



The Home Department

Conducted by Helen Watts McVey

Aldrich's Last Poem

(What was probably the last verse written by Thomas Bailey Aldrich appears in the Atlantic Monthly for March, and is a tribute to the memory of Longfellow.)

Above his grave the grass and snow
Their soft antiphonal strophes write;
Moonrise and daybreak come and go;
Summer by summer on the height
The thrushes find melodious breath.
Here let no vagrant winds that blow
Across the spaces of the night
Whisper of death.

They do not die who leave their
thought

Imprinted on some deathless page.
Themselves may pass; the spell they
wrought

Endures on earth from age to age.
And thou, whose voice but yesterday
Fell upon charmed listening ears,
Thou shalt not know the touch of
years;

Thou holdest time and chance at bay.
Thou livest in thy living word
As when its cadence first was heard.

O gracious poet and benign,
Beloved presence! now as then
Thou standest by the hearths of
men.

Their fireside joys and griefs are
thine;

Thou speakest to them of their dead,
They listen and are comforted.

They break the bread and pour the
wine

Of life with thee, as in those days
Men saw thee passing on the street
Beneath the elms—O reverend feet
That walk in far celestial ways!

An "Old People's Sunshine Room"

Some time ago I told you of the need of a home for refined old people; people who have lived past the active period of life, and found themselves feeble in body, without means, or an insufficient amount by which to provide a permanent home with the simple comforts so necessary to the peaceful passing of the few years still left them. Old people often have children—fathers and mothers themselves, who more or less willingly provide for them in their own families. Sometimes such an arrangement is very satisfactory, and this class of people have no need of such a shelter as I am going to tell you of. Other old people, though kindly treated, are continually drifted from one to another of the homes of their children, having no settled abiding place, yet longing in their poor, tired hearts, for even the plainest, poorest room in which they may sit down among their treasured belongings, in the rest and quiet of permanency.

Others are domiciled in homes where there are more or less small children, in the taking care of which they are expected to share, or they are expected to help about the housework, doing "light" chores, no matter how they are longing for privacy and rest. If they do not comply with these requirements—it may be the son-in-law; it may be the daughter-in-law; or it may be a sister's, or a brother's home—but it is only a shelter for them. In many cases, the fault lies with the old people themselves; but in any case, they long for some one place which is wholly their own. Oh, you all know how it is; these poor old people want rest, companionship with people of their own times, and freedom from the haunting fear of a homeless helplessness. They are tired of the turmoil; they can no longer take part in the

strife. They long to fold their hands and rest.

I think you have all heard of the International Sunshine society, of which Mrs. Cynthia Westover Alden is the president-general. This society has its headquarters in New York City, but it has many branches all over the country, in the big cities and the small ones, wherever there is need of brightening and bettering the lives of the sorrowful or the helpless, whether the tiny baby, the growing child, the young people, the old people, or the sick and afflicted—all feel the sunshine of the good work this society is doing, with the help of its many branches.

In this work, there is no "graft," no money-making scheme, except the money collected for the work it is doing. Many excellent women and men are giving their time, talent and means to this end, and thousands are feeling the effects of the work in their behalf.

In St. Louis, the at home branch of the International Sunshine society, through its president, Mrs. F. W. Baumhoff, is working to establish such a home as I have outlined. It is a strictly charitable establishment, with no paid officers, and is not intended to incur any debts, either in buying the home grounds, or in its running expenses. As soon as one hundred charter members, paying in \$100 cash, are secured, the home will be opened for occupancy. The home is intended to shelter the old people of Missouri, only, at first; but later, as its resources grow, others will be admitted. It will shelter people of all religions, and the Sunshine mottoes will be its laws. This home will belong to no private charity, but will belong to the members and occupants of the home, itself. These charter members may be either the old people who ask for the comforts of the home, or any charitable society or association who wishes to aid in the good work by paying \$100, which entitles the society to have one old person, man or woman, provided for.

Certain Work Degrading

A young woman, discussing the domestic problem with her friends, shocked the conservative element by stoutly asserting that, whatever housework might mean to others, to herself, it simply meant degradation. She claimed that whatever was "written in the blood" must be read and followed, and that the reason there are so many mental and moral cripples in life is that circumstances, or blind obstinacy forces many into business and avocations for which they have neither a longing nor a natural capacity. They are like "square pegs in round holes," and no manner of pruning, trimming or padding can ever fit them for the work.

Every one owes it to himself, or herself to grow—to take every opportunity for a correct expression of their better, broader selves, and anything followed simply because it is the choice of some other person, forced upon one, or because circumstances force it upon the unwilling doer, can but be degrading in the individual instance, because a misfit vocation destroys self-respect and self-confidence, and in the doing there is no joy, nor ambition, nor aspiration on the part of the doer. The whole individual rebels against trying to do what is so evidently what the inner conscience cannot approve. It is like forcing one to eat of food which the stomach loathes. In trying to lift the load so evidently unfitted for the strength or ability,

both the work and the worker is spoiled, and discontent and bitterness of spirit are engendered.

It is said that "every human being comes into the world with sealed orders from the infinite hand, and even the closest friend cannot certainly read the message therein contained." When one finds what these orders are, without a doubt, there will be no straining or pulling against inclination. Nothing will serve to discourage or hold one back, and the hardest work will seem like play. No matter what the work is, the doing of it will not degrade, discourage or embitter. It is making a life—not merely a living.

Fig Paste

Several of our readers have asked that this recipe should again be given. It is an excellent thing for stimulating sluggish organs and weak digestion: Chop finely one-half pound each of fine raisins and figs and one ounce of senna leaves; put them into a stew pan with half a pound of sugar and a half-pound of boiling water. Let them simmer slowly for twenty minutes, then pour out to cool in a baking tin that is lined with oiled paper. About a square inch at bedtime will do wonders for a torpid liver and sluggish bowels. The paste is perfectly harmless.

The Monotony of It

It is not always work, or even worry, that breaks the busy woman down, so much as the unvarying monotony of the round she follows. A woman who puts in every moment of her time doing the work of her own home, may not really work any harder, or accomplish any more than does the woman who "gets out among folks" occasionally, and whets her intellect against that of her neighbor. The one toils as a machine, growing narrower and narrower, trotting all day long in the same tracks, day in and day out, never lifting her eyes from the rut into which she has fallen, while the other straightens her bent back now and then, and looks over the border between her work and that of her neighbor; if she finds the neighbor doing her tasks in a way different from that which she employs, she wants to know the reason for it, and if she finds it to bring better, or even as good results, while making the burden lighter, she is ready to adopt the new way. She stretches herself into new shapes and exercises otherwise untried muscles, and tries all-around industries which ease and rest her, and in this way, she literally "renews herself" by getting the benefit of a new atmosphere. If, as the Bible declares, it is not good for man to be alone, it certainly is not any better for the woman, and she who is wise will get out of the treadmill now and then, and "swap magnetism" with her own species. No matter how entertaining one may be, we do get tired of ourselves at times, and long for a glimpse into other pastures.

The House Grounds

For the lawn, have your ground properly prepared by loosening the soil, removing all sticks and stones, leveling and rolling so that all humps and hollows may be done away with. This is very important, if you are to use a lawn mower on the grass. The soil should be thoroughly pulverized, and if heavy clay, a little sand, with plenty of well-rotted manure should be incorporated with it. Get the best seed to be had—not necessarily the most expensive; but be sure it is fresh,

and sent out by reliable parties, as to varieties. Then, when the soil is reasonably moist, or just after a rain, sow plenty of seed, then roll, or pat down the surface with a spade. Seeds may be sown at any season, if the soil is dry enough; but the best results obtain from early spring or fall sown seed. Good seed, of suitable mixture, will cost about 30 cents per pound. Where the ground is much shaded, a special mixture must be used, and this will be supplied by your seedman at a trifle higher cost; but it pays to get good seed at first. Grass growing under trees should be heavily supplied with an annual dressing of manure.

In planning for your lawn, study it as you would a picture. Let the grass be the canvas and let your well-massed border be the frame. Tall trees and shrubs should only be used as a back-ground, or as a screen to shut out objectionable views, using low shrubs and perennials in the foreground. Do not crowd. Follow nature's plan, and avoid straight lines. Most of hardy shrubs and perennials should be massed, the taller growing either at the outer, or fence-side, or in the middle, if set in the open lawn. Keep to the hardy shrubs and perennials, as they make a magnificent showing when well established, and require but little care, where annuals are very troublesome. In setting shrubs, keep in mind the fact that they spread rapidly, and set the plants wide apart, planting annuals among them the first season. The formal garden should be behind the house, or at the side, with the most of the front given up as a lawn.

For School Luncheons

One of our readers sends in the following:

For individual chicken pie, to put up for the school lunch in the dish in which it is baked, cut up and cook the chickens as for any pie. When the meat is done, remove all skin and bones and thicken the gravy as usual. Chop or cut up the meat as for hash, and season as you like. Have ready little tin or earthenware dishes, place in each a small raw potato cut into small cubes, then a portion of the seasoned meat, and pour over it some of the gravy. Cover this with a rich pastry or biscuit dough, and bake twenty minutes, or until done, cooking the potato and browning the crust. Let cool before putting the pie in the lunch basket.

Floral Talks

Oxalis bulbs are not expensive, and the flowers are in three shades of red, white and yellow; it is a half-hardy perennial, and is useful to cover rockwork, edgings for formal garden beds, and for edging walks, or growing in hanging baskets. It requires good soil, plenty of moisture, and will stand considerable shade. The corms, or bulbs may be taken up in the fall, treated as other bulbs, and replanted in spring.

For a fine annual climber, covering a large space in a season, the ornamental Balsam Apple is very useful. It is very tender, and must not be planted until all danger of frost is over; planting the seeds where they should grow. The plants require good soil, and frequent cultivation. The fruit, when ripened, will split open, and if one apple is put into a half-pint of alcohol and allowed to stand two weeks and bottled, it is ready to be used for sterilizing and healing open cuts and wounds. If one is put into half a pint of sweet oil, the oil is excellent for burns.

The best shrubs for hardy, deciduous hedges are: California privet, Barberry, Japanese Quince, Althea,

AN OLD AND WELL TRIED REMEDY
MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP 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.