

The Home Department

Conducted by Helen M. M. M.

The Marks of the Cross

No longer does the world send forth its call

For men to strive and suffer all alone,

To stand for faith and fall as martyrs fall.

Beneath the bitter blows of stone on stone;

No longer—but the neighbor at your side,

Who greets you every day with smile all fair,

Would cause you to look at him open eyed,

Did you but know what marks his shoulders bear!

And they who spend their strength in mills and mart,

Who swing the sledge, or bend above the books,

Or in the world's great task do their one part

In unfrequented, hidden, dusty nooks;

Who in high places rule, and they who serve,

And often see their gold has turned to dross,

Who pay the toll of strength and soul and nerve—

Upon their shoulders is the chafing cross.

And we need but look back adown the years

To those old days now shadowed in our dreams,

Until we find the one who changed our tears

To smiles that glowed in laughter's brightest gleams,

And see the mother—patient, hopeful, fond—

Who gave us of herself by day and night,

And looked to the to-morrows far beyond—

Yet she would say her cross was ever light.

And each and all, today, tomorrow—yes,

Through all the endless avenue of time,

We bear our cross in pleasure or distress,

Though on the way we falter as we climb.

No longer have we martyrs? Nay, but then

It boots not if we garner gain or loss;

There is no one of all the sons of men

Whose shoulders show no markings of the cross.

—Walter B. Nesbitt, in Republic.

"Balanced Rations"

Every farm paper is full of teachings on these subjects, and the speakers at institutes and other gatherings for the farm people talk learnedly of food proportions. These foods are for the animals of the farm; but, valuable as these animals are, there are other, far more valuable bodies getting their living out of the farm, for the welfare of which little thought is seemingly taken. A tired farm wife writes to me: "If the men can have lecturers come and talk to them about balanced rations for the animals of the stockyard, I do not see why they should not have some one who knows come and tell us what to feed

the children, and why such foods should be given. Very few home mothers know anything about practical chemistry, and we have so little time to give to reading, that we can not learn. Talk as one may, the work on the farm is hard—hard; and few women have the nerve force left, after their necessary work is done, to try to understand long, technical articles on the chemistry of foods. Most of farmers, however, do not regard their children's welfare as being quite as important as that of their stock."

And right here comes in the importance of the so-called "club." In every neighborhood there should be "mothers' meetings" or gatherings, at which questions may be asked by the uninformed, and answered by the more experienced. For this purpose, an organization is better than a mere chance gathering, for if the meetings are anticipated and prepared for, the attendance will be better, and more regular. Better interest will be manifested, and many a "troubled Martha" will take time to take her perplexities to a meeting where she knows she may find a solution for her problems. Now that the long days are with us, why not make up our minds to form a club, and then do it. You remember, the Bible tells us of the efficacy of the "two or three gathered together," and you can not fail to receive benefit from this mingling with other minds. However good and kind your husbands may be, they are not so much interested in the welfare of the children as the mother should be. Make room for the afternoon meeting at least once a week. Let the luncheon be a "neighborhood" affair, each one bringing a contribution to the refreshments, so as not to make the affair burdensome to the hostess. Do try it, sisters.

The Summer Outing

It is not too early to begin planning for the summer outing. We may have but a day, or a few of them, at most, and there may be no money to spend on dress or travel; but this should not discourage us. We all need the vacation, and we are all longing to get away to the green fields, the forest, the stream, or the water-side. Not even the farm family, so surrounded by the beauties of nature as at times to tire of them, wants to go to the city for a change. Further away from the haunts of human beings, into the wilds and solitudes, is the one cry, "back to nature," and to the fresh, sweet air and clear, health-giving sunshine. If one will but plan wisely, doing little by little the things that must be done, keeping always in view the things that will serve best for the holiday fitting, the "getting ready to go," should not be burdensome. We should leave behind us all the unnecessary, hindering things, and look forward to the simple life that befits our anticipations of restful change; the dominant idea should be comfort, and the casting aside of care. If matters are looked at in the right light, there can be real comfort and rest for a very little money.

If you can not spend money and time to go far away, take "day" vacations as often as possible; or even an afternoon, spent in luxurious idleness in the woods or the meadows, or in some not frequently visited place, will rejuvenate the par-

ticipants, men, women or children. A few neighbors could go together some day, if only to a camping ground a few miles away, or to some shady, grassy pasture, or on the banks of a stream, with no "fussing about food," garbed in comfortable, every day garments that will stand the disasters of the trip, giving the day over to idle happiness. If the whole family could not be spared, let the mothers have the day, free from the care of the kitchen, taking plain, wholesome foods and something in which to "make coffee" over the camp fire, and let the little folks do the table setting and chores. You don't know how the little things enjoy the responsibility of waiting on the "big folks."

The "Help" Problem

When our housekeepers learn to get all the help they can, and keep all the help they get, the housekeeping problem will be much easier of solution than it now is. It is wonderful, how many little contrivances as well as large ones are now on the market in the interests of the housewife. In a great many regions, gas is to be had quite reasonably for fuel, and the old coal or wood range can be set aside during the hot weather, while in others, the "wickless blue-flame oil cookers," with one, two or three burners, or even more, may be had at a cost of from \$4 to \$9, and kerosene oil (coal oil) is said to be a better, as well as a cheaper fuel, than any other, and the stove is as safe as the oil lamp, and as easily kept clean. With either a gas or an oil stove and a good steam-cooker, the terrors of putting up fruit are greatly lessened. The steam cooker is as valuable for cooking foods as the cooking chest, and every housewife should have one. Some women buy these things, and before they have learned to use them, or know their value, they set them aside, and go back to the old methods, roasting themselves, as well as the dinner. In time, we shall have denatured alcohol for fuel in the home, and this is said to be a far safer fuel and illuminant than the inflammable gasoline we have so long used. It is a pleasure to go through a large department, or other store having departments set aside for household furnishings, to see how very many little conveniences, at very small cost, are now ready for the fortunate housekeeper who has the good sense to furnish her kitchen and laundry before she spends any money in useless bric-a-brac or dust-catching draperies for the rooms seldom used. One of the "must-haves" of every family should be a good washing machine and wringer; but there are other conveniences that will lessen the work of the laundry, and, altogether, the whole outfit will not cost as much as a break-down from overwork, or the hiring of a usually incompetent laundress because the housewife is not able to do the laundry work. My dear readers, if you can get out of the heavy work, do so; but if you can not, do get the helpful machinery!

"Dust Unto Dust"

A letter comes to me from one of our readers in the sparsely settled region of the far northwest, bearing the intelligence that another human soul had passed out into the Un-

known, and the writer adds that the wishes of the deceased were carried out in the cremation of the poor, perishing shell of mortality left behind. The remains were carried to a large city on the coast, and the ashes returned, dust unto dust, to the earth that gave it.

"Dust unto dust," this friend had often said to me, in the long-ago youth-time when we had walked the same paths and shared each other's sorrows and joys. The slow process of decay under the coffin-lid had been so dreaded, and cremation would but hasten the process of returning the body to its elements, and had seemed so desirable that this had been a last request. One need not read of the exhuming of the mummified bodies or scattered bones that have lain so long in the cemeteries and burial places of the old world to realize that there is no rest for the dead that can be assured by burial in the earth, or packing away in costly tombs. Even now, we read almost dally of the uncovering of bones through excavations, or of the removal of bodies from crowded cemeteries to make room for the invasion of commerce. We robe our dead in spotless white, cover their coffins with flowers, and lower the precious bodies into the earth, and when all is hidden, we seek to lessen our sorrow by tenderly caring for the mound that hides them. But we are here such a little while! A day, a month, a year, and we, too, may be put away, and there may be no other hands to deck the mounds of either the loving or the loved. So many graves lie neglected, sunken, the sleepers forgotten!

The idea of cremation is not now so distressing as it once was, and the practice is growing; in many large cities there are established crematories where every distressing feature of the reduction of the body to ashes is hidden from the mourner, and when the white dust is given back to us in its lovely urn, we may, if we wish, keep it, or dispose of it as seemeth best to us. We know that our dead can never be disturbed and, instead of the long, slow decay, the loved body has passed at once into the dust that may be returned to its native dust, never more to know the desecration of unfriendly, or careless hands.

"Beginning Anew"

"It is useless to grieve over any error of the past. Forgive yourself, and strive to set up a new life in which this bitter experience may serve to set you on your way to a better and higher road. Cease your sorrowful self-accusations, and put all your energies into a climb for the purer atmosphere. We sin through ignorance, or it may be, weakness; it is the sin that must die—not the sinner. When we know we have done wrong and are sorry for it, the battle is half won; we must finish it by forsaking the broad path. There must be no looking back—we must press forward, day by day, doing always the best we can. Remorse is vain, and action its antidote. The idea that the soul must suffer for the sins of the body is but partly true. The soul does suffer when it realizes the result of the broken law. It must heal itself. We, ourselves, must pay the penalty, and often it is the only way of learning the hard lessons set for us. When we realize that we have erred, the one thing to do is to do better; stop crying; stop blaming ourselves, and begin to show our earnest repentance by doing something to help others over the rough places. Resolve to make something of your life—to wash out the stains; to heal the breaks and sponge out the bruises. Stop wailing, and go to work. Sing, if but a note or two, and press always upward along the path that leads to the perfect plane.

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.