

THE HOUSEHOLD.

THE EVOLUTION OF MRS. THOMAS.

BY MRS. MARY H. FIELD.

(Continued.)

Mary brought home the Green's History, as she promised, but ere many days elapsed she and her father had a whispered consultation, and a copy was ordered from San Francisco, which in due time arrived and was formally presented to our Chautauquan. Mrs. Thomas had thought when she was young that she did not like history. Its cruelties and barbarisms shocked her gentle heart. It seemed to her that it was simply a record of man's fierce greed and selfishness, with scarcely a gleam of noble feeling to redeem it.

"Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne."

So she had almost utterly neglected it in her limited school days, and since then she had really never opened an historical book. It had not been an alluring prospect to her, therefore, to see a history as the very first book she was to read in her new course; still she was glad that the Pacific Coast Chautauquans were behind their Eastern class-mates, and so were doing the reading which had been done at the East a year previous. This year the eastern class were reading Roman history, and Mrs. Thomas was sure that would be far more trying than English history. It did not seem as if the English were such wholesale butchers on principle. So our heroine fell resolutely to work. She did not see at first just where she was to find the required forty minutes for her daily reading. It seemed as if she never had a spare moment, and a leisure hour was just a figure of speech to the busy house-mother; but the time must be found, if not in one entire period then in odd minutes.

There was usually a little time for sitting down in the afternoon, after the dinner work was cleared away, which had been wholly given to sewing. Out of this Mrs. Thomas tried to get her Chautauqua hour, but often there would be interruptions, or some stress of work, so that the reading was put off till evening. Often there would be too much sociability in the evening to admit of much concentrated attention, but she persevered. The long-unused mental faculties were a little rusty, of course, and names and dates were more easily forgotten than learned; but she did not give up. Ere long she began to reap her reward. She had not read fifty pages in Green's History before she became so interested she could scarcely lay her book down. No romance could have charmed her so much. She found herself looking at history in an entirely new light; no longer was it the story of one tyrant succeeding another by virtue of wielding a strong battle-ax or using baser perfidy, but, instead, the record of the slow but steady uplifting of a great people. Mrs. Thomas found herself thinking of it as she went about her daily round of housework. Much of her cooking and clearing away she had done so often that it was almost a mechanical process, and now she found great advantage in the perfect familiarity with her duties. She cooked and washed dishes and swept and dusted in California, but her heart was far off in "Merrie England," with her ancestors of one thousand years ago. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh and it followed very naturally that at the table or by the evening fire-side she would open a conversation with the novel preface, "I have been reading," and then tell the children of the way in which the English people grew through fierce struggles, lighted by heroic deeds and lives. Even Albert and Mary had not read much English history, and they soon grew to depend on these intelligent bits of talk. The end of it was that the mother read with redoubled interest for the sake of telling it to her children, and thereby fastened the story in her own mind. The whole family grew interested. When the mother took up her book in the evening, if there was not the greatest need of other study, she was besieged to read aloud, and then, when she had read awhile, Albert or Mary would take a turn at reading, and the father listened to it with as keen zest as if he, too, were a Chautauquan.

Did the mending-basket heap up and overflow upon the shelves and into draw-

ers? Not to any distressing degree. The daughters of the house nobly redeemed their promise. When Mrs. Thomas read aloud in the evening they plied their needles, if not with their mother's speed and dexterity, at least with very passable results, and every Saturday morning saw two extremely energetic young ladies take hold of sweeping, cleaning, baking and cooking of all sorts. They had always been good girls to help, but now they felt pledged to see their mother through with her undertaking. She often looked at them through happy, grateful tears as they merrily drove her out of the kitchen and declared it was her school-time and she must not be tardy. Mary had a great knack also in the management of that most untractable being—the small boy. In the Thomas household each boy had an ostensible amount of "chores" to do, but it by no means followed that he did them day by day of his own free will and choice. On the contrary, it was a notorious fact that it took far more energy on the part of some older member of the family to look after these boys and get the work out of them than to do it one's self. Mr. Thomas was not particularly successful as an overseer, and Mrs. Thomas had a way of doing altogether too many of these "chores" herself; but Mary was blessed with a sort of cheerful and contagious energy, which, when backed by the mother's and father's authority, was quite successful. She put it to good use now, and every morning she devoted a few moments to "cheering her hand," like Marco Bozzaris. Wood-boxes were filled, steps were cleaned, the yard put in order, balls and tops, stilts and traps, cages and machines all picked up. "You know mother has got to have a little time for her readings, boys, and we must help her or she'll never get it in this world!" urged Captain Molly.

Thus a sweet spirit of helpfulness spread in the household, blessing both giver and receiver with a heavenly benediction.

By the time our heroine had finished Green's History the "Chautauqua idea" had taken root in the minds of all the Thomas household. From the reticent and undemonstrative head of the family down to the obstreperous little Dick, all held their mother's new departure in tacit or outspoken approval. Mr. Thomas was a man of sterling worth if he was a little oblivious to things present. No one thought more highly than he of education. He was as ambitious for his children as every other true Yankee, but he had come from his Green Mountain home to California at an early day, and after ten years of unsuccessful mining experience had settled down to his business of accountant, content to let other men do the speculating and roving about. He was quite a bachelor when he first met Mary Rivers, and she was a good many years his junior, but they were speedily married, and he had always been of one opinion regarding her—that she was the best and "smartest" of women. Very naturally he had grown to think book-knowledge of not much consequence to a woman. Could any amount of such learning make his wife any better mother or housekeeper? Impossible. Yet when he saw her now quietly bending her energies to self-culture, with a fixed determination to bring herself to a higher intellectual level, he secretly resolved to help her all in his power. It was not his way to put his thoughts into words, but the whole family recognized his attitude and his good wife was infinitely encouraged by it.

They were all quite enthusiastic over each new Chautauqua book. Even little Dick enjoyed Old Greek Life. A very few words of explanation enabled him to get an understanding of old customs and ideas which made his conversation for a few days seem quite classical to his small boy friends. One of his teachers overheard him discoursing about the Olympian games, out on the school playground, and remarked afterward to Albert: "That is a bright little brother of yours. He shows that he comes from an intelligent home," and Albert felt not a little pleased and complimented. Indeed, the whole family almost unconsciously began to feel that they were an exceptionally literary and intellectual household, so much did the home reading help on school work. Some fact in history, a great epoch or revolution, would be read about and talked over at the table or fire-side, and within a day or two an allusion

to the same subject would appear in a reading or geography lesson at school, and a teacher's question would follow, which would bring a prompt response from some member of the Thomas family. They all had a fair record at school before, but now their reputation began to grow rapidly. Albert had graduated at the high school and was now taking a year's course at a commercial college, while Mary was almost ready for the Normal; so both of them had essays to write requiring considerable general information, and it was both delightful and rewarding to their mother to have them begin to call upon her for help. With a happy heart she carried her Chautauqua text-books into the kitchen and stole many a glance into them as she watched her oven or had a moment's respite from housework. When she sat down to her afternoon's sewing there was always one of these same little text-books in her work-basket, and by dint of conning them over and over she became quite an authority in dates and names, not only in English, but in Greek history and literature. Nor was she satisfied with mere outlines; it was her nature to be thorough, and her mental appetite "grew by what it fed on."

REST FOR WOMEN.

It is said that one-half hour of rest during the twelve working hours would be sufficient to replenish our depleted forces, if that rest could be absolute; but to try to rest with the mind aggravated by the nagging worries of life would be useless. The necessity for rest is particularly urgent upon women. Could they not, if they were only brought to recognize the necessity, try what that half-hour of absolute rest would do for them? Such rest is best obtained in a recumbent posture, and free from the pressure of bands or heavy clothing. It would be advisable to dress as for the night, and lie down, dismissing all thoughts that might come as a disturbing influence. Sleep if you can, or dream sweet day dreams, if you can not. Build airy castles in Spain, and people them as delightfully as you choose, if your thoughts must be busy about something; but let mind and body have the absolute rest that nature demands, and you will be repaid a thousand-fold for so doing.

Begin your day with a bath of salt and water. It is invigorating and restful, and need consume but little of your time. No matter how much you may think you need those few moments for other duties; remember this is a duty you owe to yourself, and that much depends on your keeping yourself in a condition to do your work to the very best advantage. Do not forget that you are mortal, and subject to certain limitations, which you can not transgress without certain punishment. Remember that you owe it to your family to keep yourself well. There is no virtue in making a martyr of yourself unnecessarily; and no woman can keep herself in proper trim to meet her duties unless she takes plenty of rest.—Housekeeper.

RECIPES.

VELVET PUDDING.—Take three cups sweet milk, bring to a boil, sweeten and thicken with cornstarch. Remove from stove and add the yolks of two eggs well beaten, with a cup of desiccated cocoanut. Beat the whites stiff and place on top. Brown slightly in a hot oven.

APPLE SHORTCAKE.—Take one cup sour cream, a small teaspoon soda, a pinch of salt, and flour to roll soft. Bake quickly, split and spread with butter, and two inches of nice apple sauce. Eat with sweetened cream.

BERRY PUDDING.—Take one cup sugar, two spoons butter, two eggs, one-half cup sweet milk, one teaspoon baking powder and two cups flour. Mix smooth and then quickly stir in three cups of any kind of berries. Pour into a round deep dish, and steam one hour. Eat with sauce or cream.

TO TAKE GREASE FROM FLOORS.—Grease can be extracted from floors by applying a paste of wood ashes and quick-lime, to be kept on several days and then wash off. Stains on wall paper can be cut out with a sharp penknife, and a piece of paper so nicely inserted that none can see the patch.

TO CLEAN COPPER KETTLES AND BOILERS.—Take a flannel cloth, dip it in a little lukewarm buttermilk in which a teaspoonful of salt has been dissolved; rub a little spot on the kettle; then proceed to scour that spot with very fine ashes; after doing the whole thoroughly, wash all over in clear warm water; then rub it over again with fresh buttermilk and salt, after which wash again and wipe dry.

QUICK DESSERT.—If there is any dry cake on hand a dessert may be quickly prepared by placing slices in deep saucers, covering with dabs of jelly. Make a sauce of one pint water, one cup

sugar, a spoonful of butter, juice and rind of one lemon, or a spoonful of vinegar. Thicken with cornstarch and pour over the cake while boiling hot. Serve hot.

A BAR HARBOR BREAKFAST DISH.—Take half a pound of salt pork, cut in small pieces, fry them till brown; take them out, and in the fat thus obtained put a pound of haddock or of fresh cod-fish, half a dozen potatoes cut in thin slices, some crackers or pieces of hard bread broken in small bits, half a teacup of sweet milk, a lump of butter the size of a small egg, and pepper and salt to taste; thicken with a little flour rubbed smooth with the butter. When the potatoes are done, serve.

FRUIT PUDDING.—Fill a cake tin half full of apple sauce and cover with one cup sugar and some dots of butter; one-half cup raisins may be added if desired, and vanilla flavoring. Cover with a batter made of one cup sweet cream, one egg, one teaspoon baking powder and flour to stir thick. Steam one hour. The same recipe may be used, and the pudding baked one-half hour. Any fruit can be used in place of apples.

DRIED APPLE CAKE.—The following recipe for dried apple cake, says a writer in the *Illustrated Christian Weekly*, sent by a valued contributor to this column was accompanied by a sample of the cake. Put up in most approved confectioner's style and resembling wedding fruit-cake the first impression was that it was some generous wedding announcement. "Taste and try," was the sender's injunction, in a postscript to the recipe, and all who wish to follow directions are assured that the cake was delicious, pleasing to the eye, and while more healthful, resembles a much richer cake than the ingredients would lead one to expect:

One and one-half pints of dried apples, one and one-half pints of molasses, half pound of butter, half pound raisins after they are stoned, one teaspoonful of mace, one teaspoonful of cloves, one teaspoonful cinnamon, two teaspoonful ginger, two teaspoonful soda, two eggs, four cups flour. Soak the apples over night in water enough to cover them. In the morning pour off any water that may remain on them; chop and stir them into the molasses. Let boil twenty minutes in it with the spices. When cold add the other ingredients. Dissolve the soda in a little hot water. We think this very nice.

PUZZLES—NO. 15.

BIBLICAL ENIGMA.

I'm in worship and in word,  
I'm in soldier and in sword,  
I'm in rider and in rill,  
I'm in doorstep and in sill,  
I'm in hearken and in hide,  
I'm in virtue and in pride,  
I'm in pillar and in post,  
I'm in gaoler and in ghost,  
I'm in orphan and in son,  
I'm in hardy and in done.

HANNAH E. GREENE.

INVESTIGATION PUZZLE.

Select one verse from each of the following New Testament books, containing the word "Faith." Matthew, Mark, Acts, Romans, Ephesians, James. Try this without a concordance. CORDES.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. Where is it said, I will make a man more precious than fine gold?
2. Where is it said that there shall be a great crashing from the hills?
3. What prophet saw four horns and four carpenters?
4. Where is it said that the sea-coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds?
5. Where does it say, Run, speak to this young man?

ENIGMA.

In hot but not in cold,  
In wrap but not in fold,  
In pet but not in love,  
In pigeon not in dove,  
In you but never found in thee  
My whole is what we all should be.

ILIDA WAINWRIGHT.

BIBLE ENIGMA.

I'm in firmament and earth,  
I'm in honor and in worth,  
I'm in worship and in won,  
I'm in summer and in sun,  
I'm in linger and in go,  
I'm in joyfulness and woe,  
I'm in darkness and in day,  
I'm in sorrow and in dismay,  
I'm in meadow and in glen,  
I'm in peacock and in wren,  
I'm in lumber and in rest,  
I'm in stupor and in zest,  
I'm in many and in some,  
I'm in wander and in come.

HANNAH E. GREENE.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES.—NUMBER 14.

REBUS.—A staff—Staffs.

SQUARE.—

W A T E R  
A L I V E  
T I R E S  
E V E N T  
R E S T S

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.—1. Sec. 2. Abilene. 3. Regen. 4. Disciple. 5. Iscariot. 6. Sarah. Initials, Sardis; Terminals, Remeth.

ENIGMA No. 1.—"Be thou perfect." Gen. 17:1.

ENIGMA No. 2.—Intemperance.

SEND PUZZLES.

This is holiday time and some of the puzzlers are not quite so busy as they have been while at school. We are always glad to receive original puzzles, and as many readers of this department have composed very clever ones, which have been appreciated by other puzzlers, another call is made for original puzzles.

THE PRIZE.

Name of prize-winner and of all competitors in Answer Competition Puzzles No. 13, will appear in a future number.