



The Home Department

Conducted by Helen Watts McVey

"Only A Song"

It was only a simple ballad,
Sung to a careless throng;
There were none who knew the singer,
And few cared for the song.
Yet the voice was sweet and tender
As the call of a woodland bird:
Strange, that it woke no echo
In the hearts of those that heard.

She sang of the wondrous glory
That touches the world in spring,
Of the strange, soul-stirring voices
When "the hills break forth and sing."

Of the thousand sounds commingling
To usher the dawn of day;
And the hush hung o'er the valleys
In peace of the gloaming gray.

And one in a distant corner—
A woman, worn with strife—
Heard in the song a message
From the springtime of her life.
Fair forms rose up before her,
From the mist of vanished years;
She sat, o'erwhelmed with memories,
Her eyes were veiled with tears.

Then, when the song was ended,
And hushed the last sweet tone,
The listener rose in silence
And went her way alone.
Once more to her life of labor
She passed; but her heart was strong,
As she prayed, "God bless the singer,"
And she thanked God for the song.
—Selected.

Our Home Chat

From Eureka Springs, Ark. I am sending you my greeting, this week. For a little season, my work will be done here, in a tiny cottage hung birdcage-wise on the face of the mountain in the shadow of these wonderful hills, and then I hope to go back to my home greatly refreshed.

Even here, where the major thought seems to live the butterfly life of the hour, people are prone to think of the hard, every-day duties which alone make life livable. What is it Owen Meredith says about living without everything else, if only the cook be spared to us? Well, it is so here, and the housewife is busy canning, preserving, pickling, putting away for the comforts of the "evil days," the product of the garden field and orchard. Here, as elsewhere, people must eat.

It is a pity we cannot gather our fruits and vegetables from the gardens and orchards instead of from the commission house or the huckster-wagon. If the first were our privilege, we should gather only in the morning, only when fully ripe—out the least taint of over-ripeness; we should bring our vegetables in fresh and crisp; we should not gather immediately after a rain, or on a damp, cloudy day; for in these cases, the danger of mildew is great, and the fruit will be less finely flavored. We would not use imperfect, half-ripe or over-ripe fruit, and nothing but the best and freshest would be "good enough" for putting away. We would not gather more than we could put up in one day, lest standing over night would impair the flavor, even if it did no worse. And we should put up such quantities, using them in all ways of preserving for winter use—if we could have them of our own.

But when one must buy both fruit and vegetables, unless the high grades are afforded—and that means a greatly augmented price—they are never so good, and in counting the cost of all things, one feels tempted to put up

with the lower grades, and thus comes "bad luck" in the pantry, at the least, and often the time, as well as the money invested, is wasted by the fruit spoiling in the jars.

The best utensils for "putting up" time, is the porcelain-lined kettle; the next best, for preserving at least, is the yellow-ware that will stand the fire. Brass may be used if it is kept perfectly clean, and nothing allowed to stand in it, but not for pickling, as if one is careless, tins create a poison by contact with brass. A wide shallow vessel is better than a deep one, a wooden spoon bought or home-made, to stir with, and great care to prevent possible scorching. Before beginning, everything should be in readiness and at hand.

Fruit Jams

Jams are made either with large fruits cut in small pieces, or with the small fruits whole. Fruit should always be boiled in water before the sugar is added, but it must not be too thick, or it will scorch almost at once, and so be entirely spoiled. Acid fruits require more than pound for pound, else they will not keep at all.

In putting up jams it is better to use small glasses, as this prevents the frequent opening that may spoil a larger quantity before it can be used. If paraffin is melted and poured on the tops of jellies and jams, after they are cold, there will be no necessity for the troublesome method of cutting papers to fit, and dipping them in brandy or alcohol. The paraffin may be melted and used any number of times, and a pound costs about twenty cents.

For Making Jellies

Fruit for jelly should be gathered just before it is fully ripe; else it will not make perfect and clear jelly. Also when a sweet fruit, like the strawberry and the pear, is used, always add some very sour juice; say sour apple or red currant. A third apple to two-thirds peach juice makes a fine combination, and the same proportions of raspberries and currants respectively are good. Crab apples jelly readily, but I always add a few slices of lemon, to correct the slightly insipid flavor.

Swamp huckleberries and the low-growing blackberry both make delightful jelly; so do the quince and green grapes. Large fruits should be cut into small pieces and barely enough water to prevent burning is needed in making jelly. Cover the kettle closely and boil very slowly until the fruit is perfectly soft. The jelly bag is best made of flannel, but a bag of cheesecloth will do. If the juice is allowed to drip, and but little squeezing is done, the jelly will be quite clear enough for all purposes, unless it is to compete for a premium at a fair. Then it need be only the juice that drips readily that is used; any that remains may be utilized for the next and home use. Measure the juice after dripping, and allow a cup for cup, except for quinces, where only three-quarters to the pound of sugar need be allowed. Put the juice to boil and allow twenty minutes after it comes to the boil, skimming well. It should not boil hard at any time, but steadily. Have the sugar ready heated, and add gradually to the boiling juice, stirring constantly. When it comes to a boil again it is ready to pour into glasses, which should be hot and dry.

Jelly that is boiled too long will be discolored and the flavor will be injured. If it is not boiled enough it

will not keep. To test, drop a little on a cold plate; if it coagulates, it is done.

After a little experience, it is easy to tell by the way the boiling juice drops from the skimmer. When it runs around the edge and falls in only two or three places in thick, wide drops, it is done. If it drips in only one place, it must boil longer.

For The Hair

For a good shampoo mixture, lay a cake of the purest vegetable oil soap in a vessel, and pour over it one pint of soft, boiling water; stir until a good lather is formed. Take out the cake of soap and, if the hair is very oily, add one teaspoonful of bicarbonate of soda, but under no circumstances use ammonia or powdered borax. Wash the scalp and hair thoroughly in this shampoo mixture while it is still warm, and rinse in warm water. Do not rinse in cold water, as the sudden change in temperature is bad for both scalp and hair. If the hair is very dry, a teaspoonful of sweet almond oil may be added to the last rinsing in water.

Hair which is thin, dry, and breaks easy should not be washed with soap oftener than twice in three months. The yolk of an egg well-beaten and applied in the same manner as you would use soap will cleanse the hair and scalp and leave the hair soft and glossy. Thin hair, if falling out, should be combed very gently. After washing with the egg as above mentioned, rinse thoroughly with clear warm water, then with cool (not cold) water to which a teaspoonful of bay rum has been added.

Before retiring at night, loosen the hair and rub the scalp very gently with the tips of the fingers wet in cool salty water—teaspoonful to a pint. This acts as a tonic and stimulant to the roots. After this rub a very little pure vaseline into the scalp, parting the hair, for a couple of weeks, then apply only two or three times weekly, to start a new growth of hair, and keep it soft.

A fine tonic to follow the above treatment is made of one pint of bay rum, tincture cantharides one drachm; castor oil one ounce; resorcin one drachm; mix well, and rub well into the roots of the hair three times a week until a good growth is established, and the hair seems to be in a good, healthy condition.

"Line Upo' Line"

"Eternal vigilance" is the price of more things than liberty, and it behooves the housewife to be always on the alert in order to circumvent such foes of the household comfort as the pest of the sleeping apartments. In hot weather, such as we are having now, and will continue to have for sometime to come, this vile creature multiplies with exceeding rapidity, unless one is watchful. The very few that have escaped the spring house-cleaning can soon stock the whole premises, if they are not now routed from their hiding places. No one can be absolutely sure that their bedrooms are free from them for any length of time, for they are not particular as to their mode of travelling—rather taking every opportunity to make a change of residence. Not long ago, returning from a visit to a large department store, where I had purchased two paper patterns, I tossed my purchase on my desk, when I saw something hastening away from the package as fast as it could go, and on looking closely, I found it to be one

of the detested bugs, thin and gray from its paper diet, but ready to begin business as soon as possible. It is needless to say its life was shortened. Another lady told me of having brought one into her house in a bundle of papers received at the postoffice. One of our readers tells me to warn our home folks that they may get a supply from the public library, and another tells of getting hers on the street car. They will come in on the garments of visitors whose hat or wrap may be laid on the bed, or the guests may have brought one or more in on her clothing, whether from her own home, or from some place she has visited.

One of our readers sends a few lines from Georgia, which I think will benefit some one, and I return thanks for his kindness. It is worth trying. Here it is:

"There is scarcely anything in the Home Department that will confer a greater blessing on the housekeeper than to make known methods for the elimination of the bedbug from one's house. The thorough scalding of the bed and bedroom in the spring is the way to start the war, or it may be done at any time; then watch the joints of the bedstead, the corners of your mattress, and any fold in the bedding. Wet these places well with a good embalming fluid, putting it on in the morning and shutting up the room, keeping it closed all day—the closing not necessary, but best. At night, air your room before using it. It is the most effective thing I ever knew for the doing away with the pests. I think it is perfectly harmless to the human subject, used in this way. The solution of corrosive sublimate recommended does not begin to compare with it for this purpose."

The writer, who signs M. D. after his name, also endorses the use of corrosive sublimate and witch hazel for itching scalp, but thinks it not harmful to use even if one has an abrasion or scratch on the hands as surgeons, he states, recommend its use for cuts, and themselves wash large cut surfaces in a solution of corrosive sublimate. He recommends that either the fluid of the solution shall be freely applied to free the house from the pests.

One who has a large experience in preparing rented houses for incoming tenants strongly recommends the fumigating with sulphur, and plenty of it. It will free the house, and anything contained in it, if properly used. Floors should be well scalded with hot water containing plenty of carbolic acid. Now is the time to exercise due vigilance. For obvious reasons, we do not publish the name of the fluid he recommends, lest the reader can't have it, if wanted.

Query Box

N. F.—Sent your answer by mail.

Sara H.—See answer to your inquiry in issue of June 16.

"Vista."—Think you can get the information regarding keeping weavels out of peas by applying to secretary of agriculture, Washington, D. C. For recipe, see "Requested Recipes."

Mason R.—To disinfect the drain, take copperas, one-fourth pound and dissolve in a gallon of water and pour into the drain occasionally, as needed, and it will keep sweet. Half a pound of chloride of lime to a gallon of water will have the same effect. Either is cheap.

"Economy."—For sealing bottles with wax, melt eight ounces of beeswax and four ounces of rosin in a vessel placed on the back of the stove; stir until well mixed. Put the corks into the filled bottles and press them

BETTER THAN SPANKING

Spanking does not cure children of bad habits. If it did there would be few children that would do it. There is a constitutional cause for this. Mrs. M. Summers, Box 118, Notre Dame, Ind., will send her home treatment to any mother. She asks no money. Write her today if your children trouble you in this way. Don't blame the child. The chances are it can't help it.