



The Home Department

Conducted by
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Dual Lives.

We lead two lives—the outward seeming fair,
And full of smiles that on the surface lie;
The other spent in many a silent prayer,
With thoughts and feelings hidden from the eye.
The weary, weary hours of mental pain,
Unspoken yearnings for the dear ones gone,
The wishes, half-defined, yet crushed again,
Make up the silent life we lead alone.

So, happy visions that we never voice,
Gild all this silent life with sweet romance,
That they will fade like sunset's clouds, we know,
Yet life seems brighter for each stolen glance.
This hidden life—we little know its power
To strengthen us for either good or ill;
Whether we train our thoughts, like birds, to soar,
Or let them wander wheresoe'er they will.

Not those we love this silent life may share,
Though day by day we strive to draw them close;
Our secret chamber—none may enter there,
Save one who never seeks repose.
And if, beneath His eye we do not quail,
Though all the world may turn from us aside,
We own a secret power that shall prevail
When every motive of our life is tried. —Selected.

The kingdom of home is a beautiful realm,
Its subjects the truest that ever were seen,
When the father rules with a strong, wise hand,
And a loving mother, its faithful queen.
But a desert land is the kingdom cold,
Where Self is lord, and Might is king;
Where love lies dead, in its poisoned bed,
And dread and doubting to all things cling.

Heart Talks.

Friends, there should be no place for "waste" in the home—whether it be within "four walls," or on the printed page; hence there is no wastebasket here. Every letter which reaches me is read, closely, carefully, thoughtfully; some of them are re-read many times. When I lay them aside, I send a mental "thank you," to each of the writers. There is a receptacle, however, to which they are consigned—I think I shall label it the "Help-Box," and I shall go often to this box for the inspiration I shall find there. None of your letters are barren of thought, or fail to awaken thought in me. The fact that you cared to help me—that you have taken the time and pains to point out to me the way in which you think I may use my position as your editor for the furthering of the interests and deepening the influence of our department is an inspiration in itself. Do not fear that your kindly inter-

est, as expressed by your written letters, will not be understood or appreciated. Every letter is looked upon as a kindly hand-clasp, an assurance that that the high consideration in which womanly worth and intelligence is held by The Commoner is not without substantial grounds. These "women talks" which appear upon the Home pages of the various newspapers and periodicals are of wide significance for good or for evil; they are like the seeds sown on good ground—they must grow, and bring forth wheat or tares; or worthless grasses may rob us of the hoped-for fruitage. We do not want the tares; we do not want the worthless grasses. Let us have the seeds that shadow forth the fitting harvest. We cannot shirk our responsibility—we are, indeed, our "brother's keeper."

Timely Topics.

The new designs in wall paper are decidedly effective, and many of them are offered at very low prices. From a sanitary point of view, the tinted walls are preferable, and are gaining in popularity. The wall decorations, carpets, furniture and furnishings should harmonize.

A carpet should be always chosen as a background upon which the other articles of furniture are to be placed, and should, from its neutral features have a tendency rather to improve, by comparison, objects placed upon it, than command for itself the notice of the spectator. It should vie with nothing, but rather give value to all objects coming in contact with it.

More and more, rugs are growing in favor, as they are so much easier taken care of than heavy carpets. In purchasing a rug, care should be taken to select a medium weight, heavy enough to lie on the floor without turning up at the corners, yet light enough to be lifted easily and cleansed. A rattan beater should be used for cleaning them. Very durable rugs may be made of old ingrain and brussels carpets, at an expense for warp and weaving of about 75c per square yard. For dining and sitting rooms, rattan and reed rugs are nice for summer use. They can be washed in salty water, wiped off with a damp cloth, or shaken out of doors. Fiber matting is durable, inexpensive and attractive.

Couches in the working rooms are a great comfort to the tired housewife. Quiet, inexpensive ones can be constructed by any house-carpenter; a wire cot, or one of wicker, may be prettily draped with linen, art denims, or cretonne, and these covers are durable, inexpensive, and easily laundered. The cot, alone, with a heavy comfort folded and laid on it is very grateful to a tired back.

Lace curtains should not be ironed; they show numerous bulging places where the lace has been stretched, besides receiving injury to the design, often warping a leaf or flower to one side. There are movable frames constructed for the purpose of drying them. The price varies from one dollar upward. Very good work can be done without them, if one is careful.

Small Economics

To the careful, systematic housewife, the phrase, "house-cleaning," means more than the mere lifting of carpets, dusting of furniture, scrubbing of floors, scouring of woodwork,

papering and painting. Much that may be classed in this category is of such a nature as to admit of its being done at odd intervals, better before than after the heavy, actual upheaval has begun. In "making ready" for the work proper, all closets, shelvings, trunks, drawers, and other "storage" places should have a thorough overhauling, the contents sorted and consigned to their proper places in the household economies.

A great many odds and ends gather in spite of one and much of it is really of no earthly use to any one, and should be consigned to the rag-bag or the flames, if no other immediate use can be found for it. What is found to be of present or prospective value should be assorted, and placed in proper boxes, bundles or other fitting places, and thus room be made for the really useful by destroying the useless.

All draperies should be taken down from windows, doors and wall openings, well dusted, and carefully looked over for rents, needed darns, or spots that require cleaning. Such as have to be laundered should be properly cared for, and put in readiness for re-hanging when called for.

All bed-linen and covering should receive attention before being laid aside. Sheets that show a thinness in the middle will last much longer by being torn in two lengthwise, the selvage edges joined by overcasting, or sewn in a flat seam on the machine; the thin, torn edges should be neatly hemmed, and all actual holes either darned or patched. Sheets that are too worn for this should be laundered and put away for old muslin. In patching sheets, use the corners of old sheets—not new muslin.

Pillow-slips seldom repay patching or darning, and might as well be put with the old muslin.

Blankets may, like sheets, be torn apart in the middle, and turned, but it is often sufficient to darn the thin places with fine yarn. If the blanket is of sufficient worth to repay the outlay, a large patch, or lining may be basted over the thin center and stitched lengthwise on the machine, cat-stitching the edges on all sides with floss or very fine yarn. "Button-holing" the raw edges all around with yarn and a crochet hook is often preferable to hemming them. If in need of laundering, this should be attended to, and the blankets put away for the summer. Often a thorough "switching" in a hot sunshine is all that is necessary.

Old comforts—especially if homemade—may have the covering ripped off, and the cotton laid out in a smart shower, on a grass or other clean plot, and allowed to dry in the hot sunshine, after which they may be re-covered and are "as good as new." The "store" article, however, is generally made of very poor cotton-battling, and may be only lumps and wads, of very little, if any, use.

Towelling may be darned, or even patched, or, if very thin, may be folded together and stitched, making excellent wash rags, dust cloths, or polishing rags.

Table linen may be patched, darned or made over. Worn places may be greatly strengthened by darning with fine cotton thread, by imitating the weave of the material; by cutting to match the figures, patches may be put on scarcely noticeable, by darning the edges down carefully on both sides. For patching, cut off a strip from the end of the cloth. If the cloth is worn beyond hope, napkins may be cut from

the best parts and hemmed nicely, serving no end of uses about the dining room and pantry; or, by folding and stitching lengthwise, they may be used for bread, or cake cloths, or towels for polishing silver and glass-ware.

It is never wise economy to put such things away unattended. The fall days will find you just as busy as you are now, with the added tax of deferred mending clamoring for attention. Have a "Half-Hour" basket, and put all such jobs as you cannot now finish into this, and use the spare pieces of hours for this purpose.

Query Box.

Beginner.—The chocolate of commerce is a dietary substance prepared from the seeds of several small trees found in the tropical parts of the American continent. The tree appears to have been originally a native of Mexico, but is now cultivated throughout the American tropics and the West Indies. The chocolate, prepared as a beverage, is considered a most nourishing drink.

Mrs. M. A. B., Freeland, O.—I am afraid there is no way to keep your pie-crust, filled with juicy material, from becoming "soggy," after standing a day or two. The cause of it is, that the moisture soaks into the crust. Try brushing the lower crust with beaten egg before putting in the filling. Bake fruit pies in a moderate oven, having a better heat at the bottom than at top of the oven, or the lower crust will be raw and clammy; when done, remove at once from the tins, or the crust will become "soggy."

Cassie, Watson, Ill.—Vermicelli, spaghetti and macaroni are all made of flour and water, the only difference being the size of the holes in the perforated iron plates through which the stiff dough is forced in the making. Hard wheat, rich in gluten like that of Italy, is now raised largely in the central west; so that Italian macaroni comes from New York, just as Swiss cheese comes from Elgin. Among the Italians, it is considered the "staff of life," and is usually served with tomatoes and cheese.

L. E. L.—Tapioca is one of the products of the manioc, or cassava plant, and is largely used in the preparation of desserts, and as a food for children and invalids. It is light, wholesome, inexpensive and nutritious, and a great variety of delicious dishes are prepared from it. Sago is a form of tapioca, and is often called pearl tapioca; it is a useful starch food; a trifle more expensive than the ordinary form, but it cooks soft more quickly, and does not require soaking.

J. W. R., Wingo, Ky.—Cement for china: With a small camel's-hair brush, rub the broken edges with a little carriage oil varnish; when thoroughly dry, it is said that it will stand both fire and water. Nothing is better, it is claimed, than Russian isinglass, dissolved in pure soft water; it takes twelve hours to soften it by soaking in pure soft water, then considerable heat to dissolve it, after which it is applicable to china, glass, alabaster, etc. The pieces must be held firmly together until thoroughly dry. The genuine Russian isinglass will probably cost you 35c to 40c an ounce.

A. E. A., Lincoln, Neb.—Here is the recipe for which you ask, for keeping fresh beef; it and the one for dried beef are well recommended. Cut the beef in thin slices, and put in layers in a jar—a layer of beef, salt and pepper on top, and so on until done; do this the day before you begin to dry. Next day, put a piece of lard as large as an egg in a pot, then lay the beef in by layers again until half full; cover tight; it will draw enough water to cook it tender; stir occasionally, then let cook dry. Put it into the jar in layers again, and put a weight on until cold; then pour melted lard over; always keep covered