

The Farm Home

Mr. Josh Simpkins on Etiquette.

He Rebels.

I've studied up on etiquette,
Read every book that I could get,
and yet
There is n't one in all the lot
That tells a feller it is not
De rigger to eat pie
For breakfast, hence why should n't I?

And, furthermore, I cannot find
In all the books I call to mind
A single line
That gives a reason worth a whoop
Against a second plate of soup
When fellers dine.

And as for eating marrowfats
Without a spoon, I think that that's
A fool-
Ish sort of rule.

When I eat pease
I'll do as I darn please!

And what is more, till I'm a snob
I'll eat my corn straight off the cob;
And sparrergrass I'll eat as I
Have always done in days gone by—
A sort of dangling from the sky;
A sort of gift from heaven come,
Held 'twixt my finger and my thumb.

And as for those peculiar things
Called finger-bowls, I vow, by jings!
I will not use 'em as they say
The bon-ton uses 'em to-day.
If my hands ain't both good and clean,
The pump is where it's always been;
As far as I could ever see.
It's plenty good enough for me.
I don't stand much on etiquette,
But yet
I'm too polite to wash my paws
At table, spite of social laws.

—Harper's Bazaar.

Sweeping.

Recently it was my fortune, or misfortune, to notice particularly some methods of sweeping.

In house number one, the mistress was plying the broom with all speed and strength, and if there is any truth in the saying that "it is a good house-keeper who gets a peck of dust," then, judging by the dust that filled the room, she is indeed a good house-keeper. It is true she had all the doors and windows open, that the wind might carry the minute particles to some other place, but there were too many to escape, and I felt as though great quantities, almost the famous "peck," were entering my lungs by the nose and throat.

Of course, our nostrils are supplied with hair-strainers, which exclude a reasonable amount of foreign substances, but it is not a good plan to get them clogged, for then we will be compelled to inhale some dust. Besides the pecks we were taking in that manner, every article of furniture, ledges, and exposed surfaces soon became thickly coated, and when the room again became clear the careful (and she really thought herself careful) housewife with her dry dustcloth stirred it all up again.

The question often arises, "Where

does the dust all come from?" On the farms, we know, it is carried in with decaying wood, or on the boots and shoes of the family, from the fields, the yards, and the stables, usually in a moist condition, when it so readily sticks to the boots, and probably is filled with microbes and disease germs. Owing to the prevalence of consumption and catarrh, notices to "avoid expectorating" are not amiss. An old book on etiquette says: "Do not spit in the centre of the room; spit in a corner and rub it out with the foot." When we think of the vast amount of spitting that is done which may be also carried in on the boots and the other sources from which dust arises, it gives us a decidedly disagreeable sensation when we see the dust in our rooms "making a bee-line" for our throats; while I would make another rule: "Never spit except in a red hot fire." (Why do people use the long word when the short is more expressive?) Yet a cloud of dust is not necessary when we are sweeping, though we cannot always avoid it when travelling.

In another house, the daughter took a pail of clean water and placed it on the verandah; then, dipping her broom in the water until it was quite wet, she then shook it free from surplus moisture and began sweeping. Do I hear the remark, "I would not ruin my carpets with a wet broom"? I reply, "Her broom was not wet; it was only clean and damp." She moves along with short, quick strokes of the broom, and is beginning to collect a heap of dust, while every damp fibre of the broom is coated with black mud, which a short time ago was dust, eager to fly through the room, but stopped short on its upward flight by the moisture it met and to which it clung fast. The sweeper goes to the pail of water, and, dipping the broom several times, soon has it again clean, and, after shaking, returns again to the sweeping; she repeats this as often as the broom gets dirty, probably half a dozen times in each room. When swept, the carpet looks fresh and free from dust, and the bare floors show no sign of streak, as would have been the case were the broom wet or dirty. When she completes the work she rinses her broom and puts it away. There is positively not a speck of floating dust, and the furniture contains no more than when she began. Where is the dust? I look at the pail of clean water; I find it is not clean, but very black and dirty, and all those dust particles and germs are bathing in it, and I say emphatically, by all means let us sweep with damp and often washed brooms. But, if we wish to save our strength, it might be preferable to use carpet-sweepers, which are not given to dust agitating.

MECYRA.

The Poultry Business for Farmers' Wives.

When I first went into poultry in earnest I had a dim idea of doing business. I had not forgotten how to do the sums in mental arithmetic, or reckon the interest on notes, and by an effort could recall from school days enough mental power to estimate the number of rolls of paper needed for my sitting-room, or the yards of carpet required for the floor; but real business, such as a man encounters at every turn, or a woman, if she is the manager of an estate, I knew nothing of.

At first I tried shipping broilers to Detroit and Chicago, but the hired man took a half day in trying to make a crate for twelve. I know now that it weighed three times what it should have weighed and the express rates and the commission were so heavy that I had little remaining, and a number of loads of clover were ruined because of my unlucky crate. Then I sold some live fowls to hucksters, and soon found out that they had cheated in weights; their hook scales were an invention of Ananias himself. I could raise the birds all right, but how to dispose of them profitably was the rub. I tried shipping dressed fowls to commission merchants in cities, and received 21 cents each for large fat pullets in November. That ended the commission business for me. I doubtless would have had a round with incubator and capon branches of the business, but some very good friends of mine tried experiments along that

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