



The Home Department

Conducted by
Helen Watts McKee

The Passing of Summer

Thinner the leaves of the forest show,
Motionless held in the languid air;
Fainter by waysides the sweetbriars grow,
Wide-blossoms laying their gold hearts bare;
Languishing one by one—
Summer is done.

All the roses have long since died—
Silent the birds through the white mists fly;
Down of the thistles by hot suns dried,
Borne on the air sail slowly by.
Little brooks in silence run—
Summer is done.

Later the flush of the sunshine sweeps,
Shorter the reign of the slow-coming day;
Earlier shades of the twilight creep,
Always the lone birds southward fly.
Autumn chorus of earth begun—
The summer is done.
—Reed M. Fisher.

Prevention, Rather Than Cure

As the days take on the faint chill of autumn, there will be an increasing tendency to shut up the house and exclude the fresh air, especially at night. By this means, the body will be debilitated and rendered liable to contract colds on going out of doors. Care should be taken, therefore, not to begin closing up the doors and windows too early. Rooms that are shut up always leave a sense of languor and fatigue, whether sleeping or living rooms. For a sitting room, the temperature should not be above 70 degrees, and the bedroom should always be much cooler, with good ventilation through open windows. Nothing is a better preventive of disease than plenty of exercise, and walking to and from business, if not too far, is to be recommended. The chill of winter requires good, warming food, but this should not mean overeating of unsuitable diet. Every housewife should try to know something of health-giving and heating properties of food stuffs. Many an attack of indigestion brought on by over-eating, or eating of unsuitable food at unsuitable times, has been followed almost immediately by a heavy cold that is only the forerunner of a severe case of sickness. It then interests the housewife to know just what is best in the way of food, shelter, clothing, exercise, and sanitary conditions in and about the house. Get up a club for the purpose of gaining a knowledge of so great importance to the health and happiness of the family. If no other meeting place offers, use the school house on an afternoon or evening. Take the men folks along, and make them talk; insist on a supply of literature, such as bulletins, and other like pamphlets from the experiment stations, and other sources of information. Read, think, talk, and discuss better methods of living. This is a matter which should deeply interest every man and woman.

For the Laundry

Judging from the lack of attention given by editors of household literature and their writers to this subject, one is tempted to suppose that a knowledge of fine laundry

work is one of the side issues of the domestic problem; that the ability to handle the flat-iron skillfully is a gift of nature, and no matter how careless and clumsy the hand, any teaching or training in that line is unnecessary. How untrue this view of the question is, many discouraged housewives learn at the expense of ruined linens, napery, lingerie and fine-fabrics. Once it was the common opinion that every female of the human species was a born cook and housekeeper; that it was only necessary for the ignorant, inexperienced girl or woman to turn out a first-class meal. It is now known that the art of good cookery, the combination of foods for the best interests of the consumer, is one of the sciences and ignorance has no place in the kitchen. Cooking schools are springing up everywhere, but few girls get any practical instruction or experience in fine laundry work. There should be a course of such instruction included in every girl's education, and it would be a wise thing for the young girl or woman to serve an apprenticeship to such work in a first-class laundry. She may never have to endure the heavy work of the family wash, but she will never regret knowing how to superintend the doing of her fine garments or household articles, even when done by another, and there are many times when such work, done by her own hands, falls to the lot of the woman who loves daintiness and cleanliness. Not one in a thousand of the swarm of laundresses are proficient in this line. Many are teachable, but more will never be anything but common "wash ladies," though they make loud claims to being of the best.

When looking about for work to be done in the home, give a thought to the business of doing up fine lingerie, laces, napery, linens, and decorative fancy work. The work is not heavy; it is clean work, and will pay well. It may take some time to work up a good, paying business, but it pays better than working in shops, stores, or factories.

Caring for the Children

Mothers can not take the place of the nurse or the doctor, for but few mothers really understand the cause or cure of the many ails to which children are subject through poor feeding, clothing, or care. The much-lauded "mother instinct" is not always satisfactory, or successful in carrying the child through even its well spells, but all mothers should be able to recognize the symptoms of trivial sicknesses, and the little disorders and discomforts that fret and worry the little one. Many mothers are lax in the matter of properly clothing and protecting the child from sudden changes of weather, such as we must have during the fall and early winter. A slight cold contracted during the early fall days is but a nucleus around which other colds may gather until the child is really—often dangerously—sick; but if the mother knew just what to do, and did it, in the first place, the affair would be very trivial, and only a little discomfort would result. I know it is urged that mothers should constantly watch over the child; but when there are several children, the mother herself ailing, with no help in any department of the home, the exhausted woman is forced to neglect something. Mothers are often blamed because of the neglect of the children and the house, and many other

women berate her severely; but when a man has to care for the babies, even for a day, every woman in the neighborhood is very quick to pity the poor fellow, and offer her services in behalf of the children. Once, in the long ago, it was the custom, where a woman was sick, or had a large family of little children, for the neighbor women to go to her assistance, several meeting together to sew for her, or to bake or in ways, give a helping hand. But in very few communities is this now done, even among the "charity" workers in city or village, while the farm woman is forced to struggle along unaided and alone. The command to "Do unto others" seems to have been lost sight of.

Poisoning Rats

Several inquiries have come on this subject. It is well known that a rat will avoid any food that has been handled, especially if it is poisoned. Where poisons are used, they must be put out of the way of other live creatures—for instance, fowls, cats, dogs, and often children. Here are some effective poisons; but it must be remembered that they are real poisons, and so handled and placed understandingly. Mix two pounds of carbonate of barytes with one pound of lard and lay it in their way. It is tasteless, odorless, impalpable, and produces great thirst, and death follows after drinking. A basin of water should be within their reach. Arsenic and lard mixed and spread on bread; push a piece into every rat hole. Or some small pieces of sponge may be fried in drippings or wet with honey, and the bits strewn about for them to eat. The sponge will swell in their intestines when wet, and will cause their death. A good, strong steel trap hitched to something so that they can not drag it away if caught, is also good. It is claimed that, when caught by any of their limbs, they will gnaw themselves free, leaving the severed limb in the trap.

To Cure the Bed-Wetting Habit

The following will prove a boon to many a discouraged mother, and has been sent to us to pass along. It is harmless, and has proven effectual where tried. Get a handful of clean, thrifty plantain leaves—the doorway weed that is often called "hog-ear," as the leaves resemble a hog's ear in shape; the flower or seed stalk is like a rat's tail. It is the pest of the doorway. Wash a half dozen of the leaves clean, put into a pint of water and steep slowly for an hour or until the strength is extracted. Strain, and set away. After breakfast, and again after dinner, give the child a half teacupful of the infusion, sweetened, if you like, and at night just before going to bed, give another dose. Improvement will show very quickly. Continue giving for two or three days, then omit two or three days, then begin again, until improvement is noted. Worms are frequently the cause of this disagreeable habit, and the child should be treated by some simple home remedy for this trouble.

What You Want to Know

A simple way to clean discolored silverware is to put a quarter of a pound of sal soda into a gallon of water, if one has much silverware to clean; put this over the fire and bring to a boil; when at boiling heat, dip

the pieces of silver in the solution, taking it out quickly and wash in soapsuds and dry with a soft, clean cloth. This removes every sign of discoloration and leaves the silver bright and new looking. The silver must not lie in the solution—merely dipping it in quickly is enough.

Silver spoons or forks may be cleaned and brightened by leaving for several hours in strong borax water; the water should be boiling hot when the silver is put in. Silverware which is frequently washed with ammonia water will need cleaning much less often, and much work saved.

Embroidery on ribbons or silk may be cleaned by sponging with a mixture of equal parts of alcohol and highly rectified benzine; but it must not be used where there is the slightest bit of fire. Pongee embroidered in colors should be washed in gasoline; grease spots on pongee may be rubbed rapidly with butcher's paper, and the friction will draw out the grease, generally; but if this fails, lay the article over an ironing-board, right side down, between two clean blotting papers, and apply an iron just hot enough to barely scorch the paper.

For linen sofa-cushion covers, or those of Aberdeen crash or art-ticking, moisten fuller's earth to a soft paste and spread a thin layer wherever the cover is soiled. Let dry and brush off. To remove grease spots, mix the fuller's earth with a little turpentine, hang the cover in a dry place for a day, then brush off the earth and press.

When the stove pipes seem "choked up," and the fire refuses to burn, the chimney is often very dirty. Lay a piece of zinc, old or new, on a bed of coals, and the fumes arising from the burning zinc will clean both pipe and chimney of all dust and soot.

Query Box

M. M.—For poison ivy effects, it is recommended to stir a piece of blue vitriol about in a saucer of thick cream until it has a greenish tinge (the cream), then apply this salve to the affected places. It will not harm, and is said to be effectual.

Julia C.—If you will put the new wooden bowl in cold brine and heat to the boiling point, then set off the fire and leave in the brine until it cools, I do not think it will crack.

Several of our readers have written to me for the bulletins, catalogues, etc., mentioned and recommended. The bulletins can be obtained from your congressman, or from the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. The catalogues may be had by writing to florists who advertise at this season.

Anxious Mother—Sugar, lemon juice and the white of an egg, beaten together, is a common remedy for hoarseness. Lemon juice and glycerine, equal parts, slipped slowly is a relief for the irritated throat.

A Young Wife—For twenty-five yards of carpet, one yard wide, get ten pounds of carpet chain; the old rule as to prepared rags was one and one-half pounds, if finely cut.

G. S. P.—Where the cheese is too soft to grate, press the pieces through a coarse wire strainer, using the back of a spoon.

Mrs. L. S.—An excellent way to sweeten the air in the musty cellar that has been closed all summer is to open it up, and give the walls and ceiling a good coat of whitewash. One or two bags of charcoal in the corners, or musty places is purifying.

Contributed Recipes

Ragout of Vegetables—Parboil one carrot, two potatoes, one cupful of string beans, one cupful of green peas (canned), one slice of onion and one-quarter pound of fresh salt pork. Drain, when tender, remove