



The Home Department

Conducted by
Helen Watts McVey

"When No Birds Sing"

There comes a season when the bird
is still

Save for a broken note, so sad
and strange,
Its plaintive cadence makes the
woodlands thrill
With portent of a coming change.

Stirred into ecstasy by spring's new
birth,

In throbbing rhapsodies of hope
and love,
He shared his transports with the
listening earth,
And stormed the heavens above.

But now—how shall he sing? For-
lorn, alone!

Of hopes that withered with the
waning year?

An empty nest, with mate and fledg-
lings flown—
And winter drawing near!

—Mildred Howells.

Spiritual Strength

It is labor that strengthens. Many years ago, we learned that it "is the still arm that stiffens." So, spiritual exercise, such as helping others, and especially helping and training the young members, will strengthen the church. Too many churches settle down, after a rousing revival, when the meeting closes, to a feeling that no more special effort is necessary. The young converts have come into the fold, and it is all they expect to do. But is it enough? The work of enlarging the church membership by bringing in the young is no more imperative than that of keeping them, and of making them feel that they are, as you told them they should be, "in the Father's house," and among their brethren. They must be trained, educated to the privileges and joys of the children of the Father, if you wish to keep them. Turn to that passage in your Bible which says, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing them, etc., teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." There is a passage also, which you should find and ponder on—the treatment of the stranger within your gates. Do not let these new members feel that they are strangers. So many of us do. Do not wait for your pastor to do all the "getting acquainted." Do a large portion of it, yourself. Do not think your whole duty is done when you speak to and shake hands with the strangers at the church meetings. Let your light shine all through the week; go out of your way to show kindness and good will. Do you know that many people, starved for social pleasures and sympathy, come into the church meetings, hoping to find the spirit of good will there; but too often they go away, unfed, and the church in many cases, thus loses some of the ablest and most earnest workers it can have. Be kind to the stranger, for often you lose more than you can realize, because of your coldness and indifference to the shabby coat and the last year's bonnet.

Hygiene

The little Aks should be supplied with their own handkerchiefs. They need not be costly; a square of light calico, or lawn, or even pieces of old garments, hemmed, will

answer every purpose, and as they are often lost by the little ones, the loss will be less felt by the home pocket-book. Many diseases are contracted or passed on through the promiscuous usage among several children, of even the same family, of the one handkerchief, towel, or wash-rag. Let each have, and be responsible for, his or her own. Let the child have plenty of pockets. The girls should have pockets in their dresses, or aprons, or even a patch-pocket on their waist. A great deal is written and said about individual drinking cups, but there is just as much danger in the pocket handkerchief—perhaps more.

School children have a habit of nibbling, or chewing, or otherwise "mouthing" their pens and pencils when using them in school. Each child should have her own, and it should not be mixed with others. It is now claimed that colds and catarrhs are contagious, and we know they are anything but nice.

Let the children feel the responsibility for their little acts. Let them think out their own ways, and work after their own patterns. The hand must learn its cunning through exercise of its own muscles and nerve power; mind must be developed through use, and strength must be gained by doing. This is mental hygiene; it is exercise and food for the mind, just as muscular exercise is development for the body. A busy, well-trained mind will have far less inclination for evil practices than the idle, inefficient, who leans on the will of another. The child understands far more than it is given credit for, and parents should be particular as to their words or acts in the presence of "little pitchers." Even a very small child "catches on" to the doings and sayings of those about it.

Cold Weather Beverages

Since the cold weather necessitates keeping a fire at all times, the provident housewife always has hot water; or at least she should have, as the teakettle only requires filling and setting on the stove. But this plethora of hot water sometimes works harm, and especially in the matter of tea or coffee. No boiling or boiled water will make first-class tea or coffee. The water should be used at the first appearance of boiling. If it boils but a few minutes, it parts with its gases, and loses flavor and taste, becoming flat and hard. The water that is kept boiling, or set aside on the stove in the teakettle then re-boiled for the tea or coffee is not good. Then, see that your kettle, or whatever vessel the water is to be heated in, is perfectly clean. The tea kettle should be washed out thoroughly as often as any other cooking vessel, but it is not; in the great majority of families, it may never know a real, good cleaning up on the inside. Water boiled in an imperfectly cleaned cooking pan or kettle is not fit for tea or coffee-making. The water should be freshly drawn and brought quickly to the near-boiling stage; this is the stage where bubbles form on the sides and bottom of the vessel, now and then a few of them rising to the top. This should at once be poured over the tea, and the pot covered and set aside for a few minutes. The teapot must be perfectly clean, too, and should have

a bit of salsoda boiled in clear water in it several times a week. The coffeepot must also be perfectly clean, and neither tea or coffee pot must be washed with soapsuds. Fill with water, drop in a bit of soda the size of a walnut, and set over the fire where the water will boil comfortably for an hour or so, then empty, rinse well. It will astonish you to see what a difference it makes in the inside of the pot, as well as in the flavor of the tea or coffee. Don't drink either tea or coffee that has stood on the back of the stove for hours.

For Keeping Floors Bright

Polishing floors is hard work, and calls for no end of "elbow grease." For a hardwood, or stained wood floor, take eight ounces of yellow beeswax, one quart of Venetian turpentine; cut the wax into small pieces and pour the turpentine over it, and let stand in a vessel of warm water until dissolved, which it will readily do; then bottle. Apply a very little at a time with a flannel cloth, rubbing until there is none left on the surface, then proceed until the whole floor is finished. It keeps the floor in excellent order, and the polish is required ordinarily about once in six months.

Soapsuds should never be used on a hardwood floor that is oiled or waxed. All that is needed is to wipe with a cloth dampened in a little warm water—say, a wash-basin full, to which about two tablespoonfuls of coal oil has been added. One teaspoonful to the basin will be enough for anything unless very dirty. The oil should be well stirred into the water, the cloth just dampened, wrung out as dry as possible before use, and the floor polished afterwards with a clean flannel cloth. This is good for matting, also.

After scouring a floor preparatory to oiling or waxing, it should get perfectly dry before applying the polisher. A weighted brush, or a warm woolen cloth should be used to polish with. If all wax or oil is not rubbed in, the floor will be gummy and sticky, and gather a coating of lint hard to remove.

A brush and dust pan should be kept at hand for gathering up the little patches of dirt, such as that made when kindling the fire, or about the sewing machine, and the very little children will soon take pride in using them, to the no small help of the hurried housewife. Give the kiddies the happiness of "helping mamma;" you don't know how helpful they can be, even under three years old. And it is good for them, too.

Things to Do

It is not yet too late to pot the hardy bulbs for blooming in the house. Hyacinths are best, and tulips the poorest, as the tulips often become very lousy, and are then disgusting looking things. They are for the outside. A few large, solid bulbs of the hyacinth are better than a dozen small ones. It won't hurt them to freeze, even when in bloom, and they should have at all times a cool situation. The florist's catalogue, to be had for the asking, will give directions for potting, but it must not be delayed. The bulbs deteriorate if kept out of the soil. After potting the bulb, it should be

set away in a cool, dark place in order that root growth may go on; the better root development, the finer the flowering stalk. When the foliage is well started, bring the bulb gradually to the light, and do not let it be kept too warm, or have much sunshine. If kept too warm, or in too much light (as sunlight), the flower-stalk is apt to develop and even bloom under the soil, or at best, the bloom-stalk is very short and the blossoms poor. If kept where it is cool—even cold, it will grow gradually and naturally. If it freezes, it is not materially hurt if allowed to thaw out gradually; but it must not be brought to the fire. A north room, where it is quite cool, but not freezing, with little or no sunshine, is the best place for the potted harby bulb. If you have never tried them, get two or three fine bulbs, and experiment. Bulbs potted now will bloom in April at latest, if properly cared for. Potted in October, they would have given you blossoms for the Christmas table. But you may yet have blossoms, or at least growing plants, for Easter.

Helps for the Housewife

Oak furniture that has become dingy, may be brightened by brushing over with warm, stale beer, and then thoroughly dried, polished with a solution of beeswax in turpentine. Shave a small amount of common beeswax in enough turpentine to dissolve it, and dip a flannel cloth in it very lightly, applying the thinnest skim of it to the wood surface, then with another cloth, rub it into the pores of the wood until every particle is either absorbed or removed. Do only a very small place at once, and do it thoroughly. If much is left on the wood, it catches every bit of lint and dirt, and is sticky.

White paint should not be washed with water and soap. Clean it with a little warm water, dipping the cloth in spanish writing and going over the dirt with gentle rubbing, then with a cloth moist with clear water only.

Wherever there are children, either small and young, or large and in other respects "grown-up," a few remedies should be always kept on hand. Turpentine is cheap, if bought by the pint, at ten or fifteen cents, and it is invaluable for cuts, bruises and burns. For a cut, saturate the cloth you wrap it in, and it will give almost instant relief, and hasten healing. For a bruise or a burn, nothing is better. The only thing to be guarded against is that the cloth easily ignites. Keep away from the fire.

Peroxide of hydrogen comes prepared, just the right strength, and will take the soreness out of a fresh cut, or an old sore quickly, and pave the way for rapid healing. It does not, of itself, heal, but is a germ-killer, and purifies the wound. It is cheap; is splendid for a mouth wash, and its uses are legion, and can be used on any sore or hurt.

Balsam apple steeped in rectified spirits, is an old-fashioned remedy for cuts, breaks and bruises or sprains. For burns, a small bottle of carron oil—equal parts of linseed oil and lime water, well shaken, is fine; so is a paste of moistened saleratus. In every home there should be a "medicine case" containing simple remedies.

For the Toilet

Some of the necessities for the toilet table are a small bottle of olive oil, a fine toilet pumice, a cake of fine toilet soap, an orange-wood stick with a blunt point, a lemon, a jar of almond meal, one of good cold cream, a bottle of lotion composed of three ounces of rosewater, an ounce of alcohol and a few drops of