



The Home Department

Conducted by
Helen Watts McKee

Your Mission.

(This was President Lincoln's favorite song, one which he encored no less than eighteen times when sung at a Sunday school convention in Washington in 1864.)

If you cannot on the ocean
Sail among the swiftest fleet,
Rocking on the highest billows,
Laughing at the storms you meet,
You can stand among the sailors,
Anchored yet within the bay,
You can lend a hand to help them
As they launch their boats away.

If you are too weak to journey
Up the mountain, steep and high,
You can stand within the valley
While the multitudes go by;
You can chant in happy measure
As they slowly pass along—
Though they may forget the singer,
They will not forget the song.

If you have not gold and silver
Ever ready at command;
If you cannot toward the needy
Reach an ever-helping hand,
You can succor the afflicted,
O'er the erring you can weep;
You can be a true disciple,
Sitting at the Master's feet.

If you cannot in the harvest
Garner up the richest sheave,
Many grains, both ripe and golden,
Will the careless reapers leave;
Go and glean among the briers
Growing rank against the wall,
For it may be that the shadows
Hide the heaviest wheat of all.

If you cannot in the conflict
Prove yourself a soldier true,
If where fire and smoke are thickest
There's no work for you to do,
When the battlefield is silent,
You can go with careful tread—
You can bear away the wounded,
You can cover up the dead.

Do not, then, stand idly waiting
For some greater work to do;
Fortune is a lazy goddess—
She will never come to you.
Go and toil within life's vineyard;
Do not fear to do or dare—
If you want a field of labor
You can find it anywhere.
—S. M. Grannis.

Some "Do Nots."

Do not allow your back yard to become a dumping ground for every worthless, rubbishy old thing that can find a lodgment nowhere else. If it is good enough to keep at all, it is good enough to care for, and it should have a place of its own; if it has no value, it should find a place on the kindling pile, or the manure heap; if it will neither rot nor burn, then its place is "without the camp."

There are "things" that must be allowed, even on the "kitchen lawn," but such things should be kept in, at least, orderly confusion. Old lumber is sometimes a necessary evil, and, like a few other necessities, must be tolerated, but it should be neatly and closely piled, the scrappy pieces going into the kindling pile. If one has ever so small a garden, there should be a pit or hole dug, and into this should go all vegetable refuse and other decomposable matter, and thus turned into the best of fertilizer. Unless you have tried it, you do not realize what a wonder-worker this pit will turn out for you, if kept wet with your kitchen slops.

Burn all old shoes and rags. Do not allow them to accumulate; offer them as a daily sacrifice to the god-

dess of hygiene. Gather up all broken bits of dishes, glassware, or other "imperishable" rubbish and let the accumulation go with the ashes and cinders, into the outer world.

Do not allow weeds to grow inside your yard fence. Sunflowers and hollyhocks will grow as readily as burdock and jimson weed, and blue grass will do as well as either of these. If you must have tall things, try a few of the blossoming shrubs. Or a row of gooseberry bushes around the premises would repay—especially if you got a good variety of "tame" ones.

Do not think, because you may live in the country, that it does not matter how things are kept; it should matter to you; for so much of your life is spent with this back yard as your only exercise ground, that you have need, for your soul's sake, that it should be full of beautiful things—things that would rouse you out of yourself; that would make you glad to be alive, and that would cheer and encourage you, no matter how full of shadows your sky might be. If your life be confined to the city, so much more need of this one bright spot, to which you may turn to satisfy the cry of the soul after the God of nature.

Little Helps.

When sorting out clothing, bed and table linen, do not put too many of them in the pile for the rag-man; there is, in every household, a constant demand for old, soft rags, and for many purposes nothing else will serve. Put all old, worn-out sheets, pillow-slips, table linen, etc., into the "old muslin" drawer; cut off buttons and cut out seams from old shirts and other underwear, dress skirts, linings, and bundle them up for dust cloths, polishers, holders, to wipe up things with, and, in short, to serve the thousands-and-one purposes which are always confronting the housewife. Old flannel garments should also have seams cut out, buttons removed, and the serviceable portions put away for the uses which can always be found for them. These, and kindred economies, are but a few of the methods of gathering up the fragments which, pieced together, go a long way in solving the question of "pin money" for the thrifty housewife.

Beeswax and salt will make flat-irons as clean and smooth as need be. Tie a lump of wax in a piece of cloth, and keep it for that purpose; when the irons are hot, rub them first with the wax rag, then scour with a paper or cloth sprinkled with salt. When the rubber rollers of your wringer become sticky, as they very often do after wringing flannel, rub with kerosene and wipe dry, and they will be nice and smooth. Salt, dissolved in alcohol, is often found a good thing for removing grease spots from cloth. Molasses will often remove grass stains found on the clothing of children; rub the stained spot with the molasses, as if it were soap, and then wash in the ordinary way. If you would have a fine polish on your window glass, use chamois skin instead of cloth.

The parlor windows might go without washing two or three weeks at a time, but do air the beds. Keep the dish cloths sweet and clean, the sink well disinfected, and don't throw dirty clothes down in a heap on the closet floors. Wash and air your fruit jars as fast as you empty them, and put them away at once in a safe place

and see that the metal tops are not left lying about to get bent or dented and thus ruined.

House-Cleaning Helps.

Take time to paste light-weight manilla paper over the back of every picture frame not already so protected; it will effectually prevent dust from reaching the picture.

For closing holes in metal, use a putty made of chloride of zinc and starch. Tin pails and pans may be mended with sealing wax, such as is used for fruit cans. If not used about the stove, or for holding hot things, they will be "as good as new."

Wells and cisterns should be ventilated, and the water thus kept sweet and free from bad odors; the absorption of fresh air by water renders it pleasanter to the taste, and to a slight extent purifies it.

A padding of double-faced canton flannel should be used under the linen table cloth, as the linen, thus protected, will look better, wear better, and the sound of the dishes will be deadened.

A solution of borax, made by putting into a bottle of water all the crude borax the water will dissolve, is an excellent thing to keep on the washstand. For removing soils, stains and roughness, healing scratches and chafes, pour enough of the solution into the wash water to make it feel soft or slippery, wash the hands in this and dry with a soft towel. It is very cleansing.

Do not neglect the cellar, when setting the premises to rights. A cool cellar is not a damp one, and the cellar should have a thorough over-hauling as early as necessity will allow. All decaying vegetables should be removed, and the walls given a good whitewashing; if the floor is cement, this should be given a good scrubbing, and well sprinkled with some good disinfectant. Boxes of unslacked lime set about will absorb any dampness, as well as sweeten the atmosphere. A neglected cellar is a constant menace.

After trying all powders, careful housekeepers will quite likely go back to the old-fashioned washing soda for cleansing floors, sinks and drains, and other like things. There is nothing that so effectually routes impurities as boiling-hot soda and water applied with a long-handled scrubbing brush, then rinsed off with clear water and dried with a clean cloth. A large lump of soda, melted over the drain of the sink, keeps the pipe clear from all grease. While soda is the scrubber's main-stay, the laundress should touch it lightly, if at all, as it injures the clothes.

Query Box.

(We have requests from several of our readers for directions for setting the table according to the latest edicts of fashion, for all occasions. To give these would require more space than the Home Department can devote to such matters, but if our querists will send stamped, addressed envelope with their queries, I will be pleased to refer them to authoritative sources, or to publications specially dealing with such subjects. So, also, of questions on matters pertaining to styles and dress for certain occasions.)

Mrs. Lizzie O., Ephrata, Wash.—Sent you the information regarding club organization by mail, as requested.

A Reader, Bethany, Neb.—If you

will send your address on stamped envelope, I will send you the directions requested. The Commoner appreciates your good opinion.

A Querist.—Bread for garnishing should always be shaped before toasting. Croustades are cubes of stale bread from which the centers have been removed and the cubes fried in deep fat; croutons are half-inch cubes of stale bread browned in deep fat, or butter.

Tired Housekeeper.—Ironing machines, or mangles, would not be a satisfactory investment for ironing dresses, children's clothes, and such things. They are used for ironing straight, smooth, pieces, such as bed linen, table linen, towels, handkerchiefs, straight underwear, etc. Prices range from \$5 to \$75.

Jennie.—Rugs are very popular as floor coverings for several reasons, one of which is the greater ease with which they may be handled, reducing the work of sweeping and dusting, and giving greater cleanliness throughout the house. The cost of a good rug is not so great as that of a good carpet, and a clean, painted or stained strip of floor space around the edge of a room is very pleasing to some.

Bessie.—In clearing the table between courses, all things relating to one course must be removed before serving another. Remove all food first, then soiled china, glassware, silver and cutlery, unused china and other articles not further needed, then the crumbs. Soiled plates and dishes should be removed from the right side; waiters must serve at the left, as this enables the guest to use the right hand.

Gertrude.—There is said to be nothing safer or better for the removal of freckles than the old remedies. Grate horse-radish roots into sour milk; set in a warm place for an hour, then set away until next day; wash the face with it every night and two or three times during the day, being careful not to let it get into the eyes. Or, wet the spots with a small brush dipped in the juice of a lemon every night and once during the day.

Harriet S., Chill, Ill.—To remove scale insects from the palm, make a strong suds of whale oil or ivory soap and water and, with an old tooth brush scrub the leaves, rinsing well with clear water. Or take a feather,

MONEY TO COOKS

\$7,500.00 Donated, to be Divided Among Family Cooks.

The sum of \$7,500.00 will be distributed between now and midsummer among family cooks, in 735 prizes ranging from \$200.00 to \$5.00.

This is done to stimulate better cooking in the family kitchen. The contest is open to paid cooks, (drop the name "hired girl," call them cooks if they deserve it) or to the mistress of the household if she does the cooking. The rules for contest are plain and simple. Each of the 735 winners of money prizes will also receive an engraved certificate of merit or diploma as a cook. The diplomas bear the big gilt seal and signature of the most famous food company in the world, The Postum Cereal Co., Ltd., of Battle Creek, Mich., the well known makers of Postum Coffee and Grape-Nuts. Write them and address Cookery, Dept. No. 448 for full particulars.

This remarkable contest among cooks to win the money prizes and diplomas will give thousands of families better and more delicious meals as well as cleaner kitchens and a general improvement in the culinary department, for the cooks must show marked skill and betterment in service to win. Great sums of money devoted to such enterprises always result in putting humanity further along on the road to civilization, health, comfort and happiness.