

HOUSEHOLD.

A Lesson in Economy.

(Housekeeper.)

Sometimes housekeepers say: 'Well, there will be just so much waste anyway, so what is the use of saving the tid-bits?' On the contrary, careless hands can throw many dollars into the refuse barrel during the year.

There is a great deal in managing, more so than I realized until I visited a friend I had not seen for nearly a year. During this time she had met with reverses, and a very comfortable income was reduced to a very uncomfortable one. At the time her husband lost his hardware business in which their all had been invested, his health had given way and his physician had forbidden his taking any office position, urging him to keep out of doors by all means. After considerable searching, he found a position as assistant to a nursery-man and seed gardener. Being wholly untrained for such work, he could not command ordinary wages, and it seemed utterly impossible to live upon the money that was offered him. 'The little woman,' however, thought that it might be done, so he accepted the position, gave up their pretty town flat and moved into a small, old-fashioned house near the seed garden.

That others may benefit by her experience, I will give extracts of our conversation on that mild autumn day when we wandered through her garden, sat under the gnarled old apple tree or investigated the house and cellar: 'I don't know how we should have managed without our garden; it looked forlorn enough when we came early in the spring, but Tom and I thought it worth a trial. By rising very early we got in an hour's work before he left home, and I have put all my spare time into it during the day; that is, during the busy season. As I am living so much 'out of the world,' I can do as I wish, mend my chicken coop or weed onions. Those old currant and gooseberry bushes were scraggy enough when we came, but after pruning and fertilizing they bore enough fruit for our own use, and next year we hope for a full crop. The old apple-tree is more of an ornament than anything else, and only a half-barrel crop was picked; they are sweet and good for baking. That pear tree produced just one bushel of Sheidons, but quite enough for use in canning. Those were the only natural resources. The vegetables we worked hard for.

Tom gave me a hen and a setting of eggs on my birthday, and since then I have added two more and a chanticler, so I have had all the eggs we needed, besides spring chickens at intervals, consequently our meat bill has been light. I saved all the pullets for laying, and those young roosters, trying to get up a quarrel in the corner of the yard, are to be fattened for our Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. I shall soon begin to sell my eggs, as the prices are going up. Next week, I shall make fruit cake, cookies, hermits, and a supply of salad dressing, enough to last over Thanksgiving, so that I will not need to use many eggs, while the price is so high. Next year I hope to have a good flock of hens, when we will build a coop for them—this old one looks as if it had done service a dozen years.

We had very good fortune with our vegetables, considering we were amateurs, but then Tom is learning every day, so we hope to be ideal gardeners before many years. We planted lettuce, peas, string beans, summer squash, radishes, beets, turnips, tomatoes and cucumbers, besides our winter stuff that you see growing now—parsnips, onions, carrots and celery.

I sold a quantity of early stuff—lettuce, peas, summer squash, and radishes, mostly to old friends, who were quite interested in my 'enterprise,' as they called it; they said they were fresher than the vegetables they got in town, and the money was very acceptable to me. I had no trouble about it for they called for them when out driving. It seemed queer at first to sell garden stuff to visitors. I could have sold a quantity of tomatoes if I had raised them, but I used a great many on the table, and have two dozen jars canned for winter soups, besides a little catsup.

You must come into the cellar kitchen and see my fruit, not very much of a variety, but it will be a great help during the winter,

when we have no garden to gather from. I traded a bushel of tomatoes for a half-bushel of peaches with my nearest neighbor, who had poor luck with her vines; they look nice, don't they? Here is my currant jelly and gooseberry jam, not much of it, but enough for a taste occasionally. I put up the plum tomatoes with sliced lemon; they look nearly as inviting as real plums. Those pickled onions came from the farm; they make a nice relish. I shall have enough large onions to sell to pay for the vinegar and sugar I have used for canning.

We have set out a few pear, peach and plum trees, and several grape vines (they do not cost us anything you know), and next spring we will set out strawberry plants. We look upon this as our home now. Tom has gained so much this summer and I have never felt better in my life. I have a capital appetite, so I don't miss the dainties I used to have.

'What is this?' I inquired, peering into a jar neatly covered with a cloth.

'Oh! that is fat drippings. I never waste a bit of fat now; all the pork, sausage and bacon drippings go into that jar, after being melted and clarified. It makes capital fat for frying doughnuts and potatoes, and is good to shorten gingerbread. My beef drippings in this cup came from a marrow bone soup; it is as yellow and sweet as butter, and will shorten my next batch of cookies. Look here!' showing me a platter filled with square white cakes. 'I make all my soap from the third and worst grade of drippings! I haven't bought a bit of soap since I came here.'

I looked the amazement I felt, and she hastened to explain: 'It is so easy; a box of potash will cost but ten cents, and the waste grease, odds and ends and mutton fat that most housekeepers throw away as worthless, can be clarified and melted, and with but twenty minutes' stirring you will make soap enough to last two or three months. Doesn't it look white and nice? These small squares are for toilet use, for I added a few drops of rose oil to pass off the making. My next soap making will be soft soap for spring cleaning. It takes quite a while to save enough grease, we eat so little meat.'

'How do you manage about your meat?' I inquired, thinking that here was something she could not economize in very well.

'Oh, that is my pet economy. In the summer we ate very little meat—we had plenty of eggs, vegetables, and a young crower occasionally—but now we have to buy, as I wish to save my eggs for the market. Last week I bought a soup bone, a good-sized one, for twenty-five cents. I trimmed off enough meat, (round steak), to make a Hamburg steak for the first dinner; then boiled the bone, which I had well cracked before I put it in the kettle. I had enough stock for two soups. For the second dinner there was an ordinary beef soup; for the third a nice tomato soup, by adding a quart of canned tomatoes. Besides the three dinners, I skimmed off the marrow fat you saw, which in cookies is equal to its weight in fresh butter. Is not that frugality?'

'This week we had a large aitchbone, which cost fifty cents. The best part I roasted; sometimes I put a streak of dressing in it, but this week I braised it in my patent baking pan. That will make two dinners, with cold slices for breakfast and supper. I also saved a little for my chopper—we are quite fond of Hamburg, and especially upon toast; that made another breakfast; while from the tougher part I corned enough beef for my "boiled dish," next week. This will make a dinner, cold meat for two suppers, and odds and ends for a vegetable hash, the last meal from my aitchbone. To-morrow, when the butcher comes, I shall get a fore-shoulder of lamb; it is quite low-priced. I will take out the bones, which with rice, onion and a few slices of potato will make a nice soup; the rest I will roll for baking, which will give us two dinners and cold slices for other meals. Sometimes I make a little salad from cold lamb or veal; it is nearly as good as chicken salad.

I shall lay in a piece of bacon, a sugar

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cured ham, a firkin of pickled mackerel and a good-sized salt fish for the winter, which with my weekly piece of meat and various cereal dishes—as rice croquettes, potato puffs—baked beans, and pea soup occasionally, we will have a varied bill of fare. I have learned that it is much cheaper to buy by the quantity, and in winter I can do so. We have engaged a barrel of Baldwin apples and two of potatoes.

'We do not burn coal, it is so expensive. Tom cut our winter's wood, and now it is piled in the cellar. We had several loads of oak, and a little pine for kindlings; it was so much cheaper buying it that way. Our rent is low, so we have saved a little every week, for the rainy day, or towards buying and repairing this old house.'

'Well,' I said, 'if you manage as well in the future as you have already done, I see no reason why you cannot do so.' My friend laughed and said: 'Yes, we will get along very well, and when Tom's first year is up, he expects to get an increase in wages.'

ELIZABETH.

Selected Recipes.

Potato Pie.—Peel and slice the potatoes very thin; butter a deep pie-dish; put a layer of potatoes in the bottom, scatter over a very little chopped onion (one onion is enough for a pound of potatoes), season with pepper and salt and a little chopped parsley and a few slices of hard-boiled egg; then another layer of potatoes, onion, parsley, egg, and pepper and salt—until the dish is full; cut two ounces of fresh butter into little pieces and lay on top, pour over a little water, cover with a good crust, and bake slowly an hour and a half.

Indian Meal Cakes.—Take three cupfuls of Indian meal and one cupful of graham flour, one teaspoonful of sugar, one-half teaspoonful of salt and two teaspoonfuls of baking powder; sift together, and mix into a smooth batter with two cupfuls of milk—or more, if the batter is too stiff. Make the cakes small, and bake at least twice as long as other griddle cakes.

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