

A SICK DAY.

"What a trial it is to have the man of the house at home sick."

"That's so. They always think they are going to die this time surely."

The speakers were two as noble, tender-hearted women, both wives and mothers, as can be found on this earth. One of them was wife to me, the other wife to my best friend. They were conversing during an afternoon call which the latter was making on the former. I was at home, growling, with no very serious indisposition, yet unmistakably growling. I sat concealed in the next room, but within ear-shot.

"If these dear lords of creation suffered only one-half the ills and enfeeblements that we do, now—" the voice of one of them went on. I dared not listen to more, but drew the door and sat thinking.

A sick day is like a cloudy day; it makes the sunshine brighter when the clouds do break. To be able to eat with relish, work without a creaking joint, sleep without a dream; who of us could ever thank God intelligently for these if we never had a sick day?

A sick day is like a door in a hotel corridor, just opposite our own room; we pass it many times in a year, yet have never opened it, know not who occupies it, only know it is No. 54 and ours is No. 52. One day it is open and we look in to catch sight of a face there, beautiful and never to be forgotten. It ends in a life-long acquaintance, perhaps, and to be highly prized. A sick day lets us into a score of lives which we only knew upon the outside before. Mother, thou wast an invalid for a score of years. Patient, gentle mother, sitting here in my pain of a day, I seem to understand thee better than before. My neighbor, who, I am told, is an invalid year after year, yet so bright and cheerful at the window, I know thee now. How brave thou art! What a battle thou art fighting! I measure thy manhood as I never did before.

A sick day is a time to stop and think. One cannot read. One may arrange his papers a little. Ah! Here's a letter from dear old Charlie. I have not thought of him for years. What a wealth of stored happiness, all in the past behind me, this memory of Charlie brings up. Why should not a man turn back to taste the happiness that he has had? Because we are so busy reaching out for future happiness. But the past is at least secure. That is safe. What fools we are to think that happiness will somehow fail to keep, like honey grown rancid, when once the present sip has been taken. I have sat here a full hour, roaming over boyhood fields, youthful school-days, hand in hand with rosy lasses and nut-brown lads of the long ago. This letter of Charlie's was the gate-way through which I strayed. I am getting on in life, it seems. This human machine begins to show signs of wear. Yet it wears well; what mechanism in my factory has lasted thirty-eight years. However, the body will wear out at last. What then? Being idle to-day, that is worth thinking about.

A sick day tests a man's patience. Is it true that one is a disturbing element in the family peace? Then let it be—

Resolved, that, having consulted the physician, it is common sense to obey his directions implicitly.

That, having determined to give the day to repose, I will not vex it by fretting.

That, being shut in with the family, I will take them as I find them, noisy, laughing children and all, unless I am utterly prostrate.

That I will remember that I am a visitor, and behave myself with the courtesy of a guest, politely insisting on disarranging the usual household order of things as little as possible.

That I will not say anything about dying, for the first day.

That I will not ask my wife oftener than once an hour if she thinks I seem any better—not oftener than once in thirty minutes if she ever felt thus and so, describing some of my symptoms.

That I will not imagine that I have the identical disease of which my friend died last winter, till I know I have not another disease of which another friend died last spring.

That I will keep at least my good manners, and thank the kindest hands that ever served a cross-grained mortal, as they seek with baffled tenderness to serve me—a bear.

That I will not forget that that same mis who is taking a thousand steps for me the day, is nearer down sick than am I, God bless her! and such, indeed, her portion half the days of the year.

That I will ask God's blessing on the day

of sickness and leave it in His hands while I fall asleep in the sunbeams from the west. Ah! thank Heaven, I am not sick in a railway car, in a strange hotel, on the street, as vagabonds and the homeless are. What a fair, fond spot this room is to be sick in! It never was so beautiful! I own it! It is for this quiet nook in such a fatigued hour, I have been slaving all my days over in my store. Let the carts rattle over the stony streets; let the night fall; shut out the world. I am at home, shut in by a guardianship of love!

A sick day is a revelation. This, then, is how they live here; this what they are doing at ten o'clock, at noon, at three of sunny afternoons by the windows. I generally leave by gas-light and return by it; but now I see how the angel of my household is employed. Thus and thus she marshals the children, answering ten thousand questions, settling their contentions, comforting their sorrows. What a woman she is! It is plain now why she is grown so classic thin of her once round cheeks. Thus and thus she brushes about the nest, like a mother-bird; the house does not keep itself in order, I perceive; her own hands touch everything. What a manager she is!

As the day wears on it is inexpressibly enjoyable to see her seat herself within easy talking distance, that she may play the nurse to me. She rattles on about a world of things, as if for all the world she had not had me in close range before for years, and her faithful heart was bursting with sweet confidences which she pours upon me. I half think she enjoys having me sick—if not very sick—that she may become acquainted with a busy fellow once more. It is like the old times. No, she is older now; the gray grace of years is waving from her temples. To sit here and be comforted; to drink from her hand; to be cooled upon the temples by her touch; to be fluttered about and worried over; attentions and endearments I have seen my children share, but have shared myself since—when? Well, old stalwart that I am, not since my mother touched me thus when I myself was a child.

What a kind, good world this is! How softly every one treads about the house. It is amusing and pathetic to see the children in vain efforts of quiet in my behalf. My neighbor, from over the way, has dropped in to say he missed me on change, to tell the news of the day, to offer any little service he can render, and departed with kind hopes. The clerks at the store work like dogs, insist on doubling up duties, that I may rest; they come over to ask about me. When had I ever so many friends? It has paid, in coin which the heart can count, to be laid by for a few sick days.

And now the ease from pain! Ah, a long breath! How refreshing! How unutterably sweet is this repose after torture. It is ecstasy. To have no sensations is to have the most exquisite sensations. This consciousness that I am better; not worse, but better; the wheels of life run in oil again. I shall sleep now. I am in a mood for prayer. Word was sent to Christ "Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick." God cares for His creatures in pain with a tender interest. Draw the curtain. Good-night. Thank Heaven for a sick-day. To-morrow the harsh and selfish world will din its thunders in the ears which have erst been saluted with whispers of repose.

Had Her Way.

But in those days Eugene had her own way. It was only a year later when the Emperor went off to Algeria and left her as Regent to do quite as she pleased. She didn't ask the Ministers this time, but went off by herself to Rosa Bonheur's studio and kissed the artist as she did so. It is not reported whether the Ministers smiled or grieved, but the willful Empress's action proved a precedent, just as they had foreseen. It is not very long since the Governor-General of Tonquin conferred the cross in the presence of his troops on the Superior of the Sisters of Mercy serving in the field.

If France didn't mean to be gallant in the beginning, Turkey and Persia, from which countries you would least expect gallantry, have displayed quite a good deal. Sultan Abdul Hamid II. instituted the "Order of Nishani Shefakat" for the express purpose of acknowledging the benevolence of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Lady Layard and others toward the victims of the Russian atrocities in 1878. The insignia consists of a five-pointed star in red enamel.

A woman named Margaret Harris died in great agony at Pontypridd on Saturday through drinking benzoline in mistake for medicine.

Home-made Ice-cream.

It is just four years ago that we bought our ice-cream freezer, and I am safe in saying that no similar purchase has ever given so much satisfaction in the family as this. It has been in every way a good investment, for there is scarcely a week in the year that we do not use it, and I would be glad if I could influence other housewives to appreciate frozen desserts as highly as they deserve. They are not nearly so troublesome to prepare as is popularly supposed, and, regarded from a hygienic standpoint alone, they are a great improvement upon many others which are common upon our tables.

I have experimented with various rules for French ice-creams, and have found a combination which gives excellent results, and which has the advantage at the same time of being within the means of almost every one.

This is not a characteristic of many rules. I have one, for instance, which calls for "four quarts of very rich cream, two vanilla beans," and eggs and sugar in proportion. My rule is a simple one. Put one pint of milk in the double boiler with a piece of vanilla bean about one inch in length. Cream together the yolks of four eggs, half a cup of sugar, and two rounding table-spoonfuls of flour until very light, and stir gradually into the milk when it reaches the boiling-point. Allow this to cook about ten minutes, stirring frequently. Add a small pinch of salt, and turn into a stone dish, beating at intervals while it cools. This is to prevent it from forming into lumps. When cold, add one and a half pints of cream (or rich country milk) and half a cup of sugar.

This may be prepared early in the day, and kept in the ice-box. If a larger quantity is desired, a quart of cream (or milk) and more sugar may be used instead of the above proportions, the foundation mixture being the same for both. Care must be taken in measuring the flour, as too much is sure to taste. The spoon must be round, full instead of heaping: about one ounce in all.

Be sure and use the vanilla bean for flavoring, as it is quite impossible to make a good ice-cream with vanilla extract. All large grocery houses keep them, and, I think, it would be quite possible to have one or more sent by post to any place where they were not obtainable. They are long thin pods, which sell at twenty cents for one, and as only an inch piece is used each time, they will not be found expensive.

Before freezing, remove the bit of pod, carefully scraping all the little seeds into the canister. One of the features of French ice-cream is the tiny black seeds scattered through it.

Prepare the ice by pounding it fine in a coarse strong bag, and use rock-salt in the proportion of three pints for a gallon freezer. Put the can in the centre of the tub with the beater in place, fasten the lid securely, and pack ice and salt in alternate layers until the tub is full. Turn the crank a few minutes, and as the ice works down, add more, until it is firmly and solidly packed. If plenty of ice is used, twenty minutes will serve to freeze the cream.

The crank need not be turned constantly, and the motion at first should be rather slow. When it begins to harden, turn rapidly, as this is the stage when rapid beating makes the cream smooth and light.

When it is firm enough, take out the paddle, beat well with a wooden spoon or spatula to fill up the space made by the beater, and scrape well from the sides. Cover the tub with a blanket, and set away in a cool place, and let two hours at least elapse before serving. When ready to do so, dip the can in warm (not hot) water, wipe dry, and invert on a cold dish. It should come out in firm and perfect shape.

It is possible to have several varieties of cream in the same mould with only one freezing, and various combinations may be made to suit the individual taste.

After the vanilla cream is frozen, a portion may be taken out into a cold bowl, and one cupful of well-sweetened strawberry or raspberry juice stirred into it. Pour this back into the can, and it will soon harden to the proper consistency. A quarter of a cupful of strong coffee may be used in the same way. A banana or two may be sliced thin and added, and a little shredded pineapple gives a fine flavor. Ripe peaches, if cut up and sweetened, make a very nice addition; but they should not be added until about half an hour before serving-time, as they must only be chilled and not frozen.

A stern father in Kansas, with a large family of girls, has passed the cold edict that each bean who frequents his domicile through the winter must contribute a load of sawed stove-wood.

The Value of System.

"I hope if ever I go to heaven," was the irreverent exclamation of a literary woman the other day, "I will find plenty of blotting paper, if nothing else."

Then she plunged desperately into a pile of newspapers and magazines on the table for the offending blotter. "Charles Lamb knew what he meant when he wrote on the total depravity of inanimate objects," she continued, heaving a sigh of satisfaction on finding it at last in her upper drawer. "Of course," she concluded. "I might have known it was there—the world itself gets into that bureau drawer." But by that time the ink was dry.

A clever woman said the other day that a woman's notion of order was usually realized through a sort of a magpie fashion of grabbing up everything in sight and hiding it away where no one could find it.

A TESTIMONIAL BUREAU DRAWER.

There is no more reliable testator to woman's character than her upper bureau drawer, and her writing desk. If the former is a hodge-podge, a bewildering conglomeration of laces, veils, collars, feathers, gloves, powder rags and hair pins you may be sure she has the magpie habit. If her writing desk is a paper rack, a letter file, a bric-a-brac holder and a rallying point for everything from thread to the baby's medicine it is proof sufficient that she has not a systematic mind.

If the modern housekeeper would commit the problems left her to solve to her brains instead of her nerves and hands, she would be less often the victim of nervous prostration.

There is a difference between living to keep house and keeping house to live. The former is called housekeeping, the latter means homekeeping, and requires a never-ceasing fund of philosophy and originality. It even requires sometimes a bold breaking away from the domestic conventionalities that custom has dignified into the very classics of housekeeping. Fancy the iconoclastic tendencies of the little woman who dares to wash on Thursday, iron on Friday and sweep on Monday. The justifying reasons set forth by this domestic reformer were that the family conclave which usually occurred on Sunday was fatal in its results to the law and order regime, so she made a change in the programme to suit her individual necessity. Monday was general cleaning day instead of Friday with beneficial results. The laundry work coming at the last of the week left Saturday for mending and the usual baking. She had solved the problem and the nerve tension loosened at once.

ORDER IN THE NURSERY.

Some one said to the same little woman who was maternally responsible for five juvenile scions, "How do you manage to have them always in order every morning at breakfast when you have but one nursery maid?" A peep into the nursery every night at 8 o'clock would have furnished the answer. Five chairs in a row contained the attire of each of the five children. Part of the nursery maid's work came after the little ones were in bed. Thimble, thread, button box and shoe polish were on the table beside her, and each little garment was inspected, and each pair of shoes made ready for another day's campaign. Then each child's clothing was hung on its particular chair in order for each little active wearer to don.

The system employed precluded the necessity of the excitement and perplexity usually accompanying the child's toilet.

There is nearly always a remedy for every household perplexity, and a well-balanced mind can usually ferret it out if the same amount of attention which is devoted to other trifles is accorded it. There is a woman who promoted the comfort of her husband by hunting for his spectacles when he lost them. Finally she devised a plan which worked better than a search warrant, and her fame for ingenuity spread abroad through the country. She embroidered a banner with a pair of spectacles and the words "Here they are, Orson." A pocket in the banner was a receptacle for the constantly missing article and there he always found them.

"Where did baby come from, mamma?" asked Willie. "Heaven, my boy," said mamma. "It's a wonder his bones wasn't all broke. Did he fall clean through the clouds?"

The letter which Prince George of Greece has published regarding the attack upon the Czarewitch in Japan, in which he attributes cowardice to the Czarewitch, has given great offence in St. Petersburg.