Miss Parloa declares that, against tradition, it should not be soaked over night, which causes the prune to break and the juice to become cloudy. Her method is to wash the prunes carefully one by one in lukewarm water, leaving them in four or five moments to plump out the folds. Wash in this way through two waters, and put in a granite or earthen basin to stew, allowing to each cup of prunes one and a half cups of cold water. Cook at least two hours (longer is better) and the prunes will emerge juicy, sweet, and possessed of their own fine flavor. In this connection, it is pleasant to know that Miss Parloa commends the California prunes as far more satisfactory and much cleaner than the foreign fruit.

Among the new inventions which increasing vigilance on the part of the Women's Health Protective Association, has called into existence is a novel ash barrel. This, if found feasible in its workings, and is accepted by the city fathers, promises a revolution in the usual dusty transit of ashes from cellar to dumping ground.

A galvanized, bottomless can, stands in a heavy denim fitted cover with asbestos bottom and stout draw-strings about the top. When full, the plan is to lift the can out, leaving the ashes in the bag, which is then ready to have the drawstring tightened about its neck and be carted off with its fellows, like so many bags of meal to the dumping ground. Here they are to be opened and emptied, after which each numbered bag may be returned to its rightful owner.

Another invention of one of the large department stores, is intended to prevent the littering of doorsteps and side walks with the straw or excelsior packing that usually accompanies the transportation of crockery. This is a hushe-basket, with a capacious cover of burlaps fitted over the top, which draws up like an old-fashioned work-bag. Within its recesses, each article may be shaken loose from the packing, without the usual shower of flying straws that are such an eye sore to the order-loving householder.

Regarding the absolute necessity for ventilation, a warning sent out by a sanitary inspector is to the effect, that a wellbuilt house, unprovided with special means for the inflow of fresh air, is from the very completeness of its construction, a greater source of danger, than one more shabbily constructed. In the latter, illfitting doors and windows allow for the constant passage of a considerable quantity of air; while in the former, other means must be provided.

The old-fashioned custom of the ring