



# The Home Department

Conducted by  
Helen Watts McKee

### My Valentine

What shall I send my love? The flowers are dead;  
The scent of summer roses long have fled;  
The blasts of winter long ago have blent  
With dying leaves—their mission well-nigh spent.  
I sent my love, when she and I were young,  
With many a dream undreamed and song unsung,  
A valentine—such words as lovers write  
When hearts are young and happiness in sight.

What shall I send her, now, from out the past—  
The days so sweet, that could nor would not last?  
Nor flowers nor words the distance can o'erleap  
'Twi' hearts that languish or 'twixt eyes that weep.  
The years that parted us have brought us pain;  
Naught can assuage it till we meet again;  
But thought can bridge the distance to her shrine,  
And thought, tonight, shall be my valentine.

—Ladies' World.

### Seeds and Plants

I have in my hand a half dozen letters from as many of our readers, asking where they may get the seeds and plants I have told them about, and as I read the letters, I wonder if the writers ever look over the advertising columns. Taking up a copy of *The Commoner*, which proves to be of date of January 20th, I find the cards of no less than eight nurserymen and seed growers, and from having dealt with nearly all of them, myself, I feel confident that an order, placed with any of them would be satisfactorily filled. It will cost but a postal card to get the catalogue of any one of them, and you will find much valuable information in each. By sending your order early, you will be more apt to get the choice as to quality, and the kinds you send for, for orders are filled in the order in which they are received, and the seeds sent at once, but the plants will usually not be sent until time to plant them out.

### To Renovate Black Cloth

Spots may be removed from black cloth by the use of soap bark, to be had of the druggist. Pour a quart of boiling water over an ounce of soap bark; let stand fifteen minutes, strain through cheesecloth and it is ready for use. Use a piece of the material, if you have it, saturated well with the fluid, for sponging off the soiled or stained spots. Any old black skirt, stained, spotted or soiled to an apparently hopeless condition, may be made anew by immersing wholly in a tub of diluted soap bark and water in the proportions as above, adding thereto about two gallons of hot water to the quart of soap bark suds. Immerse the

### BETTER THAN SPANKING

Spanking does not cure children of urine difficulties. If it did there would be few children that would do it. There is a constitutional cause for this. Mrs. M. Summers, Box 169, Notre Dame Ind., will send her home treatment to any mother. She asks no money. Write her today if your children trouble you in this way. Don't blame the child. The chances are it can't help it.

skirt in this, dip up and down, in and out, many times, as you would wash flannels. When the dirt is wholly out, rinse well in clear, lukewarm water, shake vigorously, but do not wring, hang in the open air and iron before it becomes thoroughly dry, ironing on the wrong side. Before wetting, carefully hunt out all spots, mark them with a white thread, and give them attention in the suds.

### Our Home Chats

This is the "dead of winter," and as we sit beside our home hearths, gloomily glancing out at the snow and ice-bound landscape before us, we hardly know what to do with our enforced idleness. In many parts of the country, the coldest weather and the most disagreeable days come in February, and while the women of the family are never at a loss for employment, the cold and snow and ice of the out-doors send the men folks inside and they seem to find it hard to interest themselves, or to keep from rushing away to the towns to "hear the news." Many of these men, if asked by their long-enduring wives to do the little odd jobs of mending the furniture, or repairing the inside of the house, or in other ways lessening the inconvenience under which the housework must be done because the wife is seldom mechanic enough to do them herself, will become indignant, and ask if they are never to be allowed to have any rest—forgetting that the truest rest comes of a change of work.

If they could only appreciate the great convenience a new shelf, or a set of them, or a row of hooks, or a little patching of odd corners, a stopping of mouse holes, or a gluing together of "shackling" articles of furniture, the casing of tight window sash or bureau drawers, and innumerable little odds and ends of repair, would be to the worried home-mother, I think there would be more happy homes. As a case in point, a few weeks ago, a rocker that had served all summer on my own porch was sent to an out building in a very shabby condition. In many families it would have found its way to the kindling pile, because of its weather-beaten, "rickety" condition; but instead, a few days later, I found occupying a place which just needed another chair, a really handsome, apparently new rocker, and it looked very much at home, too. On investigation, I found it to be the battered veranda chair, made anew with glue and varnish.

One need not be a "professional" in order to use the paint and varnish brush about the home, and nothing adds more to "the looks of things," or effects a greater saving in proportion to the cash cost, than fresh paint, varnish and glue, applied indoors and out as the needs may be. The work is not hard, and many women would gladly do it for themselves, if only the material were furnished them. I have done a little of it, myself, although a more practiced hand might have done it better, but even as I did it, there was manifest improvement.

As the house cleaning season will soon be on, it might be a good thing for the head of the family to prove the hero that is in him by going to battle armed with the glue pot, the paint and varnish brush, and in this wise route much of the discomfort, to say nothing of the saving and brightening up of the old pieces of furniture which, with

a little treatment, can be made to do service for many days to come. In my own home, many a dark day has been brightened by the sound of the saw and hammer which assured me that "things" would be in better shape after their noise ceased, and the order that all dust-raising must be suspended for a day or two was simply delightful, for by it I knew the varnish brush had been in play, and that meant less house cleaning labor.

### To Renovate Portiers

Nothing is better for this than gasoline, but one can not be cautioned too often or too strongly to handle this dangerous fluid carefully. To clean a pair of chenille or velour portieres, six to eight gallons of gasoline is necessary, and the work must be performed out of doors. Spread the hangings on the grass and brush lengthwise and across, and on both sides; never hang on a line to brush or beat, as the strain is very likely to break the warp. Look them over carefully for soiled spots and dust streaks, and mark each spot and streak with a white thread. Put the hangings in a tub and cover with gasoline; rub the soils, and afterwards the whole curtain with the hands and work up and down in the fluid until it looks clean. Gently squeeze out the gasoline, but on no account wring; rinse in another tub of fresh gasoline and hang to dry in the shade, without wringing or shaking, and use as few pins as possible. As the curtains dry, occasionally pull them out smooth and straight. The odor will disappear in drying.—Household.

### For The Sewing Room

The very best dressmakers always begin at the bottom of a bodice when they sew on hooks and eyes, and work toward the top or neck, and they also keep a continuous thread, instead of fastening it at each hook and eye. It is better practice to alternate the hooks and eyes wherever practicable, since they are sure to remain more securely fastened than when arranged each kind on one side. A good many amateur dressmakers use the hook-and-eye tape that can be bought all ready for use, but the best dressmakers in particular work, prefer to sew on the hooks and eyes by hand.

Always finish off your sleeves before sewing them in; overcast or bind the seams and carefully press them open if necessary, also adjust the trimmings and finish the sleeves off at the wrists, then the bodice will not get wrinkled and soiled from over-much handling. Before finishing the sleeves, however, they must be carefully basted into the bodice and carefully fitted to the arm, and the proper length noted; the bodice must be entirely completed before the sleeves and stock are permanently fastened to place.—Ladies' World.

### Cleaning With Gas

One of the best dry-cleansers for household purposes is gasoline, but in the use of it, it should always be borne in mind that there is very great danger from the escaping fumes coming in contact with heat or fire, even at a considerable distance. Gasoline must never be used or uncovered in a room where there is a fire, or near a gas flame, lighted lamp, candle or match. Too great precaution can not be used. It will always be well to have any vessel containing it set out of doors. For cleansing articles which

can not be washed without ruin as to shrinkage or color, it can be used to wash in the same as water, and when the washing and rinsing are finished, it can be poured into some vessel which can be tightly closed, set aside and allowed to settle, and can then be used again, either as fuel, or for washing other dark articles, but not for white, or light tints. Such work should always be done out of doors, in the open air, and even then at a distance from any flame or fire. If this care is taken, it is a good cleanser to recommend; otherwise, it should be strictly let alone.

### Fashion Notes

Although it is yet too early in the season to begin much dress-making, much of the family sewing can be done; many of the winter garments that are showing wear and soil can be renovated and, with a little touching up, be made to supply the "between" season, and also to be worn during the many cold days the advancing season is sure to bring. For the new styles, the shoulders will be broad, the sleeves full, at both the shoulder and the wrists, gathered into deep cuffs, or close-fitting below the elbows. As a rule, however, the sleeves will be large at the top, and some will be made with one or more puffs and deep, close-fitting cuffs. Many sleeves have tufts running around the leg-o'-mutton, and this style promises to be very popular the coming season. The bishop sleeve is a little larger at the top, and elbow sleeves are seen in gowns of many fabrics.

The skirts are full and in round lengths; surplice waists will be much worn, chemisettes will be popular, round yokes will remain and much shirring and tucking will be seen in all soft, clinging materials.

The shirt-waist suit is advertised extensively and new and pretty designs and materials are largely shown. In some of the magazines, the old Mother Hubbard is brought out, being simple in the extreme as to make, and graceful in line, while there is no gainsaying its comfort for indoors wear.

The small, tapering waist with broad, high shoulders are again seen, and the craze for hand-embroidery, fancy braids, jets, eyelet-embroidery and fancy stitching is still very great.

### For the Baby

The bag-night-gown is very useful, as it prevents the baby kicking off the covers and thus exposing its little limbs to the cold, while it in no wise hampers the action of the restless feet. This gown is simply a plain, little gown, made of flannel or flannellette, with comfortable bishop sleeves and high neck, cut wide at the bottom of a rather long skirt, in the hem of which a tape is run by which it can be drawn up and tied like a bag.

A pretty little bloomer creeping apron is also shown made of good wearing material, and its use saves the little dresses both from wear and from the laundry. The apron is made full both before and behind, buttoning up the back; the lower part, which must be cut very full and long, is fashioned like bloomers, and each leg part is gathered into a band at the bottom, through which a piece of elastic may be run to hold it closely about the ankles.

### Entertainments, Etc.

Frequently, some one or more of our readers ask that menus for special occasions, ways of entertaining, number of guests to be invited, plays, games, etc., be given them, either by private letter or through the pages of the *Home Department*. In none of these cases do I have any idea of the financial circumstances, room or rooms to be given over to the guests, ability of the hostess to carry out a fixed program, tastes of the intended participants, their ages, or other knowledge