



# The Home Department

Conducted by  
Helen Watts Mowbray

## A Prayer

Not mine to sing life's greater songs,  
But, Father, may I be  
In good attune if thy dear hand  
Should wake by minstrelsy  
The little songs of common things,  
Which wise hearts know are best;  
The lullabies of babyhood,  
The songs of peace and rest.

Just as a child who knows not how  
To form her letters, yet  
Looks up from her long striving,  
Perchance with eyes tear-wet,  
And lets the teacher hold her hand  
To write where she could not—  
So, I, dear Father, look to thee;  
Define and shape my lot.  
—Alice Crary, in Good Housekeeping.

## October

Not e'en the tender breath of early  
spring,  
Nor hot caress of Summer's frag-  
rant prime,  
Such benedictions to the heart can  
bring  
As the soft touches of October's  
time.  
A purple veil is on the land and sea,  
A lotus-languor in the drowsy air;  
All red and yellow flames the forest  
tree,  
October's banners blazon every-  
where.

—S. L. J.

## Our Social Chat

You have doubtless heard of the woman (it is always a woman, you know) who talked so much that she never had time to say anything. This seems to have been my own case, lately, as I have wanted to "say things" to you for some time, but other subjects interfered. Now is a good time to speak.

You know we are very anxious to make our Home Department of very great value to our readers, so it shall not fall so very far behind our other departments; if you have read The Commoner at all closely throughout, you will see that there must be "something doing" in order to accomplish it. Your assistance in offering ideas, suggestions, criticisms and answering calls for information, has been very valuable, and greatly appreciated, and we hope to still further enlist your hearty interest. The editor is but one; at its broadest, her outlook is but narrow. Our readers are hundreds of thousands, and they possess the world. It is very kind and considerate (and more helpful than you know) of you to tell me what you like, and suggest ideas; but it is just as kind and considerate, and perhaps even more helpful, for you to tell me what you do not like, and what you would like as its substitute; what you think might better be left out, or added to, and what features should be particularly retained.

Regarding the conduct of the Home page of a weekly paper in which I am much interested, its readers said: "We need the Home page for sentiments calculated to make us forget for a moment the sordid cares that, for most of us, are a constant burden, never lifted except when some one's pen causes our spirits to soar above and beyond them all; so, it seems a waste to fill this space with directions for making simple dishes, etc., which may be found in any cook book." Another writer says: "In the world are many workshops, but rest rooms are far too

few. The Home page should be a cosy sitting room, where we may come to rest, shutting out all 'shop.' She further says the women of the farm do not want to be eternally told "how to do things," in the doing of which they are usually far more experienced than their would-be teachers. Another writer says, if she wishes to know how to do things, she goes to her cook book, or other books of reference; but that the work of the Home page should be to "broaden the mind, spread a bright idea, bind up the broken heart, sympathize, warn, comfort and counsel." She adds that, to turn the Home page into a housekeeper's corner, pure and simple, would be like putting every horse to the garbage cart, no matter what its record as a thoroughbred. These are the ideas of mature home-makers.

On the other hand, there are many women who can not—or think they can not—reach the books of reference, and many of these are young wives, inexperienced mothers and untaught housekeepers, who have no kindly mother, experienced aunt or sympathetic grandmother, or even the expert neighbor to whom they may turn for consultation. They have nowhere to go for information on matters of every-day necessity, except it be to the earnest, sympathetic Home editor of their favorite, or it may be only paper or magazine. These, too, enjoy the mental and spiritual food, but their material needs are so insistent that they are forced to ask aid, as it is in "doing things" they find their greatest inefficiency. They must learn, but the books of reference do not always give the methods in detail, and about these details they must ask, or learn by the slow and oftentimes costly process of experience.

Now, will you write to me, sisters, brothers, and give your ideas how, from your standpoint, the Home page may more fully serve the purpose aimed at? Don't be afraid to "hit hard." "Faithful are the wounds of a friend," and the kindest surgeon must often cut the deepest. Remember, I want to serve all of you, and will gladly work hard to give you what you want. I can not publish the letters sent me, for want of space; but every line shall be carefully considered, and you shall have my heartiest thanks for any suggestion you may offer. This is your page, as well as mine.

## "Housekeeping as a Business"

Here is the idea of a business man, as regards housekeeping: "If I were a housekeeper, I would consider the business aspect as being the direct application of order, first. In your house, you have all the elements of a business or commercial proposition. You are a store-keeper, with (if you keep help) one or more employees. Your business is to provide customers (according to the number of your family) with food, lodging and certain services. Your business is simplified in that your income as well as your charges are fixed—or they should be. Your income will necessarily be measured by the quality of services rendered your customers, and that which they demand. If they are reasonable, they will not object to paying you for your services what the same would cost them elsewhere. Estimate your rent, groceries, light, fuel, help, etc., for a month; then add the cost of your own labor, based on what your hus-

band would have to pay for a good housekeeper; then add ten per cent for wear and tear. If your customers object to so reasonable a demand, seek the divorce courts. You can do as well with others.

"Or, if you wish to be still more moderate in your demands, leave off your salary, and ask that your allowance be paid in advance. If this is done, you can usually save something for yourself by close buying. The essential thing is to run your own business and pay your own bills. Do not permit the "head of the house" to meddle in its affairs. He must pay you a fixed sum for the quality of service he demands, and when this service is furnished, it is no business of his whether you show a profit for yourself or not. That is your lookout. If you apply business principles, you will not work sixteen hours a day, but will have ample leisure to entertain your friends, and an artistically furnished house in which to entertain them. The husband, if worthy of the name, would rejoice in a household so ordered, and pay his reckoning with pleasure. The husband who is not willing to pay his wife what he would pay elsewhere for the same or inferior service—even though it consumes most of his income—deserves that she elope with a more appreciative man."—Ex.

The above is not so much a "joke" as it looks to be on its face. If husbands were willing to deal justly by their wives, on business principles, it would greatly simplify matters, in many instances. But too many husbands demand of their wives that they "make brick without straw;" in other words, give them the service they demand without a sufficient sum of money being forthcoming to meet the expenses of such demands. Or, if the bills are barely paid with much doling out of pennies and a liberal indulgence in growls and abuse, there is nothing left for the wife and housekeeper but a sense of humiliation and, if she be a woman of spirit, a hot indignation at being thus compelled to fight for even the amount his own indulgence calls for. She is, in many cases, denied even the wages willingly paid the "hired girl," no matter how satisfactory the hired help may be; yet, she must carry a sense of responsibility into everything she undertakes, knowing that she will be held accountable for every penny she invests, even though her part of the proceeds of the business may be but the food she consumes and the clothes she wears. No wonder that some women "go through" their husband's pockets, and indulge in other petty "sneak-thievery" as the husband calls it, in order to collect a moiety of their just dues so contemptibly withheld from them.

No sensible merchant would think of carrying on the business of buying and selling in such a slipshod manner as is done in the housekeeping of many a home, principally because the wife is forced to "run accounts" with supply houses, or must invest in undesirable material because of a heavier demand than her purse will satisfactorily supply.

## Query Box

"Farm Sister"—Ask any, or as many questions as you like. If I can not answer, others can. There is no set "form" for a query.

C. H. C. would be glad to know of anything that will remove stains of

iodine from colored cotton goods. Will some one help her?

J. L. D. would like to know how to can mushrooms. Can some one send directions very soon, and oblige him?

"Distressed."—If the blue fabric looks faded after ironing, perhaps the iron was too hot. It will regain its color in a few hours. If you have nice, soft rain water, make a "blueing water" as dark as you wish, and rinse the goods in this, taking care to have all parts thoroughly rinsed. Hard water will not do, as the blueing will not distribute evenly, and the goods will appear spotted or streaked.

Ella M.—To make the quilt you mention, take any material—silkoline, drapery silk, or other thin goods, and make little bags, three or four inches square, and stuff evenly with nicely carded wool; in the middle of each, if you wish, a "tack" of bright colored silk or wool thread may be placed. Sew these little bags together with strong thread, with an "over-and-over" or "whip" stitch, in rows the length you want your quilt. When you have enough rows to make the desired width, sew the lengths together with the same kind of stitch. The edges may be finished in any desired fashion.

Mrs. S. M.—To fill the cracks in the wood work or floor, make a paste of flour and water—one pound of flour to three quarts of water, adding a teaspoonful of alum. See that all lumps are beaten out. Into this hot mixture stir soft newspaper, shredded fine with your scissors, and let it soak until the mass can be thoroughly incorporated. It should be of the consistency of well-beaten putty. Press the paste into the cracks; a little at a time, with a blunt-bladed instrument, until they will hold no more, smooth down even with the rest of the wood-work, making it as solid as possible. It will harden as it dries, and can be painted over as the rest of the wood. It will stop the cold about your feet.

Mrs. H. L. M.—Make a gallon of flour starch, taking care that no lumps are in it. Or if the fabric is very dainty and thin, make the starch with "store" starch—a cupful to four quarts of boiling water. Either the flour or the "store" starch must be wet until smooth with cold water before the boiling water is poured on it, and must be stirred all the time while adding the boiling water. Strain, when cool enough to use. Put three quarts of the starch into a nice clean pan or pail and add two gallons of tepid water. Wash the garment in this starch water, using no soap—the starch will cleanse; then, when clean, put the other quart of starch into two or three gallons of water and wash again. Rinse well in clean water and dry in the shade. Before it is quite dry, roll up and lay aside for an hour, then iron on the wrong side. If allowed to get too dry, sprinkle before rolling up.

## The Home Seamstress

For autumn and early winter wear a pleasing change in style of skirt is being introduced. The one and two piece circular skirts have given way to the five, seven and nine gored styles, as these latter do not "sag." The plaited models are also again in favor. The general tendency of these skirts is to fit closely about the hips, the flare starting about half way between the hips and knees. The fullness at the lower edge is increased by plaited sections, which are inserted between the gores and give width to the bottom of the skirt. These modes are particularly adapted to the severe tailor-finish so much in vogue; and appropriate material should be select-

## 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 cent bottles.