



The Home Department

Conducted by
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The First Sign

Today I saw the red on maple bough
The first faint flame that ruddy
glows,
The promise of the summer's blazing
torch,
Lit first, while linger winter snows.

And quickened, through the bending
maple bough
The pulse of life goes throbbing
true,
Responsive to the call, to feed the
fires
All careful at the lighting new.

And soon from all the vales and dis-
tant hills
Will beacon lights forth signal
flash,
Anemones and blood-root, wintry
pale,
And meadow-rue in courage rash.

Nor snows may quench nor storms
beat out the flame.
Enkindled in these early days,
Until from out the length and
breadth of land
Shall burst, triumphant, summer's
blaze.

—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The Nation's Children

A paragraph, whether true or not, is going the rounds of the newspapers to this effect: "In one of our largest cities, 465,000 out of 600,000 school children are physically defective. Of these, 48,000 are suffering from malnutrition; 93,000 from defective eyesight; 187,000 from enlarged glands, and 230,000 from defective breathing. Doubtless investigation would show that similar conditions exist in the majority of the large cities of the country." When we look about us and see the little ailing children under our own eyes, few of them absolutely normal in physical or mental health, to say nothing of morals, should we wonder that "large families are becoming the exception," and that the "race is in danger of dying out?" This condition of today is not without a cause, and it gives a poor promise for the future generations. The stream can not rise higher than its fountain, and each generation has to bear the weaknesses handed down to it through the physical condition of the men and women who are responsible for its being. Before undertaking to cleanse the Augean stables of the nation, would it not be well to look to our own individual nurseries?

"Rest Rooms"

Are you doing anything about those rest rooms for your country families—your out-of-town customers who must make frequent trips to your towns for the purpose of trading? Do you do anything to show your appreciation of their custom, and to ameliorate the hardships of such trips? If not, you should not complain when you find they are patronizing the big mail order concerns in the large cities, for these firms attend to the comfort of their patrons in every way they can. They send out voluminous catalogues wherein thousands of articles are classified, illustrated and priced, with blank order sheets, and the most

AN OLD AND WELL TRIED REMEDY
Mrs. Winslow's SOOTHING SYRUP for children
teething should always be used for children while
teething. It softens the gums, allays the pain, cures
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Twenty-five cents a bottle.

minute directions whereby the shopping may be done by simply sitting down in the comfort of the home, and, with a pencil and paper, order whatever is wanted, from "a darning thread to a thrashing machine," or an automobile; in some cases, a whole building, ready to be put together when it reaches the customer. They further give the guarantee that, should the purchase not be satisfactory, it may be returned at the expense, both ways, of the firm, and the purchase money refunded.

If you do not care to cultivate the good will of your customers by at least offering the women and children a shelter and warmth while they are in the village, you should not expect them to feel particularly called upon to undergo the hardships of a long, tiresome ride in all kinds of weather, over all kinds of roads, for the pleasure (?) of sitting out their waiting time around the not-always-clean stove in the store, or out in the wagon in some alley, or on the street. Country merchants should think on these things, and set to work to supply a comfortable waiting room for their women shoppers, and where the little children, especially the babies, may be left while the mother undergoes the fatigue of the day's shopping. Don't leave the work to the women of the village—it is a work that should appeal to the merchants who expect to profit by the country custom. "Do it now." If nothing better offers, a good, rain-proof tent could be employed until a suitable building could be erected or hired.

In the matter of rest rooms, in many places they may be made self-sustaining under the auspices of some club or church society, by the sale to those wishing it, for a nominal sum, of a cup of tea, coffee, or light lunches, or a small charge for caring for the small children, the charge to be paid in produce rather than money, and it should not be obligatory upon the wives and mothers to purchase anything, unless they want it. The meeting place might be a sort of woman's exchange, where various articles might be left for sale, and where other articles, not kept at the country stores, might be bought. "Help" might here be offered and acquired, and good reading matter, contributed to the rooms, distributed to those who would care for it. Don't you think it would pay?

"Men Friends"

A frank, genuine friendship between a man and woman, in which neither side is misunderstood, is an excellent thing for both, and a man has a great respect and liking for the woman to whom he can confide his hopes and ambitions, feeling that his attitude will not be misunderstood, while a woman takes great comfort with a masculine friend whom she may frankly ask to perform little services without her action being misconstrued. A man is not always in love with the girl to whom he pays little attentions, and very often men are deterred from offering courtesies, fearing his acts will be overvalued. When a man of principle finds too much importance is likely to be attached to his actions, he backs down.

On the other hand, every girl does not, and should not see in every man who shows a preference for her company, a possible husband. A man

may have a genuine liking for a girl or woman, and enjoy her society very much, and still have no intention of asking her to marry him. Girls would have a much better time, and more respectful attention, if they would only accept little friendly attentions for what they are worth, not stopping to question if the man "means something serious."

If only young people would be content to enjoy each other's society, overlooking the fact that they are expected by match-making friends to be lovers if they look at each other twice, they would profit by association with respectful members of the opposite sex, developing an "all-aroundness" not otherwise obtainable. Many men, if they knew that only friendly services were expected of them, would be glad to give these, to the mutual benefit of both; but very often, these kindly acts of courtesy are withheld because of fear of unpleasant results from over-valuation.

Girls should by no means ask or suggest that money should be spent for them, at any time, for by this means, they cheapen themselves in the sight of the man, no matter how much he might enjoy lavishing gifts on them, unasked. And, lastly, all men are not to be trusted implicitly. They will not always advise a girl for her best good.

"The Army of the Unemployed"

Are you tired of hearing of the "sufferings of the unemployed" in the streets of the great cities? It is not a pleasant thought, at best, that there are thousands of people, right at your own door, hungry and shivering through the stormy days of winter; but there are always two sides to a question. Thousands of farmers are offering good homes, and living wages, with many advantages which no lowly city dweller can hope to have on the wages earned in the city's businesses, and these farm homes are waiting in vain for these idle thousands of men, women, boys and girls. While every avenue of trade and labor in the city is crowded with would-be workers eager for even the dangerously small wage to be earned in the work, the farming population is holding out anxious hands, pleading for the help without which it can not hope to sow and garner the food supply necessary for the world's consumption.

It is but a very short time now, until farmers must begin preparation for the seed-time of the year, and the supply of farm help is never up to the demand. Yet, if transportation to the waiting fields were offered to these idle men and women—those having neither property or home ties—how many of them would accept, think you? How many would thank you for the farm job, no matter what their condition in the cramped quarters of the average city flat, or how insufficient the comforts their wages would bring them. And from every quarter, the young people, especially, are crowding into the already over-crowded avenues, bringing upon themselves, in most cases, untold wretchedness. Why?

The mere iteration of the statement that the country life is the ideal existence, will not keep the people on the farm. The fact must be proven. The lure of the city's attractions is strong, even for those who have good country homes, with far more comforts than they can ever hope to have in town, and there must

be counter-attractions equally strong, if the country would keep its populace. In recent years, much has been done in this direction, but still the human tide tends city-wards, while the farm cries in vain for its complement of laborers.

Query Box

M. M. One ounce of salt to a pound of butter is the usual proportion.

"Anxious"—It is claimed that, if colored embroidery pieces are soaked in a water containing a little turpentine before washing, the colors will not run. Try it carefully.

S. G.—Do not worry. Meet your difficulties and problems with a belief that if you do your part, they will be solved in the best way, whether you may think it wise or not. Everybody has trouble.

G. W. M.—Here is a good, common whitewash: One peck of fresh lime in a large kettle or jar; pour on sufficient hot water to slack the lime to a smooth paste; add one quart of common salt and let stand for a week; then use for inside work, and for out buildings, after thinning to the proper consistency.

Jessie D.—This is said to be a test for the purity of water. At night drop a piece of white lump sugar in a tumblerful of water and let stand in any convenient place over night where the temperature will not fall below sixty degrees. In the morning, if the water is pure, it will be clear; if impure, the water will have a milky appearance, especially if contaminated with sewerage. Perfectly clear water is not always pure water.

M. S.—It would be just as helpful if you tell of recommended recipes with which you have failed, if you can find out the cause of failure. Many people fail with very excellent directions, through no fault of the recipe.

J. D.—I am afraid I can not help you with your chicken troubles. That seems one branch of learning in which I am deficient. Write to reliable poultry journals, or advertising poultry men. (2) If you order your plants now, the nurseryman will not send them until danger of frost is over, unless you insist. State in your letter when you wish them sent.

Good Recipes

Corn Meal Gems—One cupful of corn meal, one cupful of white flour, tablespoonful of sugar, teaspoonful of salt, two eggs, and a tablespoonful of butter. Use sweet milk enough to wet so it will drop from a spoon. If sweet milk is used, sift two teaspoonfuls of baking powder with the flour; if sour milk, use one scant teaspoonful of soda. Beat all together into a stiff batter, have gem pans greased, and drop the mixture by spoonfuls into the gem pans and bake in a moderately hot oven. Do not fill the pans quite full.

For a specially nourishing cup of coffee, stir into it rapidly a well beaten egg. The egg should be first well beaten, then the cream, then the sugar added, stirred well, then into this coffee should be poured gradually, constantly beating.

Date Cake—One half cupful of sweet milk, one-third cupful of soft butter, one and three-fourths cupfuls of white flour, one and one-third cupfuls of brown sugar, and two eggs, half teaspoonful each of nutmeg and cinnamon, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder, three-fourths cupful of seeded and finely-chopped dates. Cream the sugar and butter, add the milk and spices, sift the baking powder with the flour and add, beating, to the other ingredients, beating until smooth, then fold in the well-beaten eggs and the dates;

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