



The Home Department

Conducted by
Helen Watts McKee

Progress on the Farm for Father

Father's bought a thresher—It's the very newest thing;
He simply couldn't get along without it;
The praise of his new reaper by morn and night he'll sing—
'Tis the finest thing on earth, that's all about it.
His harvester is ancient—two years he's had it now—
He thinks he'll surely have to get another.
The man gets his machinery, but strange to say, somehow
The same old kitchen things must do for Mother.

Last week Dad got an engine that will run things like a charm;
You simply ought to see it buzz the sheller.
He says no lack of progress will do upon the farm;
He's having planned a new potato cellar;
He's built a mighty silo, and he says about next week
He'll have a dairy auto here for Brother.
The men the late improvements are always quick to seek,
But the same old kitchen things must do for Mother.

Of course, she never asks us for a thing to change her lot;
She never thinks her toil might be diminished;
Her workshop's cold in winter, and in summer blazing hot,
And she dully wonders why work's never finished.
But the men don't seem to notice that her weary feet now drag;
They're fixing up some wondrous scheme or other
That will call for more improvements, for they can't afford to lag—
But the same old kitchen's got to do for Mother!

—Arthur Chapman, in Farm & Home.

Song Poems

Answering Mrs. S. B.'s inquiry for old song poem, "When wild war's deadly blast was blown," Dr. F. S. Campbell, of Pennsylvania, and also J. S. S., of West Virginia, give the author's name—Robert Burns, and title of poem, "The Soldier's Return," which can be found among the poems of Robert Burns. Please accept thanks for kindness.

J. S. S. wishes the words of a song sung by the dear old mother over sixty years ago, commencing, "The bird of all birds that I love the best
Is the robin that in the churchyard builds her nest;
For she seems to watch Cathline, harps lightly o'er Cathline,
My poor little Cathline, my Cathline O'Moor."

J. R. Kenerly, Ind., wishes title of song poem and name of author, the chorus of the song being, "For friends will fawn at fortune's dawn,
While the breeze and the tide waft us steadily on;
But when sorrow o'ertakes us, each false friend forsakes us,
And leaves us to sink, or to struggle alone."

Mrs. H. S. has found the words to a poem entitled "The Vagabonds"

written by J. S. Trowbridge; but says the poem tells us "I kissed the coin (not rose) she dropped." The poem is quite lengthy, and if the reader who asked for it will send address again, it will be forwarded to him. The "Vagabonds" are the tramp and his dog.

Several friends have asked if it would be allowable for them to send in for publication, words of old-time songs which everybody loves. Yes, indeed; but do not send the very lengthy poems, as we can not give too much space. "The old songs are the best songs," but sometimes they carry a heartache with them.

"The Fragments"

Among the many wastes that should be looked after is that which comes to the woman who hires her sewing done. Many of us would have to do without clothes, or force ourselves to wear the ready-made, if we did not patronize the dressmaker. A great many times, the ready-mades are by far the most suitable, best-fitting and economical, for not every woman who sews can make satisfactory outer garments. The knit underwear, or the ready-made muslins can be bunglingly altered without making us unduly conspicuous; but with the outer garments, so much of our comfort lies in the thought that we are "looking well" that we are many times positively wretched at the "fit" or unfit of our dresses or coats. Every woman who sews is not an artist, and like everything else, a dressmaker, to succeed, has to have "efficiency." This can be cultivated, and should be, but is not, generally, and the waste of good material is an outrage. Women who do good work, or even half-way good work, are over-crowded with sewing, at good prices; better prices, in most cases than can be had at other businesses. And the price charged for the work is not all. I have heard sewing women boast that they never bought trimming, or buttons, or thread, for their own clothes, as they usually insisted on their clients getting a surplus, and this they kept for their own use. Like the butcher who "trims the meat after it is weighed" and keeps the trimmings to sell in other forms, these sewing women keep all the large scraps, giving back to the women whose garments she makes, only the smaller pieces, and very few of them. If the woman asks for her thread, or other "leavings" when the garment is delivered, she is made to "feel like thirty cents," as one woman expressed it, by the look the dressmaker gives her at the request. About the only way to keep even, is to learn to do one's own sewing, as far as possible. Even the woman who sews "from house to house" is not always an economy. Do you ask how I know? Well, both myself and my friends have had "experiences," because we are business women, working to make a living, which leaves us little time for sewing at home.

Vacation Months

We do not all have even a few days of vacation during the hot months; the long days are usually so full and the demands of the family so insistent that the house mother will invariably count on doing "a lot of sewing" during the afternoons, no matter how hot the sun shines, or

how worn out she is. No matter how much we are preached to, the sewing just must be done; especially is this true where there are little children in the family. The ready-made garments for the little tots are certainly very alluring, as we see them on the counters, and when we put them on the little ones the first time, they give the child a dressy appearance that is hard for the busy mother to equal. The price, too, is seemingly reasonable, very pretty little dresses to be had for twenty-five cents each; from that price "up," as the advertisements have it. But after the first washing, the luster of the bargain counter price is dimmed, and we find the materials in most cases of the sleazies, and the different pieces of the garment literally "cut according to cloth," with no regard for anything but the sales table. The sewing is also simply such as will hold the pieces together until the garments are sold, and many a housewife has to make over the little garments, doing the best she can to make them hang together until others can be had. It is the same with garments for the older ones. Even the high-priced have to be re-adjusted, a seam ripped, or narrowed here, a bit of fitting there, an evening up in one place, and a letting down or out in another. So much is lost and so little gained by these purchases that many mothers lay themselves a willing sacrifice on the altar of economy. There seems no other way, as matters now are conditioned. The girls of the family refuse to learn sewing, when they can do office or shop or factory work and be with other young people. The mothers who have learned to sew are passing away, and there are none to take their places. So, the waste goes on, if the mother does not stick to her sewing machine during the hot months at whatever sacrifice to herself.

Requested Information

"A subscriber" asks how to prepare, separately, to serve as a spring dish, cowslips, milkweed, plantain, and watercress. In the long ago, when I lived in a "cowslip" country, our first dish of "greens" was made of the tender cowslip leaves, cooked as any other greens, with some kind of meat. The tender sprouts of the milkweed, (by which I suppose our inquirer means what is known as "pleurisy" root, or asclepias) and the tender young leaves of plantain were used, but in combination with other "greens." If any one can tell us how they are to be served separately, we shall be glad to pass it on. Watercress is well washed, picked to pieces, and served raw, either with salt, or with a salad dressing. Under another heading answers and recipes asked for are given.

Brown Flour

"Whole wheat flour" is made of wheat by removing the outside horny coating of the kernel and grinding the remainder without further separating of the parts. It has been claimed to be an ideal flour, richer in flavor and more wholesome than white flour. According to experiments made by the government experiment stations of Maine and Minnesota, it has been decided that, from a standpoint of actual nutritive value and digestibility of all parts of the wheat kernel, the finest and whitest

of what is known as straight-grade flour is the cheapest and most nutritious, as well as most digestible. The brown, or whole wheat flour does not keep so well as the straight flour, nor can it be so readily digested. Many people, however, find it to their liking, and prefer it to the white bread. Graham flour is the whole kernel, with the horny outside covering left in the flour. It is claimed that the bran, or horny covering, irritates the coating of the stomach and intestines, doing harm, rather than good. It is not so much used as it used to be.

Query Box

E. M.—Bath bags can be made at home by this formula: Oat meal, five pounds; Florentine orris root, one pound; almond meal, one pound; old Castile soap, scraped to a powder, half a pound. Mix thoroughly, and make bags of cheese cloth about four inches square and fill in the mixture loosely, sewing up the bag. This amount should make about two dozen bags. Use one bag in the bath as you would soap. If dried when done with it, the same bag may be used two or three times. A less quantity can be made, using the same proportions.

Sallie L.—To clean a carpet sweeper, take out the brush; pick all the strings, hairs, lint and other gatherings from the brush, cleaning thoroughly, then dip in warm water until clean of dust and dirt; shake well, let dry and return to place.

Plant Lover—Grape fruit plants can be had by the same process as starting the orange or lemon; plant a few seeds as soon as taken from the pulp and care for them as you would other seeds. The plant is very pretty with dark leaves. Not hardy.

M. M.—Soap bark is not used for making soap; a tea is made of the bark and the goods sponged with this; it acts as a cleanser.

F. F.—Fruit stain, such as pear, peach or apple, is said to readily disappear by sprinkling a little powdered starch on the stain, then pouring boiling water through the stain. For berries, either stretch across a cup tightly and pour boiling water through, or steam over a vessel of

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Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.