



Chats Upon the Porch.—III.

Sunset again, and the flush of it fell all yellow across the group upon the porch, lighting the City Woman's brown hair until it shone in golden threads, and brought forth wondering exclamations of admiration from the Young Girl.

"Won't you tell us how you keep your hair so soft and glossy? Mine gets so hard and frowsy," she said.

The City Woman smiled. "You can't alter the nature of your hair," she answered. "Its quality is a matter of inheritance and temperament very largely. But you may modify or improve the natural condition by care and applied knowledge."

"Well, give me the knowledge, and I'll apply it," urged the Young Girl, saucily, running her fingers lightly through her wavy locks as she spoke.

"In the first place," she said, "do not wash your hair too often. Let me see; you have washed it once a week since I came a month ago. That is far too often."

"Saidie Smith washes her's twice a week, and puts soda in the water as well, and it is always pretty and fluffy," announced the Young Girl, defensively.

"Then Saidie is a very foolish girl," asserted the City Woman. "Very soon her hair will become brittle and broken. It will grow weak and thin—dead," as the hair-dressers say—and will need to be helped out in the dressing with that inartistic evil—a switch.

"I had not supposed that this misuse of soda and ammonia as a hair wash had reached the country. In the city we have far too much of it, and my own hair-dresser tells me that to it, more than any other thing, may be attributed the early coming of grey hair."

"I remember, as a little girl, that a young face beneath grey hair was sufficiently rare to cause comment; and it was generally attributed to some nervous shock or disease. But now it is so common a thing that no one deems it necessary to account for it in any way."

"I number among my acquaintances a dozen women under thirty, each of whom have hair more or less touched with grey; while among those between thirty and forty, it is the exception to find one with locks unpowdered with the dust of Miller Time."

"I don't want to grow grey early," said the Young Girl, in an alarmed tone. "No one would marry a girl with grey hair."

There was a little bubble of laughter from the group upon the porch at the maiden's sincerity of speech. It floated across the lawn to where the old white hen was clucking her chicks under her wings. She shook her red comb in alarm, and turned her bright eyes to the porch; until being satisfied that no evil was intended, she fell to preening her feathers and pecking the little yellow heads that poked out from their warm nesting-place.

"I so often wonder," continued the City Woman, "that women do not take more care of their hair. It is such a beautiful thing, and such a mystic thing also. You know, do you not, that the hair has a wonderful vitality: that it grows rapidly after death, and remains imperishable long after every other portion of the body has crumbled to dust."

"Isn't it Browning who tells the story of the girl with the golden hair,"

'Hair a wonderful flax and floss,
'Meshes of gold and floods of it too.'

Who, vain of this one beauty, begged that at her death it might not be cut off, but buried with her:

'Leave my poor gold hair alone.'

And how, many years afterward, when, in repairing the church, her coffin was disturbed, it broke apart to discover a heap of golden coin.

"It is the same poet, too, who talks of the Venetian women:

'Dear dead women, with such hair too,
Nothing can destroy its gold.'

"Browning evidently preferred the 'fair, fair, with golden hair' type of women. But many of us delight rather in the pretty, rich chestnut or glossy black. For my own part, I think nothing so effective as a certain blue-black hair, that is rather rare and not often poetized either by poets or lovers."

"Since we have no hair-dressers in the country, could you not give us a few hints concerning the care of the hair," asked the farmer's wife, smoothing her thin locks lightly.

"I can only tell you what I have discovered by experience, and in chats with a few skilled hair-dressers," said the City Woman. "But, since my own hair is somewhat troublesome, being naturally both fine and weak, I have given considerable study to the subject, and know whereof I speak."

"First, then, do not wash the hair oftener than once a month. It does not do to deprive it of its natural oil by frequent washing."

"Do not use artificial heat to dry the hair, if it can be avoided. Use a linen towel lightly in the earlier stage; then take the hair between the hands and rub it; also rub the scalp well with the fingers—it stimulates the roots. Strong, thick hair is not injured by rougher treatment, but fine hair should be dried very carefully in this manner."

"Do not put ammonia or soda into the water. This is emphatic. It makes the hair brittle and dry. Use white of egg or a pinch of borax—the first is better."

"When you go into town once a month, let the hair-dresser trim the ends of your hair. Any ordinary hair-cutter can do this. And once in three months, if possible—at least, once in six months—have the hair singed. This can only be done by the professional hair-dresser. This will keep the ends from splitting and stimulate the growth."

"Brush the hair night and morning, but not enough to irritate the scalp."

"If the hair is inclined to be too oily, use bay rum two or three times a week, rubbing it in at the roots with the finger tips. This is also very good for dandruff or heated scalp. And once a week take a little coal oil at night and rub it into the scalp with the finger tips. It is better than all patent hair washes for stimulating the growth."

"The secret of the whole matter is that the scalp should be treated like the rest of the body, and whatever tends to cleansing, to coolness and soothing, to allaying any unnatural heat of the head and preventing disease of the scalp, may be considered safe application. If the scalp be kept in good, healthy condition, the hair will require little attention beyond regular brushing, and occasional clipping and singeing."

"A good head of hair is often hereditary, but, like other inherited good things, it requires to be taken care of."

"What about bleaching the hair?" queried the Young Girl.

"I think no really nice woman—one of delicate perceptions—would care to bleach her hair; although it is often effective and not necessarily harmful, if done by a hair-dresser. An amateur should never attempt it."

"But if a woman has flaring red hair, and chooses to give it just the little deepening tint that makes it a glorious Titian or auburn, I should not condemn her. A touch of these tinting preparations—they are hardly dyes—add much beauty to many a woman's hair, that would otherwise remain an inartistic feature. Remember, I do not advise it, since the less of artifice in a woman's adorning the better. But, since artificial teeth and switches are granted permissible, why condemn the touch of artificial grace to the hair that nature has denied."

"Now, little maid," and the City Woman leaned over to smooth the Young Girl's wavy locks, "don't you begin bleaching or tinting, but let your hair alone. Wash it once a month, shake it out in the sunshine, brush it a good deal, and then rest content that it will not grow grey, even if you delay marrying until forty."

—MINNIE MAY.

Recipes.

CUCUMBER PICKLES.

One hundred green cucumbers about two inches long will fill four glass quart jars. Soak twenty-four hours in rather strong brine, then pour off the brine and rinse in cold water. To this number of cucumbers use three quarts of pure cider vinegar, one cup of sugar, one ounce of whole cloves, one ounce stick cinnamon, one ounce small black peppers, and a few small red peppers. Scald the cucumbers in the vinegar. As soon as the vinegar is scalding hot dip them out, fill the cans, and then pour the vinegar over them till the can is full. Seal hot.

TOMATO PRESERVES.

Make a rich syrup; when it is boiling drop in small tomatoes which have little water and few seeds; when they begin to grow soft add small pieces of lemon rind. If wanted rich, cook till all is a thickened mass. If you want to seal, they need not be cooked that length of time.

PUMPKIN PIE.

Cut the pumpkin in small pieces, cover with water and a little salt; boil slowly till the pulp is dry; rub through a colander. For one pie take two tablespoons of the pulp, one cup of milk, one egg, half cup sugar; spice with nutmeg and ginger.

CHILI SAUCE.

Thirty ripe tomatoes, ten onions, six green peppers, two cups sugar, five tablespoonfuls salt, one pint vinegar; peel tomatoes and cut; chop onions; boil two hours.

STUFFED TOMATOES.

Twelve large, smooth tomatoes, one teaspoonful salt, a little pepper, one tablespoonful butter, one of sugar, one cupful of bread crumbs, one teaspoonful of onion juice. Arrange the tomatoes in a baking pan. Cut a thin slice from the smooth end of each; with a small spoon scoop out as much of the pulp and juice as possible without injuring the shape. When all have been treated in this way, mix the pulp and juice with the other ingredients, and fill the tomatoes with this mixture. Put on the tops and bake slowly for three-quarters of an hour. Slide the cake turner under the tomatoes, and lift gently on to a flat dish. Garnish with parsley and serve.

GREEN CORN PATTIES.

Twelve ears sweet corn grated, one tablespoonful salt, one teaspoonful pepper, one egg beaten in two tablespoonfuls flour. Mix, make in small cakes and fry in butter or sweet lard.

The Way of It.

This is the way her youth went:
Care and love for a motherless brood
Drained her heart of its fiery blood;
Small denials, unfinished things,
Blunted ador and clipped her wings.
That is the way her youth went.

This is the way her love went:
There came the hope which maidens prize,
A woman's longing for closer ties,
Then love adopted, though close it be;
But duty spoke, and she made no plea.
That is the way her love went.

After a season of pain, 'twas done,
The calm, pale face in its coffin lay;
But far and wide in the realms of day
The angels shouted to greet her home,
And Heaven was happier now she had come.
That is the way her life went.

Good Housekeeping.

Kisses.

"Kiss me softly and speak to me low."

There is a story told of an old Scotch deacon who courted a girl for a good many years, but never found courage enough to ask her to marry. One day, after they had been "keepin' company" for about ten years, he ventured to solicit a kiss.

"Let me first ask a blessing," he said, and falling upon his knees, he implored the divine benediction. He next, with due circumspection and Scotch deliberation, possessed himself of the kiss, when, with a sounding smack, he exclaimed:—"Wh! woman, but it was good! Let us return thanks."

A Lost Pearl.

I do not know where I lost it,
For it slipped from a broken string,
And far away from sight to-day
It lies a neglected thing.

Or worse, since it may be another
Is wearing my pearl of price,
And the gem that was mine, with its lucent shine,
May be set in some strange device.

I do not know when I lost it;
It was just when the dawning burst
Through the crystalline bars of the lingering stars
That with sorrow I missed it first.

I never dreamed half how precious
Was my beautiful pearl to me
Till the grief of its loss, a heavy loss,
I bore over land and sea.

You marvel! You do not divine it!
I have lost what I could not lend,
What I'll mourn while I live; for no art can give
To my heart the lost heart of my friend.

Margaret Sangster.

A lady, writing from Japan, says:—"Housekeeping here has no trials. The worn and vexed spirits of American chattelaines ought to rest in Japan after death. Capable and faithful servants are plenty and cheap. Our establishment boasts of five, and for these we pay about what two would cost in New York. I do not visit my kitchen once a month, never give an order outside of a spoken wish, yet the domestic machinery moves with an ease and perfection unattainable at home by almost any effort on the part of the mistress. The manners of the servants are amusing, not to say startling, to an American accustomed to the cheerful familiarity of her native help. Every night at bedtime our five retainers appear, prostrate themselves in succession to the earth and retire. This is to wish me good-night and to renew their testimony of profound respect and pleasure over the privilege of serving me. It was difficult at first to preserve the necessary dignity for the ceremony, but now I am as majestically gracious as any other potentate. The other day, on one of my rare visits to the kitchen, a hairpin became loosened and dropped without my notice. I had been seated in my own room only a few moments when my houseman entered, bearing a small salver, which he presented to me with many genuflections. Fancy my surprise to see a little hairpin upon it, and to learn from my proud but embarrassed servitor that it had fallen to the kitchen floor from my head. Afterwards I found there had been a discussion as to who should pick it up, and almost a quarrel as to whom belonged the inestimable honor of hearing it to its owner!"

Life's Compensations.

Two small chaps mos' allus meets
Bout school-time in the up-town streets:
One is the little Rob Ragged boy,
An' the other is rich young Fontleroy.
The rich little man wears velvet clothes,
An' his pa's worth—oh, nobody knows!
But I guess he wishes 'at he could play
Like little Rob Ragged does all day—
Tag!

'Cause little Rob Ragged, he looked at him,
A-marchin' home, all starched and prim,
With a wonderin' glance of mild surprise,
An' a pitying look in his bright blue eyes,
As much as to say, "Well, I wouldn't trade,
Ef my pants be patched, an' my coat home-made!
But the little heart under the velvet coat
Sort o' jumps an' sticks in the rich lad's throat,
An' he sez to himself, "Oh, I wish I could play
Like little Rob Ragged does all day—
Tag!
You's it.