

## About the House.

### PUSSY WILLOW.

In her dress of silver gray  
Comes the pussy willow gay—  
Like a little Eskimo,  
Clad in fur from tip to toe.  
Underneath her in the river  
Flows the water with a shiver;  
Downward sweeping from the hill  
North Wind whistles loud and shrill.

Birds are loth to wing their flight  
To a land in such a plight,  
Not another flower is found  
Peeping from the bark or ground.  
Only Mother Willow knows  
How to make such suits as those;  
How to fashion them with skill,  
How to guard against the chill.

Did she live once, long ago,  
In a land of ice and snow?  
Was it first by Polar seas  
That she made such coats as these?  
Who can tell? We only know  
Where our pussy willows grow,  
Fuzzy little friends that bring  
Promise of the coming spring.

### SOME HOMELY HELPS.

Flour should always be kept in a cool, dry place.

Rice has a finer flavor if washed in hot water instead of cold, before cooking.

The smaller a roast of meat, the hotter should be the oven at first, that the least possible amount of its delicate juice may escape.

The small paper bags that fine groceries come in are a better protection to the hand than the gloves made purposely for blacking stoves.

A neatly covered board, broader at one end than the other can be easily put through the sleeves of wash shirt waists, is a decided help in ironing.

Canned vegetables, like canned fruit, are improved in flavor by standing open two or more hours, to restore the oxygen that was eliminated in cooking.

A small, strong table, with castors, that can be run back and forth between kitchen and parlor, saves innumerable steps and any amount of time and patience.

The best granite ware or other metal coffee-pot will acquire a rank flavor if it is not occasionally purified with borax, ammonia or some other cleansing agent.

In making bread, rub a little sweet lard or other fat over the top as often as it is kneaded, and it will not only rise more quickly, but have a soft delicious crust when baked.

Bread crumbs for covering the top of scalloped and other baked dishes, should be buttered evenly before they are spread, not put on plain, with bits of butter scattered over.

Salt is the best cleaner of silver and metal spoons, which have been badly stained with egg. Carpets strewn with coarse salt before sweeping give out but a minimum of dust.

If rice is not disturbed during the process of boiling, the berries will be whole, dry and easily digested. A few drops of lemon juice added to the water will make it whiter and finer flavored.

Bread should never be covered, with a cloth when taken from the oven, but laid on the side and allowed to become perfectly cold; then keep in a closely-covered tin box, without any wrappings.

Where iron utensils are used in kitchens but are not in daily requisition, they are apt to become rusty. To avoid this, mix together some pounded starch, bicarbonate of soda, and water, so as to produce a thickish paste. Spread this over the utensils, and, when wanted, rinse them with lukewarm water.

To remove fly specks from gilt frames, etc., take a little alcohol in a saucer, and add to this a few drops of sal ammoniac, shake the mixture or stir it well, and apply it with a small camel's hair brush; after about five minutes rinse with a larger brush dipped in soft water, and let the frames dry, without wiping them, in an airy place or at a small distance from the fire; this will not stain the gilding. This is also the best remedy for bronze statues, chandeliers, and lamps, but in this case the application should be rinsed off with lukewarm water, and the bronze polished softly with a leather or an old silk rag. It is hardly necessary to add that plate-glass and mirrors may easily be cleaned by a mixture of whiting and alcohol.

To clean old sponges, boil them for three or four hours in water enough to cover them, containing a couple of tablespoonfuls of carbonate of soda, or in water mixed with a couple of handfuls of wood ashes, this to remove all the greasy matter the sponges may contain; then rinse them thoroughly, squeezing them well in several lots of clean, cold water. After this preliminary operation soak the sponges in the quantity of water, suiting the whole amount to the size of the sponge, but keeping the same proportions. After twenty-four hours let the tap run on to the sponge for some time, then rinse with the hands until all smell of the acid has disappeared. Hang the sponges up to dry over a hot stove, and, when this has been satisfactorily accomplished the sponge will be almost as good as new.

### SWEET PEAS.

Sweet peas will grow anywhere, but will give best results on clay soil. A good method is to select your bed the

previous fall, enrich with thoroughly rotten manure and spade deeply; this will leave ground in nice shape for early spring planting. Do not spade ground in spring, as a stiff, firm soil is best. Never use fresh manure. Early in spring, the earlier the better, sow your seed in double rows about ten inches apart. Hollow out drills, so they will be about two or three inches deep in stiff clay, or four or five inches deep in light, loose soil, firm soil in the trench with the foot; this is important; on this sow your seed twice as thick as you want them to stand in row to be sure of a full stand; cover seed about two inches deep and firm soil. Do not hill up, as it is better to have a slight depression so as to catch most of the water after rains. Thin plants to two inches apart before they commence to vine. Hoe only shallow between plants. For support use poultry wire or brush. For a long season of bloom, mulch and water in dry weather, and pluck flowers freely as they soon stop blooming if you let seed form.

### DIGESTIBLE GOODIES.

Children's dessert need never be rich or unwholesome if but a little care as to its appearance is exercised in the making. Very few mothers nowadays concern themselves about the little things for their tiny pleasures. Who makes gingerbread men and horses to-day; or seed cake dogs—or baskets with which little girls toy delicately, only consenting to eat them when the tender handle at last breaks off. Bakery stuff is too easily procured, too cheap and too tempting. It will not nourish or satisfy but it distracts the appetite when injudiciously doled out between meals, and is more easily dispensed than a piece of good bread and butter.

Gingerbread, if well made, is no menace to a child's health, and will afford a great pleasure.

Gingerbread horses and fat doughnut men were dear to our mothers when they were little, and here is a recipe for them that has stood the test of a century: Put a pint of molasses and half pound melted drippings or butter in a bowl and stir until they are well blended. Add half a pint of sour milk and stir in well. Then dissolve a level tablespoonful of soda in half a gill of hot water and stir it through the mixture. Next add ginger to taste, a tablespoonful usually a teaspoonful of cloves, and the rind grated from one lemon. Stir in flour to make a stiff dough. Roll it out on the molding board quite thin. Cut out the horses in freehand, with special attention paid to flowing mane and tail, and lay them carefully far apart in a well floured tin. Bake in a moderate oven. The doughnut gentleman can be cut out of any roller or doughnut dough. He may have expressive eyes given him of Zante currants, and a speaking mouth curved like Cupid's bow out of a bit of red pepper, or in an emergency a thread of red yarn, and then laid carefully in a kettle of boiling fat to expand and develop into aldermanic proportions.

### QUEER TRADES FOR WOMEN.

The "dinner taster" is the latest example of the "ultra" type of Parisian refinement. The Parisian palate, you know, is the one thing worth living for, according to the idea of a certain class of people, whose pleasure in life depends upon the enjoyment of the senses.

The "dinner taster" makes it her business to visit the fine houses and taste the dishes intended for dinner. She suggests improvements, and shows the cook new ways of preparing dishes. That the business is a profitable one, may be judged by the fact that she invariably rides in a cab.

In the east end of London a lucrative trade is followed by some score or so of women. The pawnbrokers there are very numerous, and never lack for clients. Among the latter, however, are some who do not relish the idea of being brought into personal contact with "uncle."

It is for the special benefit of these that the pawnbroker's agent exists. She goes several times a day to the pawnshop, with articles belonging to the bashful ones, for whom she gets the highest sum procurable on the items pledged.

For her services she receives a percentage on the amount obtained. Another enterprising London woman has hit on a capital, although probably painful, business. She earns a profitable living by "breaking in" boots for members of the upper circles. She wears them for a few days, until they become easy and comfortable to their owners.

She works hard, seeing that she sometimes wears 36 different pairs in a week; 60 cents is the professional fee.

### RICHES OR PRISON WAIT FOR HIM.

Manager—Does it take you an hour to go around the corner, sir?

Office boy—Please, sir, a man dropped a half a dollar in the gutter.

Manager—And it took you all this time to get it out?

Office boy—Please, sir, I had to wait till the man had gone away.

The manager concluded the lad was, if anything, too sharp.

### THE LIMIT.

Young Mooncalf—Do you know, Miss Wooty, that—aw—that I've been weeding a great deal recently and I've hawf a mind—aw—hawf a mind—

Miss Wooty—Never mind repeating it, Mr. Mooncalf; it's far above the popular estimate, but I'll concede you that much.

## Young Folks.

### FIVE LITTLE CHICKENS.

Said the first little chicken,  
With a queer little squirm,  
"Oh, I wish I could find  
A fat little worm!"

Said the next little chicken,  
With an odd little shrug,  
"Oh, I wish I could find  
A fat little bug!"

Said the third little chicken,  
With a sharp little squeal,  
"Oh, I wish I could find  
Some nice yellow meal!"

Said the fourth little chicken,  
With a little sigh of grief  
"Oh, I wish I could find  
A green little leaf!"

Said the fifth little chicken,  
With a faint little moan,  
"Oh, I wish I could find  
A wee gravel stone!"

"Now, see here," said the mother  
From the green garden patch,  
"If you want any breakfast  
You just come and scratch."

### GAMES.

A Clever Trick With Dominoes.—One person brings forward a set of dominoes from which he has already extracted one. This he keeps out of sight, but knows what it is. It must not be a double, however. He then tosses all the dominoes but this one on the table and stirs them around and tells the company that they may place these all in line in any way they like, only that the numbers must follow each other in proper sequence, and that before they do it he will tell them what numbers will come out at both ends. This seems impossible, but it is quite true. The domino in his pocket will have the two numbers upon it, like five and four, or six and one. No matter what it is, the numbers on the two ends of the line will be the same as those he holds. If they wish, and they generally do, to see this done over again, that domino should be secretly mingled with the others and another one taken. This calls for adept management. No one misses the one domino from the others.

The Peanut Hunt.—This beautiful game reminds one of the English sports so universally played at holiday times. A peanut hunt can be made a frolic to any number of little tots. Previous to the arrival of the children these nuts are hidden all over the house or in rooms or halls alone selected by the hostess, the object being to afford as much merriment as possible. The more difficult the hiding the better the scheme, in all sorts of out of the way places, such as in the leaves of a big palm, in the folds of the curtains, care being taken that, if the game is one in which very small children are in question, the hiding place should be one within reach. After the guests are assembled, a signal is given, and they start on the hunt. At the expiration of the time a second signal recalls them to the place of meeting, and scores are compared, and the child who has the greatest number of peanuts is pronounced the winner, and is awarded the prize.

### A RAINBOW PARTY.

For a rainbow party, bright colors should be used lavishly in decorating the room. Tissue paper of different hues makes effective shades for the lights, while the gayer and more varied the decorations, the better. Pieces of ribbons should be obtained of the different colors named below, or as near them as possible. These streamers may be either suspended in one cluster from the center of the room or scattered about at various points. Each piece of ribbon has a number either pinned to it on a piece of paper, or, better painted on the ribbon itself with gold paint.

As each guest enters he is given a little book and pencil. The covers for these books may be made of water-color paper, with the words, "Rainbow Party," and the date printed on them with bright paints. Within each booklet are the descriptions of different colors, which are to be matched with the numbered ribbons. When the guest determines what color is meant by a description, he finds the ribbon which matches it, puts the number against the description and the name of the color after it.

The descriptions of the colors as they are written in the booklets for the guests are given below: List—A letter and to be without, black, a church official, cardinal, what the wind did, blue, a fur-bearing animal, seal, fear and a cottager, terracotta, a mouth, a man and an exclamation, magenta, a drink, wine, a proposition, and a name for a Spaniard, indigo; indigo, a crying child, yellow; yellor, a boy's nickname and a preposition, lemon, a command to travel, orange, pride of our nation, navy, a musical instrument, and a Latin contraction violet, to leave on a lonely island, Maroon, upright, plum, a letter, the edge and a descendant, crimson, a fish and what caught it, garnet, a grassy plain, green, a mark and to rent, scarlet, a vehicle and a country, carnation, what a horse cannot do and what he can, purple, part of the face and a letter, brown, a letter is tardy, slate, labyrinth, maize, a vehicle and a hole in the ground, carmine, a large body of land, azure, a falsehood and an insufficiency, lilac, what you did this morning, rose, a fish, salmon, what you have just done, red, a letter and a sunbeam, gray, a command to exist, olive,

a company of sailors, ceru; a crew, an address to a dog, ochre; our.

The supper table is effective if decorated with the rainbow colors. First cover the table with a white cloth, and on it arrange ribbons of the seven colors, violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. Bring the ends of the ribbons together at the center of the table and let them radiate from that point to the circumference, like the spokes of a wheel. The pot of gold supposed to be found at the end of the rainbow may be represented by a basket of yellow flowers in the center of the table.

### LITTLE DEEDS OF KINDNESS.

It is a fine gift to be quick and bright in understanding things. But it is far more important to be kind-hearted and gentle. When you girls go out in the world no one will ask or know whether you got good grades in algebra and Latin. If you have done your best, it is wrought into you whether your best is very good or only mediocre. But be sure of this, every one who meets you will know without putting you through an examination whether you are a gentlewoman or not. It isn't practical to quote Greek or discuss psychology or read Shakespeare with every one you meet, but you can always speak kindly and listen courteously, and quietly look out for the opportunity to do the little deeds of kindness that make our lives so much more worth living.

### UNEASY LIES THE HEAD.

An Incident in the Life of the Czar of Russia.

His Imperial Highness, the Czar of all the Russias, and the would be peace Czar of all the world, was seated at the imperial breakfast table. Opposite him stood the family analyst.

"Have you examined the oatmeal?" inquired the Czar.

"I have, your Highness."

"And you found nothing?"

"Nothing, your Highness."

"And the cream contains neither arsenic nor strychnine?"

"No, your Highness. I took particular care of the cream."

"Those radish are not painted red with a poison?"

"No, your Highness. It is nature's own coloring."

"You are sure the sugar is not ground glass?"

"Yes, your Highness."

"And the salt?"

"Genuine, your Highness; absolutely pure."

"Then, to eat," exclaimed the Imperial personage, as he flooded the oatmeal with cream, built an island of sugar in it, and bit the tip from a radish.

He had taken but one mouthful of the food when a crash occurred that shook the lamp suspended by a wire over the royal board.

The Czar slid under the Imperial table and the Imperial chemist ducked behind a china cabinet.

"Great heavens!" cried the imperial voice, "they're at it again. I shall see to it personally that every anarchist in Russia is pulled to pieces before the week is out. Go forth, sirrah, and learn which wing of the royal domicile has been blown up this time."

Sirrah, otherwise the chemist, went and soon returned. "There has been no damage," he reported, "tho' the police are even now looking for the dastard."

After finishing his meal the czar retired to his iron-clad chamber and barring the door awaited the official statement of the police. Frequently a member of the imperial household would come to his door and yell a few words to him through the key-hole.

Toward evening the czar ventured out. He was met in the "sitting room" by his chief of police.

"You have learned?" hissed the czar.

"We have," was the quiet reply of the anarchist sleuth.

"What?" the czar laid his hand on the man's arm.

"That it was the tire on the rear wheel of the imperial bicycle that exploded while your Imperial Highness was at breakfast this morning."

No longer able to stand the strain, the czar of all the Russias fainted in the sheer excess of his emotion.

### WHERE SOLDIERS MUST SWIM.

In the Dutch army a man must be able to swim as well as to fight. Moreover, if he is in the cavalry he must have a horse which will take a river as easily as a hunter takes a fence. Swimming maneuvers are part of the regular drill there. Collapsible canvas boats, manned by a few oarsmen, lead the horses, so that they do not attempt to land on stone quays and other difficult points. The men swim across with their horses and on them. They do it in swimming costume and in all the accoutrements of war. There are few nautical emergencies for which the Dutch army is not prepared. Some of the officers have even reached a degree of proficiency that not only their horses and kit cross the river with them, but their pet dogs sit upon their shoulders and are borne over, almost without getting wet.

### EVIDENCE.

Mrs. Witherby—They say that a husband and wife grow to look like each other more and more all the time.

Witherby—I have noticed how handsome we were getting to be.

## HINTS FOR THE FARMER.

### PROFIT IN BEES.

Bees may be profitably kept as a side issue on the farm, and will pay as good a profit according to the capital invested as anything else, writes Mr. A. H. Duff. There is scarcely any time lost in caring for a few colonies of bees, for the most of the work can be done at leisure hours. It is true that at times they demand our attention at once as in case of swarming, but this is only a rare occurrence and no one but enjoys the sport and excitement in having a swarm of bees and consider themselves well paid for the time it takes.

To make the bees most profitable we do not want many swarms and we can, to a great extent, keep them from swarming by furnishing them plenty of room, to store honey. Farmers frequently make mistakes in this most particular of all things in not giving the bees enough surplus capacity. A good working colony of bees should have fully as large surplus storage capacity as they have in the brood chamber, and they are liable to fill this two or three times if the season is a good one.

Every one having bees should supply themselves with the necessary fixings for taking care of them. They need a few hives of the standard pattern, and also supers supplied with honey boxes and foundation starters to fit out all the hofey boxes and the frames of the different hives, and thus have them all in readiness for the bees just at the moment they are ready for them. No one should be without a good bee smoker, and if they are fearful of getting stings, they may add a bee veil, and a pair of rubber gloves. It is no trouble to handle bees if we once learn how to do it.

Greatly to our benefit we can have a honey extractor, and increase our crop of interesting, and I shall say the most profitable of all things connected with bee-keeping. It is the most simple and most easy way to get honey from the hives, and the most convenient way to keep and use honey. If the honey is well ripened when taken out of the combs it will keep any where any length of time and improve with age. One colony of bees properly handled will easily pay for an extractor in a single season.

### HARDWOOD ASHES.

It would probably be hard to find a commercial fertilizer of much greater worth for dry upland soil than pure and simple unleached hardwood ashes. A bushel of this home fertilizer is worth more than a bushel of oats to any farmer, and yet how often do we see it dumped as a heap of worthless refuse to leach in the rain and part with its hidden value until it becomes worthless.

Our lands as a general thing have become deficient in potash. This is one of the main sources of fertility that have become exhausted. It is good for potatoes, and clover cannot thrive without it. Try a little experiment this spring. You have burnt wood during the winter, store your ashes where they will keep dry, and sow them on your young clover as you would plaster. You will be agreeably astonished at the result. You will find many dollars added to your product. Nor is the effect gone with the first crop, as is often the case with commercial fertilizers. It lasts for years, and its benefits are often extended to many succeeding crops.

### PREVENTING SWINE DISEASE.

The only true and possible way to prevent hog cholera is to treat the animals as clean, healthy, meat producing creatures, and not as filthy vermin. It is strange that we never go into the habit of treating the hog in such a slovenly manner. We know now that most contagious diseases are bred on filth. That is why we have had hog cholera in this country. The old fashioned way was to let the hog wallow in a narrow pen in its own filth, and then, without giving it room for exercise, feed it heat producing food. The fact is the swine prefer clean pens or lots to dirty ones, and they like to wallow in good, clean soil in preference to their own filth. This is a method of cleaning themselves. Give it more room, clean out its pens regularly, and let it have earth to wallow in and it will be the cleanest looking animal on the farm. Then give it pure water instead of dirty water. The animals prefer clean water every time, and will drink it when they won't touch the dirty mess found in so many pigpens.

### THE HULL OF OATS.

All who have fed oats know that there is the greatest difference in their feeding qualities. It is largely dependent on the character of the hull. It has been thought that black hulled oats had not only a greater amount of hull, but that it was also coarser and rougher than white hulled oats. But there are some comparatively new varieties with white hulls that are as coarse and rough as barley hulls. Most new kinds of oats originate in cold or at least cool climates. If they are also moist, as Ireland and Scotland are, the hulls will be large but not rough. The roughest hulled oats have their origin in Norway, Sweden and Russia.