



The Home Department

Conducted by
Helen Watts McKee

The Mother

I am the pillars of the house—
The keystone of the arch am I;
Take me away, and roof and wall
Would fall to ruin utterly.

I am the twist that holds together
The children in its sacred ring—
Their knot of love, from whose close
tether
No lost child goes a-wandering.

I am their walls against all danger,
Their door against the wind and
snow.

Thou, Whom a woman laid in
manger,
Take me not till the children
grow!

—Katharine Tynan in the Francis-
can Review.

Requested Information

Several questions have reached me that I should like very much to answer; but they are out of my line entirely, belonging to the editor of the stock and agricultural publications. If the writers are subscribers to *The American Homestead*, published by Mr. Charles W. Bryan, and will send the questions to that paper, they will get information from well informed, practical writers. If they are not subscribers, and will send 25 cents to *The American Homestead*, Lincoln, Neb., they will get reliable information on all subjects relating to agriculture, horticulture, stock, and the household, whenever asked for, for one year, and they will like the paper.

Some Experiences

For the past year, owing to a combination of conditions and circumstances, I have been "knocking about" over the country, and the unsettled condition has brought me into contact with quite a few housewives. Being naturally observant, I have seen a great deal of life at the home fireside, and have found much food for thought. In the matter which greatly concerns us all, the cost of living, I have found that women are not more to blame than men, but both are very much to blame in different ways. The old-time frugality and forethought seems to have been entirely lost sight of, even in the cities. Among my hostesses have been wives of men in different stations of life, with varying incomes, and when I assure you I was a "paying guest," you will see that I am not prejudiced. Among the housewives have been wives of professional men, business men, trades people, skilled laborers, and the man who simply works for hire—the very small wage given where circumstances force the man to take what he can get. And I have found the same lack of management in them all. The very best housekeeper I met was one of the sweetest women, a born worker and her house and table were beyond criticism, so far as neatness is concerned; her kitchen was as neat as her parlor, and her bedrooms were ideal in appointment—nothing costly or fine, but immaculately clean and comfortable. The work of the household seemed to move with no friction, and she was always dressed in white, lacy clothing that never seemed to get soiled. She did all her work—everything. But she did very little cooking; about everything, except occasional meats, and a few vegetables, was brought cooked from the store as it was wanted; very

few "stores" were kept, but the paper parcels, packages, cans and glass jars were brought in at each meal. The meal was quickly prepared, with no unnecessary garbage or litter. There were no children. Both herself and her husband were always ailing with stomach troubles. Yet she was a fine cook, and had been raised on a farm. Do you see any "lack of management here?" Any cause of complaint against the "cost of living?" On a salary of \$6 a day they saved nothing. Why?

"Rules for Training Children"

From a private letter, written by one who has wrought much good in the world, and who writes from experience, not theory, I copy:

"People may theorize about what they would do, and lay down rules for the training of children, their environments, education, etc., but I know, and so does any one who has a normal thinker in good running order, and who uses it, that nothing can supply the deficiencies of brain which one's ancestors neglected to furnish. If there is one streak in the clouded brain, it may be broadened by the utmost painstaking; but if the streak is lacking, or if the painstaking is not at hand, who is to blame? There are thousands of mothers who should never have been mothers, and, while the "mother instinct," so far as the animal is in question, is strongly in evidence, the power to rear the young in the human way is most wretchedly deficient. As to environment, in this day and age, how very, very few there are among the working class and the very poor (who are the ones who have the most children) that are at all able to choose their environments, even as to their housing, for are not one or more families crowded into houses to which either no ground is attached, or, at best, only an ash-dump in a dirty few feet of back yard! As to education—they get it; but the education within the reach of the majority is not what theorists insist they can and should easily get at any school house. The worker must be housed near his or her work, and where the worker is, there must the family be, also—no matter what the environments! There is no choice to the toiler of either sex, unless there is a fat pocketbook to choose from."

Renewing the Curtains

When fall house cleaning makes it obligatory to launder the curtains, those of lace are not always found satisfactory. Where one wishes a curtain to last a long time, it is best to discard lace, and use instead some one of the many suitable fabrics in their stead. Good scrim, or barred muslin, Swiss, or even plain, five-cents-a-yard white muslin are all suitable for white curtains, and will wash and keep their whiteness a long time. Cheese cloth does not launder well, though while new it looks all right. Many housewives prefer colored curtains for the winter, and there are many beautiful colors and designs in silkoline, etc., which launder without fading, and lend an air of cheerfulness to the room. One has but to visit the house-furnishing department of a large city department store, to find many fabrics that will take the place of the white curtain, and which will launder satisfactorily. Many prefer sash curtains for much used rooms, as they are easily

laundered, and do not shut out the sunshine and light during the short days of winter, while giving privacy to the room from the outside.

Some Good Salads

Cabbage Salad—One small, firm, white head of cabbage, one cup of sugar, two eggs, one teaspoonful of mustard, one teaspoonful of salt, one cup of vinegar, one tablespoonful of vinegar. Mix the sugar, eggs, mustard and salt, then add the vinegar and beat all thoroughly; add the butter and cook in a double boiler until thick. Stir in the finely chopped cabbage while the dressing is hot, and serve immediately.

String-Bean Salad—Marinate two cups of cold cooked beans with French dressing; add one teaspoonful of finely cut chives; pile in the center of a salad dish, and arrange around the edge thin slices of radishes slightly overlapping each other.

Getting Ready for Winter

It is not the housewife alone, or those blest with the housekeeping outfit, including a family, who must begin to get ready for winter. Many women and girls, as well as many men, long inexpressibly for a room where they can set up their household goods, no matter how few, or plain, and feel that exclusive sense of proprietorship which no "paying guest" of any boarding house can ever know. For most of these, the "light-housekeeping" room furnishes as near a substitute for the real home, as can be had; but if they are still more ambitious for individuality, the "partly furnished," or vacant room, where heat, lighting, water, bath, and fuel are part of the perquisites, offers advantages. Or, the furnished room with "kitchen and laundry privileges" is not so bad, and may be still cheaper. In these days of alcohol stoves, much can be done, and if one can afford to have the laundry "rough-dried," and can have the electric, or gasoline, gas, or alcohol iron, they may have comfort and cleanliness at a minimum cost, and snap their fingers at the disoblighing laundry. The light housekeeping plan offers many advantages over the boarding house, but even at its best, it is far from being at all equal to the home atmosphere. One great trouble is that, having no one to cater to except self, many of us forget that self is a most important factor in our lives, and worth taking pains for; we neglect often to provide suitable foods, especially if we are "dead tired" when the day's work is done; or we are too tired to prepare the food, or too tired to partake of it when prepared. Then, too, the "light-housekeeping" feature is regarded as but temporary, and we put up with so many make-shifts, instead of furnishing a few of the really necessary devices for better preparation of our foods. Just a few really good cooking utensils should be had, and when we change our "room," we can take them with us. A really good double boiler, a coffee percolator, an alcohol stove, a chafing dish, will always "come handy."

The Last Garden Things

Already frosty weather, and even snow, is reported from various localities, and the woods and fields warn us that the year is rounding to a close. But in the garden there are still fragments that may be gathered and put away in appetizing form. A

combination of such vegetables as are suitable should be mixed and canned for soups, while others, combined, make excellent relishes or pickles. String beans, cut into short lengths, green tomatoes and cucumbers chopped, onions thinly sliced, the few late nubbins of green corn cut from the cob, with chopped cabbage, or cauliflower, a few green peppers, and black and white beans already showing a degree of hardness. The beans that are nearly ripe should be cooked until tender by themselves, then the rest of the vegetables mixed and cooked altogether in spiced vinegar, to which the beans may be added. The vinegar should be seasoned to taste, with sugar, or spices, as much or as little as wanted. A little mustard may be stirred in, and a very little grated horseradish used. For soups, the mixed vegetables should be cooked and canned, just as other vegetables, cooking with as little water as will keep them from scorching, packing them in the jars while boiling hot and sealing.

Query Box

S. S.—The curtains may be made of two long sections and one short one. The long sections are hung, one on each side of the window, while the short section, about eighteen inches long, is hung between the long ones, across the middle top of the window. When laundering curtains, always iron lengthwise, and they will keep their shape.

Mother of Four—Wishes to know the standard length of skirt for a small girl. Here is a rule given by a fashion editor: Have the little girl kneel on the floor when you try on the garment, and fold the hem so that the edge just touches evenly all around. For an older girl, common sense and fashion do not always agree.

Mrs. L. F.—The middy blouse seems as popular as ever, although worn so long. They are easily made and laundered, comfortable to wear, and a girl of whatever age looks well in them. They are frequently trimmed with contrasting colors, with or without the decorative emblems.

F. H. V.—To kill the willows, or other objectionable shrubbery, the growth should be cut off close to the ground during August, with a handful of salt poured over the raw cuts. Another way is to cut them down in July or August and pull the sprouts off as fast as they grow for some time. They will die, as this deprives the roots of air and substance.

Mrs. L. C.—Mercerized gingham are especially pretty for school dresses, and seersuckers, chambrays, and percales are also attractive; all these come in plain colors, or in figures or stripes or checks. The solid colors are very pretty in combination with the figured, and these materials launder wonderfully well. For little ones, the cotton crepes wear well and launder well, needing no ironing. With the short dresses be sure to provide stockings that will protect the little exposed limbs, and provide leggings for outdoors.

Some Good Recipes

Wherever there are school children, there, too, should be ginger-cake or bread. A good ginger bread made without eggs is as follows: Put half a cup of butter, a cup of sugar, a cup of good molasses, a cup of water and a pinch of salt in a saucepan to heat; add two teaspoonfuls of ginger, half a teaspoonful of cinnamon, a full teaspoonful of soda dissolved in a little water (boiling), and mix all into five cups of sifted flour. This may be baked in one large loaf, or in several loaves, using shallow pans. If a large loaf, bake in a moderate oven for an hour. Lard