



The Home Department

Conducted by
Helen Watts McKee

In Winter Time.

About the dreary fields, today,
The winds go walling up and down,
The brooding skies are chill and gray,
The hills are bleak, the woods are brown.

A little while ago they wore
The gorgeous court-dress of October,
But now, their masquerading o'er,
The fields, the hills, the woods once more
Put on their homespun sober.

Ah, what care we, if winds are chill—
If woods are bleak and skies are gray—

While in our hearts love's summer still

Abides, and will not fade away?
There is a sunshine on the hearth,
A genial brightness, broad and tender,
That compensates for wintry dearth,
That makes the humblest home on earth
A world of warmth and splendor!

So, when the twilight gathers slow,
The welcome hearth-fire's ruddy light

Makes our low cottage windows glow
Like cheerful beacons of the night.
And, hand in hand, we, drawing near,
About the hearthstone, happy-hearted,

Forget the world without is drear,
That sullen winter storms are here,
That summer has departed.

Heap on more fuel—let the blaze
Leap upward to the blackened rafter,
While, gathered in the fire-light glow,
We spend the hours with song and laughter.

What care we, if the tempest rage,
Safe-folded in our cottage warm?
We thank the tender God above,
Who guards us with his watchful love
And shields us from the storm.

Little Helps.

When poaching eggs, put a teaspoonful of vinegar in the boiling water. The egg will keep its shape better, and the white will be nicer.

A cloth, wet in alcohol, will make washing windows in winter a satisfactory task. Alcohol will prevent the film of ice which would be the sure result of using water.

Do not wash raisins to be used in a pudding. Rub them clean between dry cloths. Washing will make your pudding heavy.

Ordinary baking soda makes an excellent dentifrice, polishing the teeth and sweetening and purifying the breath.

An excellent polisher for the nickel parts of a stove or range is whiting, moistened with ammonia. When thoroughly clean, scrub out the dry whiting with a chamois skin, or piece of soft cloth.

Boiling tea for twenty minutes, until a good portion of the tannin is extracted, and used hot, makes a good wash for salt rheum; it readily relieves the pain and itching.

Every woman should know something of the chemistry of the food she serves up to her family, its health-giving and its heating qualities. Over-eating, and eating of unsuitable food

is a prolific source of colds. Through an intimate knowledge of how to properly plan and prepare food, many a doctor bill and much discomfort can be saved.

In preparing glue for mending furniture, if you have no regular glue pot, break the dry glue into a small tin can, cover with cold water, set the can in a larger one, and half fill the outer can, add a little salt to the water bath, or larger can, to raise the boiling point, set on the stove and boil until the glue is thoroughly melted. If too thick, thin with strong vinegar. Do not melt more-glue than is needed at one time.

Do not use new linen for towelling to be used about the dishes. It will be too "wirey" to dry thoroughly. Old cloth will not cover the china with lint. Dish towels should be softened by frequent washings before use. Half worn, soft hand towels make excellent tea towels.

Beef Steak.

We are told that beef steak for broiling should be cut three-quarters of an inch thick, and put over a hot fire of clear coals. When it has browned quickly, as it should, and been turned and browned on the other side, it yet remains raw in the middle, and if left longer, the surface burns.

At this stage, the novice is in despair; but she has yet two things to learn—that immediately after the first browning, the fire must decrease in heat, or the meat be brought further away, so that the steak may cook ten or twelve minutes longer, without burning; less time will not cook it nicely in the middle; next, that, like baked meats, the surface must be kept moist with hot fat. Before your steak is put over the coals, cover both sides with melted suet, and afterward, as it dries, spread on a little butter or beef fat. Have in a hot platter a few spoonfuls of water in which the bones cut from the steak have been boiling, also, a little salt and pepper. When the steak is done, lay it on the platter and keep it hot for five minutes, turning it once in that time. This will give you both good steak and good gravy.

"Luck? or Pluck?"

Boys, here is a story I would like you to read. If it is not true, it ought to be, and I think it must be, as it appeared in a reliable newspaper. It contains a lesson for the big boys, who are "waiting for something to turn up."

The story goes back to the '90's, when the hero was a hard working railroad man in Pittsburg. He had to work hard, for he was the whole intellectual and physical equipment of a rickety few miles of railroad running out of that city—president, superintendent, auditor, engineer, machinist, and a little of everything else. Naturally, he absorbed about everything that is worth knowing and useful of the railroad business, and one day his opportunity came to him to test the value of his experience.

There was a record-breaking flood, and while the officials of the big roads stood around bewailing the fact that no freight could be moved over their submerged tracks, this man hired several hundred men, and, above his own

submerged road, he built another road on trestles, out of the flood's reach. It took him two days to rush the job through, and on the third day he was moving freight into and out of Pittsburg, while the officials of the rival companies, with their tracks still under water, looked on in amazement.

Of course, the deed was noised about, and the Gould people heard of him. "We've been wanting a good general superintendent for some time," they said; and a committee of prominent officials of the Wabash railroad was sent to Pittsburg. They went to the terminus of the little "pig and whistle" road and asked, "Where will we find Mr. Ramsey?"

"Out there, under that locomotive," they were told, and they picked their way over ties to the locomotive standing on a siding. It was one of the two owned by the road, and underneath it, pounding away at a repair, was a man clad in a pair of overalls and a greasy jumper. Pretty soon, the man crawled out and stood before the officials. His face and hands were dirty with soot and oil.

"Are you Mr. Joseph Ramsey?" they asked. He answered in the affirmative, inquiring what he could do for them.

"You can leave this job and take the position of general superintendent of the Wabash," they told him; "we came out here to look you over, and

Question Box.

The conductor of the Home Department will be glad to answer questions concerning matters of interest to Housekeepers. Make your questions as brief as possible and address all communications to "Home Department, The Commoner, Lincoln, Nebr."

decide about you later, but we've changed our minds. We want you right now. An official that knows how and is not ashamed to repair his own rolling stock needs no other recommendation."

Mr. Ramsey took the offer, and today is president of the Wabash railway, and the right hand man of its owner in the battle for a tidal outlet.

Answers to Queries.

Marion.—Coal oil is said to be an excellent cleaner for the coal range, and will not only eat away the dirt and grease, but will polish the nickel plating nicely. Be sure there is no fire in the range while using it. Dealers sell an enamel specially prepared for the black parts, and it is much more satisfactory and durable than common stove blacking.

Freddie's Mother.—By some it is thought that the daily tubbing bath is weakening to the body, but it is a mistaken idea. The little fellow will soon grow to love his bath, and will exercise his little limbs by kicking, splashing and beating the water with his little hands, in great glee. The time to give the bath is before, or about an hour after his meals. Have the temperature of the room not low-

er than 80 degrees, and that of the water, about 98 degrees. Use only pure soap—white castile is good; have a soft sponge, used only for baby; soft linen towels, a soft flannel apron or blanket to lift him out on; a little good powder to dust in his "wrinkles" after drying off. Let him stay in the water about five minutes, sponging him thoroughly, rinse off all soap-suds, then lift him out onto the warm blanket, wrap it around him and rub gently and rapidly the limbs and body, completing the "drying off" with a gentle use of the linen towels. Dress him loosely and comfortably; be sure the little feet are warm, and lay him in his crib. Do not "nurse" him to sleep, and do not hold him after he is asleep. Teach him to lie in his crib.

Mrs. L.—What you say of overeating, especially during the holiday season, is true. The appetite, at such times, is no guide to the amount of food necessary to the nourishment of the body, and common sense must be called upon to restrain it. Overeating is ruinous to both health and beauty, and especially so where one is confined indoors. Housekeepers are induced "on their feet" nearly all the time, but working is not walking, and women should walk more in the open air—not only for health, but to attain a graceful carriage. "Out in all weathers" will not give one colds, if precautionary wraps, suitable to the occasion, be used. Exercise in the open air is not only conducive to general health and good looks, but is a tonic for irritable nerves and a sure specific for fretting and spells of temper.

Young Housewife.—Liver is altogether a breakfast dish, and it is often desirable to cook it quickly, consequently, nine times out of ten, it gets burnt. But this is needless waste. Take as many slices as are required, lay them in a dish, pour boiling water over them and allow to remain a few minutes, but take them out while the water is still very hot, slip them onto a towel, where they will dry quickly. Cover the bottom of the skillet with a number of slices of salt pork, and, laying the liver on top of these, set the skillet on the stove. When the pork has fried nearly enough, put the pork on top of the liver, and allow the liver to lie flat in the pan. Turn it once or twice. It will soon be done, and done nicely, with a fine flavor.

Query Box.

Do not forget the questions, Sisters. We want to make the Home Department specially helpful, in more ways than one, and questions on your part will stimulate inquiry on mine, as well, thus benefiting both. If you have a question to ask, the answer to which you think may be of interest to several other readers, write to us, stating the question as clearly, and in as few words as possible, and, while we do not profess to "know it all," we intend to "know a great deal" in order that we may be helpful to you. The helpful spirit should rule in the home.

Pure Food Items.

Good Housekeeping says: "One need not be a woman suffragist to recognize the imperative demand just now for an overpowering feminine sentiment for the protection of the home from the several impositions and dangers of high-priced fuel and outrageous food adulterations. . . . We are satisfied that, when the wives and mothers are awake to the situation, and to their ability, whether organized or unorganized, to arouse the men to action, they will not be slow to perform their duty. . . . Up to a