

# The Home Department

Conducted by  
Helen Watts McKee

## My Choice.

If some great angel spoke to me to-night,  
In awful language of the unknown land,  
And bade me choose, from treasure infinite,  
From goodly gifts and glories in his hand,  
The thing I coveted—what would I take?  
Fame's wreath of bays? The fickle world's esteem?  
Nay, greenest boughs may wave on brows that ache,  
And world applauding passeth as a dream.  
Should I choose love to fill my empty heart  
With soft, strong sweetness, as in days of old?  
Nay, for love's rapture hath an after smart,  
And on love's rose the thorns are manifold.

Should I choose life, with long succeeding years?  
Nay, for long life is longer time for tears.

I would choose work, and never-failing power  
To work without weak hindrance by the way—  
Without recurrence of the weary hour  
When tired, tyrant nature holds its sway  
Over the busy brain and toiling hand.  
Ah, if some angel came to me to-night,  
Speaking in language of the unknown land,  
So would I choose from treasure infinite.  
But well I know the blessed gifts I crave,  
The tireless strength for never-ending task,  
Is not for this life; but beyond the grave,  
It may be I shall find the thing I ask;

For all things tell me there is yet a land  
Where will and work and strength go hand in hand.

—Selected.

In each of your hands I shut a kiss—  
Do you feel how little and soft it is?  
So, hold it gently, that it may live,  
Lest your hands ask more than my hands can give.  
I whisper softly in each dear ear;  
And now, when I speak, you alone can hear  
The voice of my heart's heart laugh or cry—  
Not the foolish words it is stifled by.

## Home Chats.

Many of our readers intend visiting the World's fair at St. Louis during the coming season, and quite a few of them doubtless have friends and relatives whose hospitality they expect to claim. It is well to arrange for your visit beforehand, and I beg of you, do not let your appearance in the role of guest come upon your friend in the nature of a "surprise." Surprise visits are not always either welcome or convenient to your hostess, and very rarely advisable. It will be better to write and ask your friend (unless she has invited you), if it would be convenient for her to receive you,

and if so, at what time and for how long. You must not forget that she doubtless has other friends who will seek her hospitality, and it may be much better for all parties to have an understanding as to "dates." Remember, too, that your visit will not only tax her time and means, but will also require considerable sacrifice of self in looking after your welfare, and you should arrange to spend but part of your time at her expense.

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Be willing to put up with much inconvenience, and try to make as little work as possible, and require as little personal service as you can. Do not expect her or any member of her family to act as your escort about the exposition grounds or the city, paying your carfare, admission fees, for luncheons, etc., out of their own pockets, for there will unavoidably be a large drain upon her purse for the necessary expenses of your stay with her as guest, and such things will become burdensome before the seven-months of entertaining is gone. When your visit is ended, if you wish to show appreciation of her kindness, do not (as some really well-intentioned people have done in the past) offer her a money present, but instead, find what her taste runs to and get some suitable souvenir in that line, which may be received without embarrassment to either of you. In such a case, do not let your gift be of too practical a nature.

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Make yourself as fully acquainted with the various exhibits, and the countries from which they are brought, as possible before you go, and take particular pains to inform yourself as much as you may about the exhibits which specially interest you. There will be an immense amount of interesting and instructive things to claim your attention, and it is well to have as general information as possible about the various cities, countries and industries, so your time may not be wasted—for I assure you, from personal experience at other expositions, that you will have to pay for every minute you spend at the exposition or in the city.

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A sister editor who "keeps house in her trunk," on looking over my "copy," advises against the white shirt-waist suits mentioned under another heading as being the only suitable ones for wear at the exposition. She is warned by experiences of her own that laundering will be an expensive item, and that very few women can wear a white suit more than once or twice in hot weather without the necessity of a freshening by soap and sad-iron becoming inevitable. The white shirt-waist suits are lovely—so long as they are fresh; but for the woman who wishes to get all she can for her money, it will be much more sensible to go dressed for business, with gowns that sun-heat, rain, dust, or the inevitable wear and tear of crowds and street car travel will not render unrepresentable after one or two wearings.

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Shirt-waist suits and short skirts made of some dust-defying material will be better for the visiting woman, and the white suits may be held in reserve for occasions more befitting. Though the summer climate of St. Louis gives us much uncomfortably

warm weather, especially in July and August, there will be many days when the "tailor-made suit" will be just the thing, and one should not fail to bring something that may be worn in damp, or cool weather. A serviceable macintosh, with umbrella and rubbers will not be bad things to bring along, if your stay is to be extended.

## For Baby's Wardrobe.

When the mother has not much money, if she is skillful with the needle, baby's wardrobe may yet be a work of art by being made as prettily and daintily as hand-work can make it, and the tiny stranger's first clothes may be worn by successive followers and afterwards treasured for a life-time. One should not provide more clothing than can be used before it is outgrown. Babies grow so rapidly that it is extravagance to buy any great number of articles, and the sensible mother will also consider service and suitableness of material in making her selections. Everything should be washable, and the whole wardrobe should be of white or cream color that it may be laundered perfectly. All decorations should be simple, and the material as fine as one can afford.

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Patterns for the various garments may be bought in sets of almost any paper-pattern company, and are reliable; the inexperienced mother will have some trouble in selecting the right material, proper trimming and the cut and making of sensible as well as beautiful garments, unless advised by some capable friend, but the directions with the paper-patterns are very explicit. Instructions as to material, number of garments of a kind and directions for putting together of pieces go with every set.

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A very full list of everything needed is here given: Four each of lawn or nansook skirts, lawn or nansook dresses, flannel skirts, flannel shirts and flannel bands; three each of lawn slips, outing flannel gowns and crocheted sacks; two kimono's; six outing flannel pinning blankets; six dozen outing flannel napkins (diapers); four pairs of silk or woolen stockings; several pairs of crocheted shoes; two pairs chamol's skin moccasins; one little silk-lined cap; one small rubber diaper; one crocheted ice-wool veil, one spool of baby ribbon, pale-blue or pink.

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All of these may be bought ready-made, but if the mother is skilled in needle work, the cost can be greatly lessened and much better material may be chosen for the money in hand. Silk and very fine, soft wool flannel are desirable for garments that touch the skin. The flannels used about the waist must not be hemmed, but carefully button-hole stitched around the raw edges with soft thread, fastening with tiny safety-pins. All seams on flannel should be laid open and feather-stitched with silk floss so as to lie perfectly flat. All seams on dresses and skirts must be filled. The slips should be made plain, but the dresses and fine skirts admit of elaborate trimmings.

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A very light-weight double-faced outing flannel should be chosen for the napkins, making each one the square of the width of the goods, thus making them large enough to double

twice. Little kimono's of soft flannel, scalloped and button-hole stitched, or of soft cashmere and feather-stitched, or with bands made of pink or blue china silk, are in good taste and are sensible to slip on over the little gowns morning and evenings. It is a sort of unwritten law that girls shall wear pale blues and boys pink ribbons. Pale colors are admissible in cloaks, but the balance of the wardrobe must be white or cream. Quite elaborate trimming and rich embroideries or lace may be used on the cape collar; washable coats are considered elegant for summer wear.

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Everything may be made at home, and as daintily as one may choose, but sensible mothers consider service as well as beauty. It is necessary to remember, also, that about everything should be of a material that will bear laundering. The little garments will undoubtedly be too large at first, but baby will soon grow up to them. Many lovely as well as comfortable things can be made very inexpensively by one who is familiar with the use of the crochet hook and knitting needles.

## For the Dressmaker.

Heavy dress goods are frequently made up without lining for the sake of lightness, but it is better to select light-weight material and use a lining which will insure a good set to the gown. A seamed-in lining is cut just the shape of the outside gores and seamed with the raw seams turned toward the skirt seams and tacked here and there, both lining and outside material being hung on the same belt, and both materials finished off together at the lower edge of the skirt. If any canvas or haircloth is used it is the feather-weight haircloth, and it is curved to fit the rounding edge of the skirt, sewed inside of the lining and stitched at the top.

The lower edge of the skirt is finished with a velveteen skirt binding sewed on like a flat mohair braid. The binding has a velvet bottom and a braid upper, and the latter is hemmed down. If a bias-velveteen binding is used it is stitched on one edge and turned up and catch-stitched down without turning a hem. Always leave a binding an eighth of an inch below the edge so as to protect the skirt thoroughly. When dress braid is used, it is run flatly along the inner side of the skirt and hemmed down.

The seams of a cotton skirt lining may be stitched with cotton thread; if silk is used, select a smooth, even thread without knots. The waist should be stitched with silk, or silk and cotton, on a two-thread machine. Silk works lighter and black seems heavier than the colored silks.

The different fastenings intended for gowns are many, but after trying a number of them dressmakers have finally settled down to hooks and eyes, ordinary and invisible, rings crocheted over, and snap fastenings for plackets and dress waists as well. Large hooks and eyes belong to the skirt and belt.

Since loose effects came in, the boning of a waist is of less importance; little, if any, real whalebone is found, and is expensive, but the variety of substitutes is limitless. Tailors' canvas comes in several colors and is light and pliable. Used for narrow skirt interfacings, jacket collars, cuffs, belts and the inside of jacket fronts, over the shoulders and around the arm-holes, and for lapels.

## Query Box.

Tanner.—To deodorize skunk skins, bury in earth and let stay from 24 to 36 hours. The smell will be all gone.

Tessie.—To prevent flies settling on your screens in wet weather, dip a cloth in coal oil and wipe over both wire and frames on the outside.

Katherine M.—Meat should be put on a plate or laid on a heavy cloth before setting on ice, as the ice extracts