

The Home Department

Conducted by Helen Watts McKee

Homesick

It stands afar, 'mid sun-lit fields—
A little farm house, brown and old,
With ancient, gray and time-stained walls,
And sloping roof of gold.
And I, a wanderer from the dusty town,
Grown weary of its heavy ways,
Wistful, from off the hot, white road,
Look down,
And long for olden days.

For there, the nights were blest with quiet sleep,
The days were filled with happy cares;
And there the skies seemed ever more to keep
A time for peace and prayers.
There, youth and laughter, joy and hope and love
Sang in my heart a happy song;
Ah, me! the song is hushed forever more
And lost the streets among.

And now I stand and gaze with heavy heart,
Across dear fields in longing sore;
To where another woman, happier far,
Looks from the low, gray door.
O, little farm house, old and brown and sweet,
I wake, when all the world's at rest,
And dream of you, and long for the old peace
And the untroubled breast!
—Pall Mall Gazette.

"Alone in the World"

One never realizes the discomforts of loneliness quite so strongly as during the winter season. Yet there are many lonely people in the world. The man who has no family ties, no sympathizing companions, no genial relations with his fellow men, is indeed alone in the world. We are told that loneliness is but the result of volition; but whatever it may have been in the olden days, it is not quite true of today, when everybody looks with suspicion on every other body who happens to be unknown to them. It is not easy to make friends and acquaintances, especially in the city. Many women live for years in a neighborhood, yet hardly get on speaking terms with their next-door neighbor, and even though the "speaking" terms are established, it may be long before there is the slightest effort or offer toward sociability. Many people really mope in solitude when they might be finding friends. They gradually get the habit of staying at home, and are thus growing more and more separate from their kind, until they are dropped out and forgotten. They become soured and embittered because of the fancied neglect, and the world can do without them. One of the ways to become acquainted is through attending church meetings. If you are unknown, make yourself known to the minister, and express your desire to know his congregation, showing yourself friendly, and you will at least find two or three who, like yourself, are alone in the crowd, and a friendship will grow out of it. There is nothing so depressing as continued solitude. Mankind is constitutionally gregarious and social, and can not live a solitary life without violating the conditions upon which the mental health depends.

Begin the New Year with a resolve to cultivate your friends and thus broaden your own outlook.

"Fresh Eggs"

When a nurse or physician is making up a diet for the invalid, there is almost sure to be a reference to the "fresh egg." In many cases, it is the "strictly fresh egg" that is ordered; yet how very few of us ever see or handle a really fresh egg—one of the old-time "just laid" kind! It is said that there are over 11,000,000 dozen eggs in cold storage at this date, and that the dealers are buying up the fresh eggs as fast as possible and holding them until they can throw the millions of dozens of stale eggs upon the market, forcing the public to buy, or to do without eggs. When they are plentiful in the spring, they are bought and put in storage, and throughout the year this buying and storing goes on, and the stale eggs are unloaded upon the people the year round, in many instances being labeled as "strictly" fresh. Even the family that "keeps a few hens" in the back yard know little of the taste of fresh eggs, because the egg laid in the poultry prison has very little in common with the one made up of the food of the range. If one would study the business, and make a business of it, poultry raising surely "has money in it," but it must be treated as a strictly business proposition.

"For the Woman's Sake"

A certain spirit of reserve prevents the well-bred man making a scene of any kind, no matter what the provocation, when he is in company with a lady. He knows well that her name will be in a measure mixed up with any account of the affair, and he also knows that a band of "roughs" may prove too much for his fistful powers. So it is a good thing for the man who is favored with the privilege of escorting his sisters and their girl friends, or perhaps the friends without the sisters, to decide upon the proper course to pursue in the event of such happening, so he will have his wits about him. And it is the right thing for the girl to do to try to understand what she should do under such circumstances that may prevent involving her escort, if it can be prevented. Perhaps the best way is to ignore any remarks heard, pass through any disorderly crowd as quietly as possible, not with an arrogant, conscious attitude, but naturally. As a rule, the roughest men show respect to a modest woman, and this will often carry both through an ordeal that otherwise might result in much unpleasantness.—Ex.

Frames for the Hot-Bed

In many instances, oiled, waterproof cloth will answer every purpose for the hot or cold frames, and it is much less expensive than glass. Common white muslin may be used, and the simplest way is to saturate the muslin with pure, raw linseed oil; this may be put on the cloth after it is stretched on the frames. Another way is to take three pints of pale linseed oil, one ounce of sugar of lead, four ounces of white rosin. Grind and mix the sugar of lead in a little oil, then add the other materials and heat in an iron kettle, applying hot with a brush. Thin, stout manilla paper may be stretched

over a frame and pasted firmly down with fresh flour paste, then painted on both sides with boiled linseed oil; but this is not so lasting as the muslin, nor to be recommended where the muslin may be had.

For corned beef, the best pieces are the rump and brisket; cut in suitable sizes, rub with salt and let lie for twenty-four hours, then rub with molasses or brown sugar and leave for three days more; then wipe well; pack down with salt to which has been added a small quantity of saltpeter, to give the "red" color. But a small quantity should be used, as saltpeter hardens the meat. Rub these in well, and turn every day for two weeks; then drain off the brine, boil, skim and pour back boiling hot over the meat, doing this every day for a month. Two pounds of brown sugar, six pounds of salt and four ounces of saltpeter to 100 pounds of meat, is the right proportion. The brine, or pickle, must cover the meat entirely at all times.

Mending Shirtwaists

A waist of thin material wears out on the shoulders and just below the collar in the back. The thick ones wear out under the arms and on the under parts of the sleeves. When a break is discovered in a yoke of thin goods, embroidery or lace, baste under it a piece of the sheerest material obtainable; batiste, organdy or Swiss muslin will do; extend the mending material considerably beyond the worn place. With No. 200 cotton, draw the break gently together on the outside of the waist; turn it over and tack the organdy to the figures in the embroidery, and trim off the raw edge. Where there is a break between tucks, place organdy under as before, and sew the edges firmly under the tucks. Darn with lengthwise ravelling of the organdy.

To mend a waist under the arm, rip the sleeve from shoulder seam to under arm seam, and a little past it; then, underneath the last tuck, cut off the front from shoulder seam to bottom of waist, straighten the edge on a lengthwise thread of the goods; replace with new material that has been well shrunken and seams allowed, shaping by the piece removed. If the goods is figured, the new piece will be set in the neatest by overhanding. All thin waists that will do for wear next season should be put in thorough repair now, as spring is not so far away.

Fish as Food

Poisoning by ptomaines (chemical compounds formed by the action of micro-organisms) is popularly supposed to be one of the dangers attendant upon eating fish; although not without some foundation, this does not agree with actual facts, as ptomaines are never found in fresh fish. Poisoned fish is no commoner than poisoned meats, probably, and both are equally dangerous. Frozen fish (and the same may be said of frozen meats) after having been thawed and kept for some time uncooked, is likely to contain its share of ptomaines; canned fish ought to be eaten at once after it has been opened, never left in the can.

A Catch-All Bag

Cut two pieces of bed-ticking twelve inches square, bind the four sides together with fancy tape, or

bright bias cloth put on with fancy stitching. In the center of one of the pieces cut an opening about five inches in diameter; bind the edges of this opening with tape or the bright colored bias strip, and run in a whalebone; fasten a piece of tape twelve or fifteen inches long at four equal distances around the opening, and tie the loose ends in a bow-knot at the top. Across each corner featherstitch tape, the same as around the sides; decorate each corner with a bowknot of the tape, and attach a bow-knot of tape at the center of the back piece, which, when the bag is hung up by the tape strings, will sag down, making the bag. This bag can be laundered, and will serve for no end of purposes, and is just the thing for collars, laces and handkerchiefs for the laundry.

For the Constipated Babe

If a breast-fed baby has this trouble, it lies with the mother to be careful of her own diet, partaking of foods that will promote regularity, which will help the baby. For the bottle-fed, or weaned baby, prunes prepared in this way are excellent: Wash clean, then soak overnight; stew slowly all day, or at least several hours, in water enough to cover them. When they have become softened, break the skins so the inside can cook out into the water; sweeten slightly with brown sugar, and strain through a cheesecloth, if for a bottle-fed baby; a little of the water put into the nursing bottle is the easiest way to give the juice. If old enough to eat, the pulp may be mashed through a sieve and fed to him.

Using Canned Goods

In nearly all households, we have come to the "canned goods" stage, this month. Most of the fresh fruits are either gone, or are so high-priced as to be beyond the daily expenses, and it is a fortunate housewife who has well filled shelves from which to draw variety. While much of the "home" canning is above reproach, a great deal of it has doubtless been indifferently done, or poor materials have been used. Much of the "store" canned supplies are poor, if we buy the cheaper grades, and often the high-priced grades are not to our liking. But the factory-canned things are usually very good, if we get a good brand. As soon as the cans are opened, the contents must be at once emptied into a dish, or vessel, as left standing in the tins, they are apt to create a poison; or, if in a glass, the admixture of fresh air is quite an aid to their flavor. Many canned vegetables need a good rinsing in cold water, before use. Pour the contents in a colander and dash clear water freely over them, letting it drain away at once. Nearly all vegetables can be thus rinsed—peas, beans, asparagus, and the like. There are so many nice ways of warming up and serving canned goods that it is well to study the cookery books and experiment. It is not what we have in the larder, so much as how we make use of it. There are wonderful possibilities in a can of corn, or tomatoes, or salmon, peas, beans, or other vegetables and fruits.

Now is a good time to use the dried fruits, and if well prepared, many of them are even better than the canned goods. I am going to ask our friends to let us have their favorite recipes for such cookery, and hope they will send them in as soon as possible. Do not be afraid there will be too many of them—we can make room for anything that is helpful.

For Superfluous Hair

One of our readers asks if there is any "safe and sure" way for the removal of superfluous hair from the face. Conservative toilet specialists