

# The Home Department

Conducted by  
Helen Watts McKee

## Which?

Which are the hands we love best—  
Those that are folded within our  
own?

Or those that move us to strange  
unrest

By feathery touch that is quickly  
flown?

Which, ah, which do we love the  
best—

Hands caressing, or hands caressed?

Which are the eyes we most adore—  
Those reflecting our every thought?

Or those whose glances our hearts  
implore,

Whose fire will neither be tamed  
nor taught?

Which, ah, which are we drawn  
most toward—

Eyes adoring, or eyes adored?

Which is the heart that most we  
prize—

That which sways with a pas-  
sionate power?

Or that which yields as a sacrifice,  
Gentle and generous, days and  
hour?

Which of all, do we hold above—  
Hearts most loving, or hearts we  
love?

—Mary B. Chapman, in Century.

## A Dream of the Past

I hope every one of you had as satisfactory a New Year's Day as myself. Yet the joy of the occasion was tinged with sadness, and it is hard to write of it except with eyes blurred by tears. Many years ago, among the low-lying hills of southern Wisconsin, a band of brothers and sisters—a round dozen of them—kept head, hands and hearts of the loving father and mother busy providing for their many wants. There was a large farm, and the large family grew up among flowers in the summer and snowdrifts in the winter, until, as the years passed, the lure of the world claimed them, and they went out, but one of them ever again to set foot on the soil of the old fields. Two of them early laid down the burden of life; four of them followed the flag in the civil war, while the others stood in the firing line of life, fighting the battle for bread. All along the roadway between the then and now, lie the graves of the household—father, mother, brothers and sisters, until today there are just two old people to recall the old happy life on the prairies of Wisconsin.

On New Year's day, these two met, after a separation of eighteen years, during which time the hands of Time had been very busy seaming the faces and powdering the hair. Did they recognize each other? Sure! And while they sat and talked of the dead-and-gone days and the sleeping family, they were just a boy and girl, living over the old life, laughing at some things, sighing over others—"just as of old." The three days were but so many hours, until the "little sister" had to rush back to her desk, and the "big brother" had to turn to his office—again the "old people." In cities far apart, these two sit at their desks, today, but their hands often fall idly on their work, and their minds sweep back through the lately opened doors of the past, recalling again the old joys, the old sorrows, but cheered by the meeting on the threshold of the New Year which will probably be their last this side

of the Beyond. Each has given the best they had for the uplifting of others, and life is not dark or gloomy; even the shadows are softened; "over the cross the crown is shining," and we say, hopefully, cheerily, "This is another Day," and the night may be far in the distance. Pray God we may have strength for the toil until the Night cometh.

## "Light Housekeeping"

While many are ready to praise the prevalent custom of light housekeeping, not only for solitary workers, but for small families, it still has many drawbacks which make against it. The great objection is that it is apt to become too light for either comfort or health. One tires inexpressibly of the ready-to-serve eatables, and the sight of a can or paper parcel does not always or often stimulate the flagging appetite. Where the housekeeper is at the same time the bread winner, she often does not wish to stop whatever is being done to get even as comfortable a dinner as she can get up by a little cooking, and as there is no one to consult, it is easy to take a hasty lunch, or put off eating until the work is done. Under such circumstances, one does not eat much; nothing is particularly appetizing when one must eat alone, and before one realizes it, the habit of bothering to stop for lunch is dropped; then, the breakfast becomes scanted through distaste for such food as one can prepare hastily, and at night one is just too tired to care whether she eats or not. Then, too, one drops the habit of "foraging for food," and often there is nothing in the house, and we are too tired to go out after it. The result is a run-down condition, and this, if the victim is a brain worker, is particularly to be avoided. The laborer, or one who does active physical work, generally has appetite enough to even eat boarding-house food. Living is undoubtedly cheaper through light housekeeping, and one begins with the idea that she can "get what she wants to eat," but usually, she don't. Only too often she don't even get what she absolutely needs for the keeping alive of her system. If one determines to begin right, and keep it up, treating housekeeping as a necessary branch of whatever business she follows, everything can be wholesome and nourishing, and far more satisfactory than at the usual boarding house; but the woman who "keeps house," living alone, generally does the most extravagant thing she can do—allows her body to feed upon itself and consequently starves her brain and nervous system.

## For Elderly Women

Did you ever ask why elderly women must always wear sombre raiment, or face the accusation that they are "primping to be thought young?" And why should they not "primp to be thought young?" Until a very recent date, it has been regarded as due to advancing years that women past their first youth should begin to wear the saddest of colors and least becoming of fashions. At present, however, the more intelligent of daughters are insisting on revolutionizing their mothers' attire, and in nearly all instances, the mother and adult daughter may wear the same cut of garment, while that of the older women will bear touches

of taste and color that not only enlivens themselves, but everything about them. Youth instinctively chooses bright colors, but elderly women should by all means wear touches of the colors which bring out their best tones and emphasize their best points. Gloomy colors are not suited for age; the ripened year is rich in coloring, and even after the going down of the sun, the sky and air are splendid with purple and gold, rose and amber, pink and violet. Glaring colors certainly are out of place anywhere in garments, but the rich, warm colorings of autumn should lighten the fading hair and faces. The trouble is that with too many women of advanced years, taste, and the ability to choose proper colors, is lacking; but some one certainly will advise them, if asked. White garments are not always advisable, even about the neck, unless some touch of color near the face relieves the ghastliness which a stiff, glossy white sometimes brings into certain complexions. A touch of some shade of blue, or a bit of pink, or scarlet, or orange, or yellow—something suitable, which at once speaks for its own fitness, should be worn. Hard white linen collars should give way to soft, pretty laces full of lights and shadows, and these will soften any color, if worn near the face, while a knot of ribbon, a silk flower, a colored brooch, will give the finishing touch. To some complexions, grays are abominable.

## Some Harmless Toilet Preparations

One of our girls who lives on a farm near a large town, asks what she can do to turn farm products into money. There are so many ways, but every one of them requires some labor, a little money, and a good business head. She particularly wishes some formulas for making simple, harmless, effective toilet preparations, as she has always read that so much money is spent for such things by women and men who wish to preserve their looks. Here are some excellent recipes, but the preparations require more than the formula; in order to sell, they must be well and conscientiously made, and attractively put up and placed before the people. It is possible she might be able to sell to her neighbors and towns-people all she could manufacture.

For a good home-made cold cream, take perfectly fresh lard that has never touched salt. If the lard be taken out and carefully rendered, so much the better. Wash the lard thoroughly in spring or well water freshly drawn, working it with the hands for a few minutes under the water; repeat this three times, each time in fresh water, then leave to soak for twenty-four hours; then wash it once more, squeeze and drain out all the water possible, then with a wire cake beater beat the lard in the strongest rosewater until it becomes a creamy mass. When finished, the rosewater should have penetrated every part, and should stand in little drops over the soft, porous surface. Pack this in small china jars, counting as cost, the worth of material, and your labor, adding a small profit, and sell the jars of cream accordingly.

Transparent Complexion Soap—Take one-fourth pound of Castile soap, and slice into a porcelain vessel, and pour over it two quarts of

deodorized grain alcohol; put the vessel, which should be a jar, into a vessel of water at such a heat as to cause the spirits to boil, when the soap will soon dissolve; then put the jar, closely covered, in a warm place until the liquid is clarified, taking off any scum that may appear on the surface, and pour it carefully from the dregs; then put it into the jar again, and set in a vessel of hot water, distilling all the spirits that may arise; dry the remaining mass in the air for a few days, when it will become a white, transparent soap, free from all alkaline impurities, with no smell. This will soften and beautify the complexion.

## Planning for the Summer

It is none too early to begin planning for the coming season, and one of the first things to do to supply ourselves with the florist's and seedmen's catalogues, and find out what the nurserymen have to offer us. As these catalogues are free for the asking, it would be well to send a postal card at once for a copy. Arrange for the filling in of the vacant places, and for the new fruit gardens, along with the vegetables and flowers. The time will soon be with us when leisure to look over these price-lists will not be so very plentiful, so it is better to begin the planning early.

## "The High Cost of Living"

"One reason for the high cost of living is that in many instances the consumer does not receive the amount of what he pays for through a system of short weights and measures which are more or less used. The writer, says a department editor in Colman's Rural World, was much interested a short time ago in visiting a state pure food department, and especially the department of weights and measures, to see the hundreds of short measures and light-weight scales which had been confiscated, found in actual use. Measures with false bottoms; a five gallon oil can was shown to have a false bottom, and, in reality, it fell short five quarts; peck measures by the score that held false bottoms; quart measures with a funnel-shaped lining; computing scales so arranged

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