

THE HOUSEHOLD.

HINTS FOR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.
OTTOMANS.

The old-fashioned ottomans of our grandmothers' day, we are assured, are coming into vogue again. They are exceedingly comfortable where a low seat is desired, especially in bedrooms, and in the living rooms of the house they are in demand by the children.

Any one with a little time and skill can manufacture them at home by means of a strong box from the grocer's, which may be covered around the sides with cretonne or figured satine.

Over this hang tassels of rope which has been untwisted and combed out. These should reach the floor.

Make a cushion of the cretonne filled with curled hair, just the size of the top of the box, which is used as a seat. This is securely fastened to the box by means of tacks around the top of the sides.

Braid three strands of small rope and tack around the seat by means of gilt-headed nails; this will conceal where the cushion is tacked to the box, and will also serve as a heading for the rope tassels.

To make a circular ottoman, get a small tub, turn upside down, and upholster it in any way you desire.

The round ottomans are very nice for filling a corner, especially if an artistic corner-bracket or wall-cabinet is hung above it.

SIMPLE FRAMES FOR PHOTOGRAPHS.

Cabinet-sized photographs may be prettily framed in this way. Get from the glazier glass cut just the size of the picture, two glasses for each picture. On one of them arrange and fasten by gum water at the back any pretty little group of pressed flowers and leaves, buttercups or pansies, small ferns or four-leaved clovers, anything that is easily pressed and retains a good color. There may be a cluster in each corner, or in one upper and one lower corner. Place the second glass directly over the first to protect it and behind both the photograph. Then frame with ribbon for hanging up, or simply fasten the whole together with a small brass or wire clasp at each side and end. The large hooks that are sometimes used on cloaks might answer for clasps if the glass is not too thick.

RIBBON BAG.

A yard each of three colors of ribbon three inches wide is required to make this simple and pretty bag. Bronze, terracotta, and old-gold, are a serviceable combination. A space half a yard long at the middle of the ribbons is joined with fine invisible stitches. The bag is then folded and the sides joined. The ends at the top are turned down to form loops, and the double layer of ribbon is sewed through twice to form a casing for a ribbon drawing-string.

A PRETTY SILK AFGHAN.

A new afghan is composed entirely of ribbons of different shades and widths. On a foundation of light cotton material, three strips of dark-olive sash-ribbon are sewed about their own breadth apart. Then with narrower picot edged ribbons in the following order, the space between is filled, each ribbon overlapping its neighbor a trifle, and run down with invisible stitches. Next the olive combs shell-pink, white, light-blue, scarlet, blue, white, orange. If several shades of each color are used, the effect is also good. The lining is of quilted satin, and the whole is bound by an olive ribbon, the edge of which may be button holed with knitting silk of the same color. Into this a handsome shell is crocheted, forming a border for the afghan. The strips of ribbon are each one yard and five-eighths in length.

ANOTHER AFGHAN.

For this you can use all your bits of silk. Those that are soiled may be put into proper shape by a bath in diamond dyes. Cut them in narrow strips. Then crochet with large needle in coarse shells just as you would use worsted.

FOR A PHOTOGRAPH FRAME.

Take half a yard of satin ribbon a trifle wider than the photograph. Fringe it two inches or more at the bottom. Take brass curtain rings, cover with close crochet in silk to match ribbon, arranging at corners

five, three, one, and put a straight row across the top with three in each corner of the top. Either fringe the top or make a point finished with a crocheted ring for hanging the ribbon. These are really pretty.

FOR EYEGLASSES.

A little book is the latest thing out for those who wear eyeglasses. It has a kid, satin, silk or linen cover, lined with chambray, over an interlining of crinoline, inner chambray leaves, and an embroidered, painted or gilded inscription, "Rub, Rub, Rub." The cover is an inch and three-quarters square; it is edged with a fine silk cord, secured by minute silk stitches, while a cord to match the cover is laced through tiny perforations at the back of the book: one end of the cord is left several inches long and is finished with a loop just large enough to slip over an ordinary dress button. To adjust this little convenience, slip the loop over a button or hook in the bosom of the dress and tuck the book inside or beneath some fold or fullness if a fancy corsage is worn.

A JAPANESE SOFA-CUSHION.

What could be daintier than a cushion for a couch made of two Japanese silk handkerchiefs? Either buy or make a muslin-covered feather pillow of the same size as the handkerchiefs you intend to use, and arrange around the edge a puffing of light blue satin. Then with a stiletto and white embroidery silk make eyelet holes around the four sides of each handkerchief, and lace the handkerchief across the blue satin with narrow white ribbon, fastening a rosette of the ribbon at each corner. When soiled, the handkerchiefs can be removed and washed.

TO MAKE A FANCY APRON.

The materials are one yard of linen lace—striped scrim, three-quarters of a yard wide—the kind used for window curtains, one yard of any pretty white lace two inches wide, crochet edging will do, a few skeins of embroidery silk, and two and one-half yards of ribbon one and one-quarter inches wide of the same color.

If possible, get the scrim in a pattern of broad and narrow stripes, the narrow one-half inch, the broad two and one-half inches wide.

Then, commencing eleven inches from the end, feather-stitch on both sides of all the narrow stripes with the same color. Then feather-stitch on both sides of all the wide stripes with some shade that will harmonize or contrast well; for instance, dark blue for the narrow, Indian-red for the wide.

Beginning seven inches from the bottom on the other side of the scrim, feather-stitch down to the bottom in the same way. Finish with a narrow hem, and feather-stitch across it. Turn this piece up six inches on the right side of the apron, sew the lace to the hem and catch it (the lace) to the apron at spaces seven inches apart. Make a hem one and one-half inches wide at the top of the apron, and ornament it with two rows of feather-stitching running across it, one at the top and the other at the bottom of the hem.

The model I am describing has the narrow stripes worked with blue of a medium shade, and the broad ones with shaded blue, running from a pale to a very dark tint.

The ribbon may be drawn through the hem, crossed, and tied in front, or the hem can be drawn up on half a yard of ribbon, and the remainder used to make long-looped bows or rosettes at each end. The latter way is very pretty, but the apron must then be pinned on to the dress when worn.

JEWEL BOXES.

Pretty jewel boxes may be made from transparent celluloid. In the centre of a square of celluloid (nine inches is a good size) mark off a smaller three-inch square; from the corners of this draw lines to outer edge so as to form a maltese cross. Now draw lines so that when the edges are cut they shall be scallops or points, and on the line which connects the two squares draw wings of a butterfly. Now cut out and paint, in oil, (if gum arabic is dissolved in water, water-colors may be used,) a band of some pretty color all round the edge of the small square, and points. On the other side of the celluloid gild each side of painted band; paint and gild butterfly to

suit yourself. Punching little holes, lace up the sides with narrow ribbon using side gilded for outside. Make a pad of China silk and place in bottom. When finished it should cost only twenty or twenty-five cents.

MICA.

Having been struck with a fever of experimenting and recovered so far as to be able to report satisfactory results, I hasten to communicate. One is the many pretty articles one can make from a few sheets of mica, the isinglass used for stove doors.

It can be cut with ordinary scissors, painted, woven in strips, bound together with ribbon, made into card baskets, lamp shades, jewellery boxes and a host of other articles. Indeed, the fever will grow on one, if once attacked.

One pretty fancy in a card basket is to take the pieces of mica almost square and cut six pieces; the bottom should be three inches across, two and one-half at the sides, flaring to four inches across the top, and three through the middle—round off the top—and tie each piece with tiny bows to its companion piece; cut a bottom six-sided, three inches on each side, and fasten with tiny ribbon to its companion sides. Or, bind each piece with ribbon entirely around, stitching the sides over and over with silk to match, glass box fashion.

A lamp shade of rose-colored mica is pretty; you will have to exercise your skill in cutting each piece separate, and lacing together at the top with finest wire; silver hair wire, I call it.

USE MORE ONIONS.

It is related of a country physician that as he passed by a farmhouse he remarked: "I shall not have many calls from here this year." The reason for this remark was a thrifty onion patch which he saw in the side yard. It is true that onions are about the most healthful vegetable that the housewife can use. If it were not for tainting the breath they would be much more generally used than they are. They are extremely easy of digestion, and to this fact part of their medicinal virtue is due. They give the generally over-taxed stomach a rest, digesting themselves and absorbing offensive matters that previous ill-feeding had left, which the digestive organs were unable to dispose of. A friend who has had long experience tells us he cured a cold by eating a very light dinner, and at night taking nothing except a bowl of onions cooked as soft as they can be. Then going to bed he begins to perspire, sleeps soundly till morning, and is then a new man, with not a trace of the cold that, uncared for, might have developed into dangerous disease.—*American Cultivator.*

SEALING UP PRESERVES, &c.

I cut a circular piece of soft brown paper to fit in the top of the jar neatly; this I dip in vinegar and lay on the fruit, pressing down well; then I will cut two more circular pieces a little larger than the jars so they will come over the side a little. I make a common boiled paste with a little flour and water worked up smooth and cook thoroughly like starch. I then write the name of the fruit or jelly on the last or top paper, as well as date. I now have fruit and jelly two and three years old; I can tell by the date of month and year. I put paste all over one piece of paper, paste it on smoothly while the fruit is hot, then put the second piece on the same way; it will get hard like a drum head. I very seldom have any fruit spoil. It is rather more trouble, but when done will repay for the extra trouble in the neat appearance and in keeping better, I think, than where just tied up.—*Country Gentleman.*

A LETTER GAME.

For fear that some of our young people may forget their geography during vacation, we quote the following game from the *American School*.

Get half a dozen wide-awake people around the table, and then put a letter-box in the hands of some steady head who can be trusted as umpire. He will throw a letter in the centre of the table, and the first one in the circle who can tell a geographical name beginning with the letter in sight takes the letter; and the one, at the con-

clusion, who can count the greatest number is the winner of the game. Any name of any place under our sun which is of sufficient dignity to possess a post-office is legitimate to use; or that of any lake, river, mountain or sea.—*Household.*

SELECTED RECIPES.

"I WANT TO TELL Jack's wife," said Mrs. C. K., "that I can make baking powder which is nicer than any I ever bought. I take half a pound of cream of tartar, a quarter of a pound of baking soda, and one pint of cornstarch. Sift all well together, and put into a tin can having a close cover."

STEWED TOMATOES.—Put a quart can of tomatoes into a porcelain lined or agate stewpan and place over the fire. When hot add one tablespoonful of finely chopped or grated onion, a tablespoonful of butter, a tablespoonful of sugar and pepper and salt. Rub fine a teaspoonful of stale bread crumbs and when the tomato has stewed fifteen minutes add them and cook ten minutes longer.

BAKED ONIONS.—Cook in two waters, the second salted and boiling, a dozen large onions. When tender, skim out carefully and place close together in a bake dish. Pepper, butter and salt liberally; pour over half a teaspoonful of soup stock strained through a cloth, and brown in a hot oven. When done remove the onions, thicken the liquor with a tablespoonful of brown flour, pour it over them and serve hot.

CREAMED CORN.—Put a quart of canned corn into a farina boiler and stew twenty minutes. Then add one tablespoonful of butter, rubbed into one of flour, one teaspoonful of cream and salt to taste. Stew gently three minutes and serve warm. Be sure to keep the boiler covered to retain the color of the corn.

CAULIFLOWER WITH WHITE SAUCE.—After removing all green and imperfect leaves, plunge a head of cauliflower into cold salt water several times. Now put in a twine net or cheese-cloth bag, and boil 20 minutes in hot salt water. Drain in a warm place. Melt a piece of butter the size of an egg, stir in smoothly one tablespoonful of flour, and add a gill of milk, half a teaspoonful of cream, two tablespoonfuls of grated cheese, salt and pepper. Pour over the cauliflower, sprinkle over a few browned, buttered bread crumbs and serve.

COOKING DRIED FRUITS.—Every one does not know how to cook dried fruits properly. This is oftentimes the reason why more people do not like them. Prunes and apricots are delicious, if prepared in the right way. They should be washed and soaked in cold water for twenty-four hours; then the kettle with its contents should be placed on the stove and heated to the boiling point. Let this simmer for three or four hours, not adding the sugar until a half-hour before the fruit is taken up. It will be almost jellied, and when served with cream it makes a delicious dessert.

A GOOD POLISHING POWDER.—One of the very best polishing powders that was ever used in my kitchen I discovered quite by accident. The range was being cleaned out, and in the flue under the oven there was a quantity of gray dust, a sort of smoke deposit, as fine as flour, that was taken out with a large spoon. In washing the spoon it was noticed that a mysterious brilliancy was acquired, and the credit for this was quickly given to the smoke dust. Since then we have always used it for polishing tinware. If put on with a damp cloth, a lustre will immediately appear that surpasses that produced by all other powders.

LOOKING AFTER THE GARBAGE PAILS.—It is surprising how few housekeepers look after the garbage pails and the kitchen sink. The supervision of such things cannot be left entirely to the maids, and it is absolutely necessary to see that they are kept scrupulously clean. It takes only a few minutes, and if there is system in the house, as there should be, it is easy to attend to such matters on Monday mornings. A solution of lye or washing soda will cleanse the pails most effectually, and when the maid finishes washing she can take some of the suds and scrub them with a little whisk. Uncleaned pails will breed the germs of many dangerous diseases, but otherwise excellent housekeepers are wont to be careless about such things. The kitchen sink should be flushed with hot water twice a day, and once a week a solution of washing soda should be poured down the pipe. Be generous with soda dissolved in hot water; it is good for all waste pipes.

JELLIED TONGUE.—Lay two fresh beef tongues in an earthen bowl and sprinkle with salt to draw out the blood. Next day wash and wipe dry and rub thoroughly with the following mixture of spices. (This mixture, by the way, is delicious for other spiced meat, and should be kept prepared in an air-tight jar): To one teaspoonful of brown sugar, add half a cupful of ground allspice, the same of ground pepper, one-fourth of a cupful each of ground cloves and cinnamon, half a teaspoonful of powdered saltpeper and half a cupful of dairy salt; mix thoroughly. After rubbing the tongues, place them in an earthen bowl, and after sprinkling some of the mixture over them set in a cold place. Every morning for two or three weeks drain off the liquor and pour it back over them, turning them over. When wanted, wash and wipe off the spice, and simmer slowly for three hours. Take out the tongues, and let the gravy simmer down slowly. After skimming them, press down very tightly into a bowl or mould, pour over enough of the liquor in which they were boiled to fill the interstices, and cover with a plate and heavy weight. When perfectly cold turn out on a platter and serve by cutting horizontally with a sharp, thin-bladed knife.

CELERY SALAD.—Wash and scrape a dozen stalks of celery and lay in ice-cold water until dinner-time. Then cut into inch lengths, pour over mayonnaise dressing, stir well together and set on ice until wanted.

POTATO PUFF.—To three teaspoonfuls of finely mashed and peppered potatoes, add three tablespoonfuls of soft butter, and beat to a white, creamy mass. Beat the yolks of two eggs very light and stir thoroughly into the potato and then add half or two-thirds of a cupful of warm milk. When smooth, add the well beaten whites of two eggs, pile upon a buttered, hot dish, and slightly brown in the oven.