



The Home Department

Conducted by
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Merry Christmas

In clouds the western beams expire—
The night is wild with sleet and storm;

Come, heap the yule logs on the fire
To keep the Christmas hearthstone warm.

With holly branches deck the room,
Turn on a dazzling flood of light;
No somber shade of grief or gloom
Should dim the mirth this happy night.

Ring, bellman, ring a merry chime;
Tonight a thousand youthful feet
And happy hearts will dance in time
To music's numbers, joyous, sweet.
A thousand furrowed brows grow bright,

With pleasure's warm, unclouded glow;

A thousand aged bosoms light
With memories of long ago.

Ring, bellman, ring a chime of praise!

Tonight, amid the angel throng,
A thousand golden harps will raise,
A thousand mortal tongues prolong,

The glories of that blessed night—
That Christmas night of glad renown,

When o'er Judea's silent plains
The Birth-Star of our Lord looked down!

—Emma Garrison Johnes.

"Merry Christmas to All"

In discussing the remembrances for our friends at Christmas time, there is a great deal said about the "personal touch;" the giving of something "made especially for you, and not bought at random." We are urged to "give of ourselves," making an especial "personal" gift to each of our friends. But if we waited to do that, I am afraid a large number of us would give no gift at all; for, say what you will, many of us really have not the time; we scarcely have the thought to give, much less the time and strength to do. We may have surpassing skill with needle and brush, or in other ways, but the big world pushes us on; we dare not drop out of the struggle lest we lose our foothold in the line, and every moment seems full of duties. Even the little, easy-made and inexpensive trifles call for too much time, and where one might pinch out the time to construct the gift, there is the gathering up of the material, and this often costs us more in time and strength than we can possibly afford to give. So the "personal touch" must, in many—the majority—of cases, be lost sight of, and we must depend on the stores for our gifts, even to our most loved ones. A writer says: "If your friend has any brains, give a book; if not, give a flower or a box of candy." But oftentimes the book will prove but a duplicate, or will not "fit in;" it may never be read or appreciated, and will serve but to "clutter things." So, after all, the flower may be the most prized. A card, a kindly note, a letter of remembrance to the absent—any of these will do. "Christmas giving is either the purest expression of friendship, or it is the meanest and shabbiest of shams. Give of yourself, if you can—if not, do the best you can under the circumstances. Give good wishes. And the Home Department

wishes you all a happy, comfortable Christmas.

Sand Cure for Dyspepsia

In regard to the item going the rounds, recommended by those who have used the sand-cure as successful, a doctor of Indiana has this to say: "There is a general belief that by eating gravel (or fine sand) it aids in digestion of foods, for it requires less work on the part of the stomach to grind up the food. It probably cannot be disputed that it will give temporary relief, but the walls of the digestive organs are by the use of gravel greatly irritated, and even have been perforated by the small stones, when the results will be worse than the indigestion. I therefore do not recommend such proceedings, and advise against trying it. Poor digestion can be cured by much simpler means, and in a way not at all dangerous."

The Old Children

Some one has said that, while the children would be cared for by the churches, Sunday schools, lodges and newspapers, the old and lonely people would be over-looked and neglected at the Christmas holiday festivals. Everybody thinks of the children, and the children think of themselves so far as being heard and seen goes; but the old people suffer for want of sympathy and tenderness. They are unobtrusive, ask nothing, voice no wants, and accept the neglect without a protest. Many of these old people are possessed of some means, but find it hard to manage through the winter season, and necessity crowds out even comfort at times, and they often suffer. Others have indeed a seat at the fire-side of some relative; but that does not always constitute a home, or home affection. Many have nothing except the pittance they can earn with their limited strength, and their patient struggles and little subterfuges to hide their needs are pitiful. These dear old children have little to do with Christmas cheer. They live solely upon their memories. In every neighborhood there should be an active Old Folks' Happiness club. Why not start one?

For the Dining Room

If hot dishes are to be served, let them be really hot, as few things are more objectionable than lukewarm foods or beverages that require to be hot.

The wing of a swimming bird and the leg of a flying bird are the choicest portions. The head pieces of all fish are considered the most delicate. A piece of the roe should be served with every portion of shad or mackerel. A piece of the back and belly of salmon ought to go with each portion.

To carve a turkey, insert the fork across the middle of the breast bone (which should be uppermost on the plate), cut through the skin between the breast and the thigh; bend the leg over and cut it off close to the body and through the joint. Cut through the top of the shoulder down to the wing joint. Shave the breast off in thin slices, slanting from the front of the breast bone down toward the wing joint. A piece of the breast should be attached to each wing. The breast should be cut in delicate slices, after which the side-bones should be removed, the breast

bones should be cut in such a way as to leave on it the white meat and the brown skin. The carcass should be divided from the neck down, and the rump form a portion by itself. Divide the legs at the joints; the second joint is a choice piece, and if the tendons have been removed before cooking, the drumsticks will be excellent.

The napkin should be unfolded and placed across the knees. It is not allowable to tuck it under the chin or fasten in the buttonhole of the vest. Do not use it towel-fashion; one corner is enough at a time. If visiting, lay the napkin loosely beside your plate without folding when done with it.

Good manners is the outgrowth of kindness and a desire to please. Different localities have different customs, and rules laid down in the best of books are subject to such moderations.

Etiquette

In answer to many questions along this line, we give the following: A man should be able to put on his own overcoat without a girl's help. Her act may be prompted by good intentions, but it is not good form.

When a guest passes a dish to his hostess before helping himself she may accept the dish from his hand and offer it to him, then help herself and pass it to her other neighbor.

When older ladies enter a room, the girls should rise as though to greet her, and with that thought in mind, the action will appear perfectly natural.

A girl may ask any one whom she has met several times to call, provided she is well assured that he is the kind of man of whose acquaintance her parents would approve.

Where a lady is the guest, if the host is present, she should be seated at his right hand; if not, she should be placed at the right hand of the hostess.

When a young man calls on a young lady, she should rise at once and go toward him a few steps, holding out her hand in greeting.

Wedding announcements should be mailed, on the wedding day after the ceremony has taken place. A wife will move in the social circle that is warranted by her husband's position and her own personal qualities and fitness.

It is a matter for individual preference whether to enclose the cards bearing the address and reception day within the invitations and announcements, or to send them later. They should be engraved on separate cards.

It is never proper for a man to take a woman's arm, except to lend her assistance in some way; neither is it proper for her to take his arm unless he offers it, which is not now done, except when passing through a crowd, or to afford any required protection.

For the Toilet

Alkali water is improved by the addition of a tablespoonful of toilet water to the basin full. Toilet vinegar is made in various ways, one of the pleasantest being to dissolve an ounce of acetic acid in a quart of cologne, making in these proportions if a less quantity is desired; or, mix a quart of common vinegar with an ounce of Peru balsam; or, dissolve two teaspoonfuls of oil of

cloves in eight ounces of alcohol and mix with a pint of strong vinegar. White, distilled vinegar is finest for this purpose, but any good vinegar will do.

Oil of butter is recommended as a toilet preparation for making a rough skin smooth. You must have a pound of fresh, sweet, real cow's butter, unsalted; melt this slowly and let the cheesy white sediments sink to the bottom of the vessel; pour off the oil of butter and suspend in it a drachm of gum benzoin tied in a thin muslin bag; let the benzoin stay in the butter-oil for twenty-four hours or longer, if liked. Then, pour into small, wide-mouthed bottles or jars and cork or seal. This is an excellent emollient for chapped face or hands. Vegetable glycerine is separated from nut and seed oils, just as common glycerine is made from animal fat, and is much purer. It is the best for medicines and toilet uses, but is not generally handled.

A friend recommends the cleansing of the face with equal parts of alcohol and water, applied with a soft cloth; go into the corners of the mouth and creases about the nose, and clean all the creases, carefully. This is said to stimulate as well as clean. Greasy preparations will clean the face and make it smooth, but if there is the slightest tendency toward superfluous hair, let them alone.

During cold weather, if the hands are very grimy, be sure to first grease them well with common lard, rubbing the grease well in, then, after a few minutes wash in hot water with corn meal and soap, drying well, then wetting with vinegar and let it dry on.

General Household

If green vegetables have become frosted, steep them in cold water for twelve hours before boiling; potatoes and other roots should be peeled, then steeped an hour, and when boiled, a piece of saltpetre should be added to the boiling water—about as large as a pea.

Baked bananas are said to be one of the best foods for nervous persons and brain workers. The raw bananas are too heavy for some delicate stomachs. Bake the bananas in the skin until quite soft and burst open; this is claimed to build up and strengthen persons with poor blood.

If you have no double-boiler, get a couple of pails, one much larger than the other; have each of them with a tightly fitting lid. Put whatever is to be cooked in the smaller of the pails, close the lid tightly and set the smaller pail in the larger one, which should have enough water in it to reach nearly to the top of the smaller one, but not deep enough to boil over it.

For a steamer, get a lard or coffee can that will just fit in the tea-kettle top, and punch the bottom full of holes. If the can will set inside the kettle an inch or two, holes may be punched for an inch or more up the sides from the bottom. Puddings, brown bread and many other things may be put into smaller dishes and cooked in the steamer.

Scouring Wool

The following directions for scouring wool have been sent us by several readers: In manufactories this is generally performed by an ammoniacal lye, formed of five measures of water to one of stale urine; the wool is immersed for about twenty minutes in a bath of this mixture heated to fifty-six degrees, then taken out, allowed to drain, and then rinsed in running water, if it is to be had; but this can be done by pouring water over the wool in a basket; or it may be rinsed through several waters in a tub. This manip-