



The Home Department

Conducted by
Helen Watts Meyer

A June Picture

There's a cloudless sky and a stretch
of meadow,
Stippled with clover and daisy
blooms,
A farmhouse old in the orchard
shadow,
A hum of bees in the lilac plumes.

There's a cheery call from the hazy
marshes,
A tinkle of cow-bells faint and low,
The wandering brook in the sunshine
flashes,
A song of June in its rippling flow.

There are slender tassels of alder
swinging
In perfect time to the perfumed
breeze,
And nesting birds in the woodland,
flinging
Their joyous carols from budding
trees.

There's a lake's blue calm in the dis-
tance lying,
With a cliff's gray turrets reflected
deep;
And green-fringed shores where the
trees are trying
To guard for a season the lilies'
sleep.

And over all rests a golden splendor,
That hints of glories we cannot see,
That thrills the heart with a promise
tender,
Of coming gladness in days to be.
—Selected.

Home Chat

It is a difficult matter for one person to plan the life of another with assurance of any large degree of success, owing to the differences, not only in the individuals, but of surroundings and circumstances. It is a hard matter for the housekeeper who is also wife, mother and hostess, to systematize her work, no matter where the advice to do so comes from, or how wise it may be. In every household chain there are knots and tangles in the way of unforeseen annoyances, hindrances and interruptions, which seriously interfere with the smooth-running of the domestic machinery, and it is in this, as in other things, that "the little foxes spoil the vines." Advice on this subject is easy to give, but often impossible to follow. We are told not to over-do; warned not to cross the danger-line of fatigue; but, with everything depending on one pair of hands, or one already distracted head, a close discrimination between the essentials and the non-essentials is well-nigh impossible, and even the essentials are often so many and so varied as to break one down in the conscientious performance of them.

Still such discrimination must be made; the list of tasks and duties should be gone over, time after time, each time eliminating one or more item, until the "burden is fitted to the back," and it is really surprising, when one tries it, how few things are absolutely necessary to the well-being of our family life. A great deal too much is done through fear of the opinion of others; we fear criticisms, and are cowards. Too much importance is attached to what "they" will say of us, while, if we stop to think of it, the people who are really worth listening to say very little; they have affairs of their own, and their good sense teaches them that no one person can do everything, and they do

not need to hunt out the short-comings of others by which to justify their own. Then, too, women wear themselves out over the sewing machine and the ironing board in order that their children may be "dressed like other children," when the children would be far better pleased in plain little garments that allowed them to enjoy themselves.

Then, too, much cooking is done. Pies, puddings, cakes and desserts are added to the regular meal which, of itself, is often too varied in kind and quantity, when plain fruits, or even nothing at all, would be far more healthful. In many instances, this fact is recognized by the wife and mother, but the husband irritably insists upon a large and varied menu, even while complaining of its cost—in dollars and cents, I mean, for such husbands seldom or never count the wife's wasted nerve-force, or the impairment of his own and the family's digestive powers in summing up the total. Too much unnecessary expenditure of time and strength, as well as money, is incurred by our mistaken method of entertaining our friends at table. Very few of us have the courage to ask even the chance guest of the moment to sit down and share the family lunch without some addition thereto, and for visitors—especially invited guests, we think an elaborate menu is called for, principally, as we suppose, because it is expected of us. In this way, the visits of our dearest friends too often become visitations, and we wear ourselves out, unnecessarily, with "much-serving," where a simple hospitality would be better appreciated.

Shampooing the Hair

It is claimed that the best shampoo for gray hair is that used by the Germans. Two handfuls of bran are boiled in about a gallon of water, and when the liquid has been strained and is cool, enough castile soap is added and heated with the water to make a thick, creamy mixture. One ounce of borax is also added, and the shampoo is ready for use. Rub the watery mixture on the scalp with a brush; or the finger tips may be used. Wash as often as required, rinsing with warm soft water and dry in the sun. Unless one's occupation renders the scalp very dirty, once a month is often enough for the shampoo.

Training the Children

In many homes, children are allowed to be disorderly and untidy, causing too much picking up and straightening out after them, when they should be taught either orderly habits, or to wait upon themselves and the house-mother. They are allowed to "piece" incessantly, and the pantry and dining room (and too often other rooms) are always in a state of "crumbs." Everything wears a "mussy" look, and one is always doing in order to undo the effect of their untidy doings. A family of children can just as well be developed into an army of helpers: not, and their training in this line should commence just as soon as they can understand what we say to them. Even the baby will soon "get the habit" of entertaining itself if we teach it to do so. Housework is said to be the healthiest work in the world—better than a gymnasium for women; and if for women, why not for the children? Girls (and boys, as well) would be far better employed in helping about

the house after school hours than in running the streets, learning the lessons of idleness, to mention no worse ones. An apprenticeship to this most important of all trades, professions, or businesses, whatever a knowledge of domestic science may be called, will discipline and develop the mind as nothing else can, and this apprenticeship should not be denied them. A great deal is now being said about "compulsory schooling," but the happiness and health of the whole human family would be greatly improved if an education along the lines of domestic economy were made compulsory for the young of both sexes.

Simplifying Our Work

It is a test of courage, as well as of character, to resolve to simplify our home work, and then live up to our resolves, and we must expect the carpings and criticisms of a certain class of people. But it is our own fault if we submit to unfavorable conditions merely through fear of the opinions of people who care as little for us as we should do for them. Look about you, and decide for yourself just what is of the most vital importance to the comfort and well-being of your family—not forgetting to have a due regard for your own welfare, and set your limit with a broad margin, having in mind those inevitable interruptions. Remember, in your "stock-taking" that you are the very heart of the home; that the peace, comfort, health and harmony of the family hinges largely upon your own condition, physical and mental; that a physically-exhausted woman is usually a cross and irritable one, given to fretting, fault-finding and nagging and that one of the most important duties you owe to your family is to provide for their comfort by giving them a wholesome, healthy and cheerful house-mother, and that nobody can take so good care of you as you can of yourself. But in order to insure this care, you must have due regard for your own physical limits, and not allow the family to push you across the danger line with their heedless demands upon your strength. Avail yourself of every help you can reach, and ask for all you think you can get.

Vegetables

Nearly all vegetables are improved by being immersed in cold water for a little while before cooking, and nearly all are injured by boiling with fresh meats. Water that has boiled a long time is flat in taste and destroys the flavor of vegetables cooked in it. The teakettle should be washed out daily, and water should be freshly brought to the boiling point when used for cooking purposes. You would hardly think of using the same vessel twice for cooking without a washing out, but the vessel in which we cook our water is used in many families day after day, week after week, with no thought of scouring or cleaning out. The dirty inside of the tea kettle can not but affect the taste of the water, and this, in turn, must impart its tainting to the food which is cooked in it. Water absorbs a great deal of the surrounding atmosphere, and whenever possible, freshly drawn water should be used for all cooking purposes. Green vegetables should be put over the fire in water that has just reached the boiling point, and should be slightly salted—one tablespoonful of salt to two quarts of

water. To do away with the disagreeable odor arising from boiling cabbage, onions, etc., a very small pinch of cayenne pepper may be used. All vegetables should be freshly gathered, if possible, when used. Stale or wilted vegetables can never be quite so nicely cooked as those that are fresh.

For the Stings of Insects

Now that the picnic season is upon us, a few helps on this subject may be timely. Every one suffers more or less at times from the soreness and itching caused by the attacks of the ever-present gnat, mosquito, or varieties of bugs and other insects which render summer outdoor life anything but comfortable. It is said that insects do not trouble where aromatic spirits or toilet vinegars are used. A decoction of dried vervain leaves is claimed to disgust the hungry mosquito. The leaves may be had of the druggist, and should be steeped as one does tea, strained and the liquid rubbed on the exposed parts of the body. Spirits of camphor or elderberry-water may be used. A small quantity of solution of menthol or campho-phenique, or of equal parts of camphor and ammonia are said to diminish the irritation of the sting or bite. A touch of turpentine or coal oil is also recommended. For bee-stings, a fresh onion or leek, cut in two and rubbed on the spot is also said to be good. Liquid sulphur it is claimed, will aid where the tick has bitten. One of the best things to stop the torture of the sc. 1-tick or chigger is a wash in very strong soap suds, the common laundry soap being used. Or the soap may be made into a jelly, the jelly rubbed over the body and then washed off with warm water.

If our readers can give tried preventives and remedies for the bites, we shall be glad to hear from them.

Query Box

M. R.—Do you mean the "pitting?" I am sorry I can not aid you.

Teressa.—There are measuring cups made of glass or tin, divided into accurate portions; they are not expensive.

Mrs. L.—Bread is served with soup; crackers and cheese, with the salad. If you prefer crackers with your soup use them.

Mrs. J. C.—The proportions are always the same—one tablespoonful of butter and one of flour to each cup of soup-stock. There are several good beef extracts on the market.

Thomas T.—"Finnan Haddock" is the haddock—a kind of codfish—smoked; so named from Findhorn, Scotland, where they are obtained in great perfection. It is a valuable food fish.

Patsey.—The colored Japanese matting should be wiped off with a cloth and a solution of salt and water after each weekly sweeping. This will check the tendency to grow brittle and crack where most used.

Annie M.—For the grass stains, before washing, rub the spots thoroughly with soft soap and baking powder; let the goods stand with this mixture on it for about twenty minutes, then wash in the usual way and bleach in the sun.

Housewife.—The tops of the fruit jars should be soaked in vinegar to remove the discoloration, then scrubbed with a clean brush until smooth. (2) All cereals are likely to become "webby" and wormy if kept too long in hot weather; corn meal is not an exception, though, under certain conditions, it may remain free for a long time.

Bessie R.—To boil water is to render it flat and insipid, destroying its

AN OLD AND WELL TRIED REMEDY.
MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING STRUP for children teething should always be used for children while teething. It softens the gums, allays all pain, cures wind colic and is the best remedy for diarrhoea. Twenty-five cents a bottle.