



The Home Department

Conducted by
Helen Watts McKee

March Winds

Whistle, Oh winds of March,
Through the gray hedges;
Grim though the skies, we see
Gold in the edges.

Send your shrill bugle call
Through all the spaces—
Bid your frost fairy-band
Spread their white laces.

Cometh another band,
Gracious and merry—
Bringing the frost of wild
Dogwood and cherry.

Whirl through the orchard boughs,
Ice-jewels clashing;
Soon in pink wreaths of bloom
Dew shall be flashing.

Harsh though your harp may be,
Soon shall its numbers
Stir the wild hyacinths
Out of their slumbers.
—Harriet Whitney Durbin.

March Work

Do not forget that March is the month for the first skirmishes in house cleaning, preparatory to the regular straightening out so necessary to right living. There is no time of year more valuable for the extermination of house pests, and if begun now, the good work will be far more effective later on. Taking one room at a time, all cracks or openings in wood work, splintered places, nail-holes, and breaks in plastering may be filled, thus sealing up any eggs or dormant insects which they contain. There are several good and inexpensive fillers, and good use should be made of them. Soft, well-beaten putty is the most expensive, and wears well; but the cracks should be given a coat of paint before using the putty, to prevent the effects of expansion through heat or cold. Where it can be had, a mixture of glue and sawdust is good and cheap for filling wide cracks or openings in floors and wood-work. Dissolve one pound of common glue in two gallons of water (with heat), then stir into the liquid glue enough sawdust to make a good paste. Fill this into the openings, compactly, pounding it down as solid as may be, then let dry. For nail holes, and small places in wood work, putty, or any of the fillers may be used. For cracks or breaks in plastering, use plaster of paris, mixed to a paste with vinegar, which will prevent its hardening while being handled. Fillers may be made of paper and glue, or flour paste. For the glue filler, shred plenty of paper, soak in water and boil until a soft pulp; for every two gallons of the pulp, add one pound of dissolved glue, mixing thoroughly. For the flour paste, mix one quart of flour, one tablespoonful of powdered alum, and three quarts of water, boiling when beaten smooth, for five minutes, stirring. Shred into this enough paper of any soft kind to make the mixture as thick as putty. Press into the cracks or openings, compactly, and let harden, then stain.

Easter and the Hare

The connection between the hare, or rabbit, and Easter can be traced only through mythology. From the earliest times, the hare has been a symbol of the moon. A few reasons for this may lie in the fact that the hare comes out only at night to feed, and that the female carries

her young for a month, thus representing the lunar cycle. The Egyptians called the hare "un," which has two meanings, "open," and "period." The moon was the open eye of the night; hence the hare became the type of periodic occurrences. As an opener, it was associated with the opening of the new year, and also with the opening of new life in youth. Thus, the hare became associated with the Easter egg, in this country the hare is almost unknown, but its "second cousin," the rabbit, abounds. The negroes have a superstition regarding the little animal that is rather apt—they believe that the left hind foot of a rabbit that is killed in a graveyard in the dark of the moon, possesses rare talismanic virtues.

The "Burning Question"

In nearly every paper or magazine one takes up, women and girls who wish to "make money at home" are advised to bake bread and cake. They are told that "almost any one would be willing to pay five cents more for a delicious home-made loaf than for a baker's." But that is theory. Thousands of women in the great cities are trying to sell their cookery. Some of them succeed; but the majority do not. In the first place, not every woman who tries it, can make really good bread or cake. Even if she can, there are always varying results, and mishaps will occur, and the woman may lack business ability; or she may have a foolish, sensitive pride that offers excuses, as though the work was degrading. Then, too, her trade may fluctuate, or her customers change localities; or some other woman may offer better cookery. If she have the business ability and courage and patience necessary to build up a trade, it is worth while.

Spring Work

Here is a good whitewash that is claimed to be very lasting: Stir flour and cold water together in proportion as you would for ordinary paste; let this boil for three minutes, stirring, adding a tablespoonful of salt for every quart of paste. Allow the paste to cool after straining; then to a pailful of well slacked lime ready for white wash, add a quart of the paste, thoroughly mixing. For inside whitewashing, it is very satisfactory.

Family Expenses

The question of suitable food for the family where the income is small, is still worrying a great many housekeepers, and many of them are "catching at straws" to keep the table supplied and appease the healthy appetites of the household. There is literally no economy in substituting eggs, milk, butter, nuts, and other things that are every bit as costly for meats, while a diet of fish for the working family would be less nourishing and cost much more than any meats that could be bought. Besides, the average housewife will have to do much experimenting in concocting dishes of these not commonly used materials, and there is liable to be much waste. The most sensible course to pursue seems to be to buy the cheaper pieces of meat and learn to cook them well, and using suitable vegetables cooked with them, supplementing any shortage that may occur by variously prepared dishes of cereals, legumes, and dried or canned

fruits and dried, smoked or canned fishes. No matter what vegetarians say about the matter, one who has been accustomed to a meat or mixed diet all through life will hardly agree to live on the fruits of the field entirely, to the exclusion of meats. Many people can not eat vegetables, or even fruits, except in very small quantities, and such people must be "a law unto themselves." Every housewife must try to solve the problem for herself, for no one person can dictate to another.

The Home Garden

A good garden, in town or country, is half the living. If you have not sent for your seeds, do not put the matter off. With many people, the garden is a short-lived affair, usually cared for until the first crops are gone, then given over to the weeds. As the garden spot is generally very rich, or should be, it should be kept at work all the season, from the earliest to the latest moment. Planting should be done for succession and as soon as one crop is done the ground should be cleared and another seeding given. This should be kept up as late as possible, giving the last plantings to such things as may be used for pickling, canning and preserving, with winter vegetables filling in. A weed crop is a costly thing, and a weed has no business in the garden. The garden should be large enough for abundant supply for the family; but too much is a waste. Plant the things you like. Most of the cultivating can be done with the horse, or the improved hand cultivators which even a woman can use. But it should not be left to the women of the family to cultivate the garden. It should be treated as any other crop, in the matter of cultivation, so far as is possible. But have a good garden, and begin planning for and preparing now.

For Nimble Fingers

Butter-fly Bows—Cut two scraps of lawn, each five inches square; roll a narrow hem all around; join the two pieces by means of narrow insertion; take enough of the insertion to extend easily around the little square thus formed, folding at the corners; edge it with a very narrow lace to match, and run little dots through it with gold thread, if desired; pleat the little bow in five narrow folds each side of the center insertion, turning toward it, the border forming the outside edge of the fifth; fasten securely in the center, and surround with a narrow band of the lawn covered with a bit of the insertion. A similar bow may be made of brussels net, used double, and darned with gold thread or fine embroidery silk; or flet net may be used. These are easily opened for laundering.

Fagoting is "coming in" again, and is used freely with lace and embroidery combinations; fagot stitching is simply a cross stitch connecting two bands which are usually set their width apart, or connecting a band with a bit of plain lawn or linen. If you can make the common "feather-stitch," or herringbone, you can do fagoting.

Jabots are made of net, lawn, null, lace, ribbon, and other soft, dainty materials; tabs, cascades, falls, are all very modish, as well as easily made. The coarsest and cheapest of these sell at the counters for ten to

twenty-five cents, and they will hardly bear laundering, while for twenty-five cents, better materials for several may be had, and made at home by the needle worker. The cheap, ready-made neckwear always looks cheap and coarse, and it is an extravagance to invest in it, while the price of the better quality is out of all proportion to the cost of the materials of which it is made. Try making these of simple stuffs, and when skill is acquired, try with better materials.

One of the Lost Arts

In these days, when a garment, especially those worn by girls and women, has served a season, it is often times "as good as new," both as to appearance and make, and might serve for several seasons to come, so far as durability is concerned; but by the time the season for its use comes around again, it is hopelessly out of date, and only the most sensible woman will consent to put it into commission again. Fashions change so rapidly that, as one of our girls writes me, "One must be willing to look like a guy, if she has the courage to wear the garment again." Another reader says it is just as well to get the cheaper garments, for they will outlive the style, anyway, and can not be bartered, or given away, even to those who suffer for the need of such garments, and whose circumstances in life will not admit of their following "the fashions" at all closely. In large cities, such clothing can be given to the charitable societies, for distribution to the very poor and needy; but many times the housewife finds it very hard to replace the garment given away, as there seems a place for every penny, without spending it for clothes. In the days of our mothers, nearly every woman could "make over," and refashion the surplus garments, and the good dress, cloak, or jacket, or coats and slightly worn men's wear was used to clothe the family, passing down the line as needed. Or the garments were re-fashioned and worn by the original wearer with much comfort. Tailors will often do this work today, but their charges are as much, in many instances, as a new garment would cost, and their work not always satisfactory. If one tries to get a seamstress in the house for such work, she may succeed; but the chances are, she will not. If the daughters would take up such work, doing it well, and on business principles, it surely would pay better than working in shops for the low wages many of them get; and the saving for the home family would not be insignificant, if one of the family could or would do the work well and carefully.

General Household

During the late days of winter, the sweeping of carpets becomes a very disagreeable task, because of the dust. To remedy this, keep all bits of unprinted paper, or even newspapers will do, and before sweeping, tear into small bits a good big handful of the paper, soak it in warm water for a minute, then squeeze out all the water possible, scatter this over the carpet to be swept, plentifully; then sweep as usual. The paper will gather the dust and prevent its rising. Sweep but a small space at a time, gathering up the paper and burning, before going further; if the carpet is very dusty, wash the broom in a pail of water standing outside the door, occasionally, shaking it off just as dry as possible before continuing the sweeping. If the carpet is very dusty as it is apt to be in a room used a great deal by the family, going over it a second time, using a sprinkling of coarse salt instead of paper, will brighten and clean the carpet as