

## THE HOUSEHOLD.

## A SUPPER WHICH NEVER WAS EATEN.

The Missionary Society needed money—it always did; that is the chronic state of missionary societies. But this was a sort of crisis; that is to say, there was a large pledge to meet soon, and very little money in the treasury.

"Let's have an oyster supper," said some of the younger members. It was not exactly an original idea, missionary societies having "spoiled the Philistines" in that manner before now. The older members groaned in spirit, but not audibly, feeling somewhat conscientious about dampening youthful enthusiasm.

So committees were appointed to "solicit." In plain English that means "beg." In due season the ladies met again, and these committees reported. They had had most gratifying success. There were so many sandwiches, so much biscuit, so many loaves of cake, so many boiled hams, coffee, tea, pickles, jellies galore. For if anybody supposes an oyster supper means oysters only, he must be very simple indeed, and needs some woman to instruct him. Enough to feed three hundred people had been promised, and the committees just beamed. At this point a bomb was thrown, but it fizzed in such a mild fashion at first, nobody suspected it would set all their plans flying. A quiet-voiced woman, who had a serene, firm face, said:—

"I have thought of something new we might try. We might dispense with the supper."

"How? Why didn't you speak of it before we'd taken all the trouble of soliciting?" This from a young girl who was impulsive and did not dream of being impertinent.

"Only because the plans for the supper needed to reach this point before the experiment could be made."

They crowded around her with eager questioning.

"Well, this it is. Some of us older ones have grieved over our method of raising money. It is a kind of false pretence, hardly the cheerful giving which God approves. We haven't spoken, because we didn't see any other way clearly. It doesn't seem just the best method of aiding our best Friend's work. If your father or your brother needed a sum of money, I don't think, in order to raise it, you would exactly like to beg the materials for a great supper, and then advertise for people to come in and buy the supper—Oh! yes; I know it's a good cause, the best in the world, therefore we ought to treat it well. It is too much like a Jesuit to say that the end justifies the means."

"Well, what do you propose?" struck in an impatient voice.

"Just this: You have it all down in black and white just what each one will do. Mrs. So-and-so gives two loaves of cake, etc. Now let the soliciting committee go round once more, and ask each woman to make a careful estimate of what her contribution would cost in money. Then ask her if she will not give the money instead of the food. Tell her some reasons—the one I have hinted at, and others which will suggest themselves."

"They won't do it."

"Well, let us try this once."

"But we couldn't keep it up, pretending to give a supper and not give it."

"No," said the woman, smiling, but firm, "we couldn't keep it up, though this is not a pretence, because you really did intend to have a supper. But it would be an entering wedge of thought, which might open possibilities of better methods."

It was agreed that the committees should go around once more, twice, if need be, to collect the money, and report that day week. That day week brought a large attendance; the innovation had stirred up many contributors to come and talk it over. Except to a few who had been praying, it was surprising how well the thing took.

"I was so thankful not to have the extra work. A houseful of company, and my girl left in the midst of it. I'm going to add part of her wages to the value of the cake."

"I felt thoroughly ashamed, for I'd always counted myself so liberal. I thought

two loaves of sponge cake must cost about a dollar. and when I came to estimate the sugar and eggs and flour I used, and knew there wasn't more than fifty cents' worth—well, I was glad to give a dollar in money, to keep any sort of self-respect." There was a suspicious shine in the speaker's eyes, though she rattled the words off merrily.

The committee reported an amount of money sufficient to meet the pledge.

"Not so much, though, as we would have made in the old way," said one, who wasn't a croaker, but only wanted to be just to both sides.

"No, not quite; but there would have been the hall to pay for, and the advertising, and the oysters, and all the other things we have to buy, to say nothing of the wear and tear of ourselves. Some of us have doctor's bills after church festivals. Perhaps we cleared nearly as much, and are not overworked besides."

"And no Philistine has deceived himself, thinking he has contributed to the work of the God of Israel by eating a supper bought of a missionary society," so said the serene woman, reverently.

The thing did go on for some time; for every woman in that church came to know what was meant when a festival was suggested. It was like an "Open Sesame" to their hearts.

Somebody called it a "standing joke," but it was a wholesome kind of joke.

The entering wedge of thought opened many minds to truer ideas of what giving is. The one suggestion to treat our best Friend as well at least as we would treat our human friends, was a seed dropped into the opened minds, which sprang up and brought forth fruit.—*Helen A. Hawley in Interior.*

## WORK FOR THE MASTER.

BY M. E. DUNHAM, DD., LL.D.

It was at the close of a sermon in which I had been pressing home to the hearts of my hearers the duty of personal work for the Master in efforts to win souls into His kingdom. My own heart was full of the subject, and I had spoken earnestly in the desire to impress those who listened with a sense of personal responsibility. Several came to me with a renewal of their pledge to be more diligent in the Master's service; but one good sister among them said:—

"Yes, all you have told us is true, and probably you think I ought to give my pledge with these to work for the Master, but I can't; and I may as well confess it. I have faults enough without adding hypocrisy. I would gladly work for him if I could; but I can't."

She saw plainly that I did not take any stock in her plea of lack of ability, and with redoubled earnestness she continued: "I am telling you the plain truth, what I feel and know to be true. I have no desire to shirk any duty, nor any feeling of unwillingness to work for the Master in any way that he may lead me; but I have no gift to talk with others about their souls, not even to my nearest and dearest friends; and then, too, my own Christian life is so imperfect they would be saying to me, 'Physician, heal thyself,' or else look quizzingly at me as one who preached what she did not practice."

Having long before learned that argument in such cases accomplishes nothing, I replied: "Well, if you can't win souls for Christ by talking, then win them in some other way."

"What other way?"

"By teaching them how to live rightly."

"O dear! I don't know how to live rightly myself, how then can I teach others?"

I looked at her steadily for a moment, and then said "Mrs. Lightbread, you know how to cook."

Now cooking was the one thing above all others upon which she prided herself, and justly, too—for she was acknowledged to be the best cook in all that region. Cooking to her was a fine art; she studied it as a science; found out ways of making the most savory and yet healthful dishes of food at the least expense; ascertained how the raw material could be most economically and profitably used; and of course was neighborhood authority on this subject.

Mrs. Lightbread made no reply, but abashed, blushing with the innate modesty of true womanhood, stood embarrassed and

perplexed. After a moment's pause I proceeded, "Use this gift of cooking for the Master."

She looked at me in utter amazement. Her very eyes were full of surprised questioning. Use her knowledge of cooking for the Master! "How?" was the only word that came to her lips.

"Among your neighbors," I said.

"Do you mean that I ought to set up a cooking-school for my neighbors?"

"What I want you to do is to be done in private homes. For instance, there is the Petersen family, poor, ill clad, and consequently unable to attend church. What is the trouble with them? Mr. Petersen is sober, industrious, and earns good wages. Why don't they get along better?"

I looked at her for a reply. She thought a moment, and then said "I think the fault is with Mrs. Petersen. Her husband provides enough, but she don't seem to know how to use it economically. You know the old saying that 'the wife can throw out of the window with a teaspoon more than the husband can throw into the door with a shovel,' and I think this is the case in the Petersen family."

"You have stated the case exactly. Go thou in the name of Christ and remedy it."

"Would that be work for the Master?"

"Certainly it would. Anything that better the condition of any human life is work for Him. And then, if in this way you should lead them to believe in Him, your work would culminate in the grandest success."

"I understand," said she.

"I would say first gain Mrs. Petersen's confidence, for without that you will fail. Then casually introduce the subject of cooking by telling her of some new ways of preparing food which you have learned; of the expense and the economy; of the methods you have found most profitable; and of what you have learned by actual experience. Do all this in such a way as not to suggest the least hint that you have any special purpose in it, and if she is like the rest of humanity she will ask you to instruct her in your methods of cooking, and thus put herself under your leadership. Well, by the time you have taught Mrs. Petersen how to cook well and economically the way will be open for you to lead her still higher—perhaps into the fold of Christ."

Mrs. Lightbread listened thoughtfully, and finally said "I will try it," and she did try it.

It will not be necessary to follow Mrs. Lightbread through the details of her work in the Petersen family. She won Mrs. Petersen's confidence completely, and through her that of Mr. Petersen also; she taught Mrs. Petersen how to cook royally and economically, and at the end of three months the husband was unbowed in praise of his wife's culinary skill, while both husband and wife rejoice in living as they never had lived before on food fit for a king, and yet had a surplus of the week's wages left over. Soon better clothing was purchased, a better appearance made among their neighbors, and the one of their personal character elevated. They began to feel a desire to rise above their former condition, and under this it was an easy thing for Mrs. Lightbread to induce them to attend church. And so they were led to attend the services of the sanctuary. Not having been Gospel-hardened by long resisting the truth, they listened appreciatively, and in the midst of a revival a few weeks after both were converted and received into the church.

At the close of the service in which Mr. and Mrs. Peterson had united with the people of God Mrs. Lightbread came to me with a radiant face, tears of joy in her eyes, and taking me warmly by the hand said "I thank you."

"For what?"

"For showing me how I could do something for the Master."—*Christian at Work.*

## THE USE OF GRAHAM.

Food made from whole wheat has long been considered nourishing and healthful, but not all have learned that it is also sweet, palatable and satisfying. Now that the best quality of whole-grain foods are so perfectly manufactured it should be more generally used by all. To those unable to procure fresh supplies of various sorts, the common Graham flour may be

made attractive and nourishing. It should always be sifted to remove the coarsest of the bran which irritates and injures many. It should be fresh and from a good quality of grain. Skill and practice added to knowledge are required in order to insure success in its cooking.

Graham Mush.—Before pouring in the water, butter the kettle to prevent sticking; have the water boiling and salted. Take freshly sifted Graham and gather up a small handful without pressing or packing together and sift lightly from the fingers while stirring constantly. Stir and beat fast and thoroughly fifteen minutes while it boils rapidly, and if you take pains you can soon make a mush which is a smooth, delicate, and quivering jelly and so thoroughly cooked as to have no raw taste. Eaten warm or cold, with fresh cream and sugar, there are few people who will not pronounce it delicious.

Graham Bread.—Start bread at night and use one cupful of soft yeast, or a cake of dry yeast dissolved in a cupful of warm water, and add enough more warm water to make one quart of wetting, one small cup of sugar, and a teaspoonful of salt. The water in which potatoes have been boiled, or two or three potatoes finely sifted while hot, and added to the yeast is a great improvement if one cares to take the extra trouble. Sift five cups of Graham and four cups of fine flour; then sift and mix both together. Stir the other ingredients into the flour with a spoon and, always using fine flour on hands and board, knead well for ten or fifteen minutes, the longer the better. Place in a pan covered closely with another pan, wrap well to retain the warmth, and set to rise. In the morning make into loaves, letting it get pretty light, and bake slowly from an hour to an hour and a half. If you wish a soft crust rub with butter when it comes from the oven and wrap in cloth. Follow directions exactly. When cold this bread may be cut in slices and toasted in a very hot oven.

Plenty of milk, cream, and butter, with whole grain food in various forms, and an abundance of fruit will prove an amply sufficient, and a vastly more healthful diet to many suffering from disorders of the stomach and liver, if they will give them a fair trial.—*Mildred Thorne, in Household.*

## A WOMANLY ART.

Every girl should be taught to darn, with all the dainty stitches of the art. There should be instilled into her a sense of the disgrace of wearing a stocking with even a broken thread, while a darn well put in has a homelike, respectable look that in no way deteriorates from the value of a good stocking. Darning is a lady's occupation, akin to embroidery in deftness and gentleness of touch. It requires skill and judgment to select the thread, which should be but a trifle coarser than the web of the stocking, or, in case of cloth, than the thread of the goods. Where a cloth may be easily unravelled, it is better to darn it with the ravellings, unless it is in a place where more than ordinary strain comes on the goods. Thick cloth should be darned between the layers, and, when done by a skillful hand and well pressed, the work becomes practically invisible. A darning case, fitted out with a pretty olive-wood egg to hold under the stocking, a long, narrow cushion of darning needles, cards of various colored wools and cottons, and all the necessaries for the complete outfit of a darning, is a useful present for a girl, and one that she should be instructed to use faithfully.

## BUTTER IN TEN MINUTES.

To one pint of good cream, sweet or sour, add one tablespoonful of salt, and one large tablespoonful of butter. The cream should not be chilled, and the butter soft, not melted. Stir the salt in, then the butter, and you will have a nice pound of butter in considerably less than ten minutes. I get mine every time. This should all be put in a mixing bowl and stirred rapidly with the back of the spoon.

This is a simple recipe and I, who have often tried to get a little butter from the savings of one cow's milk and worked till tired and vexed over it, have wished I had known it earlier. These proportions may be increased and larger quantities of butter made.—*Mrs. P. Amy, in Housekeeper.*