



The Home Department

Conducted by
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Grandmother's Tales

They're not the least like story book tales,
Because they're quite true, you know;
For grandmother knew all about it herself,
When she was a child, long ago.

She makes you feel as though you'd been there,
And forget that you're living just now;
You never once think of the grey in her hair,
Or the wrinkles across her brow.

When she begins, "Well—now let me think,"
And crosses her hands in her lap,
We children sit so quiet and still,
Just like she's taking a nap.

Because, she says, if we interrupt,
Perhaps she might lose the thread,
And before she'd be able to find it again,
Mother might put us to bed.

And so we wait till she shuts her eyes,
And makes her rocking chair go;
Then we know in a minute that she will say,
"When I was a child, long ago."

Then she tells of the boys and girls,
Not the least little bit like us;
And how they would do the dread-fullest things
And never get into a fuss.

But grandmother says they were not really bad,
Only light-hearted, you know;
I wonder what their mother would say
When she was a child, long ago.

Sometimes when we ask about different things,
She gives such a queer little laugh,
And says, "I will tell you some other time, dear.
Children now are too clever by half."

I wish we'd been born when grandmother was,
And had played with the children she knew,
And then we'd have been in the stories she tells,
And perhaps could be telling them, too.

But grandmother gathers us close in her arms,
And says things are better just so;
For the children she knew grew tired of play,
And went to their rest long ago."
—Mary Elliott, in Rural Magazine.

Loneliness

Loneliness is only a relative term, yet the old German saying that "Only a god or a brute could live in solitude and not go insane," is but too true. Human beings need companionship, not only for the sake of health and happiness, but for their soul's sake, as well. Little children often suffer agonies of loneliness when kept from contact with other children of their age; young people can not develop aright without associates of their own years. Physical hunger is hard to bear, but what of the mental and spiritual hunger, the starvation of the soul, through lack of contact with other minds? The

women of the home, especially in the country, suffer far more from this deprivation of society than do the men; the men are constantly seeing new things, new faces, and living a more normal life through meeting his neighbors in transacting the necessary business that takes him to other men; but the wife is kept, in many instances, apart from all save her own family, sometimes months at a time, while the work of the house is one steady routine that admits of little variety. Recently a writer in an agricultural journal said there was no such thing as loneliness on the farm, for the woman had her work, and then, there were the animals—which were always good company! If only that editor would try it awhile!

But there are others than country people who are lonely: Just imagine the life of the woman whose so-called home is in one of the big apartment houses of the city; or the tiny flat, or the crowded cottages, or even the large houses. For such women there are no neighbors, in the country sense of the word; there are just "the people on the next floor," below or above; the family in the front, or back, or "the family next door." There are hurrying feet everywhere, and plenty of human beings going to and fro; but one is afraid to get in touch with them, for the "touch" is only too often contamination. More than all must she be careful, if she have growing children. In the thickly populated city there are many starving souls. And the solitude of the city is terrible!

The Kitchen Coal Box

A sister-editor asks, plaintively, "Is there anything that looks worse than a big box in the kitchen, filled with coal?" We are of the opinion that there is. A big empty box, where the coal is needed, with nobody but mother or the girls to fill it, is to our eyes a far "sorrrier" object. But while one is about it, why not make the coal box as attractive as possible? Get the box of the desired size, and either paint it, or cover with table oilcloth, tacked on smoothly, or it may even be papered with wall paper, or the ubiquitous newspaper—anything to make it neat and in keeping with the rest of the furnishing; there should be casters on the bottom, so it can be moved about for sweeping, or dusting, and the casters should be strong ones, suitable ones costing about 25 cents the set of four; or if you have an old set, these can be used. The inside bottom should be slanting, so the coal can be shoveled easily, and the back should be at least a foot higher than the rest of the top. At the top of the back should be a large hook, or even a nail, on which the shovel or tongs can be kept, while the poker, if not hung up, may be secured in one corner by a bit of something tacked across the corner. But this is not all. Hanging conveniently over the box should be a pair of ten cent canton flannel or drilling gloves, and the fire woman should never fail to put these gloves on before she touches the coal things. There should also be a handled brush and a dust-pan hanging in the immediate vicinity of the coal outfit, and with a minute's use of these, all coal or ashes that may be spilt can readily be kept off from the floor. The whole thing need not cost even a dollar, and it will last

a long time—several seasons, at least, and the gloves should go into the wash every week. Let us insist on having everything attractive.

Caring for the Woman

Every one of the family should make it a sacred duty to take care of the mother, but she must take care of herself.

Do anything to avoid bending the back at an angle; a high stool should be in every kitchen, and as much work as possible should be done sitting down. Have a box or a bench on which to set the mop pail when washing up the floor or frames; this will make so much stooping unnecessary. A strong, light step ladder should belong exclusively to the house mother. A light bench that will not "topple over" should be another of her individual belongings. A wooden cleat should be nailed to the wall just above the cook table, and a few inches above the cleat should be tacked a strip of elastic; on the cleat can rest the open cook book, while the elastic, behind which it is to be slipped, will keep it open at the right place, and it may be glanced at without stooping, and be out of the way of the "things" on the cook table.

A great labor-saver in the kitchen is the zinc top for the cook table. A piece of galvanized sheet iron, or one of the so-called zinc boards which comes with the new stove, will answer, but the zinc is best. It will save no end of scrubbing, and anything hot can be set on it—even to scorching hot.

If one must depend upon soft coal for fuel, it will be well to strip the house of all delicate articles, hangings, curtains, and pack them away out of the dust and soot. There is little rest for the one who attends to the fire where soft coal is burned and the stove must have constant attention to keep it at steady heat and at the same time avoid the disagreeable accompaniments of foul odors, soot and gas.

Caring for the Gas Stove

Where one is so fortunate as to have gas for fuel in the kitchen, the stove must be given particular attention. It should be kept well polished, as this improves its looks and keeps it from rust. Milk, coffee, or foods that are allowed to boil over, clog the burners, corrode the iron and zinc linings, and give an unsightly appearance. The burners should be lifted out once or twice a week, turned upside down and lightly tapped to knock out any dust or soot, so that the circular aperture that supplies the flame may be freed from any deterrent collection. Particles that resist this method should be picked out with a strong pin. If the burners have been allowed to become greasy and dirty, the pipes can be lifted out and well scoured in coal oil, then rubbed dry with a cloth. Washing in strong soap suds will do, but the coal oil is best. There are now tops for the gas range which allows the use of many vessels where, without them, only one burner could be used. A cast-iron device, fashioned like an old-fashioned jellycake tin, but with holes all around the rim, can be turned over one burner and on this several small vessels can be kept cooking. It will cost about fifteen cents at the hardware or department stores, and

will soon "pay for itself," as well as save time for the housewife. There are many really cheap, simple devices that make far less work in the kitchen, and every housewife should have them.

Christmas Candies

For sweets for the holidays, nothing is nicer than the home-made candies, and as the holidays last well into January, there is plenty of time to practice making them. Here are two favorite "fudge" recipes:

"Smith Fudge"—One cupful each of white and brown sugar; half a cupful of cream and a fourth of a cupful of nice molasses; add a quarter of a cupful of melted butter, and bring all to a boil; cook for three minutes, stirring constantly; have ready two squares of chocolate finely grated, and add, cooking five minutes longer, stirring all the time; rapidly, at first, then more slowly. Lift the saucepan from the fire, add a teaspoonful and a half of vanilla extract, and beat until creamy. Nut meats may be added, if desired. Pour into a buttered pan, and when cool, mark into squares.

"Vassar Fudge"—Two cupfuls of light brown sugar, one cupful of thick cream and a scant tablespoonful of butter; when this is hot, add a quarter of a cake of shaved chocolate, cook stirring, until a little poured into a saucer and beaten creams; then take from the fire and beat until creamy and thick. Pour out into a pan, and cut into squares when cool.

Velvet Molasses Taffy—Cook together a cupful each of boiling water and molasses with three cupfuls of brown sugar; add three tablespoonfuls of vinegar, and when it comes to a boil, add half a teaspoonful of cream tartar; cook until it is brittle in cold water, and stir only when nearly done; pour into buttered dishes and pull when cool enough, but not white. Cut into short pieces and wrap in buttered paper, twisting the ends of the paper, as for kisses.

Mince Meat

Chop fine two pounds of cold boiled lean beef, and mince to a powder a pound of beef-kidney suet, sprinkling it with flour if it seems disposed to stick. Seed and cut in half two pounds of raisins, wash and pick over carefully a pound of sultana raisins and two pounds of cleaned currants; be sure they are free from grits and dirt before you let them out of your hands. Peel and chop five pounds of nice well flavored apples, and shred three-quarters of a pound of citron. Mix these all together, with two tablespoonfuls each of mace and cinnamon, a tablespoonful each of allspice and cloves, a tablespoonful of grated nutmeg, two and a half pounds of brown sugar, and a tablespoonful of salt. Put with them a quart or three pints of good cider and pack in a stone jar, covering. The mince meat should mellow for a week or two before using. The real, old fashioned mince pie was often made with a bottom crust, and little strips latticed over the top.

Selections

When seeding raisins, put them in a bowl and pour boiling water over them, cover, and let stand a few minutes, then pour off the water and rub each raisin with the thumb and finger, and the seed will come out. A brilliant and lasting polish may be obtained on the range by adding a little sugar and a few drops of turpentine to the common, old fashioned stove polish, after mixing it with water to the consistency of cream. Apply the polish to the cold