



The Home Department

Conducted by
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The Voyage of Life

Life is a voyage. The winds of life come strong
From every point; yet each will speed thy course along,
If thou with steady hand when tempests blow,
Canst keep thy course aright and never once let go.

Life is a voyage. Ask not the port unknown
Whither thy Captain guides his storm-tossed vessel on;
Nor tremble thou lest mast should snap and reel;
But note his orders well, and mind, unmoved, thy wheel.

Life's voyage is on the vast, unfathomed sea
Whereof the tides are times, the shores, eternity;
Seek not with plummet, when the great waves roll,
But by the stars in heaven mark which way sails thy soul.
—Theodore C. Williams, in "Poems of Belief."

Death-Dealers

It is a well-established fact that flies, mosquitoes, and other household insects are the disease-spreaders and death-dealers of the times. Many hitherto unaccounted-for diseases and ailments are now known to be carried into the family by these insect pests, and it is also becoming generally known that these insects are only invited guests—they never stay unless specially invited and prepared for. Flies are an index to the cleanliness of your premises; where there is no dirt there are few if any flies. It is the same with cockroaches and their cousins, the bed-bugs; it is also true of mice—where there is no food supply scattered about, these vile things will not stay. One very neat housewife, when asked how she kept her premises clear of mice when other houses were overrun with them, replied that she used a good brush and plenty of soap and water. The simple killing of the flies is not the beginning of wisdom; their breeding places must be abolished, and this can only be done by keeping the premises clean—not only indoors, but outside. As long evenings close down upon us, it will be a good thing to get and read all the available literature to be had on the subject, preparatory to a war of extermination to be carried on as soon as the season opens—and that means before the insects begin to breed. The department of agriculture, Washington, D. C., will send you such literature, if you ask for it, without cost; the state experiment stations frequently give out advice and if you are blessed with a school library, just see that books treating of these subjects are among the number on its shelves, rather than so many trashy stories. Interest the children in these subjects by interesting yourself, and discussing ways and means around the evening table. If the fathers of families would take an active part in such education, the children will soon follow. The evening hours are too precious to drowse away by the fire, or to spend at the corner store. Get the books, pamphlets, etc., and plan.

Hallowe'en

The old, old story of hallowe'en is told again, as the beautiful month of

October closes down, and its commemoration can be made one of joy and festivity by the young people; but too often the mischief-makers make of it a time to be dreaded by their practical jokes and destructive pranks. At the gatherings at eventide, old-fashioned games may be sandwiched in between the new, wiches' magic and tricks of fairy and gnome, with the help of colored lights and wierd disguises, will be pleasing varieties, and the many superstitions belonging to the date will furnish fun enough for all, old or young. Jack-o'-lanterns, are easily made, groups of corn-stalks with gleaming ears, branches of colored foliage from the brilliant autumnal woods, wood ferns of the coarser kind, long ropes of gayly colored vines are all used for indoor decorations, while apples, nuts and other autumn fruits should also be used in the festivities. Fortune-telling is one of the chief attractions, and may be made very enjoyable if the fortune-teller has ready wit. Every school library should contain literature on this subject, and many old books belonging to the family tell us of the many amusing and entertaining ways of making the evening enjoyable.

A "Mothers' Club"

One of our readers asks what a "Mothers' club" is for. It depends. In the first place, I think it is a very good thing that brings mothers together, and many mothers welcome the break in the monotony that without the club would never be. At these club meetings generally, the talks are on health precautions and educational ideals, suitable reading for the children, sanitary measures affecting the young, dress, clothing generally, and also the object and welfare of the schools, conditions of the school rooms, and the needs of the children, themselves. The aim should be, as one writer says, "To make the meetings just the pleasantest, jolliest, most inspiring place in the village for every one of the mothers."

A Helpful Club

One of our readers tells us of a club to which she belongs, and thinks such a club might be in operation in every neighborhood to the benefit of all concerned. This club consists of as many neighbors as wish to join it, usually about a dozen women; they meet at the home of one of the members every afternoon, each hostess acting in turn as president, and every member supplying themselves with needle, thimble, scissors, and any other sewing necessity for the afternoon's work. If the hostess has any mending, or plain sewing she is anxious to get off her hands, the first hour is spent in sewing or doing the mending, at the same time indulging in a neighborly chat with each other. If the hostess has nothing, herself, and may have something for some other burdened woman, the hour is spent on the work offered. If it is necessary to spend more time, it is attended to, but "nimble fingers make quick work," and the one hour usually suffices. After this, there are readings of current events, or of matters in which the neighborhood women are interested, then the subject-matter is discussed and commented upon; ideas are exchanged, and new things talked about, new methods outlined, and ways and

means of bettering the condition of the home life in the neighborhood offered and discussed. At five o'clock, or perhaps a little later, the next meeting place is decided upon, the work for the afternoon planned, and the guests go home, feeling that they have "wrought well." No unkind gossip is offered, or allowed, and the motto of the meeting is seeing only the bright side. By means of these meetings, the women of the neighborhood become better acquainted, a helpful work is done, and the views of each are broadened and brightened. What do you think of it, Sisters?

Family Portraits

A writer says, "When's one relatives pass away, it is to be regretted that their portraits do not follow them into oblivion." Who among us does not know what it is to possess some out-of-date portrait of some ancestor, and not know what on earth to do with it! The portrait may have been a master-piece in its time, valued as it may have been valuable, both as a work of art, and as a picture of one dear to us, but at the later period, the closely-connected ones themselves pass away, and the new possessor has no tender memories, or sentiment in regard to the relic which is merely a picture of one never known, and out of place among the new order of things. It is much better to have the smaller picture, which, when it becomes "rub-bish," as it certainly will, in time, it can be slipped into an album, or casing made to hold it, and quietly, like the original, laid away to forgotten repose, when the interest in the original has departed.

Providing for the Birds

Did you ever notice, how few people make any provisions for the comfort of the birds? It pays to have the birds about the garden, the poultry yard, and the lawn. A family of martins will do a great deal to protect the chickens from hawks and other feathered thieves, while other birds protect the crops and trees by feasting on their insect enemy. Little boxes, nailed high enough to protect from cats, with an inverted funnel-shaped tin fastened around the support (tree or pole); to prevent pussy from reaching the nest, will prove a great attraction. Some birds can and do protect themselves against other birds, like the English sparrow, but the sparrow will usually drive other birds away if allowed to. Have a vessel for containing fresh water, renewed every day, in some shaded place for the comfort of the birds. Attend to this, during the winter, so the birds will find quarters waiting for them, next spring.

Salt-Rising Bread

Most writers, in discussing the bread known as "salt-rising," maintain that the gas formation which aerates the bread owes its origin to a "wild" yeast that incidentally gets into the dough either from some of the ingredients or from the air, making it a matter of chance whether the bread will rise or not, and indeed failures are of frequent occurrence. Other writers talk of a spontaneous fermentation and ferments, but they do not specify what the germs are. With a view of putting the preparation of salt-rising bread upon a scientific basis, a

thorough investigation was carried on during the past three years in the department of industrial research in the University of Kansas. In this investigation some surprising and interesting results were obtained. Microscopic examinations revealed the fact that it is not yeast at all, as has been maintained, but certain bacteria which raises the bread. From the many kinds of bacteria in the fermenting dough it was possible with extreme difficulty to isolate a bacillus which by itself can be used in making salt-rising bread. There was prepared in the laboratory a dry product containing this bacillus, which could be used at will in making this bread. Not only was it tried in the laboratory, but in the home bakery, as well. Numerous housewives used it repeatedly with good success, and in a modern up-to-date bakery where formerly failures had been frequent, this product was used for a month with perfect uniformity of bread from day to day, without a single failure. In view of this discovery it is not likely that the results obtained in the manufacture of yeast and yeast bread may be paralleled with this bacillus and salt-rising bread?—H. A. Kohman, in *Farm and Fireside*.

Mattresses

Nearly all hair mattresses weigh forty pounds, but when the hair is short, they sometimes weigh a few pounds more. The best hair is the long, curly hair, full of vitality, drawn from the tails and manes of South American horses. The cost of hair mattresses varies according to quality and amount used. The prepared cotton felt mattresses of good quality usually cost about fifteen to twenty dollars, and are both comfortable and sanitary. Those made of ordinary cotton felt are not so good, and can be had as low as seven to five dollars, but these are better than poor hair. African fiber with a cotton top will cost about \$4.50 and cotton and wool mixture will cost about five dollars. Excelsior, with or without cotton top and bottom, is one of the poorest; the excelsior or fiber soon breaks into lumps and they are not comfortable. The old-time straw or husk mattress, with a thick pad of cotton laid over it on the outside, is both sanitary and comfortable, if the contents of the tick are stirred often and kept well "evened." Wool mattresses, owing to the animal oil in the fibres, is objected to by some, but if the wool has been well ripened, and the mattress taken care of, it is not so bad.

Use of Screens

Where one is pressed for room, as is often the case where one occupies a small flat, a screen may do good service in shutting off a corner or part of a room. Folding screens are to be had at various prices at the house furnishing departments of the big stores, but they can be home-made. A folding clothes horse which can be had cheaply may be covered with some cheap goods, and wallpaper pasted over it, keeping each wing or section separate. Table cloth is a good covering, and pockets can be sewed on the inside for holding various things. For shutting off a "corner kitchenette," or a little sewing nook, or a cot-bed, etc., the screen is invaluable.

Old-Time Remedies

One of the favorite and frequently effective remedies used in the olden-time by our forbears was the mustard plaster. Its use is just as effective now as then, but it is not so often resorted to. Care must be taken in using the plaster, that the mustard is not too strong or the time of application too long, else a painful blister may result. The skin of a child, or delicate invalid can not bear