

# HOUSEKEEPING MADE EASY

BY

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TO

MY HUSBAND

WHOSE FAITH IN ME WAS MY INCENTIVE

WHOSE APPRECIATION IS MY CONSTANT STIMULUS

THIS BOOK IS

**Dedicated**



## P R E F A C E.

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THE title "Housekeeping Made Easy" may at first sight seem to claim a great deal. The minute directions the writer has striven to give for the various branches of housework may further deepen the impression that "Housekeeping Done Thoroughly" might have better described the scope of the book.

The thoughtful housewife will comprehend, however, that what is well done is twice done, and that carelessly performed duties in any department of domestic management almost inevitably entail double toil and trouble. Granting this, it follows naturally that the best way to save work is to do

it so well that there need be no going back to pick up dropped stitches.

Regarded from this standpoint, the claim this little volume puts forth on its title-page may possibly not prove a misnomer. The chapters that make up the book appeared first in *Harper's Bazar*, and were written in the light gained by the author's own stumblings and uprisings. It is her earnest hope that her experience lessons may guide other young housekeepers past some of the pitfalls she herself did not escape.

CHRISTINE TERHUNE HERRICK.

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# HOUSEKEEPING MADE EASY.

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## I.

### RENTING THE HOUSE.

HOUSE-HUNTING is of all enterprises perhaps the most discouraging. The young couple who start out on such a search generally begin with exalted anticipations. They have their ideal domicile very clearly before them. They say, decidedly, "We will have this," "We shall insist upon that," and end by taking what they can get.

Probably architects and builders do not deliberately plan houses that are meant for models of inconvenience, although to the practical eye this often seems the case. Especially does it appear thus to the young housekeeper eager to make of her home a

model of its kind, and firm of faith in her ability to accomplish this—only she must do it in her own way. A little experience usually opens her eyes to the fact that she must render her success the greater by the difficulties she overcomes in winning it.

In every large city there is a comparatively small number of houses for people in moderate circumstances. Tenements for the very poor, mansions for the rich, abound; but, except in the suburbs, it is not easy to find a pleasant home where a young couple can set up their domestic gods except at a heavy cost. Right here is the first stumbling-block. It is hard to choose a house in an unfashionable locality or at a distance from the shopping centres, but, the choice once made, few regret it. Mr. Micawber's dictum "that if a man had twenty pounds a year for his income, and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy; but that if he spent twenty pounds one he would be miserable," contains more than a

grain of truth. Let the rent of the house be in proportion to the purse of its occupants. A man with an income of two thousand dollars a year has no right to devote more than one fourth of that to payment for the roof to cover him. If he can get it for less, so much the better. House-rent is a hard tug at the best. The inevitable payment, the fixed sum that must be forthcoming whether or no, that cannot be diminished by economy, as may be the amounts expended for food and clothing, is a hard enough pull in any case. All this should be taken into consideration in renting the house. Guard against hastily assuming obligations that are liable to become cruel bonds.

There are, however, other extravagances besides those involved in the outlay of money. Even high rent is cheaper than doctors' bills, and the healthfulness of the locality where the house stands is a prime requisite. In this day it is hard to find any district whose residents can conscientiously claim for

it entire exemption from malaria, but it should at least have the reputation of comparative freedom. The quick observer will readily notice how the house stands—whether it has a sunny exposure, if there are undrained lands or stagnant pools in the neighborhood, or if it is too heavily shaded. Beautiful as trees make the grounds about a house, it is better to be exposed to the hottest rays of the sun in summer, the keenest blasts of the blizzards in winter, than to run any risk from too thick shade and the dampness induced by it. What is true of foliage applies also to the shadow cast by bricks and mortar. A tall building will sometimes prove as dangerous a neighbor as the rankest vegetation. No apartment is really healthful, still less is it suitable for a living-room, in which the sun does not shine for a part of each day, and where there are not ample means of ventilation.

The location of the home fixed upon, the house itself requires a careful inspection.

The cellar must first be examined for any traces of dampness. Its floor and walls should be as dry as those of the upper rooms. Most thorough search should be made to see if there are cesspools near enough to taint the air of the cellar, and thus plant the seeds of fever and diphtheria. Drainage is receiving closer attention each year, as the students of sanitation learn with more absolute certainty its effect upon the health of communities. The arrangement of waste-pipes, their connection with sewers, the system of gas and water traps, should be studied by every householder who values his own and his family's physical well-being.

The day has gone by when hot and cold water all over the house and a "set bowl" in every room were prime desiderata. Sensible people have returned to the old-fashioned washbowl and pitcher, unless they can have their stationary washstands shut off by closed doors from their sleeping-rooms. Many object to even this proximity. The most per-

fect system of traps is not proof against the insidiousness of sewer gas, and it is poor economy to save labor in carrying water at the cost of injury to health. A bathroom there should be, with hot and cold water, if possible, and from these faucets can be drawn the supply to be carried to the bedrooms.

Almost first in importance to a woman come the number and size of the closets. The story is well known of the man who remarked, sneeringly, that a woman could never be an architect, for her only idea of a house would be a building fifteen stories high, in which each floor would consist of a row of ten closets. As an offset to this may be recorded the authentic case of a woman whose china closet was so contracted that when her husband offered to purchase her a handsome dinner set she replied that the only place she had to keep it was under the bed.

The latter extreme is more frequently touched than the former. While men may

not realize the full importance of plenty of good closets, they are quite ready to appreciate their convenience. Upon the woman devolves forethought in this matter. She must have, if possible, two kitchen pantries. A cold cupboard is also extremely desirable, although not absolutely essential where there is a good cellar. In the dining-room there must be a roomy china closet, preferably one with glass doors. Connected with this should be the butler's pantry, where, if there are not hot and cold water and a sink for washing dishes, there may at least be placed a table upon which can stand a dish-pan. Above it must be a rack with wooden pegs for dish towels. Metallic hooks would rust too easily.

The bedchambers reached, the closets should become more numerous, averaging one to each room. There must be one big cupboard fitted with wide shelves, and if possible with drawers, for bed and table linen. If there is no attic, a large closet must be set

apart for the lumber that soon accumulates in even the best-regulated household.

The condition of the walls should be scrutinized. Not only must they be dry, but unless one is very positive of the good health of the last tenants of the house, the wall-papers should be removed and the walls scraped before repapering. Disease germs have no more deadly foe than the whitewash brush, and it should be applied unsparingly from attic to cellar.

The heating arrangements are especially important and should receive careful examination. Nowadays most houses possess furnaces that warm a part if not all of the house—the halls, parlors, and dining-room, for instance—while the chambers must be heated by stoves or open fireplaces. Although the last are undoubtedly the most to be recommended on sanitary grounds, they also add greatly to the work of the establishment—a matter worthy of serious consideration in a family where probably but one servant will be



employed. The care of a furnace is usually assumed by the masculine head of the house, but the carrying up and down stairs of wood, coal, and ashes almost always comes upon the maid. The absence of a furnace should make the rent less, and the prospective tenants must decide for themselves whether this reduction will not be counterbalanced by the added labor induced by stoves and grates.

Some landlords refuse to provide the kitchen range, thus obliging those who rent the house to shoulder a heavy expense at the start. A cooking-stove costs a good round sum to begin with, and will never sell for one third its value. It is far better, if possible, to secure a house already supplied with one.

The minutiae of gas-fixtures and burners, window-fastenings, weather-strips, doorlocks, keys, and bolts should not be forgotten. An exhaustive inventory of deficiencies in this line should be submitted to the landlord or agent before the house is definitely

engaged, and the signing of the lease made partially contingent upon the repairs of damages. These little matters are easily overlooked, and their neglect is a fruitful source of discomfort. Alterations and additions which a landlord will cheerfully consent to make in order to assist in renting his house to a worthy tenant he is loath to undertake after its occupation is a fixed fact. Impress upon him that it is as much to his advantage as to the lessee's to keep the house in order, and selfish interest, if nothing else, will move him to make the requisite repairs.

Above all, have in writing every item of the agreement between lessor and lessee, and place no dependence upon verbal promises. An honest landlord will not rebel against such prudence, while a tricky one will need the restrictions.

## II.

### FURNISHING THE HOUSE.—THE MUST-HAVES.

THE house rented, the serious question of furnishing next presents itself. Some brides are so fortunate as to receive the plenishing of their new homes as a wedding-present from their parents. Even when a father cannot afford a sum that will cover all expenses, there is usually a certain amount given towards the purpose. This the young couple must make last as best they may, together with what they have saved for themselves or can economize from their own income. In some ways it is pleasant to have enough to render close contriving unnecessary. On the other hand, there is a great delight in planning how a little may go a great way, and even in giving up a luxury now with the hope of being able to acquire it later.

“We had a lovely time furnishing our first house,” said a woman whose little home was a model of good taste without extravagance. “We had just so much money, and we could not exceed it. We arranged where each penny should go before we spent anything. If we found we needed a footstool, a chair, or a rug that we had not planned for, we took a cup and saucer or a piece of bric-à-brac from its shelf in our imagination, and let the money we had mentally devoted to its purchase pay for what we could not do without.”

The first step the young couple should take is to decide what to reckon as necessities and what as luxuries. Among the “must-haves” may be named carpets, rugs, or mattings, window-shades, parlor and bedroom, kitchen and dining-room furniture (including china and glass), and bed and table linen. When the items are all noted the list swells to formidable proportions.

Floor coverings come first. In the reign

of improved taste under which we happily live, no sensible housekeeper with limited purse thinks of purchasing an expensive velvet carpet or even a body Brussels to cover her parlor floor when she knows that by so doing she will stint herself in other quarters. If the boards are closely and evenly laid, so that they can be stained or painted, she would either select a large rug to lay in the centre of the room, or have one made of ingrain carpet in a solid color and surrounded with a bright border. Should the floor prove impracticable for such treatment, a matting, either in plain dark colors, or in bright and neutral tinted stripes on a light ground, furnishes prettily and cheaply. This does away with any real necessity for one big rug. Several smaller ones in front of fireplace, door, or sofa answer the purpose as well.

For the hall the solid-color ingrain carpet, otherwise known as "filling," is admirable, being both cheap and durable. A very dark carpet should not be selected, as this shows

every dusty or muddy footprint. A bare floor even of hard wood is never advisable for a hall, as the constant coming and going keeps a servant busy in an endeavor to preserve a presentable surface. In a long, narrow entry a single breadth of stair carpet may be laid down the centre, where the wear will come, while the floor next the wall may be stained or painted. Stair carpets are essential, and may be found to match the hall carpet. Stair-rods are not necessary.

In the dining-room may be pursued the plan recommended for the parlor, except that a large rug or drugget must be placed in the middle of the room, under the dining-table, as matting will not stand the tri-daily dragging back and forth of feet and chairs. A painted floor that may be easily wiped up is best in the kitchen, with a few strips of old carpet, neatly trimmed or bound, to stand on while doing mixing or when washing dishes. Mattings are far preferable to carpets for bedrooms, as they do not harbor dust or

moths, and are easily kept clean. There should be rugs by the bureau, bed, and washstand—small ones, that are readily brushed and shaken.

Window-curtains are among the “may-haves,” window-shades among the essentials. Those of plain linen or holland are best, in buff or cream, although dark green is pleasant in chambers. Paper shades are wretched economy, for although costing less at the outset, they will not stand one quarter of the wear and tear that can be borne by the linen. These can be turned and washed to an unlimited extent.

The furnishing of the parlor is usually considered one of the heaviest taxes upon the purse. It need not be. That is miserable management and worse gentility which sacrifices comfort and prettiness in the rest of the house to display and finery in one show room. Heavy pieces of upholstered furniture, unless really handsome and expensive in proportion, look far more common than wicker

settees, Shaker rockers, and cane-seat chairs. Home upholstery, if neatly done, is unpretentious and generally satisfactory. Everything should be in keeping. Plush and cretonne should not be placed in juxtaposition, nor is it wise to expend a large sum in one big sofa or arm-chair, and be forced to let that stand in almost solitary state, because there is no money left with which to purchase other furniture. Light, pretty chairs that may be softened with cushions or made gay with ribbons, at the housekeeper's pleasure or convenience, give the room a more cozy, lived-in look than can be imparted by a "set" of massive pieces. Now that the clumsy centre-table has gone out of fashion, small, graceful stands, one bearing a few books, another a lamp, another a pile of photographs or a few bits of bric-à-brac, may be scattered about the room. The minor ornamentations that give individuality to an apartment must be reckoned among the "may-haves."



Economize as one will, the dining-room is bound to be a hard pull upon modest means. An extension-table and chairs can hardly cost less than thirty or thirty-five dollars. The expense of the table may be lessened by purchasing one with turned legs and a deal top, while the chairs may be plain, although solid. A sideboard may be devised by running stained shelves across one corner of the room, ornamenting the edges with leather bands, studded with brass nails, and displaying there choice pieces of china or plate. A plain sideboard is not expensive, however, and is almost indispensable.

In the kitchen (the stove being taken for granted) there should be two tables, the top of one covered with zinc neatly nailed on, two or three stout wooden chairs, one low rocker, and a couple of plain pine shelves, upon which to keep the kitchen clock, cook-books, etc.

Above-stairs comes another heavy drain upon the household store. Beds and bedding

are probably the most obstinate necessities of the furnishing. Good springs and hair mattresses cost high, to begin with, but they wear for years, and nightly repay the money spent upon them. Such apologies for hair as jute and moss may seem satisfactory for a time, but a few months' steady usage renders them hard and lumpy. Bureaus and washstands are not very expensive, and substitutes for these are possible in tables draped with cretonne and muslin. Where there are no stationary washstands, china chamber sets must be purchased. These vary in price, but can be bought at from four to seven dollars for a pretty, decorated set, without the slop-jar. That usually adds four or five dollars to the cost of the set, and is so easily broken that it is wiser to get one in plain white porcelain for regular use. Metal receptacles for slops are apt to become unsavory unless carefully scoured and scalded every day. This objection does not apply to the tin or agate-ware ewers or "feeders"

for fresh water. These are valuable in saving risks to the china pitchers, and should always be at hand for carrying water from the faucets to the bedrooms. Upholstered chairs are out of place in a sleeping-room. Instead, there should be light cane-seated or wicker chairs that are easily moved. In each bedchamber there should be a table that may be used for writing or as a workstand.

In the matter of bed and table linen much discretion must be used. Every housekeeper desires to see the shelves of her linen-closet well filled, and it is hard to avoid extravagance in this direction. In a small family, six pairs of nice white cotton sheets, and two or three pairs of coarser quality, the latter for servants' use, may be considered essential. To each pair of sheets should be allowed one bolster and two pillow-slips. Some of these should, if possible, be of linen, as many people who are willing to sleep between cotton prefer to rest their faces on linen. Three white "honeycomb" spreads

and one white Marseilles counterpane are necessary, besides a plainer covering for the servant's couch. Each bed should be provided with a mattress-cover, at least one pair of good blankets, and with a *duvet* or quilt for additional covering. Three dozen face-towels must be allowed for, twelve fine cup-towels, twelve kitchen-towels, and two rollers. A dozen cheese-cloth dusters, neatly hemmed, should also have place. Three plain white table-cloths, one of finer quality, and a colored tea-cloth, each with its accompanying dozen napkins, will, with care, be sufficient at the beginning. A dozen fruit-napkins are almost indispensable.

The question of china, glass, and kitchen utensils will receive closer attention later. A dozen each of cups, saucers, dinner and tea plates, tumblers, etc., should not be considered too liberal an allowance for the dining-room, in view of the breakages that will probably take place. Meat and vegetable dishes, and the other necessities of dinner-service, will readily suggest themselves.

### III.

#### FURNISHING THE HOUSE.—THE MAY-HAVES.

PROMINENT among those finishings to her house for which the soul of its mistress longs are draperies. Window-shades are all well enough for utility, but they are not sufficient to satisfy the artistic sense. Curtains are needed to give a room a really furnished air. The choice in these is boundless, but fitness must be consulted. Rich damask or velvet puts simple cottage furniture to the blush, and gives a look of incongruity to an otherwise pretty apartment.

For the parlor or sitting-room nothing is better in a thin material than Madras. This comes in a variety of prices, ranging from the piece-goods that sell at fifty and sixty cents a yard to the made curtains which may be purchased at from six to sixty dol-

lars the window. Between these the housewife must make her selection, guarding against the temptation to expend a disproportionate amount upon her drawing-room, and thus rob the rest of the house. Even prettier than Madras, and not much more expensive, are draperies of China silk in soft shades, and falling in lovely folds. These cost from sixty cents to a dollar a yard, and hold their color well, fading less than the Madras.

For the dining-room, Turkey-red curtains do nicely if the room is well lighted. If, however, the windows are small or heavily shaded, scrim is preferable. For bedrooms nothing is prettier than this, or the old-fashioned white muslin. Cretonne, in the attractive designs that are plentiful nowadays, brightens a chamber. Woollen curtains should never be hung in a sleeping-room, as they afford lurking-places for disease-germs and unpleasant odors. The use of *portières* in adding coziness to a room cannot be over-

estimated. A yawning entrance-way or a blank door can never give the look of home comfort afforded by a breadth of some rich-hued fabric. Any door that opens outward may be masked from the inside by hangings at little expense. The days of heavy and costly cornices are past, and the plain pole, with its sliding rings and ornamental tips, can be procured at a low price.

Next to draperies, or perhaps ahead of them, come pictures. Few families purchase these by the wholesale, as it were, but rather acquire them little by little. Let no householder be deluded into filling the vacant spaces on his walls with cheap and glaring chromos or lithographs. Better let the panels remain blank until they can be occupied—one at a time, possibly—by choice etchings, fine engravings, or good photographs. The pictures already in possession may be softened and adorned by a knot of some dainty harmonious drapery on the corner of a frame or thrown over an easel.

Books, too, are more generally the result of accumulation than of sudden acquisition, and their receptacles should perhaps have been classed among the "must-haves." The owner of a slender purse need not waste time in lamentations that his means will not permit him to cumber his parlor or library with huge book-cases. The plain, low shelves of walnut, oak, cherry, or even oiled yellow pine, are more in the mode at present. The books may be protected from dust by curtains running on slender brass rods, and these draperies may be of silk, Madras, felt, or Canton flannel, and plain or embroidered, according to the owner's time or inclination.

The individuality of a house is determined principally by its ornamentation. The necessities of furnishing are common to all, but it is in the minor points of decoration that the house-mistress shows her true self. Cheap ugliness is no longer obligatory. Bondage to bead and worsted tidies need not exist when, for the cost of the materials of each of these



abominations, one may pick up at any one of a dozen New York shops a bit of Oriental-looking drapery, a scarf soft yet brilliant in tone, a fur rug, a low screen, a gay fan, or a few pieces of decorative pottery. The taste of its owner must be trusted not to go too far, and make her room look either like a fancy bazar or a Japanese toy-shop.

In the dining-room it is easier still to attain charming results at slight cost. The chipped plate that was a piece of one's mother's wedding china, the carefully mended Sèvres cup, the brilliant Japanese teapot that has lost its top, may not be available upon the table, but they make a gallant show on the upper part of a sideboard, or on a set of mantel-shelves supplied with little brass hooks from which to swing tea and coffee cups. In the furnishing of the table, too, prettiness may be gained without extravagance. Japanese china in quaint designs is as cheap as plain white porcelain, and is far more effective, whether as teapot, finger-

bowls, or as dinner and tea sets, than is the undecorated ware. Japanese paper mats make excellent doilies, and cost only fifty cents the dozen. While pressed-glass tumblers at two dollars a dozen are made in as pretty patterns as the cut crystal at three times that price, it is folly for people of slender incomes to buy the latter for every-day use. Let the principle of consistency be rigidly adhered to, and while making economy attractive let it be also thorough.

The old-fashioned halls that are being imitated in the modern Queen Anne cottages lend themselves readily to rich effects in furnishing. More difficult of management are the narrow entries of many of our city houses, where the steep flight of stairs starts just inside the front door. Even here, however, there are possibilities of improvement. A hanging mirror, its cheap frame covered with folds of soft silk or figured Japanese goods, an old-fashioned table with a scarf laid over it, or a draped shelf under the mir-

ror, a picture on the wall or a brass sconce supplied with bright candles, a trophy of fans, an old sword, a bunch of peacock feathers, a deer's head — any of these will prove of service in relieving the monotony that permits each hall in a block to resemble every other so closely as to bewilder even the owner with doubts whether he has entered his own home or that of his neighbor.

In the bedrooms, the presence of the "must-haves" merely, leaves but cheerless apartments. Here the touches that make the chambers homelike are those that cannot be purchased by money alone. The pretty bureau and table covers, splashers, whisk-broom cases, receptacles for jewelry and odds-and-ends, all the dainty trifles that mark the difference between the home and the hotel, are due to the head and hands of the occupant rather than to her purse. The comforts that may be added here are almost boundless. A comfortable sewing-chair, an easy lounge or sofa supplied with pillows

and afghan, a light stand at the head of the bed bearing candle, matches, watch-case, and books of devotion, a rug in one's own particular working corner, two or three low footstools, a writing-desk or table, a bit of drapery for the mantel-shelf, and many other happy touches, will suggest themselves.

Almost an essential is a large screen to shut off the corner of the room devoted to the washing accommodations. The screen may be plain or showy, of Japanese or home manufacture, covered with wall-paper, felt, cretonne, or sateen. Whatever its style, it will prove one of the most useful articles in the room, whether it serve as partition for a temporary dressing-room or as a shield against the glare of the sun or a draught of air.

The longing of nearly every woman who rules over a household is for a supply of linen sheets. These are too costly for ordinary wear, except for people of liberal means, but a stock may be acquired, a pair at a time,

that will serve through the summer months for the beds of the elders of the family. Children's slumbers are generally too sound to demand these aids to comfortable rest. Extra blankets, handsome bedspreads, and pillow-shams may also come one by one, and will be valued the more from the little effort made to secure them. A generous stock of nice towels may be accumulated by purchasing half à dozen at a time as one finds the means.

A different course must be pursued in the purchase of table-linen. A table-cloth with the accompanying napkins demands a larger outlay, and must be planned for beforehand. A pretty tea-cloth and napkins add to the daintiness of the lunch or supper table, and all the graceful accessories of fine china, cut glass, and solid silver are acquisitions that often come only after long waiting. Finger-bowls should be among the first of these luxuries, if, indeed, they should not be regarded as necessities.

## IV.

### SETTLING THE HOUSE.

THE business of moving into a new home and getting it in habitable order is a task that requires executive ability. More or less disorder there must be, but by a systematic plan of action, clearly followed, the friction and annoyance may be reduced to a minimum.

Nothing can create worse confusion than the indiscriminate piling of furniture, carpets, curtains, books, clothing, china, and ornaments into an empty house, with the vague idea that in some unexplained way order will be obtained from this chaos. The task is equal to that bestowed upon poor Graciosa by her malignant stepmother, and the wand of a Percinet to restore harmony is lacking. If comfort is finally achieved, it will be at an

outlay of labor and worry that costs almost more than it is worth.

In settling the house the first thing to be done is to clean the dwelling thoroughly before a single article is moved into it. A mere broom cleaning will not suffice; still less the assurance of the landlord that the house was left in perfect condition by the last tenants. It must first be swept from top to bottom, and then the pail and scrubbing-brush must have their turn. The walls must be wiped off, the cornices dusted, the blinds brushed, and windows washed, the paint and marble scoured, and not a crack or crevice in a closet shelf suffered to escape uncleaned. The windows should then be left open, that the wind and sun may do their part in purifying and sweetening.

The house clean and dry, the carpets next make their appearance. It is taken for granted that plumbers, paperers, and painters are all out of the house before the family begins to move in. The floor cover-

ings in the bed-chambers and living-rooms should be laid first, while those for the halls and stairs must be left until all the furniture has been carried in, and the tramping feet of workmen and movers have departed. The carpets are softened and wear saved them by first spreading the boards either with newspapers or the heavy paper felting that comes for this purpose. This should be secured in place by a few tacks. Cushions or pads for the stairs are admirable, and make the carpet last nearly twice as long. Unless the new settlers have a goodly stock of experience, or live in towns where carpet-fitters are unknown, it is not judicious for them to attempt to put down their nice carpets themselves. The business of cutting, fitting, and sewing them is very hard work to unaccustomed fingers, and is apt to produce unsatisfactory results in the line of stretched and misshaped carpets, to say nothing of bruised and blackened hands and weary spines.

The work of making and laying an entirely



new carpet should always be given into the hands of professionals. The charges for such labor are not large, and the efforts of amateurs in this direction are apt to prove more expensive in the long-run.

With mattings the case is somewhat different. Here there is no sewing to be done, beyond a little binding of raw edges and corners, and the cutting is not difficult, nor, after a little practice, is the stretching and smoothing of the breadths a hard matter.

Apropos of carpets, a word of warning may not be amiss. Under no circumstances should a carpet and border be put down separately. The whole carpet should be shaped and made, and the border *sewed* on before it is laid. Some carpet men, especially if the room be irregular in shape, make a stout struggle to be allowed to sew and put down the carpet first, and then tack the border around the edge. It lessens their labor, and increases that of the housewife when she has to take her carpet up to be beaten and cleaned.

The floor-coverings disposed of, the window-shades must next be hung, and then the heavy pieces of furniture moved in. The prospective residents are fortunate when they can themselves delay entering until everything is in perfect order. But at least they should not fail to wait until this stage of the proceedings. Let some clear-headed person superintend the bringing in and placing of the different articles, and see that each piece of furniture is put in the room where it belongs, thus avoiding the confusion of finding the parlor sofa in the third story and a bed set up in the dining-room.

The furniture should be placed in each apartment as nearly as possible in the order in which it must remain. A little care can accomplish this, and the trouble of pulling all to pieces and reorganizing saved. If the different articles are done up in sacking and excelsior, they should be stripped of their wrappings outside of the house. Enough of the jute will be tramped into the carpet in

any event to make the housekeeper's life a burden to her for days to come.

The furniture should all be arranged, the glasses screwed to the bureaus, the marble slabs in place, and the beds put up, before any attempt is made to unpack smaller articles. The purely ornamental should be neglected until the useful is in perfect order. Clothing should be taken from trunks and boxes, and hung in the closets or laid in the drawers. When possible, nothing should be laid down except where it is to remain. Work is doubled by placing a thing in a spot from which it will have to be removed in two or three days.

The china and glass and the kitchen utensils come next in order. These should be unpacked in a room with a bare floor, to prevent the bits of straw from getting scattered over the carpets. Each piece should be carefully wiped before it goes to its corner on the shelf, and those things that need washing set aside in a place by themselves until a pan of

hot water is attainable. Put away nothing that is not clean enough to use when needed. This course may seem tedious at the time, but it will save trouble later. Dusty dishes mean dusty shelves, if the crockery is not clean when stored, and the whole china closet will have to be scrubbed again before the house is fairly settled.

In the kitchen the supervision must be even closer. Saucepans, kettles, spiders, and tins must be immaculate within and without. Nails and hooks must be driven to hang these on, and a place chosen for each.

The task of unpacking, dusting, and shelving the books should be delegated to some one who thoroughly understands the order in which these should be arranged. This is not an easy piece of work, nor is it one that can be committed to hirelings. The hanging of the pictures and the disposition of the bric-à-brac come under the charge of the mistress, as does the putting up of curtains and the arrangement of draperies about the rooms:

All such work as this can be accomplished quite as well after the family is established in its new abode. More important is the stowing away of the bed and table linen in its appropriate quarters, and the laying in of provisions in the kitchen. The stock groceries—flour, meal, sugar, tea, coffee, soap—and other staples may be procured in large quantities, and should all be purchased and stored before housekeeping begins. The fuel should also be in its place, both range and furnace coal, and wood large and small. It is best to have the coal put in before the furniture is moved, or even, when such a course is practicable, before the house is cleaned, that the black dust may be avoided.

The house-mistress may now consider herself fairly settled. The empty trunks and boxes may be taken to the garret, the broken packing-cases relegated to the cellar or wood-shed, to be split up and used as kindling. The house, clean as it was when the moving began, will need at least one

sweeping, possibly two, after the furniture is brought in, before it is presentable.

Even with new household goods a lumber-room or closet will be needed almost immediately, where spare articles of furniture, wearing apparel, etc., may be left until called for.

With all the good-will and strenuous effort that can be put forth, the housekeeper will find plenty to keep her hands busy for long after everything appears to the casual observer to be in perfect order. There will be mantel lambrequins to be made and hung, a chair to be cushioned, a picture-frame to be draped. But all these are minor matters. The great business of moving in and putting to rights is virtually accomplished, and the queen of the household begins her reign in earnest.

## V.

### ENGAGING A MAID.

THE novice in housekeeping has little dread of the "servant question." The warnings and laments of other mistresses she receives with several grains of salt, and although she may restrain an audible expression of her opinion, she cherishes a firm conviction that in domestic turmoils the employer is usually responsible for at least half the trouble.

A little experience generally suffices to work a change in her views. Starting with the theory that her interests and those of her maid are identical, she is often brought up "all standing," as it were, by the discovery that she is the only one of the new partnership who holds this view. To quote the words of a bright little woman under similar

circumstances, "the reciprocity is all on one side." At the best, neutrality is about all that can be hoped for. It is a rooted opinion in the minds of the majority of the so-called working classes that those above them in wealth and social position are hostile to them, and that the weaker ones must protect themselves or be imposed upon.

It is useless to condemn this state of affairs. One must deal with life as it is, and not as it should be. Since the more generous method of mutual benefit is declined, all that remains is to place the relation of employer and employed upon a simple business basis. It is to the advantage of one as much as of the other that wages, privileges, and duties should be clearly understood from the start. Nothing should be left to be taken for granted and produce complications at a later day. This is especially necessary where only one maid is employed.

The prices paid for trained domestics differ widely in different sections of the country.



In Colorado and other of our Western States thirty or forty dollars a month is hardly enough to secure a tolerable general housework servant. On the other hand, in many of the Southern States, six to eight dollars will procure the services of a maid-of-all-work. In the Middle States and New England wages are between the two, and vary according to the competence of the help and the difficulty in obtaining it. The average price is from twelve to fourteen dollars a month. For this the "girl" must do the cooking, sweeping, cleaning, part of the chamber and dining-room work, and usually all, or a portion of the washing and ironing.

Her privileges are generally rather liberal. She must have, if a Romanist, early mass on Sunday morning, and frequently claims all that afternoon and evening as well. She must have also one evening in the week. Many general housework maids consider they have a right to go out whenever their

work is done. On all such matters the mistress must have a clear understanding at the outset.

The matter of references demands close attention. No housekeeper should engage a maid on an ordinary written recommendation without first inquiring into particulars from her former employer, either personally or by letter. Forged references are not uncommon, and the powers for mischief given to an incompetent or dishonest servant are too great to be trifled with.

The routine of her daily duties must be made for the new servant by the mistress. Early rising is essential for the maid in the family where but one is employed. She must be up in season not only to make the fire in the range and set the kettle boiling, but she must allow time after this is done to brush the hall and steps, and arrange the breakfast table, besides preparing the food to be served upon it. The mistress may lend substantial aid here by a little consideration.

The labor of getting breakfast is reduced by having the food simply prepared, and reserving elaborate dishes for later meals. If potatoes are to be served, they should have been washed the night before, so that the task of getting them ready for cooking may be easily performed. The oatmeal should have been put to soak overnight, the table set, and everything else placed in readiness. It is a quick matter then to mix and bake biscuit or muffins, fry bacon, boil or poach eggs, and make tea or coffee.

The breakfast on the table, the maid may withdraw to the kitchen, get that in order, and then go about the up-stairs work. As a rule, the families that keep only one servant attend to their own bedrooms; but the maid is usually expected to do such work as emptying dirty water, and filling pitchers and ewers with fresh, and she is sometimes required to make the beds also, although not to dust the chambers or put them to rights. Her own breakfast follows. Then comes the

washing of the silver, glass, and china used in the dining-room, the brushing up of the floor, the dusting the room, and setting the table for the next meal.

When this is all done and the kitchen made neat, the maid should be allowed half an hour in which to get her own room in thorough order. This is often neglected, and the servant's room permitted to become an unsavory corner of which the mistress cannot think without a shudder. One woman always insisted that the door of the maid's apartment should be left open, that its state might be apparent at a glance. Some housewives make a daily visit of inspection to this as to all other parts of the house. If the maid is given half an hour each day for the task, there is no reason why her chamber should not be as well kept, the carpet as free from lint and dust, the bed as trimly made, the washstand and bureau as tidy, as in the best room in the house.

In the well-regulated home, each day has

its appropriate duties. Monday and Tuesday are, of course, sacred to washing and ironing. Wednesday is given to the finishing of the latter, and the cleaning of the kitchen and pantries. Thursday the silver must be polished, windows wiped off, etc. Friday, by general consent, is sweeping day, and Saturday is devoted to baking, cake-making, and preparations for the Sabbath. Where all this is thoroughly understood, the household machinery will move with comparatively little friction.

The preparation of lunch or dinner necessarily breaks in upon the morning's work. When only one servant is kept, no fancy cooking is expected, and the arrangement of desserts, entrées, etc., devolves upon members of the family.

Nor is regular waiting at table looked for. The courses must be changed by the maid, however, and this can easily be accomplished with very little extra work. The family enter the room when dinner has been announced

and find the soup already on the table. This eaten, the bell is rung; the maid appears in neat cap and apron, the soup is removed, and the course of meat and vegetables served. These, too, are in turn carried out by the maid, who then removes everything except glasses, water-bottles, napkin-rings, etc., crumbs the table-cloth, and brings in the dessert. With this her duties end, unless she may be summoned to supply some article not on the table.

On such days as there are washing and ironing to do, or a piece of heavy cleaning on hand, the family not only wait on themselves at meals, but also do part of the cooking, wash the dishes, and do the chamber work. There are not a few who take part in the ironing as well. The pastry and cake making is usually assumed by the mother or daughters, while no dusting or care of bedrooms at night is asked of the maid.

Taken altogether, the place of maid-of-all-work, or general housework servant, is not

the hardest in the world. Many women prefer it to any other branch of service, as allowing them an independence and freedom from interference that is not possible where two or three servants are employed. When proper consideration and readiness to accommodate are manifested by the family, the maid is not too closely confined, and has her fair share of afternoons and evenings out. In such a position, briskness and tidiness are indispensable qualities. The servant must not only do her work carefully and well, keeping her own domain in perfect order, but she must be neat of person, that she may be in trim to attend the door and wait on the table without being obliged to make first an elaborate toilette. She should wear wash dresses, as these are more easily cleaned, and are less apt to retain the odors of cookery than are woollen garments.

The habit of calling from the top to the bottom of the house is sometimes permitted when only one servant is kept. It should

never be allowed. It produces a most disagreeable impression upon a visitor to have her name announced in a shout to the upper regions from the foot of the stairs. Speaking-tubes are most desirable, but when they are out of the question a bell can almost always be arranged which will notify the family of the arrival of visitors, or will serve to call the maid, if her presence is desired above-stairs. American voices have sufficient reputation for loudness and shrillness already, without increasing these unpleasant tendencies by screaming orders up or down a couple of flights of stairs.



## VI.

### MONEY AND HUSBANDS.

PUTTING aside such deep grievances as marital infidelity, intemperance, and an ungovernable temper, financial matters may be said to be provocative of more domestic unhappiness than any other one cause. There is doubtless something fundamentally wrong in the training of men and women upon this point. It is unexplainable why a wife should feel like a beneficiary soliciting alms when she asks even a generous husband for the money for necessary household expenses. That, in nine cases out of ten, this is her sensation will not be denied by the majority of married women. There may be a few who are fortunate in being less sensitive than the rest, to whom these feelings are unknown, but such exceptions are few and far between.

Viewed dispassionately, such a state of affairs is undeniably absurd. It is not worth while here to go over the time-honored arguments proving that the wife saves as much as the husband earns; that her exertions in running his house, caring for his children, and keeping his clothes in order are certainly equivalent in value to the food she eats and the garments she wears; that the cost of supporting a family was assumed at his solicitation, and was not her independent choice. All these facts are too well known to require elaboration. But no matter how firmly convinced of their force a woman may be, they avail her nothing when she is chafing under the weight of the idea that her husband considers her expenditure of his money extravagant, or even careless.

There are not a few men who hold the belief, secret or expressed, that they could manage their households more economically than do their wives. Still, in spite of the many instances of parsimonious and fault-finding

husbands, there is a goodly number who feel thorough confidence in their wives' ability as domestic financiers, and do not hesitate to say that under such judicious supervision their incomes go twice as far as they did in their bachelor days, and far more satisfactorily. Even in these cases there is something peculiarly repugnant to a woman in having to ask her husband for money. A man may not appreciate this feeling, but he will save his wife untold discomfort if he will consent to recognize it. Let him humor it as a weakness if he will, but yet yield to it so far as to spare her the penance of coming to him each week for the amount of the household expenses.

When the husband and wife begin life as householders they should have a clear understanding of what it will cost. A certain proportion of their revenue should be appropriated for house - rent, another for clothing, others for food, fuel, gas, insurance, servants' hire, etc. Several of these divisions could

be comprised under one general head as housekeeping expenses, and their management intrusted to the wife, while the husband assumes others. Each week or month, as may be agreed upon between them, the husband should, *unsolicited*, hand over to his wife the sum they decided upon as the fitting one to be devoted to the expenses in her charge. Of this he should ask no account. Let there be no half-way measures. Either he can trust his wife or he cannot. If not, he would be wiser to keep everything in his own hands; but if he goes through the form of reposing confidence in her, do not let him render it an empty show by requiring a return of every penny expended. A man would scarcely relish such an examination into his personal accounts even if he received his entire fortune from his wife—perhaps all the less were such the case. If a woman is conscientious in her disposition of her husband's funds—and most women are—she will be only too jealous for his welfare. She

is more apt to stint herself, and supply deficiencies in the household department from her own purse, than to clip home expenses to save a little for her own dress or amusement.

The general division in homes where the allowance principle prevails gives to the wife a fixed sum weekly, from which she is to pay her grocer's, vegetable, and meat merchants' bills, and her servants' hire, including washing and ironing and any extra work she may have done. Sometimes she pays also for gas, wood, and coal, and even the house rent, although this last is usually considered to come more properly within the husband's province. To him pertain also the bills for medical attendance, pew rent, life and fire insurance, repairs to the house and its contents, new goods of any kind, such as carpets, furniture, etc. The private expenses of each for clothing, travelling, cigars, caramels, and similar matters are better embraced in a separate category.

It is almost impossible to lay down a general rule that will serve for particular cases as to the proportion of money to be spent on each branch of the household. It may at least be said that not more than one quarter should be given to food, not more than one eighth to service, and about the same amount to fuel and lights. This disposes of one half of the receipts without touching many other inevitable outlays, including house rent and clothing. The questions of domestic finance require clear and close thinking, and are none the less important because they have to do with petty amounts.

In the course of making a satisfactory business of housekeeping the feminine head of the establishment will meet with many discouragements, and will have to learn her wisdom through unpleasant and often costly experience. If she is a sensible woman, her household bills will diminish rather than increase, until they reach an average from which she need not waver while her family

remains the same size. Entertaining company raises the amounts alarmingly. She must make her choice as to the remunerative qualities of hospitality, and having decided the matter, reject the extra weight, or else shoulder it, not only uncomplainingly, but cheerfully.

The young housekeeper should avoid the temptation to spend money too freely upon her house. It is a hard struggle sometimes not to buy this or that trifle that would add to the beauty and comfort of the little home, but while the refusal to acquire it often brings a sharp pang, its purchase may result in regrets of a more serious character. An excellent rule for people with limited means is to buy nothing for which they are unable to pay cash. Anticipating money is a sorry business. With judgment and economy the housekeeper can generally save a small sum from her weekly allowance. A quarter here, a half-dollar there, a dime perhaps in another place, may seem almost too unimportant to

lay aside, but the aggregate proves very useful occasionally. "Despise not the day of small things," is a motto which should be learned and put into practice by every housekeeper. Such savings should be kept for any additions to her household belongings that she may desire to make, and not thrown into the general fund. No one has a right to say what shall be done with such sums if not she who has earned them by her economy as truly as does her husband his savings by his labor.

The duty of laying aside a fixed amount every year has been enlarged upon by many writers on household topics. This is far more easily said than done. Bills come in that must be paid, new articles are needed for the house, a pleasure-trip is planned, and the sum mentally reserved for future needs is swallowed up by the present emergency. There are some people who are sufficiently strong-minded to refuse to touch their savings except at the last extremity, but such a



pitch of self-control is unusual. The habit of dipping into the hoard devoted to special occasions is readily acquired, and when it is once done, succeeding drains come of themselves.

The best plan to be followed by those who lack confidence in their ability to resist temptation is to put the proportion they wish to save from their income where they cannot get at it. Money deposited in the bank is easily drawn thence, but if it is invested in shares of a safe stock, or locked up in an endowment or life-insurance policy, it is apt to remain there.

The saving of money is more than advisable; it should be felt as an obligation by married people to one another and to their children. Financial crashes are too common in America for the wise man to run the risk of leaving his family unprovided for. The living up to the full extent of one's income is a course of foolhardiness—to use no harsher word—that should be shunned by men and women of common-sense.

## VII.

### MONDAY.

THE proverb that the morning hour has gold in its mouth justifies itself more thoroughly on Monday than on any other day in the week. The necessary "messiness" that accompanies washing-day in even the best-regulated households renders the mistress anxious to get the sound of the scrubbing and the steam of the suds out of the way as speedily as possible.

To this end the family are usually summoned to an earlier breakfast than is their wont. The advantages of this plan are manifold. Sunday's rest should have prepared the members of the household for a willing resumption of every-day duties, while at the same time it has probably allowed little tasks to accumulate. If there are children

in the house, their lessons generally need to be glanced over before school, and the elders are glad of the additional half-hour that means so much more than at any other time in the day. "If I lose fifteen minutes in the morning, I chase after it all day and never catch it," said a brisk housekeeper, whose friends marvelled how she managed to accomplish so much. It is really no harder to rise at seven than at half-past, and the moments thus gained seem to double themselves before nightfall.

The breakfast should be a simple one that will not detain the maid too long from the tubs, and will allow her to pick over the clothes and put them in soak before she has to serve the meal. Many mistresses prefer having this part of the work done overnight. It undoubtedly makes the washing easier, as less rubbing is required where the garments have been well soaked, but the choice of thus beginning her laundry-work Sunday evening or postponing the added labors until

Monday morning should be left to the maid. It is demanding a good deal to insist that part of the prized "evening out" should be spent in this occupation. If the clothes are not put into the water until the morning, a little household ammonia should be poured in with them to "loosen the dirt."

The mistress's eye is needed here, as everywhere else in the house. The crispness and freshness that characterize properly laundered garments are so largely contingent upon these preliminaries that too close care can hardly be paid to them. The sorting should be carefully done. Unless the mistress is fully satisfied of the maid's skill and discretion she should have the task performed under her own direction for a few weeks, until the *modus operandi* is thoroughly mastered.

The fine clothes should be laid aside to be attended to after the fine flannels have been washed. The nicer white pieces may be put through the second water from the flannels.

After this come colored flannels, bed-linen, etc., and, last of all, the coarser pieces.

Soap should never be rubbed on flannels, but they should be washed in warm suds, and rinsed in water of the same temperature as that in which they were washed. A little bluing in the second water will improve their color. They should be hung out at once, dried in the shade, and, if possible, ironed while still damp. Flannels thus treated will never become stiff and yellow, but will retain the color and texture of new goods. Where there are fine baby flannels it is well to have a special time for washing them, so that they may be ironed before they are quite dry without interrupting the general wash.

The flannels out of the way, the fine white clothes follow. The best authorities claim that there is no virtue in long boiling, but that it is sufficient if the clothes are put over the fire in cold water, brought to a boil, and then taken off. Starch first those pieces

which need most stiffness, adding a small lump of spermaceti or a full teaspoonful of lard to a half-gallon of starch. Some housewives advocate a little kerosene for imparting a good gloss. The odor disappears with the ironing. A little borax is beneficial in the starch and in the water for washing. Household ammonia is also a great help in cleansing the garments.

In sorting the clothes the housekeeper should be on the alert for stains and worn places. Soap sets stains that could have been extracted before washing. Oil should be washed out in cold water, ink stains dipped in sweet milk. If this fails, lemon juice may accomplish the work; but should even this prove of no avail, a few drops of chlorinated soda will do the work in no time. This chemical is invaluable in removing ink from white cotton or linen goods. It does not injure the fabric, and obliterates all traces of the stain. Its effect upon colored goods or silk is disastrous, however, as it

takes the color out of the one and eats up the other. The bottle should never be left in the kitchen, but kept under lock and key, as it is a deadly poison. Many fruit stains may be removed by immersing the disfigured part in boiling water. Paint marks may be taken out by turpentine. Mildew is rather obstinate, as are iron rust and grass stains; but Javelle water will sometimes obliterate them when everything else fails. Oxalic acid, diluted, or lemon juice, are often more efficacious than even the Javelle water. Claret stains should, while wet, have dry salt spread upon them, and afterwards be dipped in boiling water.

Worn spots should be watched for in sorting the bed and table linen. A patch or darn skilfully applied will be almost unnoticeable after the mended article has been done up. The repairing of soiled body-linen is not pleasant work, and most housewives prefer postponing this part of the mending until the clothes come up from the wash.

A little attention to the laundry appurtenances will sometimes lessen this task. Numbers of the worst rents in clothing are caused in the wash, and might be averted by an occasional inspection of wash-board, tubs, and wringers. A splinter of wood, a projecting nail, a loose corner of the zinc of a wash-board, will produce a rent that it will require hours to repair.

Another source of accidents is found in the carelessness with which clothes are taken from the line in winter. A hasty jerk to a garment that is frozen to the line often results in an ugly tear. This is especially likely to happen with heavy pieces, such as sheets and table-cloths, and these are just the ones that are the hardest to mend neatly, and in which a hole is most apparent, no matter how smoothly it may have been darned or patched. There should be no iron-work used about laundry appliances in such a way that the clothes will come in contact with it, and the maid should be



warned not to hang wet articles on the nails or hooks to which the line is attached.

Even where a mistress is able to engage an experienced laundress she should know how the washing is being conducted. This is even more desirable where there is a "general housework girl," who is apt to resort to ways and means to save work or to conceal her own shortcomings. Washing soda should be vetoed in laundry work. It is an excellent thing in its place, but that is not the wash-tub. It undoubtedly takes out dirt, but it ruins the goods. A large proportion of washerwomen use it, some of them going so far as to bring it with them for service in families where its use is not permitted. If it does not declare itself by its odor, its presence soon becomes manifest in the tiny holes that appear all over the garments. Far better economy is shown by not allowing clothing to get very dirty before washing. Hard scrubbing wears out linen much more rapidly than frequent

washing when such vigorous handling is not needed.

Another artifice sometimes resorted to by the lazy laundress is an extravagance in bluing. By means of this the dirt is disguised and labor saved. In all these matters the housekeeper must be constantly on the alert. The quality of soap and starch has its share in making the clothes look well. In buying soap it is well to purchase a large quantity and spread it out in a dry place—on the attic floor or upper shelf of a closet: exposure to the air dries and improves it. Old soap lasts much longer than new. A good quality of starch stiffens better than a cheap one. The best brands in both these wares can be ascertained by experiment, taking care always to deal with a reliable firm.

The doors leading from the laundry to the rest of the house should be kept closed as much as possible on Monday, that the unmistakable steam odor of the tubs may not fill the house, bearing with it the suggestions

of discomfort inseparably connected in the popular mind with wash-day. Monday is a hard day at the best, and the housekeeper can lighten it for her servant by taking a share in the housework, looking after the bedrooms, washing the dishes, and attending the door. The maid should not be called from her tubs except when it is absolutely necessary. Only plain cooking should be demanded. A little foresight on Saturday will generally provide a Monday's dessert, and in most homes the washing is well out of the way by the latter part of the afternoon.

## VIII.

### TUESDAY.

TUESDAY morning brings another early start. The week's ironing, although more tedious, and in some respects more wearying work than the washing, is yet less formidable in being less disagreeable. It is, at all events, a drier task, and the maid can look neat while she is doing it—an end difficult of attainment when she must be up to her elbows in suds. Still, with a long and fatiguing day before her, it is wisdom and kindness both for the mistress to lend a hand again in the preparation of the breakfast and the necessary household duties. The maid should, however, hold herself in readiness to attend the door. She can iron as well in a trim calico dress as in the shabby garb some seem to feel it incumbent upon them to adopt

at such times, and her cap and white apron should be at hand where they can be slipped on at an instant's notice.

Unless there is a very large washing and ironing, the maid should be expected to do the plain cooking, although no "fussy" dishes should be required when these tasks are in progress. Tuesday is an excellent time for the mistress to display her skill in the manufacture of appetizing *entrées* and tempting side-dishes. More than one housewife selects ironing-day for experiments in fancy cookery, and makes the meal that is often dreaded as a "pick-up" lunch the daintiest repast of the week. Fruit is always an excellent dessert for Tuesday. Fried food should not be prepared while ironing is going on in the same room, if it is possible to avoid it. The odor of the fat is apt to cling to the clean clothes, and the smell of cold grease is always unpleasant. If frying must be done, the clothes-horse should be carried into another room, and not returned until the kitchen has been well aired.

The clean clothes should, of course, have been dampened down the night before. In doing this the plain pieces should be sprinkled first, using either the hand dipped in a bowl of tepid water or a regular clothes-sprinkler. The latter does the work more evenly and easily. Sort the pieces, folding those of a kind together, as the napkins, towels, etc., rolling each bundle tightly. Pack them in a clothes-basket, laying the dampened and folded starched garments above, and over all spreading the folded sheets to keep in the moisture. In the morning put aside the sheets, and begin with the starched pieces first. This is contrary to the custom of many laundresses, who lead off with handkerchiefs, pillow-cases, napkins, and the like, leaving those articles which demand more strength and pains until they have begun to be weary. In the majority of houses, collars, cuffs, and shirts are sent out to the Troy or Chinese laundries, and the chief test of a laundress's efficiency, her skill in ironing a

shirt, is thus escaped. In those houses where all the laundry-work is done in the house it is better to begin with the shirts, etc., giving to them the first and best efforts of the day. Shirt-irons are sold that are preferred by those who wish to produce a polished surface. They are rather heavier than the ordinary flat-iron, and have a steel finish on the bottom.

The irons must never be allowed to become red-hot, as this roughens them.

The shirts and collars out of the way, the other starched clothes come next. Gingham and calico dresses should be ironed on the wrong side to produce the lustreless effect seen in the new material before it has been laundried. Black stockings should be smoothed on the wrong side with a cool iron. For use on skirts, especially those of dresses, there is manufactured a rather narrow iron with a sharp point that will run up between the gathers. After the fine starched garments follow the table-linen and bed-linen, and so on with the smaller plain pieces. In

large families where there are many sheets and towels, time and labor may be saved by the purchase of a mangle. This machine, immortalized by its connection with Sloppy and with Mr. Mantalini, is really a useful contrivance. While it will hardly answer for most body-clothing, it does very well for bed-linen, towels, etc., and also for under-flannels, stockings, and handkerchiefs. The question of what shall be ironed and what shall not is often a serious question to a busy house-mistress. Some of these go so far as to urge using the sheets rough-dry sooner than take the time for smoothing them from other pressing duties. "Something must be crowded out," they plead, and that it is better to use unironed sheets than to neglect other household cares. This is a point each must decide for herself. Smooth sheets are undoubtedly pleasanter than rough ones, and the mangle would seem to furnish a solution of the difficulty. Where one of these is unattainable, sheets and towels can be pressed



into comparative smoothness by loosening the screws of the wringer and passing the linen through this. Reliable authorities claim that, in the interests of health, it is better that under-flannels, stockings, and babies' napkins should not be ironed. However this may be, when these pieces have been carefully folded into shape and smoothness, the passage of an iron over them adds little to their appearance before they are worn, and nothing to their comfort in wearing. Knitted under-clothing should never be ironed, but stretched to the proper shape and pinned on a bed or other firm, clean surface until entirely dry.

Care of what may be called the machinery to be used in ironing can hardly be too strenuously dwelt upon. When not in service the ironing blanket and sheet should be neatly folded and laid where they will not gather dust. It is better to purchase stout unbleached muslin for the ironing sheet than to use an old bed sheet that will give

way in a few weeks. A cheap gray blanket may be purchased for ironing. The irons should not be left where floating dust and specks of soot or grease may settle upon them to leave their mark on the clothes on the next ironing day, but kept in a closet or drawer. In passing, it may be said that equal care should be exercised with the utensils for washing. Tubs and boards should be wiped dry Monday evening, and, troublesome as it may seem, the clothes-line should be taken down each week instead of being left out to rot and blacken in the sun. The clothes-pins should not be kept where they will get dirty and leave stains upon the garments they fasten. That useful contrivance, a clothes-pin apron, should have a place in every laundry. If possible, a box, a press, or a drawer should be set apart in which to keep clothes-pins and line, sprinkler, irons, ironing blanket and sheet, and fluting-iron, when not in use.

The fluting machines are so much cheaper

now than when they were first introduced that there is no reason why any family should be without one. Where there is children's clothing to be done up, one is almost indispensable. Another "must-have" for the laundry is a large cover of cheese-cloth or mosquito netting—the former is preferable—to throw over the freshly ironed clothes as they hang on the horse. It shelters them from damp and dust, and in summer is absolutely necessary to prevent fly-specks.

It is a rather melancholy reflection that one third of the working-time allotted to us should be spent in achieving cleanliness. The most practised and practical housewife will draw a long sigh of relief when the first two days of the week are well past, and the freshly washed and ironed garments are up-stairs. In some households the work must perforce run over into Wednesday. A little forethought on the part of members of the family may often lessen the labors of the laundress. If one does not share the opinion of the man

who thought any fellow must be pretty dirty who was obliged to change his clothing as often as every week, one may at least be pardoned for speculating upon the ideal of cleanliness that moves a man to don a fresh shirt every day. Yet there are not a few men whose weekly average is six shirts; nor are these of the classes who pursue occupations that are heating and begriming, but more generally men of sedentary habits. This question is, however, supposed to be beyond the reach of the average woman's mind, and far be it from her to sow discord in families by attempting to place a limit upon the clean linen worn by the men of the house. Let it only be mildly urged that in such cases some of the shirts would better be sent to a laundry. Women are often thoughtless in this regard. One young married woman wondered that she had difficulty in keeping a cook and laundress. Upon inquiry it came out that she frequently had fifteen white skirts in the weekly wash. This is not neatness, but

- ridiculous waste. There is no meanness, but only common-sense, in keeping watch over the children that they do not soil dresses and under-clothing unnecessarily. Prudence also dictates an avoidance of elaborate trimming for under-garments. Fine tucks, simple edgings, and plain ruffles take half the time that is consumed over puffings, delicate laces, and double ruchings that must receive the utmost care to look even tolerably neat.

## IX.

### WEDNESDAY.

THE first thing to be done on Wednesday morning is to remove all trace of the business of the two preceding days. The washboards, tubs, and wringer should have been out of the way before this, and if the press of work on Tuesday left no time to take in the clothes-line, it should come down now. The ironing-board, blankets, etc., may be put out of sight, and the little duties that have been crowded out in the hurry of Monday and Tuesday be resumed.

In a family where there is a large corps of domestics the household machinery may have run as smoothly as though laundry-work were unknown. But in the average American family, where but one maid is employed, it is hard not to overlook a few

lapses from regularity on Monday and Tuesday. The use of a carpet-sweeper or of a dust-pan and brush to remove footprints or scraps, when at another time a thorough sweeping would be deemed necessary, the shutting one's eyes to a dingy window or unpolished brasses, may be pardonable on such days, if ever. But with the relief from pressure that comes with Tuesday night the little slights that seemed excusable in the midst of other occupations loom up as shocking negligences, and the first impulse of Wednesday morning is to repair them. The kitchen looks as though it needed the touch of a broom, now that tubs and tables are set back out of the way. The halls and stairs must have a systematic sweeping and dusting, and the rest of the house receive its share of attention.

There is no desire to intimate by this that the usual routine of the house should be neglected, or that tidiness should be subordinated to the endeavor to get the laundry-

work out of the way. Still, unless the mistress resigns herself to a large amount of extra exertion on Monday and Tuesday, she can hardly fail to see trifling deficiencies in the condition of the various rooms, though they may not be apparent to other eyes than her own, that are accustomed to be on the lookout for marks of neglect.

General consent has converted Friday into sweeping day. What many wise housekeepers endorse and practise must surely have its foundation in common-sense; but there are also advantages in dividing this branch of domestic service. When part of the sweeping is done on some other day it secures the comfort of a moiety of the house on Friday, and guards against every room being in a state of disagreeableness at once. On Wednesday the sitting-room may be swept, and one or two bed-chambers, if this is practicable. Wednesday, too, is the best day in the week for washing windows; that is, if the weather permits. The labor is al-



most thrown away if it is performed when a whirl of dust is blowing, or where the windows are in the full blaze of the sun. Cloudy skies are preferable.

In cleaning windows the first step is to give them a thorough brushing that will dislodge the dust from sashes, ledges, and chinks. A small whisk-broom is the best for this office, and it should also be used on the outside and inside blinds. Whatever is left on the former will be beaten off on the panes by the next rain, spotting and streaking them, while the dust from the inner shutters can hardly fail to settle on the glass. The brushing having been vigorously done, wipe off the windows with a dry cloth, rubbing them well. Wash the sills and wood-work with a cloth dipped in warm water, and bring a fresh supply before beginning to wash the glass. Never use soap on windows, under penalty of making them cloudy. A little borax, pearline, or household ammonia may be added to the warm water. Choose old

rag that are not linty, in order to avoid white specks on the panes.

Wring the cloths out before applying them. Nothing is gained by flooding the windows until the water runs down them in streams, except the pleasure of wiping them off again, at the cost of double time and labor. If a hose can be played against the outside, or the water dashed on in pailfuls, it cleanses nicely, but when the glass is to be wiped off, the less water employed the better. There are housewives who boast that they can wash every window in a house with the contents of a small bottle of water, moistening the cloth from time to time. Such economy is hardly advisable, but if the panes are wiped with proper thoroughness before they are wet, a basin of water will do the work as well as a barrellful. When this method is pursued, the wet cloth should be followed *instantly* by a clean dry one. Otherwise streaks are prone to appear.

The best window rags are made of worn-

out flannel underwear, torn into pieces of suitable size. These should not be thrown away after one service. To the young house-keeper old cloths, whether linen, cotton, or flannel, are invaluable. Many a one would cheerfully echo the cry, "New lamps for old," of the peddler in the tale of Aladdin, and exchange some of her new finery and fresh napery for the soft old rags that are necessary in housekeeping. Those who are so unfortunate as to lack a mother's store-room to fall back upon in such emergencies find unbleached cheese-cloth of the cheapest quality a boon. After one soaking it is soft enough to be used for window and floor cloths, dusters, mop-rags, and similar services. With the aid of this, one need not be forced to the extremity of the bride who used to beg her husband pathetically to make haste and wear out his clothes, and who was finally reduced to purchasing rags from the laundress who came to her every week.

An excellent substitute for cloths in window-washing is chamois-skin. The glass should be first wiped clean with a dry cloth. The chamois-skin must then be dipped in water, wrung out, and passed rapidly over the glass. A second wetting of the chamois follows; it is squeezed very dry, and again rubbed over the pane. This will dry almost immediately. Both water and chamois-skin must be clean, and the former should be renewed as it becomes clouded. A soft cloth moistened in alcohol and rubbed on the glass adds lustre to it. Rubbing with plate powder may perhaps produce a brilliant effect, but it entails extra work in the wiping off of the white dust that will fall from the cloth on the wood-work and carpet.

To polish glass, either in sashes or mirrors, nothing is better than soft tissue-paper. Where this cannot be procured, old newspapers, crumpled and rubbed limp, are the best substitute. Plenty of "elbow grease" is needed to render these effective, but the re-

sults repay the exertion. The blinds should be kept closed for a while after the windows are washed, especially if the sun's rays are likely to strike them, to prevent the glass becoming streaked.

Wednesday is a good time for looking after the state of the paint in the rooms that have been already swept, or in those where there is to be no sweeping the same week. Indeed, the doors will need daily attention even in homes where there are no children, while in the chambers from which little ones run back and forth constantly the task will sometimes have to be repeated every few hours. Our thrifty grandmothers avoided this expenditure of time and trouble by having the doors painted black above and below the latch, that the finger-marks, even if there, might not be visible. This custom has gone out of fashion, but the hard-wood finishings that are becoming more usual each year show the traces of dusty fingers less perceptibly than the white paint so long con-

sidered "the thing." In wiping the marks from paint, sapolio, scourene, or any such preparation may be used, but these or soap should be rubbed on a *flannel* dipped in hot water. If an ordinary cotton or linen rag is employed, the paint is apt to come off with the dirt. Household ammonia added to the water usually serves the purpose as well as soap, and even this should be used in moderation upon hard wood. The oiled surface is quickly impaired by alkalies, and the unpolished space around the door handle, while doubtless bearing triumphant testimony to the tidiness of mistress and maid, is yet a serious blemish upon the aspect of the room.

This is one of the best days in the week to invite company. If visitors are expected, this should be taken into account in the day's work, and that so disposed as not to conflict with the arrangements for the guests.

## X.

### THURSDAY.

THE work of polishing silver and looking over china and glass is in some households left undone until it becomes a dreaded task. The business is very simple if it is attended to each week and the silver *kept* bright, instead of waiting until it is so tarnished that one shrinks from the hard rubbing that must be used before it can resume its pristine lustre. A wiser plan is to set aside one day in the week for odds and ends, and Thursday is as good for this purpose as any other.

The first essential in cleaning silver is plenty of hot water. The pieces should be washed clean in almost boiling suds to begin with. Nor must the water be allowed to grow cold. If there is a butler's pantry it will be an easy matter to let off the cooled

suds and fill up with fresh hot water. If an ordinary dishpan is used, the tea-kettle must be kept constantly on the stove in readiness to replenish the pan. Best of all is the double dishpan, holding boiling water in both divisions, the one clear, the other suds. As each piece is drawn from the suds and rubbed with whiting, electro-silicon, or silver-soap, it may be dropped into the clearer water on the other side. When the dishpan is of the ordinary style the silver should be scoured piece by piece and placed unwiped on a waiter. All done, the dishpan should be filled anew with hot water, the contents of the tray emptied into this, and each piece rinsed off, wiped dry, and laid aside to await a final polishing with the chamois-skin. If the water has been hot, the cleaning properly done, and one piece taken from the water at a time, not all piled up to drain and cool before wiping, the finishing touches of chamois-skin or flannel will be a light matter.

These directions may sound like an in-



volved method of performing a simple task, but the proverb that the longest way around is the shortest way across is verified here. The silver cannot be made really bright without *hot* water and plenty of it. Care in this regard will save rubbing afterwards. Nor is it slower work to dry one piece at a time than it would be to let them drain until the chilled metal requires twice as much polishing to make it presentable. Muscle is demanded then in lieu of the quick touches that accomplish the work when it is done in the right way.

In nearly every family, besides the small silver that is in daily use, and the cake-baskets, pickle-jars, and pudding-dish stands that are in constant service, there are handsome solid articles, such as jelly-bowls, coffee-urn or teapot, cream-jugs, extra spoons and forks, etc. These are generally kept in the silver-trunk, and only emerge from their retreat upon grand occasions, or when company renders it necessary to supplement the usual

contents of the silver-box. Such treasures are at once the pride and plague of the house-keeper's heart. It is very delightful to be able to adorn her table with them, but it is an undoubted nuisance to have to spend half a day in making them presentable when guests are expected.

A simple expedient that should be better known will spare her much of this annoyance. Each article should be washed clean and rubbed bright after using, then wrapped closely in white tissue-paper of a special make, technically known as "grass-bleached, 682," and placed in a Canton-flannel bag, closing at the top with a drawing-string. If after this the bags are laid in a trunk or drawer, in a dry room or closet, they will appear weeks later as bright and fresh as when they were put away. The elegant plush and morocco cases, tempting as they are to the eye, are worthless in preserving the brilliancy of their contents. The homely Canton-flannel bags achieve this much better.

To avoid confusion, each bag should be plainly marked in indelible ink with the name of the object it holds. The time taken in marking will more than equal that lost in opening half a dozen pouches of the same size and shape in a hasty search for the after-dinner coffee-spoons or the extra cream-ladle. The Canton flannel used for these bags should be that which has been subjected to a more careful bleaching process than is bestowed upon the material usually sold in dry-goods shops. Both the tissue-paper and the flannel should be procured from a reliable silversmith.

There is wide difference of opinion as to the best material for cleaning silver. The whiting and plate-powder, it is alleged, remove the dirt or tarnish and a minute portion of the metal at the same time—a serious consideration in plated-ware, but of less importance in solid silver, where the infinitesimal amount lost is hardly discernible even after long service. In fact, nearly all the

preparations advertised for this purpose are made on the same basis—ground chalk disguised in various ways. The silver-soap sold a few years ago was good for a while, but has deteriorated of late. Electro-silicon is the most valuable preparation for cleaning silver, and is easily used. With all, the chamois-skin rubbing must finish the work.

The silver disposed of, the glass and china should have their share of attention. It is a good plan for the mistress to give half an hour every week to looking over and counting her possessions in these lines. Silver spoons have an unaccountable trick of straying out of ken, and constant vigilance is needed to keep track of them. Single pieces of china and glass are also addicted to mysterious disappearances. A regular day for taking an inventory of stock, to use a commercial phrase, not only encourages a maid in carefulness in handling fragile articles, but also renders it more probable that when breakages do occur they will be reported. It

is a great temptation to a maid to pass over an accident in silence when she knows that a broken article may not be missed for days, or perhaps for months. And the shock is keen to the mistress when she finally discovers the sum of her losses. Great was the distress of a rather careless young matron whose negligent security as to the well-being of her cherished crystal and porcelain was unshaken until she had occasion to require more tumblers than the three that usually sufficed for her small family. She had changed waitresses only the week before, and vexed at the stupidity of the new maid, who failed to find the glasses in the cupboard appropriated to them, the mistress sought them herself. Out of the dozen pretty cut-glass tumblers she had herself arranged on the shelf when she took possession of her new domain, there was but one intact besides the three on the table. Two others were badly cracked. After some search the fragments of the rest were discovered piled in a neat pyramid be-

hind some fruit-dishes that had served admirably as a place of concealment.

If the housewife has more china and crystal than she needs for daily use, she may select enough to answer for ordinary service and put the rest aside. The number to be counted is thus diminished, and a perfect set secured when she wishes to entertain.

Thursday is by general consent the maid's afternoon out. In the homes where a hot dinner is essential, and it is inexpedient to have tea one evening in the week, a special arrangement must be made by which the maid can prepare the evening meal. Where this order does not prevail, however, with forethought the supper may be so planned as to give only slight extra trouble. The noon repast should be served as promptly as possible, that the maid may finish her work early. She should wash the lunch-dishes, set the table for tea, put on coal, and leave the fire in such a state that the mistress will have no trouble in boiling the kettle when she

goes down to get tea ready. The housewife should make a study of dainty dishes for this night, taking pains to prevent the absence of the maid making itself observed in the *menu*. There are few things a man dislikes more than to perceive at once, by the food served him, that there is a deficiency in the culinary department. Jest as one may about the way to a man's heart lying down his throat, it must be conceded that it is not enlivening to any one to come home weary, after a hard day's work, and partake of a supper of cold bread, dry chipped beef, apple-sauce, and tea. The last item might be a saving clause to a woman, but not to a man. The wife should study little surprises and savory dishes that will make the maid's evening out a season to look forward to with pleasant anticipation rather than with dread. Even the clearing away and washing up afterwards may be converted into a frolic. If the dishes are left for the maid to wash next day (and there should be a clear understand-

ing on this point), the food must be removed, the crumbs brushed off, and the soiled articles scraped and neatly piled in the sink or dishpan.



## XI.

### FRIDAY.

THE columns of housekeeping magazines abound with directions how to sweep. Each one advocates a different plan of operations. There can be no excuse, it seems, for any ignorance as to how it should be done. In spite of all, there are not many who do it well, and there thus appears to be an opening for a few more words on the subject.

The fact that sweeping-day falls on Friday is in some homes a fresh proof of the unluckiness of that day. It dawns in trailing clouds of dust as the maid wields her broom in the halls, awakening the sleeper from his last nap by the scratch of the brush against the threshold of his door and the thump of the stick upon the panels. It sets in a halo of the same floating matter in the air as the

last particles of dirt are swept from the doorsteps, following the time-hallowed custom—which would be more honored in the breach than it is in the observance—of beginning at the top of the house and sweeping to the bottom.

For various reasons Friday is certainly the best day for doing the bulk of the week's sweeping. The house must be made clean as late in the week as possible before Sunday. Saturday has its own appropriate duties, which leave no room for general sweeping. Performing the work earlier in the week allows space for becoming dirty again before the Sabbath puts a temporary ban upon labor. Even taking into account the desirability of getting the house into the state of apple-pie order dear to the heart of the true housekeeper, there is yet no necessity for doing it in such a manner that the other inmates of the home feel that they would prefer dirt to cleanliness at such a price.

As has been previously suggested, some of

the bed-chambers may have had their sweeping earlier in the week. In this case that labor-saving machine, the carpet-sweeper, will probably pick up what threads and dust may have accumulated in these apartments during the last two or three days in shorter time and with less exertion than would be required were a broom employed. The system that should prevail in every part of a well-kept domicile must not be lacking in the business of sweeping. As far as possible the work should be done in the morning. If it must inevitably extend into the afternoon hours, reserve until then the rooms in the back of the house, and where visitors are not likely to penetrate. For producing thorough discomfort in the mind of a caller, there is nothing more to be commended than ushering her into a dismantled drawing-room, between rows of chairs and stacks of drapery lining the hall. Let one apartment always be in readiness to receive a chance guest, and have the drawing-room swept out of calling-hours.

Some exceptionally neat housewives insist upon their parlors receiving a complete cleaning once each week. Unless the drawing-room is also the family sitting-room, and is, as such, constantly occupied, this is hardly necessary. The room should be carefully dusted every morning, the floor gone over with a carpet-sweeper twice a week, and the regular sweeping, in which furniture, draperies, and bric-à-brac are removed, done once a fortnight.

To attempt this important task, the sweeper should array herself in appropriate garb. A rather short dress of some wash material, loosely fitting about the waist and sleeves so as to give the arms free play, a neat cap that will cover the hair entirely, easy shoes, and a pair of old gloves deprived of their fingertips, form a comfortable and sensible uniform. Thus equipped, the dust is not to be feared, and the exercise, as exhilarating under proper circumstances as any form of calisthenics, will be really enjoyed.

The preparation of the apartment for sweeping, and its restoration to order afterwards, take more time than is consumed in the actual broom-work. The bric-à-brac must be carefully dusted and put in a safe place, the movable furniture brushed and wiped off and carried from the room, and the larger pieces covered with sweeping-sheets made of unbleached cheese-cloth and kept for this service alone. The draperies must be unhooked from the rings, shaken out of the window, and brushed off with a whisk-broom. Small rugs must also be brushed and shaken. Doing all this at first is much better than postponing it until the sweeping is done. There will be quite enough to look after then without having another task to attend to when the weary reaction comes that usually follows vigorous exertion.

The room emptied as nearly as practicable, the sweeping begins. The length of the stroke taken by the broom is a matter of discussion that each worker usually settles

for herself by adopting the stroke that best suits her. A short, light sweep is to the writer's mind the easiest and most efficacious. The broom should be slightly moistened, and the carpet strewn with damp, *not* wet, tea leaves. If too moist they are apt to spot the carpet, especially if this is of a delicate color. Damp salt, bran, and bread-crumbs are also highly recommended to be sprinkled on floors in place of the tea leaves. The former two require rather harder brushing to get them out of the fibres of the carpet than do either the bread-crumbs or the tea leaves.

The dirt should be swept from the corners and sides towards the middle of the room. Care should be observed to leave no bits of lint or straw and no streaks of dust behind the broom that will oblige the sweeper to go over the floor again. The heap of fluff and dirt must be gathered up at once, carried out, and burned, guarding against its blowing off the pan in the transit from the parlor to the

place of cremation. If the day is gusty, the windows should either be kept entirely shut while the sweeping is in progress or only raised a couple of inches. At no time is it advisable to have them wide open. The doors must be closed. The dirt removed from the room, the windows may be raised their full height. While the dust is settling, the maid should go around the room with a small whisk-broom and dust-pan, making diligent inquisition into corners and the crevices between the carpet and the wall for such particles as may have escaped the broader sweep of the broom. This allows the dust to subside sufficiently to permit of the maid's continuing her work by brushing off the cornices, mouldings, and curtain rods with a Turk's-head brush attached to a long handle. Where one of these is not owned, a feather-duster on the end of a slender pole will answer the purpose.

Picture cords and frames must next be looked after, the cords being brushed off with

the duster, and the frames and glasses wiped with a soft cloth. The paint may then be washed as directed in the work outlined for Wednesday. Not only must the doors undergo this, but also the base-board, window-sashes and sills, and all other wood-work about the room. The window-panes and mirrors must be gone over with a cloth, and the mirrors polished. The marble of mantels and pier-tables must be cleaned, the gas-fixtures brightened, the globes washed, the door knobs and hinges rubbed, if these are plated, and the draperies rehung before the furniture is moved back or the ornaments replaced. The task is neither short nor easy if properly performed, but there is a solid satisfaction in the finished work that cannot be won by less thorough achievement.

The same method of procedure must be followed in the other rooms. The doors must always be kept shut to prevent the escape of dust to other parts of the house. By observing this precaution the halls and stairs



may be swept first without fear of the likelihood that the work will have to be repeated when the chambers are finished. In the bedrooms, as everywhere else, all the furniture must be moved. Slovenly or lazy servants are apt to sweep around heavy pieces. A not infrequent occurrence is to find a generous deposit of fluff and dirt behind the bureau and washstand, and even under the middle of the bed; this, too, after the solemn asseveration of the maid that she has moved "every stick of furniture" in the room. These accumulations are not only unhealthful and prone to breed disease germs, but literally add to the labor of the housemaid by sending out contributions of dust to lodge on carpet or wood-work upon the breath of every draught that passes their lurking-place.

Brains tell in sweeping as they do in every other branch of domestic service. They are never more manifest than when they insist that one room shall be entirely cleaned and

ready for occupancy before another is begun, and when they abolish the idea that a house cannot be successfully swept without creating intolerable turmoil.

## XII.

### SATURDAY.

SATURDAY is essentially a day for left-overs. All the bits of work that have been suffered to drag along unfinished during the early part of the week are attacked with sudden and violent industry as Sunday draws near. The couplet,

“When the sun is in the west,  
Lazy folks work the best,”

contains more than a grain of truth. Not only the lazy, but the industrious, feel a fresh impetus given to their exertions when they know that an enforced respite from labor is at hand.

There is practical wisdom in having the house “spandy nice” by Saturday night. Apart from the eminent fitness of being every whit clean on the Sabbath day, Mon-

day and Tuesday will bring pressing duties of their own that will render it no easy matter to look after work left over from the preceding week. If the loose ends are not gathered together on Saturday, they are pretty apt to remain flying well on into the middle of the next week.

In the well-regulated house the sinks, wash-bowls, and faucets should receive attention at least once a week. When practicable, all drain-pipes should be flushed daily with hot water, if possible, but when that is out of the question, with an abundance of cold. The human body parts with a great deal of greasy matter in the course of its ablutions, and this is apt to form a deposit on the lining of the waste pipes that will in time clog them seriously if it is allowed to remain. An excellent compound of potash is sold by druggists and grocers for the especial purpose of cleansing waste-pipes. The same work may be accomplished nearly as successfully by a strong solution of washing-soda and by household

ammonia. Copperas-water, an excellent disinfectant, should be used in connection with these other preparations.

The marble bowls and slabs must receive a hebdomadal scrubbing, in addition to the wiping off that should be a daily occurrence. Pumice-stone, sapolio, or scourene serves here as upon faucets. On the marble it may be applied with a cloth or a small stiff brush, but for the faucets, stoppers, chains, and other plated finishings, the brush is preferable, as it carries the soap better into the chinks and interstices. One such scouring as this in a week will keep these platings bright, if it is supplemented by a wiping off with hot water and a rub with a flannel or chamois-skin each morning. The inside of the bathtub and set foot-tub should also be scrubbed regularly.

Lamps, andirons, fenders, and fire-irons demand their quota of attention, nor should door plate, knobs, and hinges be neglected.

In cleaning brass and copper, electro-sili-

con or whiting may be used. Also excellent for this purpose is a German compound—Putz pomade. It is a sort of reddish paste. The article to be brightened must be washed, and the pomade applied to it with a bit of cotton cloth or flannel. When the paste dries, as it will in a couple of minutes, it must be rubbed off. The dirt or tarnish comes with it, and a little polishing with a chamois-skin or flannel imparts a brilliant finish to the metal. When copper is seriously tarnished or coated with verdigris, diluted oxalic acid, in the proportion of a tablespoonful of the pure acid to a quart of water, will clean it more quickly than anything else. It is of special value in brightening boilers. Next in merit to this is hot vinegar and salt. Putz pomade can usually be found at leading grocers' and druggists' shops, but if it cannot be procured, sifted wood-ashes and vinegar will prove a tolerable substitute.

The kitchen pantries should be overhauled on Saturday morning. It is not enough that

the mistress should issue orders to have this done. She must either lend her personal attention to the task or else submit the work to a thorough scrutiny when it is completed. Bits of food and remnants of gravy must be inspected, and their use or destruction decided upon. When the outside of the cup and platter are clean, the average maid too often pays little heed to the condition of the inside. Grease is suffered to lurk in the seams of pails and pans, and dust to coat the bottom and sides. Sticky china, clouded tumblers, and tarnished tins are as reprehensible in the kitchen cupboard as are blackened silver and dusty porcelain and crystal in the dining-room closet. A conscientious tidying once a week simplifies the periodical house-cleaning wonderfully. When there are insects to be exterminated, it is absolutely necessary to scour the shelves as often as once a week, scattering pennyroyal, borax, or what other remedy may be needed, in the track of ants, cockroaches, and Croton bugs.

The cellar and refrigerator should not escape examination, and this must be more searching as the hot weather approaches than in the winter months.

The custom of preparing Sunday's food on Saturday, and making a cold dinner an inseparable accompaniment to the day of sacred rest, has happily become a thing of the past. Even the most strait-laced now consider cooking plain meals one of those works of necessity and mercy against which there is no law. A few conservatives who cannot quite relinquish ancient usages compromise by serving the Sunday roast cold, but flanking it with a variety of hot vegetables. While there is a touch of absurdity in condemning one's family to eat food that has been cooling for twenty-four hours, there is yet a degree of unkindness in insisting upon a more elaborate repast on what is supposed to be the easiest day of the week than is demanded on any other. A little extra labor on Saturday will reduce Sunday's work to a



minimum, and yet provide as tempting fare as any one, except a very critical gastronomist, need exact.

Soup should be made on Saturday. The stock can be prepared then, and nothing left for the next day but the thickening and seasoning. Even this may be done on Saturday, along with the straining and clearing, and the soup be none the worse for it—rather better, indeed. The meat may be skewered ready for the pan; or if fowls are to be served they may be drawn and trussed, the bread crumbed for the stuffing, and the seasoning mixed with this. The stuffing itself must not be inserted until just before the fowls go into the oven, as it becomes soggy if left in too long before cooking. If salads are desired, the mayonnaise can be mixed on Saturday, and will be benefited by a night on the ice. As for desserts for the Sunday dinner, their name is legion. Pies, tarts, meringues, custards, jellies, blanc-manges, creams, cakes, and cold

puddings are all considered choicer delicacies than hot sweets.

For the breakfast and lunch or tea the same prevision should be exercised. The orthodox Sunday fish-balls and baked beans owed their origin to the wish to save work on the Sabbath. Cold meats and relishes for lunch are certainly permissible one day in the week. Setting religious considerations entirely on one side, there is simple humanity in making the first day of the week one of comparative physical rest. Domestics are very apt to resent as an infringement of their rights the imposition of extra duties on Sunday, and the mistress can conciliate both conscience and interest by observation of the precautions indicated.

The prevalent habit of sleeping an hour later than usual on Sunday morning, so dearly valued by business men who have to rise early every other day in the week, is likely to create bustle and hurry if the family desire to attend morning service. To avoid this

rush without robbing the sleepers of their cherished nap, everything should be ready the evening before. Saturday is "tub-night" in many homes where there are children, and this custom aids in sparing over-haste the next morning. The changes of clean clothing should be laid ready for each person, the studs or buttons transferred from soiled to fresh garments, tapes, fastenings, glove and shoe buttons, etc., examined, that there may be no last stitches to set while the church-bells are ringing. It is needless to remark that it is far better not to postpone such repairs until Saturday night. All mending should have been done earlier in the week, but oversights as well as accidents are liable to occur in the best-regulated families, and the final inspection certainly does no harm.

### XIII.

#### IN THE SITTING-ROOM.

THE general idea of a family sitting-room is of an apartment dedicated to use, rather than to beauty. Hither are banished from the drawing-room the half-worn chairs that have been superseded by more elegant seats; here is the shabby carpet; here are the faded curtains. If there is an old-fashioned hair sofa in the possession of the family it is apt to be installed here in all its unmitigated slipperiness. The chromos that the improved tastes of the household have outgrown adorn these walls. The sewing-machine stands in a prominent position, and the room, if not warmed by a furnace, is too apt to be heated by a stove.

That all this should be as it is shows a mistaken state of feeling. In the endeavor to

have the company-room unexceptionable the family must put up with the left-overs. The invited guests have all that is best and brightest in the house, while those who *make* the home are only admitted to such pleasures upon high days and holidays. Not that it is not in every way desirable to have an attractive drawing-room in which to receive one's friends, but the owners of a pleasant parlor should not make a plain basement dining-room their gathering-place in the evenings, and at times besides those devoted to meals. If there is no other way of achieving the family-room, let the parlor be yielded. Still there are few houses in which there is not a back parlor or library that might be made the pleasantest apartment in the house for work and recreation — that Innermost which every home should have to be a home.

The room need not be gorgeous, but it must be cheery. The floor-covering may be of matting or of plain ingrain carpet, the worn spots, if such there be, concealed by

pretty rugs. One of these should lie in front of the sewing-chair near the window, another be laid before the fire; for there must be a fireplace, if possible. A coal-grate or a hearth on which wood is burned, made bright with brass andirons and fender, tongs and poker, shovel and bellows, is the best. If either of these is out of the question, a Latrobe, a Franklin, or a stove with an open front that will allow the blaze to be seen, is an excellent substitute. It gives a cheeriness that can be imparted by nothing else. A low screen may be placed before the fire if the heat becomes oppressive. If a closed stove is unavoidable, let a higher screen, covered with felt or cretonne, do its utmost to conceal it.

Flowers, too, there should be, the hardy house-plants that flourish in spite of furnace-heat and gas—the latter their deadliest foe. Within the radius of its poisonous influence one cannot hope for many blossoms, but German and English ivies, the variegated trade-

scantia, commonly known as Wandering Jew, the oxalis, and the Madeira-vine will stand a great deal of hard usage without succumbing. Such bulbs as narcissus and hyacinths may be started in the cellar, and brought up to the sunlight to expand into bloom.

The furniture of the sitting-room may not be as elegant as that which adorns the parlor, but it should be neat, and at all hazards comfortable. Low chairs should abound, and each member of the family should have his or her particular seat and cosey nook. The sewing-machine, when not in use, should be draped with a pretty table-cover and rolled back out of the way; the mending-basket and stocking-bag should have their corner and hook where they need not be too apparent. If there is no regular library in the house, part, at least, of the books should be here, arranged on low shelves where they will be conveniently at hand when pauses occur in the regular work. One shelf may be appropriated to the children's school-

books. Endless searchings and hurryings will be spared by having a fixed place for these. What pictures are on the walls should be good. Cheap and tawdry chromos or lithographs are far more of a disfigurement than an ornament. The simple adornments of gay Japanese fans, unframed photographs, etc., that would look out of place in the more sedate elegance of a drawing-room, are suitable here.

A room in which there is as much work done as there is in this should be well lighted both by day and by night. The windows should not be darkened by heavy draperies, but supplied with Holland shades and curtains of Madras, scrim, or muslin. Some color is preferable to pure white, as that is apt to show every particle of dust, and the curtains to look limp and dingy as soon as the starch is out of them. Figured China silk is very pretty, although perhaps not as serviceable as the Madras goods in soft, neutral tints. These, even if they fade a little,



will still be harmonious in tone, and can be freshened at any time by being taken down and subjected to a thorough shaking and beating in the open air.

At night the room should be illumined either by a drop-light or by one of the fine lamps that, under the names of the Rochester, the Climax, the Fireside Electric, and other titles, are rapidly crowding the Argand gas-burners out of the way. Easily managed and kept clean, they pay for themselves in a short time by saving the consumption of gas. The brass lamps are very pretty, but the nickel-plated ones require much less work to keep bright, and do not tarnish readily. A low light is an absolute essential to the comfort and safety of the eyes that must superintend finger-work in the evening. Half a dozen of the most brilliant gas-jets in a chandelier of ordinary height will not do as much service as one good lamp placed on a table. About this the family may gather with their various employments. The only

objection to these lamps is that they heat the room very rapidly, but gas has the same drawback.

The paper on the walls of a sitting-room should not be too sombre. The rich dark tints that furnish a reception-room handsomely absorb too much light, and make the room less cheery on a rainy day. The chief aim in furnishing the sitting-room is to make it bright and homelike.

In any room that is the common property of the family there is a constant struggle on the part of the mistress of the house to prevent untidiness. In her efforts to keep things "picked up" she sometimes has a hard struggle to hold temper and tongue in control. It is trying to spend half an hour of precious time in restoring order from chaos, only to see one's labors destroyed by heedless hands that will do little towards repairing the mischief they have caused. Strength and energy are wasted in endeavoring to preserve neatness.

Yet it will not answer to let the room become hopelessly untidy. It ought to be as one wishes to see it at least once a day. The windows and blinds should be opened every morning, that the air of the room may be thoroughly changed. The dust-pan and brush or the carpet sweeper should be used in clearing away shreds of lint and scraps of paper from the floor. The hearth should be swept, the ashes taken up, and the fire relaid. Every article of furniture should be carefully dusted; the lamp carried out, cleaned, and filled; books and papers arranged; the flowers trimmed and watered, and the entire room put in perfect order. After that, a certain degree of confusion will have to be allowed. If this is to be a place where every one may feel at his ease, rigid principles cannot be established. The home feeling is worth more than even spotless tidiness. When the latter must be purchased at the expense of the former, it is wise to let it go.

A pleasant medium between intolerable litter and exasperating propriety is not impossible. Those who have a share in the family sitting-room, and whose regular occupations are pursued there, should be trained into feeling a pride in keeping the apartment bright and attractive. Each one should be taught to assume the responsibility of the disorder he makes, and to take it for granted that upon him will devolve the task of replacing what he has disarranged. Children may be imbued with this principle even at an early age, and boundless care and worry thus be saved the house-mother.

## XIV.

### IN THE PARLOR.

A REMNANT of the sanctity that invested the old-fashioned "best room" lingers about the modern parlor. The sitting-room is not only the family rallying-place, but also the apartment where, in many homes, all but the most formal company is received. Whether acknowledged or unconfessed, a certain dignity seems often to hedge in the drawing-room, making its occupants feel far less at ease than when in any other part of the house. Yet withal it is the object of intense pride on the part of the mistress. Poor indeed is that home where there is not some effort to have a parlor, even at the cost of crowding the inmates of the bedrooms, or of eating in the kitchen.

Readers of Mrs. Stowe's charming pictures

of old-time New England life in *Oldtown Folks* will remember the description therein given of one best room. The dozen mahogany, claw-footed, hair-cloth-covered chairs, the sofa to match, the claw-footed table, and the other furniture make up an *ensemble* of dreary state that seems ludicrous in the light of to-day. Nevertheless, the present housekeeper, although she has abjured hair-cloth and cannot afford mahogany, burns her incense at the shrine of the "jute velours" or raw-silk-covered patent rocker as devoutly as did her foremothers before their more costly idols.

An inspection of a dozen different parlors in the houses of people of moderate means reveals a surprising resemblance between them. The carpet is usually in the same style—a tapestry or body Brussels, more often than not of a large figure, and rather vivid hues. There is generally a "parlor set" of furniture, consisting of a very uncomfortable sofa, four or six uncompro-

ingly stiff chairs, and the inevitable patent rocker. All are covered with figured "jute velours" or a cheap quality of raw silk, the colors not always at violent discord with those of the carpet, but painfully apt to verge upon it. Concession to modern ideas may have gone so far as to place the marble-topped centre table between the two front windows instead of in the middle of the room. On the glassy surface is a bead or worsted mat, or possibly one made of crazy patchwork. On this stands a lamp or a vase. There is a marble mantel-piece, of course. It is generally of white marble—a species of tombstone to the fires that never burn behind the grim and shiny summer front. The shelf holds at least one pair of vases, occasionally two, balancing each other with mathematical exactness. Wax or paper flowers are seldom lacking, and there are always a few more mats strewn about somewhere. The walls are hung with family photographs in oval frames, and perhaps a

chromo or two. If there is a young girl in the family, there is probably an effort after popular decoration in the shape of two or three Japanese fans, several bows of ribbon, a tidy done in Kensington stitch, an ornamented flat iron, a plush-covered miniature dustpan, or a milking stool with gilded legs and embroidered cushion. The effect is not inspiriting, and offers a solution for the awe encompassing the best room—a respect born of the dread of the discomfort undergone by its tenants.

All this cannot be altered at a touch. If one has to buy new furniture, the task is less difficult. A pretty matting or a carpet of subdued tones, odd and graceful chairs instead of the hackneyed set, can be purchased as reasonably as the unattractive furniture that is often selected. But when one has one's parlor furnished already, one has to make the best of things as they are. The glaring tints of the carpet may be lessened by one or two inexpensive fur rugs, the



chairs and sofas placed at less acute angles, the hard coldness of the marble of mantel and table disguised by draping scarfs, the artificial flowers exchanged for a pot of real ivy, the mats banished, and a few books and magazines scattered about. A light chair or two may be purchased, or imported from some other part of the house in exchange for one of the set. These, by-the-bye, may be materially improved by sawing about two inches off the legs. The family photographs must be ruthlessly swept away. Their place is not in the drawing-room. They are of no interest to strangers. If they must be hung up rather than cherished in an album, let them be in the sitting-room or bedchambers, where they will be viewed by the uncritical eyes of those to whom the originals are dear.

Above all, the room must be lived in. It need not be used as a romping-place by the children, or as a sewing-room, but it should be kept open, not darkened and gloomy. Every-day callers may be received here, and

the family should meet here for social chat or relaxation in the evenings. If it is half library, so much the better. Books give a home-like air imparted by no other insentient things, perhaps because they are more nearly living than anything else not flesh and blood.

The room that is in daily use will require daily care. Probably this is one reason that the parlor is often kept closed. The busy housewife shrinks from the added labor, and finds it easier to avoid the room almost entirely than to keep it in order. Yet the duty need not be irksome. When there is a young lady in the family it naturally devolves upon her. Even the half-grown school-girl is capable of assuming the charge if she is assisted by a few hints and a little supervision from her mother.

In the first place, the room should never be left in an untidy state at night. Unlike an apartment in which work is constantly doing, there need be no litter on the floor.

The chief derangement is of the furniture, and it is not five minutes' work to pull chairs and tables back into place after the circle breaks up for the night. A semblance of neatness is thus procured, together with the comfortable consciousness that there is a room in a fit state to receive very early callers the next morning, if such should present themselves. Before breakfast the windows may be opened long enough to freshen the air of the room. A few passages of the carpet-sweeper over the floor will gather up what dust or shreds may have been left there by feet or clothing on the preceding night. If this is done two or three times a week, a thorough sweeping will be sufficient once a fortnight. It is wise to use a whisk-broom in the corners occasionally. In mentioning carpet-sweepers it may not be amiss to say that they should always be emptied after service. If the dirt is permitted to accumulate in the box, it clogs the wheels and injures the brushes, so that they do more harm than good.

For dusting tufted furniture a house-painter's brush is the best implement. It goes into nooks and crevices, removing fluff and lint. Such brushes may be bought at almost any hardware store or house-furnishing establishment. The bristles are so much softer than those of the ordinary whisk-broom that they are less likely to fray the fabric with which the furniture is covered. For wood-work, marble, etc., the invaluable cheese-cloth duster surpasses every other, unless, perhaps, an old silk handkerchief. Feather dusters take off the superficial deposit, but do not clean thoroughly. They are indispensable, however, when attached to long poles, for brushing curtain-rods, cornices, and picture-frames that cannot be reached by the arm alone. Spider-webs must also be watched for, especially in warm or damp weather. They appear with incredible rapidity, and give a look of shiftlessness not equalled even by finger-marked paint or dingy windows.

Another point that demands vigilance is

the condition of the globes on the chandeliers and brackets. It is surprising how quickly they gather dust and become streaked and grimy. A wiping off twice a week will postpone the business of washing them for a long while. Without close attention dust will accumulate in corners of the bric-à-brac and behind ornaments. The best hireling is likely to dust around an article rather than to lift it and carefully wipe it and the place where it stood. The mistress must follow up even such trivial matters as these, and satisfy herself that the work is being performed as she would have it done. Eye-service is too common for the housewife to be discouraged when she finds it in those in whom she has placed most confidence. The temptation to shirk and neglect is powerful, and if it cannot be conquered by admonition, may be in a measure controlled by watchfulness.

The care of the flowers is almost universally assumed by the mistress. They must

be picked over and rearranged as they begin to fade, and the water on them changed daily. When they are withered they become an eyesore instead of an ornament.

## XV.

### IN THE BEDROOM.

How not to do it is one of the first things for the average chambermaid to learn. If the mistress cannot instruct her maid-servant in the care of bedrooms by precept, let her call example to her aid, and with her own hands bring the chamber to a proper state. One showing will not suffice. Even with conscientious domestics, close watch is necessary to prevent neglect.

To begin, then, the maid must be informed that because bed-making is a daily-recurring duty is no cause for its being slurred over or hurried through. Rather is it a demand for added attention. She must learn that the right way to make a bed is not to straighten the under sheet with a few vigorous twitches, bring up the other covers with an ener-

getic sweep of the arm, smooth up the spread, and adorn the completed work with a pair of gorgeous pillow-shams pinned on overmussed or musty pillows. Nor can the neatness of the rest of the chamber be achieved by half a dozen flirts of a feather duster, the filling of the pitcher with fresh water, and the emptying the slops. Yet this is all that many bedrooms receive even from the girl who engages herself as a "professed chamber-maid." One may possibly tolerate such treatment in a hotel or boarding-house, but in one's own home better things may surely be expected.

The first item of the bed-making is demanded from the occupant of the couch. Her duty it is, immediately upon rising, to throw back the covers over the foot of the bed on to a couple of chairs placed there for that purpose. They should never be tossed in a heap on the floor to gather dust from the carpet or matting. The mattress should then be half turned, that the air may get at



both sides of it, and the windows opened at top and bottom, admitting a sluice of the fresh outer atmosphere. Even in the coldest weather this should be done for a few minutes, while in summer the bed should stand uncovered for at least an hour before making. The habit of leaving one's room in perfect order when one goes to breakfast is not commendable as far as the bed is concerned. The other rearrangement necessary may be done then, but the couch should be left stripped until the unpleasant vapors generated by the body during the night have been dispersed and the bed thoroughly sweetened.

When the bed is made the mattress should be laid with the side above that was below the night before. Over this comes the mattress-cover of unbleached muslin, with its filling of a single layer of cotton batting. This must be drawn very closely over the mattress, and snugly tucked in at the sides, top, and bottom. The under sheet can hardly be pulled too tightly. Upon this smooth

drawing and firm binding of the bed by the covers depends the symmetry of the whole. Not a wrinkle must be suffered to show. What seems but a slight fold in sheet or blanket is a serious blemish as outlined under the white spread.

The ordinary housemaid is with difficulty deterred from putting on the blankets upside down. By what process of the uncultured mind the idea is evolved that the opening should be at the bottom rather than at the top it would be hard to say. The spread that covers all may be of plain white cotton, of handsome Marseilles, or an expensive combination of satin and lace. Whatever it is, it should be clean and unrumpled; and to preserve these qualities it must be removed every night, neatly folded, and laid aside. Added warmth may be furnished by the misnamed comfortable, or by a *duvet* or afghan, laid folded across the foot of the bed in the daytime and drawn up at night. Cheap blankets of mixed cotton and wool, or the

simple coverlets made of cream or colored cheese-cloths, filled with batting and tufted with worsted in the style of the little *duvets* used for babies, are preferable to the heavy chintz quilts, whose weight alone is almost enough to produce nightmare.

Tastes differ as to the style of counterpane to be used. The white is always neat, and is in reality the most serviceable, because it may be made to look as good as new by its passage through the hands of the laundress. Indeed, Marseilles spreads, if properly done up, improve with repeated washings. They lose thus that stiffness which shows a misfold nearly as plainly as would a sheet of paper, and renders it all but impossible to draw them smoothly and evenly across the bed. The counterpane should never be spread up over the bolster, but turned back neatly just below this, and the upper sheet folded back over it. By this method the spread may be taken off at night, and the top of the sheet left undisturbed to

protect the sleeper's face from contact with the unpleasant woolliness of the blankets. Nor should the lower sheet serve as an excuse for dispensing with a bolster-slip. This is as necessary to comfort as are pillow-slips, and should never be omitted.

In old Virginia a "bed-stick" was considered an essential. A little longer than the couch was wide, it was used to smooth up the coverings from the foot to the head. A broomstick answers the purpose tolerably, and aids in producing a trimness of finish otherwise hard to attain.

On the question of shams there are varying opinions. They are ornamental, but troublesome, and only serve, so say some, to conceal untidiness. Many housekeepers prefer to keep two pairs of pillow-cases and two bolster-slips in use, employing one set for day and the other for night, while other women have day-pillows and night-pillows, either laying the latter on the foot of the bed in the daytime, or keeping them out of

sight in a closet. If shams are used, however, the sheet-sham is as valuable as those for the pillows, concealing the top of the sheet when it has become tumbled. The sheets, by the way, should be long enough to be drawn up over the shoulders of the occupant of the bed. Cause for acute discomfort is found in short sheets that cannot be pulled up to the chin without uncovering the feet. Sheets should be of a length that will permit of their being tucked in well at the foot of the bed, and yet allow enough to turn back six inches at the top over the blankets.

The rest of the chamber should be submitted to the same close attention that has been bestowed upon the bed. The washstand requires especial care. The pitchers must be washed and wiped out every morning to prevent an accumulation of sediment and consequent stain. The bowl must be scrubbed clean of the grease that gathers on the inside of it, and the soap-dish washed—the latter a rare action among housemaids. The recep-

tacles for slops should be scalded out with boiling water and washing-soda or household ammonia, and set in the sun, uncovered, for an hour or two. The top of the washstand should be spread with a white cloth, a towel, or a bamboo mat. The towels, which should have been left opened out until dry by those who used them, should be folded neatly and hung in their places on the rack.

A dustpan and brush or a carpet-sweeper will be required nearly every morning in a sleeping-room. The dust must be brushed from the corners and the rugs shaken from the window. If a thorough sweeping is required, all articles that cannot be carried from the room should be protected by cheesecloth sweeping-sheets. In dusting, a cheesecloth duster should be used, and all bric-à-brac and furniture carefully wiped. Loose hairs, scraps of paper, etc., should be removed from the bureau, and the cover of this shaken and replaced. No pieces of clothing should be left lying about the room.

Each chamber closet should have a shoe-bag hung on the inside of the door. Nothing detracts more from the tidiness of a room than the sight of boots and slippers scattered about the floor. By the bureau or in the closet should hang a small laundry-bag for soiled handkerchiefs, collars, and cuffs. Little brass screw-hooks fastened here and there for whisk-broom, catch-all, hand-glass, button-hook, and other toilette implements that can be hung up out of the way will also prove almost indispensable. Similar hooks by the washstand will hold sponges, sponge-bags, and wash-cloths.

If there are draperies in a bedroom they should be well shaken each morning while the windows are open, to rid them of possible lurking disease germs. When the room is swept, it is well to unhook the curtains from the rings and give them an air and sun bath of half an hour.

When a chambermaid is employed, she should be instructed to go to each chamber

in the evening, strip the bed and turn the covers half down, close the blinds, bring in fresh water, and if necessary replenish the stock of towels. The mistress will find an occasional glance at the work not amiss.



## XVI.

### SHREDS AND PATCHES.

THE business of looking after the mending of the family is not confined to the one day of the week especially set apart for that purpose. The labor may be greatly lessened by laying off garments as soon as rips or rents appear in them, and never wearing stockings after holes begin to come. There should be a particular repository for the articles of clothing that need repairing, and here they should be laid as soon as they come from the wash.

In a former chapter mention has been made of the advisability of looking over bed and table linen before washing it, in order to check incipient holes. There are some housewives who go so far as to mend all undergarments, even darning stockings, before

sending them to the laundry. The rents are undoubtedly larger after washing, but the majority of women prefer the additional labor when bestowed upon clean clothing rather than a smaller amount on that which is stained with perspiration until offensive to smell and touch. Outer garments, such as aprons, dresses, caps, etc., are not disagreeable to handle before washing. Shirts should have the starch soaked out of them, and then be repaired. It is almost impossible to put a new neck or wristbands on a shirt, or to mend a button-hole properly, when it is stiff from the laundry.

A generation ago it was thought shocking if a girl married having no knowledge of sewing. Instruction in how to cut and make her own underclothing, and to do plain and fine mending of all kinds, was esteemed an important part of a young woman's education. Although sewing-machines were practically unknown, most mothers made all their own and their children's and husbands'

underwear. Now that shop-work has to a great extent superseded home sewing, it is probably cheaper for a woman to buy garments ready-made than to spend her time in fashioning them herself. Still, she ought to possess the ability to do the work should an emergency arise that would compel her to attempt it. Many a girl has married in utter ignorance of any sort of sewing beyond the merest rudiments, and has been forced to teach herself with infinite pains to fashion the tiny garments she could not afford to buy.

Even if one has no skill in cutting and fitting, she should at least perfect herself in all branches of mending, from laying a patch by the thread to darning stockings well. The last is an accomplishment owned by few. Nearly any nursery-maid will profess herself fully competent to mend stockings, whose labors in the shape of cobbled holes, knotted thread, and pulled fabric would disgrace the merest tyro in the art.

When the clothes come from the wash they should be sorted by some one who is sufficiently skilled and observant to let no defect escape her eye. Each garment should be opened and inspected, and then refolded in the original creases. The firmness of the threads holding buttons should be tested with a little tug, button-holes scanned, bindings, seams, and trimmings scrutinized closely. Each piece that needs even a stitch should be laid aside. The adage that a stitch in time saves nine verifies itself weekly in the experience of the housekeeper. A large basket may hold all the mending except the stockings. These should have their own bag. Being smaller than the other pieces, they are more apt to become mislaid. As they are examined they should be paired. Those that need mending may be drawn into one another and consigned to the darning bag, while such as are in good order may be turned, rolled tightly, and put away.

The mending basket should be supplied

with everything needful for performing the task easily and satisfactorily. Brick-making without straw is not much more difficult than doing fine mending well without the proper aids. One spool of stout white cotton, another of black silk, a paper of needles, a pair of scissors, and a thimble comprise nearly the entire furnishings of many family work-baskets. With such inadequate means, it is no wonder that repairing a garment and disfiguring it are likely to amount to about the same thing.

To properly equip the basket several grades of white cotton are necessary, ranging from No. 36 to No. 90. Needles to correspond should also be provided. Besides these, there should be such colored cottons as are apt to be required for the family sewing, three or four spools of black silk of varying degrees of fineness, skirt braid, rolls of tape both narrow and wide, pearl and porcelain buttons of different sizes, neat pieces of cambric, muslin, linen, and flannel for patching, a

braid of variegated silks for gloves, a measuring ribbon, a wax, an emery ball, bodkins large and small, common and button-hole scissors, thimble, shoe-thread, shoe needles, and buttons, hooks and eyes, etc. By having all these arranged in pockets or pouches in one basket, endless time and trouble in searching may be saved. A large piece box, near at hand, should hold scraps of dresses that may be needed to repair the gowns they match.

Nor should the stocking bag be less fully stored with darning cotton of the necessary tints, darning egg, and long needles. The example presented by Mrs. Whitney in her picture of the girl who simplified stocking mending by always having a full supply of long darning needles threaded is worthy of imitation.

The large pieces of mending should receive the first attention. They are more bulky than the stockings, and there is a feeling of having accomplished the chief portion of the

week's sewing when they are out of the way. Worn spots should either be neatly patched or darned down on a piece set under them. Laying a patch by the thread is a very nice undertaking, and tedious to an inexperienced sewer. Garments that have begun to fray on the edges should be rebound or rehemmed before the margins wear rough. Lace is more easily mended before washing. When it once begins to go, it is hardly worth while to waste time upon it. Better rip it off at once, and replace it with new trimming. It is not enough to sew buttons on when they are off; they should be tightened as soon as they show any signs of loosening. Torn button-holes may be strengthened by putting a tiny patch of a bit of tape at one side. It serves as a stay, and makes the button-hole look neater. The Biblical prohibition against putting a piece of new cloth into an old garment should be carried into effect in modern mending. If the patch must perforce be of new material, it should

at least be washed and shrunk before it is applied.

Stockings should always be mended with cotton of the same color. A single thread must be used. The doubled cotton may close the gap more quickly, but it produces a lump that is apt to make the wearer of the stocking thoroughly uncomfortable. There are some unfortunates who claim that their skins are too sensitive to permit of their wearing mended hose. If the repairing is skilfully done, there is no reason why there should be any suffering from this cause. The thread should be run through the fabric some distance on each side of the hole as well as back and forth across it. Worn places also should be darned before a real break appears. The old custom of running the heels of stockings before they were put on at all is almost obsolete, but its revival might not come amiss in large families where there are plenty of small feet to tread out the heels of stockings while the rest of the



foot and the leg are still good. The heel protectors that are sold at most large shoe stores save wear to the stocking. So does the habit of changing the hose often enough to prevent their becoming stiff with dirt or perspiration. Mothers of little children occasionally sew a piece on the inside of the stocking knee to prevent the skin showing as the outer covering becomes frayed.

Besides the weekly mending of body-clothing, there is always repairing needed upon bed and table linen. The pieces that are not pressingly needed may be laid aside on a shelf in the linen closet to be picked up at odd seasons. In some families sheets are always cut in two lengthwise, as they begin to become thin in the centre, and what were hitherto the outer edges joined, that they may receive their share of the wear. This is technically termed "turning" sheets, and was more prevalent years ago than it is now. Those people who cherish a prejudice against having a seam down the middle of a bed

may utilize the sheets by cutting them over into pillow and bolster slips. This is especially advisable if the sheets are of linen. No fragments of this or of damask table-cloths or napkins should ever be thrown away. If the pieces of linen are not large enough to make full-sized cases, they may serve as covers to children's pillows, may be doubled and made into squares for babies' napkins or towels, or into wash cloths. The small bits that are impracticable for any other purpose are admirable for binding up cut fingers, or steeping in liniment to lay upon a burn or wound.

## XVII.

### CLOSETS AND CUBBIES.

THE care of the closets of a house forms a division of labor by itself. The legend over each might be *Multum in parvo*, or "Infinite riches in a little room." Cavil as one may at the desire of women for a superabundance of cupboards, it may yet be doubted if there was ever a house in which there was a closet too many. There is always room for one more.

To the heart of the housewife two closets are especially dear — that set apart for the china and that in which the linen is kept. The others, important as they are, sink into insignificance by the side of these. The care of each is her delight, and their perfect condition her pride.

The china-closet is apt to demand frequent setting to rights. One reason for this may

be found in the fact that it is not left to the care of the mistress alone, but lies within the province of the maid. Even the best domestics are slow to learn that if an article is put away in its appropriate place after each time of using, it will save periodical tasks of rearranging. Under the ordinary rule, tea and coffee cups and saucers, breakfast and tea plates, become confused, and the waitress who seeks a certain piece in a hurry has to hunt through half a dozen piles of dishes before she can find the object of her search. The weekly inspection of the mistress, suggested in a former chapter, does much towards regulating this trouble.

The china-closet should always, if possible, be supplied with glass doors. Sliding doors are preferable to those that open. The latter take more room, and by their means crockery is constantly being knocked over and broken. The closet should also be lighted sufficiently to enable one to match pieces of china in the daytime without the

aid of a candle. In such a cupboard cleanliness is more readily preserved than in the dark little pantries often found even in handsome houses. In spite of the glass doors, dust will gather on the contents of the closet. To avoid the trouble of wiping the grime from the inside of cups and glasses it is well to put them away upside down. Small dishes may be treated in the same way. Vegetable-dishes and soup and gravy tureens should be kept covered. Platters for meat and fish should stand on their edges, kept from slipping forward by a narrow strip of moulding tacked to the shelf. The finer porcelain that is reserved for state occasions should be kept entirely apart from that appropriated to every-day use. The glass should be divided in the same manner. The most delicate and rarely-used pieces should be on the upper shelves. The largest and heaviest articles must occupy the lowest shelf, and on that with the strongest supports must be piled the plates. If there must be double rows of

china in order to economize space, the highest pieces should be placed at the back of the shelf instead of in front, where they might be knocked down by any one reaching over them. A little judgment in arrangement will easily dispose matters so that those things needed most frequently will be most readily obtained. Where the best china is kept in a dresser in the dining-room it may be converted into a very ornamental object by the use of hooks for cups, pitchers, etc.

The linen-closet, while less showy, is equally precious. Here, too, skill in assortment is needed. The cotton and linen sheets must be in separate piles, as must be cotton and linen pillow-cases and bolster-slips. Those of different sizes must also be divided. Great confusion is saved by this simple method. No one who has unfolded one sheet and pillow-case after another, vainly seeking those devoted to some particular bed, will fail to enforce the necessity of keeping unlike pieces in separate piles.

In many families it is the custom to go through the entire stock of linen in rotation, that all may be worn alike. The disadvantage of this system is that the whole collection generally needs replenishment at once. A better way is to divide the store, or, at least, to reserve a portion of it with which to supply deficiencies when that in constant circulation threatens to fail. One is then sure of having changes of irreproachable nappery in case of emergency. This is especially necessary with towels, as these are apt to become unaccountably stained or torn. There should never be lacking a number of nice towels for the guest-chamber. It is an excellent idea to have a distinct set of towels for each member of the family, children included. They may be distinguished by different patterns, or by an embroidered or stamped letter. The elders not only prefer a better quality of linen than that appreciated by the little ones, but also take more care of the finer towels. Those hung in the

children's rooms are not unlikely to do service in rubbing mud from the shoes or wiping fruit-stains from the fingers.

In every linen-closet there should be a corner for old cloths, worn-out garments, discarded underwear, and hopelessly frayed linen. These should be torn into pieces of available size and put up in neat rolls.

The preserve-closet should be dark and cool. Canned fruits, jellies, and jams are prone to darken by exposure to the light, and ferment and sour if kept in too warm a place. The taller glass jars should be placed at the back of the shelves, with the labels on them high enough up to be seen over the jelly-glasses ranged in front. The large stone crocks are safest on the floor: it is hardly worth while to tempt Providence by overtaxing even the stoutest shelves. Every jar, tumbler, and cup should be so legibly marked that the nature of its contents may be determined by a single flash of a match. Pickles should have their own corner, distinct from



that allotted to sweet conserves. The shelves should be examined once a fortnight for any sign of the sticky dripping that indicates fermentation of the jams or preserves. Such vigilance will render it possible to check the mischief before it has gone so far as to be irremediable. Unless very thoroughly convinced of the honesty of her domestics, the mistress will do well to have a lock on this door, and to retain the key in her own possession. The taste for sweets is strong in all classes, and it is both wise and kind to keep temptation out of the way.

Clothes-closets are not often as neat as those hitherto mentioned. It is hard to keep any place that is in such constant and hasty use as are these in apple-pie order. Still, they may be in a state very far removed from the utter confusion into which they often degenerate. When possible, one side of each closet should be fitted with large drawers, in which may be laid delicate dresses, extra underclothing that has no place in

the bureau, furs in winter, and thin gowns in summer, nor should shelves be lacking for hat-boxes, etc. The indispensable shoe-bag has already been mentioned. There should be hooks in abundance, and double ones at that. By using these the skirts may be hung on the lower pegs and the waists on the upper ones, thus preventing the latter from becoming crushed and tumbled.

Closets filled with dresses that are in regular service are apt to grow close and musty. To avoid this gowns should never be put away immediately upon taking them off; they should receive a good shaking, and be spread out to air for a while. This is especially necessary in warm weather. Even this is not sufficient to keep the closet sweet and clean without giving it an occasional airing. To accomplish this all the dresses should be taken down and shaken in another room, while that in which the closet is should be left with the window and closet door wide open for a couple of hours. Handsome dress-

es that are infrequently worn should be protected from dust even in the closet by a sheet or curtain hung over them.

Soiled clothes should never be kept in a bedroom closet. They render it unsavory, with an odor that clings when the offending cause has been removed. The hamper for these should stand in the bathroom, or in a corner where there is a free circulation of air. They should never be put where they are liable to fall a prey to mice or cockroaches. These will scent food that has been spilled upon garments, or even the starch in them, and make a feast of it, devouring the fabric at the same time.

In every house there must be a lumber-closet. To avoid rendering this a receptacle for a heap of miscellaneous rubbish, it is advisable to make a number of bags to hold the odds and ends relegated to this cubby. There must be a bag for white rags and another for colored, one for newspapers, another for pieces of dress-goods, another for

wrapping-paper and twine. By means of these catch-ails the closet that is usually the bugbear of the housekeeper may be kept in as trim order as any other in her domain.

## XVIII.

### IN THE CELLAR.

ONE of the most important apartments in the house is the cellar, and withal one that often receives insufficient attention. The result may frequently be traced in the impaired health of those who live above the underground lumber-room. Even careful housekeepers have a tendency to consider a good cleaning-out spring and fall all that is requisite, and to concern themselves little about the matter in the interim. Old packing-boxes, newspapers, broken utensils, rotting fruit and vegetables, and in some cases such garbage as potato-parings, lemon and orange skins, bones, etc., that should of right be consigned to the swill-pail, are suffered to accumulate from one month's end to the other. The unwholesome and unpleasant

odor that rises like a cloud whenever the cellar-door is opened is hastily attributed to the mustiness popularly supposed to be an inseparable adjunct to the underground regions. Slight but persistent unhealthiness in the family is disregarded, and a sharp attack of diphtheria or typhoid fever is perhaps needed to arouse the household to the danger in which they dwell. Such causes for sickness as neglected cellars and defective drainage are responsible for what is known as malaria, and the diseases arising from that, fully as often as are outer atmospheric causes.

The cellar is more readily kept clean if it is cut up into several small rooms, instead of being left in one great, undivided chamber. Where it is not thus arranged, it should at least be partitioned off on one side by bins to hold the various stores, in place of letting them lie in heaps in corners. When bins are out of the question, barrels or large packing-boxes form tolerable substitutes. The coal

is usually kept in the vaults provided for that purpose.

The housewife will have difficulty in impressing upon the minds of her subordinates that the cellar should be kept as neat as any of the chambers above-stairs. The average servant seems to regard it as a kind of dumping-ground where such articles as are hard to dispose of tidily may be deposited without fear of their exacting unfavorable comment. Carelessness that would not be tolerated in the kitchen for a moment is tacitly encouraged here, or, at all events, permitted to pass without protest. Energetic efforts will be required to induce a servant to keep the cellar as it should be, and such a result will never be attained without the personal superintendence of the mistress. Superficial cleanliness may prevail, but investigation will reveal neglected corners that will drive despair to the heart.

It is a great aid in the endeavor to obtain proper neatness in the cellar if it is well

lighted and ventilated. The windows may be kept shut in the daytime, but should always be left open at night to allow the fresh air to enter, except when the weather is so cold that there is danger of freezing the supplies of food kept there. Even then the sashes should be unclosed night and morning long enough to permit a sluice of pure air to draw through them. By carefully following this plan much of the musty and earthy odor common to cellars may be banished. Wire netting should be nailed over the outside of the windows in a way that may exclude the flies without hindering the opening of the sash. There should be a spring attached to the door that will prevent its being left ajar and a free passage to flies furnished by careless servants.

If there are no separate vaults provided for the coal, and it must be kept in the common cellar, large bins are indispensable. The coal should never be dumped into one corner of the cellar, whence its grimy dust will be



tracked to the upper floor by every one coming up from below. Nor should the wood, large and small, be thrown into an indiscriminate stack, but neatly piled, the kindling in one place, the logs intended for the open fires in another, and chips, sawdust, and shavings swept together and emptied into a basket or box.

Vegetables, above all, should never be heaped on the floor. They rot more easily there, besides being unsightly, and invariably leaving dirt for some one to sweep up. Barrels or boxes may hold them, and also apples or pears. Both vegetables and fruit should be picked over often, and the rotten ones thrown away. The good ones will keep twice as long if this is done. The work may seem tedious, but it is almost essential, especially towards spring, when vegetables begin to decay rapidly. Health demands this as well as economy. Many a case of spring illness has been traced to a harmless-looking barrel in the cellar, where disease - germs

are fostered in a mass of putrid vegetable matter.

The idea that the cellar is an *omnium gatherum* for useless articles of all sorts should be diligently combated. Whatever is not worth keeping in the certain hope of putting to service at some future time should be thrown away without hesitation. The longer anything is kept, no matter how worthless it may in reality be, the more value does it assume in its owner's eyes, and the harder it becomes to banish it. After a while a species of almost sentimental interest attaches to it, and a removal or a fire is needed to finally rid the house of it. For all such absurd relics the cellar is the generally accepted repository. Here may be found the leaky tins, the cracked washboard, the handleless scuttle, the rusted foot-tub, that are cherished in the delusion that some day they will "come in handy." With all these it is better to part, unless they can be so repaired as to gain intrinsic value. The cellar cannot

look neat with a heap of lumber and old iron disfiguring it. Broken packing-cases and hoopless barrels may be sent here to be split up and converted into kindlings as speedily as possible, while any boxes that may possibly be put to use are much better kept in the attic, out of the damp.

A cellar-floor should always be laid in cement. An earth flooring holds the dampness, and is, moreover, very hard to keep clean. The cement can be swept, and even scrubbed, without trouble. The walls and ceilings should be whitewashed, not only to make the room lighter, but as a means of disinfection. The whitewashing should be repeated at least once a year. The floor should receive a sweeping as often as once a fortnight, and at the same time the cobwebs should be dislodged and all collections of rubbish removed.

The cellar must be supplied with shelves. Swing shelves are preferable to those set in the wall, as there is less danger with the for-

mer of rats and mice having a chance to attack the provisions. One shelf should be kept for the milk, and wiped clean every day after the cream is skimmed. Deposits of sour milk are always unsavory. The meats, vegetables, cakes, etc., stored on the other shelves should be protected by covers of wire netting. With all the care one may take a fly or two will sometimes succeed in effecting an entrance, and the mischief they can do in even a short time renders the precaution worth while. A piece of gauze or mosquito-netting stretched over each pan of milk may also save a fly from involuntary suicide and the milk from waste. Poultry and meat that are hung up for a day or two should be encased in stout brown paper, or, better still, unbleached muslin. All shelves should be scrubbed off every week with a mixture of washing-soda and water, then wiped dry.

It is a great convenience to the housewife if she can have a closet partitioned off and well stocked with shelves, where she can

keep her pickles, preserves, jellies, and jams. Up-stairs cupboards are seldom cool enough, except when they are in so exposed a position that there is risk of their contents freezing in the bitterest winter weather. Here, too, can be placed the choice fruit, the box of oranges or lemons, the barrel of fine apples, and other delicacies, that keep better in a cold place than in an ordinary pantry. The semi-gloom also helps preserve canned goods.

Drain-pipes frequently traverse the cellar, and are likely, from the obscurity of the place, to receive less attention than is their due. They should often be examined for leaks, and any such promptly checked. If there are open drains they should be washed down with a strong solution of copperas and water. Should the odor from the drains refuse to yield to this and to chloride of lime or potash they must be inspected by a practical plumber, and the matter rectified without delay.

## XIX.

### IN THE KITCHEN.

THE epithet “queen of the kitchen” is oftener applied to the cook than to the mistress, yet it belongs to the latter much more truly than to the former. The cook may hold the position of regent, but the absolute sway must be in the hands of the woman head of the house. Moreover, she must rule not only by the right of her position, but by virtue of her knowledge. She must have a clear idea of how matters should be managed, and of how they are in reality conducted. No superficial acquaintance will answer here, but there must be a genuine study of all appertaining to the theory and practice of the culinary department. This, too, must not be confined alone to the preparation of the food, but to the charge of the utensils required for

this purpose, the handling of the means by which the desired end is attained.

One of the first accomplishments to be mastered by the woman who wishes to become thoroughly conversant with the ins and outs of her kitchen is the making of a range fire. This is one of the tasks that it is popularly supposed may be performed by anybody—a faith that is often followed by confusion when the experiment is attempted. The condition of the stove itself is one of the first things to be looked to. Time is wasted in an endeavor to build a hot fire on a substratum of cold ashes and clinkers. The grate must first be cleaned out, and the ash-pan withdrawn, emptied, and replaced. Careless or lazy cooks sometimes neglect to return the pan, permitting, instead, the hot coals and ashes to fall on the floor of the stove, thus in time seriously injuring it. The stove should be cleaned before the fire is built, the ashes brushed off the top, and the range blacked.

This care, if given every morning, will prove light, and will keep the stove in a condition that will do away with the necessity for a hard task of rubbing once a week. It is a mistaken idea to plead, as do some cooks, that the stove is more easily polished when warm. The blacking is apt to turn gray if applied to the stove except when it is cold. The range neat and shining, the real making of the fire may begin. Lift the front top of the stove, and on the grating below lay a crumpled—not folded—newspaper. The impossibility of the air having free current through the layers of a closely folded paper causes it to smoulder instead of burning brightly. Over the paper heap the kindling, placing the sticks in an irregular fashion, that here, too, the air may have full play. Open the draughts, touch a match to the paper, and as soon as it and the kindlings are fairly ignited pour on about half a hodful of coal. Do not wait to do this until the wood is all ablaze. In that case there is often not



heat enough to kindle the coal, so that the whole fire goes out, and the stove has to be emptied and the work begun all over again. Before putting on the covers brush into the fire all bits of wood or coal that have been left on top of the stove. The amount of coal that has been put on should be sufficiently kindled by the end of half an hour to allow of having a little more added. There is no sense or economy in having the stove filled up to the lids, nor should these be allowed to become red-hot. The coal should never come higher than the fire-brick lining of the range. When the fire is fairly under way the draughts may be closed and the heat thrown into the ovens. The draughts of a stove form a branch of kitchen science demanding the housekeeper's special consideration. Unfortunately each stove has its own idiosyncracies, so that no fixed rule can be formulated that will apply without exception to all.

Another matter obliging study is the

amount of coal required by a range. This varies not only according to the size of the stove, but also depends largely upon the draughts and the cook. A range of medium size for ordinary service should not need more than two good hodfuls of coal per diem. On ironing-day a hotter fire is necessary, and three scuttlefuls will probably be the minimum. Constant watching of a fire and the adding a little coal from time to time are far preferable to the usual custom of filling the stove to the top, and then letting the fire burn so nearly out that the embers have to be coaxed into usefulness by kindling-wood. When there is a red-hot bed of coals, then is the time to put on more fuel, before the white heat has died away and been succeeded by cinders; but this lesson is hard to teach the average cook.

One of the most important and most neglected parts of the kitchen duties is the keeping plenty of hot water on the stove. Very few cooks can be trained to replenish a ket-

tle as soon as it is emptied. The old lady who, when dying and almost speechless, beckoned her daughter to bend over her to receive her final messages, and murmured with her last breath, "Always—keep—the kettle—full—of—hot—water," is no subject for ridicule to housewives. Most of them have been in extremities where her course seemed to them entirely natural. To be in a hurry for the cupful of boiling water that is needed for a certain dish, only to find the kettle dry, is a tax upon the patience that is hard to meet. Insisting that the kettle must never be placed on the stove unless filled, and examination into the matter on every visit to the kitchen, are the only remedies for the trouble.

As has been suggested before in these papers, a painted floor is advisable in the kitchen. If this is out of the question, linoleum is the best floor-covering for this room. It is cheaper than oil-cloth, wears as well, if not better, and possesses one of the advantages

of the painted floor—it can be cleaned easily. A carpet gathers and holds grease and smells, and a spot that could readily be wiped from the floor or oil-cloth cannot be so quickly eradicated from the carpet. The kitchen floor should be swept every day. The best time for this is early in the morning, after the fire is made and before the cooking preparations have begun. A little brushing up will probably be needed through the day, and the floor should be well mopped or scrubbed at least twice a week, if not oftener.

Nor should the kitchen windows be neglected. They will demand a washing once a week in winter, but the inside will have to be wiped off much oftener in fly-season. The wood-work in this room is apt to be overlooked in the press of other matters, but its perfect neatness is essential to that aspect of shining cleanliness that should characterize the well-kept kitchen. If the walls are painted, as they should be, instead of kalsomined or whitewashed, they may be wiped down

with a wet cloth without doing them any injury. The tables should be scoured as often as they need it, and when not in use each should be covered with a neat red or buff cloth. The use of the zinc-covered tables previously recommended will make an appreciable difference in the labor of scrubbing.

The number of fly-specks on walls and furniture will be sensibly diminished by the help of nets at doors and windows. The sliding screens that will fit any window are sold at very reasonable rates, and will last year after year. They must be kept during the winter in a dry place where they will not rust. A capital substitute for the wire netting is that made of cotton, so stiffened by some preparation resembling shellac that it is almost equal to wire in durability, while much cheaper. This may be employed in covering the screen-doors, and with a little care will last a long time. The fly-doors leading from the kitchen should be furnished with springs,

that they may not be left standing open when any one with laden hands has passed through them.

The subject of sinks and drains has already been touched upon. They require especial care in the kitchen, where so much miscellaneous matter is emptied into the sink. A heap of tea-leaves, coffee-grounds, plate-scrapings, etc., should never be suffered to accumulate over the drain-grating. All such stuff should be put into the stove and burned, opening the drafts and closing the lids until the refuse is completely consumed. The drain-pipes should be flushed daily with boiling water. The excellent suggestion has been made by one writer on household sanitation that a large lump of washing-soda should always be laid on the grating over the drain-pipe of the sink, so that all the water that runs down may carry cleansing with it.

The faucets, boiler, and other brass-work should be kept as brilliantly clean here as everywhere else in the house, and the furni-

ture should be as carefully dusted as in the parlor.

The cook must not fall below her domain in neatness. In this democratic country it is perhaps useless to urge her to imitate French or English cooks and cover her straggling locks with a trim cap which will keep cooking odors from her head and stray hairs from the dishes; but, at least, she may wear tidy dresses and aprons, and learn that the preparation of food and slovenliness of appearance are not necessarily inseparable.

## XX.

### IN THE PANTRY.

THERE is no reason why the kitchen pantries should not be kept in perfect order. That they seldom are in the state of absolute neatness that commends itself at once to the housekeeper is sometimes perhaps her fault as well as the cook's. Any maid will feel more interest in keeping fresh utensils clean and shining than in scrubbing up rusty and battered pots and pans. It is not possible, of course, to provide new kitchen furnishings for each successive occupant of that apartment. But the woman who has just begun housekeeping has all the plenishings in their first brightness, and she should insist upon their keeping the new look as long as possible.

Several household writers have given lists



of what is needed in the kitchen in the line of iron, tin, and wooden ware. The great trouble with such inventories is that they are generally too expensive in their requirements. The housekeeper of modest purse draws back aghast before the formidable array of jelly and ice-cream moulds, confectioners' tubes, roll and cake tins, graters, strainers, fish, meat, and bread boards, ham boilers, roasters, steamers, and broilers that are enumerated in the catalogue of essentials. They are all very convenient, and mixing and cooking are undoubtedly rendered easier by their aid, but their cost swells to a sum total that exceeds the amount usually appropriated for both kitchen and pantry. The inexperienced housewife thinks ruefully that if all these accessories be necessary to the proper preparation of food, she must get them, but the drain is heavy for young people of slender means.

The truth is, however, that they are by no means indispensable, even to dainty cookery.

With much less than is comprised in many such compendiums all but the most elaborate fancy cooking may be accomplished satisfactorily. Many women who could rank as *cordons bleus* have achieved their success with the simplest utensils. It is a good plan to begin here, as in the other departments of the home, with essentials, and add conveniences as one can. The following list gives a tolerably fair idea of what is necessary in the pantry. Such general household belongings as brooms, dustpans, etc., are omitted, as are all laundry appurtenances.

## THE MUST-HAVES.

One large dishpan for kitchen.	Four jelly-cake-tins.
One divided dishpan for dining-room.	Cake-cutters.
One large dripping-pan.	One dozen muffin-rings.
One small dripping-pan.	One chopping-bowl.
Three breadpans.	One bread-bowl.
One biscuit-pan.	One chopping-knife.
One round fluted cake-tin.	One one-quart tin saucepan.
One dozen patty-pans, for muffins and small cakes.	One two-quart tin saucepan.
Two small round cake-tins.	One two-quart saucepan, agate-ware or porcelain-lined.

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| <p>One one-quart saucepan,<br/>agate-ware or porcelain-<br/>lined.</p> <p>One frying-pan.</p> <p>One soup-kettle, agate-<br/>ware or porcelain-lined.</p> <p>One four-quart tin pail.</p> <p>One two-quart tin pail.</p> <p>One one-quart tin pail.</p> <p>One graduated quart meas-<br/>ure.</p> <p>One half-pint tin cup.</p> <p>One tin dipper.</p> <p>One cake-turner.</p> <p>One corkscrew.</p> <p>One pastry-jagger.</p> <p>One wash-basin.</p> <p>One towel-roller.</p> <p>One six-quart seamless milk<br/>pan.</p> <p>One four-quart seamless<br/>milk pan.</p> <p>Two jelly moulds.</p> <p>One plain pudding mould.</p> <p>One two-quart pitcher.</p> <p>One four-quart pitcher.</p> <p>Four yellow mixing bowls,<br/>assorted sizes.</p> <p>Two small yellow bowls.</p> <p>One split spoon.</p> <p>Two wooden spoons.</p> <p>Two iron spoons.</p> <p>Six kitchen knives.</p> <p>Six kitchen forks.</p> <p>Six teaspoons.</p> | <p>Three tablespoons.</p> <p>One bread-knife.</p> <p>One meat-knife.</p> <p>One small knife for peel-<br/>ing potatoes, cutting the<br/>meat from bones, etc.</p> <p>One larding-needle.</p> <p>One soup-strainer.</p> <p>One hair-wire gravy-strain-<br/>er.</p> <p>One colander.</p> <p>One wire dishcloth.</p> <p>One can-opener.</p> <p>One apple-corer.</p> <p>One large funnel.</p> <p>One small funnel.</p> <p>One bread-box.</p> <p>One cake-box.</p> <p>One potato beetle.</p> <p>One meat broiler.</p> <p>One fish broiler.</p> <p>One toaster.</p> <p>One vegetable grater.</p> <p>One nutmeg grater.</p> <p>Dredging boxes for salt,<br/>pepper, and flour.</p> <p>Three pie-plates.</p> <p>One lemon-squeezer.</p> <p>One floor mop.</p> <p>One dish mop.</p> <p>One bread-board.</p> <p>One small meat-board.</p> <p>One rolling-pin.</p> <p>Two sugar buckets.</p> <p>One meal bucket.</p> |
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One spice-box.	One Dover egg-beater.
Scrubbing-brushes.	Six kitchen plates.
One scrubbing-pail.	Six kitchen cups and saucers.
One garbage pail of galvanized iron.	Two large stone-ware platters.
One flour-barrel cover.	One perforated skimmer.
Knife-and-fork box.	One griddle.
One double boiler.	Set of scales.
One teakettle.	Two stone crocks.
One teapot.	One refrigerator.
One coffee-pot.	

To this outline of the pantry furniture additions may be made from time to time. Labor-saving machines abound, and work in the kitchen may by their aid be reduced greatly. Many cooks decline to avail themselves of modern improvements, preferring the extra labor to the adoption of new-fangled ways. If the mistress cannot prevail upon the maid to use such helps, she should reserve for herself a corner of the pantry, and here bestow her especial implements and contrivances.

In the general arrangement of the pantry it is best to permit the cook to exercise her own judgment. She will handle the various

utensils more frequently than any one else, and she should dispose them in the most convenient order for her purposes. A few hints may help her to place them where they will be most easily reached. The least used articles should occupy the upper shelves. Tin pails and pans, bowls and cups, should be turned upside down when not in use, to prevent the accumulation of dust. Heavy kettles and saucepans, broilers and frying-pans, should be in a pot closet by themselves. Everything that can be hung up should have its own particular nail. Cake-turners, iron spoons, skimmers, graters, strainers, funnels, egg-beaters, tin cups and dippers, should swing from nails or little brass screw-hooks fastened in the door-posts, or in the edges of the shelves. There should be, if possible, a drawer, where should be kept the knife-box, corkscrew, apple-corer, pastry-jagger, larding-needles, can-opener, skewers, and all the small articles that are liable to be mislaid. Pudding and jelly cloths, fish nettings, clean dish-

cloths and towels, should have another drawer to themselves, and should *never be put away dirty.*

In the making every utensil perfectly clean after service, before restoring it to its place, lies the secret of keeping the kitchen pantry tidy and sweet. There cannot fail to be unpleasant odors when pans and pails are put away with gravy or milk in the seams, or when the chopping tray is set aside unscoured. If servants would only bear in mind that old dirt is far harder to remove than when it is fresh, they would save themselves much labor, and their employers equal worry. When hot water has been poured into frying-pans or saucepans as soon as they are used, the grease and bits of food yield more quickly to the friction of the iron dish-cloth than when the same vessels have stood unwashed for several hours.

The mistress should lend her co-operation to the task of making the pantry look attractive. Papers should be supplied for the

shelves, either plain white or the gayly colored cut borders that come for the purpose. The latter show dirt less than the white, and are not costly. An excellent plan is to cover the shelves with white marbled oil-cloth, tacked on neatly, that the edges may not curl. This can be wiped off with a damp cloth at less expenditure of time and labor than would be required to scrub the bare shelves. Oil-cloth prepared especially for use on shelves, and with a stamped and scalloped border may be purchased at house-furnishing stores. It is not costly and gives the shelves it covers a very attractive appearance.

It is not enough simply to keep the pantry *looking* neat; it will need to be overhauled every week, and all articles wiped, inside and out, as well as the shelves on which they stand. The tins should be brightened once in a while, and the stone-china and pressed glass in use here should be kept as clean and bright as the finer ware in the

dining-room. Added diligence must be practised in hot weather, when the flies abound. No cooking utensil should then be used without having first been rinsed out. No pots or pans must ever be put away after washing without taking care that the inside is perfectly dry. Rust gathers quickly, and is not readily removed.

While the cook should be supplied with a sufficient number of dishcloths, mopcloths, and towels, it is not wise to be too lavish in this respect. Profuseness on the part of the mistress breeds extravagance in the maid. The towels are made to do duty as iron-holders, to open oven doors, to scrub the floors, or to scour out the sink. There should be cloths provided for all these offices, and the towels reserved for their own especial use. They should be washed out daily, and when greasy be thrown into hot water strong with borax or household ammonia. At least once a week they should have a hard rubbing and be boiled,



nor should any opportunity be neglected to give them a bleaching, either on the snow or on the grass. There is no reason why they should become the stained malodorous rags into which they are quickly transformed even in otherwise well-regulated kitchens.

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## XXI.

### ECONOMY OF LABOR.

ONE of the reasons that servants are so slow in the performance of their daily duties comes from their lacking the power of arrangement. Their want of training tells here, as elsewhere. Sometimes, but rarely, it is possible to drill them into system, but the effort is generally fruitless. To give them real aid in their work, consideration must be employed by the mistress, and the material assistance she offers so bestowed that it may prove a help rather than a hinderance. When she has occasion to assume a share of work in the kitchen she should take care that she saves labor instead of increasing it. The dainty dishes that she will trust no one but herself to make, the adaptation of odds and ends to an appetizing result

that can be achieved by her hands alone, will probably call her often to her kitchen and pantry. She should have a mixing corner of her own. Here she must herself bring the materials she wishes to use, not interrupting the cook to bid her fetch them for her, and when she quits the room, her work finished, she should not leave a pile of dishes behind her for the cook to wash.

Many mistresses need almost as much counsel to teach them how to make work light as do their employees. They waste time and strength in preparations, and have little energy left to fulfil their designs. Each woman should study the simplest and easiest ways of accomplishing her various duties, not to spare herself exertion through indolence, but to economize her powers for other efforts.

With due forethought then must the housewife set about the preparation of such dishes as she selects for her own manufacture. One of the first steps is to get together every-

thing she can possibly need for the work she has in hand. Time is wasted in running about in search of different utensils or ingredients after the process of mixing has begun. The success of the cooking is often risked by its having to wait. If cake is to be made, the butter and sugar should be weighed, the eggs counted, the flour measured. The milk, spices, flavorings, baking-powder, etc., should stand near, as well as fruit, nuts, chocolate, cocoa-nut, or anything of the sort that is to be used. The two bowls for whipping the whites and yolks of the eggs separately, the bowl or dish for creaming the butter and sugar, the spoon for mixing, the egg-beater, the teaspoon for measuring, the flour-sifter, and the greased cake tins should all be ranged in order before a beginning is attempted.

If a galatine or a scallop is on hand, the chopping knife and bowl, the bread-crumbs, the spices and sweet herbs, the dish, mould, or scallop shells, must all be at hand at the start.

It was once considered a sign of laziness if a woman sat down to her work. Later wisdom teaches that strength saved is strength earned, and recommends the worker to save her feet and her back by every means in her power. The housekeeper who does much in her kitchen should have a chair for her special service, higher than those in common use. Perched comfortably on this, with her feet on a footstool, she may beat eggs, stir cake, chop meat, and even knead bread. The product of her labors will be none the less worthy because she did not wear herself out in achieving it.

On the same principle, let her provide herself with all the labor-saving appliances she can procure. The Dover egg-beater in its ordinary size is not as useful as the larger one, which whips eggs in half the time required by the other. Both should be supplemented by the "Baby," to be employed in whipping a single egg in a cup or glass, instead of seeking it vainly in a large bowl.

More universal in its beneficence than even these is the Keystone egg-beater, which turns out mayonnaise dressing, méringues, snow pudding, whipped cream, and all articles that require thorough beating, with great ease and celerity. Almost anything demanding hard stirring, from mashed potatoes to ice-cream and pound-cake, may be submitted to it with profit. The "Enterprise" meat-chopper is a boon to women in preparing hashes, minces, etc., and the sweet-corn scraper is invaluable for taking corn from the cob for fritters and succotash.

Nor should minor conveniences be overlooked: a wooden-handled iron spoon that will spare the fingers the close fatiguing grasp on the metal, a small paint-brush for greasing pans, a little scrubbing-brush for scouring potatoes for baking, a small sharp knife for cutting meat for salads and for shredding cabbage, larding and trussing needles, skewers large and small, a potato scoop for potatoes *à la Parisienne*, a potato slicer

for Saratoga potatoes, and other implements that will readily suggest themselves. As occasion and money permit, the housewife may add to her collection what may be styled ornamental utensils, such as moulds for jellies, ice-creams, blanc-manges, and Charlotte-Russes, éclair tins, croquette moulds, omelet pans, etc. If she is not fond of so-called fancy cookery, such things will be of little value to her, but the time-saving contrivances pay for themselves very speedily and satisfactorily.

In addition to those articles supposed to belong especially to the culinary department, there are others which have their place here as well. Many steps back and forth from the upper floor may be saved by keeping in the pantry a small work box or basket. It should contain a couple of papers of large needles, a spool of stout cotton or linen thread, a celluloid thimble, a few rolls of tape of medium width, a ball of strong twine, and a pair of large scissors. There should

also be a roll of cheese-cloth for fish-bags and strainers, a piece of stout cotton cloth that has been well shrunken for pudding or dumpling bags, and bands of the same for binding beef *à la mode*, galantines, etc. The outfit is not expensive, but it will give infinite comfort. And if the mistress follows the wise plan of washing all the dishes she soils in her mixing, it is judicious for her to keep a few dish-towels for her own especial service, with the understanding that they are for her use alone.

Practice in cookery and all connected with it is the only means of acquiring proficiency. The tyro will dirty twice as many bowls and cups as does the adept, and with no better result at the end of her toil. It will take time to enable the amateur to successfully imitate those professionals who cook an entire course dinner without sullyng the immaculate whiteness of their aprons by a single spot. Until then, let her provide herself with gingham aprons of generous dimen-



sions, buttoning around the skirts in the rear as well as about the waist, and furnished with a bib that will fasten at the back of the neck. She is said to be a poor cook who washes her fingers often while at work, but the beginner will find hers grow sticky often enough to keep her constantly travelling backward and forward between her mixing-table and the sink. To obviate this, let her set a tin wash-basin of warm water within reach, and near it either a clean roller or else a hand towel, which, like those she has for her dishes, shall be reserved for her own private use.

Such study of the draughts of the range as was recommended in a former paper of this series must be devoted to the ovens. They vary in different stoves, and often even the same one is affected by the way the wind sets, or by a window or door being open or shut. The condition of the range has much influence upon that of the oven. A steady heat for baking cannot be expected from a

stove that is imperfectly cleaned and choked with clinkers. The method advised by some of the best cooks to test the state of the oven by holding the hand in it while counting twenty slowly is excellent. If the heat becomes unbearable by the end of that time, the oven is at the right temperature for baking. A less tedious plan is to have a thermometer set in the door of the oven that will indicate its heat. The cost of having one affixed is from three to four dollars, and the convenience thus gained is inestimable. The best ovens are tricky at times, and will bear watching. Nearly each one has its pet peculiarity—a tendency to burn at the bottom, or a habit of scorching the top of whatever is confided to its care while the lower part remains raw and sodden. Familiarity will enable the cook to combat the one failing by placing the grating or a pan under the baking-dish, and to conquer the other by covering the cake or loaf with a pan or a paper until the bottom is done.

## XXII.

### GATHERING UP THE FRAGMENTS.

IN the minor economies of the kitchen the mistress must take the lead. Human nature is not at so high a standard either above or below stairs as to justify the employer in expecting a hireling to feel an interest the owner herself does not manifest in saving the odds and ends.

With the end in view of impressing the value of left-overs upon her kitchen lieutenant, the housekeeper must make the rounds of her pantries every morning. The best time for this is soon after breakfast, when the cook has had her morning meal, and whatever has not been eaten in the kitchen is on inspection.

In many homes such surveys as this are never made. The mistress either objects

to the apparent pettiness of the work, or else feels that the savings thus made are not worth the trouble they demand. Occasionally the neglect arises from an indolent *laissez-aller* policy, and yet again she professes a faith in her domestics that forbids her to cast the imputation upon their honesty that such a course might suggest.

The last is one of the emptiest of excuses. A really honest servant has no need to fear the eye of the mistress, and one who is addicted to pilfering should be promptly checked. Moreover, there is a great want of consideration in opening to servants a way to temptation by leaving them practically unchecked in the disposition of eatables of all kinds. The housewife should know clearly how long the various provisions ought to last, and she should be able to understand the reason if there is more butter and sugar used one week than there was the week before. Her servants will respect her the more if they know she has her eyes open

to what occurs in the kitchen, and keeps a clear account of what comes into the house and of what goes out of it. Nor will she be suspected of avarice in such a course. Among the lower classes it is singular that while money commands such reverence that they hold in slight estimation those who have but a small portion of this world's goods, they yet think the more of those who, possessing wealth, yet watch its expenditure closely, or are even, with Barkis, a trifle "near." In other words, where economy is a matter of necessity, they sneer at it; when it is done from choice, they may cavil, but they still respect.

The indiscriminate giving away of "broken victuals" at the basement door fosters a profession of begging, and should never be permitted. It also breeds loose ideas of property in the servants who are allowed to handle thus freely the goods of their employers. The wholesale exercise of such so-called charity really possesses little of that grace,

inasmuch as it costs nothing to the giver and does little good to the recipient. Worse even than this is the reckless consigning of food that could be utilized to the garbage pail or ash barrel. Piles of rolls and stale bread, quarts of soup stock, bones that could be used for gravy, and numberless scraps of all kinds of food are constantly flung away with a lavishness that would bring the families to speedy penury, were the proverb that wilful waste makes woful want often or promptly justified.

Apart from the extravagance of throwing away the remnants of dishes that have appeared once on the table, these little-appreciated left-overs may be converted into most appetizing side dishes and entrées. Slices of cold meat that would never do to reappear as they left the table may be converted into scallops or salmis, or with other odd bits may fill a pie; cold fish makes delicious salads; and scraps of poultry of any kind can always be used. Stale bread need never be wasted.

When soft enough to crumb with the fingers, it is valuable for the many varieties of deserts in which it takes a part, such as bread pudding, suet pudding, cabinet pudding, queen of all puddings, and numerous others. When the slices and heels of loaves have begun to harden they should be spread on a tin plate and set in the oven until, without turning brown, they have yet become brittle enough to be crushed with the rolling-pin or potato-beetle into crumbs that serve admirably for breading chops or croquettes, and for sprinkling over scallops. The broken crackers that are always found in the bottom of the cracker box or bag should also be powdered. Each kind of crumbs should be kept in a glass jar with a top, secure from mice and dampness. These glass preserve-jars, it may be said in passing, are the best receptacles for small quantities of groceries, as one can with them discern at a glance the nature of each variety, and be saved the trouble of searching through paper parcels and tin boxes. When the latter

are used they should be so clearly marked that one can learn their contents instantly without further examination.

Bits of cheese, no matter how small or stale (unless rancid), should be grated and put away for cheese fondus, macaroni, or Welsh-rarebits. The supply will seldom be greater than the demand, so long as, in addition to the uses already mentioned, grated cheese is served with pies and soups, besides being eaten as a relish at lunch and tea. All fat, except that from mutton, should be tried out and clarified, to serve for dripping in place of lard. Even mutton tallow, if clarified and packed into tiny glass jars, such as are used for vaseline, will be as good as that for chapped hands and faces or chafed bodies. Drippings should never be thrown away, nor should a teaspoonful of gravy or soup stock be wasted. Bones from which cooked meat has been cut will make very fair gravy if well broken, put over the fire in enough cold water to cover them, and allowed to stew



gently for hours, until the liquid is reduced to a half or a third of the original quantity. Such bones are always desirable for the stock-pot, and into this may go vegetable left-overs, if they can be utilized in no other way—always provided that clear soup is not wanted. This cannot be made except from meat or bones. The contents of the stock-pot should be boiled at least every other day, and the pot itself—a heavy stone crock with a top—should be scalded out frequently. The vegetables that remain from dinner are often thrown away as useless, but they can almost always be employed, in one form or another, even without consigning them to the stock-pot. A tablespoonful of stewed tomatoes will flavor a sauce; a cupful of mashed potato will be a foundation for a potato puff or purée; cold rice and macaroni are constantly needed for soups; beets may be worked into a salad, and onions never come amiss. The whites of eggs, when the yolks have been used, may be beaten up with

a little water and kept a day or two for icing, or may be whipped into a meringue that will convert a plain pie or cake into a showy dessert. A cupful of sour milk assists in the manufacture of delicious gingerbread, shortcake, or griddle-cakes, and a larger quantity can always be made into pot-cheese.

The custom that was once invariable at the South of purchasing groceries in great quantities and giving out every day the supplies needed has never found much favor at the North. In a modified form, however, it might be practised with advantage. Buying in large amounts is more economical than purchasing what is necessary from week to week, unless the sight of the generous provision arouses extravagance in the cook. To avoid this, it is an excellent idea to have a reserve that is kept under lock and key, and from which the weekly modicum may be given by the housekeeper. So many pounds of sugar, so many pounds of butter, so many bars of soap, so much starch, etc., should be

weighed or counted out once a week. A large closet may serve as the storeroom. Where this plan cannot be followed, the cook should be made to understand exactly how long a barrel of flour or sugar or a tub of butter is expected to last, and her pride as well as her obedience enlisted in the endeavor to make it hold out the appointed time.

There is no economy in purchasing in large quantities groceries that, from their nature, are liable to spoil. Cornmeal or oatmeal that may possibly become full of worms, dried codfish that breeds maggots in hot weather, macaroni or tapioca that may grow musty, olive-oil that is likely to become rancid, and the more delicate articles, such as fine canned or potted goods, it is far better to buy as they are needed. The grocer who gets in his orders fresh every week is not only better able to bear the loss by spoiled provisions, but also much less likely, with his facilities for keeping his stock, to incur the risk. If one is in the country "twelve miles

from a lemon," a store of such things may be indispensable. Then the perishables should be carefully watched, that any sign of their spoiling may be observed in time to endeavor to check it.

## XXIII.

### MARKETING.

THE marketing is one branch of the household labors in which a man is supposed to excel a woman. In many sections of the country the laying in of provisions of all sorts is done by the master of the house. He stops at the market on the way to his place of business, orders what seems best to him—very often without regard to the state of the culinary department—and comes home to his dinner at noon or night with a full knowledge of what is to be set before him that leaves no room for any of the pleasant little surprises in which wives delight.

The mistress of the house is *par excellence* the one who should do the purveying for the family. For her own sake as well as theirs it is desirable. To many hard-working, close-

ly confined wives and mothers this is the only opportunity that comes for that out-door exercise which should be a daily part of every one's life. A woman's existence may not always be sedentary in the strictest sense of the word, for she is generally on her feet constantly during the day. But even the most active household occupations do not give that change and recreation furnished by a brisk walk in the morning air, and the freshening that comes from the mere sight of other faces and scenes than those which surround her from morning until night. To numbers of women this is the only relaxation their duties afford them, and it is one not to be lightly foregone.

If the habit of doing the marketing one's self is not fixed, it may seem difficult at first to adjust one's self to it. "There is so much to be done at home," one urges; and another, "I have no time to dress for the street." Both objections must be either vanquished or eluded. The latter is sometimes the more

- sensible course to pursue. Leave the work at home to wait until your return. You will attack it with all the more zest from the vigor gained by the walk. Nor need home duties be left at loose ends. The dining-room table may be cleared, the cloth brushed off, and the room darkened. The dishes may be scraped, piled in a dishpan, and a kettleful of hot water poured over them. They will be easier to wash from their preliminary soaking. In the upper story the beds will be benefited by an hour's additional airing. The dressing for the street may be nearly all done upon rising. Boots may be donned instead of slippers, and a walking-dress assumed instead of a wrapper. The removal of the neat apron that has protected the dress at breakfast-time, and the slipping on of bonnet, cloak, and gloves, need be a matter of a very few moments, nor will it require longer to remove them on returning home.

As a measure of economy it is wise for a woman to go to market. The most reliable

of butchers will bear watching. It is a temptation they find hard to withstand, when a slip of the knife slices off a pound or two less than was ordered, not to let the amount called for stand in the bill instead of the weight that was really sent. When the purchaser has stood by and superintended the cutting she is less easily hoodwinked, and in weighing out groceries the same rule holds good.

Moreover, the housekeeper who goes to market herself is likely to receive material aid in her efforts to introduce a pleasant variety into the food of the family by seeing different articles for sale that would never suggest themselves to her at home. The disadvantage is obvious of giving orders to the clerks who are sent each morning from the provision-shops to the houses of their customers. They may enumerate their wares, but that does not take the place of the sight of the food itself. The customer who does her purchasing in person may pick up a dain-



ty or secure a better cut of meat than would be possible to the stay-at-home.

Another advantage derived from a woman's marketing is that she is much less apt to be extravagant in her ideas than are the majority of men. A man sees a fine large roast that takes his fancy, and, without pausing to consider that it is twice as much as his family requires, orders it home, thus entailing upon the household the necessity of living off of *réchauffés*, stews, hashes, and scallops for the next three or four days. Then, again, a man hates to be thought stingy. With that disposition to moral cowardice which is more conspicuous in the stronger than in the weaker sex, he shrinks from saying that any delicacy or any cut of meat is too expensive. The woman, on the contrary, feels no hesitation in acknowledging that she wants something cheaper, and turns away decidedly from a piece that she knows would over-supply her family.

The prejudice in favor of patronizing the

same tradesmen for years is not invariably wise. The butcher or grocer often acquires a feeling of security with regard to his regular customers that tends to make him heedless of their orders. If one is thoroughly satisfied with one's marketman there is no sense in making a change; but if carelessness appears it is far better to go to a new shop than to suffer imposition or neglect. The housekeeper should also be on her guard against overcharging. She should compare the prices she gives her particular tradesman with those demanded by others, and ascertain whether she is asked more than would be required elsewhere.

A housekeeper, learning accidentally that a friend paid the butcher both patronized less for certain cuts than she was in the habit of giving him for the same pieces, inquired of the meat merchant his reason for this. The reply was cool and unabashed: "I merely thought, madam, that you were better able to pay two cents more in the pound.

But"—condescendingly—"if you really object to doing so, I will charge you only the same I do others." It is needless to say that that butcher lost one customer forthwith.

In view of such occurrences as these the bills should be watched closely and paid weekly. Allowing them to run longer furnishes more opportunity for cheating. If the tradesman gives any cause to be suspected of trickery, it is wise either to pay as you go, or else in his presence to make a note of the amount of meat bought and of the price charged for it. With a grocer the same plan should be pursued or a pass-book used. Most women have a delicacy about seeming to doubt the honesty of shopmen, which is often quite thrown away upon those with whom they have to deal. On any occasion it is unnecessary to show suspicion, but merely to express a preference for the ready-money system.

In preparing for going to market it is always wise to make out one's memorandum

before quitting the house. Trouble and confusion are thus saved, as well as the danger of purchasing for meals already provided. A list should be written of all the groceries that will be required during the day, that the trouble of sending out for them in a hurry may be saved. If the cook's memory is defective, it may be supplemented by a slate or small black-board hung in the kitchen. Upon this she should jot down a memorandum of anything that may be needed as soon as she discovers that the supply is exhausted.

The advice given by various housekeeping writers to purchase meat at large markets, like Fulton or Washington markets, in New York, is excellent—when it can be followed. There are householders who make all their purchases for the ensuing week on Saturday night, sallying forth laden with a huge market basket, which they bring home packed. These supplies, stored in a good cellar or refrigerator, keep perfectly in cold weather,

and money is saved to an appreciable degree by pursuing this course. But in many cases such a plan is impossible, either from the absence of large markets in the vicinity, or because of the inability of the housekeeper to provide means of transportation without increasing the cost of the provisions to what they would be if bought in small amounts. Often want of space in which to keep the eatables after they are at home is the drawback. Under such circumstances all that one can do is to economize by skilful buying and cooking.

A certain amount of knowledge that cannot be taught by books must be acquired before one can market judiciously. Only experience can inform one whether fish, meat, and vegetables are in good condition instead of stale and unwholesome. Such general rules may be laid down as that the eyes and scales will be bright if a fish is fresh, that vegetables must not be wilted or flabby in texture, that beef must be bright red, with

white veins and marble-like fat, mutton dark in color, and veal light. However valuable such instructions may be as hints, they give the tyro less help than will a few weeks' regular daily marketing, aided by close observation.

## XXIV.

### IN THE DINING-ROOM.

A GROWING tendency to luxury in table furnishing runs side by side with increased elaborateness in cooking. Both mark an advanced civilization and a healthy growth, if not carried too far. Where they are allowed to run to excess they may perhaps do more harm than good, but in moderation they are a great improvement upon quondam American carelessness in these matters.

While rich appointments in table and dining-room are sometimes impossible to people of moderate means, there is a certain daintiness always attainable, and that should be studied. A general outline of the furniture of a dining-room was given in a previous chapter. The care of the apartment after

it is furnished is of as much importance as the first plénishing.

The dining-room should be aired daily as thoroughly as any of the bedchambers. The odor of stale breakfasts and dinners is extremely de-appetizing, and its existence should be rendered impossible by opening the windows and shutting the doors immediately at the close of each meal. Food should never be left standing on the table after the family have quitted the room. That which is to appear again should be carried at once to the cellar or pantry. The scraps left on the plates should be gathered in one dish and sent immediately to their destination in the garbage pail. The soiled china, glass, and silver should be taken into the butler's pantry and neatly piled at the side of the sink. In hot weather it is well to cover them with water at once that they may not attract flies. The thorough rinsing of all china that has been used should be an invariable preliminary to the washing of it in scalding suds.



From this it should be drawn, a piece at a time, and wiped quickly with a *dry* cup towel. The towel, by the way, will keep dry much longer when used on dishes that have just emerged from water so hot that evaporation aids in the work of the cloth. But when this finally becomes moist, do not continue to use it, but exchange it for a perfectly dry towel. Such ill-advised economy as making the same towel do service in wiping all the dishes from any meal, bears fruit in streaked and clouded china and glass and dull silver.

The first airing that the dining-room receives should be early in the morning, by the time the maid has built the range fire, filled the kettle, and put it on to boil. If that plan—excellent where there is but one servant—has been followed of setting the table the night before, the maid must throw over it a cheese-cloth sweeping sheet before she proceeds to brush up the crumbs and dust and arrange the room. Ten minutes' allowance of sweet morning air will do

wonders towards, dissipating the scents of food that hang about any eating-place, and will give the apartments a freshness that will act as a stimulus to the rarely vigorous morning appetite. The room will warm again all the more quickly because the heat has a purified atmosphere to work upon, instead of one heavy with effete particles.

The covering of the breakfast-table is a matter that must be largely left to the individual taste. Some people prefer a white table-cloth at all times and seasons, while to others the dainty colored cloths and doilies sold nowadays especially commend themselves. The latter give a touch of color which, however inadmissible at the dinner-table, is very attractive at the less formal breakfast and luncheon. For luncheon, indeed, economy in table-cloths may be practised, and yet be inoffensive, by the use of large fringed napkins spread on the bare board. Four of them are usually employed, laid so that one corner of each touches the

other in the centre of the table. A pretty mat or doily may be under each plate, or the plates may be set directly on the table. The plainest table with a hard top may be used in this way. It can be kept bright by a slight polishing after each meal, and a vigorous rubbing about once a fortnight with some reliable furniture polish. A little sweet-oil on a piece of old flannel will remove spots. When one has a really handsome table of mahogany or black-walnut, it seems a pity to obscure its beauties by napkins. It may be protected from scratches or blisters by mats placed under the dishes and at each place.

In warm weather one of the first morning duties of the maid should be to drive out all the flies she can, and close the windows with screens, bowing the shutters. The light in the dining-room should never be very brilliant, especially when it falls to the lot of any members of the family to sit facing the windows. If the outlook is unpleasant, as is

sometimes the case in cities, it may be concealed by ground glass or stained glass. The latter is, of course, far prettier, but it is beyond the means of many people. An excellent substitute may be provided by sash curtains, running on slender brass rods fastened to the upper part of the lower sash. The material of the curtains may be of soft China silk, either figured or plain, in a delicate shade of pink, yellow, pale blue, or green, or of figured Madras in light colors. If the room is not brightly lighted, the curtains may be of white Swiss or dotted muslin.

In setting the table for breakfast, the tea equipage should stand in front of the mistress of the house. Coffee and tea cups should be ranged in convenient order on the tray, and all the appurtenances, such as sugar-bowl, slop-bowl, cream-pitcher, tea-strainer, spoons, sugar-tongs, etc., should be within easy reach. If the tea is made, as it always should be, upon the table, the hot-water kettle, with the spirit-lamp under it, should stand

at the right hand; the teapot, cosey, and caddy near by. Each place should be furnished with a tumbler, butter-plate, and salt-cellar, if individual salt-cellars are used. If not, a larger receptacle for salt and a pepper cruet should stand at each corner of the table. The knife and fork should be laid at the right of each place, the knife with its edge turned from the person to whom it belongs. The napkin should be on the left side. A plate should be at each place, to be exchanged, when breakfast is served, for a hot one holding food. There should be flowers in the centre of the table, if possible, even though there should be only a pot of primroses or a cluster of pansies in a tiny vase. The butter, ice, cold bread, milk, and cream may be put on the table before the family enter the room.

The arrangement of the lunch or tea table is essentially the same, although at the former the tea-tray is sometimes omitted, and most of the food is put on at once, instead of be-

ing served in courses as at breakfast and dinner. At the latter meal the table is spread with a white cloth; the silver, etc., placed as at other meals. Large white napkins, hemmed, are used at dinner, while colored and fringed doilies or small white napkins are employed at the other meals.

Two or three writers on home topics have deprecated strongly the use of napkin-rings, and have urged that a clean napkin should be given each member of the family at every meal. A little mental arithmetic brings the number of napkins needed, according to this plan, for a family of five persons, to one hundred and five per week. There are few families, except among the wealthy, who own nine dozen napkins they can have in constant service. More than this number would be required for a change or for company. This supposes only a weekly wash. In the average household, with its one maid-of-all-work, there would be difficulty in having napkins done up all through the week,

and complaint made if nine or ten dozen were sent to the laundry every Monday morning. In addition to this, the constant wear of washing is bad for the damask, and prevents its lasting nearly as long as it would under ordinary circumstances. There is no real necessity for changing so frequently. Barring accidents, a napkin may easily be used three or four times without becoming unpleasant, nor should the housewife whose means oblige her to observe this allowance feel guilty because she cannot give each one of the family three clean napkins per diem.

Time is saved by a waitress who sets the table at the end of each meal for the one that follows. The china, glass, and silver may be replaced in order after washing, and the trouble spared of putting them away and taking them out again.

Plates and tumblers should never be placed on the table bottom upward. The fashion is antiquated, and has neither sense nor beauty to commend it. The suggestion that

it may be done through fear of dust is not pleasant when it occurs to one that the knife, fork, and spoon have received the deposit from which only the other pieces were protected. It is better to cover the whole table with a cloth, and thus shield all alike.

When seldom-used china is taken from the closet it should always be wiped carefully before placing it on the table. The chances of its being grimy with dust are too numerous to be risked.



## XXV.

### BREAKFAST, LUNCH, AND DINNER.

THE table requires a different arrangement at every meal in the day. The waiting also has its especial features at each one. While in many homes the maid-of-all-work includes the task of waitress among her duties, there are numerous others where the "second girl" looks after the waiting. In either event the work should be performed quietly and skilfully; and the instructions that apply to the waiting when in the charge of a dining-room servant vary only slightly from what they should be in the hands of the "general housework girl." In the latter case the duties are fewer and less elaborate, but the same care and refinement should mark the service that prevail in the house conducted by a dozen domestics.

An outline of the manner in which the breakfast-table should be set has been given before. As was then remarked, there is no reason why the board should not be spread for the morning repast on the preceding evening. The silver alone may be omitted, as that is usually carried up-stairs at night. If there is any fear of dust accumulating from the shaking of the furnace or the cleaning out of the grate, one of the light sheets of unbleached cheese-cloth, formerly referred to, may be thrown over the table after it is all ready. Instruction as to the proper methods to follow in airing the room and putting it to rights were given in the last chapter.

Too much stress can hardly be laid upon the desirability of having the breakfast-room bright and cheery. The other meals in the day are generally attended by people in better plight than those who come to this. To breakfast one usually brings a jaded appetite and depressed spirits. The freshness of the morning has had no chance to im-

press those who have just quitted their bedrooms. There are some fortunate creatures who declare that to them the first meal of the day is the best. The dining-room should be studied in its effects, that the great body of unlucky exceptions to this rule may gain upon their entrance something of the feeling giving by a glimpse of sunshine or a draught of pure air. If the atmosphere of the apartment has been renewed by opening the windows, if the room is well lighted, pleasantly papered and furnished, the table tastefully laid and brightened by flowers, the hoped-for result is achieved.

The dainty touches that point the difference between the home and the hotel table should not be lacking. The pretty cloth, the bright silver, glass, and china, the array of individual tea and coffee cups and saucers, the glittering brass or copper hot-water pot, the gay cosey, the crocheted or knit mats, are all invaluable adjuncts to an attractive *ensemble*. Nor should there be missing the

“shining morning face” of the hostess, nor the crisp neatness of attire and coiffure that is shamefully apt to be absent. No woman who would object to having her husband take his place opposite her in his shirt sleeves, with unshaven face, uncombed head, and collarless neck, should ever make her appearance at the table with her hair in crimping-pins or curl-papers, and herself in an untidy dress or without a collar. This may seem a digression to the uninitiated, but it has a more important share in house-keeping made easy than is suspected by the average observer.

The usual rule is that the first course of the breakfast should consist of fruit; oranges, bananas, or apples in winter; berries, cherries, melons, peaches, pears, or any other fresh fruit in summer. There are persons who find their appetites effectually banished by any sweet, even that of fruit, at the beginning of the meal. For these weak ones an exception may possibly be

made, and their share served as dessert. When fruit comes first, the fruit plate and doily, knife, fork, and finger-bowl, should be standing on the table when the family take their seats. They may be removed when the first course is finished, and their places filled by plates holding saucers for the oatmeal, cracked wheat, or other porridge. This is served by the mistress from the head of the table, and she may either add sugar and cream herself, or these may be passed. Where there are children the former method is preferable, but when there are none but grown people at the table the latter course is the more gracious. If the tea was made by the hostess as soon as she came to the table, it should by now be in readiness. The same rule with regard to sugar and cream that was observed with the porridge obtains here.

The solids of the breakfast, as meat, fish, or eggs, potatoes, hot bread, etc., come next. The plates are again changed; this time for

hot ones. These are placed in a pile in front of the master of the house, to whom is deputed the serving of the principal dish. The less important articles of food may either be passed by the waitress, or else set upon the table, and helped out by those before whom they stand.

At lunch, as before said, the table may be spread as for breakfast, except that most of the food is put on the table at once. Even the dessert, or the crackers and cheese, may be here, if there is room for them. The plates are only changed once, at the transition from solids to sweets. The guests do most of the waiting on themselves, and the meal should be informal and pleasant. The waitress is often sent from the room as soon as every one has been served once, and may be recalled by a bell if needed further.

Dinner is a more serious affair. The table-cloth should be pure white, although fashion has occasionally introduced vagaries of color. The flowers that should be pres-

ent at the other meals must not be wanting here. The table has a less crowded look, owing to the absence of the tea-tray. If the hot dishes are to be set on the table, plain mats may be laid in the places the dishes will occupy. A large napkin or carving cloth may be spread where the meat platter is to stand, to save the table-cloth from splashes of gravy. All the small silver to be used should be put on the table at once, if possible. If the courses are to consist of soup, meat, and vegetables, salad, dessert, and coffee or tea, there should lie at the right of the plate, first a knife, a fork for the second course, then a fork for the salad, and last a soup spoon. On the cloth beyond the plate may be laid the spoon or fork for dessert. The napkin, with a piece of bread between its folds, should be at the left side of the place. The other table furnishings, such as butter-plates, salt-cellars, tumblers, pepper-cruets, etc., have been already mentioned in the chapter entitled "In

the Dining-room." Casters have entirely "gone out." The only pieces on the table besides those belonging to each place, and vases or other repositories for flowers, are the ice bowl and water carafes or pitchers. If oil or vinegar is needed, it is passed in the flask.

A plate is in front of each guest, and on it is set a soup plate. The tureen is placed in front of the hostess, where the ladle has already been laid. She serves the soup into the plates as they are passed to her. Both plates are removed after the tureen has been carried out. The meat is generally put in front of the master of the house, unless the hostess carves, or there is a professed butler. When there is a regular waitress, the vegetables usually stand on a side table or "dinner wagon." In those families where the cook does the waiting they are placed on the table after having been passed once. The waitress may then either leave the room, remaining within sound of the



bell, or else stand at one side, tray in hand.

The second course removed from the table, the waitress lays a clean plate at each place and sets the salad bowl, with the accompaniments of vinegar and oil flasks, sugar-bowl, salt and pepper, in front of the mistress. When the salad is dressed, the waitress passes it, and follows it with crackers, cheese, and olives.

After this, everything must be taken from the table except the carafes, ice bowl, and flowers. The soiled things go first. The plates are always left until the main dishes have been removed. After the plates come the small pieces, such as salt-cellars, cruets, and the like. For these a separate tray must be provided, spread with a napkin, that the clink of the silver may not be audible. When this tray is full, it should be set aside unemptied, both to save time and clatter. It should be the study of the hostess to reduce the amount of necessary noise to a

minimum. The waitress should move softly and wear light shoes. Bustle is incompatible with perfection in waiting.

When everything is off the table the crumbs may be gathered into a tray by a scraper or napkin, never by a dust-and-grease-accumulating brush that cannot be washed after each using. The dessert-plates may be set at each place, and the dessert served by the hostess. The tea or coffee tray may have stood ready on the sideboard, and be placed on the table as soon as every one is helped to dessert. The latter may remain on the table until the guests leave the room.

Such minor points as the invariable passing of dishes to the left of the person served, the using of a tray for everything, and sundry other little matters of the same sort, have been passed over from lack of space, and also because they are among those things which everybody is supposed to know. Trifling as they are, their performance or omission marks all the difference between good and bad waiting.

## XXVI.

### THE FAMILY BILL OF FARE.

A GOOD table is not achieved merely by buying an abundant quantity of the best provisions and having them well cooked. There may be monotony in the finest cuts of meat and the choicest vegetables if they appear in an unvarying round. The old formula of hot roast on Sunday, cold Monday, hash on Tuesday, boiled meat on Wednesday, stew on Thursday, fish on Friday, and pork and beans on Saturday, and this same course repeating itself each week, is true oftener than one would at first suppose. Such an order is especially apt to prevail in the homes of people in moderate circumstances, where but one maid is kept. Here the housekeeper hastily assumes that dainty dishes are expensive. In seven cases out of ten she will

stigmatize croquettes, salmis, salads, and scallops as “fancy nonsense” or “flummery,” and with an air of conscious superiority will profess herself satisfied with less elaborate preparations of food. “Plain roast beef, beefsteak, and mutton-chops are good enough for me,” she avers, and is firmly persuaded that in following this bill of fare she is practising the strictest economy.

Just here she makes her mistake. Really excellent beef and mutton are about as costly articles of diet as one can find, without purchasing such delicacies as game, terrapin, and sweetbreads, or brook-trout at fifty cents a pound. Good beefsteak can seldom be bought for less than twenty cents a pound. A nice cut of beef for roasting is only one or two cents less in the pound, nor are mutton-chops cheaper. In many places porter-house steaks and well-trimmed chops never fall below twenty-five cents a pound, nor rib-roasts of beef below twenty-three. The bone is, of course, included in this. A family of the

average size — five persons — can hardly be satisfied with less than from three and a half to four pounds of steak or chops. The weight of the bone is generally anywhere from a quarter to a third of the amount. A roast of beef that will not dry out in the cooking must weigh at least eight pounds. It is easy to calculate how the cost mounts at this rate. One may, of course, purchase indifferent beef and mutton, thus jeopardizing one's teeth and digestion, and this is often done. The housewife who would scoff at Hamburg steaks as fussy will not hesitate to set a piece of leathery rump-steak, fried at that, before her family, and will buy a "chuck" roast in preference to braising a piece of the round, or larding it and steaming it tender for beef *à la mode*.

This much may be said in extenuation of her course: her family may resolutely refuse to accept the more delicate cookery, and cling to the old stand-byes with a devotion worthy of a better object.

“It’s all very well to talk of made dishes,” broke out a woman one day in a council of housekeepers, “but what is one going to do if her family won’t touch them? Now there’s my husband; he won’t eat hashes or stews, or made-overs of any kind. He always wants steaks or chops or veal-cutlets for his breakfast, and the boys are just like him. If I were to put a scallop on the table he’d call it baked hash or boarding-house fare, and it would be just the same with croquettes or anything else of the kind. He says he wants something *solid* for his meals.”

Undoubtedly many women have to battle with just this sort of opposition in their endeavors to raise the standard of cookery in their homes. Still there are many men who relish made dishes, and there are others who can be brought to do so by a little innocent diplomacy. It is not worth while to advertise, by blowing trumpets before it, that the *ragoût* or *pâté* that presents such an attractive appearance is composed of scraps from

yesterday's roast, the gravy made of the bones, and a little boiled rice or macaroni. It would be no gratification to most men to know that the whole dish cost just thirty-seven and a half cents. With the woman, on the other hand, the knowledge of the fact causes her to thrill with mild exultation, and imparts a flavor to the food that would be quite missing in a meal that was three times as expensive.

In spite of the slurs cast upon them, good women, as a rule, are not extravagant—certainly not in the pleasures of the table. If they spend more in this line than they should, it is generally through their ignorance of any other way to present a palatable variety. They long to economize, and spend sorrowful hours over the weekly bills, but they have no idea of how to reduce them without stinting the family.

The table should be suited to the purse. To do it and yet maintain a generous diet, care in the kitchen must supplement the

modest means. There is a great deal of talk about plain living inducing high thinking, but there is a medium between food so plain that it is not appetizing and viands so rich that they cause dyspepsia. Delicate appetites need tempting, and the mind will work more readily after a palatable meal than after one that has been prepared so simply as to give no play to taste.

There are many easy means by which simple food may be improved. One of these is by serving it daintily and having it hot. If a lunch or tea consists of nothing more elaborate than cold meat, baked potatoes, and cold bread, the meat should be cut thin, neatly arranged on a platter and garnished with parsley, the potatoes come on the table smoking hot and folded in a napkin laid in a dish, the bread be in slices of uniform size and thickness and piled on a pretty doily placed on the bread-plate. The task of preparation will be no more difficult than if the meat were sent on in uneven pieces, the potatoes



cold and soggy, and the bread in irregular chunks.

There should be no fixed routine of the different kinds of food. Fish on Friday should be the only landmark of the week. Nor should the housekeeper, in her desire to preserve the health of her husband and children, make too great a run upon dietetics. Graham bread, rice pudding, and oatmeal are very well in their way, but there is such a thing possible as having too much of them. Good food—even rich food, if taken in moderation—is not necessarily unwholesome for grown people of undyspeptic constitutions. Fried articles are not dangerous if the frying is properly done, and consists of a quick browning in boiling fat, instead of a slow soaking in lukewarm grease. Pastry should never be a daily occurrence. When it is rich, it is both good and indigestible; when it is cheap, it is bad and still more indigestible. If one is to have an attack of dyspepsia, let it at least be at the cost of temporary gratifi-

cation, and not at the expense of both palate and stomach. Moreover, if the pastry is a rare event it is less likely to bring discomfort in its train than when partaken of frequently. Simpler desserts, such as puddings, jellies, blanc-manges, and, above all, fruits of every kind, are better for the whole family. It would seem superfluous to remark that children should never touch pastry in any form were it not that one frequently sees three and four year olds disposing of their portions of pie with as much apparent gusto as their elders, and under the consenting gaze of the latter.

It is a question, often agitated as to whether the servants should have the same variety of food that is prepared for the dining-room. This is a hard matter to settle. To some people it appears unfair not to share the delicacies enjoyed by the family with the denizens of the lower floor. This may be readily done when there is but one maid kept, but in a larger household, where there may be two,

three, or even four domestics, it seems rather unreasonable to be expected to furnish them with forced strawberries, hothouse grapes, spring chicken, or choice game. Yet it is absurd to deprive the masters and mistresses of these things simply because they cannot afford to double the amount required for themselves in order to supply the kitchen demand.

The best plan is to provide an equivalent. In many cases the dainties that are most highly prized by the family are not at all appreciated by the kitchen cabinet. Often they prefer a piece of corned beef to any game, and simple sweets and fruits satisfy them as well as the more expensive products of the hothouse. There is no necessity for furnishing the kitchen table with cream because there is a limited amount kept for the morning oatmeal and coffee of the family. Servants have never been accustomed to such luxuries, and it is therefore no deprivation when they do not have them. It is

advisable to have two brands of tea, as a cheaper quality usually suits the taste of the domestics quite as well as the higher-priced, more finely flavored variety that is relished by the trained palate.

Many hints may be gleaned by the housekeeper who endeavors to study variety in her menus if she will read the market reports. A suggestion now and then is of infinite value to the woman who has to evolve from her inner consciousness something over a thousand bills of fare per annum. One woman, who resembled Mrs. Bagnet in so far that she longed to get troublesome matters off her mind, used regularly to write out every Saturday night a bill of fare for each meal of the following week. The plan is worthy of imitation. Where there are wide variances of taste and digestion, individual peculiarities have to be consulted by the caterer, but a general outline can almost always be put down in black and white to serve as a guide.

## XXVII.

### GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY.

A RECENT article in a weekly journal dwelt at some length upon the decline of hospitality. Various reasons were assigned for its decadence, but the chief explanation seemed to be the expense. So much is expected nowadays of those who attempt entertainments of any kind that people of moderate means naturally shrink from the cost. Even those assemblies that originally required but a small outlay are often speedily converted into elaborate affairs. An instance of this may be seen in the afternoon teas that were introduced in this country some years ago. At first no refreshments were provided beyond tea and light cakes, and possibly coffee for non-tea-drinkers. The bouillon and sandwiches were the enter-

ing wedge. Then a salad was added, then ices, until now the modest "tea" is become a gorgeous reception with a big supper. The people who used to delight in receiving their friends without dreading the bills that would follow shrink back in dismay from the metamorphosis.

This is entirely wrong. The consistency that should mark all branches of living is lacking here. The woman whose husband is in receipt of a salary of two or three thousand a year does not, if she is sensible, expect to wear diamonds that will rival those of her neighbor across the way whose lord and master's income is ten or twelve thousand. Yet if the former wishes to entertain a number of friends, she will stretch every nerve and every dollar to provide a supper equal to that Mrs. Lofty's caterer furnished at her last reception. And after all the effort the poorer woman's endeavor is a mere cheap copy of the more elegant repast. As an imitation it is absurd and pitiful at once.

Let the housewife who has to watch her dollars and cents closely make her wits save her purse. She need not be ashamed to own that she cannot afford to order refreshments for her guests from Delmonico or Pinard, nor should she waste time and strength in a struggle to achieve what can be but a travesty of their dainties. Far better let her take a firm stand, and rely on her own individuality to make her entertainments attractive. She should abjure mammoth receptions and great standing lunches, and content herself with teas — *bona-fide* ones — little lunches and dinners, and small card or conversation or musical parties. The means she employs to make her house and her *menu* attractive need not be costly.

It is taken for granted that every housekeeper has a fair supply of china, glass, silver, and table-linen before she thinks of inviting guests. The ware need not be rare or costly, but in these days of cheap and pretty table furnishings there is no excuse for its being

ugly. The linen should be well laundered, the table set with due regard to contemporary usage. If possible, a key-note should be chosen, and everything about the entertainment harmonize with this. It is not difficult to have the flowers and decorations agree in tone. Even the light of the room may be softened by tinted globes (hired for the occasion) to the prevailing hue. The candles may be of the same color, and the ices, etc., may also conform to the chosen shade. Of course when the china matches the other accessories, it is very pleasant; but even without this, charming effects may be produced. White china suits everything, and is preferred by many on that account.

It may be said for the comfort of those whose means do not permit them to give large entertainments that small ones are much more apt to be agreeable. Some of the most delightful little dinners are those where the number present is limited to four or six. There is a cosiness about a small



party like this that can never be attained at a table stretching from one end of the room to the other, and filled on each side with guests. A lunch party of six or eight women is generally pleasanter than one twice that size. At affairs of these dimensions the *menus* need not be so elaborate as would be that required at more formal parties. The dinner may begin with raw oysters or tiny clams. Soup comes next. Fish may be omitted if desired, and its place taken by a simple entrée, such as croquettes or *pâtés*, and this be followed by the roast. After that appears the salad, accompanied by crackers, cheese, and olives; then the dessert and the coffee. At a lunch the order is substantially the same, except that the oysters or clams may be dispensed with, that bouillon served in cups takes the place of soup, and that there is no roast. Instead of it there is some such dish as chops, small fillets of beef, breaded cutlets, or chicken served in an attractive form.

Simple teas form a very pleasant mode of entertaining one's friends when something more general than a dinner or lunch is desired. All that is necessary can be provided at a small outlay of care and cost. Tea or coffee and chocolate are the beverages, thin bread and butter, rolled or cut into tiny three-cornered sandwiches, should be provided, or, if these consume too much time in the preparation, finger rolls, or *grisini*, will answer the purpose. Besides these nothing is essential but a nice assortment of light cakes, that may be either of home manufacture or purchased at a confectioner's, as one may choose. Two married ladies may be requested to preside over the teapot and the coffee-urn, and half a dozen young girls invited to assist in the waiting. With these provisions and a pleasant selection of guests, the success of the tea should be assured.

Naturally a great deal depends upon the people who are present. Judgment is required that in issuing the invitations the

wrong people are not asked to meet one another, and the same tact should be shown by the hostess in introducing her friends. All the work is not done when the guests are invited and the refreshments spread. The host and hostess must be constantly on the alert to see that people are not bored, that one man is not obliged to talk to the same girl all the evening, and that there are no unattended wall-flowers.

Young married people are apt to become careless about their social duties. This is especially the case when they have little children about them to absorb their thoughts and leisure. The habit of staying at home once gained is not easily broken, and on this account it should not be fostered. One's home should be the happiest spot in the world, but its inmates should not refuse to go out into the world occasionally, nor neglect inviting their friends to their own fire-side in return. "Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits," and the rust gathers fast

on the intellect and conversational powers that are not kept bright by friction with others. The practice of asking two or three people to lunch or dinner every week is to be commended. The expense and trouble will be slight, and will pay for themselves in the pleasure gained by both hosts and guests.

A little experience in entertaining will be needed by the housewife before she and her maid adapt themselves entirely to the duty. Preliminary study of the courses of a meal is sometimes necessary, that the silver may not give out at an awkward moment, and that the plates that have to be washed between times may not come in steaming hot for the ice-cream. Few young housekeepers have a sufficient amount of silver and china to go through a course dinner without having to wash those used in the early part of the meal, that they may do duty later on. Even if the waitress is exceptionally clear-headed it is prudent to write out the bill of fare clearly, and pin the sheet of paper in a

prominent spot in the kitchen or pantry. The description of the china to be used should accompany the name of the course with which it belongs, and the places should be designated where the dishes that are to be used again must be washed.

Usually, good servants make very little objection to company. The mistress is much more likely to have their cheerful co-operation if she manifests consideration in her choice of the time she selects for inviting them. No maid will be amiable who is obliged to stop in the midst of her washing or ironing to cook an elaborate company dinner, nor will she relish having her "afternoon out" taken as the one on which her mistress gives a reception. If this particular day must be chosen, she should be allowed the outing of which she is thus deprived at some other time, instead of being obliged to relinquish it altogether. Where there is but one maid kept, the hostess should herself prepare the more delicate dishes.

## XXVIII.

### HOUSE-CLEANING.

ONE of life's inexplicable mysteries, to a man's mind, is the necessity for house-cleaning. His untrained eye can perceive no untidiness in what appears to him a well-ordered house. Even to a woman the origin of dirt often seems almost as great a problem as the origin of evil, and about equally difficult to get rid of. Each room may be swept and scrubbed once a week, and the windows be polished at the same time, the closets may receive a monthly putting to rights, and the cellar and pantries be subjected to a close daily inspection. In spite of it all the semi-annual house-cleaning brings to light deposits of fluff, stores of cobwebs, and accretions of dust that make the housekeeper shudder at the apparent slovenliness in which she has

contentedly lived. Where did it all come from? is her cry.

This question is so likely to remain unanswered that it is hardly worth while to attempt to reply to it, but rather to devote one's energies to clearing the house as best one may of the obnoxious matter. It is scarcely expedient to turn the whole establishment out of windows twice a year. One pulling up of carpets in a twelvemonth ought to keep one in a state of cleanliness that should satisfy all except those ultra-fastidious souls who make life burdensome by the intensity of their neatness.

The designing of the system to be followed in cleaning house demands nearly as much consideration as is required for the planning of a war campaign. In the first place, the housekeeper must resolve that if it lies within the bounds of possibility no one is to be rendered miserable by the house-cleaning. It is a purgatorial period in many homes, and wrongly so. Skill or tact may

succeed in avoiding the confusion that in the minds of most people—and especially of men—is essential to the spring and fall setting to rights.

To avoid such a state of affairs the house-keeper must resist the temptation, strong to all women, of rushing into the heat of the conflict and finishing the irksome business with all speed. Left to herself, she would gird up her loins, attack the task as though it were her worst enemy, and hardly pause to draw breath until the entire dwelling was in a state of irreproachable cleanliness from the shingles on the roof to the cement on the cellar floor. That so many women do yield to their desire to conduct house-cleaning in this fashion goes far to account for the horror its prospect usually excites. Men's methods of work are so different from those of women that they cannot comprehend the burning impatience that consumes the latter to get one piece of work out of the way in order to make room for something else.



Then, too, a man cannot have the same feeling about his house that a woman does, dear though it may be to him. It is his tarrying-place; it is her sphere. What his business interests are to him, her housekeeping is to her. He rarely understands this, sympathetic though he may be. It is unwise in the woman to prejudice him against what is so much to her by making her care of the home too sharp an interruption in the quiet daily routine to which he is accustomed.

In order to avoid this the cleaning should be done by degrees. Such a method may not announce quite as loudly to the world at large that the house is being swept and garnished, but it is an inexpressibly more agreeable system. For example, let the closets receive the first attention. This is no small part of the general sum of labor. Each cupboard and wardrobe must be emptied, swept, and scrubbed. The cracks must be examined for traces of moths, and if these are discovered, each crevice should be filled with insect

powder. The shelves must be brushed off, the walls wiped down. Dresses and wraps must be hung on a clothes-line in the open air and well beaten. The contents of boxes must be turned out and inspected in search of moth larvæ, and such articles as are likely to harbor them protected by sprinklings of camphor or tobacco, or else be laid in boxes, and have paper spread over the top of the box in such a way that the cover shuts down on it. Woollens must be wrapped in papers or cloths, and packed away in trunks or drawers. A certain brand of tar paper is sold warranted to keep moth from furs and woollens. If house-cleaning possessed no other merit, it would be noticeable as a period for ridding one's self of rubbish. With all the care in the world, trash of various kinds will accumulate in six months. The stock should not be permitted to swell to such dimensions and dignity that it will never be destroyed except by a fire that burns the house down.

When both closets and pantries are in absolute order, the more general cleaning may begin. This should be started at the top of the house and worked down, leaving everything in perfect condition behind it. Having the whole house half clean and half dirty breeds discouragement in the hearts of the bravest mistress and maids. One room should be taken at a time. When that is entirely in order—the carpet beaten, the curtains shaken and rehung, the walls, cornices, and mouldings wiped, the paint scrubbed, the windows washed, the picture-frames and glass, the bric-à-brac and furniture, dusted, the upholstery whipped and brushed, the marble of tables or stands scoured, the brasses and mirrors polished—the housekeeper will feel a tranquillity of spirit in the thought of that apartment which she could never have were half a dozen chambers being cleaned at once. By this course, too, she is always sure of having at least one part of the house habitable.

In families where only one maid is kept,

house-cleaning is likely to be tedious business, unless extra help is engaged. Very poor economy is shown by the mistress who wears herself out and overworks her servant in the endeavor to save a few dollars rather than call in a woman to assist in the toil for a couple of days. The same system of making tidy that is practised at other times should be employed now. If the regular work has been properly done, the general purification need not be an extremely formidable affair, after all.

The lifting and putting down again of carpets and matting is usually the most serious part of house-cleaning. If all the carpets are up at once, discomfort is unavoidable. When the family spend the summer out of town it is sometimes feasible to have this most disagreeable work done during their absence. Should this be impossible, it is wise to have part of the carpets taken up in the fall, and the others in the spring. While they can be beaten well and at reasonable rates by the

steam carpet-beating process, there is no sense in resorting to the old-fashioned mode of having them whipped by hand. Cleaning them by either method reveals all the weak spots in the fabric. If it is worn thin in any one place, even if there is no actual break, the carpet should be ripped apart and re-sewed, putting the frayed bits by the wall and under the larger pieces of furniture, and taking the fresher breadths for the parts of the room where they will be more conspicuous and undergo more wear. A good deal of planning is demanded sometimes to make such alterations, but the result usually repays the effort. Often a small rug will cover a darn or a patch so that no one will suspect the existence of the blemish.

Mattings do not need lifting as frequently as carpets, but even they generally require it once in two years. By this time the dust has begun to sift through the meshes. Mattings can be made to last nearly as long as ingrain carpets by turning them. The wrong

side is generally quite as pretty as the right, and wears fully as well.

When ravages from moths in carpets are apprehended, strips of tarred paper about a foot wide should be laid on the floor around the edge of the room, and the carpet tacked down over this. It is said that moths can be destroyed *in* the carpet by wetting this thoroughly with a sponge dipped in clear water, along the seams and close to the walls, and then passing a hot iron over the moistened spots.

When painting and papering are to be done, the fall is the best time for the task. If it is performed in the spring the walls will probably be disfigured by fly-specks before autumn, should the house be kept open, while if it stands closed all summer fresh white paint may become yellow.

## XXIX.

### GENERAL UTILITY.

THE young housekeeper finds emergencies constantly arising in the care of her home and its contents. Tins and brasses grow dim, pots become rusty, accidents happen from unexplained reasons, and she is sometimes almost at her wits' end to know how not only to repair but to prevent damages. In the kitchen these troubles are especially noticeable. Even the rambling style that must necessarily mark this chapter cannot exceed the variety of the difficulties that present themselves to the inexperienced mistress of a house.

One of the chief trials of the housewife who has stringent notions upon sanitary topics, and holds perfect cleanliness an essential to health, is found in the refrigerator. It is

very hard to have this kept in a proper condition. It is not easy to clean, in the first place. The getting at the inside of the lower pantry is awkward work, and the average maid finds it much simpler to slight the task than to do it thoroughly. Yet so much depends upon the state of the refrigerator that it should never be neglected. Here are kept the milk and butter that are among the most easily-contaminated articles of diet, and here are too often thrust odds and ends and scraps that are suffered to remain there long enough to become malodorous, and thus taint other food.

A mistress who had been confined to her chamber for nearly a fortnight by a slight attack of illness descended to the kitchen for the first time after her recovery, and found the cook absent from the room. As was her usual custom, the mistress proceeded to inspect pantries and refrigerator. The first were in tolerable order, except for the accumulation of little "dabs" of food in half a



dozen different vessels, and a general dustiness that showed her plainly the advantage that had been taken of her temporary seclusion. But the condition of the refrigerator filled her with horror. The bottom of the cupboard was fairly swimming with the water that had trickled down from the melting ice above. The smell that met the nostrils on opening the door was nauseating. Examination revealed a plate of refuse fish, the remains of a meal cooked the week before. A couple of chops on another dish were white with mould, while a handful of vegetables rotted in the corner. And in the midst of all stood a plate of butter-balls and a pitcher containing the baby's supply of milk.

The refrigerator should never be scoured out *less* often than once a week, and it should be kept clean between times. The daily round of the mistress ought to insure attention to both these directions. The best mixture for scrubbing it is a strong solution of washing-soda and scalding water. This

may be applied either by a small scrubbing-brush or by a cloth, although the latter is rather preferable. Everything in the refrigerator, including the shelves, should be taken out, and the sides receive as vigorous a rubbing as the bottom. Pieces of charcoal should be laid in the corners to absorb any lurking odors. If such smells are obstinate, the suggestion offered by a practical writer on housewifery may be followed, and a little coffee burned in the refrigerator cupboard. The receptacle for ice should receive equal care. Bits of bruised vegetables are sometimes allowed to gather here, as well as spilled milk and scraps of other food. They should all be removed at the weekly cleaning, and the soda and water applied here also. Washing-soda, when used in the right place, is of distinct value in the kitchen. It has already been suggested as a means for keeping drain-pipes free. It is a sworn enemy to grease in any form. Stirred into boiling water, and poured into soiled kettles or saucepans, it

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makes short work of the food and fat left on the inside of these. It is excellent for bringing tarnished tinware to its normal brightness. With all these good qualities, there are yet many mistresses who refuse to give it houseroom because their laundresses will persist in putting it in the washtub. Not only does it leave a strong and unpleasant odor about the clean garments, but sad havoc is made in the fabric by the powerful alkali. It eats into the material and rots the threads, so that the clothes are speedily riddled with tiny holes. The temptation is great to add it to the water in which greasy dishcloths are washed, but borax answers the purpose almost as well, and does not injure the stuff of which they are made. Household ammonia is nearly as good. This is also excellent in cleaning pots and pans, as it cuts the grease as readily as does the soda. Such vessels should never be left untouched until cold, but be filled with hot water as soon as the food cooked in them has been removed.

It may be remarked, by the way, that the grease that is so diligently scoured off upon ordinary occasions is beneficial to unused pots in keeping them from rusting. Any iron utensils, such as frying-pans, soup-kettles, saucepans, broilers, etc., that are kept in a basement, should be coated with grease before the family leaves town for a three-months' absence in the summer. The task is not pleasant, but it is more agreeable than coming home to find such articles masses of rust. The precaution is not necessary if the agate iron-ware manufactured by Lalance & Grosjean is used. This never rusts, and is easily kept clean. The distinction should be made between this and the common granite-ware. The agate iron is free from the faults of chipping and scaling off that one sometimes observes in the ordinary granite iron-ware.

The polishing of the kitchen stove has already been mentioned. If the blacking is put on thin and the stove brushed quickly

afterwards the work is facilitated. The top may be kept neat during the day by having an old whisk-broom hanging close by with which to brush off bits of food or of anything that is likely to scorch readily. The covers should never be permitted to become red-hot, as this both warps and discolors the iron. The ashes from the stove should always be sifted, and the cinders left over will serve to hold the fire, or to keep the heat low in the furnace on warm days. The necessity of having plenty of hot water always on the range hardly needs reiteration here, except in connection with the warning never to fill an empty kettle while hot with cold water: the cold liquid poured on the heated metal causes a sudden contraction that is likely to result in a cracked kettle. The water for tea or coffee should not have been simmering for hours, but be drawn freshly and brought to a boil immediately before it is to be used.

Insects of every kind are the bane of the

housekeeper. She shrinks equally from the cockroaches that eat her linen, the ants that infest the sugar-barrel, and the flies that swarm from the top of the house to the bottom. The last-named are the most difficult to dispose of effectually. Screens are absolutely necessary, if a pretence of keeping them out is attempted. Even with these in doors and windows the marauders will succeed in forcing an entrance. They should be beaten out early in the morning, and the nets closed immediately. A potent weapon against them is Persian insect-powder. This should be scattered about the room, the last thing at night, by means of the little blow-guns that come for the purpose. All the doors and windows should then be tightly shut. In the morning the dead flies that strew the floor may be brushed up and committed to the kitchen stove, that there may be no possibility of their revival.

Borax is excellent for expelling both water-bugs and ants. Mixed with white sugar

and sprinkled on the floor it proves fatal to the bugs, and mingled with red pepper and scattered about the pantry-shelves it routs the ants. A simple remedy of this kind is far pleasanter than the bondage to bother in which many people are kept by the old plan of setting everything containing food in an outer vessel of water.

Some new utensils require a preliminary seasoning before they are fit for use. Tins should always be filled with water, and a handful of hay boiled in this, before they are used. Lamp-chimneys are less liable to break if put on the fire in a kettle of cold water, and this brought to a boil which continues for an hour. Old lamp-burners may be renewed by being boiled in soda and water. Lamp-chimneys should be cleaned with soft tissue-paper, and soft paper is also capital for rubbing the oil off the body of the lamp.

## XXX.

### THE FAMILY DRESSMAKER.

THE coming of the dressmaker to the family is awaited with varying feelings. The sensations awakened in the hearts of the men of the household are generally of dread and disgust. They fancy they see before them days in which the food will be indifferently cooked and carelessly served, when there will be a stranger at the table, when the women of the family will have no thought or words for anything except a jargon of dressmaking terms unintelligible except to the initiated. There is just enough truth in their prognostications to enable them to say triumphantly, "I told you so!" when anything goes wrong during the reign of the necessary evil.

The women's expectations differ in kind. They know that there is hard work ahead of



them, but the thought of the results they hope to see reward their efforts sustains their courage by the way.

It is not without due consideration that the family dressmaker has been styled a *necessary* evil. Women of independent means recommend the putting on of gowns and wearing them out without alteration, declaring that making over dresses does not repay the pains bestowed upon them. This method may do very well for those whose dress allowance is of liberal dimensions, but unhappily the number of such women is limited. The greater proportion have to guard their expenditures, and when they indulge in new costumes one season, are obliged to balance the outlay by corresponding economy the next year. The frequent changes of fashion render essential a remodelling of old gowns if one would not look odd. To do this the services of the family dressmaker must be called in.

A popular belief, current among men at

least, is that women enjoy dressmaking. Undoubtedly it is pleasant to see a shabby old gown metamorphosed into a comparatively fresh new one by the aid of judicious turning, sponging, and retrimming. The end crowns the means. But it is not invariably a delight to a woman to go through the tiresome minutiae that precede the agreeable termination. There are numbers of women who anticipate the spring and fall dressmaking with deep groanings of spirit. Left to themselves, they might fuss along with their old clothes. But every true woman desires to look her best, not only in her husband's eyes, but also, for his sake, in those of his friends. So she plans and acts and contrives with what skill she may to save his purse and his pride. To say the least, his unfavorable comments savor of ingratitude.

To economize time and expense, all possible preparations should be made for the dressmaker before she comes. Gowns should be ripped apart, cloth sponged and pressed,

silks cleaned, laces for trimming freshened, and all new materials to be used bought and in the house. Linings, sewing-silk, thread, twist, whalebones, reeds, hooks and eyes, braid, buttons, should all be provided, that when the dressmaker arrives her work may be ready for her, and no time need be wasted in sending for articles for lack of which everything is at a standstill. All goods to be dyed must be sent to the dyehouse at least three weeks before they are wanted. A word of caution may not be amiss with regard to dyeing. Some woollens dye nicely, but it never pays to dye a silk. The crackling, stiff quality imparted to it by the process stamps it unmistakably. Even a fine silk looks cheap and common after dyeing.

Garments may often be dyed without being ripped. Waists are apt to shrink and stretch out of shape, but a skirt is not seriously altered. Every grease spot must be sponged from the fabric before it is sent to the dyer's. If not, they are certain to ap-

pear later, and are then almost impossible to eradicate.

The task of ripping can be taken up at odd moments, and a great deal thus be accomplished. There should be a roomy receptacle for all scraps. Either a trunk or a large drawer may be set aside for pieces, or if both of these are out of the question, there should be several piece-bags provided, one for linings, another for wash goods, another for woollens, another for silks, velvets, and plushes. The remnants of each kind and color should be made into neat rolls, pinned or tied. Smaller bags may hold buttons, hooks and eyes, etc. By the practice of such system as this, time and trouble may be saved. The habit of keeping buttons from year to year is worth following, as a set that has been worn one season on a street costume may do duty later on a house gown or a wrapper.

When the dressmaker has arrived, and is fairly settled at her work, the housekeeper's

period of trial begins. She is in a strait betwixt two. She wishes to spend all the time she can with the seamstress, aiding her in those parts of the work that can be performed by unprofessional fingers. In addition to this, it is an indisputable fact, be the reason what it may, that even the most conscientious dressmaker, apart from the assistance she receives, accomplishes more when she has some one sewing with her than when she is left to herself. The housewife realizes this, and knows that to lessen the amount of time she must keep the "necessary evil," and to proportionately diminish the bill for services rendered, she should offer all the help in her power. Yet the remembrance is fresh in her mind of the masculine animadversions upon the prevalent state of the larder during the period of "making over." She recollects the man who apologized to his friend for his inability to invite him home to dinner by informing him that they had nothing for that meal but a "darned dressmaker." It re-

quires a good deal of womanly diplomacy to aid the housekeeper to steer her bark clear of all the breakers.

To achieve her desire she should so arrange her work that she will have few extra duties while her dressmaking is on hand. She should make no outside engagements that can possibly be avoided. She should also exercise judgment in selecting such dishes for the table as lie within the capabilities of her work, and yet guard against a plainness of food in too marked contrast to the ordinary mode of living. There are plenty of pretty desserts, notably those of fruit, that are simply made, and do not demand the presence of the mistress in the kitchen. Now, too, is the time to call upon the resources of the grocer, and to purchase potted and curried fowl, game, sausages, kippered fish, and the many nice prepared puddings. Above all, the housewife should guard against permitting her absorption in her work to cause her to lapse into carelessness of house or person.

Some men hold decided opinions against having dressmakers take their meals at the family table. Such men argue that their own time with their wives and children is limited, and that they do not wish to have it curtailed by the presence of strangers with whom they have nothing in common. When the master of the house has such feelings, they should be respected as far as possible. There is no reason why the dressmaker's meals, neatly arranged on a tray, should not be sent to her where she is at work. This is done in many families within the writer's knowledge, and she has never known of an objection being offered by the seamstress.

A woman may dress well without being extravagant, if she will employ forethought in her buying. She who purchases materials for her summer gowns in the fall of the preceding year, or who provides for her winter outfit in the spring, is able to secure her costumes much more reasonably than if she buys everything in its season. When she

follows this plan, however, she must select goods of quiet color and unobtrusive design, avoiding striking patterns or peculiar colors that are likely to become *passé* before they are made into dresses. Indeed, it is wise for the woman who will probably have to make her dresses do service for more than one season to choose tints and fabrics as Mrs. Primrose did her wedding gown—for qualities that will wear.

A mistake frequently made by women who are ambitious to dress well, and who have small means with which to accomplish it, is that of endeavoring to imitate rich costumes in inexpensive materials. A cheap velvet or plush or a flimsy silk is as poor an investment as one can make. A good tricot, cashmere, or serge that does not pretend to be anything remarkable looks better than the more pretentious fabric. Consistency in dress is always admirable. The attempt to dress beyond one's means is not only wrong, but absurd.



The principle that a mother applies to her own dress she should extend to that of her children. Ruffles and furbelows are out of place on children's frocks, and happily are not necessary in the present state of the modes. A marked improvement is noticeable in this respect upon the fashions that prevailed a few years ago, and it is no longer essential for mothers to wear themselves out in the struggle to overtrim their children's clothes.

A practical knowledge of dressmaking is an excellent accomplishment for every woman to possess. It will stand her in good stead many a time. The example of the Princess of Wales, who has had her young daughters so thoroughly instructed in dressmaking that they are able to cut and fit their own gowns, is worthy of imitation by American mothers. By all means let any possible good be derived from the Anglo-mania that is epidemic in this country.

## XXXI.

### ECONOMY *versus* PARSIMONY.

THE saying has been worn threadbare that a French family can live on the food that an American family throws away. The repetition of the trite quotation does not seem to have had any pronounced effect upon the management of the average American kitchen, for its truth is as apparent to-day as when the phrase was first coined. Still, it is doubtful whether extravagance lies at the root of the wastefulness. Rather should the fault be attributed partially to ignorance of how to make good use of the remnants, and in no slight measure to a dread of appearing parsimonious.

The true meaning of economy seems to be problematical to many people. In the majority of minds it is inseparable from

stinginess. To prove their freedom from the latter unpleasant trait, housekeepers often feel that they must buy lavishly, show no interest in what disposition is made of odds and ends, and disdain to inquire closely after the remains of a dish when it has once appeared on the table. To the same class belong the people who profess to consider nothing too good for every-day use, and who would scorn the idea of reserving any portion of their houses or the contents thereof for "best." They use their finest table-ware until it is chipped and battered, allow their children to race from one end of the drawing-room to the other with dirty boots, and to wear their best frocks when engaged in the manufacture of mud pies.

Now, while nothing is too good for the individual, there should yet be some regard for the fitness of things. Silks and diamonds are not appropriate morning costume, and one would call the woman absurd who donned them when she began her day's

housework. She would assuredly not be accused of "nearness" because she reserved her best clothing for the proper occasions.

Frugality does not imply parsimony any more than extravagance comprehends generosity. Without going so far as one who calls economy the most delightful of luxuries, it may yet be conceded that it is an eminently respectable virtue, and deserves something more than the shy half-recognition which is about all it usually receives even from the boldest. When properly directed, economy permits what to the uninformed might seem extravagance, for while it retrenches in one quarter, it often does so only to allow greater freedom in another direction. Applied to household affairs, it may be said to make a study of the science of *dovetailing*, and to carry it to its highest perfection. It permits no rough corners, no unhewn ends, but introduces a harmony of material elements that is the apotheosis of housekeeping.

To begin with that most important department of the household, the larder. Economy here does not signify stinting of food, lack of variety, and insufficient quantity. It means judicious buying, good cooking, and a consideration of how to utilize left-overs so that they may appear upon the table in attractive shape. So far from all this implying meanness, there is really more stinginess in having the same large piece of meat appear upon the table three or four times in succession, until sight and palate are alike weary of it, than there is in bestowing sufficient thought upon the remnant to convert it into a series of appetizing little dishes. In the latter case the food is eaten; in the former it is not.

“I had an amusing experience the other day,” said a young housekeeper, whose studies before marriage had tended more in the direction of metaphysics and the ologies than of domestic economy. “I had given a dinner-party the night before, and as it

was in the honor of some particular friends, I had ordered the choicest *menu* I could devise. The next morning, never thinking that all might not have been eaten the night before, I called the cook into the dining-room to receive directions. I never go into my kitchen if I can avoid it. I began giving orders for the marketing, when the look of holy horror in the woman's face checked me.

“‘Will ye come here, mem?’ she said, beckoning solemnly. I followed her to the pantry, where she had set forth the remains of the last night's feast. It looked like enough to last us a week. The cook pointed to the shelf dramatically. ‘Shure, mem, it would be sinful to be afther buying annything more till that's all ate up. Don't ye know that wilful waste makes woful want?’”

The cook is exceptional who is sufficiently alive to her employer's interests to call attention to the left-overs. Rather will she think that it's an ill wind that blows nobody good, and quietly appropriate cold vegetables

and broken meats for the benefit of her particular friends; nor can she be severely blamed.

Wise economy may be displayed in the buying of food, and a large purchase should be made with a distinct idea of the modes in which the articles, if necessary, may make an attractive second appearance.

Attention to that branch of household economics which includes the making over of dishes has attracted the notice and engaged the pens of some of the ablest writers of the day on dietetics and home management. Where such women lead, surely no one need hesitate to follow. The pennies thus saved are the pennies earned that will make a perceptible difference in the marketing bills of the prudent housewife.

Should such close attention to details be declared belittling, it might be worth while to institute inquiries as to what higher interests such study is driving out. The greater includes the less, and in eight cases out of

ten the woman whose life is marked by noble deeds and thoughts will be found to consider important just such kind of minor points as the smaller mind rejects as trivial. The woman of large heart and brain does not stultify herself by looking after the littles, but rather dignifies what might otherwise be petty.

The economy that regulates the culinary department should be carried into all other ramifications of the *ménage*. Take, for instance, the using of all the finest porcelain and glass for every day. It is a wretched principle to employ only stone china and heavy tumblers for one's own family, and to keep all that is dainty and choice for guests. Still it is wise to hold in reserve the hand-painted fruit plates, the exquisite Baccarat glass, the fragile Dresden or Sèvres coffee and tea cups, for honored visitors and great occasions, instead of chipping and cracking them by daily use.

When one bestows thought upon the sub-



ject, it is wonderful in how many directions wise economy may be exercised without a suspicion of parsimony. Economy prompts the careful housewife to draw down the shades at the windows through which the sun beats fiercely upon carpets and curtains; economy moves her to turn the gas down to a point when quitting the room, instead of leaving a blaze of light in the emptiness; economy directs her to don a neat wrapper on Sunday morning for breakfast, instead of giving unnecessary wear and crush to the dress she intends to assume for church, and leads her to exchange boots for slippers when she comes in from walking; from economy she protects the front of her gown with an apron when she has rough or dirty work to do. Yet no one accuses her of stinginess because she observes all these little precautions, any more than they suspect that fault when she lays a mat on her steps to keep the mud from her hall carpet.

That economy need not be despised or pro-

scribed as unattractive may be seen by the modes in which it has been rendered ornamental. The elegant lamps that now grace nearly every parlor are used largely from the desire to save gas. The pretty rugs that are laid in front of bureaus and before sofas and fireplaces were adopted to spare wear to the carpet or matting, while the fanciful scarfs and chair backs so much in vogue pay for themselves in keeping clean and fresh the chairs and sofas they adorn.

Economy only ceases to be admirable when it goes too far and verges on stinginess, and then it is very apt to defeat its own desires. The boarding-house keeper who doles out two towels and two napkins a week to each boarder spends more than she economizes. The linen loses more by the hard scrubbing it must sustain to be made clean than is saved in laundry-work by the reduction of the number of pieces.

Common-sense is the measure by which economy must be conducted. The guarding

against unnecessary wear and tear, the mending of tiny holes and worn places as soon as they are perceptible, the stitch in time that saves nine, the changing about of rugs that they may wear evenly, the making over of old clothes, the skilful disposition of remnants, the watching for such little leaks as the throwing away of soup stock or the neglect to sift the ashes—all this attention to apparent trivialities only becomes misplaced when it withdraws the mind from higher objects, and binds it down to a mechanical round that leaves room for nothing but petty details. Economy must appear in not wasting nerve force and brain tissue for inadequate cause as well as in the avoidance of material extravagance.

## XXXII.

### BENEDICK AT HOME.

THE position of a man in his own house is often anomalous. It appears paradoxical at the first glance to declare that the master of a domain should seem to hold a place in it on sufferance. That such a state of affairs does exist in many homes will hardly be denied by close observers of domestic arrangements in a variety of households.

This condition of things does not usually prevail in the establishments of the newly married. While the novelty lasts, the recently made Benedick is the centre around which all revolves. His comforts, his likes and dislikes for people and things, his preferences in eating, are consulted, and constitute the young housekeeper's guide, until the husband is in a fair way to become spoiled.



The length of time all this lasts varies, but it may safely be predicated that those are exceptional households in which, after a while, there is not a diminution of the first enthusiastic manifestations of devotion. The love has not lessened, but it has become an everyday matter. The young wife has acquired cares that are more engrossing than the study of her husband's lightest whims. There are babies in the house now, little "troublesome comforts," whose wants are imperative and vociferous. In the cases where the mother is her own nurse, the wakeful nights, the busy days, keep her too closely occupied to be always mindful that Benedick's favorite dishes are prepared, or that she herself "wears the colors he approves." In the early months of their married life the regulation dressing-gown and slippers were displayed in orthodox fashion in front of the fire every evening, and the wife was always at the door to greet her returning lord. But now the hour of his home-coming is that of the babies' sup-

per and bedtime. She may, like a brave little woman, still "meet her husband with a smile," but the chances are largely in favor of his having to get his own slippers and dressing-gown. The cares of the day have left her no time for brightening her wits or withdrawing her thoughts from the rut in which they run, and she is too weary and too much absorbed in domestic details to seek from her husband the business particulars which she was once proud and happy to be allowed to share with him. She is so tired when supper is over that she can only long for bedtime as she works mechanically at the sewing with which her basket is always filled, while Benedick sits buried in his paper on the other side of the lamp.

As the little ones grow up, if they are like most American children, their desires are paramount in the household. If the husband and father is of a very domestic character he still clings to his hearth-side, but he feels secretly that the share of attention his

cares and fancies receive is far smaller in proportion than that bestowed upon Jack's and Mamie's sports and studies. His wife declares, half jestingly, half sighingly, that she never has a chance to become acquainted with her husband. They have drifted apart, little by little, and although the old love holds firm, the sympathy, the community of feeling, are gone.

The old principle of avoiding the first wrong step holds good in married life as well as in everything else, and is perhaps of even more importance in this relation than in any other. The little rift within the lute is easily made, and widens with such fatal quickness that it is almost impossible to so close it that no trace of the breach may remain. While it is the duty of every husband to do his share towards preserving the unity of thought and feeling, the responsibility of this rests far more upon the wife's shoulders. She is the keeper of the home, as well as its maker.

The holding of herself in a receptive attitude for confidences, the acquiring of a habit of quick and apt sympathy, the readiness to heed and to help, the patience that receives complaints cheerfully, the courage that puts the best and bravest face on petty worries and greater trials, the unselfishness that forgets fault-finding and makes a fresh beginning after each discord — all these are not easy for a woman to learn.

- They mean self-effacement, so far as the weaker qualities of her nature are concerned. Nor is it always a simple matter for her to keep herself up to her own standard when her nerves are worn to the quick by bodily weaknesses of which a man knows nothing. Nevertheless, the woman who means to be in the best and highest sense a helpmate and companion to her husband must resolve to struggle to put self under her feet as steadfastly as did the man pictured in the House Beautiful cast the world behind his back. The effort brings the reward, however, inas-



much as such a frame of mind eventually becomes second nature.

All this does not mean that a woman is to spoil her husband. Only, putting herself in his place, let her make herself and her home what she would like to have it were their positions reversed. When Benedick has been hard at work all day, he is not refreshed by coming home to a dragged, spiritless wife and a cheerless room. A woman who has little children about her cannot always be arrayed in her best, either physically or mentally, nor does a reasonable man expect it. But the wife may, by giving thought to her arrangements, and applying the system which should be the rule of her home, so dispose her tasks that most of them will be out of the way by the home-coming hour. The table may be set, the room in order, and she herself arrayed in a neat dress or tea-gown. The children, if they are trained as they should be, will feel that papa's return is the brightest spot in the day. The lesser

babies are generally in their beds by six o'clock, and the elder children, who are permitted the dignity of staying up to supper, are quite old enough to make their presence a pleasure rather than the nuisance it is in some homes.

Even the busiest woman, by a little plotting, can snatch five or ten minutes during the day in which to glance at the daily paper, and learn enough of the progress of events to be able to converse knowingly with her husband upon current topics. If she learns only sufficient to render it possible for her to make intelligent inquiries, and stimulate her husband into giving her a fuller version of the news she has only caught an inkling of, so much the better. The average man is never more happy than when in the position of enlightening some one who receives gladly the words of wisdom that fall from his lips.

When the tea-table is cleared, and the husband and wife settle down for the evening,

the pleasantest part of the day should be just begun. Few Benedicks are so exacting as one young husband who professed a rooted aversion to seeing his wife sew, and who never permitted her to keep her fingers busy while he was present. Most men like the pretty domestic picture a woman makes when she is at work making or repairing little garments, or indulging in a rare bit of fancy-work.

If Benedick is fond of reading aloud, a great point is gained. The evenings can hardly be other than delightful when the husband reads an entertaining book and the wife listens while she works. But even without this there may be bright talk on pleasant subjects. When the true nature of the home is realized—the fact appreciated that it is a partnership in which the interests of the firm are identical—there is no danger of lack of themes for conversation. The husband has his business experiences to retail, the wife the droll or interesting

episodes of her day. Unless unavoidable, let her spare Benedick the recital of her servants' tiffs and misdeeds, and show the brighter side of home life to the tired man.

The question of smoking is sometimes a bone of contention between otherwise harmonious couples. Careful housewives protest against having their carpets and curtains tainted with the odor of tobacco, and Benedick has to take his cigar or pipe to the porch, or seek pleasanter but less safe quarters. Here, again, is where the sacrifice of the woman's personal preferences must be made. It is better to run the risk of sacrificing the freshness of carpets and hangings than to let Benedick feel that in order to enjoy his pet luxury he must quit his own fireside.

Let it be remarked, in passing, that when a room is thoroughly aired every day, and the curtains are well shaken, there is very little trouble from stale tobacco smoke. In some homes where evening smoking is the rule

there remains no trace of it after the rooms have had fifteen minutes' airing. An open fireplace is a great aid in ventilation.

Above all, the wife should shrink from the risk of belittling herself in her husband's eyes by yielding to peevishness, petulance, or tears over trifles. The glamour of young love wears off easily enough at the best. Let Beatrice strive to keep herself beautiful in Benedick's eyes by growing loveliness of character that lasts when the mere prettinesses of youth have disappeared.



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THE END.