



# The Home Department

Conducted by  
Helen Watts McKey

## God's Help

My hands have often been weary hands.

Too tired to do their daily task,  
And just to fold them forevermore  
Has seemed the boon that was best  
to ask.

My feet have often been weary feet,  
Too tired to walk another day,  
And I've thought to sit and calmly  
wait  
Was better far than the onward  
way.

My eyes with tears have been so dim  
That I have said, "I can not mark  
The work I do or the way I take—  
For everywhere it is dark—so  
dark!"

But, oh, thank God, there ne'er has  
come

The hour that makes the bravest  
quail;  
No matter how weary my feet and  
hands,

God never has suffered my heart  
to fail!

So the folded hands take up their  
work,  
And the weary feet pursue their  
way;  
And all is clear when the good heart  
cries,  
"Be brave! Tomorrow's another  
day."

—Harper's Weekly.

## Social Occasions

There can be but little done in the outer world, during the months of February and March, but the dark months are full of opportunities for social gatherings and the bringing together of the people of the neighborhood. It will be but a few weeks until the call to spring work becomes insistent, and we can work all the better if we have had a season of relaxation and enjoyment. Plan for some pleasant afternoons and evenings, and for social gatherings at which old friends can meet and with the "old-timers." In these days of regular mails, telephones and trolley cars, sociability of the old-fashioned kind seems dying out, and, in the matter of knowing their neighbors, country people are following their city cousins in customs that do not tend to intimate social relations. It would certainly add much to our happiness if we might be a little more "old-fashioned," in some things. Not only should the young people be brought together, but their elders have need of these comminglings. There is nothing more refreshing to the worn and worried mother of the family than to get away from the house for a few hours, and enjoy the society of others outside her own family. Old people should try to retain their youthful spirits; it is better than all the health-foods, drugs, or cosmetics, not only for the mind, but for the body, to attend these pleasant neighborhood gatherings.

## St. Valentine's Day

Offers so many ways of "making merry," and the season is so very different from any other, that nobody should overlook the occasion. Let the young people have their fun, and let the elders join in the games with a good will. Many of the old-

fashioned games come in very prettily, while there are always new ways of making most of the day. The world is sadly in need of laughter and jollity, and no season furnishes so many forms in which these can be indulged in as harmlessly as the festival of St. Valentine.

## Good Reading Matter

Do not neglect your opportunities. Often a postal card will bring you a whole winter's reading, or at least instruct you how to get it. If you write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., asking that the monthly list of publications be sent regularly to you, you can choose from it such bulletins as suit your own needs, or which treat of matters with which you wish to familiarize yourself. These bulletins are free for the asking, and you may order a dozen, a score, or more, which will be sent to you, unless out of print. Many of these are of great benefit to the housewife, and are along the lines of domestic work. The year books are full of interest, and these you must get through your congressman. There are free books and circulars along other lines than agricultural, reports of the various divisions that it will pay to keep. For the publications issued by the state boards of agriculture, experiment stations, etc., applications must be made to the managers of the stations of the several states.

Do you know anything of the traveling libraries? Write to your state librarian, at your state capital, and ask him for the information. He will tell you how your community may have desirable books at small expense. In this way, by the use of them, neighborhood reading clubs may be formed, meeting at the homes of the members, or at the school houses, for the purpose of club study and discussions, and in this way a great deal of information may be gathered. The city dweller can have nothing better. One may not be fond of books, but the discussions may attract earnest thinkers, and questions asked and answered will be very helpful. These studies need not be for the men alone, for there are courses of reading on floriculture, and on many domestic topics, fowls, flowers, vegetables, housekeeping, home-making, cookery, and many other interests for women. Opportunities will open up to you, if you seek them in earnest, with a determination to grow, intellectually.

Thrice happy is the man who doth obey  
The Lord of love, through love—who fears to break  
The righteous law for the law's righteous sake.  
And who, by daily use of blessings gives  
Thanks for the blessings he receives;  
His spirit grown so reverent it dares  
Cast the poor show of reverence away.

—Alice Cary.

## Cookery Conveniences

A correspondent, referring to the use of the fireless cooker, says it is a good thing, but adds that there must be practical intelligence back of it, or it will be worse than useless—in fact, wasteful, and that home construction of the "hay box" is like other home constructed articles—there must be constructive ability and a good bit of common

sense, in order to make the contrivance a success. The purchase of the commercial article is not to be too strongly urged upon the ordinary housewife, for it would prove a costly toy under careless, indifferent management, and would be thrown aside after a few unsatisfactory trials as a fraud. In many cases this is doubtless true; but the careless, indifferent housewife is not the one who bothers much about the saving of either time, fuel or food stuffs. No matter what means such a woman uses for cooking, failure is inevitable, and the little success she does attain to is as much a matter of chance as of anything else. It is more than likely she will not think it "worth while," and the health of her family will not suffer by her decision. But to the real-pains-taking, careful home-wife, who "looketh well to the ways of her household," the fireless cooker, even when homemade, opens up almost unlimited possibilities, and for her these urgings are written. Many excellent housewives, who are more than anxious to learn the newest methods of economical work, may not have the patience to study this new claimant, or to experiment with it; but once having thoroughly mastered the principle upon which its usefulness depends, they will wonder how they ever did without it. Even with the best of kitchen ranges, whether fed by coal, wood, gas or gasoline, one will have failures and "bad luck" until its management is well understood. Any box that will retain the heat may be padded out with heat-retaining materials, and its efficacy tried. Only foods that require slow moist cooking should be tried at first—the simpler the first dishes the better.

## "Salt-Rising Bread"

Answering "Reader of The Commoner"—One pint of new milk, and half a pint of hot water, teaspoonful of salt and one of sugar, and a pinch of soda about as big as a large pea. Put this into a perfectly clean, sweet half-gallon pitcher or jar, stir into it one tablespoonful of corn meal and white flour enough to make a thick batter, stirring until smooth. Set the pitcher in an iron kettle containing enough quite warm water so the pitcher will just rest steadily on the bottom of the kettle. Cover the pitcher and kettle with a folded towel, and set on the back of the kitchen range (if the fire is low) where it will keep warm for a few hours, and leave it overnight. Or the kettle may be set in a warm place near the sitting-room heater where it will keep warm, but not hot. The pitcher should be full of the frothy yeast in the morning, but if it is not, add a tablespoonful of warmed flour, stir well, reheat the water in the kettle and return the pitcher, keeping warm and closely covered until light. Have ready sufficient sifted and warmed flour (three or four quarts) in the bread-pan, make a hole in the middle and pour into it one pint of new milk, a teacupful of boiling hot water, an even teaspoonful of salt, and stir into this enough of the surrounding flour to make a batter, then add the emptyings, rinse out the pitcher with a pint of warm water and add to the yeast and batter, and stir into this enough flour from the sides to make good "sponge" batter, stirring until smooth. Draw enough of the flour over the sponge to cover it, cover the

pan and set in a warm place, and leave until the flour cracks to let the sponge-foam through, then, with the hand, mix the flour with the sponge stiff enough so it can be kneaded well, remembering that a soft dough gives better results than a stiff one. Turn the mixture out on a well-floured board and knead with the heel of the hand until the dough is a tough, elastic, perfectly smooth mass that will not stick to the hands or board; mould into loaves, put into greased pans, let rise to the top of the pans (or nearly so) and grease the top of each loaf; bake in an oven hot enough to "set" the crust in five minutes, but must not begin to brown for twenty minutes, allowing the oven to cool gradually after that. If inclined to burn the crust, set a cup of cold water in the oven, or cover the loaves with thick paper. Bread is usually left in the oven for one hour. When done through, turn the loaves out on a table, and let get a little cool, then put away in a stone jar or tin bread box, covering, and the crust will be soft and edible. This method has been "tried" for many years.

Will our "Reader" please tell me how she succeeds?

## Timely Recipes

**Shamrocks**—One cup of scalded milk, one cupful of hot water, tablespoonful of lard, two tablespoonfuls of butter, teaspoonful of salt, seven cupfuls of flour, one cake of good yeast dissolved in one-fourth cup of warm water. Mix the milk, water, butter, lard, sugar and salt thoroughly; when lukewarm, add half the flour (three and a half cupfuls) and stir in the dissolved yeast. Stir until perfectly smooth. Cover, set in a warm place and let rise. When light and foamy, add the rest of the flour, kneading until the dough is smooth, pan and let rise again. Have gems velvety and elastic, then return to the pan and let rise again. Have gem pans buttered and form the dough into small balls about the size of English walnuts, and place three balls in each one of the gem pans, making the pan about three-fourths full. Let these rise until above the edge of the pan, then bake in a quick oven twenty minutes.

**Rusks**—Two cupfuls of warm milk, half-cup each of butter and sugar, two eggs, teaspoonful of salt, one cup of seeded raisins, cinnamon to taste, and flour to knead properly, one cake of good yeast. Dissolve the yeast in the warm milk, add sufficient flour to make a batter; let this rise until light. Beat the sugar and butter to a cream and add the two eggs well beaten, then add this to the batter with the salt, raisins and enough flour to make a soft dough that will not stick to the hands. Mould the dough with the hands into balls about the size of a large egg, set the balls close together in a buttered pan and let rise until fully twice the first bulk, then brush the tops with the beaten white of an egg, sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon and bake in a hot oven for thirty minutes. Any kind of nut-kernels may be used instead of the raisins, if desired.

**Nut Sandwiches**—Thin slices of whole-wheat bread, buttered; chop, roast and salt peanuts, or other nut kernels raw or cooked, mix with sufficient mayonnaise to spread easily, and fill between two slices of the bread.

## Answers to Miscellaneous Questions.

A little flour sprinkled over the top of cakes before the icing is ap-

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