



The Home Department

Conducted by
Helen Watts McVey

"Just A Few Words"

Just a few words: but they brightened
A life that was clouded with care,
And strengthened a spirit discouraged
And close on the verge of despair.
And faith to go hopefully forward
Sprang up where their tenderness
fell—

Just a few words: but how mighty
For good or for evil their spell?

Just a few words: but they blighted
And blackened a name as a frost,
And stung unto madness a spirit
That hung on the brink of the lost.
Hung, trembling with pitiful longings
To turn from the valley of shame—
Just a few words: but they weighted
The balance; and—whose was the
blame?

The one who had lifted the burden
From shoulders that shrank from
the load

Spoke also the words of light scoffing
That proved the poor, halting one's
goad.

The speaker passed carelessly onward,
Nor recked of the deeds she had
done—

Nor thought of the lilies or thistles
To spring from the seed she had
sown!

Yet, somehow, I cannot help thinking
That, bright though her pathway
may be,

Though the sunshine return to her
four-fold,

Though the shadow she never may
see,

Somewhere, down the path she must
follow,

May rise up to face her, a woe—
For the harvest is promised, and
surely—

"You will reap even such as you
sow."

HELEN WATTS-McVEY.

Home Chat

After a summer spent among the Ozark hills in Arkansas, I am again at my desk, strengthened and improved in health and ready to serve you in any way I can. During my vacation, I met many excellent people; these included many of the wise ones of the day, in the various walks of life. From this association, I gathered a store of helpful information, and learned many lessons, and in the coming pages of the Home Department I want to share these riches with you. My days were far from idle days, for idleness is but a poor kind of rest, but there came into my life a peacefulness born to close communion with the beautiful in nature, and a drawing nearer to the heart of the great mother, Earth, and it was with a touch of real pain that I turned my face again toward the toil and turbulence of the city.

Many kind words were spoken to me of The Commoner, in all its departments, but of course more especially the Home pages, and many of the new friends volunteered items of interest and helpful bits of information for uses therein that will prove valuable to each of us, as it appeals to our needs. But no editor is satisfied with the paper he "brings out." We always want "our paper" to be just a little better than any other paper published, and we are all willing to work hard to have it so. In this work, we need the co-operation of all our readers, for we want them, also, to feel a genuine sense of ownership and responsibility in regard to its advancement. So we ask that you, each, write, suggesting any

improvement that might be made in the subject matter employed in the Home Department. We want you to tell us what you like, and why you like it; what you do not like, and why, with suggestions for bettering it. It is very good of you to say so many encouraging things as you have done in the past; but we want to hear from you again. Only by thus keeping in touch with you can we follow your needs. In helping others, you will help yourselves, for you know that "no man liveth unto himself," and you cannot do a kindness to another that will not, in some way, react upon your own lives. For every touch of genuine sympathy, there will come into your own lives something of the beautiful that will repay you for all, many, many times over.

Query Box

K. M. A. H.—Many thanks for kind words. The suggestions offered are in line with the spirit of the article.

Sr. Josephine.—For the mildew stains, rub the spot with the juice of a raw tomato, cover with salt and lay in the sunshine.

Housewife.—Suet, if finely chopped, may be used as shortening for pastry, but the pastry so made must be served very hot.

F. J. S.—Thanks for interest and kind words. Will send the address to J. S.

M. D.—Your kind words are appreciated. Sweet apples may be canned the same as sour ones, or other fruits. Will send recipes in "Requested Recipes."

Helen M.—Nothing will remove freckles permanently. The best you can do is to fade them as much as possible and avoid conditions which are favorable to their development.

Lady Subscriber.—If you had sent stamped, addressed envelope I could have cited you to "headquarters" for such information. It is rather early in the season to state authoritatively what will or will not be worn the coming winter.

Lassie.—Madras, chambray, linen, duck, voiles, and all lightweight silks and veilings can be used in ladies costumes. The shirtwaist suit still "holds its own," and the Eton jacket is a prime favorite.

Laundress.—Before putting your summer dresses away for the winter, be sure to wash all starch and dirt out of them, and rinse out all traces of soap, or they will turn yellow. Some cottons become yellow in spite of all care. Everything must be well dried in the sun. (2.) The costumes may be worn quite a while yet.

Mrs. A. T.—For the trouble with the ants, dip a sponge into a solution of sugar and water, squeeze dry and lay it on a plate on the pantry shelf where the ants gather, and when they have filled it, throw it into boiling water; wash out and repeat until the ants are destroyed.

Annie.—All styles of wearing the hair are fashionable, provided the one chosen is distinctly becoming to the wearer. The pompadour is still in vogue, but is smaller than heretofore, and sets more snugly to the head. The one lock pulled down over the left eyebrow has been abandoned.

Mrs. B.—A correspondent sends us the following, which may help you: Coal oil and cayenne pepper, mixed in proportion of a heaping tablespoonful of cayenne to a quart of oil and allowed to stand twenty-four hours, then applied to any hiding place of the "little brown bug," with a feather or

small oil can, will entirely rid the place of the pests. It is safer than the corrosive sublimate where there are children. Bugs are by no means hard to dislodge if you are persistent.

"Anxious."—I have great sympathy for you in your affliction and helplessness, but the information, to be of any use to you, would fill both the pages allotted to the Home matters. Write to the secretary of agriculture, Washington, D. C., asking for any bulletins on the subject of mushroom growing. The bulletins are free. I am afraid you could not be self-supporting "at once," unless you had some means, a knowledge of the practical workings of the business and strength to do the work.

Juvenile Prodigy

This is how Johnny recited one stanza of it, to the delight of his proud mamma and amid the plaudits of the company:

"Liza Grape-men allry mindus

Weaken maka 'Liza Blime,

Andy Parting Lee B. Hindus

Footbrin Johnny Sands a time."

And thus was another promising elocutionist turned loose on the world.—Exchange.

For the Cool Days

With the coming of September, there will be cool evenings and chilly mornings, and the mothers must not forget that the smaller children—and especially the babies—will feel the change of temperature very sensibly, without being cognizant of the cause of their discomfort. The mother will know, however, that the clothing must be attended to by the addition of some light outer garment, which may be removed as the day advances and replaced when the night air descends. It must be remembered that the little children—especially the crawling babies—live in a cooler atmosphere than do the grown-ups, as the temperature close to the floor is always the coolest. It is much less trouble to change and re-change the little one's clothing than to care for a sick baby, and the mysterious colds, so hard to be accounted for by the unthinking mother, more often than not have their origin in the unsuitable clothing the little one is compelled to wear in the chill atmosphere next to the floor, while the adults are perfectly comfortable in their higher altitude.

It is not that more babies should be brought into the world, so much as that we should keep those already here in a better condition of health. Give them sensible care, cultivate a strong body and healthy organization, and the world will have an abundance of people—and a better class of them. The little one with "no language but a cry" cannot always make you understand the difference between unreasoning fretfulness and real discomfort, and you must study conditions for the baby as closely as you would for the older ones. Do, dear mothers, take care of the baby's comfort.

Then, too, the cooling days of the advancing autumn will find the older children in need of the lighter wrap or "top-garment" that may be put on or off at will, rather than the heavier clothing that will be needed regularly later on. Children going to school should not be allowed to come in from a romp on the grounds, hot and perspiring, and sit down in the chill of the closed room to "cool off," without laying some light wrap about their shoulders. The teacher should

see to that, but the mother should furnish the garment. The "between-seasons" clothing must be carefully looked after.

"Why Marriage is a Failure"

The St. Louis Woman's Magazine has the following, which is too nearly true to be lost:

"Married life is dull because it is a partnership in which there is no equity. When a woman signs a life contract with a man at the altar she puts more capital into the firm than he does. She gives whatever money she may have; she gives the love of her heart; she gives the work of her hands; she gives all the intelligence she possesses; above all, she gives herself. She takes the same risks the man does; if financial trouble comes, she must endure poverty and privation; if mistakes occur, she must suffer for them; in all the labors and losses of the firm, she is an equal partner, but she is not an equal partner in its profits and perquisites. She is a silent partner, with no voice in the management of the firm, yet she must stand for its debts. She gives her earning capacity to it, yet she is expected to be grateful for getting her living out of it. She has no idea of whether she has a right to draw much or little money out of the business, yet she is blamed if she spends too much.

"No such unjust arrangement could continue for a minute between men in business, and it ought not to be countenanced between men and women. The two principal things that make the life of the average couple dull are bickering about money and the lack of some subject of conversation of mutual, absorbing interest. A real partnership, based on justice between husband and wife will supply both of these deficits.

All that women hate, and get upon their nerves and makes them seem greedy for money is the feeling that they are being treated unjustly—that they are not getting a fair divide. There is not one woman in ten thousand who, if her husband will candidly explain financial situations to her, (and treat her justly,) will not gladly and cheerfully do her part of the economizing. Women, as a rule, do not know what their husbands can afford, and, having no incentive for economizing through lack of knowledge of the financial condition of the firm, and because they never hear or see any tangible results of their saving, they readily find excuses for any extravagance. You never hear of a woman who is taken into active partnership in the matrimonial firm and who is treated justly, as a partner, complaining because she has to work hard and economize."

Danger in the Tea Pot

The injurious effect of the use of tea as a beverage does not arise from the use, but from the abuse of the decoction. The beverage, if properly made, is a mild stimulant, and to some extent, an exhilarant, and it is claimed by experts that the decoction, if properly prepared, can be attended by no deleterious effects. But tea should never be boiled, nor should it be allowed to "steep," as is the custom in some families for an hour, or hours. Tannic acid develops by this steeping, and used in this way, tannic acid is really a poison. Tea leaves should never be allowed to boil; neither should the tea pot be used time after time without being thoroughly cleaned. The pot should not be set over the fire at all. After the

BETTER THAN SPANKING

Spanking does not cure children of bad writing. If it did there would be few children that would do it. There is a constitutional cause for this. Mrs. M. Summers, Box 118, 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.