All Around The House

By Mrs. H. W. Beecher.

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ALL AROUND THE HOUSE;

OR,

HOW TO MAKE HOMES HAPPY.

BY

MRS. H. W. BEECHER,

AUTHOR OF "MOTHERLY TALKS," ETC.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.
1881.

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ALL AROUND THE HOUSE.

THE TRUE HOUSEHOLD.

So much has been written on household and domestic affairs that it may seem to many a worn-out topic, about which nothing more of interest or importance can be written. But "the household," as we interpret it, is an inexhaustible theme. To become an expert even in the simplest forms of the manual labor connected with it, demands continual watchfulness and attention. Instructions must be repeated daily and, hardest of all, patiently. They must be modified, or enlarged, under the changes that are a part of a housekeeper's burdens, so as to allow for and control the different individual characters that come under the mistress's care for counsel and direction. All this demands no small skill and labor.

Those who, after some practice, have learned to feel at home in all the departments connected with domestic affairs, naturally begin to venture on experiments, hoping that each trial may bring to light some new and better way of performing their accustomed labors. This reaching out after something better, if not easier, is not confined to housekeepers alone. The farmer aspires to per-

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fection when experimenting with seedlings. He brings them forward with great care to a perfect growth and up to full bearing, knowing well that not one in a hundred, probably, of all that has been so tenderly nursed will prove of any value; but his courage does not desert him; for, if only *one* develops into a fruit or flower far surpassing the original, he is abundantly rewarded, and stimulated to new efforts.

So, while many experiments in the endless labors belonging to domestic affairs fall to the ground, yet a few now and then are developed, and, under the nursing of good, practical common-sense, are found trustworthy, and of such importance as to supersede long-established notions. Every year contributes something new and valuable, of undoubted advantage to young housekeepers, aside from "the line upon line and precept upon precept" which will ever be found indispensable by all inexperienced persons.

But the manual labor and the thorough knowledge of it that is necessary to good housekeeping are too often accepted as the sum and substance of all that comes under the head of "household duties." It is of great importance, undoubtedly, and justly demands honest advice, with clear and very definite instructions. Nevertheless, it forms but a small part of the duties which we think belong to a household, and which every good housekeeper should feel devolve upon her.

To knit and sew, to wash and iron, to make the sweetest and yellowest butter, the tenderest pastry, the whitest and most delicious bread, to feel ambitious that every part of the house shall be spotlessly clean, or to be able to superintend and direct so as to secure the needful results, is no small thing. She who is capable

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of all this has begun well; but this is only rudimentary—of great importance certainly and truly indispensable, yet it is but laying a small portion of the foundation.

The true housekeeper cannot reach that perfection to which all should aspire, if, stopping here, she feels that it is enough to have proved herself capable of performing this part of her duties in an unexceptionable manner. A hireling may be found who, not for love but for a suitable compensation, will accomplish all this equally well. But there are higher duties belonging to this department, the performance of which no gold can secure.

After digging the cellar, there is a great deal more to be done in building a house. The stone or brick to wall it up securely must be provided, and the mortar to hold the materials together is to be prepared. That done, what next? Why, the foundations are to be laid, and, whatever the materials, it is important that they should be held in place by some strong, adhesive power. On this foundation the walls gradually ascend; but they cannot stand unaided. The beams, the joists, the laths, the nails and plaster, are all indispensable. Without them the structure will assuredly fall and be destroyed.

If, then, all this fitness and adhesion are absolutely needed when you build a house of inanimate substances, how much more when you attempt to construct a household of sentient, living materials, in which, more than in any other structure, every part has its own individual importance, and, to be perfect, every part must harmonize!—for on this harmony the whole depends for beauty, symmetry, and strength—almost for existence. As this building rises in fair proportions, you will learn

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that to insure its safety you must depend upon the strength and durability of the adhesive properties of each part; for that alone can bind it indissolubly together.

This cement is composed of a great variety of elements, and it depends largely on the skill and good management of the housekeeper, whether these are sought for and blended together so judiciously as to secure the abiding strength and unblemished beauty of the whole. Take kindness and gentleness, unselfishness and forbearance, scrupulous regard for the inalienable rights of each, and be sure you bring, in no stinted measure, faith, hope, and that *love* which suffereth long and is kind, without which all will be unsound and incomplete—and you have a cement that will bind a household together in bonds which nothing can sever. Do not forget that no sophistry can long conceal the fact that household and home enjoyments depend more upon the wisdom and prudence of the mistress than on any other member of the family circle.

We are speaking to young housekeepers, principally. Knowing how much you will often need practical instruction and counsel, we desire, as far as we know the way, to show you not only how to minister to the personal comforts of those who must now depend on you for happiness, but also urge you to bear in mind that, when you became the mistress of the household, you accepted duties far more important than ministering to bodily comforts merely. *Housekeeper* and *home-maker* must be to you the same. Henceforth you are to be responsible not only for neatness and order in your dominions, for food well and economically prepared, and for faithful attention to all bodily comforts, but you should watch, with unceasing vigi-

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lance, that the peace and harmony, the happiness and usefulness, of those committed to your care are not molested or destroyed.

Every wife and mother, as life draws toward its close, must recall many instances of failure—times when she could have been kinder, more patient, and less exacting—when firmness and decision could have been effectually maintained without sinking into sternness or irritability, or where gentleness and loving words would have better secured the desired results. Who would not willingly take up again the burdens of past years if there were reason to hope that a second trial would be more successful than the first? How plainly they can now see where the happiness of others, and their own, might have been increased tenfold by a different administration of the power committed to them!

If home and household duties could always be viewed in this light, we should hear less of the "restricted sphere" of women; of lofty intellects, great powers and genius, dwarfed in the narrow precincts of home-life, or by stooping to the drudgery of housekeeping. We all know that under wise supervision the "drudgery" can in many cases be delegated to some one less highly gifted. But where can a higher, nobler, more divine mission be found than in the conscientious endeavor to create a *true home?* What work better adapted to a noble woman's genius? If you are ambitious of leadership, you can find it here—where man, however dear and noble, will not attempt to supplant you. In the *home*, if you have built it on correct principles and on sure foundations, you may reign a queen.

But, remember, it is no child's-play to rise preëminent in this grand sphere—which seems to us so truly womanly. No high or noble position was ever attained

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without taking up and bravely bearing some *cross*. No path ever led to that which was worth honest effort without some thorns. No woman can build a most precious home who does not well understand that she must, for the crown that is set before her, cheerfully accept much labor, suffering, and self-sacrifice. We have thought much of late of the inconsistencies and discrepancies that so often disturb the harmony of otherwise perfect families, and, as we pass on, would now and then bring these mistakes and shortcomings before you, as beacon-fires to guide you safely past the "breakers."

A HOME OF YOUR OWN.

THE home-education of our daughters is often sadly neglected. Indulgent mothers, keeping their daughters in school from earliest childhood, think it cruel to expect that their vacations should be devoted to anything but amusement and relaxation, leaving all knowledge of the homely duties of housekeeping to be gained after they have graduated. Yet how many pass from the school-room into married life, and on their first entrance into society are transformed from simple school-girls into wives and housekeepers!

If no part of child-life is devoted to those lessons which none should be able to teach so kindly and so thoroughly as a mother, what is the result? The *home* which the lover dreamed of proves comfortless, and is soon exchanged for a boarding-house, and the bride is too often transformed into the heartless devotee of fashion, instead of being the "helpmeet" God designed

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a wife to be. If love in a cottage "flies out of the window," it will certainly take to itself wings to escape the discomfort of a boarding-house.

Young ladies would soon discover the richer life there is in one's *own home*, if they were early instructed in an intimate knowledge of the whole routine of home duties and household mysteries, so that, when exalted to the dignity of the mistress of a house, they could, with good judgment and intelligence, direct their servants, if compelled to keep any—or independently perform the work of a small family, easily and methodically, with their own hands. Such knowledge and ability to execute would greatly augment domestic happiness.

When the children have all grown up and scattered, "the old folks" may perhaps find a pleasant rest in a quiet boarding-house; yet what will the "little ones" do if they cannot come to "grandpa's house," and what attractions can grandparents offer them in a boarding-house?

True, there is much that is hard and disagreeable in household cares and labors; but what good thing do we possess that did not require thought, effort, and often unpleasant work, before we came into the full possession and enjoyment of it? Yet there is great comfort, under any self-denial or hardship experienced in the performance of duty, in the knowledge that, the duties being once mastered, the thought of drudgery connected with them disappears; and, in the happy consciousness of independence and power over difficulties, one finds great pleasure and a full compensation.

To give some guidance in the path of making home happy and comfortable is our simple aim. We endeavor to deal with both the general principles and the scien-

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tific details of housekeeping. We hope to be able to furnish many *receipts* which we know from personal experience or reliable sources to be good. In presenting these receipts, we would ask that "young housekeepers try them with their own hands, and not turn them over to the tender mercies of Bridget;" or, if that is impossible, we would add to this request that they attribute failures to the ignorance or inexperience of the experimenter, and not to the worthlessness of the receipt.

Furnishing the house is, of course, the first step, if young people are sensible and begin their married life in a home of their own; but this work depends so entirely on the taste of those who are to occupy it that only a few general rules can be given.

One should aim at good taste, even in the humblest home. If you cannot afford the most costly furniture, there is no reason why you should not endeavor to secure articles of neat and attractive shape and color. A coarse, ungainly scroll in a carpet, with ill-matched and sombre colors, will cost as much as a neat and tasteful pattern, with fresh, bright hues harmoniously blended, and with graceful vines and flowers, true to Nature, in both shape and color. The one will make you gloomy and dissatisfied every time you see it, perhaps without knowing why; the other will give an air of comfort and contentment to your home, and make you as happy and cheerful about your duties as the birds among your flowers.

The cheerfulness and attractiveness of your rooms depend more largely upon the style and color of your carpets than upon the furniture. To secure fast and durable colors, great care and good judgment are indispensable. The colors that "hold fast their integ-

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rity" the longest are fortunately the most beautiful. Those that are easily defaced by sun, or daily use, may be attractive at first, but the pleasure is of short duration.

Set figures, on medallion patterns, are not graceful, and the colors, for the most part, are not durable. Light-colored carpets, although often very enticing, seldom prove satisfactory. They need to be kept in darkened rooms, only occasionally lighted up for exhibition to visitors, or their charms will be very evanescent. A few weeks' constant wear would compel one to admit "that a thing of beauty" is not always "a joy forever." Some very sensible housekeepers consider light colors the most desirable, particularly for chambers, under the impression that they will not be soiled so readily as darker shades. On the contrary, we think that although a foot-mark, or dust that can be easily removed, may be noticed sooner on a dark surface, if not well covered with figures, yet light colors fade and become permanently defaced much quicker. By constant use they soon have a dingy look that quite destroys their original beauty. Bright, clear scarlets and dark, rich greens usually wear well, retaining their beauty "clear down to old age." Most dark crimsons, especially the crimsons of the present day, so largely tinged with magenta, are liable to fade and become dim, except in the richest carpets, and are not very sure even in them. Blue and brown, or blue and oak, are not a good combination. Blue tarnishes more easily than almost any other color; and blue and oak do not give a cheerful look to a room.

The variety of styles in useful and ornamental furniture is so very numerous, we can only say in passing that the same general rules hold good as are given for

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selecting carpets. Bring to the work correct judgment, good taste, and great care in selecting forms and colors that will harmonize with the wall-papers and carpets, and then your own preferences and ability to gratify them must be your guides.

In furnishing a *kitchen*, first settle in your own mind how much you are willing or able to spend upon it. If your means are ample, select the best of everything, but not in such profusion as to overload your kitchen, and increase, rather than simplify, labor. Do not buy any new invention until fully persuaded that it is an improvement on older styles. If not able, in every particular, to gratify your taste in furnishing your house, spare something from your parlors that you may add real conveniences and comforts to your kitchen; that is, if you have health sufficient to keep a rigorous and unceasing supervision, or can do the work yourself; but, if either of these courses is impossible, it seems of little importance what you get. If servants rule your kitchen, you will surely be compelled to replenish every few months.

A case of drawers should be in every kitchen-closet —one for bread-cloths and blankets, and meat and fish cloths; another for kitchen table-cloths, roller-towels, dish-towels, and cook's holders; another where soiled table-linen can be neatly folded ready for the wash; and, if you have not a laundry separate from the kitchen, a fourth drawer for ironing-blankets and sheets, bosom-board and holders, is desirable. Each article should be plainly marked and scrupulously used for its appropriate work, and for nothing else. Let the directions for their use be distinctly stated, and then accept no excuse either from yourself or a servant for violating the rule. "A place for everything and every-

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thing in its place," and used for its own work, should be the recognized law for every part of the house, but especially in the kitchen, and any deviation from it should be met at once with just rebuke. Disorder, waste, and filth, in the kitchen are too easily passed over by those who depend on servants, because the mistress shrinks from the constant oversight and conflict. It is true that eternal vigilance, much patience and forbearance, are necessary to keep the kitchen machinery running neatly and smoothly. But it "pays," not only by the extra economy, but by the greater comfort and happiness of all the inmates of the house.

PROVIDING HOUSEHOLD STORES.

OPINIONS differ as to the most economical method of providing food and raiment for a family. Many advocate as far as possible buying in large quantities, or wholesale. Another class, perfectly able to adopt the course that best suits them, imagine they economize best by buying little at a time. A third class have no choice. With great care they manage to preserve the semblance of comfort, at least for a while: but their purses are very light, and in a greater or less degree they live "from hand to mouth." A necessity is laid upon them to buy food only for the day, and that in no lavish quantity, and their changes of raiment are not abundant. They could not buy food or raiment at wholesale.

"The destruction of the poor is their poverty" is an ancient proverb that can be easily understood by all.

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It is plain that where everything is bought in small quantities—a pint, a quart, or half a pound, at a time—they must cost more in proportion than when laid in on a more ample scale. All know, or ought to know, that in buying two or three yards of cloth, a table-cloth, or a spool of thread—anything in small qnantities—the price must be increased, even by so small things as the wrapping-paper in which they are put, and the twine used to tie the parcel. Small as these items seem, it is certain that the smallest must add considerably to the merchant's expense in the course of the year; and, although they may not appear on the face of the bill, they must certainly be taken into the estimate when the merchant or grocer arranges his schedule of prices. These little things go to make up the difference between wholesale and retail, and are a part of the profits which must be secured to make the business remunerative.

But the community could not forego the accommodation and convenience of our retail dealers, and it is all right and proper that they should find in it a source of profit to themselves. But, for those whose incomes are sufficient to give them opportunity to exercise the best economy, we think a large proportion of their purchases should be wholesale. There are, certainly, some things that cannot be bought safely in large quantities, even with an abundant income and ample and well-protected storerooms.

Meats, fish, poultry, and many varieties of fruit and vegetables, are perishable, and should only be bought in quantities sufficient to supply the wants of a day, or of two or three days, at most. But it is perfectly safe to buy sugar, teas, coffee, molasses, vinegar, canned fruit, spices, starch, soap, and even flour, provided the store-

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rooms are dry, and in other respects suitable, in a quantity large enough to last a year. Many articles grow better with age, and the savings in such wholesale operations far surpass anything that an inexperienced person would imagine. To those who have lived at a distance from shopping facilities these details will seem needless, but many city housekeepers have never acquired the habit of "looking ahead."

In the dry-goods department of any large family, when sheeting, shirting, ticking—indeed, all kinds of cotton goods — tapes, thread, sewing-silk, pins and needles, are bought by wholesale sufficient for a year's consumption, there will be found an immense saving in the year's expenditures. If kept from the damp air they will not be injured. Cloth of all kinds can be cut into garments or articles of daily use with much better economy, and yield a larger supply, when cut from a whole web, than when two or three, or half a dozen yards are pieced, twisted, turned, planned and replanned, to eke out the garment. Every seamstress knows how nicely the gores, pieces, half-breadths, etc., left from one article fit and come in just right to make certain parts of another and smaller garment, when she has a whole web to cut from, and in that way how almost every inch is utilized, which could not be used unless left on the main piece.

We have heard people say, "Oh, if I get a good stock of materials on hand I am not half as careful and saving in the use of them as I should be if I planned out just how many pounds or inches I must have, and bought that, and no more. When things are plenty I give away much more than I should if I had only a little in the house."

Such persons are not fit to have the care of a house

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and its stores. They should be put to school and taught how to use the good things placed in their hands "as not abusing them." They have no right to waste anything—they have no right to give away anything which they cannot afford to part with, or which is not given into good hands. If God has blessed them with abundance, it should be used to make glad the hearts of all that come under their influence; but it is sin to throw his good gifts recklessly away.

But if any have but little to use or to give away, that little should be carefully husbanded and employed to do the most good. Whether five, two, or one talent may be given into our keeping, if used generously, but with care and without waste, to do the largest amount of good and produce the most happiness, we may hope some day for the blessing which shall make us rulers over many things, *because we have been faithful over a few.*

COOK-BOOKS.

YOUNG housekeepers find it often difficult to select, among the innumerable cook-books which are published, such as will give them the most reliable information; and but a few years since this was a question that perplexed matrons of large experience. They seldom found one that gave them entire satisfaction; but no one individual found a common ground for complaint—each had reasons for dissent from separate points of view. And, on reflection, it does not appear strange that there should be diversity of opinions.

The number of volumes which are before the public

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under the various titles of "Domestic Economy," "Model Cookery," "Hints to Young Housekeepers," etc., etc., is past enumerating. Some of these are excellent; some are as nearly perfect in special departments as is possible; some suitable only for the rich; or those who delegate domestic care to hirelings, employ foreign cooks, and eat what is set before them, asking no questions, provided the table *looks genteel*, and each course is served with appropriate embellishment and in fashionable order.

But in many of these books there is much that will be an unknown tongue to the inexperienced. Many young ladies, worthy of all respect, have a good English education, but are not so situated that they can aspire to anything higher. They have secured sufficient knowledge to enjoy substantial reading, to be greatly edified and bear some part in the conversation of literary people; but they are dumb if phrases or quotations from foreign languages are introduced. And is it in good taste—excuse the inquiry—to garnish conversation with here and there scraps of French and German, unless perfectly sure that all present are as much at home in these languages as the speaker? It may show learning, but is it doing as one would be done by, if similarly situated?

Most of the popular cook-books abound in receipts and directions couched in a language and phrases which, to a large proportion of those who search them for practical information, would render the works useless. Such books are valuable for those who live fashionably, but not for persons of moderate means, who, happily, are obliged to live simply and economically. Yet this class need some reliable guides even for their less elaborate but more practical mode of living; and to the

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young housekeeper, more than any one, it is important that such guides should make the work as simple and easily understood as possible.

Then in some of the books on housekeeping and domestic economy the directions are not easily understood, by reason of an effort to condense everything into the smallest possible compass. This is all very well for experienced persons, who only need receipts to ascertain the quantity and kind of ingredients needed. They are perfectly competent to put all together without help from any one. Not so with the young and inexperienced, to many of whom all that pertains to cooking and home cares is a mystery, and they stand helpless and aghast, holding out feeble hands for some kind teacher to show them the way. Like a babe just learning to walk, they stumble and fall often, needing a strong hand, or clear and minute directions, till they become strong enough to go alone.

But within the last year or two a new order of cook-books has been brought before the public. The first that came under our observation was published in Aiken, South Carolina, for some benevolent purpose. The ladies having charge of the operation proposed that each should write out some choice receipt for which she should be responsible, and, arranging them in pamphlet form, sell them at the fair, the avails being donated to the object for which they were laboring. The plan was very successful, and the purchaser secured more than her money's worth in many valuable receipts.

Last year the ladies of the Brooklyn Employment Society published "Every Day's Needs," for the benefit of that society, and, each receipt being vouched for by some of our best housekeepers, gives it a thoroughly trustworthy character.

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These two books, or pamphlets, are small, making no pretense of giving all that a young housekeeper needs; but other more elaborate cook-books have been prepared, which we think are among the very best ever published.

"In the Kitchen," dedicated to "The Cooking-Class of the Young Ladies' Saturday Morning Club," by Elizabeth Miller, is a work of 572 pages, containing miscellaneous directions and receipts for all manner of food, culled from the best sources, of which the author says, "Most have been tested by myself, and there *is not one* in which I have not full confidence."

We have examined this work carefully, and seen many of the directions tried by skillful hands. We are much pleased with the whole arrangement, and the easy manner in which every item is stated. There is one idea quite new, which it would be well for all to remember who prepare such works. Scattered here and there through the book are blank pages on which to write any receipt found elsewhere and proved reliable.

"The Home Cook-Book," published by J. Fred Waggoner in 1870, found its way from the cold regions of Chicago to us on the banks of the St. John's, among the orange-trees of Florida. It was originally published for the benefit of the Home for the Friendless, Chicago. For this charitable object the ladies of that city and vicinity gave their time and experience. We have had little time since its arrival to examine it as carefully as we should were we in our own domains. But every old housekeeper is able to judge of many things connected with domestic affairs at a glance—long practice giving her an almost instinctive knowledge of what will be the result if certain rules are followed. In this wise we are greatly interested in this new cook-book, and such authority as a *Western lady* in the cooking department is

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worthy of great confidence. Some of the best cooking we have ever seen has been found at entertainments given at the West, even before a place had been long enough reclaimed from the wilderness to supply the conveniences and refinements common in older cities.

Then comes "Buckeye Cookery and Practical Housekeeping," compiled from original receipts, and published in Marysville, Ohio. This book is dedicated to the "Plucky Housekeepers of 1876, who master their work, instead of allowing it to master them."

This "Buckeye Cookery" has much more in it than mere cooking. It gives some of the most sensible rules for practical housekeeping in a concise but very clear manner. Nearly every receipt has annexed the name of the lady who sent it, and, as it bears the credentials of some of our best and most skillful Western matrons, one need not fear to trust it.

This book was prepared with the hope that its sale would be sufficient to enable the contributors to build a Congregational church which had long been needed. They have been so far successful as to begin to feel hopeful, if the sale of the book continues to be as good as it has been thus far, that they may secure their church. Whether they succeed in that part of their work or not, they certainly have succeeded in giving to all housekeepers who buy it a most excellent cook-book, rich in the best sort of receipts and rules for practical labor.

Without a moment's doubt we feel safe in assuring those who desire the best book of this kind, that in procuring either of these last three works they will not go astray.

Last, but not least, we have a word to say of "The Six Little Cooks; or, Aunt Jane's Cooking Class," pub-

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lished in Chicago by Jansen, McClurg & Co. In this work we are specially interested, for it is beginning just where we have long desired to see this part of a girl's education begun. The book is full of really excellent receipts, which old or young may profit by; but we like it because, while teaching the young daughters, the mother is at the same time making her instructions a source of great pleasure to her girls. Under such care when they take up life in earnest they will find this part of their work much easier from having "played work" when young.

We have some young granddaughters who were almost from infancy furnished with a very small cook-stove, which their sensible mothers have taught them to use in summer out under the trees, and from which already they often surprise their parents with some nice addition to the regular "bill of fare." We intend to provide each of these little damsels with a copy of "The Six Little Cooks," and shall expect to fare sumptuously when with them.

Little girls can learn to do cooking neatly and properly, just as well as they can be taught to sing, play the piano, or do fancy-work; and woe to the mother who dares to teach them that there is anything servile or degrading in such work!

HOME-MADE COOK-BOOKS.

A YEAR or two since, in reply to some queries on the subject of receipts, we advised a young housekeeper to keep a blank-book and insert under appropriate head-

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ings every experiment which she made successfully, and all receipts that she had found acceptable ; also, to beg receipts from her friends, and, after trying one herself and succeeding, to write it down at once, and in a foot-note show wherein she thought she had improved upon the original.

Such receipts, tried and varied by one's own experiments, are often far better than those found in our most elaborate cook-books, because too many of the rules and directions for making every variety of food are not such as the author has herself tried and proved, but taken hastily—at the table, perhaps—from the lips of the lady of the house, and frequently without even the safeguard of writing them down. The best of memories are sometimes treacherous, particularly when the thing to be remembered is something out of the usual habit and line of thought, and for that reason so many mistakes are found in otherwise very excellent domestic manuals.

A reader of the *Christian Union* writes and indorses this idea by giving her own experience, and we quote some parts of her letter :

"When a young girl at home, I had done considerable pastry-cooking, canned fruits, made pickles, etc., and thought I knew all about housekeeping. But, ah me! when I married I found that in many things I was as ignorant as my little daughter now is. But, determining to conquer and become a successful housekeeper and home-maker, and believing that regular and well-prepared meals were essential to this end, I eagerly sought information from every available source. Looking back on those days I laugh at my youthful experience, but then it was oftener a cause for tears than laughter. I searched every cook-book I could find, and in all I saw much that was useful, but also much utterly valueless. Then I hit upon a plan

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of making one of my own; and now, after sixteen years, I would advise all young housekeepers to try the experiment.

"Purchase a blank-book with pages all numbered, but put nothing in it save what you have tried or seen tried. Arrange it systematically; divide it into different departments—one for meats, another for vegetables, for bread, pies, puddings, etc., allowing space at the end of every section in the body of the book and in the index in which to make entries as new receipts or directions are found, tried, and approved. Any good housekeeper will be glad to furnish you her rules for her own favorite dishes. Write all out definitely, remembering that it is equally important that the ingredients be properly mixed and cooked as that the proper proportions are used.

"In such a book, prepared by your own hand, and each thing tested by you, there is a feeling of reliability which makes it invaluable. What a treasure such a book would be to a daughter, all written by a mother's hand, and tested by her judgment and mature wisdom!"

The writer of this letter will, we are sure, so train her daughters that they will be well versed in all home virtues and practical knowledge, and her advice is worthy the careful consideration of all young home-makers.

A little receipt-book, prepared for the benefit of the Business Woman's College in Brooklyn, by the ladies who have the management of that institution, has in it much that has been proved and furnished by some of the best and most practical housekeepers, and will be a great acquisition to our young ladies—not simply on account of the receipts for nice dishes, but also to show how many good devices these "hard times" have called into existence, by which our charitable institutions have been greatly aided and kept alive at a time when it is hard to secure donations.

Now, have not some of our young people leisure and

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ingenuity sufficient to devise many other ways for the relief of the poor, or the benefit of our many excellent institutions? We feel that it is of great importance that the rising generation should learn to find more pleasure in good works. Why not begin by dividing their leisure hours—half for the pleasures of fashionable life, and half spent in trying to comfort the sick, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked? There is a promise of a blessing on those who remember the poor and afflicted; and we venture to predict that young ladies or gentlemen who will thus divide their leisure time for a year will, at the close, acknowledge that they have found the enjoyment of doing good to others far outweighs all they have secured in fashionable life.

DINING-ROOM AND KITCHEN FURNITURE.

SUGGESTIONS with regard to the furniture of kitchens and dining-rooms for people in moderate circumstances are often called for. We notice that a majority of those we have been accustomed to look upon as our wealthiest citizens usually consider themselves in very "moderate circumstances," particularly when some benevolent project is brought to their notice. We do not, however, desire to criticise. All have an undoubted right to estimate the value of their possessions in accordance with their own ideas of truth and honor.

One inexperienced friend who desires such suggestions evidently intends to begin her new life in a truly economical manner, and arrange her home with

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reference to comfort, good taste, and true happiness, rather than for style or fashion. The size and style of the house, and the sum that can be appropriated for furnishing it—three very important items—are not given; but there are some few points that in any case should be first considered before making important purchases, and borne in mind continually while making them. No shopping expedition should ever be undertaken without clearly understanding beforehand just what is wanted and how much can be expended. These questions being settled, shopping is far less laborious and perplexing than it would otherwise be.

Before bringing new furniture into a house, all papering, painting, and cleaning, should be thoroughly finished. This can be easily managed if the house is new, or; if it is the first experience in housekeeping, when everything is to be purchased and brought in, there will be in all probability no very pressing necessity for haste, or for receiving the furniture till all needful cleaning has been finished.

The inquiry is often made, "Are not rag-carpets the most durable for dining-room and kitchen, and also the the most economical?" In most cases, we think not. When one's resources are limited, or where the men of the family are farmers or out-door laborers, and, of necessity, often enter the house with heavy, soiled boots, a strong, well-woven rag-carpet may possibly last longer than an ingrain or three-ply; but even in such cases it is doubtful if, in the end, it will prove the best economy—certainly not for a young housekeeper. It takes the "wear and tear" of a large family, through several years, to *save*—not *buy*—rags enough to give the first semblance of economy to these carpets. When a rag-carpet begins to wear out it may

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be pieced and turned, to be sure, but can never look very well, or be of much service after it has once come to mending; whereas ingrain and three-ply carpets can be pieced and turned as long as any of the pieces will hold together, and, if neatly done, will, to the end, look quite respectable.

As far as mere taste is concerned, we much prefer a clean white floor to a rag-carpet. If scrubbing is too hard work (can it be harder than sweeping a rag-carpet?), the floor can be painted—not a dark color—that shows dirt and every footprint too easily; but select a color as near that of freshly-planed yellow pine or oak as possible—a shade or two darker. With a light, soft mop, and a pail of clean, warm suds, a painted floor may be easily made to look fresh and nice. It has this advantage in a kitchen over carpets or oil-cloth—that every spot can be at once removed without injury.

Dark grounds, well covered with rich colors and tasteful designs, are much to be preferred to light or plain dark colors, in carpets for daily hard use. One scarcely perceives at first how easily a light-colored carpet is defaced, or, if not faded, how soon the color loses its freshness and looks old. But in a little while the change is so marked that we wake suddenly to the consciousness that what was a few months since a bright, fresh, and attractive carpet, has been imperceptibly transformed to a dingy, faded, untidy thing, that must be a discomfort to the eyes as long as it lasts. On a plain, dark color, also, every footprint is visible at all times. Snow, rain, or mud, will leave marks, notwithstanding the utmost care, that can seldom be removed. Rich, bright flowers, or trailing vines, scattered over dark surfaces, prevent these daily disfigurements; and, if you do buy light carpets, the same holds true with

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regard to them : the more they are shadowed by mixed, bright colors, the less perceptible are the changes that are wrought by time, accidents, or careless usage on the foundation color.

Bear in mind, when purchasing, that pleasing and harmonious combination of colors and graceful designs in carpets, as well as in dress, cost no more than uncouth, disagreeable ones. A handsome carpet, that is a perpetual pleasure to look at, may wear just as long as a homely one that is a perpetual torment. Therefore every one should search till that is found which is satisfactory. Quality and price should be the first consideration ; then the beauty of the article ; and the search should not be relinquished till these three points are combined. They can be—and patience and perseverance will insure success ; but a large amount of grace will be needed to be patient with a disagreeable article always before the eyes.

Just at present Fashion commands her votaries to seek the *Eastlake* colors and designs, or the mixed and inharmoniously colored *Persian* carpets. *Eastlake* patterns, for the most part, look faded and old, as if heirlooms, handed down from some of the past centuries, and the designs are as ungraceful and untrue to Nature, and disagreeable to the eye, as can well be imagined. But there are persons who always see, in all that carries the impress of fashion—something "*too lovely for anything.*"

Persian carpets, if not too expensive, would be economical for common hard usage, because they *cannot* show spots, the colors being thrown together so indiscriminately that none can tell whether they are spotted by design, *lack of design*, or by accident.

Cane-seated oak chairs are pleasant and serviceable

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for the dining-room, but in that case table and sideboard, if you have one, should also be of oak. Leather-covered chairs are more expensive, but very durable and handsome. The leather should match the other furniture in color. Black-walnut sideboard and table, with dark, leather-covered chairs, have a richer appearance, and are not much, if any, more expensive; but this style is more suitable for a large, high-studded room, well lighted, else the dark material gives a sombre hue to the apartment which is very disagreeable. A dining-room should be always bright and cheerful, with large windows and plenty of them, that the room may be bathed in sunlight. It is only in such a room that dark furniture can be tolerated. It is not necessary that the carpet should match the furniture, we think, but only that the colors harmonize. Dark greens or scarlets, softened by oak or gold vines or scrolls, help to give the room a cheerful aspect. A black ground, covered with scrolls or vines of oak, gold and green, has been much used for dining-rooms and halls of late, and looks exceedingly well.

White or buff-colored curtains are desirable for kitchen windows, even when they are supplied with blinds or shutters; for the kitchen needs all the light possible, requiring only thin muslin curtains to soften the intense glare from eastern or western windows, or to shield the occupants from the rude gaze of outsiders. The blinds in the kitchen should never be closed till too dark to see without lamps or gas.

There are many other hints for both kitchen and dining-room that would be desirable; but we have a few words to say about chamber-furnishing, particularly about the beds.

When there are two occupants in a chamber, and the

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room is large, two bureaus, though not indispensable, are a great convenience. One of them at least should have two wide and deep drawers at the bottom, and two deep but narrow drawers on each end over the long ones. This gives space between to hang a long, broad mirror or dressing-glass, and is a very great convenience for a lady ; and particularly for one who has no daughter or lady friend to point out whatever may be amiss in her attire, and who has not any desire for the doubt ful luxury of a lady's-maid, even if she could afford it.

Whatever may be the style of the bed, by all means have one of the *Hartford wire-woven mattresses.* The cost is, to be sure, greater than a common under-bed or paillasse, but the difference in expense is nearly, if not quite, saved in the hair-mattress which should be then used with them. A Hartford mattress with less than one-third the usual quantity of hair is all that is required. A very heavy mattress would destroy half the comfort and elasticity of these wire-woven blessings. They are the most desirable under-beds we have ever seen. Many use them, we are told, without any mattress, only spreading a thick blanket or wool-wadded comfortable over the woven wire.

The comfort found in the use of these is not all the recommendation by any means ; a well-aired bed is secured besides, and a free circulation of air will pass through this *under-bed* continually. No vermin can lodge in this network of wire unperceived, if there is the slightest attention given to their extermination, for here there are no hiding-places. When the bedclothes are taken off to air the bed, and the upper or hair mattress thrown over the foot of the bedstead, preparatory to turning it over every morning, one can see all there is to be seen in this admirable under-bed.

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Brush the wire network every week with a whisk broom, and wipe the dust that may gather on the rail on which the mattress rests with a wet cloth, and then dry with a towel. That is all the care needed. A wrench comes with the mattress to tighten the wires, should they *sag*, but we have used our mattresses eight or ten years, and never had occasion to tighten or in any way repair them.

There are many kinds of wire-woven mattresses, but we have never seen any but the Hartford that we would venture to recommend, without any reservation.

CARPETS.

YOUNG people might be relieved of much care and anxiety, if, when they commence housekeeping, they were at liberty to buy everything of the very best materials—those which will last the longest, and always give pleasure and satisfaction, so long as a vestige remained. This is true economy, and as true respecting carpets as in all other expenditures.

But there is an old saying that "the destruction of the poor is their poverty;" and usually young people cannot *begin* by practising this perfection of economy. The first cost of the most lasting articles cannot at first be met. It might quite exhaust the modest capital of young housekeepers; so for carpets they must seek the best quality of ingrain or three-ply, which can make a house look very inviting and home-like; and, if one cannot venture on Brussels or Wilton, it may be a satisfaction to know that these commoner kinds have many

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advantages that the richer ones have not. They are often really more beautiful in gracefulness and harmonious mingling of color than any Brussels, and wear to better advantage, because they can be turned—giving a change that is like having a new carpet, inasmuch as the colors on each side are differently blended. None who are able to have a carpet at all need feel troubled, if they never can have anything better; therefore be well content with an ingrain of good wool, not *shoddy*, until with a free conscience and without pecuniary inconvenience a higher grade can be purchased, and then we would prefer the best quality of Brussels for the parlor to velvet or tapestry. A good Brussels will, we think, last longer than tapestry; the colors are quite as good and the designs less elaborate and more graceful generally. But both are liable to the same objection. Neither can be turned and made over, like the cheaper styles.

The best Wilton carpets cost more, but are far more durable, than Brussels for parlor-carpets, certainly; that is, if parlors are to be *used*—not shut up and darkened, and only thrown open for show. The Wiltons are usually of good, fast colors, pretty patterns, retaining their color until completely worn out—if, indeed, they can wear out. Of course there are inferior qualities, but we refer only to the best. The Wilton carpets are not so desirable as Brussels for chamber-carpets. They have a thick, heavy nap, and the dust settling in them more readily than in Brussels makes them harder to sweep.

In putting down carpets, lay something between them and the floor, for the dust, which sifts through and settles on the boards, will grind and wear out the carpet much sooner if it comes in contact with the bare boards. Some recommend laying straw, evenly, over the floor,

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and fastening it down by passing any old twine back and forth across the straw, tacking the string at each side of the room, as it binds the straw in place firmly. This mode will teach housekeepers and children to *untie*, not *cut*, the strings that come round bundles, and carefully roll them in balls, that they may have them always ready for any emergency. But we do not like straw under carpets, and think the hard, rough joints, and indeed the straw itself, will wear the carpet more than any dust that can sift through on the boards, even if straw did not tend to gather dampness.

Newspapers laid smoothly on the floor, and fastened down with very small, smooth-headed tacks, are much better than straw. But *carpet-wadding* is better than anything we have known for this purpose. It is not expensive, and more than pays the cost by the protection it affords to the carpet. It is made expressly for this use, of coarse but soft brown paper, in large sheets, with cotton placed between the sheets. It is to be found at all carpet-stores, and will last for years, only requiring to be brushed off and rolled up when carpets are lifted for house-cleaning. It adds much to the warmth and comfort of the room on cold, windy days, besides the saving in the wear, for the wind, which can easily reach one through the carpet, cannot find its way through this cotton-wadded paper.

In putting down a carpet, stretch it perfectly smooth and taut, as it is nailed down, for any loose spot or wrinkle will soon wear out. Carpets once nailed down smoothly should not be lifted too often. Ingrains and three-ply will need it every year, and twice a year—spring and fall—if the rooms are constantly and severely used; because dirt penetrates them more readily than the thick kind of carpets, which are very closely woven.

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Brussels, if in a small family and subjected to little rough usage, do not need to be taken up more than once a year; and, in rooms neatly kept and little used, only once in two years. Wilton carpets should never be raised oftener than every two, and Moquette and Axminster only once in three years, and should not be swept oftener than every other week. Be careful to go over the carpet with a dustpan and soft brush whenever any dirt is seen, but do not wear out the carpet by too heavy sweeping.

On lifting one of these heavy carpets, one is surprised to see how little dirt has found its way through to the floor or carpet-wadding, and cannot but feel that, were it not for fear some mischievous moths had laid their eggs in the corners, it would have been better not to have gone to the trouble of taking it up.

One's own preference must decide how the parlors are to be furnished after consulting the family purse. Only be sure that the room is not overloaded with furniture. That is extravagant and in very poor taste, besides being exceedingly inconvenient. The style and variety of the articles can be settled only by those who bear the expense and occupy the apartments. If necessary to be very careful and saving, there are many pretty contrivances which a skillful housekeeper can supply with very little actual cost. Some of the most attractive parlors we have ever entered have been made so more by the ingenuity of the ladies of the house, than by anything that furniture-stores or cabinet-maker's skill ever contributed.

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IMPORTANCE OF CAREFUL DUSTING.

IT is not easy, for persons yet unaccustomed to the daily routine of household care, to realize how essential to cleanliness is the practice of daily, thorough dusting; and there are some old, experienced housekeepers who, though very particular in many things, are nevertheless quite remiss in this important department.

"What nonsense! Who will believe that there can be any perceptible difference between a house that is dusted every day and one that receives that attention once or twice a week? It is a saving of patience, time, and dusters, to be content with less of that kind of care."

We heard remarks like these not long since. Two ladies were giving their experience with unfaithful servants, and one complained of infrequent dusting as forming a part of her trouble, and this quotation was the reply. We did not linger to hear more, but think one could easily see what would be the difference in the appearance of the two homes over which these ladies presided.

Suppose they were just beginning a home-life—and we think they were—occupying two houses, newly furnished, and in all respects similar. For a few weeks there would be but little perceptible difference. Both are alike pleasant, complete, and attractive. But ere long a change is noticeable. In one—no spots on the furniture are found; no dust has settled in carved work or mouldings. The statuary, marble-top tables, and mantels, are as fresh and pure as when the house was first occupied. No scroll, or bud, or leaf, in the exquisitely-

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carved mantels shelters the dust, which can always be so easily removed if caught on its first entrance and not allowed to settle and become solid by dampness or neglect. The window-panes are clear as crystal, and no dark spots of dirt are heaped up in the corners of the sash. The gas-fixtures are all in good working condition; the top of each burner free from anything that can obstruct a full, clear flame. The most fastidious caller, with immaculate white kids, need fear no damage in taking up a book, or resting her hand on a table.

The neighboring house, opened and occupied at the same time, presents a very different aspect. The furniture has already grown rusty and old; the highly-polished rosewood is losing its fine sheen; dust has found a refuge in every available nook and corner, giving an ancient look to rich carvings, that deserved better care. The windows are clouded and streaked with dust; dark shadows that have been gathering slowly in the corners are now realities, in the shape of dust and lint, that from day to day have been allowed to find lodgment there unmolested.

Marble-top tables, mantels, and statuary, even at this early day, are looking gray and mouldy. All the elegant and artistic work which adorns them is defaced. The gas flickers, or shoots up in uneven and irregular flames, because the orifices in the burners are choked with dust and lint from fires and sweeping, and the shades are unwashed and heavily clouded from neglect.

Such a difference is often seen between two houses having equal facilities for neatness and order, but under entirely different administration. Unfortunately, the descent from careless *surface*-dusting to real slovenliness is so gradual that the latter state becomes the established

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fact before the mistress has recognized the evil; and then, though she may deplore it, is unconscious that it arises from any remissness on her part. No doubt every morning she goes through the pantomime of dusting. With a pretty feather-brush she flirts from chair to bookcase or table, and gracefully passes it over the top surfaces, but never thinks to look farther; while day after day the dust is slyly secreting itself in every crevice where it is secure from the gentle approaches of that innocent dusting-brush.

The upper surfaces, or that part of the furniture which is always visible to a casual observer, may look bright and comparatively well kept for a time; but soon even that lustre fades, and, if the doors or windows are opened on a damp or rainy day, the dust which has settled so long uncared for cannot be easily removed. Something more than a feather-brush is needed to make the least impression, or a few more weeks of superficial work will have changed the rich rosewood to a dead russet-color, and the marks of premature old age and decay be seen everywhere.

Now, mark the difference between such carelessness and true cleanliness.

Instead of using a feather-brush for anything more than to give the last touches, a good housekeeper will take an old silk handkerchief for the finest articles, or a soft dusting-towel with a fleecy surface (which comes expressly for the purpose), and *rub* the furniture all over —not simply *wipe* it. If there is a damp spot where the dust has settled, it must be rubbed thoroughly till it disappears; or, if too firmly fixed, washed off in lukewarm suds, and immediately rubbed dry with a chamois-skin. Draw one end of the dusting-cloth or handkerchief back and forth through all the fine open-worked carving; or,

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where the cloth cannot enter, use a clean soft paint-brush, which should be always kept with the dusting-articles for that purpose. In this way, all the dust that can accumulate, if looked after every day, will be dislodged, and furniture retain its youth and freshness, in a great measure, clear down to old age.

This process sounds like something tedious—consuming much time. On the contrary, the daily attention that should be given to dust—which no care can prevent from entering, but which at first rests on the furniture so lightly that it is removed with ease—consumes not half the time that a careless and less methodical mode of working, or pretending to work, will do; for, after some delays, the day of reckoning for negligence will come, and hard and long-continued work will be the penalty before the furniture can be restored to anything like decency. By neglect, in the end, not only is much time wasted, but the articles will be permanently defaced.

There are some small places in the carving of rich furniture which even a paint-brush will not reach; but it can be removed by blowing hard into the spot, and thus driving it out. A small pair of bellows is a great convenience to keep on hand for such a purpose, as it easily removes all dust from the most intricate carving.

There are very few things that, to an orderly person, are so annoying as to see dust daily increasing in all of those ornamental parts of furniture which would be a perpetual pleasure if kept clean. Some houses seem made purposely for the dust to hide in, as if to defy careless girls and thoughtless housekeepers.

Finger-Marks.—Near akin to careless dusting is the neglect of doors and door-casings, which, if not fre-

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quently washed off, will, in a few days, become badly soiled. Servants, bringing up coal, with hands begrimed from being over the furnace and other rough work, are apt to leave the marks of their fingers on the sides of the doors or casings as they pass in and out. Sometimes the whole hand is pressed on the door, if one enters with a heavy coal-hod, to steady the steps. It is very natural that this should be done, when carrying a heavy weight; but one can hardly imagine such perfection in our domestics as to feel any surprise that they do not themselves see the damage done, or take instant steps to remove such marks, without being reminded of it. But whoever has the care of the rooms, whether dining-rooms, parlors, or chambers, should be instructed that it is their work regularly to watch for such marks and remove them speedily. If at once attended to, it is very little trouble. A clean, damp cloth will take off all such disfigurements easily if they are not left on too long.

The same care is needed to keep the door-knobs or handles clean. Children with soiled hands, right from their meals, often leave the knobs sticky or greasy, and they can receive the necessary care at the same time that the wood-work is cleaned, taking no longer time, but adding greatly to the neatness and comfort of the house. One of the most essential qualifications of a good housekeeper is a quick, observant eye, that at a glance, almost by instinct, knows when and where such little touches are needed, and secures prompt attention to them.

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FASHION, OR ECONOMY?

"HARD times" and "*the panic*" are terms that, like old customs, are revived about every ten years. Sometimes the days of trouble are not half so hard as the imagination paints them; but no one will doubt the reality of "*hard times*" the past year. Young housekeepers are fully realizing that there is great need of the strictest economy. They hear it talked of at every corner, and see cause for grave deliberation at every step; and, feeling this unusual pressure, they acknowledge the necessity for close calculations in all their expenditures, and would gladly curtail them.

But they groan, being grievously burdened by the exactions of *Fashion*, and find no possibility of retrenchment while compelled, as they imagine, to exorbitant outlays, by her inexorable laws. They lack the courage, and we may say good sense, to break these bonds, and act independently. If good and usually sensible ladies of riper years would but set the example, we think our young people would soon see how easy a thing it is to dress neatly—in good taste—yet quite economically.

From out the monstrosities of fashion, one surely can select, from every style, some points that may be so combined that a simple, graceful, and not extravagant dress shall be secured by this sensible gleaning. The most fastidious, if compelled by pecuniary considerations to resort to such selections and combinations, may be comforted by the knowledge that their dress, thus skillfully planned, is far more modest and in better taste than any of the uncouth fashions exhibited in our dress-magazines.

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But we acknowledge that, to be really fashionably dressed, and yet be economical, is under the present dispensation quite impossible. Those only whose wealth necessitates no very stringent economy can venture on a strict adherence to fashion with impunity. People of limited means are bound to shake off these fetters and be governed by good practical common-sense, or become hopelessly involved.

Bear in mind how fashion changes, and notice how each change of late is more wildly extravagant than the last. If one follows this "will-o'-the-wisp" and remodels the wardrobe or buys new to meet each fresh caprice, what time is there left for anything else? Wait—and once in about every five or seven years this changeful goddess will come back to a more sensible style. Only a short time since, and immense "hoops" were "all the rage." Then so much material was needed to finish a dress ample enough to cover this unbecoming extension, that a laboring or salaried man could not furnish his wife with what she would call decent apparel, and save money for anything else.

At length "hoops," or crinoline, diminished in size, and what was saved? *Nothing*. For the amount of trimming that then began to be piled upon the skirts demanded as large a pattern as before this change, and was far less economical than the extensive skirts, because the material was cut up for puffings, bias-folds, etc., so as to be useless for remodeling or making over a dress.

Now "crinoline" has vanished, and "gored" skirts are the style. The dress is now so scant as to cling closely about the feet, greatly impeding the natural action of the limbs. This, certainly, is not agreeable; but instead of buying twenty, thirty, or forty yards of material for a dress, we may hope—at least while

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these "*hard times*" continue—for something like the good old days when, whatever burdens may have been imposed on woman by others, her back was never bent under the self-inflicted and almost insupportable weight of ponderous skirts, and unnumbered yards of trimming. Then seven, eight, or at the most ten yards of material was ample measurement for the rich as well as the poor.

Yes. The "hoops" have disappeared, and the huge, billowy skirts shrunk to very narrow limits, and what have we now secured, in increased comfort, or decreased expense? Absolutely nothing! Indeed, we are not at all sure but this last change brings more discomfort, as well as extravagance, than anything among the styles that have passed away. There is a marvelous increase in trimmings of every sort. Ruffles, flounces, puffings, plaitings, bands, and bows, of the heaviest material—in dissimilar color and fabric—in the most elaborate and grotesque devices, are all mingled; and, united, cover the skirts of fashionable dresses—from top to bottom—disfiguring the waist and arms, and making the whole figure a mystery. From the back of the dress, that part of the skirt which should hang in graceful folds is puffed and looped up, forming something more uncouth than the poor camel's "*hump*." In the heavens above, the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth, there can nothing be found to equal the deformity and most unnatural figure of a lady robed in the "*height of the fashion*."

If our poor frail bodies must carry such incumbrances, then crinoline would be a blessing. But, unaided by that which would help to support the burden and relieve the spine from this unnatural pressure, a devotee of fashion has now the whole weight of these heavily-laden skirts dragging from the back and hips,

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incapacitating the body for any natural, free action; and the trouble is greatly augmented by the last crowning cruelty of all, the "*pull-back*," which compels short, mincing, uncertain steps, and makes the attempt to enter a carriage, or step up-stairs, hazardous as well as ridiculous.

But the discomfort and absurdity of the present fashions are not the worst features in the case. Great as is the extravagance of wasting so much material on one dress, and cutting much of it into trimming, which spoils it for altering over for a second term of service, the expense and waste of time in manufacturing the garment are still greater.

Unless able to hire her dresses made, what time has a mother or housekeeper for her home duties if she attempts to make a fashionable dress herself, with the required amount of trimming? We give a few statistics: A good dressmaker employed at your own house usually receives three dollars a day. In the country you may find one for two and a half. A full-rigged fashionable dress will require nine days' steady, hard work of a rapid seamstress—twenty-seven dollars, besides the nine days' board, for making one dress!

If you send the material to a dressmaker, you will have a bill varying from fourteen to fifty or seventy-five dollars, according to the reputation of the dressmaker for stylishness, or her vicinity to the most fashionable part of the community. Appended to this bill you may find a goodly number of extras. These items may be relied on, as we have them from undoubted authority.

Now, unless your husband is a man of wealth, do you think he can safely supply you with money to meet such bills for fashionable attire?

But a gentleman pays fifty, seventy-five, or even a

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hundred dollars, for a dress suit, about the same for a dress overcoat, and twelve, fifteen, or perhaps twenty-five, for boots. Yes, men of large means do, and perhaps much more; we do not know. But where your husband has one suit you have several, all costing as much as, and some far more than, his one dress suit. Not many years since, a gentleman's wardrobe cost more than a lady's, even when she had three suits to his one. Now it takes so many yards to clothe a lady, that her expenses far exceed her husband's.

Have sewing-machines, after all, been the great blessing to the family that is generally supposed? Since they came into general use it is very certain that a lady's expenses have greatly increased. Work by machine is done so rapidly that fashion-loving people are led from one absurdity to another; whereas, if every stitch were done by hand, we think there would soon be a great change in dress, even among the most ardent devotee of fashion.

RUGS OR CARPETS?

TOO late to incorporate into the article on carpets, the idea of substituting *rugs* in the place of carpets was brought to our notice. This theory is quite foreign to our taste, but well worthy of careful consideration.

As we understand it, the idea is to substitute Oriental rugs, which will cover only the main part of the floor, forming a large square or oblong carpet, but not fitted into the recesses by the windows and doors, or the irregularities which must follow the moulding or wash-

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boards on each side of the room. This mode leaves an uncovered surface of flooring all around the room, which is to be painted or finished according to the taste of the occupant. In fine houses the floors are usually *inlaid* with several kinds of wood, forming a border round that part of the room uncovered by the rug.

There are some well-defined advantages in this proposal. As a matter of economy it is thought desirable by a few. To fit a carpet nicely to all the corners and little recesses in any room may often necessitate some waste, especially if there are figures or scrolls to be matched, and it also requires a skillful hand to fit the carpet to all the irregular places found on any floor, however simple.

Another reason suggested in favor of rugs is that the corners and little nooks are the favorite resorts of moths. They doubtless prefer to deposit their eggs in the most inaccessible places, and by instinct seem to understand that by so doing they have a more hopeful prospect of securing undisputed possession than in the more exposed parts of the room. Careless sweepers are great friends to moths; so few, unless under strict supervision, are experts in exploring thoroughly the strongholds of these alert and most vexatious torments.

Again, if a carpet is made only to cover the principal part of the floor—square or oblong, according to the shape of the room—it can be taken up with greater ease, as often as may be deemed necessary, and will require no special skill to replace it. It can also be changed from one room to another with little trouble and without refitting.

Here are some sensible reasons for this theory of carpeting a room. Now let us see what can be adduced on the other side, to offset these.

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In an economical point of view it is doubtful if much is saved. It may perhaps take a little more carpeting to start with to cover all the nooks and corners under the windows, by the doors, and around the mouldings; but bear in mind that a carpet often requires cutting to match the figures—almost always, even when simply sewed in breadths—and there will probably be enough that must be cut off to fill all these places. There is also another point to be remembered when looking at this plan in an economical point of view.

A carpet which is not fitted to the floor throughout must of necessity wear out in some spots more easily than one that fills up every irregularity. When used as a rug there will be several feet of bare floor all round the room, and, in sweeping and passing in and out, the outer edge of the carpet will receive rougher usage than if this edge were fitted and tacked close up to the door-sills and wash-boards. We greatly misjudge if in a short time an orderly housekeeper would not be annoyed by finding the edges breaking and beginning to show ragged spots on such parts as were nearest the door or close to a sofa or arm-chair. If it were simply a binding, that could easily be replaced; but when the carpet itself begins to "fray" on the edges it will soon look old and shabby.

It is true that moths are more likely to deposit their eggs in the small corners about the windows, wash-boards, and mouldings; but they are not always so fastidious. They often seek to nest in the bindings, and, as their tracks plainly indicate, they do not disdain to intrude even into the middle of the carpet; especially in heavy fabrics, when they can settle down into the thick tufted threads of the Moquette, Axminster, or Aubusson, fearless of the broom, if not of the tread of

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many feet. But even if they do select the irregularities of the corners, in preference to other spots, by so doing they have, in their ignorance, put themselves more completely in the power of a skillful housewife than they could be if in less secluded places. With the little bellows, that can be procured with any bottle of the best moth-powder, one can blow the powder into the smallest crevice and far under the corners of the carpet; but if this powder is scattered over the middle of the carpet, it can remain there but a short time, before walking across the floor, opening the door, or sweeping, will remove it, without having accomplished much good. In the corners and unused places the powder will remain much longer, without annoyance to any one in the room; and, if blown far under the edges, when carpets are closely fitted, even sweeping will not dislodge it, and it continues for weeks, protecting our carpets from these destructive little insects.

We also doubt if lifting a carpet often is desirable. It is quite a tax—an addition to the general labor of a family which we think can be dispensed with. It does the carpet no good; but, if a large, heavy, sewed one, it may, by ripping through rough handling, be greatly injured. A carpet, even under the name of *rug*, is a cumbersome thing to take up and down stairs, and is seldom whipped or shaken without some rent or strain, if done by hand; while considerable expense is incurred if it is taken to a carpet-cleaning establishment. All the cleansing secured by frequent lifting will not compensate for the trouble, expense, or annoyance.

The last reason against this new theory which we give now is this: We think this arrangement undesirable, because children, old and feeble persons, or any one crossing or entering the room in haste, risk severe falls.

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We have known such falls, from mats or small rugs, and some very severe injuries by being tripped up on half-way carpets. If one is feeble, or in haste, he is liable to catch the toe of the boot under the edge of a carpet not nailed close up to the mop-boards. But if not able to cover the floor entirely with carpeting, we should doubtless be content with half, as better than none at all.

Most of these large rugs are made of the very best quality, woven in one piece, with elaborate borders, and large enough to cover all but a few feet of handsome inlaid wood floor, round the sides and ends of the room. They look rich and stylish, but are not to our taste.

These rugs are very common in warm climates. In Havana, for instance, the floors are usually marble or stone. A rug of Persian or Turkish carpeting, woven for this purpose, and often very rich and beautiful in colors and design, is spread in the middle of the parlor floor. It strikes a stranger unpleasantly to pass up a flight of stone or marble steps, through a marble-paved corridor, and enter a parlor with the same kind of stone or marble floor. It has a cold, uncomfortable, inhospitable appearance.

In the centre of these parlors a large rug, or carpet, is spread, often of most exquisite pattern and wonderful richness. These rugs are ten, fifteen, or twenty feet long, and perhaps twelve feet across and often more, according to the spaciousness of the room. Placed all around, in the primmest order, are light, fanciful cane, willow, or bamboo chairs of every conceivable description—rockers, easy-chairs, and arm-chairs. Under each a small round footstool of bamboo or cane is placed. All around the sides of the room are settees, or some fancy seats; in alcoves or recesses some quaint-shaped

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chairs of bamboo, with a pretty table of the same material; but all have either a small rug for each, or a long one to be laid before the settees, and each with the prescribed footstool.

Now, in a hot climate these rugs may be desirable, and after a time one may learn to look upon them with favor. We have had but slight experience, but the little we had was not pleasant, so far as stone floors or rugs are concerned, and we should be sorry to see the custom adopted as a matter of choice in our country.

We fear these reasons for and against the idea of rugs instead of carpets have not been very lucidly presented, but perhaps they may serve as a pioneer path for more skillful people to explore and develop.

Just at this present time, whole woven carpets, or those without seam, are "*stylish*," and are called *rugs*, for what reason we do not understand, as they cover the entire floor in many cases, or all but a foot and a half, or about that space, all round the room, which is either finished with "inlaid" wood for the border, or with plain filling. Most of these so-called rugs are of the richest kinds of Turkish, Persian, Axminster, etc.

HOW TO GROW OLD.

"What is age but youth's full bloom?
A riper, more transcendent youth?"

WE have been repeatedly requested to explain why ladies are reluctant to acknowledge their true age; but we doubt if this folly is very common, though one can imagine some few plausible reasons for

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reticence ; and there may be as great a variety of them as there are individuals weak enough to feel sensitive about such revelations.

In early youth each additional year is hailed as a mark of honor, and our little ones are far more eager to magnify than ladies are supposed to be inclined to subtract from the full number of years.

"I am almost six," or, "I am past ten," replies the miniature man or woman, with an exalted idea of increased importance for every additional month. Nor, as they pass from early childhood to riper youth, do they hesitate to give a prompt reply when questioned of their age, provided the inquiry is properly made, and by those who have any right to such familiarity.

However, there are those who, having passed beyond the *teens* and rapidly nearing the fatal *thirty*, do shrink from such inquiries. In one over-sensitive to ridicule this is not at all surprising, because the term "old maid" is often used in a most offensive manner. That there are sometimes peculiarities in this class of ladies may not be denied. Some are so unfortunately constituted that they are a burden to themselves and a torment to all around them, meddling, interfering, and ready to promote dissensions and bitterness as far as their influence extends. A young person whose life has been closely linked with such specimens can scarcely avoid a feeling of repugnance at the thought that that offensive term may some day be used in connection with herself, and may be tempted to hide her age by prevarication. But it should be remembered that gossiping, meddling, and intrusive dictation are sometimes found among matrons, as well as with elderly maidens.

The mistake of our young people lies, we think, in fostering false impressions ; in yielding without protest

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to the popular heresy that an "old maid" must, of necessity, be disagreeable and troublesome—and that from these peculiarities there is no escape.

On the contrary, our daughters should be taught that it rests almost entirely with one's own self whether, if living in "single blessedness," one shall be the bugbear of the family—the dreaded and shunned ogre of the nursery, and the sore torment from which all young people flee in dismay—or the idolized "*Auntie*," to whom the baby turns for ever-ready amusement; and to whom the weak, the helpless, and the young look in every emergency—next only to the mother. Who binds up the cut finger, or bathes the bruised head, when the mother is not near, so patiently as the gentle "*Auntie?*" Who helps the careless child in the neglected lesson or forgotten work—shields from censure—and by her pity and tenderness leads the little culprit to repentance, and toward reformation—when rebuke, or punishment, though perhaps deserved, might have made the child bitter or defiant? Who is the angel of light and comfort in the sick-room? Who is the sweet counselor and trusted friend, in all the little secrets and mysteries of youth? Who rejoices in every hour of prosperity, or mourns most deeply when clouds and darkness gather about her loved ones? The maiden sister or aunt, who, with no husband or children of her own to call forth her tenderest love, pours out the rich treasures of her heart, and adopts for her very own those who make a home for her, and give her cheerful reverence and honor. These blessed ones have no hesitation in speaking of their *age*, under proper circumstances.

But there is a class of ladies who endeavor to hide their age even at the expense of truth—the *mothers*

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who love dress and fashionable life more than their homes and children; who, to secure the compliments and attentions usually given to the young, keep their daughters in boarding-schools away from home as long as possible; who look forward to their children's vacation with dread, and see their little girls shoot up into beautiful and graceful women with dismay. Every advance toward maturity is to the vain and heartless mother an index to her own age.

The fashionable woman, with two or three young ladies by her side, is not the one to whom brainless fops do homage, or to whom the "exquisite" lifts his beaver with the most devoted eagerness. Her cheek may be soft "and tinted like a shell," her eyes flash brightly in the senseless badinage or stereotyped repartee of a party, or, bashful as "sweet sixteen," droop in well-simulated modesty, to compliments that no noble man would dare offer, or modest matron receive; but, with these younger and fresher beauties by her side, she soon perceives that her power and glory in the fashionable world have departed.

Such women dread old age—with reason—and will not acknowledge it so long as, by every known rejuvenator or cosmetic, even at the risk of health or life, they can ward off the dreaded foe. Oh, how many temptations to sin surround them constantly, and how much misery they are "sowing for their reaping by-and-by!" How much exquisite and real happiness they barter when giving their lives to such unsatisfactory enjoyments, away from the safety and love of home! When old age, and all its infirmities, can no longer be warded off, what have they to look forward to but discomfort, repining, and neglect? Their daughters, just entering upon the unnatural and unhealthy excitements and dis-

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sipation of fashionable life, have never been taught to respect or love their mothers, and will not give up their own gratification to soothe the declining years of the mothers who never gave them love and tenderness, and who are made prematurely old and helpless by former dissipation.

How different the lot of those mothers who have made home and home duties their pleasure, and, having tried to do their whole duty, shrink not from wrinkles, gray hairs, or old age, but, keeping their hearts young, find increased happiness and honor in every added year, rejoicing with joy unspeakable in the love and devotion of children who have seen in their mother's age but the "sunset breaking into day!"

MAKE NO HASTY PURCHASES.

THERE are a few simple rules which it would be wise for the inexperienced to keep before the mind when making any important purchases, and particularly if on so large a scale as furnishing a house. One of the greatest temptations will be to overload or crowd the rooms—especially the parlors—with every variety of stylish furniture, often unnecessary, besides being inconvenient and cumbersome. This is a common mistake with young people, if they have not been taught the importance of "counting the cost," and carefully estimating what the sum total will be. Our best furniture stores are so full of rich, choice specimens, that they fascinate and beguile the unwary, who are in danger of yielding to the spell. Without a thought of the

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possible want of adaptation, of many exquisite articles, to the style of the house, or the peculiar construction of the rooms which their bargains are to fill, they buy recklessly much which, when delivered, will prove inharmonious, and be a perpetual source of annoyance and dissatisfaction.

First examine carefully the house to be furnished. Take notes of the size and shape of every room. Make a note of every recess, niche, alcove, or bay window, if any. This close examination, with the memoranda carefully made, will help to keep the most important items, which must be purchased, clearly before the mind. The next step should be a visit to the best furniture stores, prepared to resist any gentle assurances that such and such articles may safely be purchased, without wasting time on further deliberation, because they are "suitable under any circumstances—nay, absolutely necessary, in all genteel houses. Why, Mrs. —— and Mrs. —— bought without a moment's hesitation." This may be true; nevertheless, one buys, or should buy, to suit individual taste, comfort, and circumstances, and must not permit a salesman to solicit or urge any purchase.

Each article should be examined carefully to learn if the material is good, and the work well and neatly done. Make a note of such things as seem most desirable; and having all particulars, and each peculiarity, clearly defined (so that, with the aid of notes in the all-important memorandum book, there will be no danger of confusion), it will be well then, without making any purchase, to go home, and, after resting quietly, review the day's work away from the confusion of the store. If the body is allowed to become painfully weary, the mind is scarcely capable of judging correctly; but a

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good night's rest will assist one wonderfully to decide what things are best adapted to the house which is to be furnished, and what, however beautiful, would be incongruous.

One day of preliminary research is an excellent preparation for the second day's work. But never forget, while making the purchases, that no room must be crowded. In the midst of so many attractions, it requires no little self-control to resist the longing to buy "just this one thing more! it is so beautiful!" When such excuse is felt to be needed, it is safe to conclude that the purchase should be, at least, delayed. There will be time enough after all other articles have been sent home and carefully arranged to buy "just this one thing" if it then seem desirable.

Another thing must not be forgotten—namely, many articles that fashion demands, and which are really in good taste, may be allowed—indeed, are demanded—in a city home, which are inconvenient and exceedingly undesirable in a country residence, unless one is so unfortunate as to be located in the centre of a large village. That is far worse than living in the city, gentility and style being there taxed more inexorably than in the city.

Heavy damask curtains with rich white lace overcurtains sweeping the floor may be endured in the city, and by some eyes will be regarded as the crowning glory of the room. They are doubtless a great protection from bold-eyed gazers passing by, but in the country they are surely a great mistake. Aside from being very expensive, we cannot think them half so elegant and tasteful as more simple curtains.

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CAMEL'S-HAIR SHAWLS.

WE have endeavored to arrive at as correct a knowledge of this subject as a somewhat extended research through unwieldy encyclopædias and ponderous dictionaries could furnish.

A rough fabric, called *camelinum* or *cameletum*, was manufactured from camel's-hair in ancient times, and the Arabs still make carpets, tents, and wearing-apparel from it. The French use it in making hats, and the finest parts of the hair are sent from Smyrna, Constantinople, and Alexandria, to manufacture the pencils used by artists. There are three qualities—the black, red, and gray. The black is the best, the gray the least valuable. This is, we imagine, nearly the extent of any use to which the camel's-hair is put.

The shawl spoken of as the camel's-hair shawl is the India or Cashmere shawl, made from the finest portions of the fleece of the *Thibet goat.* This animal is found on the cold, dry table-lands of Thibet, fourteen or sixteen thousand feet above the level of the sea. This goat can be reared in many other countries, but the wool deteriorates as it descends from its native home; and in the sultry plains of Hindostan it is scarcely more valuable than the hair of the greyhound. But far up among its snowy heights its fleece is long and silky, straight and white. It sometimes measures more than a foot and a half in length, falling in rich heavy masses from either side of the back. It is usually brown or gray, with golden or tawny tips. Some parts of it are white. These goats have been introduced into France and England, but their wool becomes coarse and harsh compared with that which grows high up amid the

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snows of the Thibet mountains. The *Angora* goat, like the Thibet goat, has a long flossy fleece, but instead of being straight it falls in beautiful silken ringlets.

It is under the long fleece of the Thibet goat that the exceedingly soft material—too fine for hair, and too straight for wool—is found, which is used in the manufacture of the famous India or Cashmere shawls. It will probably be impossible to introduce the shawl goat into France or England successfully.

The genuine Thibet *wool* has been brought over to England, from which the finest Paisley and Edinburgh shawls have been made ; and the English have had manufactories in Delhi and Lahore, employing native weavers from Cashmere to do the work, but all shawls made in these establishments lack the richness and delicacy of those made in Cashmere. They are coarse and deteriorated in comparison with the genuine article.

It is impossible to account for this superiority. It is sometimes attributed to the peculiarity of the water in the vale of Cashmere, but most probably there may be found a variety of causes. The fleece is brought from Thibet—a whole month's journey to this valley—a region of most wonderful loveliness, and here these celebrated shawls are made more perfect than on any other spot.

The great mart for the wool of which shawls are made is Kilghet, twenty days' journey from the northern boundaries of Cashmere. When received, the wool is separated with the greatest care, fibre from fibre, the choicest being set apart for the most valuable shawls. There are two kinds of wool—the white, which can be easily dyed, and the brown, gray, or ashen color. The latter, not being easily changed, nor improved by dyeing, is used in its natural color. About two pounds of either are obtained from a single goat once a year.

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After the down has been separated from the hair with much care, it is washed many times in rice-starch. This process is considered very important, and it is to the peculiar quality of the waters of this valley that the inhabitants attribute the unrivaled fineness and richness of the fabrics that are manufactured there. After the wool is thus washed and cleansed, it is then dyed and given to the women to spin. One-half the weight is lost by these various manipulations before it is woven. The yarn is then given to the weavers by the merchant, who either secures a number of shops, where the men in his employ work for him, or he gives the yarn to overseers with full directions for the colors and patterns, and they manufacture the article in their own houses or huts, hiring the weavers themselves. The overseers earn from six to eight pence per day, and the weavers about three and a half pence. Four persons are often employed a whole year on one shawl.

Carpets and counterpanes are made from the coarse, long wool, which is rejected by the shawl-manufacturers. The common inexpensive shawls are woven with a long shuttle, but the finer ones are worked with a wooden needle. The Hindu weaver has no knowledge of mechanics. His tools are of the most simple kinds. He winds his thread on a distaff, sets up an oblong frame or loom, and then begins his work with this wooden needle. Of course his mode of working is very slow and tedious; but thus far no machinery has been invented that can give such fine fabrics as those made in this simple manner by hand in the rude huts of the Hindu.

For every color they use a separate needle, and the more colors the higher the price. Not more than a quarter of an inch can be made by three or four persons in a day. Many of the most valuable shawls are made

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in separate pieces, in different looms, and each piece, when finished, so skillfully joined as to tax the most expert to point out the places where they are united.

The labor of making a shawl is divided in order to hasten the completion of the shawl, to protect it from insects, which might injure it if the work were protracted. Some of the best shawls would occupy three years, if made entire. The pattern is woven or worked in on the wrong side; and, if a new or very intricate design, the overseer stands by constantly with the pattern before him to direct every step. Both sides of a real Cashmere should be alike, although, in the wearing, one side is called the rough side.

The work in the vale of Cashmere is not as extensive as it has been, from many causes. The Janizaries dressed much in shawls; and their destruction, the loss of royalty in Cabul, and the ruined finances of Lucknow are some of the causes of the decreased demand for this elegant article. Under the Mogul emperors, Cashmere found employment for thirty thousand shawl-looms. During the reign of the Afghan kings, there were not more than eighteen thousand in use. At present, not over six thousand are employed. In part, this great decrease may result from the sale of the English imitations among the Asiatic people. At first the pretty patterns and brilliant colors were attractive; but, lacking the softness and warmth of the genuine article, they soon lost favor and are now much neglected.

The tax levied by native princes before the shawls are shipped for France and England is enormous, and is increased with every step. There is a duty on the wool as it is gathered on the mountains of Thibet—a duty on cleaning, washing, and spinning—a duty on dyeing—on the sales and importation to Cashmere—on the thread—

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on the fabric while yet in the loom—fees to brokers and assessors, the duties from Kilghet to Cashmere, from Cashmere to Amritsir, from Amritsir to Bombay, and while at Bombay, and the insurance—all this before the "far-fetched and dear-bought" luxury is landed in England.

We are indebted to "McCulloch's Commercial Dictionary," "Appletons' Cyclopædia," and the "Encyclopædia Britannica," very largely for such information as we have been able to collect.

COUNTRY HOMES.

A CALIFORNIA lady writes:

"Our parlor and dining-room open into each other by sliding-doors. Our dusty summers and romping children force us to think of *centre* carpets for the floors; but, before completing our arrangements, I wish to inquire if these centre carpets can be so fastened as to be easily taken up and shaken; or, when down, so secured that babies will not stumble over the edges, etc."

These centre carpets are usually made of velvet, Wilton, Axminster, and the heavier, more expensive kinds. We have never seen any made from ingrain or three-ply; but there is no reason why breadths of these cheaper carpets should not be sewed together and finished with a border of stair-carpeting, or the wide borders that are made for other carpets. In this way a very handsome *centre carpet* may be secured, with comparatively very little expense.

These squares, or centre pieces, can be tacked down,

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and then be easily lifted for shaking, and replaced with very little trouble. But we would not like to insure the babies from many a tumble, and some severe falls; and the older members of the family may be thankful if they escape without some serious accident, whether the carpets be nailed or unnailed. We think when fastened down, however, they are even more unsafe; for, if the foot catches under the carpet when nailed down, it does not yield so readily, and the fall will be more injurious. If one cannot have a floor covered all over with carpeting, a *matting* is, in our judgment, much to be preferred for warm climates. To be sure, the matting is not so durable as a good ingrain or three-ply; but then it is very much cheaper, and there are kinds that wear well, and are exceedingly pretty. Even in bedrooms, if one can secure a little care and judgment in moving bedroom furniture, they will last well. We have seen rooms covered with the strong, handsome Japanese matting, and a border of some rich-colored carpeting fitted all round the room, that equaled in elegance any of the more expensively furnished parlors. A square of velvet or tapestry carpeting can be used, with little danger of tripping, if there is a centre table put upon it, as the carpet will not extend so far as to give any excuse for stumbling. In cold weather this may be desirable, but does not add to the elegance of the room.

The dining-room may be covered with matting and be serviceable, because the crumb-cloth or drugget, on which the dining-table must be placed, should be large enough to secure it from rough wear. This border, the centre piece, and drugget can be easily taken up and shaken often enough to keep moths away.

Our California friend does not think the cane, willow,

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or bamboo furniture comfortable, and woolen is objectionable, because so easily ruined by moths in that climate. She inquires "if *cretonne* can be used without the necessity of restuffing the furniture every time the cover needs washing or renewal, or if that material will be out of taste, as *seeming* to cover something very nice."

Cretonne Furniture.—When *cretonne* is worn out or soiled so that it becomes necessary to take it off and recover the whole set of furniture, it must, of course, be retied or rebuttoned; but, unless the springs have been broken, there will be no necessity for restuffing anything.

As a matter of taste, simply, nothing can be prettier than some of the beautiful patterns of the *cretonne.* The softness of the cloth, the delicacy of color, the gracefulness of design, make it one of the most desirable and attractive materials for furnishing a country, or summer, home that we have any knowledge of. It is strong—wearing extremely well—and does not soil or fade so easily as one might at first imagine. One of the most bewitching houses we ever entered was near Jacksonville, Florida; and in this fairy-like home almost all the rooms were furnished with *cretonne.* It was a large, commodious house; and that it had been planned with great skill and furnished in perfect taste must have been apparent to all who entered it. The furniture, of unique, fanciful, and graceful patterns, was all covered with *cretonne*, of excellent color and designs, but each room different: soft, fresh pea-greens, delicate blue-and-pink grounds, with trailing vines, and flowers, and here and there birds'-nests—young birds and their parents, with the bright-hued Southern plumage—for the parlors, sitting-rooms, and some cozy, small side-rooms; and the more sober, quiet browns and oak for halls and dining-

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room. White lace or muslin curtains, with *cretonne* lambrequins, shaded the windows. Everything in all the rooms was in perfect harmony, either by similarity or contrast; and, wherever allowable, *cretonne* was largely and successfully used. Where trimming was needed, heavy tasseled or netted fringe of cotton, either white or shades suited to the color, was employed.

We think both pride and taste could be as abundantly satisfied with a house thus furnished, as if millions were at hand to aid in lavish embellishment.

There are very many simple contrivances, requiring some patience and ingenuity, but very little money, that give an air of greater comfort and cheerfulness than rich, expensive, and elaborate furniture can; and then the conscious independence of having secured these comfortable, if not fashionable, surroundings by one's own labor is a great reward.

CURTAINS FOR COUNTRY HOUSES.

FAILING to finish our reply to our California friend, we now add a few words which may assist her, and perhaps others who are uncertain how to manage curtains for glass doors or long windows.

Curtains.—Large double windows, or those that open lengthwise like a door, are difficult to fit with lambrequins and curtains; but a light wire or cane frame projecting from over the window, deep enough to permit the blinds and windows to swing clear, can be fastened above the window, and both lambrequin and curtain suspended from that with very good effect. There

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is nothing more refreshing than plain white Swiss muslin curtains, open in the middle, looped back on either side with a broad band of insertion, over blue, green, or cherry ribbon. Or a strip of well-glazed paper muslin looks as well as ribbon, is much less expensive, and can be purchased in almost all of the delicate colors. Or the curtain may be simply tied back with ribbon. There should be a broad hem on each curtain, with ribbon or paper muslin laid inside the hem. By joining the hem to the curtain with a handsome insertion, and sewing a ruffle on the outer edge of the broad hem neatly fluted, one secures a charming effect from the parlor curtains. Lace curtains are very elegant, but difficult to do up so as to look like new, and somewhat expensive if one hire them cleaned by a French cleaner ; and are no more beautiful than these Swiss curtains, which can be easily cleaned, and fluted, and look new each time.

Lambrequins, made also of white Swiss to match the curtains, produce a very airy, cheerful effect, or the lambrequins can be made of damask, or cretonne, with its rich, soft colors, and trimmed with heavy fringe. If one has not confidence in one's own skill to cut and shape these lambrequins, any upholsterer will shape them, and then it is easy work to trim and put them up.

Lounges.—Very pretty and comfortable lounges can be manufactured at home with little trouble or expense. If the husband or sons have any spare hours, or skill with saw, hammer, and nails, they can snatch leisure moments now and then, and make the frame ; or if they are not skillful, a carpenter, in an hour or two, could make it and give it a proper shape to suit the part of the room where it will be put. After the slats are nailed on, if there is any place near by where a few springs can be obtained, they will make the lounge much more

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comfortable; or, better than any *springs*, some of the *woven wire*—such as the wire-woven mattresses are made of—would be the most comfortable. Over the springs, cotton batting, hair, or moss should be laid, then a thick, strong canvas or bagging that the springs may not wear the outside cover. When this is nailed down smooth and tight, taking care that the stuffing is spread on evenly without lumps or hard spots—put on the cretonne, chintz, or woolen outside cover, and nail it down strong. Finish by nailing with brass or black nails, a gimp and fringe—plaiting or ruffle—to cover the edge, and you have a neat lounge, quite as comfortable as most that you buy. Three large, square pillows, filled with feathers, hair, moss, or "excelsior" (a kind of poplar shaving made expressly to pack furniture in), and covered to match the lounge, are a great convenience for a straight lounge, placed as it should be close to the wall.

Toilet-Tables.—We are happy in a toilet-table, presented by some dear friends, which is both useful and ornamental in either city or country.

Four pine boards are nailed together, forming a box about the dimensions of a medium bureau; the back, front, top, and bottom are complete, but the ends are open. The back rises about four and a half feet above the point where it joins the top board, sloping till at the top it is not more than a foot across. On this is nailed a half circle, projecting half a foot in front. This skeleton box is covered with delicate blue Silesia or French cambric—not paper muslin—which is nailed all around tight, except the ends. There the cambric is only fastened at the top, and left loose at the sides and bottom; and thus the inside of the box may be used for a little closet.

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The blue cambric is covered with white dotted Swiss muslin, with a broad hem at the bottom and two deep tucks above, both finished with narrow lace edging. Over this a valance or flounce of the same material is nailed at the top of the table, a little full—hemmed, tucked, and trimmed like the underskirt. This is caught up in festoons at the front. Round the top a pleating of narrow blue ribbon is nailed on with fine brass-headed nails, and an edging above and below the ribbon. Long loops and ends of narrow blue ribbon are fastened in the centre of the top, where it is festooned up, and at the end of the table.

In the centre of the back board, half-way to the top, the board has a piece cut out, a foot and a half long and a foot wide. Round this is the narrow ribbon pleating and on each side a lace edging. In this open place is a fine mirror, fastened on the back with cleats. From the half circle at the top a long curtain of dotted Swiss muslin is nailed a little full, opening in the middle, and fastened with a bow of blue ribbon, with a broad hem and tucks, edged with lace like the bottom part. This curtain falls apart from the mirror, leaving that and the table open, and reaches nearly to the floor, fastened at each corner of the table with bows. This is one of the prettiest toilet-tables we have seen, but poorly described. Of course, other colors—pink, buff, light-green, or violet—can be used to correspond with the rest of the furniture.

Brackets.—Pretty and very useful corner brackets can be shaped and made without difficulty, and covered with embroidery, damask, or reps. Round the shelf or bracket a piece of the same material with the furniture cover or lambrequin may be cut in points or scalloped and finished with heavy fringe. These pieces are often

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beautifully embroidered on Java or canvas, and the brackets when finished are quite ornamental as well as useful. Leather work, or pine cones varnished, are often worked up into very fanciful brackets, and are quite strong and durable.

Footstools and Ottomans may be manufactured out of old boxes, peck or half-bushel measures, or long store boxes. Nail old bagging loosely on the top, leaving one side open till you have filled it evenly and plumply (not too hard) with cotton, hay, moss, or excelsior. Then nail the canvas very tightly all round the sides and over the top, and cover with embroidery, or with material to match the furniture. Cover the edges with gimp or fringe. Nail a piece of oil-cloth over the bottom to make it slide easily overthe carpet when wishing to move it. Or the top may be fastened by a piece of strong leather or hinges to one side of the box and stuffed, and covered and trimmed as described above, and thus not only the footstool or ottoman is secured, but a box for pieces, work, or anything necessary. In this case there should be casters on the bottom to move it, when filled, without trouble.

These are only a few of the comforts, conveniences, and really elegant articles that can be manufactured by one's own ingenuity, skill, and perseverance, saving much money, and gaining more comfort and pleasure. Lambrequins and valances for brackets or mantels may be made of black farmer's satin, and flowers, vines, birds, etc., placed on the satin, by button-hole stitch in embroidery-silk. They are beautiful.

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IS IT WASTED TIME?

A LETTER signed "A Thoughtless Housekeeper" has been handed us, evidently written under the impression that directions for systematic and thorough cleanliness, in every department of household labor, are snares to catch unwary women, and hold them to unmitigated drudgery. If our suggestions lead any to feel that a suitable regard for neatness must of necessity allow no time for other and important duties, we greatly regret it. If this is a well-grounded impression it must be the result of a most infelicitous mode of expression on our part; but it does not change our firm belief in the necessity of the completeness and nicety with which all work should be done—not for the sake of neatness alone, though that is of sufficient importance, but because in the end it is an absolute saving of time, strength, and money.

We do not propose to discuss this "Thoughtless Housekeeper's" complaint at all for our own justification, but hope by a few more words on this subject to convince the inexperienced that true cleanliness—even the most fastidious precision—need not consume so much precious time as many are fond of assuming.

Will it be thought a severe or uncharitable inference, if we confess to a suspicion that a desire to employ one's time in more ennobling pursuits is not always the true or most potent objection to careful housekeeping? Is there not a little indolence? A little disinclination to that particular form of employment which is truly at the bottom of most protests of this kind? Would not "a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep," be better relished than to be up bright and early, "putting the house to

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rights," looking after and rectifying little mistakes, or starting the machinery for the day's work satisfactorily? Or, perhaps, an untimely call, or the late farewell of a guest the night before, may have taken one from an interesting book and left it at an unfortunate sentence, which keeps the mind in so uncomfortable and impatient a state of expectancy that the temptation is very strong to hurry through the next morning's work in a most careless manner.

Our "Thoughtless Housekeeper"—this is a *nom de plume* of her own—says:

"After reading your last article on dusting, etc., I could not help asking myself, For what end is woman created? Has she no immortal soul to save, or is she simply a machine made for the sole purpose of fitting and preparing a house and caring for the furniture?" etc. "If this is woman's mission on earth, I will forthwith arm myself with an old silk handkerchief, chamois skin, paint brush, and bellows, and try to fulfill it."

Now this must be a very "Thoughtless Housekeeper" indeed, and very inexperienced, if she does not know that it will take but a small portion of the early morning—not very much longer than it must have taken to concoct that note—to carry out our directions to the letter. Let her, for once, get the "old silk handkerchief" and other needed implements, and try it faithfully for one week, and see if this *mountain* does not speedily shrink into a *mole-hill* of very small dimensions. We advise only what we have often tried, and feel confident that by working systematically one can be particularly exact, and yet always find a good portion of time for other duties—to care for the children, to seek the comfort and happiness of the household generally, to enjoy society and social life in a proper

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degree, to help the needy and show kindness to the sick and sorrowful. One can be scrupulously neat and yet find leisure to read and write, to cultivate the mind, enrich and enlarge the understanding, and looking to "our Father" for help and guidance, give heed to the welfare of the "immortal soul."

Yet to learn to do this easily, and with dexterous celerity, is not the work of a day, but cometh by experience. If taught by a skillful guide from early girlhood, it becomes a "second nature," and the work is performed easily and naturally. To those who have not had early training it is, for a time, a hard lesson, yet one that each trial lightens. But there are certain conditions that it is absolutely necessary should be complied with before "the yoke becomes easy and the burden light;" no more, however, in this than in all important duties. We have not found that those most efficient in domestic affairs, or the most earnest and successful in self-culture, can afford to let the sun be far ahead of them, on his morning journey, before they also are ready to commence their own day's labors; nor can we see that through the day there is leisure for many hours of gossip or fashionable calls. Time enough for all *useful*, social enjoyments, but little to be squandered foolishly.

If any housekeeper will make early rising a fixed habit, and see that her handmaidens follow her example—provided she is obliged to have any—it will not take many weeks for even an inexperienced one to learn that all the little niceties that at first seem burdensome, but which give an air of refinement and cheerfulness to every home, can be carefully attended to before the family are ready to assemble at the breakfast table, or, if there is no servant, can be so far adjusted as to make the

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morning meal pleasant and comfortable. A very short time, after the family separate, will serve to accomplish the rest of the dusting and adorning, and one can pass on to other duties with a quiet conscience. There is so much time gained by early rising, and the early morning labors seem so much less harassing, and less broken in upon, that we cannot but think if those who are now so ready to criticise our suggestions, as over-particular, would try the experiment, they would find so much pleasure that, when once the habit has become firmly established, it would be hard to persuade them to go back to the old way of late hours and unmethodical labor.

Too large a circle of calling acquaintances is not conducive to good housekeeping or to self-improvement —at least, we cannot imagine how it can be. It is impossible to perform all the duties that must devolve on every housekeeper, even if thoughtless or inexperienced; or to have any time for one's own culture, or for works of mercy, if hours are frittered away in mere ceremonious calls. Aside from the waste of time, a large circle of acquaintance is not improving, or half so enjoyable as one more select. If one has an extensive calling acquaintance, what profit or pleasure can spring from it? What time to converse on anything of interest? The *weather*—which keeps on the even or uneven tenor of its way uninfluenced by any comment—and what has been, now is, or promises to be, the next day's storm or sunshine, is evident to each individual, and needs no words or time wasted upon it. Therefore, such calls are always in danger of degenerating into mere gossip, if not into something worse. This is bad for all concerned, lessening the spirit of kindness and benevolence that should be the governing motive

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in social life, and deadening one's own moral perceptions.

To say nothing of the practical—or even manual—labor that every sensible housekeeper must feel should come under her own supervision—not to be delegated to others—we think she cannot be truly happy if a large amount of her time is devoted to even the best form of social life. For to do that, if she is blessed with children, the care of them, and many other important duties must be left too much to the care of employees, who, however good or well-meaning, ought not to be expected to supply her place—especially in the care and influence of the little ones. Bearing all these responsibilities in mind, we cannot but think that, instead of dwarfing the intellect, or neglecting the soul by too exact or fastidious neatness, there is very much more time spent, and more danger incurred in yielding to that which custom and etiquette have forced upon woman, and which profiteth not, than the most scrupulous neatness can bring upon her.

Now we are confident that our view is the correct one ; but if not clearly and brilliantly stated, will our readers kindly remember that, while we are trying to write, we are nearing Cape Hatteras—a cold, fierce storm is howling about us in a most threatening manner, the ship groaning and quivering like a wild bird just in the snare—and the writer is fearfully *sea-sick?* Bearing this in mind, kind reader, excuse all defects, and we will retire, hoping that you are safely sheltered in a warm, happy home, surrounded by your nearest and dearest—whom may God preserve !

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HOUSEKEEPING MADE EASY.

EVERY few months some new patent is brought before the public, which, in the particular department it represents, is to insure us such wonderful assistance that what was once severe labor shall by its ministration become mere sport, or healthful amusement; but having tried it, we do not find our toil much diminished, or our leisure hours perceptibly increased. If the mistress approve, the servants are apt to resist or, it may be, positively refuse to use "any o' them new notions."

Provide a "*steamer*," for instance, with separate departments, like that belonging to the "Peerless" cooking-stove, capable of holding a great variety of vegetables (and steaming, when skillfully performed, is, without doubt, the only way to secure the best and sweetest flavors), and your *help* at once cries out against it. "A great clumsy thing, occupying all the room on the stove. We can never do anything else when that is in use." You go to the kitchen, and arrange every article with your own hands, to show her that, by a little thought and care, she *can* have as much room on the stove as is necessary, and that economy in room is often as important, and quite as easy, as economy in materials.

While you *stay by her* the work goes on successfully, but your presence alone can secure the proper attention; and one may as well do the work as be compelled to watch every step and movement while another does it. There are girls, to be sure, who take great interest in all improvements and readily give new ways a faithful trial, gladly accepting and recognizing what-

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ever advantage they may find ; but that is not the character of the majority of servants.

In the present style of living, also, there is of necessity great complication of labor, and inventions which *do* lighten the work by their easy operations are very likely to tempt the ambitious housekeeper to add new items to the list, already too long, of things to be done, because she has found a way to expedite the preparation. Thus, instead of using the invention to secure more leisure, she employs the time gained by it to give some extra touches to her work. On this account—because of the abuse of the good things which skill and science furnish—we sometimes think that many of the so-called labor-saving machines, which have been accepted and recognized as such, are often, by this foolish perversion, conducive to evil.

Even the sewing-machine, that wonderful invention which should have been a blessing to all, has been seriously injurious to many, by tempting them to expend on dress the time, strength, and money which could have been far better employed, and would never have been given but for the rapidity with which this machine enabled them to accomplish the work. If ladies were compelled to hem by hand, in the old-fashioned way, all the ruffling and elaborate trimming that is now heaped upon and disfigures a fashionable dress, we think it would not be long before every one would vote that one skirt to a dress was sufficient, and overskirts, panniers, and ruffling would be spoken of as among the absurdities of the past.

We are almost hopeless that family housekeeping will ever be made easy, especially that part of it which usually brings the most trouble—the cooking department ; and when we allow ourselves to think about it

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we confess to a longing for some arrangement by which cooking could be dispensed with in private families, and food be furnished from some large public house, where every department, to be successful, must be systematically divided, to a degree impossible when a lady, with the aid of one or two inefficient girls, must perform the work of every department for the whole family.

We found the old longing vividly renewed, while stopping at the Parker House, Boston, some time since. We had the privilege of going from the dining-room, through all the many departments, clear down to the steam apparatus which so wonderfully lightens the heaviest labor. No doubt, most of our large hotels arrange their extensive operations on very much the same general principles ; but we have never before had the pleasure of seeing the method by which the housekeeping of large establishments can, by a well-defined system or organization, be made comparatively easy, and each department so planned that every one of the large body of servants knows just what is his own particular work, and slides almost mechanically into his own groove as if moved by machinery.

Our stay was of necessity so short that we could give only a hasty glance at arrangements which we would have been glad to study for hours or days, and therefore we cannot describe that which so interested us. It showed us that, while housekeepers endeavor to follow the present complicated and elaborate modes of living, private housekeeping can never be made comfortably easy, because it is only by the perfect combination of machinery, systematically employed under the direction of those who have made the management of it a study, that it can be done without bringing a pressure of labor and care sufficient to break down the strongest.

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We passed from the dining-hall into a large room, from which the waiters receive the dishes so rapidly served, and which are in such quick succession placed before the guests. Here were the huge coffee and tea urns, with attendants ready to fill and pass the cups, and the immense caldrons of soup, with long ladles to dip out each kind, when called for. Right opposite stood the tables and sinks for the dish-washers, to whom each parcel of dishes removed from the dining-hall was handed to be washed and piled up ready for immediate use; plates, spoons, knives, forks, and every variety of dishes were laid, as fast as washed and dried, at once in their appropriate places, so that the waiters should lose no time in searching for them. Meats, game, fruits, vegetables, and groceries had here a regular storage-room, and near by were those appointed to select, weigh, and prepare them according to orders, and place them in the large ice-bins or chests, to be kept in safety till called for by the cooks.

It was strange to stand where such large quantities of food were being prepared, and find this region, usually stifling with the smoke and fumes rising from each article in the process of cooking, as perfectly ventilated, and as free from all disagreeable smells, as any parlor. We had no time to examine the mode by which this desirable result was obtained; but it was wonderful to look at those immense grates, one huge mass of glowing coals, to see every variety of material simmering, boiling, baking, roasting, or broiling, and yet no smoke or smell perceptible—all carried up the flues, entirely out of sight.

Then to notice the quiet method or system that was manifested in every branch of cooking, each one in charge giving undivided attention to his own particular

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department, his work simplified everywhere by mechanical power: the roasts suspended before these steady fires—beef, veal, mutton, and poultry—all slowly turning, kept in motion by some unseen agency, leaving to the attendant only the care of seasoning, basting, and dishing—everything moving steadily forward, made comparatively easy by the skillful adjustment of machinery.

While these meats were cooking, in other stalls or alleys the cooks were busy preparing various articles to take their place, as soon as done, while the refrigerators were full of other kinds already prepared. In apartments away from the fires, the bread-maker was kneading his dough, cutting off and weighing the loaves ready for the pans; the pastry-cook, surrounded with plates already covered, and rolling the crust to cover others; close by another, beating eggs, grating lemons, or peeling the fruit, or putting together the material which was intended to fill them. In another apartment, the famous "*Parker House rolls*" were being prepared, while large trayfuls were rising, or dozens baking, in the immense ovens, which were lighted by gas, so that the operator could see plainly to the farthest corner of the oven, and be ready to remove the biscuits on the large wooden *oven-slice*, as soon as they became a genuine golden brown.

We would like to say a word of the washing and ironing rooms—clothes washed, wrung, rinsed, dried, and mangled by steam—though steam has not yet been found to *iron* shirts, collars, embroidery, or ruffling. But we must stop. Possibly we have spoken of what is familiar to many of our readers, but to us it was intensely interesting; and we left, earnestly wishing our housekeepers might soon find some way to simplify

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labors and cares, which those who have tried them know are often harassing and annoying, and must be so until our customs become more primitive, or our servants more reliable and efficient.

JUST SIXTY-TWO!

A FEW months since, the following lines came into our possession under peculiar circumstances; and since, they have returned to the mind without warning, but with great vividness and force—at times bringing courage and motives for energetic labor, which at the moment appeared easy and exhilarating, but in other moods teaching lessons so far above the attainments of real life, that one cavils at them and grows desponding and hopeless. Yet will not these simple lines lose their hold on memory or imagination; and we now give them to our readers:

"Just sixty-two! Then trim thy light,
And get thy jewels all reset;
'Tis past meridian, but bright,
And lacks one hour to sunset yet.
At sixty-two
Be strong and true;
Clear off thy rust, and shine anew.

"'Tis yet high time—thy staff resume,
And fight fresh battles for the truth;
For what is age but youth's full bloom—
A riper, more transcendent youth?
A wedge of gold
Is never old;
Streams broader grow as downward rolled.

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"At sixty-two life is begun;
At seventy-three begin once more.
Fly swifter as you near the sun,
And brighter shine at eighty-four!
At ninety-five
Shouldst thou arrive,
Still wait on God, and work and thrive.

"Keep thy locks wet with morning dew,
And freely let thy graces flow;
For life well spent is ever new,
And years anointed ever grow.
So work away!
Be young for aye!
From sunset breaking into day."

The sentiments here expressed find a quick response, when health and strength feed the lamp that "brighter shines at eighty-four." To be "young for aye" is easy and not unnatural when the body remains comparatively strong and vigorous up to that period. Under such circumstances, "*just sixty-two*" seems truly but beginning to live—"a riper, more transcendent youth."

When blessed with perfect health all the way till this riper youth is perfected, the nervous system becomes firmer with age, and vigorous strength through all these years is still unabated. Many of the small frets and worries of youth, that naturally kept the young blood in an excitable condition, have passed away and been forgotten, and in this mature state are not likely ever to return to trouble and weaken a healthful old age.

Especially is this the case when one has been early established in happy home connections—when children have clustered about the home; and though some may have been "called up higher," yet, under loving care, a

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part are left to spring up from sweet babyhood to useful, honorable maturity, ready to give back the care and love once lavished on their childish life.

But suppose, when the children have passed beyond the necessity of constant watchfulness—as suddenly and unexpectedly as thunder from a cloudless sky, the parents' health fails; infirmities very grievous to be borne fall, one after another, in quick succession, upon them, and at "*sixty-two*," with mind still unclouded, the body is racked with pain, the nerves shaken, till trifles light as air assume force and dimensions that are overpowering and appalling. The strong will that once controlled the body—forbidding irritability or despondency, making it easy to laugh at care and cast all gloomy forebodings to the winds—now, weakened by perpetual suffering, is no longer the dominant power.

Little by little, passing from "sixty-two" to "seventy-three," bodily infirmities increase—the acute torture of rheumatism, perhaps, wrenches every limb, and the stiffening joints reluctantly obey any effort. To rise up, to sit down, to seek for rest on the bed—all are only changing the place to keep the pain. What can be worse? Ah! another foe approaches whose slow, insidious steps, in the steadily increasing suffering, are at first scarcely noticed. But connected with the pain, and underlying it all, by-and-by the sufferer is compelled to recognize occasional numbness in the limbs, a strange sensation and pressure on the brain, and other peculiar symptoms that awaken fears of a danger, more to be dreaded than any mere bodily pain. Suddenly the limbs refuse to perform their duty, and paralysis has the victim in its grasp. In early youth this foe may be conquered; but not for long, when one has passed the seventies. But, unfortunately, even late in life paralysis—

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is not dying. Years of useless helplessness may stretch out before one.

"Fly swifter as you near the sun,
And brighter shine at eighty-four!
At ninety-five
Shouldst thou arrive,
Still wait on God, and work and thrive!"

Ah, what mockery seems hidden in these triumphant words, to one helplessly bedridden! So weary! so hopeless!—knowing that this death-in-life may last for years—

"Wishing and praying that life might part—
Nor yet find leave to die."

It is hard enough to feel so useless—to know that, for you, life's work is over—but harder than all, if the mind still retains its balance, to know that those most dear are overburdened—taxed to the utmost in body and mind through their care and watchings over one no longer able to respond—and, if the power of speech is also gone, not even allowed the poor comfort of saying, "*I thank you.*"

When at last, through the gates of death, God sends release, friends may weep and mourn to lose one who, however helpless, was always dear; but they will naturally exclaim: "Useless—and no comfort to himself or others, but such a burden to all—what a happy release this is!"

Ah! we can understand how persons naturally energetic and loving may suffer continually most intensely, and yet, with a resolute will—with little selfishness, and great love for friends and home—always trying to

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gather strength each day by looking to "*Our Father*" for help—can

> "Fly swifter as they near the sun,
> And brighter shine at eighty-four."

For such, this is not a very hard thing to do. But to be stopped in the midst of usefulness and stricken down helpless—to become a burden where once one was most looked to for help—to meet this mysterious dispensation with patience and courage, and, without a murmur, cheerfully wait God's own good time—is an attainment which none acquire but those who live near to Heaven—whose "life is hid with Christ in God."

"ORDER IS HEAVEN'S FIRST LAW."

IF we could succeed by any amount of patient instruction in establishing an earnest belief that order and regularity simplify and lighten labor, full half the trouble that vexes and discourages our housekeepers would be laid to rest. But one is often tempted to believe that such efforts must be wellnigh hopeless; because in this enlightened age—as we are accustomed to style it—many of our young people are coming forward to that period when they must soon assume a housekeeper's duties, but are found poorly prepared to meet the demands which will then be made upon them.

Such teaching as will be of any great advantage must begin very early. Let children have a large amount of time for play in the clear sunshine and fresh, open air; but do not fail to teach them simple lessons daily. There should be a short time every day devoted to some

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useful work, and, however unimportant it may appear, let it be a fixed rule, which no excuse may set aside, that whatever is attempted must be *well done*, and at the proper time. Children are naturally very careless, and only "line upon line, precept upon precept," can bring order out of their heedlessness. If good habits are not early established, what can be expected of our children when they are called upon to assume the serious duties of life?

Most of our servants come to us with habits of unscrupulous carelessness, and these are wellnigh hopelessly fixed through the example of employers as unmethodical as they are themselves.

Through a life of much toil and some hardships, how often have we blessed the dear mother's unwearied teachings which, though in early childhood, perhaps, they did not always guide us exactly as we would have chosen to go, yet gradually shaped our character into so much, at least, of order and method as has enabled us to make many "crooked places straight," and lighten many burdens, which but for these early instructions would have been insupportable! We are certain that, but for this habit of working systematically, one-half the labor, which in our earlier housekeeping days seemed indispensable, could never have been accomplished by one pair of hands.

It is not necessary, nor is there space, to specify each particular phase of household labor that is much more easily and far more expeditiously done when one works systematically.

But let us give one example for illustration, and that one of the most simple forms of household labor. We refer to the manner of removing food and dishes from the table, preparatory to bringing in the dessert. It is

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torture to sit quietly at the table and witness the manner in which most servants perform this duty. Knives, forks, and spoons are thrown in the most reckless way on the greasy plates, or among the fragments left on them; large plates piled over the smaller ones, with, perhaps, a cover or a vegetable dish between, and this awkward, unsafe pile is whisked over your guests' heads, or your own, while all shrink in momentary expectation that the tottering structure may come tumbling over their shoulders or into their laps, and a sickening vision of broken china and ruined dresses floats before the eyes.

If this cargo passes safely from the table, it is hurried into the kitchen and "*dumped*" as carelessly as if it consisted of dish-towels, which very likely lie close by on the shelf—a damp, untidy heap, unfit for use. One has cause for gratitude if there is not a "crash" when this load is so unceremoniously discharged. The waiter will be sure and say, "Nothing broke, mem;" but the next meal shows what is far worse than a good, honest, open-face *break*—the edges are nicked, bits of glazing are broken off, and the china so defaced as to be ever after a grief of heart to a good housekeeper. Dishes so despoiled of their beauty unfortunately never *will break* and be forgotten.

How easy and far more expeditious it is to pass quietly round the table—first removing the meat and vegetables to the servants' table, then gathering knives, forks, and spoons, into a small pail or receiver, so that each may stand in the dish, instead of being thrown down on the greasy plates, to the great injury of the handles. While the food is being removed it expedites matters, and is a good lesson for the attendants, if the mistress will quietly gather the plates together, remov-

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ing the fragments left on them into a dish by her side, and pile each plate and dish in order, according to their size, ready to be set on the side table or into the butler's pantry. Of course, silver, glass, or fine china should never be taken into the kitchen to be cleaned. After meats and vegetables are removed and the pile of soiled dishes carried away, while the waiter takes off the casters, salts, or such clean dishes as may remain on the table, the hostess can gather the mats together, and fold the table-towels, all ready for the crumbs to be taken off.

If the mistress will give this timely aid, which need in no wise disturb her, a table can be neatly cleared in five minutes and the dessert brought on, without any of the noise and clatter which so often attends this work.

This is only one of very many items where a methodical way of doing a portion of daily work will simplify and make it easy; and where the quiet assistance of the mistress teaches a lesson far more effective than a whole hour of word-teaching.

We may have spoken of this matter before, but it will bear repeating, for although it seems a very simple thing, it is over such small items that more time is wasted than on others which are erroneously supposed to be of greater importance.

HINTS TO YOUNG MOTHERS.

PARENTS blessed with quiet, happy babies have little idea of the discomfort and exhaustion those mothers experience whose children are nervous and fretful—perhaps crying all the night.

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It is often said, "A babe in the house is a well-spring of joy;" and, if the child is most of the time playful or asleep, no one feels inclined to dispute the truth of this wise old saying; but that this joy may be unalloyed, some remedy must be found for those strange "*spells*" of crying by the hour which one is told to bear patiently, because "all children do so for the first few months," and then are sure to develop into this "well-spring" of perpetual joy.

And so the poor young mother, perhaps not yet old enough to be out of school, or from under her mother's care, tries to arm herself with patience because "it is always so with young babies"—a most unsatisfactory reason, but accepted as inevitable, and without one effort to find relief either for herself or her wailing babe. Surely there must be some definite cause for that which robs a mother for months of a large portion of her sweetest pleasure, and makes the new world into which the little pilgrim has entered so truly "a vale of tears;" and if the cause of all this trouble can be found, there must also, somewhere, be found a remedy.

Now look back to the first few days of this little life, and recall all that transpired which might have affected the delicate nerves of the tiny stranger, who for weeks should have had undisturbed rest and quiet. How many friends dropped in through the day, "*Just* to peep at baby"—or "to hold the darling for one minute"—or "to wake it *this once*, and see whose eyes it has!"

It cannot be denied that a mother's pride and affection are both gratified by these marks of interest; yet if allowed to form such bad habits, short naps and restless nights are sure to follow. After two or three such visits in the course of an afternoon the babe will be

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thoroughly awakened and excited, and cannot be hushed to sleep. Then the mother, prostrated, needing quiet and rest herself, cannot obtain it, while her new treasure is restless even when in its nurse's care. To take it to the breast—although not needing food—is the quickest and easiest way to quiet it. But broken rest and too frequent nursing will insure pain and crying, and no remedy can be hoped for until those who have the forming of the child's habits shall "cease to do evil and learn to do well."

But here is another baby, that has been trained in the most approved, common-sense way—washed, dressed, and fed at fixed hours, and laid in the crib, without rocking, to fall asleep, as Nature meant it should, and under no circumstances to be disturbed by any aunt or grandmother till the next meal. All through the day it sleeps, or serenely watches the shadows on the wall, or the bright sun shining through the curtains. A little cooing ripple occasionally gives token of its presence, else one could scarce believe there was a baby in the house.

But at night, when all should be ready for rest, the little one becomes uneasy, and soon begins to cry. There is no help for it: the child must be taken up. All the usual means are resorted to; it is patted and trotted, rocked and sung to, but with no effect. What is the matter?

Look carefully to the baby's clothes. See if some cruel pin is not the occasion of the piteous cries.

Ah! here is the cause of all this trouble. Following that most barbarous custom, the waists of the underclothes are pinned so tightly that the little body is as round and unyielding as a piece of marble. There is not room for breathing—no elasticity. What wonder

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if, after many hours of perfect inactivity, the poor baby begins to find this unnatural pressure insupportable? How the limbs must ache, and the whole body feel stiff and numb! Speedily unfasten every string or button, and give the lungs free chance to expand, and the whole body power to move. Rub gently with the warm hand all down the spine, and every limb, to promote the circulation, which these heathenish "swaddling"-bands have all day impeded. Try this simple remedy; and if the "*screws*" are not again put on—unless the child is really sick—the little martyr will sink into a quiet sleep, when both the nurse and mother may hope for unbroken slumber till morning.

Now turn to another suffering baby. Its clothes are more sensibly arranged, but the heart aches to hear its piteous cries.

Take it up at once. Feel the little blue hands—they are like ice. Draw your chair close to the fire, and, wrapping a warm blanket about the baby, lay it on its stomach across your lap, holding the cold hands in one of your warm ones. Shake out the foolishly long robes till, hidden somewhere in this mass of flannel and muslin, you find the little numb toes, and hold them near the grate, till thoroughly warm. See how it stretches its feet toward the fire, and curls the pretty face close to your warm hand. Many a child who has cried for hours, under such simple treatment will in ten minutes be fast asleep on your lap. Very often simply turning a child over in its crib will dry the tears, chase away the frowns, and reward the mother with soft cooings and happy smiles.

If a baby becomes restless and appears uncomfortable, first let the mother imagine herself in the baby's place. Are the hands and feet wrapped too closely, so

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that the child cannot move them? Would you lie half as quietly as your infant has done for the last two hours, if your limbs were thus fettered? Could you do it without becoming cramped and full of pain?

Unwrap the swaddling-clothes, and give the limbs freedom; shake up the pillow, turn it over to give the little head a cooler spot; change its position or take it up if it has been long in the crib; rub it softly, soothingly, toss it gently, anything that will give a change, and send the blood freely over the whole body.

If these devices fail to give relief, it is probable that some of the above-named causes have produced colic, which may require more active remedies. Do not give even the most simple medicines till you have tried what virtue there may be in a warm-water enema. We have never seen it fail, unless the crying indicated the beginning of some serious illness. The effect is magical when a child is fretful and restless, and yet not really sick.

If from any cause the mother has been greatly terrified, fatigued, or overheated, she should refrain scrupulously from putting the babe to the breast till fully recovered. Under such circumstances, if great care is not taken, it must be an exceedingly hardy child who does not show the effects of such carelessness, by long-continued crying or fatal convulsions. If the mother's excitement proceeds from fright, let her go to her husband, or some near friend who has power to soothe her into calmness; if from fatigue, entire *rest* for a short time must be secured; or if overheated, wash the hands and face in cold water—keep away from a current of air or draught, and wait till quite cool before taking the child.

But a more serious evil may threaten the child—the

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mother has, it may be, allowed herself to fall into a passion, so that the blood courses wildly through her veins, and the throbbing heart proclaims that all self-control is lost—for the time being. Let her beware how she approaches her babe, until in her closet and before God she has overcome the evil spirit and is at peace. Better put her little one under the deadly Upas tree than take it to her bosom in such a state of mind.

There is nothing that more seriously injures a child than to give it its natural nourishment when the mother has lost control of her temper. We can recall several cases where convulsions or idiocy have been the result. These facts are not generally believed, because mothers are too little accustomed to trace the *effect* to the *cause*; but most physicians, who look carefully after the cases that are brought to their observation, will assure you that this is no fiction.

HOME COLLEGES.

NONE can feel greater respect for the knowledge and accomplishments which our daughters have an opportunity of securing during the years they spend in the best seminaries and colleges of our land, or more heartily appreciate these privileges, than we do. But if those to whose wisdom and experience we bow with great deference judge it necessary that these early years must be given to mental culture, uninterrupted by domestic training, then we urge, with emphatic earnestness, that, after our daughters have graduated in these public institutions, it should be recognized as equally

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important that the finishing touches to a thorough education should be given under their mother's tuition, in the *home college*. Until this is accomplished no young lady should be deemed competent to enter that school which has no vacation—the married life.

Let the heart's highest aspiration for knowledge be gratified, if possible; but do not ignore the wisdom that can be obtained only by domestic training. The two should go hand-in-hand through life. Nothing exemplifies the wisdom of this union so forcibly and so painfully as the multitude of cases where married life is full of discord and fault-finding, through the wife's incompetence to manage her domestic affairs judiciously, and provide an attractive table—a neat and orderly home.

If such inefficient matrons have daughters, they will develop into still more helpless women than their mothers, capable of bringing no brightness and happiness into any home. That thought alone should be sufficient to make mothers particularly careful that their daughters' intellectual and domestic culture should be blended in equal proportions.

"The *first* ought ye to have done, but not to have left the *other* undone," is a wise direction that one has frequent occasion to recall in sadness, when seeing young ladies of the highest mental culture, yet utterly deficient in all domestic knowledge, accept a position which they are quite incompetent to fill with honor and comfort. When they leave their parents' house to make homes for themselves, they destroy all chance of true happiness if they neglect, because distasteful, those duties which they accepted with their marriage vows—or else drag through them heart-sick and discouraged by their own ignorance. Before promising to perform the

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duties of a wife and housekeeper, or *home-maker*, every young lady ought fully to understand what all those duties are, and know how they should be performed.

All the responsibility of providing food and raiment for the household, and seeing that nothing is wasted or squandered, rests upon any lady when once she is crowned the "*Mistress of the House.*" She should know how to provide plentifully, yet economically, and so to manage all departments of her kingdom, that her wedded happiness be not shipwrecked by her own carelessness and ignorance, or by her love of fashion and pleasure. If her husband's means are limited, this is an imperative duty, but no less binding, if he counts his income by thousands.

Unless prevented by ill-health, every housekeeper will attend to the marketing herself; for she ought to be better qualified to make judicious selections than any other member of the family. A servant's judgment is seldom trustworthy, and the husband *may forget*, or, not forgetting—that is supposed to be impossible—it is not best to permit him to encroach so far on "woman's rights" as to imagine he can understand his wife's business as well as she does herself.

To the housekeeper who has attained some skill through long experience nothing seems more wonderful than the instinctive knowledge which seems to come to some without effort. We have sometimes asked such a one:

"How did you make that delicious cake?"

"Oh, I hardly know myself. I never made anything twice alike."

"But you have made this cake to-day, and cannot have forgotten. Do, please, tell me *exactly* how you made it."

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"Oh, take a little flour, just a mite of salt, two or three eggs—beat them well, you know—throw in a lot of sugar, and a 'right smart chance' of butter, and milk enough to make it about right for stiffness. Dash in any kind of fruit and spice you like, and bake—*bake some time;* you can always tell when a thing is done, you know, easy enough."

Was not this lucid explanation comforting to the young wife, already at her wits' end in view of her own ignorance? But because Mrs. —— is such a "fine cook" she goes to her for help in her hour of greatest need, and finds that the coveted lesson has "made that darker which was dark enough before." She never dreamed that rules for cooking could be so hard to understand!

But let no young housekeeper feel that domestic lore is unattainable, or more unmanageable than, in her school-girl days, she found the French and algebra which she so cleverly mastered. Now—as then—patience and perseverance will win the day; and her love for her husband, and strong desire for his sake to "perfect herself in all housewifely accomplishments," will make this a less galling effort than the other was.

We do not like to see young housekeepers feel that the time spent in school must have been wasted simply because at the very threshold they are not victorious in domestic economy. Everything that tends to cultivate the mind and enable one to look at all that passes correctly will come into practical use more frequently in home duties than in fashionable life. Practice must teach much that cook-books cannot; but a good solid education is the best interpreter of all troublesome directions, and tends to make care and otherwise tiresome labor a source of pleasure and solid enjoyment.

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One of the most disheartening vexations that meet the young housekeeper, almost at the threshold of her new home, is the consciousness of her ignorance, and consequent inability to repair damages, remedy evils, or rectify the mistakes that every one is liable to, but which to the inexperienced are painfully annoying. They feel these vexations acutely, while an old and competent housekeeper would pass them over lightly. The girlish matron sees the responsibility—feels the full weight of her honors, knows her own weakness, and unfortunately thinks everybody else knows them, too—and will be ready to watch her uncertain, faltering steps with a critic's eye.

Take courage, poor child. Your slight shoulders will become accustomed to these unwonted burdens ere long. Old housekeepers are not half so maliciously critical as your vivid imagination pictures them. They may mischievously smile when you slip in your housekeeping cares, but they do not forget their own shortcomings and former ignorance, and, while amused at your perplexities, they recognize the far-off kinship, and pity while they smile.

"EVERYTHING NEAT AND TIDY."

"Will you please tell me how a woman, in poor health, two or three in the family, six cows, and no help, can keep things neat and tidy?"

WE cannot understand how any woman under such circumstances could succeed at all in carrying her burdens, if she did not "keep everything neat and tidy." Neatness should save work, not increase it. With "a place for everything, and everything in its place,"

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and well cleaned before it is put there, one can turn off much more work, with far less fatigue, than if each article used was thrown aside anywhere, to be searched for when next wanted, and cleaned before it could be again used, consuming in the search more time than it would take to do the work for which it was wanted. Every housewife knows that if any article is set aside uncleaned, it will take more than double the time to get it in a proper condition when next wanted, than if it had been immediately cleaned after using. Knives, forks, spoons, plates and dishes, are difficult to clean if left unwashed till what remains on them gets hard and is thoroughly dried. After making bread or pastry the breadboard and rolling-pin can be washed and made spotlessly clean in less than five minutes, if done immediately; but set them aside for an hour or two, or until next day, and you will find it will take time and strength which you can ill afford to waste, to get them in working order again; or if used unwashed, and we have known such cases, your bread or pastry will reveal the carelessness. Just so with paint, floors, windows, and each and every kind of work. If you let them pass day after day till dust and dirt accumulate in every direction—for these are industrious workers—by-and-by, from regard to your own comfort and convenience, you must take a day, perhaps two or three, to repair the damages, and it will be hard work, and a great waste of time; whereas, a few minutes' dusting or sweeping, or use of a clean cloth and water, each day, will easily conquer dust and dirt, moth and rust, and you will find far less fatigue in the operation. We mention these things simply to serve as examples; the same method carried into all parts of your work will save your time and strength, and yet enable you to "keep everything neat and tidy."

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"How large should I make sheet and pillow tidies?"

Sheet tidies should be as long as the sheet is wide, and about half a yard deep, and laid over that part of the sheet that is turned over the bed-spread at the head of the bed. They hide the wrinkles and tumbled look of the upper sheet after it has been once slept on, and give the bed a neat appearance, that is very desirable. Pillow tidies may be made two and a half yards long, and from three-quarters to a yard wide, according to the size of the pillows, and spread over both when the bed is made, or cut in two pieces, covering each pillow separately. They may be made with a simple deep hem, or a hem and tucks braided, embroidered, or ruffled, according to your fancy, time, or means. They may be made of new linen or cotton, or when old sheets are too far worn out to be used as sheets for smaller beds, the proper length and width may be cut from such parts as are whole, and hemmed, tucked, or ruffled, nicely starched and ironed, and used for tidies. They should of course be removed and neatly folded each night, and with care will not require washing oftener than once a month. They are a great convenience, as a bed may be kept always looking prettily and neat enough to relieve you of all fear of unexpected callers, or company. When the house is small, and one is compelled perhaps to have a bed in the sitting-room, these tidies add much to comfort and peace of mind.

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CONVENIENT KITCHENS MAKE PATIENT HOUSEWIVES.

AS the peace and harmony of the household depend, in a great degree, on the patience and amiability of the housekeeper, it is important that the building and convenient arrangement of the kitchen should receive much thought, and well-matured deliberation. The choice of the utensils necessary to the proper performance of the work to be done in it, when the building is completed, is a prerogative of the mistress which no wise man will attempt to dispute; and in deciding on the style of this part of the house, she, more than any one else, should be consulted, and her wishes and judgment have the greatest weight.

Fourteen feet by sixteen—not including the closets—eighteen by twenty, and twenty by twenty-five, according to the size of the house, are very good dimensions for a kitchen. The first size is suitable for a small house, the other two measurements for medium-sized and quite large houses. We have, however, often worked in much smaller kitchens than the smallest of these, quite contentedly; but that was in our early days of freedom and independence, when not subjected to the caprice and carelessness of *help*. When compelled to submit to such incumbrances, one comes in too close contact, to find very small kitchens agreeable.

Three large windows are desirable; and for a spacious kitchen, four will make work more comfortable. If your architect refuses so many windows, attempt to secure, at least, doors half glass. If possible, have kitchen windows, like doors, open in the middle to the floor; for, more than any other room in the house, this should

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have free sunlight and fresh, pure air. We have no fancy for the dim, shadowy light of fashionable rooms in any part of the house; but in this department, light and good air are indispensable. Servants will be far more amiable and healthy if they work in a light, airy room, and food will be less liable to be flavored with seasonings not authorized by any well-recommended cook-book. There is, also, another and very important advantage in these long windows: they have no *window-seats* upon which untidy girls can leave soap, wet towels, or greasy dishes—which misdeeds are a grief of heart to all good housekeepers, and a disgusting sight to all who pass by.

A range, or cooking-stove, should never be placed opposite a door or window if it can be avoided; for sunlight or wind, striking across them, will deaden either coal or wood fires, and thus prevent the oven from baking equally. But if this mistake is made, and cannot be repaired, the only help for it is to drop the curtains and close the doors or windows while the fire is needed.

Some kind of ventilator is important over the range or stove, by which steam and all disagreeable odors can be carried off without pervading the whole house. A perfect ventilation over the whole house is necessary, but is quite as much so in the kitchen as in any other part of the house. We know a small country house where a very small room is built on the back part of the kitchen to prevent overheating the main room. It is just large enough for the cook-stove, with narrow space for one to pass around it. The roof to this little room is carried up as high as the kitchen chamber, with a window near the top, which can be opened or shut by means of a pulley. At first we thought this a fancy, which would never repay the expense. But careful ob-

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servation for a few weeks convinced us of our mistake. We gladly bow to the superior wisdom of the contriver, and, were we building in the country, would select that mode of ventilating a kitchen.

It is more convenient to have the sink on the left side of the range; but, whichever side it is placed, it should be as near the window as possible, to secure plenty of light. A "water-back" can always be connected with a range, so that hot or cold water may be turned into the sink at pleasure; and for that reason the sink must be fitted close to the boiler.

Marble or soapstone sinks are much more desirable than wood or iron, and porcelain best of all. They are more durable, and much more easily kept sweet and clean. A large soapstone, marble, or porcelain bowl for washing dishes, set permanently at the left-hand corner of the sink, with a hole at the bottom covered with a fine strainer and connected with the waste-pipe underneath, is a greater convenience than one can realize until she has tried it. Also, a "grooved" soapstone or marble slab for rinsing and draining dishes. It should be "set" a little inclined, so as to drain into the sink. A slight moulding, about one inch high, will be needed round the edge of the "drainer," to prevent the rinsing-water, when poured over the dishes, from spilling on to the floor, and also keep the dishes from sliding off.

With a sink thus furnished, no dish-pans are needed, except to wash pots and kettles. But although, in the end, this is the best economy, yet the first cost cannot in all cases be afforded. In that case, as the children sometimes say, "let's play we don't want them," and be well content with a wood or iron sink; and a neat lattice, made of wire or wood, can be fitted over the rinsing-pan with little expense. It is a simple affair,

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and particularly desirable and useful, because it compels a girl to stand her dishes upon this lattice or drainer, one by one, as she washes them. This prevents the cracks, nicks, and breakages, so inevitable when dishes are tumbled into a pan, one on top of the other, large and small together. This arrangement is very convenient where there is a range, when the hot water is carried by pipes into the sink and can be made to flow with no trouble, at will, over the dishes that have been washed. Even when the water is not carried into the sink by pipes, but must be brought in a pail or pitcher, these draining and rinsing arrangements are still a great saving of time and trouble.

RULES FOR MARKETING.

THERE are a few hints respecting the selection of articles in market, particularly meats, fish, and poultry, which may be of service to some of our readers.

In purchasing *beef* take notice of the *color*. If well fed, the lean will be a bright red, flecked with spots of clear, white fat, and the *suet* firm and white. If the fat is *yellow*, don't buy the meat; you may be sure it is stale, and no plausible assurances from the butcher to the contrary should be accepted.

Ox beef is the best. Heifer beef is lighter-colored, the fat white, and bones smaller, but the meat is not so sweet nor juicy, and certainly not so economical.

Veal should be fat, fine-grained, firm, and white. If too large it will be tough, unpalatable, and unhealthy.

Mutton.—In selecting *mutton* seek small bones, short

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legs, plump, fine-grained meat, and be sure that the lean is *dark-colored*, not light and bright red, like beef. The fat should be white and clear. When in what is generally understood as prime condition, it is too fat for common mortals' "daily food," and not at all economical; and, to perfectly satisfy an epicure, it must be kept till too *tender* for an uncultivated taste.

Lamb should be small, light red, and fat. If not too warm weather, it ought to be kept a few days before cooking. It is stringy and indigestible if cooked too soon after killing. Neither lamb nor veal should be taken from spit or oven till the gravy that drops from it while cooking is white.

Venison.—In good *venison* the fat will be clear, bright, and thick. If the cleft of the haunch be *smooth* and close, it is young; if close and *rough*, it is old. By running a sharp, narrow knife into the shoulder or haunch, one can easily learn of its state by the smell.

Pork.—Great care must be taken in selecting *pork*. If ill-fed or diseased, no meat is more injurious to the health. The lean must be finely grained, and both fat and lean very white. The rind should be smooth and cool to the touch. If clammy, be sure the pork is stale, and reject it. If the fat is full of small kernels, it is indicative of disease.

Poultry.—The skin of *fowls* and *turkeys* ought to be white and of fine grain. See that the breast is broad and full fleshed. Examine if the legs are smooth, toes supple, and easily broken when bent back. If these signs are not found, the poultry is too old or stale. The same rule applies equally to geese or ducks. When the feet are red and hard, the skin coarse and full of hairs, all poultry may be pronounced too old for comfort.

When found necessary to keep meat or poultry lon-

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ger than was expected, sprinkle pepper, either black or red, over it. It can be washed off easily when ready for cooking. Powdered charcoal is recommended to prevent meat from tainting, and some assert that "when fowls have been kept so long as to turn *greenish*, they can be made as sweet and fresh as ever by sprinkling with powdered charcoal an hour before cooking." It *may be* that the charcoal can make meat or fowl sweet again; but, after taint has gone so far as to discolor it, we do not believe it can ever be brought back to a healthy state, and certainly should not advise the experiment. A greenish tinge is a sure indication of decay, but that charcoal, either in lump or powdered, will arrest as well as prevent this change, is doubtless true. In hot weather it is always advisable to keep a jar of charcoal in the store-closet, ready for use if needed.

Fish.—No one article of food requires so much attention and judgment in selection as fish; because nothing else, unless it be pork, is so injurious—often fatally so—if stale or out of season.

The eyes should be bright, not sunken; the gills a clear red, not dark color; the body stiff, and flesh firm, not flabby and slimy. Chloride of lime, it is said, will restore stale fish to a tolerably good condition; but we would not recommend any compromise. "Better is a dinner of herbs" and good bread and butter, than a stale fish, renovated, and severe illness produced thereby. The taste may be restored in a measure, but the flesh cannot be made healthful.

A good *turbot* is full fleshed, thick, and the underside a yellowish-white or cream color. If it has a bluish tint, and is soft and thin, it is not good.

Salmon and *cod* are known, when perfect, by a small head, thick shoulders, and small tail. The scales of the

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salmon should be bright and the flesh red. It is perfect only when dressed as soon as caught.

Cod should have white, clear flesh, and grow even whiter after boiling, and be firm and sweet, easily separated in large flakes.

Herring, *mackerel*, and *whitings*, are quite unfit to eat unless newly caught.

Lobsters, *prawns*, and *shrimps*, should be very stiff after they are boiled, and the tails turn far inward. When they relax, and grow soft and watery, they are not in a fit condition for eating, and the smell, when at all stale, is sufficient proof of their unfitness. If bought alive, judge of their excellence by their weight and sprightliness.

The male lobster is the best, unless wanted for sauces or soups; then the female is usually chosen for the coral.

Oysters are not good unless they close firmly on the knife when being opened. If they can be opened easily, or hold themselves open in the least, they should be rejected.

Lobsters and *crabs* can be found in market at almost all seasons of the year; but they are in the best condition and plentiful only from April to the last of October.

MILK AND BUTTER.

No one should attempt the care of milk and butter who does not distinctly understand that the most scrupulous cleanliness is an absolute necessity, and any deviation from it unpardonable. This is one of the

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many household duties that cannot be left to the entire care of servants. The mistress herself should know just how all the work belonging to butter-making must be done, from the time the milk is brought in till the butter made from it is nicely packed for use.

Of course, we do not mean that the labor may not be performed by the servants; but in no one department is the daily oversight of the mistress so indispensably necessary. This unfailing oversight is important in all the combinations that belong to domestic economy. Simply giving directions, without seeing that they are promptly and exactly followed, may possibly pass for good housekeeping, but it will not enable one to keep milk properly or make good butter.

Pails, pans, skimmers, butter-prints, and churns must be thoroughly scrubbed in clean, hot suds, immediately after using, so that the milk may not dry on. Keep a small, white scrub-brush, with which to scrub the seams, corners, handles, etc., of all utensils that are used about milk, particularly the *strainers* of the milk-pails.

As fast as each article is washed in this way, beginning with the pans, dip them into cold water to rinse off the suds, and then set them into a tub, or large, deep pan kept exclusively for that purpose, putting in skimmers, ladles, and prints last. Then pour over all a large kettle of boiling water, and let them remain in this while the milk-pails and churn are being washed. Rinse these last, also, in cold water, and pour over them another kettle of boiling water; then, while they are being scalded, wipe the pans, etc., with clean, dry towels, and turn down on a shelf or bench out-of-doors, where the sun can sweeten them perfectly. Then proceed in the same way with pails and churn.

A tub or large pan for washing, and another for

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rinsing and scalding, should be kept expressly for these things, and brush, wash-cloth, and drying-towels should be marked, and never, under any circumstances, be used for anything else. Here, also, must the mistress's watchfulness be constant. If her vigilance is relaxed, there is not one girl in a thousand but will use these articles "just this once" for other purposes totally inconsistent with that perfect cleanliness so very important in this department.

"Too much trouble to be so particular," say you? It is not half the trouble, nor does it take so much time as it seems when reading. But even if it does consume time, and is a little troublesome, bear in mind that nothing is ever well done without time and trouble. The satisfaction of enjoying the result ought to be ample compensation.

In very hot weather, if one has not a good cool cellar, it may be necessary to scald the milk when first brought in. Have a kettle of boiling water over the fire; strain the milk into a tin pail kept for that purpose, and set it into the boiling water till scalding hot; but be very careful that it does not "crinkle" or "scum" over the top, else the butter will be full of "mealy" grains, and have an unpleasant taste. We do not think the butter is so good when the milk is scalded; but the cream rises more rapidly and the milk does not sour so soon. An important consideration, when without a cool cellar or "spring-house."

In cool weather milk should never be over thirty-six hours old. It is possible that more butter may be obtained if kept forty-eight, though we do not think so; but what may be gained in quantity will be lost in quality, if kept so long. In hot weather, unless blessed with a large, cool cellar or "spring-house," milk can sel-

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dom stand over twenty-four hours. Every minute the cream remains on after the milk changes, injures the butter.

The cream is not "ripe enough" is a common remark among dairywomen. We think they misjudge often. In cool weather we churn while the cream is quite sweet, but thick, and the flavor of the butter justifies the method. In very warm weather the cream will sour, although we churn every day, and the effect of this change in the cream on the flavor of the butter is the chief difference we find between June butter and that made in the hot and sultry months of July and August; but a little extra care makes the difference scarcely noticeable.

The "Blanchard churn" is one of the best we have tried, and most convenient, as the washing, salting, and working over can be almost entirely done in the churn, with the "wings" or "dasher" pressing out the buttermilk and salting more evenly, thoroughly, and with far less fatigue. We saw, last fall, at the New Hampshire State Fair, the "Bullard's Oscillating Churn," which we think will, when well known, become a general favorite. It is simply a plain long box, without "paddle" or "wings" inside, fitted to an oscillating table. The box can be taken off easily, when necessary to air it and keep the table clean. By taking hold of a "rung," or handle, at one end, this box is pushed backward and forward. The fly-wheel on the table regulates and continues the movement. One of the excellences claimed for it is, that the continual "swashing" of the whole body of cream rinses down the sides at every stroke, so that there can be no accumulation of "dead" or half-churned cream on the sides of the churn, which, in other churns, mixes with the butter, and doubtless is the cause of the mottled

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appearance of a great deal of the butter found in market. This "dead" cream contains caseine or the cheesy part of the milk, and injures the flavor, and prevents the butter from keeping in a good condition.

We do not see how this churn can fail to be one of the best. It is a great saving of cream, because that amount which, in other churns, becomes "dead" cream, never gathers in this, and *all* is saved, therefore giving more butter. It works just as easily when the cream, becomes thick and heavy as at the first. When the cream begins to thicken, ordinary churning becomes very laborious. If very warm, it is well to put a piece of ice into the churn after the butter has come, and let it stand ten or fifteen minutes before taking the butter out. The butter-bowl should soak in cold water all night.

After drawing off the buttermilk, we throw in a handful of salt, as we fancy it causes the buttermilk to run off more freely and with less working—which, if too long continued or done roughly, injures the grain of the butter. Mix this salt gently through the butter, and pour over it some ice-water; work the butter through it, drain off the water, and add more ice-water; work over gently till the water runs almost free of buttermilk. Then add what salt is needed; press it till no more water will run; bring into a compact ball, cover with a clean cloth, and set in a very cool place.

The next morning break up the butter and work it over till all the buttermilk is removed. Then stamp what will be needed for the table till the next churning, place in a jar and cover with cold, clear brine, strong enough to bear up an egg, and cover closely. Pack the remainder into the butter-jar, pound it down firmly, fill up with brine, and cover closely.

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We have found that this method, carefully followed, will secure the best of butter the year round. Most of the butter sold is ruined by the amount of buttermilk left in, making it full of streaks and of a poor flavor. No brine or care can keep such butter a week even tolerably good.

THOUGHTLESSNESS.

THERE are three things, at least, that are a great source of discouragement to a careful housekeeper, namely, the apparent impossibility to teach a servant to shut a door, to use a "holder," or to put things in their appropriate places, instead of throwing them about on the floor, table, or chairs.

When the cooking is in progress in the kitchen, it is uncomfortable and annoying to find the doors leading into dining-rooms or hall left open, and the steam and all the combinations of odors that, necessarily, mingle in the kitchen, pervading the whole house. When told for the hundredth time that those doors must not be left open, the invariable reply is, "I only left it open *just a minute.*" They never remember that just that one minute is sufficient to fill the house with disagreeable odors as effectually as if left open half an hour, and that it will take more than twice that length of time to free the atmosphere.

To add to this discomfort, when the head of the house, half impatiently, inquires, "Can't you teach that girl to keep those doors closed?" the weary housekeeper knows she can never make him realize that "shut the door" is repeated over and over again, hour after

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hour, kindly, urgently, peremptorily—in every variety of tone, till her soul is sick of the sound, and yet "just a minute" is the unvarying, wearisome response.

Good dish-towels of every kind are provided for dining-room and kitchen use; and with them "holders" are given to both cook and waiter, saying:

"Now, girls, if you use these towels, even the coarsest of them, to take off pots and kettles, to remove food from the oven, to take the dishes to the table, or for anything but their appropriate use, you will annoy me exceedingly."

The answer will surely be: "Oh, no, mem! Indeed, I never do such a thing!" But, almost while speaking, pie, cake, or bake pans are lifted from the oven with one of these same towels, and most likely it is burned or smeared by so doing.

"Dear me, I didn't think!" is the ever-ready excuse.

There are nice, roomy closets for pots, kettles, and bake-pans; cupboards with abundant space for kitchen crockery; yet these utensils are more frequently thrown on chairs or window-sills than placed neatly and conveniently in the closets, where they can be readily found. This is so common that, whoever sits down on a kitchen-chair, does it at the risk of soiling the dress.

Nor is this heedlessness confined solely to the kitchen. It is as common in the dining-room pantry. In both departments dish-towels are often thrown on the chairs, to be sat on by any careless body who ventures to take a seat before seeing if the chair is safe. The next minute, or shortly after, perhaps, the same towels are used to wipe the dishes; or, worse still, laid over the bread on the hearth, or wrapped round the loaves when taken out of the pans, utterly regardless of the large, clean

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bread-cloths provided for that purpose, and which should be used for nothing else.

No matter how often dish-towels are washed and scalded, they can never be made fit to use on bread or meat. Cloths for both these purposes must be always on hand, kept separately, and under no circumstances used for anything else. If this seems too particular, let any one who so considers it take a dish-towel that has been washed, boiled, rinsed, and ironed, with the greatest care, and notice how differently it still smells from any towel that has never been used about dishes. We do not attempt to explain the reasons why such articles retain the odor, but the experiment will, we think, satisfy any one that it is not pleasant to think of their being used about our food.

Until servants can be taught to overcome such careless habits, any one quick to observe, or with a fastidious stomach, will not find the frequent visits to the kitchen, which are of so much importance, conducive to a good appetite.

And yet unceasing vigilance is the housekeeper's only safeguard. This is a lesson which many young housekeepers, or those who are unwilling to give more time and thought to their household cares than they spend in social calls or amusements, must learn in time, through the increasing discomforts at home; and the little "leaks" and "wastes" that, after a year or two of neglect, will become too apparent to be longer overlooked.

A young matron little by little wakes up to the fact that certain things that were fresh and pretty a short time ago are growing clouded, dingy, or a hole here and there appears far too soon to be accounted for by the regular wear and tear of daily use.

"Just look at this fine damask towel! How gray

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and dirty it is! What can have happened to it?" she says to the girl, who brings up a basket of freshly washed and ironed clothes. "And here are those heavy huckaback towels with great holes all over them, evidently not torn, but actually worn through! What does it mean, Mary?"

"An' sure I don't know, mem. They were so when they came to the laundry."

Had the lady been particular in noticing the manner in which her work was done, she might have seen her chambermaid scrubbing the marble hall with these expensive towels, taking them from out the dirty clothes, to save herself the trouble of going down-stairs for a regular scrub-cloth. Having seen it once, she would have probably taken steps to prevent a repetition of such ruinous work, and have saved her towels. We have seen such practices in houses where we had no right to interfere, but earnestly desired to have the mistress rouse up sufficiently to see the destruction that was going on about her. We cannot tell what can be devised to overcome the untidy and heedless habits so prevalent among servants, but are fully convinced that there can be no change until our housekeepers, as a class, are more earnest and constant in superintending their work, and their servants learn that they can no longer conceal their shortcomings.

TIME NOT WASTED.

THERE are many who feel annoyed at directions for unremitting watchfulness in household affairs, and think housekeepers waste time and strength if they

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attempt, practically, to carry out important suggestions; but we imagine those critics labor under mistaken ideas, or are of that class who believe in taking life so easily that untidiness and carelessness may be carried to any extent, and property, by such neglect, be constantly wasted, rather than have their ease and pleasure broken in upon, by the amount of care necessary to good housekeeping. To give up a ball or party now and then for the purpose of some little extra attention to home duties, or to be interrupted in the most bewildering parts of a highly sensational novel, only to correct some error or carelessness in the various departments under, or which should be considered under, their supervision, is what such housekeepers call "waste of time."

Until there is some provision by which servants can be carefully instructed and trained for the duties which they will be expected to perform as they grow older, the necessary supervision and watchfulness of the mistress will, of course, often be burdensome and perplexing, because it is so seldom that one can be sure that the most careful instructions will be carried out. An order is given so definite and distinct that forgetfulness or mistake would seem impossible.

"Do this immediately, that it may not be forgotten. You fully understand me, do you not?"

"Oh, yes, mem; certainly."

"Well, now please repeat exactly what I requested you to do, that I may be quite sure that there will be no mistake."

And the directions are repeated correctly, and, quite satisfied, the lady turns to other cares which, with many unavoidable interruptions—especially if the home lies in the city—may fully occupy time and thought for hours; or, it may be, a few days' absence is necessary.

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After some hours or days have elapsed, you say to the girl:

"Did you attend to the directions I gave you a short time since?" specifying the particular object, and a prompt "Yes, mem," is expected. But, instead, one is deafened by a storm of excuses and reasons for having forgotten or neglected the orders.

This constant watch over every department is no doubt very wearisome and harassing. If strength and other duties would permit, the mistress, if efficient, could do her own work in half the time it takes most girls to do it, because they work heedlessly, and without the exercise of any great judgment. They have never been taught that good judgment is needed in their work, and go through their labor listlessly and thoughtlessly. Their mothers before them did no better, and, until the girls are old enough to go "out to service," such mothers have been their only instructors. What better can we hope for until schools for training our "help" properly for household labor have been founded and put into successful operation all through the country? While waiting for that good time, which all thoughtful housekeepers must hope is coming, there can be no very pleasant homes but through the unfailing watchfulness of our housekeepers.

It is important that they should know if the ashes are regularly sifted and removed each morning. One can hardly realize how much coal is saved in the course of the year by carefully sifting all the ashes until the knowledge is gained by watchfulness. It is too easily and quickly done to allow of any excuse if neglected. She must see also that coal and kindlings are kept entirely separate, and each neatly stored in its appropriate bin; and that the cellar is well swept and free from

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cobwebs. Many ladies have a great dislike to go into their cellars, as if ghosts and hobgoblins were sure to congregate there. No wonder, if kept in the condition which is too common.

In these frequent visits of care and investigation, the mistress should see that the laundry is neatly kept; that the soap is piled in the laundry-closet so as to leave passage for air to circulate and dry and harden the soap; that the starch is covered so as to exclude all dust; clothes-boiler, starch-kettle, and strainer, well dried and put in the proper place; clothes-line rolled on the reel and hung up, and the clothes-pins free from dust and mildew. If the line and pins are allowed to remain out overnight, they soon become mildewed, and the clothes, by spots and dark, dingy lines, will reveal the carelessness, if it is learned in no other way.

In store-rooms, pantries, and closets, sugar, tea, coffee, spices, sauces, preserves, fruit, and vegetables, all require oversight and attention. In the dining-room, silver, glass, and china need to be often counted, and all the "belongings" should pass under review.

The parlors being more constantly under the mistress's eye, neglect and carelessness are detected in them more readily than elsewhere. But the chambers call for constant and thorough watchfulness. The corners and edges of carpets require frequent examination. See that the chambermaid is provided with—and *uses* faithfully—a stiff whisk-broom (a large broom will not do the work properly) and a pointed stick to clean out the lint and dirt which naturally tend to accumulate in corners, and, if allowed to remain, will soon become hiding-places for moths.

Mattresses should be bent over like a bow every morning, resting on each end, and the windows raised,

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even the coldest days, that pure, fresh air may circulate through and around them. Slops can be emptied, and articles scattered about the chambers gathered up, while they are airing. By the time all the beds are thus put to air, and slops, etc., attended to, the first bed will be sufficiently aired to make up.

The "*Hartford woven-wire mattress*" secures good circulation of air; and the hair-mattresses that should be used with them, aside from being the most healthy and comfortable, are so light as to make this part of household labor easy; because they can be turned over and shaken with no more strength than it requires to turn over a blanket. Once a week, however, without fail, they require to be well beaten with a stick, or, better still, with a carpet-whip—a number of braided or twisted rattans fastened in a handle. This whip can be had at any house-furnishing store, and is made purposely to beat carpets, mattresses, buttoned or tufted furniture. After being well beaten, the mattress should be carefully brushed all around the tuftings with a pointed brush, such as is also used to clean any tufted or buttoned furniture.

MORE ABOUT KITCHENS.

A MAN knows—or thinks he does—just what he needs in his study or library; and, in the construction of a kitchen, he will be influenced by considerations for the beauty and artistic appearance of the house, as a whole; with little thought, and no practical knowledge, of what will help to make work easy, and assist most toward the neatness of its performance, or

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the promptness of its execution. But a woman who practically understands what it is to do the work, or daily arrange for others to do it, naturally realizes, more truly than a man can do, that, in building a kitchen, whenever beauty and utility are not compatible, *utility* must be the major, and beauty the minor, consideration.

To be sure, we see no reason why this particular apartment cannot be made tasteful and attractive, yet perfectly convenient. It by no means necessitates a rough, uncouth combination to make it all that the most fastidious and methodical housekeeper can desire. We can imagine a kitchen pretty enough for a fairy's bower—so picturesque or fanciful that to *look* into it would be a positive pleasure, but an intolerable torture to be obliged to *work* in it. And we can also imagine one as clumsy and inconvenient as if thrown together by some convulsion of Nature, that would be just as intolerable and useless for all working purposes as the fanciful style of building. But a happy medium can be secured if one will be but patient and study it out before the work of construction is begun.

Much time is wasted, and not half the efficient labor performed, for lack of more attention to the architectural design of many of our kitchens. Some are so small that one cannot but feel "cribbed, cabined, and confined," just *to* step inside of them. In others, one is bewildered and lost in the great "*Saharas*" which are called kitchens—a wilderness, where everything is lost, and nothing can be found; where the spider weaves her web unannoyed, and rats and mice find an abundance of waste land, wherein to build their nests, or forage for days unmolested; where—because the dimensions are so large—servants imagine their sins will not find them

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out, and are therefore tempted, in hurried moments, to throw cloths, brushes, baskets, brooms, etc., into some of the numerous hiding-places which always abound in such large kitchens, there to wait for a more convenient season, when, of course, they intend to put all these scattered things in their proper places.

Ah! the sure but unfortunately evanescent repentance that will come when, wearied and hard pressed, at the close of the week, all that has been so recklessly strewed abroad must be gathered up and replaced! for *once a week* everything is supposed to have a place of its own—although, we confess, we could never understand why it is more wicked to have things in disorder Saturday afternoon, and on Sundays, than on other days of the week. But we do distinctly understand how, by neglecting to replace at once every article as soon as one has finished using it, the work is made doubly hard. Why should it be more troublesome to reach out your hand and put a dish, a knife, or spoon, where it belongs, than to drop it carelessly, and by-and-by spend many minutes hunting it, because it is not in its proper place?

We make no pretense to any architectural or mechanical skill, yet have a very definite idea of what we esteem great conveniences, and what we should strive to secure had we any prospect of building; but will, therefore, cheerfully endeavor to answer some of the inquiries now before us.

We dislike the long, narrow, dark kitchens too often found, especially in city houses. But likes and dislikes are largely controlled in building by master-builders, who often very arbitrarily assure those who employ them that a closet cannot be made where one very much desires it, or that a stairway cannot rise by easy ascent, with broad platforms here and there for resting-places;

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and, although one does not believe a word of it, yet, being ignorant of their art, you cannot argue the point, or gainsay their statements. One finds it easier and far pleasanter to coax a *husband* to her way of thinking on such subjects than the *architects*, who are usually, of all men, the most obstinate, and not always the wisest.

In our last we spoke of some desirable arrangements connected with the sink. Added to those then mentioned, a long table, fitted so closely to the sink that no water can drip between, is much needed. It is better to have it permanently fastened to the wall, and made as wide as the sink—a kind of long, wide shelf or table on which to clean vegetables, dress meat, poultry, game, etc.; and, by being thus made of easy access to hot and cold water, it saves time and many steps, and, by its convenience, leaves no excuse for not having these things properly cleaned. If always well washed and dried after such work is done (as it ought to be), it is very convenient to put dishes on when washing and drying them. Then, when all are clean, they can be put in place with fewer steps and in better condition. Under this table, near the sink, two drawers are needed, with several compartments—one for polishing-materials, whiting, bath-brick, chamois-skins, and all articles needed for scouring copper, tin, etc.; the second drawer for stove-polish, and the necessary dishes and brushes for keeping stoves or ranges in good condition.

A board over the sink, extending thence the whole length of the room, and between two and three feet wide, is much more serviceable and far neater than plastering or paper. Nicely painted and grained (oak color is the best for a kitchen, we think), it is not so readily defaced, and can be washed and cleaned with ease. Into the upper part of this board, hooks and large

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galvanized nails must be driven, on which to hang the basting-spoons, ladles, a set of skewers, cooking-forks, and spoons, chopping-knife, cake-turner, gravy-strainer; but *dishcloths*—NEVER! A friend suggests that a shelf above this board would often be convenient; but the great temptation it would prove to throw many untidy things upon it "*just* for a *moment*" would far overbalance all good to be derived from it.

This table should be carried from the sink up to the next wall, and as near the first window on the adjoining side as possible. There cannot be too much light on the sink, or sink-table. In the corner, just where this table and the board above mentioned end, a case of small drawers, set in the wall, for salt, pepper, spices, etc., is very desirable. This, also, saves many steps, being convenient for the work in which such articles are used, and therefore more likely to insure neatness, and guard against loss or waste.

This table and the drawers should be on the left-hand side of the range, if the water-back is placed on that side. On the other side of the range, we need to have nailed a cleat, about five inches wide, and two and a half feet from the floor, supplied with strong nails or hooks, on which to hang holders, poker, stove-lifter, and fire-shovel; or, better still, instead of a cleat, or strip, have a board of that height carried down to the floor, instead of plastering. If there is space on that side, a closet, large enough to hold all the iron or tin ware used in cooking—pots, kettles, frying and bake pans, etc.—is important. In this closet cleats are also needed, with hooks and nails, on which to hang frying-pans, waffle-irons, muffin-rings, and any iron or tin suitable to be hung up. Above these cleats, a broad shelf is useful for smoothing-irons, starch-kettles, etc., unless

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one is so fortunate as to have a laundry separate from the kitchen.

At the top and bottom of all doors to such closets there should be a narrow sliding-panel for a ventilator, to be kept always open, excepting when sweeping, or building the fire, and thus secure a free circulation of air, that the contents of the closet may be kept free from rust and mould.

This gives a very imperfect idea of the most important part of the kitchen. Should there be no room near the range for the iron-ware closet, it must be made just opposite, under the "dresser," or kitchen-crockery closet; and be sure that the ventilator just mentioned is made in the upper and under part of the door, if the "dresser" and pot-closet must be combined.

The cook likes an open "dresser," to display her tins and crockery to the best advantage. But do not yield that point; for, if it be open, it will be impossible to keep the dishes free from dust and ashes when sweeping, or cleaning out the ashes from the stove. If possible, have good *sliding-doors*. A door on hinges is always swinging; girls will heedlessly run against it, and many broken dishes are the result.

WASHING.

TOO many housekeepers are satisfied if table-linen and the "starched clothes" are sent up tolerably clean and well polished, and make no closer examination. But to be successful in a few articles, and those of a kind that are usually supposed to be of the great-

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est importance, is by no means all that should be required of a laundress. It is surprising that so many housekeepers will permit such marked neglect and carelessness in the washing and ironing of the coarser and plainer articles which really constitute the largest part of a family washing. Sheets, pillow-cases, towels, underclothes, and more particularly hosiery of every description, are often hurried through the suds and rinsing-water in the most unsatisfactory manner. We think it would not make us half so impatient and uncomfortable, if table-linen, sheets, shirts, cuffs, and collars were returned to us half washed and ironed, as it would to find the commoner articles neglected; perhaps—because in the first instance the "perfect work" of patience would be very speedily accomplished, and justifiable reasons for an immediate change would be too evident to be "gainsaid or resisted."

How many housekeepers carefully examine the clothes as they come up from the laundry? How many take time to notice if the sheets have been well stretched and folded so as to bring each hem even? Are they ironed all over, or simply the upper or outside fold, which, when the bed is made, will be turned over the spread, and therefore the laundress feels it important that so much, at least, of the sheet is smoothly ironed? Are towels, handkerchiefs, and table-linen also carefully stretched and snapped, and, the hems being laid evenly together, are they ironed and folded with neatness and precision? After a laundress fully understands that her employer means to have *all* her work properly done, and will not be satisfied with half-way measures, if she is worth teaching, she will soon fall into the habit of being thorough and exact.

Are housekeepers watchful that their clothes-pins

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and clothes-lines are not left out overnight, after the washing is done, to be ruined by rust and mildew ; and do they know if the line is rubbed with a clean cloth before the clothes are put on it? If not, they must not be surprised if they find dark spots from dirty clothes-pins, or a dingy stripe the whole length where their clothes hang across the line. As the inside of the article is put on the line, a careless housekeeper will not find it out before the stain has become too fixed to be removed. Of course, most laundresses soon learn if they can be careless with impunity. It is the fault of the mistress if girls learn that they can hide or cover up their shortcomings. Let housekeepers teach those in their employ that they are never long unaware of neglected duties, and a better class of domestics will be the result.

It is surprising how soon even those who are called good laundresses become careless, if they learn that certain articles are not closely examined. The soiled spots on towels—the finger-marks of careless children—are so distinctly visible one can hardly imagine that they have been passed through the suds even. This neglect can be seen in *stockings*, more than in most other articles—because the leather-stains and dirt, in careless washing, are left almost as distinct as when taken from the feet, and soon become permanent. These may, perhaps, be thought too trivial offenses to be worthy of notice ; but we think them important—subtracting from the comfort of the wearer, and eventually spoiling clothes which are thus shamefully handled. We do not see how there can be an excuse for even the first offense of this kind ; and if repeated we think it deserving of earnest reproof. If, after the admonition, it is again repeated, we consider it sufficient cause for prompt dismissal.

Rinsing Clothes.—There is generally more careless-

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ness in *rinsing* clothes than in any other part of the laundry work. The soap may be perfect, the streaks and spots faithfully rubbed; but if the articles are thrown into the rinsing-tub, barely covered with water, and hastily passed through it, no laundress need look for any great credit for her labor.

The rinsing-tub should have a generous supply of water. The bluing—not a great deal—should be carefully stirred in, and not many pieces put in at a time. Each article needs to be vigorously shaken up and down in the water, and fully opened, that the water may flow freely through every part. Then, having passed it through the wringer, shake it out and hold up to the light, to be sure that all spots or dirt are removed. Put no piece into the basket just as it comes twisted out of the wringer; but shake it out, and pass at once into the second tub of fresh, slightly blued water, to be again rinsed with the same care and thoroughness. If there are tubs enough to spare two for the last rinsing, it is well to leave clothes soaking in them till all the white clothes have been passed through the first rinsing-water. Then, in the last rinsing, be sure and leave nothing in the "*twist*" from wringing, but shake out each piece before throwing into the basket, and hang out as soon as the basket is full. Clothes should be on the line as quick as possible after the last wringing, or there will be danger of some yellow streaks.

If possible, clothes should be dried in the open air; but if very windy or freezing, they ought not to be starched till they have been dried and brought into the house.

Clothes must not be thrown carelessly and unevenly upon the line, but be well snapped out, and hung up straight and smooth. Blankets, bed-spreads, sheets, and table-linen particularly require to be thus carefully hung

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up, bringing the hems or selvages together straight and true, and pinning strongly to the line.

These minute directions may seem trivial, and, perhaps, whimsical, but the wisdom will be proved by the ease with which clothes thus treated can be ironed, the pleasure experienced when one sees them, neat and evenly put in their proper places, on bed or board, and we think clothes thus attended to are so much more durable that the most skeptical cannot but see, after a little experience, that it is good economy.

To wash Flannels.—White flannel may be kept soft and without shrinking if properly washed. Put sufficient soap into boiling water to make a strong suds, and then put in the flannels, pressing them down under the water with the clothes-stick. When so cool that one can bear the hands in the suds, rub the articles carefully, and when well cleansed wring with the hands. If you put flannels or blankets through the wringer the nap rolls up into hard knobs, and makes the flannel harsh and unpleasant to the touch. Wring as dry as possible, snap out, stretch and pull each piece as it is wrung, so as to keep the original size, and this done throw them into another tub of boiling water, into which some French bluing has been thoroughly stirred. If the first suds is strong enough the flannels will retain sufficient soap for the rinsing-water. Shake them up and down in this last water with the clothes-stick till well rinsed and cool enough for the hands. Then wring once more quickly, snap well and pull into good shape. Hang out as soon as they are in shape, on a good, bright day, and with a brisk wind if possible.

It is well to wash but one piece at a time; put it into the second tub, and place the first suds over the fire to keep boiling hot, until ready to wash the second. Keep

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the rinsing-water hot in the same way while washing the second article.

When flannels are about two-thirds dry bring them in. Snap and pull again, fold as true and evenly as possible, and roll up hard in a clean towel for a little while, and then iron; or rather press till dry.

Never wash flannels in cloudy or stormy weather, and always iron after they have been folded and rolled not over half an hour. If they lie long folded they will shrink. This is not easy work; but if these directions are followed the results will be satisfactory. Blankets washed in this way may be kept soft and white till worn out, instead of the harsh, gray, dirty-looking things one or two careless washings will change them into.

Scorched Linen.—Peel and slice two onions, extract the juice by pounding and squeezing; cut up half an ounce of fine white soap, and add to the juice also two ounces of fuller's earth and half a pint of vinegar. Boil all together. When cool spread over the scorched linen, and let it dry on; then wash and boil out the linen, and the spots will disappear, unless burned so badly as to break the threads.

BUSYBODIES.

A YOUNG friend preparing to begin life with the man of her choice, but with very limited means, rather than wait for the slow, uncertain process of first "becoming rich enough to marry," accepted the position cheerfully, like a sensible woman, fully aware from the first that she would be obliged to work hard, keep no help, cook, wash and iron, scrub, make, mend, and con-

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trive to "make a little go a great way." She has now passed eight years, in which neither party has once regretted that the "twain became one flesh." Two little ones have during this period increased her cares, but also doubled her joys. Then a sister dies in a distant and yet unsettled part of the country, leaving two boys of six and nine. Without hesitation or fear, on account of the additional labor and care which must in consequence fall upon her, she sends for these orphan-boys—born in the backwoods—untrained and unformed in mind and manners, to share with her own children equal care and affection; but exacting from them, in return, equal respect, obedience, and helpfulness.

Now, this lady says she tries to live and act in a Christian manner, training and governing her children as far as possible in accordance with the teachings of the Bible; but complains that she is surrounded by neighbors who interfere, and she finds it hard to be patient under this unwarrantable supervision. One criticises the manner she dresses her children; another is distressed that she sends them to school so young; a third censures her for working them too hard; a fourth thinks she favors her own children, to the neglect of these adopted orphans. Thus watched, and every act and word that can be caught up reported through the neighborhood, she has been annoyed and irritated "until," she writes, "I can endure it no longer, and run to you for advice and comfort."

It is greatly to be regretted that there are in almost all neighborhoods "meddlesome Matties," who spend their whole time in watching the affairs of others. It would be a blessing to any community where such nuisances are found, if there could be some power to compel them to employ the time they waste over their neigh-

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bors' business and actions, in hard labor. But they do more harm to themselves than to you, my friend. With a good husband, healthy children, and all the work you can do, you can hardly have leisure or inclination to make yourself uncomfortable over idle gossips.

But we cannot blame you after all. It is necessary to be well seasoned to unjust or unauthorized criticism, before any one can pass on unmoved, when neighbors, with whom it is desirable to live peaceably and affectionately, can find no better employment for their time than in making injurious remarks, and attributing wrong motives to every act which they do not fully understand. But when satisfied that this is the character of those by whom you are surrounded, we know of no way but to keep aloof as much as possible from such people—for a meddler is of all characters the most unsafe. Be always ready to repay their wrong acts by kind ones, when needed; but allow no intimacy. A few good and righteous persons may be found, even in such neighborhoods, to redeem them. Endeavor to put yourself in communication with these, if you have an opportunity; or, if so situated that it rests with them to take the initiatory steps toward an acquaintance, wait patiently until they learn your true character—and take care that they find it such that they will seek an introduction themselves.

Meanwhile, *you have your home.* Do not worry about an annoyance that is common to all. Satisfy your own conscience, your husband, and your God, and you can live very contentedly without much society, until you find that which is congenial, and given voluntarily.

All the best society that earth can furnish can never be productive of half the real happiness which one can and should find at home. It is better that children should not be so much secluded as to grow up bashful and

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awkward. Yet, of two evils, we should much prefer that to the bold, unshrinking manners, so offensive, and so common in many young children, in these progressive days. The awkwardness and shyness they will soon outgrow; but habits formed by unsuitable associates will cling to them through life.

Simple and unsophisticated little children are very scarce; therefore, if you find gossiping, intrusive neighbors, too troublesome for your endurance, withdraw from them, if only to keep your little ones uncontaminated. Your own home joys and duties will more than compensate you for separating yourself and children as much as possible from such undesirable companions; and, in any case, a small, well-chosen circle of acquaintances will be far more enjoyable and improving than a large, promiscuous one; and, beyond all comparison, better for those committed to your care. This secured, endeavor to banish all anxiety and irritation for what another and most insignificant class—*the meddlers*—may say of you, or your affairs; only be watchful and prayerful for your children's sake and your own, that you give no real occasion for harsh criticism; then the words of the foolish will be but idle wind. Let them, like the wind, pass and be forgotten.

WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS, IS IT FOLLY TO BE WISE?

"YOU make but a short tarry in the country," said one gentleman to another, as they entered the cars on a hot day a short time since.

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"Yes, I just ran away to get a breath of country air."

"It is a great blessing to escape from the city this very trying weather, and enjoy the coolness and freshness of this pure air. One seems to lay in strength and health for fall duties by these short periods of rest. Are you fond of the country?"

"Y-e-s. For a short time. Can't say I should be content to remain long, however. A day or two at most will quite satisfy me. There is much said about the pleasures and superior comforts of country life, at least in the summer. I don't exactly see it. As far as creature comforts are concerned, I certainly secure better fare, finer vegetables, more desirable meat, poultry and fish, and far more enjoyable accommodations, with less effort, in the city, than I have ever found in the country. The corn is miserable—nothing, in fact, but field corn, I think, whereas our city markets supply the best and sweetest. To be sure I had some very nice peas yesterday, for a wonder; but generally, for some reason I cannot understand, all the vegetables one gets in the country have a disagreeable, earthy taste, that the city market-gardeners manage to get rid of."

"I am surprised at what you say. I never fail to find the sweetest corn and peas, the finest vegetables of every description, far better than I can possibly get in the city; and then if there were no other advantage, we escape the mosquitoes."

"Yes, I know it is claimed that there are none of those annoyances; but that claim is not allowable. I find nothing in the country that can at all compensate for the loss of luxuries and superior comfort that I secure in the city. The beds are generally detestable—the lights an abomination—dirty, greasy, smoky lamps,

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or the feebler light of a country dip, besides the trouble of keeping them in order. We avoid all this in the city. We have only to light the gas, and there is an end to all that trouble."

The cars starting just then, we lost, in the rattle and confusion they made, the remainder of the conversation; but what we had heard furnished food for reflection for some time. "Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise," is an old, but we think a very false, idea. If we knew where this city-worshiper passed the few hours he spends in the country it might satisfactorily explain his erroneous impressions. But we think we can give a pretty close guess. He probably stays at an hotel, where all the vegetables are bought in the market and carelessly cooked; or it may be at some friend's, who, having no garden of his own, is compelled to purchase his provisions from the same source; or, if freshly gathered, they are left in the hot sun, or hotter kitchen, to wither and grow stale, and then have their ruin completed by the ignorance of the cook, to whose care they were consigned.

There is nothing in the culinary department that requires so much care and watchfulness from the time they are gathered till they are ready for the table as vegetables, and nothing can be more easily cooked, and cooked right, when once the proper manner of preparing them is thoroughly understood; that is, if one can have access to a good garden, where such things as deteriorate by keeping can be gathered the same day they are to be eaten. If the vegetables of which this man complained were stale to begin with, and then badly cooked —all boiled together, as is common in many hotels, and as some farmers' wives are content to cook them—we have no doubt that more palatable viands could be procured

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at a good hotel, or in his own family in the city. But if properly gathered and cooked, we think it impossible to secure as good vegetables in the city, and certainly not those that can be as nutritious and safe, as in the country. The remark that "somehow all the vegetables one gets in the country have a disagreeable, earthy taste, that city gardeners manage to get rid of," reminds us of the city lady who dismissed her converted milkman, because there was a nasty yellow scum on his milk, so different from the *clear, blue-white* milk he had formerly served her with.

Perhaps the earthy taste complained of in the country vegetables could be accounted for by a similar explanation: they were like pure milk, so much richer than the stale, tasteless things found in city markets that to a city-nurtured palate the taste was foreign and mysterious.

A few rules for gathering and preparing vegetables in the country may be given, which, if carefully observed, will secure their being brought to the table in an excellent condition, and eaten without one murmur of dissatisfaction.

First be sure that they were raised from the best of seed. It is useless to expect good vegetables unless they spring from the most perfect and best variety of seed. "*Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?*" Those who cultivate but a few acres simply for family use, having learned the importance of choosing their seed with care, are every year becoming more and more particular in their search for the finest varieties. More depends on this than farmers have been accustomed to think; but seeing what can be done by amateur gardeners through care, and reading the success of other experiments, they are giving much more atten-

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tion to this than was customary in former years. The result is that there is no longer any excuse for having a poor article brought from either your own garden or the market. It is the length of time they have been gathered, and the manner in which they have been prepared, that must determine the character of vegetables.

All vegetables are injured by lying exposed to sun and rain; but corn, peas, fresh beans, asparagus, and lettuce, become perfectly worthless. They should be gathered while the dew is yet on them, brought to the house, and placed at once in a cool place where the sun will not strike upon them. It is better to leave corn in the husk, peas and beans in the pods, until it is time to prepare them for cooking. Then watch that they are not left long in water; if, indeed, you cannot avoid washing them entirely. Corn when taken from the husks needs no washing; simply remove all the silk. If there is a black or rusty spot on an ear of corn, reject it entirely; it shows the beginning of disease.

It improves a mess of peas, adding greatly to their sweetness, to boil the *pods*, after shelling, about fifteen minutes in the water you will boil the peas in. For this purpose, it is necessary to pour cold water over the pods, to remove dust or minute bugs that may have been upon them. Wash quickly, and then leave them to drain before shelling. The peas, of course, after this need no washing; neither do beans. Asparagus should be washed quickly, to remove all dust; but must on no account be left in the water a moment after it is clean. As soon as washed, put in a colander to drain, and then over the stove to cook as soon as you can. All vegetables should be laid in the saucepan in which they are to be cooked, with sufficient salt to season sprinkled over them; then *boiling* water poured on, and the whole

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brought to a boil immediately, else they become of a brownish color and look very uninviting. The salt, either put on them first, or the water salted before they are put in, prevents the color changing. Then boil, or, a still better way, *steam* them for the proper time. Twenty minutes for asparagus, peas, and corn, is long enough, never over thirty minutes: when so old as to need longer cooking, they are too old to use at all. Fresh beans require longer time, unless very young; from three-quarters to an hour will be necessary.

All vegetables are much sweeter and fresher when steamed, particularly if you use one of the "Rumford boilers" or "Ferris's cooker," where they are inclosed in a tightly-covered pan, or saucepan, so that neither water nor steam can touch them, but the water boils underneath the dish, cooking by the heat. In this case, the seasoning, and just as much water as is necessary to take up with the vegetables, should be put with them into the saucepan—not a drop more. You thus secure all the sweetness and juices of your vegetables, without weakening or destroying the flavor. But if you boil them, use as little water as possible.

We think if a few dishes of country vegetables, gathered and cooked in this manner, were set before those who imagine they find equally good supplies in the city market, they would completely change their opinion. This is hard on those persons whose home is, and must be, in the city. But there is a remedy even for them, if situated so that they can, either by rail or carriage, ride out a few miles to the market gardens, and buy their vegetables direct from the field where they grow. In this way they can have as fresh food as those more highly favored, whose home is in the country. But there are many who cannot afford to do this, or have

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not the time, and in these cases their ignorance is a bliss from which it would be folly to try and awaken them.

MUTUAL RESPECT.

WHEN ladies meet together, it is a very common thing for them, in a half-jesting manner, to speak slightingly of their husbands, as if they thought, "We are the people, and wisdom will die with us."

"Oh, dear! what can be expected if one trusts an errand to one's husband?"

"Who ever heard that a *man* could put anything in the right place?" etc., etc.

Of course the listener assents, and at once proceeds to corroborate the assertion by detailing her own more trying experiences—all in good nature, to be sure. They are the happiest, most cheerful company of martyrs that ever was seen. Each wife would be ready for a battle in a moment, if by her remarks any one was led to imagine that this same troublesome, inefficient husband was not as near akin to the angels as can be expected in mortals. But it must be confessed that a listener, who sits by for an hour, on boat or car; in an hotel or at a social gathering, can hardly fail to decide mentally that husbands, at best, are but troublesome comforts, needing a watchful guardian to furnish constant advice, admonition, or reproof.

We recall a scrap that was handed us far back in early youth, entitled "*Respect due to Wives*," which ran something like the following:

"Do not jest with your wife on subjects that may

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wound her feelings. Remember she treasures every word you utter.

"Do not speak of great virtues in another's wife, to remind your own of a fault.

"Do not treat her inattentively in company; it touches her pride, and she will not respect you more or love you better for it.

"Never upbraid her in the presence of a third party. The sense of your disregard of her feelings will prevent her ever confessing her fault.

"Do not be stern and silent at home, and remarkable for sociability elsewhere."

We remember thinking this excellent advice, and we have not lost our belief in it, knowing it is often greatly needed; but we see many reasons for believing that wives need these cautions quite as much as their husbands.

Perhaps it is the perversity said to be inherent in woman's nature, but we must acknowledge being so far behind the age as to be guilty of a little sympathy and feeling for husbands, and believe they are also entitled to respect and delicacy. We would like to ask some good wives, in a quiet, unobtrusive way, if we could, a few such questions as these:

"Do you never jest with your husband upon subjects that you are sure will wound his feelings, and do it purposely to hurt him a little, by way of retaliation, 'to pay off old scores?'

"Do you never tell him some great excellence in your friend's husband, to remind him of faults in his own habits or character?

"Do you never treat your husband inattentively or impertinently in company; while you are cordial and polite to other and less noble men?

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"Do you never blame him impatiently in the presence of a third party? What woman is more sensitive to censure than a husband in the presence of others, when it falls from his wife's lips? He may be too proud to show or speak of it; but do you believe he forgets it?

"Are you never cross and silent in your own home, with no one to entertain *but your husband*, but full of life, and wit, and amiability, in company?"

While it is right and just that husbands should take these suggestions to heart, and endeavor to augment the joys of home, should not wives also listen to like truths and profit by them? Are we not equally blameworthy? Ay! more so, for home is our kingdom, where we may reign supreme if we hold the sceptre with a gentle hand, and with the law of love and kindness ever on our lips.

We have known young people begin life with every promise of perfect happiness, yet make entire shipwreck of all by their own unguarded words, impatient looks, and unregulated temper. A talent for spicy and brilliant repartee may enliven a party, give zest and piquancy to social intercourse, and endow its possessor with a certain position, enviable or otherwise; but in the home circle it is a dangerous gift, and unfortunately one more frequently bestowed upon the wife than upon the husband.

We have often recoiled as from a blow, when hearing those who should be one in heart draw comparisons prejudicial to one another, and complimentary to others, prefaced with some stinging remark. Do they remember that in marriage they take each other's honor in keeping to cherish or destroy; and that God has made the bond so inseparable that all honor bestowed on the one passes over and is shared by the other, and all dis-

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grace or error that militates against the one is equally injurious to the other?

There is much said of injustice to women—of her slighted feelings, and her rights ignored—the possibility of her attaining literary eminence or being equal to man being scoffed at, and her efforts to elevate her sex met with ridicule and contempt. Now, we are not indifferent to any work that has for its aim the elevation of woman, but we are often mortified at the snappish manner that is manifested by some who cannot speak of "women's rights" without a tart and vixenish fling at man.

Our *fathers*, *brothers*, *husbands*, *sons*—are they not bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh? If we press forward for the prize which may place us side by side with these dear relations, why may we not work hand in hand with them, instead of attempting to be on the defensive or aggressive? We cannot think that the other sex—to whom we belong, and who belong just as truly to us—will attempt to bar our progress in any efforts to rise, if we retain at the same time our own individuality, the character of true, gentle, loving women—a much more noble type of womanhood, and far more likely to gain the end sought after, than that imperious fault-finding kind, which will only bring us reproach.

We are fully aware of all that is said of man's rough, abrupt, overbearing ways. There is much truth in it: and it is not at all attractive, or to be excused. But, since the days of old Queen Bess, perhaps by dealing honestly and impartially with ourselves, we might find enough of the same qualities in our own sex to establish our claim, at least to sisterhood, if not to equality. But admitting that these are purely masculine elements, which find no response in our own character, can we not learn a way to conquer and eradicate

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even these uncomfortable and undesirable characteristics in men?

When the storm descended in great wrath the traveler wrapped his cloak more closely about him. But the wind caught him, and, roaring furiously, rocked him to and fro, whirling him like a feather along the road, in vain endeavors to tear his cloak from about him. He only hugged it all the more closely, and defied the storm and wind. But when the sun came gently and noiselessly to him, the iron will and sturdy frame that battled so successfully with the rough and boisterous tempest, bowed down before the genial, loving influence, and cheerfully acknowledged his conqueror.

And so may every wife, if she will, when she first enters the married life, assert her power and secure a most willing, loving subject; where arrogance and impatience will but bring her a rough and stubborn opponent.

We are aware that half of the seemingly good-natured complaints and assertions that are so often recounted where two or three women are met together are not meant unkindly, but only a sportive way of making and keeping up a sprightly vein of conversation.

But there really is no wit in it. It is a bad habit, and may lead to unpleasant consequences. That which is often repeated in sport may, in time, become so familiar as to leave the impress of reality; and before the wife is conscious of it, the tiny blemishes in her husband's character may have developed, through her imagination and oft-repeated words, into serious faults that threaten much unhappiness. The best cure we can recommend is for the wife to turn resolutely from those shortcomings that look like faults in her husband, and honestly take an inventory of her own shortcomings and

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mistakes. She will need no magnifying glasses to find plenty of them. Having found them, let her as honestly place them side by side with what she thinks wrong in her husband, and perhaps she will not feel inclined to carry the investigation farther, but rest content, and bless the union which God has sanctioned, and will bless if she does well her part.

HOW SHALL WE DRESS?

DURING the past three months applications for assistance have been painfully frequent. To be sure, such calls are always numerous; but the character of the applicants is widely dissimilar from any former experience.

We often see on the door-step two or three rough, strong, untidy women, laughing, talking, careless and lazy; but the moment the door is opened their whole demeanor changes. The look of great distress flashes so swiftly across their faces that one can scarcely determine when the laugh ceased, and the doleful drawl began. We are bewildered by a well-learned and rapidly-uttered statement of misery—"Five children without food, clothes, or fire; husband absconded, or dead," etc., etc.

Listening to this jargon, all sympathy vanishes, and we grow cold and hard-hearted.

But of late, although the number of regular beggars has not diminished, there are numerous cases that are exceedingly sad. Many come to us craving the bare necessaries of life, who a few months since possessed all

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that they could reasonably desire. The financial disasters that have swept over the land, wrecking so many, have overtaken them. Men of fine business talent, well educated, suddenly find themselves bereft of everything: wealth which they thought secure taken from them, their wives and daughters compelled day by day to relinquish one luxury after another—palatial homes, rich attire, fine equipages, and all the ease and pleasure they have been accustomed to look upon as indispensable has departed.

Step by step, not luxuries alone but comforts disappear. At last comes the bitterest trial, when the husband and father roams from place to place seeking *work*, and finding none, and the delicately nurtured wife and children are ere long compelled to go from door to door in an equally unsuccessful search for food as well as work.

Ah! How many times have women with wailing infants in their arms, or half-starved children clinging to the flounced and over-trimmed skirt—the last remnant of departed splendor—stood before us begging for food! Having led a life of ease—ignorant of every kind of work, superficially educated—when this financial storm has swept every possession from their grasp, and they find themselves sinking, sinking lower and lower day by day, till starvation stares them in the face, what is left for them but beggary? The absurdities of fashionable dress never appear half so sadly ludicrous as when seen at our doors under such circumstances; knowing, as one does, that these poor sufferers must cover themselves with whatever is left to them, however inappropriate it may seem.

We have just received a letter inquiring how a lady with a moderate but comfortable income can dress neatly and becomingly, and yet avoid extravagance.

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Such inquiries are signs that the present financial depression is working out good results, which, though for the present not joyous, will teach our young people that there is quite as much real happiness in industrious avocations as in frivolous amusements or fashionable entertainments. These lessons will also, if rightly impressed, show young mothers the importance of early training their children to habits of industry, and instructing them in all useful pursuits.

If study and work are united, receiving an equal share of attention, our next generation of young women will be far more happy than the last—for they will be more useful and beloved; and should sorrow and reverses come, they will be better equipped to meet and overcome them.

In making purchases it is economy to select as good articles as one's income will warrant; for there is no saving in buying anything simply because it is cheap, unless it is also good and serviceable. To buy a needless and flimsy article because the price is unusually low is waste, not economy.

For daily use the dress should be chosen with reference to the work that must be done while wearing it. Make it neat and comfortable for such work without regard to style, unless, by some unusual freak, fashion may have adopted something simple and convenient. To see girls sail through a kitchen or bend over the wash-tub in a trailing wrapper, sweeping the dirt from the floor or soaking in the suds, should prevent more sensible women from giving the warrant of their example to those under their influence.

None should marry who cannot begin life with enough to enable them to dress with neatness, modesty, comfort, and good taste, without unduly encroaching on

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their income. No article is cheaper for being ugly. First be sure of the price, then examine the quality of the goods to be purchased. These two points being found satisfactory, every wife, for her husband's sake, and for her own, should select the pattern and colors which are most becoming to her size, figure and complexion. Of course the husband will take pleasure, when selecting his own wardrobe, in being equally observant of his wife's preferences and taste. It betokens a cloudy atmosphere when either becomes indifferent to the appearance of the other.

Ginghams and calicoes are the most serviceable for working or morning dress, because they can be washed and made to "look amaist as weel's the new" every week, and any unfortunate grease spot on these fabrics can be easily removed by skillful washing. In cold weather, if it is necessary to have warmer dresses than calico, alpaca or serge, although more expensive in the first cost than some of the many varieties of woolen goods now in market, yet being more durable, and less easily defaced, is really in the end the most economical. The less cotton there is in woolen fabrics the longer they will last without looking shabby.

If a person must be much in the kitchen, or finds it necessary to attend closely to the cooking, woolen dresses are so difficult to clean that if they are used it is prudent to have a long sack apron, made with sleeves, reaching almost to the bottom of the skirt. Raise the dress and skirt beneath the apron by means of a dress elevator, and, when the work is done and the apron removed, an alpaca or serge dress will be found in good condition, and perfectly appropriate for an afternoon, or walking dress.

In summer many kinds of cambrics, muslins, lawns,

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or piques are pretty and inexpensive to use when the rough work is finished, and if made simply are always in good taste; but on no material do ruffles or puffs so soon become untidy as on thin fabrics.

If one sometimes longs for just one really fashionable dress, which cannot properly be afforded, this fact should yield some comfort: namely—that about every six or eight years this freaky goddess, tired of her usual absurdities, astonishes her votaries by introducing some extremely neat and tasteful style, sufficiently economical to warrant those in moderate circumstances in free indulgence for a season. One has only to wait a few years to be fashionable without being perplexed by conscientious scruples. But follow fashion only when she offers that which is within your income as well as that which is in true taste. Always be her mistress—never her *slave*.

It is commonly thought that one *silk dress* at least is indispensable. We see no pressing necessity for it. Any one can be truly respectable without even a silk dress. It may be a gratification, and, if the first expense may be incurred without hazard, it is quite desirable, and not extravagant. But never buy a cheap, flimsy article merely for the pleasure of wearing a *silk dress*. After wearing such a silk a few times, it becomes very unsatisfactory, and its owner feels defrauded of the pleasure anticipated by the possession. A good silk—black, or of fast colors—may prove more economical in its appropriate use than almost any other material, because if cut with care and judgment it can, when defaced, be turned, made over, and remodeled almost indefinitely, and always look well—that is, neat and respectable—after each change; but woolen materials do not bear many transformations without looking old and dingy.

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When a silk has done duty as a "best dress," with skillful modifications it can become a pleasant home dress, and, when that term of service expires, it may descend to the children or be used for trimmings or linings. But in buying a silk count the cost from the beginning to the end. If made in the present style, no silk, however good, can serve more than one turn; once defaced, whether by accident or wear, it is henceforth good for nothing but to be thrown aside with other cast-off finery, because the material has been so wasted in endless trimmings that there is nothing left for repairs.

Our *American silks* are the most enduring and economical of any kind, and one dress will outlast two or three of other materials, unless it may be those very heavy silks beyond the reach of persons in moderate circumstances, costing from six to eight dollars a yard. The Hoboken black silks have much of the lustre of the best class of imported silks, but are much more expensive than the Hartford silks (Cheney Brothers). Two years since the Hartford silk lacked the lustre of the imported, or the Hoboken, resembling more the Irish poplins. We have had no occasion recently to examine any samples, but hear they are constantly improving—securing more lustre every year.

These silks wear wonderfully well. They never crack, and the only objection we know of coming from those who prefer *change* to durability is, that they never wear out, and therefore furnish no excuse for buying a *new dress*. The Hartford black and white striped silks are exceedingly rich and handsome, and the colored silks (fast colors) of every shade are of excellent quality. Thus one can have one of Cheney's Hartford silks, black, or black and white, or in colors of every hue, for two dollars a yard, surpassing any other silk we have ever

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known for durability, costing no more than our best woolens, and much more lasting. To these excellences we may add that they can be dyed over and look almost as fresh and new as when first purchased. This last is a recommendation we cannot safely claim for imported silks. For persons whose coffers are not bounteously filled, no dress can be more desirable. We have given these silks of Cheney Brothers, both black and colored, a faithful trial, and know that this statement can be trusted.

SEA-SICKNESS—ITS LESSONS AND REVELATIONS.

THERE never was a pain so acute but some one had the *only* "ready relief" to offer—the only infallible remedy. There never was a nerve so sensitive that a "sovereign balm" was not at once recommended; and if not accepted with unquestioning faith, why, then, the suffering was, of course, all your own fault. Sea-sickness is no exception to this rule. A sure preventive is tendered by a multitude of kind, sympathizing friends; yet no two agree. It is impossible not to be wonderfully amused at the widely dissimilar or contradictory—but *each one certain*—remedies prescribed, even if so sick that we can only "grin horribly a ghastly smile."

"Eat a good, square meal when you first start. If, at the commencement, you have your stomach well fortified, you are not half as liable to sea-sickness."

"*Live very simply* for some days before going aboard, and be sure to take gentle but effective aperients the day before you sail. You will have your system in a

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much more healthy condition, and be fully able to resist the sea."

"If at all sick, take champagne freely. It gives tone to the stomach and subdues nausea."

"Whatever you do, on no account touch *champagne* or wines of any sort. They will surely give you an acid stomach, inducing sea-sickness in its worst form."

"Take a cup of strong coffee, without milk or sugar, before rising, and you will be surprised to find with what comparative ease you will be able to dress. Go at once on deck; '*make an effort*,' no matter how badly you feel. Once there, you will be all right. Keep on deck —out of your berth all day, and as late at night as you can."

"Do not touch *coffee* on shipboard. It will make you bilious, and insure the evil you are hoping to avoid. If at all nauseated, keep quietly in your berth all day. If not too cool, have the doors and windows opened; but on no account attempt to rise."

"There is nothing better than lemons. Keep one in your hand, and taste a little of the juice now and then; it will refresh you and settle the stomach. But let oranges alone entirely; they will not digest easily, and will make you bilious."

"Reject *lemons* altogether. At first they may seem pleasant and refreshing, but will only increase your discomfort; but *oranges* are nourishing as well as palatable, and, if eaten freely, will prove highly beneficial."

"Take soups, highly seasoned. The pepper and other seasonings will warm and invigorate; but avoid broths, gruels, etc."

"On no account venture on highly-seasoned *soups*. They derange the stomach badly, are too heating, often causing inflammatory symptoms. And leave all meats

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alone; but *chicken-broth*, *oatmeal gruel*, and the like, are simple, easy of digestion, and quieting to a sick stomach."

"Eat as much meat as you can, even if the stomach rejects it. You need strengthening, and though at first it may annoy, you will find that you arrive at a settled, placid state of body and mind much sooner than if confined to light, unsubstantial food, like gruels, broths, etc."

"Deny yourself *all kinds of meats*, *gravies*, and condiments, through the whole voyage, even when entirely free from nausea. One enters upon his travels through foreign lands and climates in a much safer condition if, while on the water, after, by sea-sickness, the stomach is thoroughly 'swept and garnished,' he still continue the remedial process of a light, simple diet."

And so all kindly attempt to sympathize and advise, but each one gives directions utterly dissimilar. "When doctors disagree, who shall decide?"

Of course we have our own ideas of what is the very best mode of procedure; but are not sure that what is beneficial for us, personally, would be accepted by a large majority. There is but one general rule which will always hold good for every one, and which may be accepted with the greatest confidence: *Never venture on the water at all;* and then, old and well stricken in years, you may be gathered to your fathers without having experienced the discomforts of sea-sickness. That is the only security. A person may cross the ocean many times, in all kinds of weather, and return triumphantly, making himself merry over the discomforts of others; but "let him who thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall." In an hour when he is most confident sudden disaster may overtake him, and the most skillful phy-

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sician would hardly attempt to explain the reason for the unexpected calamity.

A severe wind or storm could not have been the cause, for many a time, when the sea rolled "mountains high," when the ship rocked and quivered in every timber, and the winds rent the sails like shreds of paper, and shivered the masts like glass, he has walked the deck exultant, viewing the wild commotion of waters with head erect, and cheek in the full flush of health, saying defiantly, as we once heard one remark:

"The ship may be wrecked, but you can't scare up a storm which will upset my stomach, anyhow."

Take care! The voyage is not yet ended. "Let not him that putteth on the armor boast like him that taketh it off."

"No fear for me; I couldn't be sea-sick if I were to try."

One, two, three days drag by, and still this boaster is invulnerable. Where all others are so miserable, it is provoking to see the mocker pass unscathed. Another night of wind and storm, and in the morning the weak and languid victims of the sea's relentless, arbitrary power miss the loud, jubilant greeting which, in their nervous condition, has been somewhat exasperating. Who is this outside the saloon, leaning for support against a pillar—pale-faced, lustreless-eyed, with drooping head? "Can this be haughty Marmion?"

"Served him right!" is the first irritable feeling—but suppressed, it is to be hoped, before the utterance; for a common trouble *should* make the heart kind, and restrain the tongue. The right hand of fellowship, in this community of misery, is extended, and the hitherto unconquered meekly accepts the pledge.

We do not undertake to explain this strange vicissi-

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tude of seafaring fortune, but are inclined to suppose that, unconsciously, the system may have been in a somewhat disturbed condition just before this particular voyage, and the storm and wind, acting as physicians to the patient, furnish a remedy which, though "at first not joyous, but grievous," will in the end work out a more peaceable condition of the body, bringing the bile into subjection and establishing the health.

If our advice were asked, we should say, bring to your aid all the good sense and quiet judgment you possess, make them your prime ministers, and act up to the light imparted by these counselors. If you attempt to follow the advice of every one who, passing, stops to sympathize, it will work you woe assuredly. In our own ease, we should *fight* the invader, resisting to the uttermost the lassitude that settles over one the moment that nausea begins.

Reject the berth, and as long as there is power to sit up, refuse to lie down; for, though a recumbent position may restrain the sickness somewhat, and, to a great degree, prevent vomiting, yet the strength gives out sooner, and we are not at all sure, unless it proceeds to great excess, that one is wise to wish to resist a remedy that is far more beneficial in the end than the doctor's ipecac. As far as possible, we should keep on deck, where fresh air can at all times be secured, and make no effort to eat, when sure the stomach will reject the very first mouthful. What is the use of torturing one's self by the vain attempt?

Do not look cross and forlorn. It makes others uncomfortable, and only increases your own disgust with yourself and everything else. Do not *whine* and draw down your mouth in a grimace, suggestive of a drug-store. Laugh, talk cheerfully as long as your breath will allow,

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and, when that is *impossible*, sit still and be patient. As soon as the throat relaxes enough to swallow, a few sweet-water grapes are very cool and comforting to most patients; and, when at all possible, a quail or pigeon, if there are any on board, or, next best, a bit of chicken, carefully broiled and seasoned with pepper and salt—*no butter*—may be accepted by the unruly stomach when stronger meats, gravies, soups, and gruels, are at once rejected.

But this course may not be the best for all. Therefore, let each be a law unto himself; but be *good-natured, anyhow*. If you do not feel so, *act* it a short time, and the genuine article will soon follow. Amid all your discomforts, try and bear in mind that the long-suffering *stewardess* is mortal as well as yourself. Do not keep her running up-stairs and down for a dozen different things, when you very well know that, for the present, you cannot touch them, and her fatigue will be in vain. "*Do unto others as you would that others do unto you.*"

A VISIT TO A SUGAR PLANTATION.

ON a recent visit to Cuba, we were shown a plantation about twelve miles from Havana. It is not a large one, and with none of the modern improvements of some very extensive and interesting manufactories farther inland, which we should have gladly visited had time and the war then permitted. At the terminus of the railroad we took carriages to convey us to the mill, two or three miles from the town. A rough, private road, leading through large

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green fields of cane, reminded us vividly of the immense fields of tall Western corn we have so often seen in Indiana, only the cane is planted nearer together, without those cleanly-hoed spaces between which are always seen in a well-cultivated cornfield.

Reaching the mill our attention was first called to the huge stacks of cane, piled in front of the building, ready for grinding. Some fifty men, women, and children, from three years up to seventy-five, and long past that age, judging from their appearance, were actively engaged in carrying the cane in their arms to the tramway, or perhaps, more properly, causeway, over which, by machinery, it was conveyed to the hopper. Little "Tots" and "Dots" of boys and girls—so tiny that our young mothers would have rocked them to sleep in their arms, or expected a nurse to do so—came staggering up with their little arms full of cane to throw on the inclined platform, as busy as bees, but far less noisily proclaiming their industry. They made us think of little ants attempting to drag a straw or grain twice as large and heavy as themselves.

Scarce a sound was heard among that active throng, except the rustling of the dry leaves under their feet, or the pieces of cane striking one against another as they were drawn out of the pile. Occasionally some old person gave a short, quick order to the young ones not to loiter, but we thought any such command quite superfluous. No merry laughter, nor the pleasant sounds of childish prattle—little children, with the tired, dispirited look of old, worn-out men and women! It was sad to look upon. Not sad that they were trained to habits of useful industry, but that, by overwork, laying the burdens of age on youthful shoulders, all the sweetness and joyousness of childhood were crushed out and destroyed,

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with nothing better to look forward to "through all life's wearisome way." Of the "wings—some day!" probably they never hear, and, to them, all that the future promises is *work*, *work*, until they find the only rest they know of—the rest of the grave.

Carts, loaded with cane, freshly gathered, were coming in every little while, replenishing the pile faster than the silent workers could take it away. But when the noon-bell struck its first note, the dumb spoke, and the many words, so long suppressed, found utterance. Yet, even now, the fun and frolic, and harelequin tricks so peculiar to the colored race the moment their work is done, were wanting. The oxen, which had just brought in their load of cane, hastened to the trough close by, where the water was constantly running, but most of the drivers threw themselves down on the cane-heap. A few of the children gathered some of the green leaves remaining on the cane, and, lying down on the ground near the oxen, held it up for them to eat, but most of the tired little ones curled themselves up in the sunniest part they could find by the fence, to sleep till called to dinner.

With the first note of the bell, the women, whose "work is never done," hastened to the "*barracoon*," a large two-story building—the first floor used to cook food for the laborers, and for all the house-work that they had time to attend to. The second floor was the nursery, where over one hundred babies are kept and cared for by children almost infants themselves, while their mothers are working out-doors.

But we will return to the mill. As the cane is laid on to this causeway or platform, which, by some machinery, is constantly passing up and down, it falls into the hopper, regulated by men in attendance, where it is ground into fine fibres; and as the mill revolves the juice

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is pressed out, and the *pummace*, passing from behind the first entrance on to another movable platform, is carried out, and falls into the cattle-yard beyond. There is still some little saccharine property left, and the pigs and cattle feed upon this *pummace*, which, after the animals have gleaned all they can, is, we are told, mixed with other compost and spread over the fields, to be ploughed in when preparing for the next harvest.

As the cane is ground and crushed, the juice flows through large baskets into the vats or receivers below. These baskets are placed above the vats to catch the juice and strain out all the small bits of cane that may fall in while it is being ground; and, to make assurance doubly sure, some old women, too decrepit to work out-doors, are seated, down in the dimly-lighted apartment, by the vats, and, with their hands, skim out whatever bits of cane may have escaped the straining, squeezing and wringing them as dry as possible, then throwing them into waste-baskets to be carried to the yard with the rest of the *pummace*.

From these reservoirs the juice is conveyed by tubes, I think, to large boilers, and, by a process which I did not clearly understand, is, by steam, condensed, and turned into a thick, black sirup—a quicker and less expensive mode than boiling. This sirup flows into troughs, which lead to another set of vats, still lower, and at the far end of the building. In these compartments, negroes and Chinamen, mostly naked, save a pair of short drawers, buttoned round the waist and reaching only half-way to the knees, *stand ankle-deep in this black mass of sirup!* The sirup, after leaving the condenser, becomes too cool before reaching the lower vats to flow easily; and this gang of men, with wooden shovels, scrape or shovel it into large tanks which have ma-

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chinery inside kept in rapid motion, and by this centrifugal force all the sugar in the thick, black-looking sirup is grained and thrown out into other receivers, while that which does not grain runs off below and is put into barrels by another set of laborers. Still another gang of darkies and "heathen Chinee" stand barefoot in the sugar, and shovel it into boxes, ready to be sent to New York to be refined and purified. Need enough of purification, one would think, after having been waded through so long by the filthy beings we saw walking in it.

Is there any process so cleansing that we shall ever, without reluctance, venture to taste sugar or molasses again? It seems that Yankee ingenuity might find a cleaner mode of making sugar. We were told that many of the larger manufactories were much more cleanly, and that in them the work which we saw performed in this repulsive manner was done by machinery. We shall be glad to see these improvements, if only to remove the extremely disagreeable impression made by this our first visit to a sugar plantation.

PLAYING CROQUET.

"I exceedingly desire to obtain your opinion and advice on a matter which some may think does not belong to your department; but, interpreting you by the counsels you have already given us, I judge that in your estimation the 'Household' means all the family relations, as well as the manual labor of household duties, and the directions and receipts for the performance of them. I therefore venture to write you.

"I have three daughters, the eldest eighteen years old.

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Their most intimate companions, though children of Christian parents, are allowed many more social amusements than I can, with a clear conscience, indulge my children in; yet I find it very hard to deny them much that I fear I do wrong to grant. There are some kinds of amusements that I do not think *wrong* exactly, but they tempt to great waste of time, and my girls become so absorbed in them, particularly if their companions are with them, that I am constantly troubled lest real duties will be neglected and time foolishly wasted through my lack of firmness.

"For instance, do you think it right to play *croquet?* My daughters enjoy it greatly, and urge me to join in the game with them. I always wish, as far as possible, to make myself a desirable companion for them, participating, when I can, in all their amusements; but all these things fritter away so much time, which should be more profitably employed; and, worse than that, I cannot but think it must tend to excite jealousy, rivalry, and often dissatisfaction and heart-burnings, that may in time separate chief friends."

JUST before reading this letter we had been playing a game of croquet, and were ignominiously beaten. Had we been called to reply to these questions at the moment, perhaps we should have been tempted to assert that all such games were a waste of time. But, soberly, we feel bound to say that the individual who invented *croquet* was a public benefactor, for it tempts to exercise in the open air, and brings into healthy action all the muscles of the back, chest, and arms, more than any other out-door exercise that we have any knowledge of, in which young girls and women have strength to participate. If they have been sitting long at any kind of work, or are overburdened, anxious, or despondent, this variety of exercise has sufficient excitement and interest to change the whole tone of the mind, and, united with the tonic of pure, fresh air, will enable them under its in-

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vigorating influence to bear such burdens as seemed, a short time before, wellnigh insupportable, and assist them to look at the cares and perplexities of life in a more hopeful manner. Any simple amusement that does this cannot be harmful. All the evils that can spring from it—envy, jealousy, and heart-burnings—beset us on every side. Prayer for deliverance from such temptation, and great watchfulness in everything we do, will be our only protection—but are no more needed in our social life and amusements than in every act of our lives which brings us in contact with imperfect human beings like ourselves.

Some very strict people say, "Why seek exercise in such frivolities when there is a large variety of useful work sufficient for all the exercise necessary for health?" A change in the labor performed is doubtless one kind of rest; but every one is benefited by short periods of relaxation and amusement as much as by change of work or entire rest. The mind often needs to throw off care and unbend for a short period, and we know of nothing that will more effectually do this than *croquet*. There is an exhilaration in trying one's skill in knocking the balls about with force and precision that enlivens the spirits, chases away despondency, and prepares the players to return to official duties or in-door labors wonderfully cheered and invigorated.

We speak of croquet, as that was the species of amusement mentioned; and it is certainly one of the most pleasant that have come under our observation; but any simple, cheerful mode of releasing the mind a short time from responsibility and care, or freeing the young from studies or work, and allowing the exuberance of youthful spirits full play, is not only proper and harmless, but will go far toward securing a sound

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mind in a healthy body. If your daughters seek for nothing worse than a few games of croquet, at suitable times, we think you need give yourself no anxiety.

A CHRISTMAS GOOSE.

AN individual under the very appropriate signature of "*Some Goose*," is anxious to learn what kind of geese we "had down in our country," for he says, judging from a little incident mentioned by us in an article on "Procrastination," a long time ago, "they must be a very hardy kind."

Another person is greatly exercised because we spoke of "the stately old gander" as keeping watch and ward over his mate when on her nest, "for he never before heard of geese *sitting* in winter, or that the head of the goose family ever guarded the nest."

It scarcely seems a matter of sufficient importance to require a letter or an answer; yet all questions in natural history are interesting, and should, as far as possible, receive attention, we suppose.

We have very little knowledge of the geese of the *present time*, but in New England, a half century back, they may have been, like the *children of that period*, more hardy than the present generation—and in the times when winter and sleighing often encroached far on to the spring, there was great need that both should be so. In the "long ago" the incident narrated, though simple, was strictly true. Since then there have been great changes in the climate; at least in those portions with which we were familiar. New England no longer

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boasts of snows that blocked up the roads so solidly that for weeks we could ride to school over paths high above the tops of the fences; and when the drifts banked up the houses, so that, by digging them away from the doors and windows, beautiful icy arches were made, which to our imagination fully equaled any at St. Petersburg; and the brothers walking on a path over the windows, on a line with the second story, had a fair opportunity, which was never lost, to snow-ball the late sleepers in the morning.

With these changes we do not know but the geese have now forgotten to lay in the winter time, but they certainly did not then forget—(we never heard of their sitting till spring). And in these days of progress, when women claim the ability to take care of themselves, unaided, and assert equal strength and vigor—a full emancipation, a perfect independence of man—we do not know but the lower orders of creation, clear down to the *goose*, have waked up to the full consciousness of their equal rights—or evident superiority—and indignantly refuse aid or protection from their mates.

But it was not so in our girlhood days—the courtesy and protection volunteered were gratefully accepted, through every grade of creation, we imagine, and he was a "*right smart lad*" who would risk a bite from the "stately old gander," or a blow from his strong wing, while he was watching over and protecting his mate on her nest. And when the early spring sought to battle with the snow, which so stoutly refused to take its departure, and Madame Goose then began to sit, her warm house, made soft and comfortable with fresh straw, was moved to the east to secure the greatest warmth of the sun, and a shelter under the huge pyramids of wood which had been split and piled up in the winter to season

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for summer use. Then even a strong man would hesitate before needlessly daring the old gander's rage, by coming any closer to the goose-house, than his lordship thought decorous. We remember some fierce fights in the season when winter kept possession far beyond its appointed time, so that it was deemed advisable to move the "coop," or goose-house, into the "feed-room" to secure warmth and shelter for the young birds just ready to break through the shell. Mistaking the intended kindness for an act of aggression, the spirited old fellow fought as valiantly as any true knight could do, to protect his companion from molestation and harm.

But half a century has passed, and we cannot possibly oblige the anxious inquirers into the character and habits of this hardy specimen of creation with even the one egg which we were requested to send.

SYSTEM IN SMALL THINGS.

THE advantage of system or method in labor is shown as plainly in small things as in those which we are accustomed to consider of more importance. Indeed, this habit, once fixed in regard to little things, will eventually manifest itself in all that the hands find to do. Watch a number of young children together, and you will see, here and there, one who takes hold of anything, whether work or play, with an ease and unhesitating exactness quite in contrast with the awkward, labored efforts of the others; whatever the one undertakes, is accomplished without an effort, apparently, and before his companions have effected anything. Those

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who notice this, say, "How naturally and easily that child takes hold of everything she wishes to do, and what awkward, clumsy children the others are!"

No doubt there is a great difference in the natural acuteness of children, but much is to be attributed to good or bad training; and you will find that, whatever the natural endowments may be, they have been developed into practical use by home training, or left to run to waste by tho lack of it.

Unfortunately, most of that class upon whom many of us are obliged to depend, have had no opportunity for systematic training. When they reach our shores, it is generally a necessity for them to "get a place" without any delay, and very few are so fortunate as to fall into careful hands, or among those who can give the time to teach them; so they pick up a few ideas here and there, and use them very inefficiently. For example: notice the manner in which many girls remove the dishes at the dinner-table. It makes one uneasy and nervous to sit by and observe the slovenly manner in which this work is often accomplished.

Soup-plates, with a quantity of soup remaining, piled one above another—all the more liable to spill over, from the soup-spoons being gathered up with them; or the dinner-plates heaped together, with knives, forks, and spoons tossed in among the greasy contents—bad enough when the handles are silver or plate, but ruinous if of bone or ivory; salad, pickle, preserve, and little butter dishes mixed in among the dinner-plates; large and small all thrown together in one heap, and this unsafe, tottering pile whisked over the heads of those who sit at the table, and deposited, or rather *thrown* into the closet with a crash or jingle that tells of the destruction of some cherished article; or if not destroyed past use, it is

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so cracked and defaced as to be ever after a source of constant annoyance; for the beauty of our dishes once marred, they seem insured against a more thorough destruction.

Such a heedless and unsatisfactory way of doing even so small a thing as removing dishes from the table, is entirely unnecessary. The right way is by far the most expeditious, as well as infinitely more agreeable.

Let the waiter pass quietly around the table, first gathering all the knives, forks, and spoons into a small tin pail, or receiver. Then, when she is taking meat and vegetables to the servants' table in the kitchen, it will expedite the work if the mistress take the plates and remove anything that can be made useful, and scraping the remainder into a deep dish kept for that purpose. By so doing there is a neat pile of plates, arranged according to their size, ready for the girl to take to the closet or pantry, where the best articles are washed. Of course silver, glass, or fine china should not be taken to the kitchen for washing. Then let the waiter, with a clean plate and fork, take up every unbroken piece of bread that may remain by the plates—remove salts, casters, vegetable covers, etc., and gather the crumbs with a crumb knife or brush, while the mistress folds the table towels, or collects the mats.

A table can thus be neatly cleared and ready for the dessert in five minutes, without the noise or disturbance that too often attends this part of table service.

We know that some object to the hostess thus aiding in this work as *ungenteel*, but it is wise to set this kind of gentility aside, and accept that style which insures the largest amount of comfort.

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TAKING NOTES.

"AH! I see you have spied my bonnet and shawl thrown on the sofa, and think me sadly careless and untidy, but, really, I was so tired I couldn't put them away when I first came in, and—then I forgot all about them."

But you were not too tired to go to your room, have a good wash, brush your hair after your walk, and make yourself quite neat, I perceive. Would it have added greatly to your fatigue, think you, to have taken the bonnet and shawl with you, and put them, at once, in their proper place? If you begin your new life by putting everything where it belongs, you can hardly imagine how much time you will save; how much real comfort you will secure; or how many temptations to irritability you will avoid.

Nothing tries the patience more than to find yourself compelled to search all over the house for a missing but indispensable article, particularly when a certain monitor in your own bosom whispers that, when last in use, you tossed aside that which now you so much need, because—too tired to put it in the one, only, proper place. One moment's care *then* would have saved all this wasted time *now*, and secured your own self-respect. A little painstaking, a little practice at the beginning, will soon prepare you to be exact in the smallest things, with scarcely a thought—almost by instinct. And really these *little things* occupy but a few moments. Yet the neglect of them lessens—and the careful performance of them adds amazingly to—the sum total of your pleasure and comfort. Let us look, for a moment, at some of these apparently insignificant items.

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When you come in from a walk or ride, go at once to your room, before removing your out-door attire. Take off the gloves first; pull out the thumbs and fingers smooth, like a new pair; fold together and lay in the drawer. They will wear twice as long, and always look new. Then remove the bonnet; brush it with a velvet brush, or, if of lace, with a feather brush, kept for the purpose. Straighten the strings, and fold smoothly across the crown of the bonnet, or roll up and pin together, and lay the bonnet in the box. Then take off the outside garment. If a cloak, brush it thoroughly; see that no button, button-hole, or trimming, is breaking—then hang it up, or fold and lay in the drawer. If a shawl, shake off the dust and fold neatly; but not always in the same *creases*, as they are apt to wear rusty, or break, if not often changed.

All this, which takes so many words to tell, will occupy but a few moments to perform, and then you are ready to brush your hair, and wash your hands and face, before going to your sitting-room. But if callers are waiting for you when you come home, in no case stop to lay off your garments, but go in at once and receive them, with your walking or riding attire still on. In the first place, it is not kind to keep friends waiting; and secondly, you will be tempted, if you remove your things first, to toss them off hurriedly, and very likely forget them for the remainder of the day.

At night, on retiring, if you leave your garments just as they fall from you, an unsightly pile on the floor or chairs, will you be more inclined, or have more leisure, when you rise in the morning, to put them away, than you had at night? Would it not be wiser to shake off the dust, and hang the clothes up in a closet, leaving the door open till morning, that all perspiration

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may be dried, and the garments well aired? Many garments are moulded and ruined by being packed away in a close closet or drawer before they are fully dried, as well as by being thrown into a heap, and injured by the wrinkles thus made.

In the morning, throw your night clothes across a chair by an open window, till well aired, and then hang them up in a well-ventilated closet. This is much neater, as well as more healthful, than to roll them up or fold ever so neatly, and put under the pillows, as many do. They never can be fresh and pleasant when you put them on again at night, if folded and put away from the air.

"Oh! how tiresome to be compelled to think of every little item! It would kill me in a week. But some are 'to the manner born,' and all this careful thought comes as easy as breathing."

You mistake. Let me tell you a short story.

Many years ago, two little girls lived in a large, old-fashioned house, but none too large for the ten wild, frolicsome children who occupied it. Care for the house and children required many steps, and much hard work. The good mother conscientiously believed it her duty to teach her children to take care of themselves as much as possible, and to help others also, and to do whatever they undertook faithfully.

This was not an easy lesson for those young girls to master, nor indeed for any of this large flock; but the youngest, giddy and thoughtless, found the order, regularity, and scrupulous neatness, that were exacted, a great trial, and sinning and repenting were the usual routine of each day—the sinning so frequent, and the repentance so evanescent, that any one but a mother would have despaired.

Returning from school, on the youngest's tenth birth-

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day, both girls were called to their cheerful, sunny chamber, and on each side of the east window stood two pretty, new bureaus. Their mother showed them how neatly she had placed everything belonging to them. "And, now," said she, "remember that once a week I shall examine your bureaus. I shall not let you know when. Most likely it will be in the night, generally when my work is all done; and if I find anything, however trifling, out of place, I shall be compelled to wake you, and make you get up, and put all in order. Please try and remember this, my dears; for it would not be pleasant to leave your warm beds some cold, winter night, to do that which you should have done before you slept. Or perhaps some day, just as you are ready to go on a pleasant excursion, how sad it would be to make you stay at home, because you carelessly neglected mother's requests! It will grieve me, if compelled to do this; but I know of no other way to break up your exceedingly careless habits."

"And what was the result of all this? If the rule, so needlessly strict, was transgressed, it must have been a very cruel mother who could have executed the threatened punishment?"

On the contrary, it was one of the truest mothers the sun ever shone upon; but the children well understood that her word once passed was unchangeable. One or two little pleasure expeditions lost, and rising a a few times, in a New England's winter night, soon rectified the naturally careless habits; and the cure, though for the time not pleasant, was thought, in afterlife, a small price to pay for establishing a habit of order, which soon became a second nature, and no burden. Indeed, it was a lesson for which those girls had had cause to bless the good mother continually.

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FRIENDLY CRITICISM.

THERE is a latent obstinacy in every person, even the most timid and gentle, and nothing wakes it to such active life as sarcasm or ridicule. Criticism given in that spirit blinds the recipient to whatever of justice there may be in the censure; but there are very few things which deserve more gratitude than friendly, kindly criticism. An honest mind will rejoice to meet such a spirit, and, examining the reasons for the censure, will gladly make the needed corrections; or, if a careful review fails to convince us of the soundness of the criticism, we should earnestly endeavor to make a clearer and more satisfactory statement of the points objected to. We are conscious of much help derived from the friendly objections made to some of our statements, and though sometimes we may think the critic mistaken, and cannot yield the point, yet we find great advantage in it, inasmuch as it compels us to examine very cautiously, and give the reasons for the faith that is in us, in a more definite manner. We therefore tender thanks for all, even though we remember the fable of the old man who came to grief in his efforts to take the advice of every one he met.

One "hopes we will give plain receipts, adapted to persons of limited salaries."

One thinks "fewer words, short and comprehensive receipts," would be more satisfactory. Another wishes we would be more definite, going more into detail, giving the most minute directions; "remember we are beginners, and want to be taught the A, B, C of house-keeping."

The first is doubtless an old housekeeper, knowing twice as much as we do, at whose feet we would will-

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ingly sit and take lessons. The last is probably "a young thing," as she says. To such we are sent, and will try to make every rule and direction as plain and definite as possible.

A lady writes: "I hope you will not counsel us to be *too neat*; for, as far as my observation goes, our women are in danger of wearing themselves out with needless work."

If from early childhood a habit of neatness and precision in all things has not been thoroughly established, when womanly cares usurp the freedom of girlhood, and the necessity of faithful superintendence or active labor demands a wise use of *time*, it will take months to uproot the evil of carelessness, to learn how many precious hours are wasted by throwing things "anywhere," *because you are in a hurry*, and have so much to do. That is just the very reason why *every article*, however trivial, should be put at once in its own true place, and *nowhere else*, the moment it leaves your hand. It takes time and "patient continuance in well-doing" to learn this lesson; but once learned no money could buy it of you.

"In a hurry just now and can't stop." Will you not be as much, perhaps more, in a hurry to-morrow? And will it not seem very hard, and make you quite impatient to-morrow, to hunt ten or fifteen minutes for something you *must* have—but which you have thrown, you know not where, to-day *because of the hurry?* If you had but taken a step, or raised your hand, you could have put the article exactly in the right place and never missed the time. But now deduct the few extra seconds—hardly that which you gain to-day, or think you gain, by tossing the article anywhere—from the time you will spend to-morrow in hunting for it,

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and you will be astonished to see how much you have wasted. That was only *one* item—how many more just like it were stealing or frittering away your time all day?

Look at the wastefulness of careless, untidy habits, and honestly estimate how much *time*—we will say nothing here of money—is lost every day by them; then multiply the wasted hours of one day by the number of days in a year, and look at the sum total. We *know* that neatness and order of the strictest kind, instead of increasing labor, most certainly will make it comparatively easy, and the heavy burdens light.

The absolute necessity of *saving time*, of making each hour as *long as possible*, which we learned in earlier life, convinced us, as nothing but practical experience could have done, of the wisdom of a mother's patient teaching, which, in girlhood, we thought too stringent. It is because we have tested how wonderfully order and neatness lighten labor, that we give "line upon line and precept upon precept," in our endeavors to convince young housekeepers of this truth.

We think with our friend, who cautions us against "counseling over-neatness," that "our women *are* in danger of wearing themselves out by needless work;" but we differ in thinking that the danger lies not so much in over-neatness as in over-labor on worse than useless things. Think of the aching backs, the tired chests, the smarting eyes, the hours of steady labor devoted to the elaborate dress now in fashion. We refer more especially to those who cannot afford to hire this work done, yet sacrifice health and peace that they may join the worshipers of fashion. Even the sewing-machine cannot make this sacrifice an easy one. Indeed, we are sometimes tempted to doubt if the sewing-machine is,

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after all, the blessing we are accustomed to think it. It certainly is, like many other good gifts, perverted. Look at the miles of ruffling and flouncing, the skirts and overskirts, paniers and bows, "tier above tier," that are required to make *one dress!* Without the sewing-machine it would not be possible to disfigure the human figure in this monstrous fashion. All the fatigue and labor of the strictest style of housekeeping is as nothing compared to the toils and martyrdom of the devotee of fashion. The oversight or actual labor of a well-organized household brings peace and pure enjoyment, while the pleasures of fashionable life are like the apples of Sodom.

PERPLEXITIES.

WE have been repeatedly solicited to speak of the comparative merits of keeping house and boarding, but have refrained for several reasons. There is much that seems plausible, or reasonable, to be said on both sides: there are many so situated that they cannot choose that which would give them most comfort, but are compelled to bow to peculiar circumstances over which they have no control; and we dislike to be the cause of making any discontented with a position which they have not the power to change.

We know that as old age approaches, many worn with heavy cares often think they would gladly cast off the burden of household responsibilities, and enjoy the rest and freedom they imagine may be found in boarding; but we have seldom, if ever, found one who, having made the experiment, felt in the end that it was

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successful. For our own part we have had but one uniform opinion; we have never found a satisfactory reason for changing it. There is a little romance about it that we imagine every loving woman is somewhat influenced by, though few, perhaps, feel it deeply enough to realize what it means or shape it, even in their own hearts, into a definite idea. But think a moment.

The young lover, after a time, assumes a far dearer name—*the husband.* He takes his bride from her mother's arms and calls her—*wife.* If a true helpmeet, she gives to him all the youth, the beauty, the strength, and intellect that God gave her. It may be but little, but it is all she has to give. Who can do more? And the husband enthrones her—*the queen of his home.* The crown may after many years become burdensome, the sceptre too heavy for hands growing feeble through sickness, labor, and old age; but with all the pains and penalties which come with the crown, what sovereign willingly lays down the burden and abdicates the throne?

This is the romance—one which we cling to and believe in, and always shall; but we fear it is fading out of most minds, and may be classed by the rising generation, by-and-by, among the follies and eccentricities of "*the olden times*" which the young are so fond of criticising. And yet one can hardly feel surprised that it should be so. If something cannot be found to lessen the heavy burden which fashion binds on our housekeepers, hotels and boarding-houses will be the *shelter* of our families, and *homes* be as one of the myths of the past. The style of housekeeping of to-day is so elaborate when compared with that of fifty years ago, and, unfortunately, the servants are so much less competent and less amenable to proper authority, that it is difficult to see how our homes are to be preserved.

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We cannot wonder if the young daughters, who have watched their mothers fading under the increasing burdens of housekeeping, should shrink from assuming the same risk; and therefore our hotels and boarding-houses are filled with young married people who, in their earlier life, are losing all the joys of home. And that is not the worst danger threatened by such a course. In the mixed society of hotel or large boarding-house there is such publicity, so much to distract attention, so few ways of ministering to each other's comfort, that we cannot think young married people who board can be as closely and harmoniously united as when, in their own house, they exercise sovereign but united power.

If our young people would be wise enough to begin their married life in a small house, or, better still, on a single floor—a "*flat*"—how much more of true happiness they might experience! With good health, and only two to provide for in the beginning, no queen on her throne could be more independent than a young housekeeper, even with very limited means. Such care and labor can only be a pleasure, while it insures good health, and prepares the wife by experience to perform such added cares as coming years may bring, and with much more ease and comfort. But if young people will begin by assuming the cares which must come with a large house, and fill it, as it is naturally filled, with daily guests, they very soon become disgusted with housekeeping and seek refuge from its fatigues in a boarding-house.

But what can we do for those who, having large families, must have large houses; or, being public property, seem compelled to keep open house, and be always prepared for any new and unexpected comer? In such

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cases how long can health and strength hold out without the best of servants? And where shall we find them?

In our large cities, where the labors and duties are more wearing and exacting than in the country, we cannot but feel that some arrangement might be made which would largely secure the comforts, privileges, and privacy of home, and yet emancipate wives and mothers from the "wear and tear of housekeeping."

If a spacious hotel, with large laundry attached, were built on a "court," placed in charge of a thoroughly competent landlord, who would employ only the best servants, the washing and cooking could be provided for all the families in the "square." A waiter appointed for every family should take the orders for meals at stated hours, and at the specified times bring in the food under covers in baskets or hampers prepared to keep it hot, and see everything properly served; remaining to attend the table and remove the dishes and fragments.

In this way a family could have their table well served in their own house without the care of preparing the food; no dishes to be purchased or broken, no cook, laundress, or waiter to manage—the most blessed release of all.

Where there are young children and the mother in feeble health, one girl for nurse and seamstress would be very desirable. All else that one girl could not do, unless the house and family are very large, could be easily done by the mistress and daughters, if any, with no more labor or exercise than health absolutely demands—not half as much as would be needed to oversee the kitchen and laundry work.

This is not chimerical. We have seen it in successful operation in some of our cities. Something similar is very common in France; and surely might be devel-

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oped into a great blessing to our overburdened city housekeepers. By such an arrangement our homes could not only be secured, and wives and mothers have all necessary leisure for social life and intellectual improvement, but oh! how many irritable, fretful words, forced from loving lips by much suffering and by labor far beyond the strength, would never be uttered!

Lift the needless burdens which fashion and custom have laid upon the mistress of a house, and which these tyrants are yearly increasing, and we shall have happier homes, and better and more Christian occupants.

EXCURSIONISTS AND LION-HUNTERS.

"What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

"But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold those that wear soft raiment are in kings' palaces."

THESE are questions we have had occasion to ask many times. It seems wonderfully applicable to a certain class with whom we often come in contact, and with whose peculiarities we have no sympathy, for of all the absurd and incomprehensible things that are done by people of leisure, nothing so excites our surprise, and we must say contempt, as the rage for "lion-hunting"—excursion parties, organized for no purpose but to gratify idle curiosity, and hunt up "celebrities" of every description, whether of church or state, of literary or artistic notoriety.

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We can understand how one can find pleasure, fully compensating for the fatigue, in going with a party of friends on an excursion to some peculiarly beautiful scene, to a grand mountain, a singular cave, or magnificent cathedral, or simply to escape from the hot and dusty city and wander for a few hours through green woods and fields, and beside the still waters. But to see people enduring the trouble and fatigue for no better purpose than to intrude for a few minutes on the private grounds of some distinguished person—to walk through the gardens—not to look for the choicest flowers and shrubbery—but, discarding all that there may be of beauty, to seek the path that will give the best opportunity to peer into windows or open doors—thereby affording, perchance, a glimpse of the "lion"—then rush back to cars or boats—which never wait for idlers—breathless, but satisfied with such a day's work: all this we cannot understand. Grounds much more beautiful may be seen with far less trouble and expense, and without the consciousness, which we hope all must feel, to a greater or less degree, that they have taken a liberty extremely distasteful to those who have no power to repel the intrusion.

But what went they out for to see? Is the ground owned by a popular or distinguished man or woman more sacred than any other spot of earth? Do the virtues or talents of the owner change the character of the soil? Have the fruits a finer flavor, the flowers a sweeter perfume, because paid for by mental labor? Is the grass greener because their feet have pressed the sod? *Popular* persons often are obliged to travel from one place to another. Why not track their footsteps everywhere? That would be far more sensible—and certainly better for these unfortunates if they

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might only be allowed to enjoy freedom from "sight-seers" when at home, during the few hours' leisure they need from the labors and cares of their life.

Neither can we understand why these curious people will push and jostle each other in public places in a manner that, if not blinded by their insatiable curiosity, they would, themselves, deem unpardonably rude, just to look at some illustrious person, or, it may be, to secure an introduction, and perhaps the honor of touching his hand. In the confusion and bewilderment of a public gathering, even if introduced, it is usually done in a hasty, inaudible manner, so that the name is not understood, and the individual who has taken such pains to be introduced will probably never be thought of again. What has the poor hero-hunter gained?

We are not, fortunately, a "star of the first magnitude," nor even a "lesser light," but are so situated that we have a realizing sense of the annoyances experienced by those in the front ranks, when so persistently pursued by foolish enthusiasts. Every one has, it may be, a right to perpetrate any amount of foolishness, for his own gratification, without being accountable to any one but God and his own conscience, provided he does not trespass on the rights of others. But the trouble is, the moment any one gives to the public words or works of value, or has done good to his fellow-men by the right use of God-given powers, and is accounted a public benefactor—that moment seals his doom. These harpies swoop down upon him; all that he has at once becomes public property—entirely at the mercy of wonder-seekers.

But this is not all—these "insatiables" will call upon a person of eminence, professedly on business, and wait at the house till the man of fame is at liberty; but

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after the important nothing for which they profess to have come is dispatched, and they are dismissed, it strangely happens that the album has been rifled of certain pictures which could have been bought at the photographer's for twenty-five cents, only it was so much more interesting to steal—beg pardon, *borrow*—the pictures, right from the house where the original lived! Gold pens and pencils, little mementos cherished for the givers' sakes, if not valuable for their own, if they chance to bear the charmed name, vanish —*mysteriously*, some say. We never recognize any mystery about it, but feel assured that some relic-seeker, who has doubtless told the little ones scores of times—

> "It is a sin to steal a pin;
> How much more a bigger thing!"

has been in the room—one who cannot understand that to take that which belongs to a person of note is as sinful as if taken from one whose name never appeared in print.

But this kind of trespassing is far more endurable than the unblushing audacity of excursionists and picnic parties going up and down seeking people of note. A gentleman of distinction had finely-arranged and spacious grounds, which he cheerfully kept open to any who wished to enjoy the many choice flowers and shrubs. He only claimed that the *house* should be unmolested. Orders to the servants were peremptory that no one should be admitted to the house who came to view the grounds.

For a time he succeeded; but on one occasion a party were overtaken by a sudden shower. A servant was sent to provide seats on the veranda, where they could be

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sheltered; but when the doors were opened to give this invitation, those who had often gazed at the house and longed to enter, could not be restrained; and, notwithstanding all remonstrance, like the "plague of flies" in Pharaoh's palace, they swarmed over the house, prying into every nook and corner, through parlors, library, halls, and chambers. With muddy shoes and wet garments they wandered, leaving nothing unexplored; and why? Simply because it was a *popular man's* house. The owner's kindness had often before been requited by the rudeness common to over-much curiosity; but this was the drop too much. Patience was no longer a virtue, and now these grounds are inclosed by high fences, and guarded from sight-seers by locked gates.

Within a week three excursion parties have, like locusts, swarmed through the orange-grove where we now write, because in it is the residence of Mrs. Stowe. With great coolness, coming directly to the house, they ask—almost demand—an interview with that lady, as the boat would wait for them but a few moments.

Being told she was absent, they scattered in various directions—some on the veranda, to gain a view of the parlor, others gazing long into the dining-room, as though there must be some mystery there, or perhaps the person they sought. Two gentlemen (?) came to a bedroom on the end of the veranda, and, deliberately opening the door, attempted to enter. The occupant—a lady—instantly closed it, turning the key. Some half-dozen *ladies and gentlemen* stopped before the low window, staring into the room. The curtain was hastily dropped, as a slight hint that the intrusion was offensive; so they passed to the second win-

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dow, persistently determined to have a full view. But that curtain being also lowered, the "sniff" of vexation was quite audible. Evidently, they did not believe that the lady of the house was gone, and, imagining this her room, determined to have "one good look." What mistakes these "patrons" of talent do sometimes make!

Windows and doors being closed, away went the whole party to the orange-grove. *Ladies* beat the limbs with their parasols to dislodge the fruit, thereby destroying many buds just ready to burst into blossom for next year's crop, without obtaining the orange. *Gentlemen* jumped and tried to shake the limbs. One was badly pierced by the thorns that guarded well their owner's property. Another, leaping to catch a branch, fell heavily over the stake in the croquet-ground. Is it to be supposed that the inmates of the house who witnessed that fall were overwhelmed with pity for the gentleman's misfortune?

When the boat's whistle called them to hasten, in passing by the house again, one stopped to purloin a relic—the first bud from a cyclamen, which had but just been received from the North, and was planted and watched with great care. Another broke off a branch of ivy brought from England, while her friend said: "*Don't pick them so close to the house. These little children are watching us, and will tell.*" If not conscious of doing wrong, why need they care if the children did tell?

Now, what have they secured by such liberties in a lady's garden? Was there any inspiration in trampling over the new-ploughed ground? Will the little flower, planted with such tender care, when withered and destroyed, furnish the pilferer with one poetic thought?

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If they had succeeded, when staring into that window, in catching a glimpse of the "authoress," what would they have seen? A little woman, whose quiet, gentle manners give no token of her power. In that slightly bowed head with brown curls, just silvering, would they have seen the *mind?* Then *what* went they out for to see? What have they gained by this "excursion?" A slight gratification of a silly curiosity, a most unhealthy craving for "sight-seeing." What have they lost? We should think some self-respect. We *know* they forfeited the respect of those who, looking on, witnessed their folly. If a few more of these Arab hordes should swarm about the place, high walls and locked gates, to secure rest and quiet and protect private property, must be inevitable.

A gentleman in St. Augustine planted two choice trees brought from abroad. A party of "tourists" entered his grounds a few weeks since, and, having made their inspection, on leaving, two "gentlemen" cut down these choice little trees and trimmed them up for canes! The owner, seeing this outrage, hastened to them and demanded the little spoiled trees. He has tied them near the entrance, and placed an inscription on them telling how they were destroyed, and thinks, for the future, his grounds shall never more be opened to any but personal friends.

The result of such marauding parties will be that sensible, well-behaved people will be deprived of that which they know how to value and profit from, through the wrong-doing of a class who have no more appreciation of the beautiful in Nature, than just understanding of the delicacy and refinement of true genius.

And there is another misery which these persecuted people are compelled to suffer. Not only are their

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grounds and houses ransacked and pillaged, and their privacy invaded by insatiable sight-seers, but when these parties are seen approaching, their victims quake with fear, well knowing that, if only a half-dozen are making this raid, there will surely be a *reporter* among them. That is inevitable; and in a week all over the land will fly some strangely-garbled statement of what was seen. Heaven defend the poor victim if they succeed in effecting an entrance, and hunt their prey into a corner—for reporters' eyes see double (some of them do certainly)—or, by some optical delusion, conjure up such a picture that the nearest friends will never be able to recognize it! Traits of character, peculiarities (for of course a distinguished person must be peculiar and eccentric), and little incidents, are stated that would be perfectly harmless if not labeled, for no one who knew them would be able to guess who or what was meant; but these statements are sent flying all abroad, most distinctly marked, name and dates all given. What can these helpless, long-suffering martyrs do? Be patient? Try it? and tell us how long your patience holds out under the same infliction.

Were we in their place, our daily prayer would be: "Send poverty or sickness, but from excursion parties, prying curiosity, 'lion-hunters,' and reporters, good Lord, deliver us!"

If the young mothers and housekeepers will lay this to heart, and try to teach their children and all belonging to them how much better it is to stay at home quietly, and try to be like the great and good, instead of running after their shadows, or annoying or hunting them in their own homes, the lesson will be more valuable than ten thousand receipt-books or treatises on household labor.

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SHOPPING.

GREAT is the mystery of Fashion! But there is yet another mystery which we cannot comprehend. The excitement, the absorbing interest that is found in "shopping," especially in a foreign country, is a matter of great and increasing surprise. Ladies leave their homes with trunks almost bursting with the richest apparel which our New York stores can furnish. When they land on a shore where everything in Nature is new and strange, and more of interest to be seen than they have time, with the utmost diligence, to examine, one would imagine shopping would be the last thing to be thought of. It *is the last*; but, unfortunately, the *first* also; for though not even shopping can tempt many ladies from their beds to witness the gorgeous sunrise of a tropical climate, yet as soon as the late breakfast is dispatched—what next? Why, shopping, of course. And for what? To "price" goods. The great desire of their hearts is to endeavor, by a little smattering of French, German, or Spanish, to "*beat down*" the merchant's price; while he, with still more unintelligible English, assures them, with the most lavish politeness, that to oblige the illustrious American ladies he is ready to impoverish himself by the fabulously low price at which he offers his wares.

But our ladies have been warned never to accept the first price named in foreign lands. They are told that a little coyness, combined with Yankee "cuteness," will have a wonderful effect in lowering the original sum. It may be so; but, if we mistake not, we have seen some curiously sly glances pass from one clerk to another

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behind the counter, as if well satisfied with their part of the transaction, when ladies—forgetting the notice over the door, "*English spoken here*"—have exultantly expressed their delight in having fought for and obtained a most wonderfully cheap bargain. We have seen articles purchased which were first offered for one price, then reduced two or three times, and at last bought, taken to the hotel, and triumphantly exhibited as great bargains, when we knew the same material, equally good, could have been purchased at home for less price, and no fear of the custom-house.

Surely the exertion of shopping, and making "great bargains," in foreign countries, is not always tempered with wisdom; and perhaps even at home it is not any more judiciously executed. There is a marvelous infatuation about it, in all places, for some people, which to us is very surprising. It can only be accounted for by the supposition that ladies of wealth and leisure—finding time hang heavy on their hands, and many hours which no books or home attractions can enable them to pass contentedly—seek to amuse themselves and kill time by making useless purchases, of which they will tire almost before these have been exhibited and talked over.

Now we cannot understand what pleasure there can be in the fatiguing business of shopping, only so far as it is gratifying to accomplish any necessary labor successfully. To hang about a counter, examining things one has no intention of buying—jostled, crowded, and made uncomfortable by the ever-surging throng—is fatiguing in the extreme, and exceedingly bewildering unless a list of what is needed has been carefully prepared before entering the store. According to our mode of looking at the work, this should always be done, even in home

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shopping, but is much more desirable when abroad. Decide what you must have; and fix, as near as possible, the quality and price. This settled, begin your researches—no need of buying in haste, and repenting at leisure. If the purchase to be made is of any great importance, never decide at the first sight. Take a pattern of the goods with you, after having spent all necessary time in the examination.

When you return to your hotel, compare the sample with something similar which you have brought from home—and the price also—and in the quiet of your room you will decide far more wisely than will be possible in the confusion of tongues which distracts you in all stores; especially when partially tongue-tied yourself by inability to speak the language. By this mode of procedure you will have a better opportunity to complete your purchase the next time you enter the store, having clearly arranged in your own mind just what you intend to buy, and the price you are willing to pay.

Notwithstanding the term "fixed price," often seen in large letters in many stores, it is true that the merchant does often make many changes in the sum demanded—perhaps compelled to do so by the determination on the part of his customers to "beat him down," and never satisfied until that consummation, so devoutly wished for, has been achieved.

But, although fully aware that it may not be always safe to accept the first price named, it must be acknowledged that higgling and chaffering in making a bargain is not in good taste. It would greatly lower our self-respect, and we will never stoop to it. To say, in a quiet, lady-like manner, "The price is higher than I am prepared to give," is usually quite sufficient. Most

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shopkeepers are quick to understand the characters of their customers, and very readily perceive if you really know your own mind. If they have the least intention of reducing the sum asked, they will, without any more words on your part, give you their lowest terms—which you can accept or look farther; anything rather than stoop to expostulations or persuasions with a stranger. If satisfied that the article is desirable, and of a fair price, why wish to discuss the matter further? Why wish or expect the merchant to sell his goods at a loss to himself, just for the honor of dealing with you? He must be destitute of common-sense to offer to do so, and if any such pretense is made—"take care; he is fooling you." Do not expose your own weakness and credulity by giving him an opportunity to lure you into a purchase through any such pretensions.

SEWING-MACHINES.

"WHAT is the best sewing-machine?" If this inquiry had been made fifteen or twenty years ago the reply would unquestionably have been "Wheeler & Wilson's," for we did not then suppose it possible that any invention would at all compare with it.

A few years after we received a "Grover & Baker." The little troubles that sometimes perplexed us in using "Wheeler & Wilson" had always seemed insignificant when compared with the time lost by hand-sewing, and we had no thoughts of complaining. But after using "Grover & Baker's" we forgot our first love. The machine was less complicated, the work so strong, the

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stitch so perfect, no ripping save by coaxing, and we could do more and better work, we thought, and with less fatigue, than on our first machine.

We were perfectly contented. Work rolled off with marvelous rapidity, and, truth to tell, being able to accomplish so much in so short a time, we did indulge in a few more tucks and extra ruffles, because it took so little time, comparatively, to make the children's clothes very tasteful. That was folly. It must be confessed that there was much noise and little talking when either of these machines was in energetic operation.

Just at the height of our dreams of perfection "Willcox & Gibbs" came to us to disturb our great repose and contentment. The "*Noiseless Machine!*" The idea of a quiet house and a little real enjoyment while at our machine, without diminishing the amount of work to be accomplished, was indeed to be accepted with a grateful heart. Noiseless, beautiful stitches, the perfection of "hemming," "felling," "tucking" and "quilting," were at our command—all, surely, that the heart of a good housewife could desire in a machine. Skill and invention can surely no farther go. To be sure the work would sometimes rip, and, whenever started, the ripping was very effectually accomplished; but that, we soon learned, was our ignorance, and with riper knowledge the trouble ceased. Always ready to accord all praise to other machines, yet we turned to the "Willcox & Gibbs" with infinite content. Lately the new "Automatic Attachment" has apparently removed all causes of complaint in fastening the thread, although the mechanism is not quite as simple, but with this attachment it is worked with even less noise than before.

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But now comes Beckwith's machine, to be operated by hand or by foot, at will. That will be a relief. How often have we risen, after some hours' steady work at the machine, with aching back and almost crippled with numbness, and pain in feet and ankles! To have a machine on which one can change, using foot or hand with equal facility, and find the work equally good, would indeed be a blessing. We are not yet familiar with the "Beckwith," but are pleased with it as far as our knowledge extends, because we find a very perfect, even stitch, and that the machine is capable of doing all kinds of work well—both plain and ornamental—but chiefly because we see that operators may be relieved, when working it by hand, from the great strain on the hips and back, which constant use of the foot has shown to be often injurious.

Next in our own experience comes the "Domestic," of which we only know enough to be satisfied with the variety of work which can be accomplished on it, and only object to it as being so noisy. We have seen no work that has pleased us better. It is more complicated than any other machine that we are acquainted with, but when it becomes familiar through practice, the security and ease with which the work can be fastened, the self-regulating tension, requiring no care on the part of the operator, and other peculiar excellences, cannot but compensate for any little annoyance from the noise, and any unusual intricacy in the machinery.

But there are now before the public so many excellent sewing-machines, that it is quite difficult to give advice in selecting one. Then the improvements in all sewing-machines are so great — each year developing something new—that one can hardly recognize an old friend with these valuable improvements or added con-

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veniences. So great have been the changes in some that we supposed had reached perfection, that it will not be strange if our present favorites should, in a few years, be thought crude and clumsy compared with the wonderful developments that are in store for our children and grandchildren.

How little did our housekeepers of fifty years ago dream, when spinning and weaving at home, that all that hard work would be done by machinery in a few years! And to fancy it possible that their wearisome, endless labor with the needle would ever be performed by a machine, was quite beyond their powers of imagination.

There are so many really excellent sewing-machines now in the market, that we think one can hardly go astray in making a purchase. If the "automatic attachment" on Willcox & Gibbs's is found to perform all it promises, we must say that, so far, we have seen nothing better, and, for the sake of its quiet, *noiseless* movement, it will always be a favorite.

The sewing-machine is doubtless a great help to the weary, a great blessing to the heavily-laden mother and housekeeper—*or it should be;* but all have need of caution, lest they make this good gift a curse. Let us look back to the time when sewing-machines were unknown, and compare the amount of cloth, time, and stitches necessary to make the most elaborately fashionable dress then with that which is piled on the ordinary dress of the present period. Look at the ruffles, puffs, flounces, etc., that mothers put on even a little girl's dress, to say nothing of the amount required on their own. Think of putting one hundred yards of ruffling on one dress! And any lady knows that is but a small estimate of the number required for some sty-

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lish dresses. If there were no way to have it made but by hand, how few dresses would be so elaborately trimmed!

Knowing how rapidly all kinds of sewing can be done with the machine, is there not danger that ladies will be beguiled into a great waste of time, money, and material by the possession of that which was designed to give them rest and time to use for their own improvement and for the welfare of others? Aside from the temptation to extravagant expenditure of material, time, and strength—if not very careful, there is danger of many becoming devotees of fashion, who, but for the ease and rapidity with which the work is done by these wonderful machines, would have made better mothers and happier homes.

The wise will see this danger and resolutely turn from it. We can hardly understand how sensible women can be so beguiled by fashion. In their own hearts they must acknowledge that the excessive use of trimming now in style is not in good taste—that Fashion fools her votaries by enforcing styles that all can see are ludicrously extravagant. If common-sense ever becomes the mistress and fashion the servant, as she should be, many of our modern improvements and useful machines will be more truly appreciated than they can be now, when compelled to aid the foolish and extravagant, instead of ministering to the comfort of the weary and overworked.

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HOUSE-CLEANING.

IT is difficult to realize, after so long a term of excessive heat, that autumn will soon call back our wandering housekeepers, and they, doubtless, need no reminder that their first duties on returning home will be to put their houses in order for the coming winter. Those who have not been so fortunate as to secure a short respite from home duties have probably already begun their house-cleaning—one of the prominent parts of household labor that custom has needlessly made a dreaded and most formidable undertaking.

We cannot think it necessary that to effect a satisfactory purification of the house, the whole of the interior should be dismantled and thrown into wild confusion, and all the inmates be made cross and uncomfortable, in order that the mistress may have the satisfaction of knowing that twice a year, at least, her domains are in order and thoroughly clean. By a little care, good management, and forethought, except in a few particulars, a house may be kept in good condition the year round, and a large portion of these home revolutions and disturbances, so dangerous to the comfort and happiness of the majority of the household, be avoided.

Yet with the best management, there is much extra work to be done every fall and spring. In the fall the dust, that is exceedingly annoying and likely to pervade the whole house during warm weather, and all traces which the *flies*, without regard to the most persevering care, will always leave on paint, furniture, etc., must be removed. In the spring the smoke from gas, and the dirt from furnace and grates, will call for labor equally hard.

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When frosty nights begin to be felt severely, the flies will have done their work, if with the aid of an active assistant they have been hunted out every evening from all the dark corners, with brush and broom, and those that are by these efforts scattered on the floor are gathered up and burned. As the cold increases, they become more feeble and inactive each night, and will lie in large masses on the ceiling or in dark corners, and, when thus brushed down, are too stiff and torpid to fly quickly, and may be captured in large quantities. But as soon as fires are kindled, and the house is pleasantly warm, or the bright October sun shines in at the window, if these efforts to destroy them have not been made, they will be as busy as in July and August, and far more persistently annoying.

If coal and wood for the winter were not put into the cellar in the spring, that will be the first work to be done before house-cleaning commences, because the dust which finds its way into the house when coal is put in will make all attempts at cleaning useless.

The next step is to see that grates, ranges, and furnaces are in order, and all the ashes taken away. If there are any repairs to be made about the house, they should be attended to before the great work of house-cleaning is commenced.

Preserving, pickling, and all kinds of work that tends to leave stains or dirt about, more than is to be expected in ordinary labor, should be finished and securely put away before the more laborious occupation of cleaning the house is commenced; but the closet in which pickles, preserves, etc., are to be stored, must be well cleaned before they are put in. This done, the house is at the mercy of scrub-brush and brooms.

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AUTUMN LEAVES.

WE take great pleasure in collecting our rich-colored leaves every fall, although we are by no means an expert in preserving them. But by observation and inquiry it is easy to glean sufficient knowledge to find much enjoyment in the work. Added to this, it is pleasant to try experiments on leaves and vines, and the many modes of pressing them. The little we know on the subject we are happy to lay before our readers.

We began, some four or five years since, by simply laying single leaves—selecting the most perfectly colored—between two or three thicknesses of soft paper, then another layer, and so on, each day, as we found fine specimens, laying large, heavy books on top. We changed the leaves into dry papers about every other day, until they were well dried, and found them smooth, with pretty good color, but very easily broken, and though, when carefully arranged, quite ornamental, not at all durable.

Another year we pressed our leaves in sprays, using not only maples but alders, oak, the linden—one kind of which turns a clear lemon color and is soft and smooth, the other russet and rough, but both very desirable. The sumac also keeps color well, and, if not taken too late in the season, may be preserved in sprays without losing the leaves.

This time we varnished the leaves when nearly dry, and were greatly pleased with the color they retained, but did not like the unnatural glossiness. When varnished they are as brittle as glass, but, if placed above reach, last some time; and, if fastened near the ceiling or over the tops of picture-frames, the unpleasant lustre arising from varnish is not apparent. Some will be

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removed this fall from the walls, that were prepared three years ago, and are still in good color.

The next experiment was with boiled linseed oil—a disagreeable piece of work—but when finished there was no perceptible difference between the looks of the leaves that were oiled and those which were varnished, and both were liable to the same objection—unnatural lustre and great brittleness. This time we pressed not only sprays of three or four leaves, but little branches a foot and a half and some two feet in length, and found no difficulty in doing so. Perhaps the leaves were not quite as smooth where the stem was the largest, as the pressure could not reach them as effectually; but unless close by, in the hand, it was not noticeable.

Of late we have tried waxing the leaves, both when freshly gathered and when half dried, and are greatly pleased with the result. Those half dried do not look as well or keep the color as perfectly as those waxed when first gathered. Common yellow wax is preferable to the white.

Lay several thicknesses of thick, firm wrapping-paper on the ironing-table. Fold up paper, or old cloth, into a pad on which to put a cake of yellow wax. Lay the leaves smooth, and, if a spray or branch, pick off those leaves which overlap on the branch and hide a good part of the leaf; pass a warm flat-iron over the wax quickly and then over the leaf or spray, on the upper side first; then turn over and do the same with the under side, and remove to the paper in which it is to be pressed. When the sheet is full, cover with two or three thicknesses of paper—proceed the same way with more leaves till all are waxed. This done, put all under an even but heavy pressure, and change them to dry papers every two or three days till the leaves are perfectly cured.

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We find the leaves that have been thus treated keep in good color, are as soft and nearly as flexible as if fresh from the tree. But this year, although leaves on the mountains and in high latitudes have turned very beautifully, they do not appear to have the firm texture and strength usually found in autumn leaves, and do not keep their color under any process as formerly. We hear it attributed to the intense heat of the summer, which seems to have burned all strength and vitality out of the leaves, as well as out of mankind generally. This looks like a very natural explanation.

In pressing leaves it is a good plan to get a smooth, flat board, a little larger than the papers in which they are to be laid. Then put the papers smooth on this, and place the leaves in order as fast as ready. Cover with more papers; add more leaves, till all are placed. Then put another board of the same size on top, and on that pile large, heavy books, making an equal pressure all over; or instead of the books, take off the marble top from a table or stand and put that on top. This gives the most even pressure, and is sufficiently heavy.

We have been told that after leaves have been pressed a day or two, if they are dipped into a weak solution of sulphuric acid, shaken free from drops, and again put in press, it will restore the color perfectly. When well dried from the wash they can then be waxed. We have never tried this.

When leaves have been cured they can be made very ornamental by being mingled with any kind of ferns. The Hartford creeping fern is very beautiful to use in wreaths and festoons over doors, pictures, or around window and door cases. By linking the vines together with a spray of rich leaves the effect is very pretty.

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Crosses, crowns, circles, or any fanciful shape may be cut out of paper, and leaves and ferns of all sorts sewed on. Or take very fine thread wire and wind bright leaves and small ferns, together with the creeping fern, on to the wire with "reel wire," such as is used in preparing wax flowers, or the wire used for flowers by milliners, which comes wound with silk. In this way very tasteful vines or wreaths can be arranged around windows or pictures, brackets or lambrequins. White curtains may be tastefully looped up or festooned in the centre by these vines, or a bunch or spray of richly-colored leaves. No prettier decorations can be found than our autumn leaves may furnish in ingenious and skillful hands.

SELF-DEPRECIATION.

"WELL, I declare! I will never venture to ask Mrs. D. to dine or sup in my house again—never!"

"Why not? We always supposed you and Mrs. D. the best of friends."

"And so we are, to be sure. It is certainly from no lack of the most sincere affection that I made that remark—"

"Which, of course, you did not mean?"

"No, I suppose not. I spoke carelessly, I acknowledge; but when I visit there, everything is so nice, so enticing, that, for very shame, I think I can never invite her to sit at my poor table again. I don't see why it should be so. I am sure she cannot try more earnestly than I do to provide the best of everything, and

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have the whole arrangement of the table attractive. Unfortunately for my credit, it cannot be charged to the difference in our servants, for, during my short experience in housekeeping, I have been favored with better servants than my friend has had; at least, I am sure I should not expect to have an eatable thing in my house with such help as I know Mrs. D. has often been compelled to endure, but, alas! I never succeed, and she never fails. She has the "knack" of doing everything well; I have not. She is a most excellent cook, and I a very poor one, I think—but why are you laughing, when I feel so desperately disheartened?"

"To see how skillful you are in self-torture. Your lamentations remind us of a little incident that at the time afforded us much amusement, and may be of some service to you, if only to dispel, for a few moments, the clouds from your face.

"A young clergyman, while on a visit to his brother, also a clergyman, agreed to preach for him in the evening. Neither had been long in the ministry, and they had never heard each other preach. The pastor preached in the morning, and on returning from church his brother said to his wife, 'Kate, I *cannot* preach this evening. While listening to my brother I felt that I had mistaken my calling. I ought never to preach anywhere. I cannot preach here to-night.'

"His wife tried to cheer and comfort him, but all through the afternoon he was much depressed; and, grieving over her husband's distress, she made known the cause to her sister. Rising above this despondency, however, in the evening he delivered a most excellent discourse—all the better, doubtless, for his sojourn in 'the valley of humiliation,' during the afternoon. But on the way home, after the evening service was ended,

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the host, who had listened, in his turn, to his brother, was evidently suffering from a severe attack of *ministerial blues*—and it takes a young clergyman to have the *genuine article*. At last, unable to remain silent longer, he said to his wife, 'Mary, I think I must give up preaching altogether, and go off somewhere into the backwoods out of sight, and become a farmer. After hearing my brother preach this evening I don't think I can open my mouth in public again as a teacher.'

"Can you wonder that his wife, who had heard the other side, responded to her husband's Jeremiad with a merry laugh instead of the sympathy he had a right to expect? Even a woman, with her proverbial reticence, could not be expected to enjoy so rich a treat alone. She repeated the story at the supper-table, and for that time, at least, banished the blues from both parties."

"Very amusing, doubtless, if I was in the proper mood to enjoy it; but I cannot see how it is applicable to my case."

"You cannot? We will tell you, then. We called at Mrs. D.'s some weeks since—not long after she last dined at your table—and while with her we listened to her compliments, for your excellent table, almost word for word, like those you have so ruefully uttered. She was sure she should never dare to ask you to her house to take a meal again—never! Everything was so good, so perfect, and your table was so elegantly arranged, everything in such good taste; and hers—oh! so poor, always, when compared with yours!"

"Is this possible?"

"Yes, every word true; and we must be allowed to say we think you both dear, good, silly women. We will tell you why, if you will be reasonable, and look at the matter honestly. Your own heart tells you that you do

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'set a good table,' as good as—if not a little better than—most people. By a *good table*, we refer only to home and informal entertainments—with those stylish affairs, ordered from some fashionable restaurant, all for show, over which you exercise no authority, and have no responsibility till the *bills* are sent in, we have nothing to do. We mean the genuine, social, friendly repast, which skillful hands present as friendship's offering."

"But you surely do not think that I was not sincere in what I said?"

"No. Be at ease. We are very sure that you spoke just as you really felt at the time, and so did Mrs. D. Many causes combine to produce that state of mind. Nothing ever looks as well, or tastes as pleasantly, over which we have spent time and thought sufficient to cause fatigue. At a friend's you pass to the table, not having the least idea of what you may find there; you have not thought about it, planned for it, and labored over it for hours, until the sight wearies you, but all has the great charm of novelty.

"Then, perhaps, a little unconscious pride—affectionate pride—mingles with all your plans to entertain your friends. If it arose from any spirit of *rivalry*, the consciousness of your own ability in such matters would never permit you to undervalue yourself when compared with another. But, through the love you bear your friend, you are led to think nothing too good, no effort too great, to express your affection, or to do her honor; and she, in her turn, reciprocates the feeling. Through your affection you magnify the beauty and excellence of all she does to entertain you, and depreciate your own efforts; and she, likewise, does the same.

"Then, again, do you not realize that, if desirous of preparing an unusually fine entertainment, this very

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anxiety leads you to see all that you accomplish 'as through a glass, darkly;' and if obliged, as is often the case, to perform most of the labor with your own hands, you become fatigued and incapable of judging of your own work sensibly; and the weariness brings, also, something very like disgust for it all?

"Now, these things ought not so to be. We see and hear a great deal of this, and are sorry for it, because it destroys much of the pleasure which should come from friendly intercourse. Real friends are supposed to meet together from higher motives than to be pampered with the choicest and most appetizing dainties. Good food, neatly and skillfully prepared and arranged, is not to be despised; but it is to be hoped friends do not come to our tables having that for their chief object.

"It is irksome to provide for those who make you feel that they will go away to cavil and to criticise. There is little pleasure to be gleaned from such visits, and much discomfort and heart-burning spring from them. But when sure of the kindness and the integrity of your guests, it is the most foolish of all self-torture to allow yourself to depreciate your own efforts and magnify your friends'. Why think about it at all, to draw comparisons? Do the best that your time, strength, and purse, will allow, and rest content. By being over-anxious about that which, though worth doing well, is not of paramount importance, you not only deprive yourself of much pleasure, but by-and-by make your friends uncomfortable. Appreciate and enjoy to the fullest extent the excellence of the bounties your friend sets before you; but do not neutralize the pleasure you should receive by mentally comparing her entertainment with that which you may be able to provide in return."

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WHO IS TO BLAME?

THOSE who are still held in bondage through "olden-times" proprieties are often startled by the topics which young people of the present day feel at perfect liberty to discuss freely among themselves, or join with their elders, who should set a better example, in expressing their settled opinion about the whole matter.

We are surprised and pained when we hear these things—partly because the topics are of a nature that one would gladly believe a young, fresh, pure-hearted girl would naturally shrink from listening to, much less talking about, even to her closest friends—certainly not in general society—and partly because of the levity with which such remarks are made, and the boldness with which their youthful judgments are pronounced.

We are led into this train of thought from repeatedly hearing, of late, *young ladies and gentlemen* earnestly expressing their opinions on the last topic one can imagine young people would care to discuss—*divorce.* We were more particularly pained because, in two instances, after hearing of the marriage of a friend, they found it so easy and natural from that to glide into an argument on the reasons which should secure divorce in general, and the facility with which the marriage bond could be sundered. It struck us as a very serious evil that young people were learning to look upon the marriage vow as so light a matter.

Is it necessary to go before a justice, or take an oath after the exact formula of judicial courts, before a couple are considered responsible for solemn promises, which, if broken after this oath, would brand them with the shame and sin of perjury? To say in court, or be-

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fore a justice, "I solemnly swear before God and these witnesses," is an act so solemn that the lip trembles and the cheek grows pale with awe while these words are being spoken; and if they have any honor, any fear of sin, what could tempt them to break that oath, or violate the promise it seals? Is not an oath administered by a clergyman, and before witnesses, as irrevocable as if taken in court?

What is an oath? A solemn affirmation or declaration made with an appeal to God for the truth of what is affirmed. The appeal to God in an oath implies that the person imprecates His vengeance and renounces His favor if the declaration is false; or, if the declaration is in the form of a *promise*, the person invokes the vengeance of God if he fails to fulfill it.

A large company assembles. At the appointed time the door opens, and as the guests divide on either side, the room—that but a moment before was a perfect Babel with laugh and talk and sprightly repartee—is in an instant as silent as the tomb. The bride and groom, with attendants, pass in and take their appropriate places. The pale bride and earnest groom apparently recognize the solemnity of the act they are about to perform, and the grave and tearful faces around bear witness to the importance of the occasion.

The clergyman steps forward, and his voice ascends in earnest prayer, imploring God to witness the vows about to be made, and bless and prosper those who make them, according as they remain true to these vows. Then, as God's embassador, he calls upon each severally, "in the presence of God and these witnesses," solemnly to promise, "forsaking all others, to love, honor, and cherish," and for "*better or for worse*" to remain true and loving husband and wife "till God shall separate

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them by"—*what?* Incompatibility of disposition? No. Insufficient support? No. Intemperance? No. Unkindness? No. The promise is for "*better* or for *worse*" until God shall separate them—by DEATH.

Now are our young people to be influenced to believe that this ceremony and the vows of marriage are all a farce? Did that young couple take these vows with perfect knowledge of their full import? Do they realize that now they have "an oath in heaven," which God has witnessed, and by which, if broken, they call down upon themselves "His vengeance and renounce His favor?" And how are the rising generation learning to understand these vows?

Look at the answer in the sad occurrences of every-day life. For a few weeks or months—it may be years—their lives glide on, apparently peaceful and serene; but after a time, as with thunder in a clear sky, we are startled with a trial for *divorce!* Why? Incompatibility of temper—a growing want of sympathy; or children are given, and those who should have riveted the solemn promise past all breaking are the cause of the disgrace and sin. One parent is too strict, the other too indulgent—and divided counsels in family government estrange the hearts that once beat in unison, and this "root of bitterness" springs up into vigorous growth, and soon bears fearful fruit.

Or the wife was reared in affluence. Foolish parents allowed no care or disagreeable duty to annoy her. She knew—her parents knew—that the lover just entering upon his life-work was not rich, but willing hands and a brave heart gave promise of success. Time only was needed, with his young wife's loving coöperation, to enable him to place her in circumstances equal to those from which he took her.

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From the first she understood she would be obliged to join hands with him in his efforts to work his way up to competency. She knew he could not give her many of the luxuries that she might freely claim when with her parents. Rich dresses, large parties, and luxurious carriages must for a time be dispensed with. All this she knew and accepted when "before God and these witnesses" she made those solemn vows. But her words were lightly spoken; and to her marriage was but a new pleasure, a novelty, a plaything, of which she soon tired, and heart-burnings and repinings were the result.

She goes on a visit to her parents. The ease and luxury of her childhood's home seem now more precious to her than the true heart and loving husband in the less stylish establishment; and, forgetting that her promise was "to love, honor, and cherish *till death do us part*," she refuses to return, and her parents, slighting the Saviour's command, "What God has joined together let not man put asunder," uphold her in her sin, and sanction her appeal for *divorce*.

What is the difference between a false oath "lawfully administered" and a broken marriage vow? Whatever dissimilarity an earthly tribunal may decide there is in the guilt, we think the Recording Angel will write down one as much *perjury* as the other.

It is fearful to see how easily, of late, divorces can be obtained, and for how slight a cause they are applied for—as often by one party as the other. It would seem that marriage was being looked upon as the gratification of a passing fancy merely, which could be cast off as readily as an unsatisfactory garment.

There is a terrible sin to be answered for somewhere. Those who have made legal divorce so easy will be held accountable, we think; but fear that parents are most

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responsible for this growing evil. If, both by precept and example, their children are taught to see the beauty and holiness of the marriage relation, we cannot think they would enter into "these bonds" so thoughtlessly, or cast them aside so lightly. We believe there is but *one* cause for divorce—*infidelity*—that God's law and teaching sanction.

BEFORE AND AFTER MARRIAGE.

WHEN a young man begins to feel especially drawn toward a maiden—and by more intimate acquaintance this interest ripens into affection—all the politeness and respect he can command will be manifested when in her presence. The best traits of his character are called out to entertain and honor her; to draw closer the bond of union he desires to see established. Both, if the interest is mutual—perhaps with no intention or desire of making a false impression—are in that peculiar state of mind which shows them to the greatest advantage. Particularly is this true as regards the lover. To gratify the slightest wish of his chosen no effort is felt to be wearisome; no labor a burden. All self-denial for his lady-love is accounted as a joy and honor. His very life seems too small an offering.

But how is it when the prize is secured, and the twain are made one? Are those graceful courtesies, sweet amenities, kind and watchful attentions, through which the coveted prize was led to an exalted estimate of the lover's character, to be continued by the husband—growing brighter and holier as the years roll on? Will the respectful attention and honor which a true gentleman

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yields to *woman* be more scrupulously accorded—be held more sacred—when bestowed on the *wife?* "Then will sweet Peace wreathe her chain round them forever;" and the love which budded in youth, and grew deeper and broader with the after-years, will be matured and perfected in old age, holding them as one till, separated by death, they meet again in that better world where love is the light thereof.

But if marriage brings indifference, or a feeling of ownership which is supposed to exonerate a husband from all attention to his wife, to release him from the commonest civilities, which he dares not refuse to other women, then there is little hope of true happiness in that household. The first year of married life is, doubtless, in some respects, the most critical. No young people ever become fully acquainted with each other during the period of courtship, or engagement. There is a glamour over them that hides any disagreeable or inharmonious peculiarity—and every one has some—that will not show well in a strong light.

We daily see young people accept the mutual duties of the married state profoundly ignorant of the life upon which they have so thoughtlessly entered. The husband may understand what is right or honorable among *men*, but without the first idea—especially if he has not been brought up with sisters—of what respect and attention a wife has a right to expect, and he is bound to give, as an honorable gentleman.

We claim for wives a degree of respect and attention beyond what a true gentleman gives *any other* lady, but we also claim that wives shall be governed by the same rule. Both should be affable, courteous, and kind to all with whom they associate, but for each other there should be a deeper respect and deference than is ever

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seen in their intercourse with others, however worthy; yet in far too many cases politeness and good breeding are folded away with the wedding finery. But until the children that are growing up around us are taught by their parents' example the sacredness of the obligations those assume whose hands are joined in wedlock, the horribly disgusting records of cruelty and crime that fill our daily papers will continue, and happy homes be "like angels' visits, few and far between."

Aside from the present misery and strife, what will be the condition of society, or of our country, when the children of these unhappy marriages come to the front and take their places as rulers of our country and fashioners of society? If the mother is vain, foolish, irritable, and self-willed, in no wise seeking to make home happy, never yielding to her husband's judgment or caring for his pleasure: or if she seeks to live peaceably and make her family happy, but every effort is met by coldness, indifference, or sneers from her husband, will not the fruits of such example be shown in the future character and lives of their children?

There can be no happy marriages or happy homes if love, pure and sanctified, is not the foundation. So few young people know what love is! A little romance, a good deal of pride or ambition, hovers about them, and they call it *love*. "Of all the sad things in this world, the saddest is the leaf that tells what love *meant* to be, and the turning of the leaf to tell what love *has* been. One all blossoms, the other ashes; one all smiles and gladness, the other all tears and sadness. Nothing is so beautiful as the temple that love builds; nothing is so miserable as the service of that temple if God be not in it.

"If there be anything that young wedded love should have as its first vision, it should be a vision of a ladder

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between the earth and heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending—and God over all blessing it. *Then there is hope.* Begin your household life, begin your wedded life, with a firm hold upon God and purity and heaven, and there is hope for you ; otherwise, sad is your fate !"

HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

UNDER this heading an article from *The Spectator* was sent to us some days since by a friend, as it contained a few ideas that seemed suggestive of matter for *The Household.*

We like many parts of the article from *The Spectator*, and would gladly give it entire, but can note only here and there a sentence. In speaking of the choice of a life companion we find this sentence :

> "There are two broad rules worth teaching, because they have some chance of being believed, and they are these: Let the woman's first requisite be a man whose home will be to him a rest, and the man's first object be a woman who can make home restful."

This we subscribe to ; but the writer should not have stopped there. Like most that is written on this subject, he makes the husband's ease and comfort the most prominent thing to be considered—"a man to whom home will be a rest," and "a woman who can make home restful."

A true loving woman needs no instruction in this particular. She naturally endeavors to insure, by every means in her power, the peace and rest of her husband, and will use all her skill to gather about her kingdom every possible attraction to enable him to find it there.

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But has the wife no claim on her husband by which he shall feel that he is equally pledged to secure peace and rest for her?

Again:

"It is the man with many interests, with engrossing occupations, with plenty of people to fight, who is the really domestic man—who enjoys home, who is tempted to make a friend of his wife, who relishes prattle, who feels in the small circle where nobody is above him and nobody unsympathetic with him as if he were in a haven of ease and reparation."

All very well as far as it goes. This is what home should be to every husband; but how about the "haven of ease and reparation" for the wife?

We know that usually the husband is the "bread-winner," to whose earnest labor, either intellectually or manually, the family look for necessities or luxuries; but although his work may be the most remunerative in dollars and cents, are his labors any more wearing and perplexing than his wife's? Would he willingly change places? Let the wife go to the law-office, or conduct a case in court; go as a physician among the sick; a pastor or preacher before the great congregation; a salesman in a store; a president or cashier in a bank; a mechanic in the shop; a laborer on the farm. Then let the husband supervise and direct the household; be harassed with poor servants, knowing that when things go awry it will be attributed to want of care, or lack of patience with their incompetency or willfulness; let him night after night hush and soothe and care for the fledglings, that year by year fill the nest; let him wash and iron, bake and sew, and perform all the labors belonging to the position, in addition to the unceasing care and watch over these little ones.

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How long would he be content? How soon beg to return to his legitimate labor? Which would tire the soonest? In this supposititious change we have not taken in to account the inevitable physical weaknesses and sufferings which a woman must endure, aside from her daily cares and labors, of which men can know nothing, fortunately, and can alleviate only by gentleness and tender love.

One more extract:

"As we should say to women who wish for domestic happiness, never marry a lounger, or a pleasure-seeker, so we should say to men with the same yearning, never marry a fool of any sort or kind. There is no burden on earth like a foolish woman tied to a competent man; unable to be his sweetheart, because she cannot help dreading him; unable to be his confidante, because she cannot understand him; unable to be his friend, because she cannot sympathize even with his ordinary thoughts. . . . No amount of that household capácity, which men so absurdly overrate—*as if any able woman could not learn to manage a household in three months*—can compensate for the absence of clear thought, quick comprehension, ability to follow and credit or discredit a statement of fact, and competent to understand what the husband is. This is the rock on which thousands of the marrying men of this city split."

Yes. And are not an equal number of our young women shipwrecked on that same rock?

"*As if any able woman could not learn to manage a household in three months!*" It must be a wonderfully *able man* who could learn to do it, in all its details, *in three years.* All of this quotation, but the last wild mistake, we can fully indorse. We only desire that the same rules may be made applicable to both parties; we only crave *unity* between husband and wife; and that the rules for governing their lives, bound together as

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they are, and must be by the marriage covenant, should be also united. We have no battle to wage about man's supremacy or "woman's rights." We only claim that they should be equal—laboring together for one purpose—the welfare of each, the upbuilding of their homes—working together in spirit, while each takes that part which is best adapted to the abilities given. We long to see each governed by the law of kindness—to see the respect and courtesies that are bestowed on strangers and acquaintances blossom into riper and more tender respect and attention when shown to each other.

We see with much pain how frequently a husband or wife is quick-sighted to see faults or mistakes in their other self which would not be noticed in a friend or acquaintance. This ought not so to be. Those who are to walk through life together should be slow to find faults, but quick to see and recognize a deed well done, however simple, for love's sake, and also for the good such examples can do the young under their care, who are so easily influenced, and that there may be no heart-ache and bitter repentance for their "reaping by-and-by."

"We vex 'our own'
With look and tone
We may never take back again.
We have careful words for the stranger,
And smiles for the transient guest,
But oft for 'our own'
The bitter tone,
Though we love 'our own' the best.
Ah, lips with the curl impatient!
Ah, brow with the look of scorn!
'Twere a cruel fate
Were the night too late
To undo the work of the morn."

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"THIS IS THE WAY: WALK YE IN IT."

"MRS. BEECHER: Will you listen to me a moment, and tell me what to do?

"I began my married life, about eighteen months ago, with every prospect of unusual happiness. But a great change has come over the spirit of my dreams. My husband is always kind and gentle, but no longer, as at first, shares his thoughts with me, or takes me into his counsel and confidence in matters where we should be supposed to have mutual interests. Gradually a barrier that I see not how to remove or overcome has risen between us. I know not what it is, or how or why the estrangement—no, it is not quite that, but a cloud, a veil—has come between us. I cannot go to him as I used to—he will not come to me for explanation, if he feels the need of any. I cannot say, 'Tell me what is wrong.' He would—not unkindly, but indifferently—say, 'Nonsense! nothing that I know of.'

"If I could only know just what was the right thing to do! His love, respect, and confidence are so much to me, no pride would stand in the way of a full and loving understanding. Do tell me what I can do! Through the experience of the last few months I am led to believe that, by helping me, you will aid many more young married people than I generally supposed. I have reason to think that my trouble is not an uncommon one, but it is none the less hard to bear."

THIS is a difficult and delicate subject to handle; and judging from many similar letters, which we have been reluctant to answer, we have no doubt but that the writer is correct in supposing her case "not an uncommon one."

In many cases—perhaps in most—it is quite probable that what seems a "cloud" is but a freak of the imagination, springing up through over-sensitiveness on the wife's part, or from too great anxiety to do what would be most pleasing and acceptable. Women are

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much more thoughtful of the comfort and happiness of others in little things than men. The little courtesies and attentions, the graceful and gentle words, that are to them, when coming from the best and dearest, as the breath of life, are of much less importance to their husbands. But judging by their own appreciation of these tokens, they offer them freely, and, if accepted carelessly, or with no response, it *hurts*. How silly most husbands would think their wives if they could for a moment realize how sharp the pain is!

In many cases it is no lack of affection, no sign of estrangement, no clouds rising in the distance, threatening disaster; it is only want of thought, inability to understand the needs of organizations so unlike their own.

Then, again, the wife is in danger of forgetting, in her less absorbing cares, that her husband's duties are often complicated, requiring close attention and perhaps much anxious thought; and it would not be strange if, returning from such responsible and difficult labors, the affairs of store or office should still linger in his thoughts, making it sometimes difficult to give a prompt and hearty response to loving attentions.

But the danger lies in lack of openness and mutual confidence. If these peculiar traits are not understood *by both*, by-and-by serious coldness and misunderstanding may spring up that must, eventually, mar the beauty of their married life.

These little clouds, however, unfortunately, are not always the offspring of over-sensitiveness on the wife's part, and the cause, not always absent-mindedness and too great absorption in business on the husband's. Lack of confidence between husband and wife is the canker-worm which has destroyed the peace of thousands. And here the wife is usually more in fault, in the early

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days of their married life, than the husband. She keeps to herself the little mistakes and troubles that are to her a source of pain and annoyance, because they may seem childish and insignificant to him, and she shrinks from being teased or ridiculed. But let a wife go to her husband freely with her troubles, mistakes, or follies even, and, if he is at all worthy of that sacred name, he will assist her to overcome or help her to bear them.

This is by far the safest way. He is not her judge or master, but her other self; and being one, it is wiser to bear the frets and vexations of life together. Let both confide each in the other. He will give her strength and courage, and her quick, instinctive penetration will often help him to see things in a truer light than he would have done alone. He is in the busy world all day, his thoughts distracted by many details and perplexities; but she—away from the turmoil and vexations of active outside business life, and often much alone, or with only her young children about her—if her husband has confided in her, thinks over the topics they have talked about together—looks at them from every point of view, without such interruptions as distract his thoughts, and has the time to pause, ponder, and reflect, which he needs, but in the whirl of business cannot secure.

Without perfect confidence, married happiness cannot be permanent. There can be no true union where, either through pride or fear, or the consciousness of mistakes or errors, one conceals from or attempts to deceive the other, or holds back from any motive that which each has a mutual right to know. Of course, professional men are an exception, in so far as they withhold from their companions the affairs of others

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committed to their care *professionally*—not a step farther. In all else, they who practise concealment, even in business matters, lose half the joy and blessedness which God designed that marriage should bestow.

Wretched, indeed, are they who find the one taken "for better or worse" is like a sieve, incapable of keeping that which was committed to their love and honor. But until hope is vain, and one is compelled to give up all confidence in a companion, let there be no concealments.

Want of confidence on the part of the husband, after the novelty of married life and having a "home of his own" has worn off, is more frequently practised from the foolish fear that by confiding truly in his wife she may learn to exact it *as a right*, and his pride takes the alarm, lest, trusting to his other and often far better half, he may risk the loss of some of his boasted independence.

The wife is sometimes tempted to concealment, and, alas! too often to deceit and falsehood, through fear of her husband's anger or, worse, the dread of his ridicule. She may have erred in judgment, or done some foolish, weak, *but not wicked* thing; and having learned too soon that his tones are not always of the gentlest, feels that, instead of guiding her to a clearer light and a higher life, he will be more likely to sit in judgment on her mistake, or, what is the sharpest thing for a loving heart to endure, make a jest of mistakes, or ridicule her weakness.

Rather than face either of these, she sins against her conscience, and conceals her fault. Successful in this—the next concealment is easier and less repugnant, or, if conscience lifts a warning voice, she silences it by the plea that the blame must rest with him, whom, if gentle

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and loving, she would have so gladly flown to, nothing concealing, but making him always her *head and her guide.*

Married life, opening with every promise of perfect love and harmony, is often wrecked—the mischief begun by "just one" trifling concealment. This is followed by another and another, with shorter intervals. Mistakes concealed grow more frequent and less simple, and when at last exposed, recriminations, bickerings, and heart-burnings destroy the home where the light and purity of love once held undisputed sway.

This wife of eighteen months, who fears that "a cloud" is rising between her and her husband's love, may not, at first, find any help from these suggestions; but possibly, after careful self-examination, they may at least lead her to act well her part, being very rigid with her own shortcomings, and very lenient with her husband's—above all, *avoiding all confidants of either sex.* A wife's bosom should be the tomb of her husband's failings, which should only be remembered to warn her from the same mistake. But while we now speak chiefly to wives in reply to a wife's request, these suggestions, if of any assistance, are equally needed by the husband. As *one*, they should be governed in all things, and by the same rules.

HARD TIMES CONQUERED.

WITHOUT being really conscious of it, every one depends, more or less, on the kindness and co-operation of others for happiness or success, in whatever

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is undertaken. But in the present state of financial affairs, whoever looks for the helping hand in any business pressure is likely to find a "lion in the way" which retards or entirely prevents the fulfillment of his hopes. "Hard times" is no imaginary obstacle. To be sure, the term may be sometimes employed too readily as a reason or excuse for refusing kind deeds, yet no one doubts its reality. Its pressure is felt in every department of business all over the country.

We can scarcely number the times we have listened to the piteous moans of young people whose parents, by heavy losses, are compelled to reduce their expenses, and call upon their children to aid them, if not by active cooperation, at least by the exercise of a little self-denial—children who, like "the lilies of the field," were never called upon "to toil or spin." Their "Heavenly Father," no doubt, "careth for them," but, unlike the lilies, we think He designed these children to use the strength and talent given, to do all they can for themselves, looking to Him to bless and bring their efforts to perfection—"out of seeming evil still educing good."

About seventy years ago, a physician, with a young family springing up around him, consulting his wife, as all good husbands will find it prudent to do, bought a large farm in one of our New England States, where every farmer truly earns his living by the sweat of his brow. Both felt that nowhere could their children be trained to industry and frugality so thoroughly as on a good farm.

Of course the doctor was obliged to "run in debt" for this property and give a mortgage on the place. The payments were to be made quarterly, and promptly, or the whole would be forfeited and revert to the original owner. In those days physicians were not likely to

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become millionaires in a hurry, and though his practice was large the pay was small, and not always sure. He therefore looked to the farm to bring forth the means to release him from the bondage of debt; and the children, even to the youngest, were taught to labor for, and look forward eagerly to, the time "*when we have paid for the farm!*"

The creditor was the doctor's father-in-law, through his first wife; and while the good old gentleman lived, if by any mishap or over-press of business the quarterly payment had been delayed, it would have been kindly excused. For the ten or fifteen years that he lived after the sale of the farm, there had not been one delay in payment, though now and then there would come a time when it was very hard work to secure the needed sum in time; for even in the olden days "hard times" were often found prowling about, to the great terror of our hard-working New England farmers. But little by little the heavy debt was diminishing, and they were looking forward, hopefully, to the year of Jubilee, when they could sit under their own vine and fig-tree with none to molest and make them afraid.

At this period the father-in-law died. He had had but two children—daughters. The younger, the doctor's wife, died childless. The elder married a hard, close, scheming man, who, knowing that his wife and children would inherit this property, in case the payments were not promptly met, lost no opportunity of remarking that Dr. Mason's farm would doubtless soon come into his hands, as with his large family he must certainly fail to pay, by-and-by.

The financial troubles which the war of 1812 had caused, as all wars are sure to do, were not yet adjusted. Money was scarce, and payments very difficult. Ten

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children now filled the old house with merriment and gladness; but they were to be clothed and educated.

Let us see how successfully they had been taught to make their high spirits and resolute wills cheerful auxiliaries in lifting the burden which, since their grandfather's death, was pressing heavily upon their parents.

At the time of which we write, among other crops, rye was extensively raised. It was used for food among the farmers quite as much as wheat, but was also valuable for other purposes. When full-grown, but still in the milk, large quantities were cut to be used for "braiding." The heads were used for "*fodder;*" the stalks, after being soaked in strong, hot soapsuds, were spread on the grass for the sun to whiten. When sufficiently bleached and ready for use, they were cut at each joint, the husk stripped off, and the straw thus prepared tied in pound bundles for sale.

Bonnets, then, meant something more than a small bit of silk or velvet with a flower or feather attached, and the "straw braid" for making them was in great demand. Boys and girls were alike taught to braid, and the long winter evenings were not spent idly. Dr. Mason raised large crops of rye, and each child, almost as soon as weaned, was taught to *braid*, and was soon able to earn something by this work, toward clothing himself. At six years of age, a dollar a week was easily earned by braiding straw; at eight, three dollars; and in something of that proportion up to the eldest.

Does any one think such a life, with such an object in view, was hard or cruel? Never was there a greater mistake. It was of immense value to these young spirits. They had something real, that they could understand, to labor for. There were life and courage and true heroism in it: an education—with here and there,

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to be sure, some rough places to pass over—which was worth more to them than all the money millionaires bequeath their sons and daughters—an education which prepared them in after-life to be courageous and self-helpful.

It is this kind of training that has made New England's sons and daughters strong and self-reliant, and the lack of it which makes these *hard times* such a horror that many seek death by their own hands, as preferable to the struggle for better times.

In the long winter evenings, when the labor of the day was over, the children home from school, and the "*chores*" all finished, the candles were lighted, and the evening work began. The mother in her corner was busy making and mending for her large family. The doctor, if not with the sick, read in the opposite corner. The children gathered round the long table in the middle of the room, where lay the school-books and straw already "*machined*" for braiding, while the old fireplace, heaped with blazing logs of hickory, oak, and fragrant birch, made the room warm and cheerful. Here, with their books fastened open before them to the next day's lessons, the children, with nimble fingers, plaited the straw, and studied their lessons at the same time. For children taught to be industrious usually carry the principles thus developed into the school-room, and are ambitious to keep as near the head of the class as possible.

Such a family as this was well equipped to meet and conquer adversity. At last there came a period when the doctor was unusually grave and silent. All noticed it, but no remarks were made until evening, when he came to supper, so unmistakably worried and despondent that his wife inquired if he was not well.

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"Yes, well enough. But, Lucy, I have so far been unable to collect money for our quarterly payment. So much is due me, that I have had no fears but that enough would be promptly paid to save me any trouble."

"How much is lacking?"

"Not quite a hundred dollars; but it might as well be thousands for any chance I now see of getting it in season. There is so much sickness about, that, as you know, I have had no rest, and little time to collect money. If not ready before midnight to-morrow, we are ruined. I have kept it from you as long as I dared, still hoping that those who ought to pay me would do so."

"Have you told them how very important it is that you have the money?"

"No; I did not wish to speak of it. Mr. H. is watching greedily for a 'slip,' and we need expect no mercy at his hands. Under our hard labor and good care this farm has risen greatly in value—too much so for him to spare us an hour, if he can once get hold of it. I am about discouraged. It is the darkest spot we have seen yet. But I must be off, and shall probably be out all night. To think there are not forty-eight hours between us and ruin! And my hands so tied by several bad cases, that I may not find one hour to try and make up the little that is needed!"

For a few minutes after the doctor left, the children stood silent and sad, watching their mother. At last she said:

"Children, we can help father through this, and save our home, if you are willing to submit to some little self-denial. No; I should have said to *great* self-denial. You have all worked diligently to buy new garments for winter. You need them, and deserve them, and I

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