



The Home Department

Conducted by
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Post-Nuptial.

We used to walk together in the twilight.

He whispering tender words so sweet and low.

As down the green lanes, when the dews were falling,

And thro' the woodlands where the birds were calling,

We wandered in those hours so long ago.

But now no more we walk in purple gloaming

Adown the lanes—my love and I—ah, me!

The time is past for such romantic roaming—

He holds the baby while I'm getting tea.

We used to sit with lamp turned low—together,

And talk of love, and its divine effects,

When nights were long and wintry was the weather;

Far nobler he than knight of princely feather,

And I, to him, the loveliest of my sex.

Now, oft when wintry winds howl round the gable,

Immersed in smoke, he pores o'er gold and stocks,

The fact ignoring that across the table,

"The loveliest of her sex" sits darning socks.

Off when arrayed to please my hero's fancy,

I tripped to meet his welcome call,

He looked unutterable things—his dark eyes glowing,

In fond approval of my outward showing

His taste in laces, dresses, jewels—all.

Now if perchance we leave the house together,

When friends invite, or prima donna sings,

He scans my robes (bought new for the occasion),

And foots the bills—and looks unutterable things.

—Selected.

The Home-Making Instinct

I do not hold, as do some others, that every woman was intended for a housekeeper, in the sense in which the term is used today; the wretched failures we see about us refute that idea, but I do believe that away down in the heart of every woman—every "mother's daughter of us"—there lies a dream of home. In every woman's soul there lives a desire, more or less intense, to have and to keep a home of our very own; and with this desire there is also the ability, in greater or less degree, to evolve this idea as successfully as circumstances will allow.

In the coarsest, the roughest, the feminine instinct dominates, too often in a depraved sense, and the idea may be crude and coarse, like the brain through which it works, but it is there. Often it is but the mere animal instinct of seeking a place of rest—of shelter and security, where one may find a bed of leaves and a hidden bone, but the home-feeling in the poor heart sanctifies it, and it is to her what no other place can be.

You have all heard the pathetic story of the old beaver, captured on

the shores of its native stream and carried away into captivity by an experimenting naturalist. Shut up in a room and given some sticks of wood to play with, its natural instinct asserted itself, and the poor, homesick animal labored industriously, if vainly, to construct a dam as best it could from the material supplied it. The world is full of women, in whatever station of life they may be found, who, like the poor beaver, are intent on building a home of the scantiest material. Set them down in ungenial environments, and their first impulse is to better them; a touch here, a little pulling there, a straightening of this and a resetting of that, and though the poverty may still be there, yet the home-touch has imparted an expression of care and comfort it could not otherwise have possessed.

The instinct to arrange and adorn is born in all women, and the world is full of homes made from the scantiest and most unpromising material. Ignorance and poverty may have kept the tastes crude and coarse, and the hands rough and unskilled, while the ideas of cleanliness may be of the dullest, but in some thing the woman shows her pride of adornment—of ornamentation, and if approached in the right spirit, much can be done to give her better ideas of life through her love of home. Floors will be scoured, windows washed, the torn wall paper neatly patched, clean papers put on her shelves, her few dishes washed and set away, her few cooking utensils hung up; wonderful contrivances and receptacles are made of pasteboard, a few cheap prints are hung on the walls, while her few poor little treasures are proudly arranged on some shelf or table, and from the foul hovel of a short time before, it has become a cleanly, cosy nest to which the family hurry after the day is done, as honestly proud of their one-room home as their richer sisters are of their wonderful mansions.

As we go higher in the social scale, we find the same spirit ruling; with larger opportunities and greater advantages, we find a higher grade of ornamentation and arrangement, and homes grow more beautiful as means to the end are given; but through it all, we see only the inborn home-making instinct which God has implanted in the breast of every woman, be she savage or civilized.

Misfit Houses.

Not long ago, I heard a farmer's wife say that she had spent weeks of time carrying every drop of waste water through the kitchen and over the entire length of a long porch to throw it into a drain. It would have cost three or four dollars to run a pipe from the kitchen sink, under the porch, to the drain, but this was deemed an unnecessary expense, so this woman had walked a distance of over thirty feet and back from the kitchen sink to the drain on an average of eighteen to twenty times every day, and in summer weather even oftener than this, that the few dollars might be saved.

The loss of time and strength this involved, whether the worker be mistress or maid, meant just so much taken from the things that tell on the immediate comfort of the family. Think of the miles this woman

walked, uselessly. Who was to blame?

In many houses, and especially farm houses, there seems to have been especial pains taken to arrange the rooms as inconveniently as possible, and to so place the well, cistern and out-houses as to make as many steps as possible necessary, on the part of the house-workers. In many quite large houses there will be found no closets, and in those found, there will be neither hooks nor shelves. The kitchen is generally one big, bare room, with no wall cupboards, dish-closets, sinks or drain pipes, the windows all on one side and the stove, cook-table and work bench necessarily on the other, or dark, side.

In many houses, too, will be found a door in every corner of the room, and if not a door, then a window; and in such rooms it is impossible to arrange furniture with any sort of comfort or convenience. Where a small hall might have readily secured privacy to one or more bedrooms, the one room must be passed through in order to reach the other, and in one house I know of, three rooms have to be passed through in order to reach the fourth.

If farmers, when contemplating building a new dwelling, would consult the wife's taste and ideas of arrangement, they would more often than not find a very great improvement on their own plans. There should be more closets, if smaller rooms, not necessarily, as one old man said, "to hide dirt in," but to keep articles of wearing apparel, etc., out of the reach of dust, and to protect other articles from the ravages of vermin. One cannot keep a room look-

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ing neat and orderly where "things" must be piled on chairs or thrown on the floors, and clothing hung about openly on the walls never looks neat when on the person; besides, the odor of cooking often renders the presence of the wearer offensive to delicate olfactories, when the clothing worn has been hanging on the kitchen walls, to say nothing of the dust and smoke that have discolored the fabric.

In building even one room, space may be planned for a closet in which may be stored clothing, extra bed-clothing, newspapers, and many things which, if left lying about would not only become damaged, but would give to the room an appearance of disorder which no amount of work on the housewife's part could overcome.

Just the Same.

A correspondent writes: "No right-thinking, high-minded girl would, for a moment, occupy the menial position of a hired servant so

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long as anything higher could be reached. Not that housework is degrading, but there is all the difference in the world between doing the work of one's own household—even doing the work with one's own hands—and going into the kitchen of some one else as a paid servant, compelled to execute whatever task is assigned you, and to comply with the demands of a capricious and exacting mistress; if one should summon courage to complain of some injustice and protest against some task, she is told that her services are hired, and if she is not satisfied to do the work required of her, she is at liberty to seek another home."

Now I do wonder if the writer quoted will understand me when I tell her that is just exactly the case in any work which women—or men—attempt to do for hire. We are all hired servants, whether we call our work a "profession" or a trade; whether we serve for a salary or for "wages." We are expected to do the work given us—to do it just as we are told; to do it according to the dictates of our employer; it is just that—the strict faithfulness in trying to do just what we are hired to do—paid to do, that enables the employe in any industry to hold his or her place against competition.

This correspondent says further, that "the hired girl is never considered good enough to be the companion of her mistress." By this, I suppose she means in a social sense. I do not think that employers generally make companions of their employes, nor do I think that the employe expects companionship as part of the contract. The understanding is, it seems to me, to be "so much work for so much pay," and the permanency of the employment depends largely upon how well and how willingly the work is done.

When a woman—or a man—accepts employment, it is supposed that she or he does so, regardless of the "social standing" which goes with the