

outside leaves and all—would be of use, after the heart had been eaten with cold meat or bread and cheese as a salad.

It did not take Alice long to make her purchases. These included a pennyworth of bones, which on her return she chopped up small and put on to boil while she could spare the middle of the fire to the saucepan. Bones must boil fast and long to get the goodness out of them. They want to be well washed under the tap, then put on in warm water, and as soon as the water boils up to be carefully skimmed till no more dirty scum rises. Then salt and pepper are added. The lid is put on and the pot left boiling for seven or eight hours. If the fire is required for something else in between, the pot can be taken off and put on again when convenient, remembering that the full time must be given first or last. The liquor is strained through a cullender into a large bowl, and when cold a cake of fat is to be removed from the top, underneath which will be found a jelly. This will make any kind of soup. It is what cooks call 'stock,' and the fat is most useful for frying fish or anything; while if it is clarified, that is, melted into a pan of boiling water, stirred, and left till cold, it makes excellent pastry. Clarifying or clearing fat in water makes any gritty or dark particles settle to the bottom, and when the fat cake is carefully lifted off the water the bottom can be scraped, and the rest is good enough for anything. In a family of children, two or three pennyworth of bones should be bought at once, but Alice and Tom were a very small family, and did not need large quantities of anything at present.

While the stock was boiling Alice thought she might as well begin arranging her rooms, for as the stew was to be for supper she would not make it till three o'clock. Had it been for dinner she would have begun it directly she came back from marketing, as a stew requires long and gentle cooking, and only needs a very small fire so that it may simmer quietly.

Tom had got the rooms ready as far as he was able before returning to Billthorpe to fetch his bride. The bed, chairs, tables,

and such things were in their places, and Tom had made a cupboard with shelves in the living room, and also a nice little dresser with shelves above for plates, and hooks for jugs and cups; but though neat, the effect was decidedly plain, and showed the want of a woman's touch. Mrs. Bent had warned Alice beforehand that London was such a smutty, dirty place she must have nothing about her that would not bear soap and water, 'and above all things,' said she, 'never a fixed-down carpet in either your bedroom or sitting-room which gets filled with soot and dust that you can't never get rid of by just sweeping. Have a strip of bedside carpet which you can shake well every morning, and scrub your floor well over at least once a week. I have seen London bedrooms which were scrubbed three times a week, and nice and wholesome they did look and feel to be sure. Then in your living room I should have a good piece of linoleum, as much as you can afford to buy; that will keep your feet warm, look handsome, and you can wash it over as often as you please. If you like to get a neat rug to lay down before the fire when your work is done, why that can be shaken daily, so won't do any harm. Seeing that the gentry are giving up fixed carpets so much now, and that in many fine drawing-rooms you won't see nothing but a few rugs thrown about quite careless like, I don't see why poor people should set such store by nailing dirty bits of carpet down everywhere.'

Alice quite agreed with Mrs. Bent. There had been no dirty nailed-down carpets at the Vicarage, and she was in good practice for scrubbing and polishing. Tom and she had bought the linoleum, which looked very handsome, and nearly covered the floor. Miss Celia had given her a nice strip of carpet for the bedroom, and a very pretty rug was also among her wedding presents. Alice had felt anxious to have white muslin curtains, but Mrs. Bent told her they would look dirty directly, and recommended instead scarlet Turkey twill, bordered with a narrow, strong furniture lace.

'You see,' she remarked, 'Turkey twill