

THE HOUSEHOLD.

WAS IT A BARGAIN?

"Yes, we certainly must have a new carpet, and I must persuade George to let me get it before Martin's sale is over; but I shall have hard work to do it, I'm afraid."

"Is George getting so stingy, then? I heard that his salary had been raised this year, so that he ought not to make such a fuss about buying a new carpet. I soon persuaded my husband that we must have one, and new curtains, too, and I mean to have new chairs for the parlor before long," and Mrs. Wilmot smiled triumphantly and shook out the flounces of her dress as she rose to take her departure.

Mrs. Ross could only sigh as she looked at her faded curtains, and the carpet that five pairs of little feet had worn almost white here and there. She had been married ten years, and the carpet so bright and new on their wedding-day, and which her mother had said would last a lifetime, had begun to be a great eyesore to her lately, especially since her friend Mrs. Wilmot had taken to visit her.

Sarah Wilmot had been her school-fellow, and so when she married and came to live in the same neighborhood, it seemed only natural that they should be friends; and yet she could not help wishing sometimes that she had not come to live so close or would not call upon her so often, for she always contrived to make her feel dissatisfied about something, and the shabby parlor carpet had been a standing grievance for some time. But Mrs. Ross thought she saw a way to get rid of it now, and as soon as her husband had finished his tea that evening she began her attack.

"Did you come past Martin's on your way home, George?" she asked taking a pile of stockings from her mending-basket.

"Yes; but what about it, Mary," said Mr. Ross.

"Well, you must have had your eyes shut if you did not notice their carpets, and the wonderful low prices at which they are marked," replied his wife, still busy with her stockings.

"Oh, I did notice that the windows were stuck all over with bills, the usual style of linendrapers' puffs,—their way of selling off the rubbish of their stock."

"But it is not rubbish, George," said Mrs. Ross warmly. "I took the children out for a walk to-day and looked at the carpets quite closely, and I am sure they are wonderful bargains."

"Well, they may be, my dear; I won't dispute the fact," said Mr. Ross, laughing at his wife's earnestness and taking up the newspaper as he spoke.

Mrs. Ross began to lose patience over what she considered her husband's obtuseness. "Do put that tiresome paper down, I want to talk to you, George. We must have a new parlor carpet; that one has been down ten years and is quite worn out, and I hate to see anyone come in now, for I'm ashamed to ask them into the parlor."

"The carpet certainly is shabby, but—"

"It would do nicely for this room—make this very comfortable," said Mrs. Ross, quickly.

"Yes; but I don't think we can afford to buy a new carpet this year."

"Not this year! Oh, George, we really must; and we shall never have an opportunity of getting such a bargain again."

"But you know, Mary, I meant to assure my life this year. I've always wanted to do it, but our expenses have been so heavy that I could barely make ends meet; but now that my salary has been raised I hope to do it."

"And we might have a new carpet, too, I'm sure," said Mrs. Ross. "How much will the life-assurance cost?"

Her husband told her the sum.

"Well, the rise you have had will more than cover that, and pay for the carpet, too," said Mrs. Ross.

"Well, perhaps it would; and if we could be quite sure there would be no extra expenses this year, we might buy a new carpet at once, but, as it is, I think we had better wait."

"Oh, nonsense, George, we shall never have such an opportunity of getting it so cheap as just now. Let me go up to Martin's to-morrow and look at some of them."

Mr. Ross shook his head at first; but his wife had so set her heart upon having

the new carpet that he gave way before long, and it was decided that Mary should go the next day and make her selection.

"You must not choose anything too bright in color, or it will make the curtains and other things look shabby," said her husband, as he yielded a reluctant consent.

But Mrs. Ross had already made up her mind to get one as nearly like Mrs. Wilmot's as possible, and to have new curtains in a short time.

When the new carpet came home and was laid down, Mr. Ross could not but acknowledge that it was very pretty, and appeared to be cheap, too, if it only wore well.

"I'm afraid, though, that the colors are almost too bright," he said, noticing the general effect, or rather, contrast, between the bright new carpet and the faded curtains and shabby chairs.

"It is of no use buying a dowdy thing to begin with. It will wear shabby quite soon enough," replied Mrs. Ross, who was mentally calculating what it would cost to have a set of new chairs as well as new curtains.

Mr. Ross hoped that the carpet being bought his wife would be satisfied, and he might yet be able to insure his life before the close of the year; but in less than a month the defects of the chairs were pointed out to him, and Mrs. Ross declared they must have new ones. "We really have not chairs enough to use either," she said. "We have been obliged to have two of these taken for the kitchen, and the boys want two more for their bed-room."

So the chairs were bought, and with a sigh of regret, George Ross was obliged to resign the hope of insuring his life that year, while Mary secretly hoped that her friend Mrs. Wilmot would cease finding fault with her furniture whenever she came to pay her a visit now.

But no. Mrs. Wilmot had so little business of her own to mind or so large a capacity for minding her neighbors' affairs that knowing, as she said, that Mary had only to ask her husband and she got whatever she asked for, she took it upon herself to remind Mary every time she saw her of something that was still wanting, either in the house or her dress or the children. So month after month passed, and George could never save enough money to effect the assurance on his life, for, although his salary had been raised every year, and he now occupied a much better position than when they were married, their expenditure had somehow quite equalled their income. Indeed, it was harder to make ends meet now that they were living in a larger house and appeared to be well-to-do people than when they had only half their present income, and everybody knew they had a struggle to maintain a respectable appearance.

There was another thing, too, that often troubled George Ross. They could not afford to give the little weekly sum they once did towards the charitable or missionary societies in connection with the church to which they belonged. Mrs. Ross would have given to these, and left some tradesman's bill unpaid; but her husband was firm in this matter. He would not be burdened with debt; he had no more right to incur debt than to pick his neighbor's pocket, he said.

The hope of making some provision for his wife and children seemed further off than ever, but George Ross never quite gave it up until one morning when he was taken ill at his work. He was seized with a sudden pain in his head, and fell from the office stool insensible. Various remedies were tried to restore him, but all failed; and at last he was lifted into a cab and taken home.

After a few hours, he so far recovered as to be able to recognize his wife and children; but the doctor said he could not live many days. A shudder shook his frame as he heard the whispered words, and when the doctor had gone, he said, "I can never assure my life now, Mary. That carpet has cost us more—ten times more—than it was worth, for that was the beginning of our extravagance; and now I must leave you and the children wholly unprovided for."

"Oh, never mind us, dear; God will provide for us," sobbed his wife.

"Yes, God will provide; but I—I have been an unfaithful servant, for it was the work I ought to have done as far as I could. If I had never had the means of doing this, it would have been different; but God gave

me the means, and I squandered them, instead of using them for him."

It was in vain that friends tried to comfort him with the promises of God's word concerning his care for the fatherless and the widow.

"I have no right to take comfort from them," he said. "Thank God, I did not put off the concerns of my soul as I have this business of assuring my life, or it would be too late now, for my head is too weak to think of anything but how great a sinner I have been, and how great a Saviour I have found, since he is ready to forgive such an unprofitable servant as I have been."

And so he passed away, his last hours clouded with the anxiety he felt concerning the future of his wife and family.

When it became known that no provision had been made for Mrs. Ross and her children, every one blamed her husband for this; and it added not a little to the poignancy of poor Mary's grief to hear some of these whispers, for she knew that it was entirely her own fault that they were thus cast almost penniless upon the world.

Fortunately, they were not in debt; and so, by the sale of the new furniture that had been considered necessary after the new carpet was bought, a few pounds were realized; and they took two rooms in the old shabby neighborhood, and Mrs. Ross made a scanty living by taking in plain needlework. How deeply and bitterly she repented of her extravagance and folly was known to none but herself and God; but she often warned her children by telling them the story of the new carpet, and asking, "Was it a bargain?"

OUR BOYS.

Because the boy is healthy, and eats his food and sleeps his sleep and plays his play, his mother is not to imagine without knowing that therefore all is well with him; and rest comfortably with her book, her fancy-work, her gossip, her friends, her household duties, satisfied that he is amused and off her hands. She is to discover what his play is, change it or improve it; she is to make the acquaintance of his companions; she is to see that all his amusement is wholesome to mind and body; she is never to allow him to be off her hands or off her mind. She brought him into this world; she is responsible for him, his soul shall be required of her. What the father's duties may be is not within the scope of our present consideration; but whatever his duties may be, and however he may perform them, abates no jot or tittle of what must be demanded of her also. And her obligations, moreover, do not cease even at the time when he begins to go out into the world. The women of the Turkish harem may resign their sons and their duties toward them when the boys are at the age of seven, giving the little lads over to the mercies of men, but the mothers of our civilization can never resign them at any age. If the boy wishes to go to large public schools, she should inform herself of the life lived there, and judge from her knowledge of her own boy if he can go there safely; and if he is to go to college, she should inquire into that matter also. An unwise woman is that mother, then, who, for the sake of the name of any college or supposed superior facilities of learning, will let her boy go to one where the faculty take their ease, and clear their consciences by calling the boys men, and making them responsible only to themselves at the very time when they most need guidance and command, where drinking and card-playing are the fellow-accomplishments of Greek and mathematics, or where the dangerous neighborhood of great and fashionable hotels renders those banquets possible in which the collegeyouths make night hideous with their college yells, as the wine they drink goes to their weak young heads, and they fling about the dishes, work havoc, conduct themselves more like young brutes than young men, and get home to their chambers in a state to wring the heart of any mother who has a heart in her body. Something more than great advantages of education or of association are to be looked for here by careful mothers. In almost every case the education of almost any college will be ample for the purposes of life, and the boy must be known to be strong who shall be trusted in the temptations of

such colleges as those of which we speak—temptations which, once yielded to, not only ruin the soul, but the body also. Too many a son who finds himself before middle age with a body good for little more, nerves and organs and strength broken up, has to thank for it, not his own weak or unvirtuous inclinations, but a mother who neglected to keep him narrowly in the way of taking care of himself, to inform herself as to his companions and pleasures, who was perhaps in herself neither a standard nor a beacon-light for him, and who suffered him to amuse himself with what turned out to be a very dance of death. Let the mothers of the men about to come forward and take the conduct of the world in their hands look to it that those men, so far as their hearts and heads and hands could do it, are sound in soul and body and fit for their work.—*Harper's Bazar.*

RECIPES.

- FRIED CRACKERS.—Soak square soda crackers well in milk, and fry them quickly a nice brown in a little butter.
- TO TAKE ORDINARY INK out of linen dip the ink spot into melted tallow, wash out the tallow and the ink will come out with it. This seldom fails.
- SALMON BALLS OR CROQUETTES.—Half a can of salmon chopped with some cold boiled potatoes and a hard boiled egg. Season with the pepper and salt, make into round balls or cakes, roll in beaten egg, and fry a light brown.
- STEWED CHEESE.—Set a little bucket containing a pint of milk into a pot of hot water until it begins to boil; then cut up the cheese and add it with a piece of butter and some pepper and salt. As soon as the cheese is melted, pour it over a slice or two of toast.
- ORANGE SNOW.—Dissolve an ounce of isinglass in a pint of boiling water, strain and let stand until nearly cold; mix it with the juice of six or seven oranges and one lemon; add the whites of three eggs, and sugar to taste; whisk the whole together until it looks white and like a sponge; put it into a mould and turn it out on the following day.

PUZZLES—NO. 18.

ENIGMA NO. 1.

I'm in tulip, thorn and tree,  
I'm in thirteen, eight and three,  
I'm in captured, held and free,  
I'm in healthy, youthful, old,  
I'm in frozen, hot and cold,  
I'm in raven, rook and wren,  
I'm in window, door and den,  
I'm in little, large and light,  
I'm in silly, sick and bright,  
I'm in virtue, vaunt and grieve,  
I'm in given, keep and leave,  
I'm in table, chest and till,  
I'm in heather, hut and hill.

HANNAH E. GREENE.

SQUARE.

- 1. To form. 2. A carrion fowl. 3. To turn aside.
- 4. To immerse. 5. To come in. S. MOORE.

ENIGMA NO. 2.

I'm in love but not in dove,  
I'm in walk but not in mock,  
I'm in time but not in rhyme,  
I'm in girl but not in curl,  
I'm in nice but not in spice,  
My whole is a language.

BRYANT S. DRAKE.

Tabor, Iowa.

ENIGMA NO. 3.

I'm in love, but not in hate,  
I'm in soon but not in late,  
I'm in vain but not in proud,  
I'm in people, not in crowd,  
I'm in one but not in all,  
I'm in spring but not in fall,  
I'm in even but not in morn,  
I'm in wheat but not in corn,  
I'm in night but not in day,  
I'm in joy but not in gay,  
I'm in two but not in one,  
I'm in laugh but not in fun,  
I'm in earth but not in sky,  
I'm in truth but not in lie.

SARAH A. L. FRASER.

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NOTE.

Every reader of this paper is welcome to this department. Puzzles or answers sent in will receive careful attention. Answers have been received from Bryant S. Drake, George Brown.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES.—NUMBER 17.  
SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.—Zion—1 Chron. xi. 5, 7; Heb. xii. 22.

- Z-cruiah . . . . 1 Chron. ii. 16.
- . . . . . 2 Sam. ii. 18; iii. 30.
- I-mage . . . . 1 Sam. xix. 16.
- . . . . . 1 Dan. ii. 31-35; iii. 12.
- O-badiah . . . . 1 Kings xviii. 3, 4.
- N-chemiah . . . . Neh. i. 11.

SQUARE No 1.—  
G R A S P  
R A Z O R  
A Z U R E  
S O R R Y  
P R E Y S

SQUARE No. 2.—  
A N N A  
N O O N  
N O O N  
A N N A

SQUARE No. 3.—  
T R I P  
R A R E  
I R O N  
P E N T

ENIGMA.—"The Lord Reigneth." Psalms 97: 1.