

## HINTS FOR THE HOSPITABLE.

Good old-fashioned hospitality, sweet, warm, cordial, worthy of all grateful praise! Thankful are we that it is not yet an extinct virtue; but what with the multifarious engagements of modern life, united to the scarcity and inefficiency of servants in the country and in the cities, to the high rentals which render spare rooms too expensive a luxury for any but the wealthy to enjoy, the numbers of those who "keep open house" are perceptibly decreasing. But it is still not an unknown thing for some family connection, or companion of early days, separated from us by distance, to be invited to make long visits in our homes. For the benefit of such visitors, whose mouths are necessarily closed in their own behalf, we offer our little hints:

First.—No visitor should be invited whose company is not really desired. If we care nothing about Christian sincerity of character, we should at least remember the fact that no one can long sustain a pretence of cordial feeling for an unwelcome guest.

Second.—Having invited our guests, and being really glad to see them, let us not make such a display of our "best china," napery and elaborate menus that we shall be obliged either to do a large amount of extra work ourselves, thus defrauding ourselves of our guest's society, or to bring in an additional servant for the occasion, who will be sure to break and spoil more than she costs otherwise. None of these things add to household serenity, and no right-minded guest can be made comfortable and happy when he sees that his hosts are suffering annoyance.

Third.—Let us not make our friends so very "much at home" as to compel them to be witnesses of any family disagreements—if such there unfortunately are—or to conform their likings to our own. If for ourselves we require only coffee and rolls for breakfast, we need not take it for granted that our guest would not like other things if they were provided in such abundance that he would not fancy them destined for himself alone. If we prefer to sleep in unwarmed rooms, we should not compel him to do so. It is an easy matter for him to cool a warm room, if he does not fancy it; but he cannot command a cold one to be warmed for his benefit.

Fourth.—Guests should never be left to take care of or to amuse the children of their host. They may be very fond of children in the abstract, and of some children in particular, but the society of children should be sought by, not inflicted upon, our guests.

Fifth.—While we would not agree with the Spaniard who declares that his house and all that is in it belongs to his guests, we should certainly remember that while a guest is with us his room is sacred to him. If he chooses to spend his entire time therein, we may have our own ideas about his politeness, and may have our mental reservations about inviting the unsociable fellow to come again, but we have no right to intrude upon him unasked. He has also a perfect right to call upon persons whom we do not know, or to receive visits from such persons; though, of course, no guest of good-breeding, or of delicacy of feeling, would wish to receive calls while in the house of another from any person with whom his host did not wish to maintain social relations.

Sixth.—Be merciful. Of course a guest of right feeling will wish in all things to conform to the usages of his host as far as possible, while the courteous host should seek to make them as little burdensome as circumstances will permit. But there are people who seem to have made a set of cast-iron rules about their household matters, to which not only their own family must conform, but also the stranger that is within their gates. We know a family whose head—a man of great wealth, and maintaining a small regiment of servants—had the whim of insisting that every member of his family should appear at the breakfast table at precisely 6 a.m., both winter and summer. One winter he had invited a brother-in-law to make his home with him in New York city while undergoing medical treatment for rheumatism. The poor invalid was not exempted from the laws which governed his host's family, though pain often kept him awake until those early morning hours when, as every person accustomed to observing illness knows, gentle sleep seems just ready to descend and close the weary eyes. At a quarter before the early breakfast hour the poor fellow's crutches were beginning to falter down the long flights from the third story, so that, though often nearly fainting, he never offended his host by arriving later than the moment required. This was endured for one fortnight, when the invalid made the excuse of needing water-cure treatment, that he might be able to leave his host's house without giving offence.

Seventh.—It is never necessary, and seldom desirable, to devote one's entire time to the entertainment of guests. There are homes, charming in all other respects, where a guest is hardly allowed to take proper rest, so anxious are his kind entertainers that he shall see everything. While the different members of the family are taking turns in escorting their visitor, they forget that the physical endurance of one is not equal to that of four or five.

Eighth.—Let us by no means fall into the contrary extreme and neglect our guests. Let us give him every pleasure that we can afford to do without overtasking his strength, but in so doing let us always consult his tastes, which may differ from our own.

One man thinks it the greatest of privileges to be allowed to sit before a library fire with a book, while another thinks it "slow" if he does not attend all the places of amusement within reach, or make the acquaintance of all the neighbors.

Ninth.—Let us never forget that the true host invites his guests for their pleasure and advantage more than for his own.—*Harper's Bazar.*

## Timely Floral Hints.

## FORCING DUTCH BULBS.

For winter and early spring flowers in the window or conservatory, nothing surpasses the various Dutch bulbs. If treated intelligently, they are absolutely sure to bloom profusely, and I know of no other plants which will yield so many and such truly beautiful and fragrant flowers, in return for so small an amount of care as they require.

Any really good potting soil is suitable, but it is well to add considerable sand, if it is not naturally sandy. After potting the bulbs, water thoroughly so that the soil is moistened throughout, then set away in some cool, dark place for a period of six or eight, or more, weeks. This is for the purpose of inducing a strong root growth before the leaves or buds start, and it is absolutely necessary in order to flower the bulbs with any degree of success. It can be accomplished only by keeping them in the dark and at a low temperature—from 40 to 50 degrees. A cold pit is just the place, or, lacking that, a cool cellar or closet. If the pots are completely buried, four inches deep, in sand, a much more even temperature will be sustained and there will be no need of watering except at the time of potting; but if not covered, they must be watched and the soil not allowed to dry out. When the pots are well filled with roots, the leaves will begin to appear, and they must then be brought into the light. They should be given as cool a position as can be commanded, and not set in the full sunshine for the first few days. When the flowers begin to open, water more liberally and keep as cool as possible and they will last much longer. By bringing a few at a time to the light, the period of bloom can be considerably prolonged. This can also be accomplished by potting several lots at intervals of a week or two. Some will naturally start before others and such should be brought to the light first.

## HYACINTHS.

Hyacinths may be grown in both earth and glasses filled with water. When grown in the former, press the bulb down into the soil until only the upper fourth is visible. If a paper cone is made and slipped over the leaves when brought to the light both leaves and the flower-spike will grow taller. Hyacinths, growing and blooming in glasses, which can be purchased for the purpose, form most beautiful ornaments for the sitting-room or parlor. The following rules by Wm. Paul, Esq., of London, are so comprehensive that we reproduce them for the benefit of our readers:

1. If you choose your own bulbs, look for weight as well as size; be sure also that the base of the bulb is sound.
2. Use the single kinds only, because they are earlier, hardier, and generally preferable for glasses.
3. Set the bulb in the glass so that the lower end is almost, but not quite, in contact with the water.
4. Use rain or pond water.
5. Do not change the water, but keep a small lump of charcoal at the bottom of the glass.
6. Fill up the glasses with water, as the level sinks by the feeding of the roots and by evaporation.
7. When the bulb is placed, put the glass in a cool dark cupboard, or in any place where light is excluded, there to remain for about six weeks, as the roots feed more freely in the dark.
8. When the roots are fully developed, and the flower-spike is pushing into life (which will be in about six weeks), remove by degrees to full light and air.

The more light and air given from the time the flowers show colors, the shorter will be the leaves and spike, and the brighter the colors of the flowers.

## How to Measure for Patterns.

In taking measurements for patterns hold the tape measure easily, neither loose nor tight. Wraps, jackets, sleeves, basques, in fact all body garments, are selected by the bust measure, which is taken just above the fullest part of the figure, and high up under the arms. Measure always over the dress. Measure for a skirt over the dress and around the waist line.

Give both the bust and waist measure, and age of children, as sometimes they are too large or small for their age, and the number of inches around the bust or waist is then a better guide. Always measure over a close-fitting garment. Inch-wide seams are allowed on the shoulder and under-arm seams, as the chief alterations will be made there. All seams are allowed for in the patterns, thus materially aiding the dressmaker.

If you lengthen a sleeve, do it equally at the top and bottom, so as to keep the elbows correct. If the skirt fits around the waist, by which measure it is sold, and seems short, lengthen it at the bottom. Hold the pattern up to the wearer, and thus get an

idea of the fit before cutting the goods, though our patterns fully deserve their title of "perfect fitting," and can hardly fail in their mission.

## To Have Eggs in Winter.

It is best to have some old hens as well as pullets in the fall, that the egg basket may not be empty at any time. There are only a few breeds of pullets that lay well in the fall, and then they are not to be depended upon for early sitters. As the market value of broilers depends upon the time when they are offered for sale, three or four weeks in the spring will make a very great difference in the income, and old hens are much more likely to sit early than young ones.

To have plenty of eggs in the winter, the fowls must have a warm, dry house, and as much sunshine as possible. They must be kept clean, and fed regularly with appropriate food. Some persons have much to say against corn as food for fowls; but I have made many experiments, and my experience goes to prove that it is the most valuable of all available grains, but that oats should be given occasionally to furnish variety. Give part of the corn without shelling it, that the hens may have something to do. Parch the corn, sometimes, and give it to them while it is warm; this is especially good for the coldest weather, and may be fed to them every day for a week.

Many poultry raisers neglect in winter to give the fowls something to supply the place of the worms and insects they find in summer. Uncooked meat must be fed, and burnt bones or ground bones given that they may have material for egg shells. If you have no machine for grinding bones, you can easily pound them fine on a flat stone. It is a cheap food, and hens that are given plenty of it never wait until eggs are cheap before beginning to lay.

If you are troubled with lice, go to a cigar manufacturer's and get refuse stems of the tobacco plant which they will gladly give you. Spread the stems around the henhouse and in the nests. A few ought always to be put under sitting hens. This is a cheap remedy for lice, is not troublesome to use and will be found certain and effectual.

Fowls that are cared for properly, and are not allowed to drink impure water are not likely to be troubled with cholera. It is a good plan to add a few drops of carbolic acid to their drinking water once in a while, as it acts as a preventive to disease.

There is some danger of hens becoming too fat, but more of their becoming too poor. A thin, shivering hen will not help to replenish the egg basket.

## A Veiled Author.

"Who is 'The Duchess'?" is a question often asked by the thousands who read the novels of this remarkably popular writer. And perhaps never has a *nom de plume* more completely screened the identity of its owner. "The Duchess" is really Mrs. Margaret Hungerford, residing in a home of comfort and beauty in Ireland's famous county, Cork. She is an industrious woman, and writes a complete novel with more ease than many of us would exercise in writing a short article. She is domestic in her nature, and dislikes to talk about her work. Her modesty is proverbial among her friends, and many of her neighbors in the little Irish town where she lives are ignorant of the fact that "Madame Hungerford" as they call her, is the author of the novels that lie on their tables. She rarely associates her personal self with her literary *nom de plume* in her correspondence with friends or strangers. The Authoress, in years, is past middle age, but retains a youthful appearance. She is fond of children, and their little characteristics are often incorporated in her stories as she sits writing at her window, watching them at their play on the lawn beneath. It is estimated that more copies of her novels have been sold than of those of any living writer. Any new story by her is always sure of a wide reading on both sides of the sea. Of what is generally regarded as her most popular story "Phyllis," more than a quarter of a million copies have been sold. Her literary work brings her a neat income, enabling her to live in comfort. She has been twice married, her present domestic relations being of the happiest nature.

## A Bad Practice.

I know both men and women who are very free to talk over their household affairs with outsiders; it is a practice I do not believe in. Another thing I have observed is that men are not so particular as they should be about the language they use before children. I think parents can not be too nice in that respect, and that mothers should insist on the husband's talking decently before the little ones, if at no other time. How many of the parents make a practice of telling frightful stories to the children? I can remember how frightened I used to be after hearing ghost stories. I would be afraid to go from one room to another after dark, and I would cover my face with the bedclothes when I went to bed for fear I should see something awful. By the way, I must tell the sisters that I, too, have some city cousins. One of them is an affected young girl who wondered "why the hens laughed so," when she heard them cackle!—[S. A. M.,