



# The Home Department

Conducted by  
Miss M. M. M.

## "At Christmas-Time"

We all are here!  
Father, mother, sister, brother—all  
so dear!  
Each chair is filled, each voice is  
heard  
In laugh or song, or gleesome word.  
We dream we shall be always found.  
Thus gathered, the old home-hearth  
round.  
Blessed be the meeting, and the spot;  
Tonight, be every care forgot!  
Let joyous mirth assert its power;  
Let warm affection rule the hour  
When all are here.

Are we all here?  
Some one is missed—a vacant chair!  
The merry throng that graced the  
hearth,  
And gave the hour its guileless mirth,  
Is thinned by fate's relentless hand;  
Some one is absent from the band;  
Some, like a night-flash, passed  
away;  
Some sank, slow-fading, day by day;  
Some, in life's maelstrom, whirled  
apart,  
Lost to the old home, save in heart.  
O, vacant chair!  
—Charles Sprague in Scrap Book.

Ah, even still, we all are here!  
E'en they, the absent, held so dear,  
Fond memory brings, our hearts to  
cheer.  
And through the haze of buried  
years,  
Each dear, remembered face appears!  
We see them, as in days long past;  
Fond looks from memory eyes are  
cast;  
Dear hands rest softly in our own;  
Sweet voices speak in memory-tone.  
We words recall; we smiles behold,  
Of dear ones, safe in heavenly fold,  
Or tossing still in stormy strife,  
Brave-battling on the fields of life.  
O, olden band, wide-flung today,  
We hold you in our hearts, always!  
Living, or dead, or near, or far,  
With you we watch the Christ-Child's  
star;  
We live again, the old, glad times;  
We hear, with you, the Christmas  
chimes;  
O, scattered band! each one so dear,  
We all are here! We all are here!  
—H. W. M.

## The Lesson of Christmas Giving

It is a beautiful custom—the joy of giving, which comes to us, more urgently at this season than at any other. Yet there should be more in the Christmas festival than the giving of a doll to the girlie, the pair of skates to the boy, the hanging-up of the tiny stockings, the decking of the Christmas tree, or the dinner which is to follow. All this Christmas-giving is but a symbol recalling the great gift of God—the giving of the Saviour to the sin-crushed world. To every child should this story be told in all its loving details, as often as the Christmas-tide comes round. The gift of God is greater than the toy pack of the mythical Santa Claus and the little heart should early be filled with appreciation of this wonderful love, and its utter dependence for all good and happiness on the great parent heart of God. The child's own eyes can see with what joy you fill all its little wants, and the lesson of the higher love should be carefully impressed upon the sympathetic little heart. Let your love for him, your loving tenderness, be to the child a symbol of the love

that with the gift of His Perfect Son, promised to "With Him, give freely of all things."

We are all just little children, in need of the support of the Father's love. No effort of our own will spare us from some of the discomforts and trials of existence. While it is required of us that we "do," it is also demanded of us that we "trust." In a sense we do, all of us, trust to some higher power; but we should learn to trust more—to believe more, and to take courage with stronger hearts, because of the great parent love of God. In these times of stress and worry, of cruel want and weary waiting, we must do as the children do—look to the higher love. The clouds will clear, things will mend, times will brighten, and although just now, in many homes, the lack is great, we must believe in the power which proclaimed "Peace on earth; good will to men." Let us accept the lesson, looking up as a little child, and believing firmly that "He doeth all things well." We wish you a comfortable and cheerful Christmas!

## The Old Children

While watching and planning for the holiday joys of the young people and children, do not forget the feeble old folks who are in their second childhood, and who long to join with you in the merry-makings and festivities. There is nothing more pitiful than neglected old age, and to crowd feeble old persons away into a corner by themselves, refusing to let them have any interest in the busy times about them, is cruel. They do not realize that their "hands have lost their cunning," and they long to help you in any way they can. In the distribution of presents, remember their little wants—they are few, and find out their likings—they are easily pleased. Even the fact that you have given them a thought pleases them. Unless they are utterly helpless, or imbecile, they can still do many little things, and the children should be taught to respect their little treats, or presents, no matter how crude, for the hands that give them are guided by love alone. They seek to bless, always, and the services of love will not always be at our command. O, be kind to the old and gentle to their infirmities. Speak the kind word, give the air of interest to your attentions to them, and do not let them feel that you deem their presence a marplot to your joys. Go out of your way, if needs be, to brighten their gray lives, if only by a kind word. The holiday time, to them, is swarming with the ghosts of dead joys, and they sorely need your loving sympathy.

## The Social Season

Nearly everybody "goes somewhere," or wants to do so, at this time of year, and now is a good time to set things in shape to keep up the cordial spirit so fully developed under the charm of the Christmas holidays. If you live in a village, or large town, there are many ways in which the social spirit may be kept alive, and there are many people who will not let it die; but those who most need this social stimulus are the ones who get the least of it. There are women, especially those living in the country, who get so in

the habit of staying at home that the proverbial "wild horses" could not "budge" them from their prisons. To such women, no amount of chains and bars could make a place more of a prison than the home has become to them. They just get in the habit of staying at home, and then they get into the habit of dreading to have any one come to see them. They get out of touch with everything, and the community generally lets them stay out of touch. Many such women would be a very valuable acquisition to any gathering, if they could but be drawn in, and once having overcome their dread of meeting others, they are easily entrapped again. But by staying too closely at home, one becomes morbid, and sensitive, and gets the idea that everyone is against them, and efforts to get acquainted with them are regarded, in some instances, as mere curiosity and impertinence. It is not only women who get into this state of feeling; but many young people, especially if self-conscious and shy, get entirely out of touch with others of their age, and in doing so, become uninteresting and unattractive. Such people are apt, too, to become embittered and distrustful, and this spirit sets them still further apart, until life becomes a burden to them. If only the socially inclined would tactfully seek this class out, and by means which they know how to employ, get them out of their seclusion, it would be a blessing. It is a blessed thing to "remember the forgotten," and to throw a little sunshine onto a darkened pathway, but tact and patience, and kindly sympathy must all enter into the work. Not all the poor, or lonely or discouraged dwell in homes of poverty.

## The Farm Telephone

The question of how to keep the young people on the farm is much discussed, and every year, the discussion is bringing the solution of the problem nearer to the people. Among the most advocated measures discussed by agricultural papers is that of installing telephone lines, thus connecting the neighborhoods and ensuring a measure of safety as well as sociability that would do away with a very great deal of the loneliness so severely felt by both young and old. This is, of course, in addition to the uses of the telephone for business purposes. It is claimed that a telephone system is not so very expensive if put in by the farmers, themselves. The average cost of a six-mile line, with ten subscribers using telephones, is estimated at a cost of about \$20 for each subscriber, and the line would require re-building in from nine to twelve years, while the telephone would last much longer, if properly cared for. Free literature, giving instructions for putting in the line is furnished by dealers. Each subscriber furnishes his quota of expense—the number of poles, or an equivalent in money, and the labor of putting the line up is the work of the men themselves, along the line. A telephone system may be put in at a monthly rental by some company doing such business, and this, at first cost is the cheaper method; but the farmers should organize a company and own their own outfit, and though the first cost is greater in this case, the cost of maintaining the line is small, and

the companies in towns or villages are generally very glad to exchange privileges with rural lines. Now is a good time to talk the matter over, and decide on what you are to do. The lines should be a common property, but each man should buy his own phone. Write to manufacturers and get information and estimates of cost and of the proper methods to pursue. Get together, taking your wives with you, and talk the matter over in all its bearings; get all the information you can, then act. Get as many subscribers as possible, as the more families use the lines, the greater its value to you. Now is the time to take the matter up.

## Bathing the Baby

Here is a picture, which many mothers will laugh over now, but once it was no laughing matter to them, at least when their first attempts in this line were made: "When she begins to undress the small one her confidence, which has risen high during the preparatory movements, has ebbed away until, when she beholds the soft little body, she wonders if she will dare attempt the bath alone. The wash-cloth of soft linen, according to nurse's dictum, is put into the water and mopped over the tiny face and head by way of experiment, which elicits a howl from baby. Mamma wonders miserably whether the water is too hot or too cold. Her courage comes back as she reflects that even if it isn't at just the right temperature, it will not burn or freeze the child; so she proceeds to bathe from the little head down, getting hotter and more nervous, for the baby seems so unaccountably limber—can anything be wrong? His lungs seem to be in good condition, however, and mamma concludes that so long as he is able to howl with such force she will venture to proceed. When the time comes to turn him over, she wonders if she can do the trick. Taking a tight grip on her courage and on the slippery baby, she succeeds in bringing the little red back into view. She bathes and rubs lightly, for this mother, if ignorant, is conscientious, and tries to do everything as it should be done—it is only experience that is lacking, and frequently this is dearly bought. After much struggling with bands, sleeves and pins, and with weeping on the part of the mother and howls of protestation on the part of the child, the process is completed."—Clara North Ruly in Men and Women Magazine. Mothers do you not recognize the picture?

## "For a Good Dinner"

One of our brother readers, who assures us that he "knows how to cook," sends us the following method for what he calls "getting up a good, cold-day dinner." He says it is by no means "like mother used to cook," but begs that we try it. Here it is: Select a piece of beef, five to eight pounds, according to the size of your family; have it cut from the under side of the round, which is a cheap, but juicy portion, but can not be used for steak, yet is the finest flavored of any beef. Have the piece as nearly square as possible, wipe it well with a damp cloth, and tie it into compact shape. Into a wide-bottomed, deep iron kettle, put three generous slices of fat, sweet, salt port chopped into small pieces, crisp this slowly in the kettle, drawing out the fat, but not scorching. When well done, skim out the pork, and into the fat drop one small carrot and one good sized onion, both

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 the pain,  
cures wind colic and is the best remedy for diarr-  
hoea. Twenty-five cents a bottle.