

## THE HOUSEHOLD.

## WHAT CONSTITUTES A SALUBRIOUS HOUSE SITE?

Since the recent outbreak of completed elevations and ground-plans for rural homes has taken its way through the advertising columns of the leading newspapers and magazines, and especially as they are accompanied by most enticing estimates of low cost, the irrepressible longing of every man to have a separate and inviolable home that he can call his own is finding its response in houses situated in all the suburbs of our large cities, and on the principal streets of our small ones, which, whether they fulfill all the expectations of their owners or not, certainly afford many husbands and wives a charming season of mutual study and architectural planning; for there are few more fascinating occupations for man or woman than house-building, and especially is it a delight to the latter. She heroically resolves that whatever inconveniences and discomforts she has endured in her contracted hired 'apartment' shall now be abated; but one could wager fifty to one without fear of loss, that, in a majority of cases, she has not thought at all of the most important circumstance in connection with the new structure, the circumstances on which its value as a safe, healthful and enjoyable home for herself and her family depends.

If the lot which her husband has bought looks 'pretty,' and if the outlook from it on either side is charming, and if the neighbors seem to be agreeable, she looks no deeper and gives no thought to the nature of the soil, which has everything to do with the quality of the air that is to fill and surround the new habitation. The drier the air that is perpetually inhaled by a family, the stronger and more vigorous—other things being equal—will that family be. It is beginning to be very well understood by medical men that constantly living in a damp atmosphere works some obscure and subtle defect in the system, through which it is especially liable to yield to disease. Many extant treatises dwell upon the relation of soil-moisture to consumption; and though we know it now as a germ disease, we also know that thousands of persons, through their sound constitutions can and do withstand its onset; but alas for the person who has spent his days, and especially his nights, surrounded by an invisible moist envelop that has silently stolen his power of resistance.

The best soil, in a sanitary point of view, is a sandy or gravelly one, the worst, a soil that is underlaid by a stratum of hardpan, through which the moisture cannot percolate downward, but is kept, mingled with the damp earth, just where it fell from the skies, or where it has been brought by draining higher adjacent land 'Retentive' is the adjective generally given to such ground, and one can easily try an experiment that will closely imitate its behavior. Take a porous flower-pot of the ordinary red clay that will hold one quart, and place beside it a glazed earthen bowl that will hold just as much; put into each an exactly similar quantity of dried garden earth, and then pour in as much water as you can and not leave a 'pond' on the top. The first surprise is, to see how much water it requires to saturate the earth, demonstrating how much air-space there is in what we are accustomed to call the 'solid earth.' Soon the two receptacles present a very different appearance. Gradually the water that went into the porous pot vanishes; no one sees it go; but in a few days the earth is as dry as when the water was poured in, and one can lay a bit of paper on the top, and there it will remain unharmed and unchanged; but in the glazed bowl the earth will be found at this time a tenacious mud, and if a bit of delicate paper is laid on it, it will soon imbibe enough of the moisture to blister and warp it; and if you place the two vessels in a warm sunlight you will see no moisture rising from the porous pot, but a cloud of it goes up from the other. The moisture escaped from the pot through its pores, and by evaporation; but it couldn't get away through the glazed bowl, and only surface evaporation took any of it off. Exactly analogous actions take place in bodies of earth that are measured by the acre or the mile square.

If a house is built on soil that 'retains' all the moisture that comes to it, of course it stands in the midst of a cloud of evaporating water, which under a brilliant noonday sun may be imperceptible, and not till the cooling evening comes on does this moisture condense into a heavy dew; but it still enwraps the house and must be breathed by the inhabitants whether in its light, least harmless, noonday, most vaporized form, or at night, when condensed; and if the house happens to be on land infected with the bacillus of malaria, most likely the inmates will inhale those misery-breeding creatures.

There may be circumstances that will forbid the choice of a dry soil as a house-site; but here there is a cheap remedy that can be applied, and the more easily and completely if all the people in a given section will co-operate to dry out the ground. Modern intelligence has discovered methods of underdraining that are just as efficient in conveying away superfluous water from large tracts of land, as the pores of clay pot were in abstracting it from one quart of desiccated earth; and in applying this intelligence to drainage we are only returning to the wisdom of the men who by thorough underdraining made the Pontine Marshes—a pestilential stretch of the Campagna di Roma, eight miles in breadth and thirty miles in length, into a habitable region; and so rich was the soil that it attracted a large rural population. When the country was distracted by civil wars the drainage works were neglected, the Marshes again became a pestilential spot, which for hundreds of years has killed many an ignorant man who has attempted to work upon it; but its history could not be forgotten, and in the new day of science in which it is our happiness to live, the Italian Government has begun measures for again restoring it to usefulness, and has, better still, afforded substantial support to Italian investigators, who, from the very earth of Campana, have demonstrated the bacillus of malaria, and also the adaptation of quinine to its destruction.

It is easily seen, when we remember that miasmatic exhalations are attenuated and dispersed by the noonday sun and condensed into a thickly peopled layer at morning and evening, hovering above the ground for a greater or lesser altitude, how wise the old Italians were who perched their houses on high and dry knolls, and went forth—not at all in the 'early to rise' hour, but at one usually supposed to mark a sluggish—to labor in the fertile but miasmatic valleys, and returning before the 'bad hour,' as they call sunset, escaped an attack of fever and ague, and were able to work a few hours every day, instead of making one long one, and spending a number of subsequent ones quaking in ague chills. It is easy to see why it is better to sleep on the second floor than the first anywhere, but above all if one lives in a damp region. Perhaps the intending house builder groans in spirit at the prospect of having to pay out money for draining a house-site which has cost all that he dares abstract from his bank-account for it; but he must remember that of all 'permanent improvements' none can be so valuable as the one that will change a menace to the health of him and his into a salubrious spot, and that one attack of quartan, tertian, intermittent, remittent, paludal or malarial fever, or any synonym for fever and ague, will cost more, in time lost, doctor's bills, drugs and nursing—not to name the heavy price in suffering and in the undermining of the constitution—than the material and labor for the draining of a large tract. Col. Geo. B. Waring wrote a book twenty years ago giving minute directions for this work, with estimate of cost, surprisingly little; and in the Massachusetts Board of Health Reports for 1872, Mr. French, then of Concord, Mass., gave minute directions, with cost, of 'curing' a wet cellar if you have been obliged to inhabit an improperly built house with a wet cellar. But a woman can easily learn how to select or prepare the spot where her home is to be planted; it is no more unfeminine to inform one's self as to the quality of soil where the cellar is to be dug than to study the proper composition of the geranium bed, only in the one are to be reared the brief, bright blossoms of the passing year, and in the other are to live one's children; while to

grow up over dry soil and to have dry air to breathe will make all the difference between robust, joyous health and wearisome invalidism for the young persons concerned; for it is true that these malign influences that come from a damp soil are less mischievous in flames already built up and knit.

The woman who studies the matter up enough to understand where her house should be placed, will at the same time learn the proper methods of construction for a good cellar, so that an exhortation on this point would certainly be a work of supererogation.—*The Independent.*

## APPLE DAINTIES.

A favorite breakfast dish in many families is fried apples. Wipe the apples and cut in rounds, removing the cores. Put them in a frying-pan in which slices of salt pork have been fried. Let the apples brown on one side before turning, and keep as whole as possible. Serve on a platter, with the slices of pork placed in the centre. A tough apple is best for frying. If very sour, sprinkle a little sugar over the apples when on the platter.

A very nice dessert, and one that can be made early in the morning, or even the day before it is to be used, is an apple custard. It is so simple and delicate that an invalid may enjoy it. Stir together in a pan half a cupful of sugar, a piece of butter the size of a walnut, and one tablespoonful of corn starch that has been mixed smooth in a little cold water, pour over this mixture two cupfuls of boiling water, add the yolks of two eggs beaten light, and cook until thick. Remove from the range, and add three tablespoonfuls of stewed apples, mixing thoroughly through the custard; turn into a baking dish. Beat the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth with two tablespoonfuls of powdered sugar, add one spoonful of the stewed apples, and heap on top of the custard. Put in the oven until a light brown.

Among the pleasant memories of the past is one of a children's tea. It is easy to recall how beautiful the table looked, with its pretty china, glass, and silver; but the crowning glory in the eyes of the children gathered there was a large glass dish heaped high with apple snow. This is a pretty dish for any table, and requires little time or skill to prepare. Boil twelve tart apples in water until tender, scrape out the pulp, and beat until very light; add granulated sugar until pleasantly sweet. Beat the whites of ten eggs to a stiff froth, add the apples gradually, beat until well mixed and very light, and place in a glass dish.

Steamed apple dumplings when rightly made are delicious. The following recipe has been used many years without a failure: The proportions given will make half a dozen dumplings. A medium-sized apple should be selected. For the crust take one pint of flour, through which two tablespoonfuls of baking-powder have been thoroughly mixed, a tablespoonful of butter, and water enough to make a soft dough barely stiff enough to roll out; divide the dough into six equal parts, and roll each part large enough to enclose an apple, which has been peeled and had the core removed. Have ready a steamer in which a cloth well floured has been placed, put the dumplings in so they do not touch each other, fold the cloth over them, put on the steamer lid, and do not take it off again until the dumplings are done, which will be in an hour. The water under the steamer must not be allowed to stop boiling. A very nice sauce to serve with these dumplings is made of a cup of sugar, a piece of butter the size of an egg, the white of one egg, and two spoonfuls of cream beaten together until very light.

In a certain French settlement in the West the housewife would consider her weekly baking incomplete without an apple cake. This dainty is so toothsome that it should be more generally known. If the bread is baked at home it is easily made. Put aside one pound or a cup and a half of dough when the bread is being made into loaves. Into this dough work one tablespoonful of butter, one of sugar, and a cupful of chopped apples, shape into a flat cake about an inch thick, put in a pan to rise; when light, bake in a moderate oven. It should be nicely browned when done. It is sent to the table warm, broken, never cut; into small pieces.

Sweet apples make a delicious preserve,

and one that, with the addition of a pitcher of cream and a plate of sponge cake, will serve as a dessert for any except a formal dinner. The best results are obtained by making a small quantity of these preserves at one time and in the following manner: put a pint of water and a quarter of a pound of sugar into a saucepan; let it boil ten minutes; put in as many apples, peeled cored, and quartered, as the syrup will cover when it boils up. Simmer until tender. The apples will be transparent, and look very nice if taken up carefully.

Apple water is a very refreshing drink for the sick, and is made in two ways, either of which is good:

Apple water No. 1.—Peel, quarter, and core one pound of apples. Boil for half an hour in a quart of water; strain, add the juice of one lemon, sweeten to taste.

Apple water No. 2.—Roast thoroughly two or three apples; put them in a pitcher; turn on a pint of boiling water, and add a little sugar.—*Margaret Ryder, in Harper's Bazar.*

## OPEN THE WINDOWS.

To close up one's house in vault-like gloom, lest one's carpets and draperies shall fade, is the greatest folly. Carpets will not suffer from light if their colors are fast, or, at least, if they fade equally all over, they will be as pretty in the late state as in the first. Probably prettier, because less crude and glaring than as they left the loom. The carpet on which the sun's rays fall will be what every carpet should be, the background or the setting for the furniture not too good for daily use. A shut-up parlor is less often seen in these than in former days. We have learned the wisdom of living all over our homes, and we have discovered that the smallest child soon learns not to touch or molest articles which are merely to be looked at, while he plays happily in the beautiful room where his elders chat and his mother receives her friends.

## SORROW'S OFFER.

BY PATTERSON DU BOIS.

To him who murmurs that his days are sad  
Go whisper that in sadness there is sweetness  
For one who hath been altogether glad  
Is but half-made,—his poor life lacks completeness.

Sorrow hath value all its own for thee;  
Make loss possession,—giving is receiving.  
Alas for him who is too blind to see  
That there is something more in grief than grieving!

## AN AUTUMN BREAKFAST.

Young housekeepers are apt to be perplexed at times as to the ordering of the meals, writes Juliet Corson in a helpful article on 'The Routine of the Household' in the October *Ladies' Home Journal*. It is for them, and for other housekeepers as well, that the following receipts are given.

The breakfast may include:

Mackerel with *Maitre d'Hotel* Butter  
Potatoes stewed with Cream  
Hot Egg Bannock  
French Breakfast Coffee

While the fire is burning begin the preparations for breakfast by heating coffee, roasted in the bean, with just enough sweet butter to make it glossy—a piece as large as a coffee-bean is enough for each tablespoonful, four tablespoonfuls, as ordinarily ground, for each quart of water. After the coffee is put to heat make the bannock, and when that is in the oven grind the coffee; put it in the coffee-pot with a pint of cold water and let it gradually reach the boiling point; lift it from the fire for a moment to check the heat, and then replace it and let it just reach the boiling point several times. Meantime boil a pint of milk; the hot milk and the coffee are to be poured simultaneously into the cups.

The egg bannock is made by sifting together a cupful of flour, an even teaspoonful of salt, a saltspoonful of white pepper, and a heaping teaspoonful of baking-powder; beat three eggs to a froth; stir them into the flour, and then stir in about a half pint of milk, enough to make a batter thick enough to support a drop let fall from the mixing-spoon; pour this batter into a buttered spider, cover it with a buttered tin cover or pie-plate, and bake it over a gentle fire, shaking the pan and adding a little butter if the bannock sticks; when it is light-brown on the bottom slip it off on the cover and return the uncooked side to the pan; when both sides are brown it will be ready.

After the bannock is put over the fire lay a large salt mackerel, skin up, in a pan of cold water over the fire; as often as the water heats replace it with cold, changing it until the fish is fresh enough; meantime squeeze the juice of a lemon and chop a tablespoonful of parsley fine, or soak some dried parsley, and mix them with a heaping tablespoonful of butter, and after the mackerel is drained spread this butter over it and serve it on a hot dish. When the fish has been put on, peel and chop some cold boiled potatoes, put them over the fire with enough milk to cover them, salt, pepper and butter to taste, and heat them, stirring often, until the other dishes are ready.