



# The Home Department

Conducted by  
Helen Watts McKee

## A Winter Morning

The soft, blue sky leaned down toward the earth,  
Velled with white, fleecy clouds that moved and stirred  
Like the light pinions of some sleeping bird,  
Poised in the ether where it had its birth.  
An opal radiance shimmered in the east,  
Mounted and widened, till, shot through its bars,  
The arrows of the sun dispersed the stars,  
Glad from their service to be thus released,  
No sun which lights a perfect day in June  
Has ever known a fairer sky than this;  
It should be welcomed by the song-birds' tune,  
Its rose and gold should greet the south-wind's kiss;  
Who could believe, did he not glance below,  
This glory bends above a waste of snow?

—Ninette M. Lowalter.

## Cremation for the Dead

The custom of cremating the bodies of the dead is growing in favor, but among the masses but little is known of the process by which it is accomplished. At the crematory, there are all the sad ceremonies usually attending the interment of the body, but there are no harrowing sights; no smell, no decay; and when the reduction is completed, there remains nothing but the mineral salts of the body, and these are as clean as fine washed sand. At the crematorium, the upper story is used as a chapel, in the center of which is the catafalque draped in black, for the reception of the coffin and its contents; below this are the furnaces and other apparatuses for the incineration. When a body is to be cremated, the secretary of the association notifies in writing the manager, who attends to having the furnace ready by a certain hour for the incineration of the remains; in each instance, giving the name of the dead. At the appointed hour the cortege arrives, the coffin is removed from the hearse and borne into the chapel, where it is placed on the catafalque. While the funeral services are being held, the coffin is noiselessly lowered into the crypt below, where, in the presence of several witnesses, the body is removed and placed upon a grated iron frame beneath which is a metal floor covered with asbestos, upon which the ashes are deposited. The casket is then placed out of sight behind a black curtain, the body is swathed in a heavy cotton cloth which has been soaked in a strong solution of alum, and it is ready for the fire; the receiving frame is pushed upon iron rails to the mouth of the retort into which the corpse is slid; the doors are then closed, and no mortal eye may look upon the body again until it comes forth in the shape of a grayish-white mass of ashes. The time occupied in the reduction of an adult varies from one and one-half to two hours. In the case of men, the ashes weigh from five to six pounds; of women, from four and a half to five pounds.

The usual crematory apparatus is composed of a receiver, a furnace and a chimney. The receiver is an arched brick chamber with a flat bottom, open at each end, one of

which communicates with the upper part of the furnace, and the other with the lower part of the chimney; the furnace, which discharges its heat into the receiver, is somewhat spacious, sufficiently so as to produce the necessary heat by means of wood fuel; the chimney is also of sufficient sectional area to remove the products of combustion, and high enough to permit the draft to keep above the gases and to prevent any dispersion of heat or smoke through the apertures of the retort. In order to overcome the possibility of any organic molecules escaping from the shaft, a portion of coke is kept constantly burning upon a grating at the base of the chimney. The products of animal combustion which issue still highly heated from the receiver are subjected to a higher temperature in passing through the blazing coke, and any organic matter which may have resisted or escaped the first combustion is destroyed by the second, and mixes harmlessly with the outer atmosphere.

Before a body may be subjected to incineration the burial certificates from the board of health, as well as the certificate of the attending physicians must be shown, else a heavy fine is lodged against the manager, who is also subjected to a term of imprisonment. The ashes are variously disposed of by the friends or relatives, but usually the flaky remains are incinerated and allowed to remain at the crematory. Just as the body is received it is taken from the coffin and placed in the retort; nothing is disturbed. The heat the body is subjected to is of 800 degrees intensity; from the time it is placed in the receiving chamber until it issues a handful of whitish gray ashes, it is enveloped in such a cloud of vaporish smoke that even if the rules of the association permitted an inspection during the process, nothing but this could be seen.

## Refreshments

While not obligatory, it is customary to serve light refreshments at an evening gathering. No elaborate preparation of any sort is necessary; the refreshments may be passed around, or a buffet lunch may be served in the dining room. Ices and fancy cakes are in good taste, and for a cold weather gathering, chocolate with cakes, or sandwiches with little cups of hot bouillon may be substituted for the ices. The men of the party should pass the cups and plates, or the ladies may do this. Either is proper. If something heavier is required, salads made of chicken, lobster, fish, etc., may be served. For a chafing dish supper, Welsh rarebit, oysters and lobsters may be served, or any other of the chafing dish dainties.

## A Remedy for Catarrh

The following remedy was given a year or two ago, but is asked for again: Go to the drug store and buy one ounce of pure extract of yellow puccoon; take one teaspoonful of this and put it in one pint of water that has been freshly boiled, shake well and set it away to settle. Buy a spray (it will cost 50 to 75 cents); pour the solution out of the bottle carefully, not stirring up the dregs at the bottom. Take the spray, hold your head high, and spray the liquid in both nostrils, letting it run down into the throat. Do this twice a day,

and you will be all right in one year or sooner. It is supposed that a mild case of catarrh will succumb to the remedy before the expiration of the year; but for a severe chronic case, it may call for the whole time.

## Harmless Amusements

A part of the education of every child should be the teaching it to enjoy funny things. A sense of humor is a saving sense in more ways than one. Amusement is a good thing when it is harmless, and a good laugh is better than medicine.

## Condensed Milk

It is told that when condensed milk was first introduced, forty years ago, the idea was laughed at. The inventor of the method carried the supply for New York city in a ten-quart pail, delivering it personally to his customers. He died later, worth \$7,000,000 made out of the business, which grew to be a gigantic industry. "The process employed is very simple, the fresh milk being put into a great copper tank with a steam jacket. While it is being heated, sugar is added, and the mixture then drawn off into a vacuum tank where evaporation is produced by heat. The tank has a glass at the top through which the operator in charge looks from time to time, and can tell by the appearance of the milk when the time has arrived to shut off the steam; this must be done at just the right minute, or the batch will be spoiled. Next the condensed milk is drawn into large cans which are set in very cold water and chilled, being made to revolve rapidly by a mechanical contrivance, in order that the contents may cool evenly." This is but the outline of the original method, the great industry that has grown out of it today requiring most effective machinery and the putting into small cans. A great many people use the canned milk from choice, but the taste for it has to be acquired.

## Bits of Information Asked For

A good stain for a floor is made by adding to a strong lye of wood ashes enough copperas to make the desired shade of oak. Put this on the boards with a mop, let dry and varnish afterwards.

For cleaning paint for varnishing, have a plate with some of the best whiting to be had on it, and have ready some clean warm water and a piece of flannel. Dip the flannel into the water, squeeze nearly dry, then take up as much of the whiting as will adhere to it; apply to the painted surface, and rub gently; any dirt or grease will be removed; then wash the parts well with clean water, rubbing it dry with a soft cloth or chamois skin. This will not injure the most delicate colors, and it will look as well as new. Try this.

There are so many varnishes and stains now on the market which are both reasonable in price and satisfactory for use, that it is hardly worth while to attempt to mix one's own varnish.

For painting canvas, make a flexible paint by these directions: Yellow bar soap shredded in thin slices, one and one-half pounds; boiling water, one gallon; dissolve, and while hot mix with oil paint, one cwt. This is far a large canvas.

March is the best month in spring in which to paint houses, etc., as the paint will last twice as long as when applied in hot weather. In cold

weather the component parts of the paint form a hard substance on the surface, almost as hard as glass; but in warm weather, the oil penetrates the wood and the paints wear off.

For roofs, this is said to "look better than paint and wear better, and is as durable as slate, stopping the small leaks in roofs, making the roof incombustible and rendering brick impervious to water." Slack stone lime by putting it into a tub, covering to keep the steam in. When slacked, pass the powder through a fine sieve, and to each six quarts of the powder add one quart of rock salt and one gallon of water; then boil and skim clean. To each five gallons of this add one pound of pulverized alum, half a pound of pulverized copperas, and slowly add three-fourths pound of powdered potash; then fine sand or hickory ashes, four pounds; now add any desired color and apply the mixture with a brush, smoothly coating it on. Keep stirring it well as you add the ingredients, so it will be well mixed.

## Getting Ready to Garden

While it may seem a little early to do anything in the garden, yet there is a great deal that can be done, and by doing it now, time will be gained for the busy season soon coming. All the garden tools should be gathered up, mended, the woodwork painted, and all blades sharpened, handles mended, and everything put into shape. Pea and tomato sticks may be got ready and put under shelter, and it is a good time to spread fertilizer, if you neglected it last fall. The garden spot should be very rich in order to have vegetables get right down to business as soon as the warm days come. If you did not gather the weeds off the ground last fall, it would be well to set matches to the piles as you bunch them now, and thus burn up a lot of insect eggs. Don't forget to read the advertising columns, send for the catalogues, look over the lists of new implements and plan for the busy days.

## Query Box

Several letters have been returned to me, because the person to whom they were addressed could not be found. It is better that you send an addressed envelope, as some of our excellent scribes slur over the names of the town, city or state, and it is almost impossible to clearly make them out without the aid of an official guide wherein every postoffice is to be found. If some of you are still waiting for your answers, please remember this. Several have written, giving no address, and can only be answered by personal letter.

Will Mrs. G. W. B., "Business Manager," please send address.

M. R.—Wash tan shoes with warm water and castile soap, wetting them as little as possible; let dry, then dress with tan dressing. Rubbing with banana peel is recommended; also rubbing with a woolen cloth on which a few drops of turpentine is poured.

Polly M.—Polishing the kid gloves with shoe polish may or may not be injurious; it depends on the polish. A little of the polish stirred up with a little olive oil, and rubbed thoroughly into the leather may be best.

H. R.—Ask your furniture dealer about the brown stain; there are so many ways of staining, and so many stains on the market that it is hard to advise.

"Housekeeper"—The style of interior decoration as to joining side walls with ceiling varies so much in different sections of the country that you would best consult your local "paper" man, or house-decorator. The pieces of furniture should have the old varnish removed and can then be grated anew. The polishes and varnishes advertised in reliable