



Household Chats.

Questions, replies and communications on all topics of interest and benefit to our housekeepers, whether relating to home adornment or the well-being of the household, are cordially invited.

By-the-Way.

The addition of a little sugar to the water in which peas, beans, corn, beets, and other similar vegetables are cooked, is often a great improvement; and there is scarcely any variety of squash which is not given a richer flavor by adding a "pinch" of sugar as well as salt in seasoning it for the table.

There is a certain little family living in one of our city suburbs from which a great many pleasant suggestions may be caught. It is a very happy family, rich in contentment; the father is a mechanic, the mother a genuine homemaker, and the children "little helpers," in every sense of the term. Here is one of their ways: All summer long, in their rambles, they gather the cones of pine and spruce, bits of bark, etc., which come in their paths, and save nutshells and acorns and dried orange peels, all for the sake of a cheery fire in the open grate when winter shall come. "You've no idea how prettily such things burn," the little homemaker says, "and the zest of making the collection adds to the children's pleasure through their vacation."

This same wise mother makes a suggestion in regard to the outings of grown folks. "If I were asked to name something absolutely indispensable to the enjoyment of a vacation trip, I should say a pair of comfortable shoes. If you are going to the beach for a week, or to the park for a day's outing, be very sure to wear shoes that are thoroughly "broken-in." You can't take comfort in very new ones, for even if not tight they will "draw;" and aching feet will make any one ill-tempered. In this way the pleasure of the little folks will be spoiled, and the day will be out of joint generally. I had to learn this bit of wisdom by experience, but (with a merry laugh) you may have it for nothing."

At times of vacations, or the season, it is well to remember that a piece of gum camphor as large as a nutmeg evaporated in one's sleeping room before retiring will go far towards banishing the discomfort caused by mosquitoes. In ordinary cases it is unailing in its results. Place the gum on a fire-shovel or large iron spoon and hold it over a lamp to be slowly consumed.

One little party of clubbish excursionists are greatly interested in making photographs of different leaves which they find in their woodland rambles. The method is very easy: make a solution of a few cents' worth of bi-chromate of potash, pour some of the liquid into a shallow dish large

enough to allow floating a piece of note-paper which will take the leaf, and when the paper is well moistened remove it and place in the dark to dry. It should be of a bright yellow color. Upon this place the leaf or fern—whatever it is desired to photograph—putting under it a piece of soft black cloth and several thicknesses of newspaper. Place the hole between two pieces of window-glass, securing them together with spring clothespins or other clamps at the edges, and expose where rays of bright, hot sunlight will fall upon it vertically. It soon begins to grow brown, and in two or three hours—or so soon as a perfect, dark impression is formed—the paper is removed from its frame and placed in clear water, the latter being changed every five or ten minutes until the paper becomes perfectly white. If rightly done, the shape, veins and markings of the leaf are perfect. The making of a scrap-book, upon one page of which a leaf photograph is mounted, while the opposite page contains a short description of the tree or plant on which it grew, would be enjoyed by older students, as well as the little band referred to.

And here is yet another suggestion which may be acted upon at pleasure, from the household memoranda of the home-mother above referred to. "In every kitchen (she says) paper bags and wrappers are prone to accumulate. Those which are clean and fresh it is often well to reserve for other use, but one cannot begin to utilize half which come in; so I have a box in our wood-bin into which I throw all such papers, tightly twisted, and when I want a little fire, just enough to heat the water for tea or warm a bit of bask, I light three or four of these twists. Such a fire throws out no heat, saves oil, if only a little, and gives one the satisfaction of using up waste material."

Here, too, are some suggestions from a house-keeper, who joins our circle with a budget of

Hints on Canning.

As this is the "canning season," perhaps a description of my method of putting up fruits and berries may be helpful to any who have become discouraged by being unsuccessful with their canning. If I have many cans to put up, at once I use a common wash-boiler, which has a board with holes in it fitted to the bottom; but if only a few I take my large kettle, having a flat steamer in the bottom, doing four or five jars very easily. I fill the jars just as full as can be without crushing the fruit or berries, which should be perfectly ripe, putting in the sugar with them, one cupful of sugar to a quart jar of fruit is a good average rule, peaches and blueberries not requiring quite so much, and cranberries, currants, and other particularly sour fruits a little more. Place the jars, when filled, in the boiler with cool water, letting them remain over the fire until the fruit is boiling; then take them out, one at a time, run a knife-blade all around the inside of the jar to allow any bubbles of air to come

to the surface, fill the jar to overflowing with boiling hot water, clap on the rubber and cap, and your work is done. I always stand the jars on their heads to test them, as sometimes the rubbers become hard or the caps bent in opening, thus causing leakage. It is always wisest to have new rubbers, as they are so inexpensive, particularly where one has any doubt of their ability to make the jar "air-tight;" and care should be taken that the caps are not injured by careless handling or opening of jars. Should a cap refuse to come off easily, a cloth dipped in boiling water and placed on it in several thicknesses will remove the difficulty.

Now, while we are doing this work we need some protectors for our dress-sleeves. Take a pair of your husband's old cotton hose, cut the feet off, and draw the legs on over your sleeves; I think you will like them so well you will never make any of calico again.—

Helps for the Housekeeper.

When one is doing her work alone, or with little help, especially with "farm-hands" to provide food for, it is always pleasant to feel a little ahead of time. Vegetables for dinner are all the better if prepared for cooking an hour or two before use. Potatoes, parsnips, carrots, etc., should be scraped or pared, as the case may be, and covered with cold water; and this may be done in any spare time during the forenoon. "Top" or leaf plants, such as celery, lettuce, cabbage, etc., should not be entirely immersed in water; after washing them clean, set the roots or lower parts in a vessel of cold water, sprinkle the tops, and place in the refrigerator, or other cool spot, until wanted. Peas, beans, green corn, etc., are improved by the same process—of sprinkling with cold water and putting away in a dark, cool place, especially if purchased at a market. City people are often compelled to use vegetables which they who can pick or pull them fresh from their own gardens would not think of eating.

Moths are very troublesome at this season. The little white millers, which cause all the difficulty, should be watched for and killed whenever possible. It is extremely hard to catch them "on the wing," but they light quickly, and by watching until they do one is nearly always successful. Another thing, many people put off storing furs and blankets until the mischief is done. Not long ago I heard a lady say, "There, I must put my muff and box in the cedar chest; I saw two or three moth-millers in my closet to-day." I wondered if she knew that it is not the miller which eats the fur, but the larva which hatches from the eggs laid by the miller, and that if the eggs have been deposited no amount of "cure" will do the good that a single ounce of "prevention" would have done. The millers should be kept out of garments and furs by packing them away early; how ever, here is a hint which may benefit the dilatory ones: Prepare a large barrel by papering inside, after having first "clinched" or driven out all the nails which might catch garments, around the upper edge place a row of hooks, and have a tight-fitting cover with a cleat on top to lift it by. In this barrel hang all articles which you have reason to believe may be infested by larvae or eggs, and in the bottom place an unstoppered vial of chloroform, which should be refilled so soon as all evaporated. In this way all insect life will be exterminated. A larger receptacle may be prepared in the same way, and garments kept in it which may be used during the