

THE HOUSEHOLD.

THE FARM MOTHER.

When the question is asked, 'What is the most valuable crop raised on the farm?' some one is certain to answer, 'The boys and girls.'

Quite right, but I want to ask another question: 'What is the most valuable creature on the farm?' and you unhesitatingly answer 'Mother.' Just as she is the most valuable, most precious and most holy thing on earth.

So much is written of how to keep the boys on the farm, and make farm life attractive to the young of both sexes, that we are in danger of overlooking the consideration of the mother's comfort and happiness. Not until we have been poor can we appreciate the advantage money will bring. And not until the mother is taken care of the inmates of the home begin to realize how large a place she filled. How many mothers live to be gray haired and never know they are appreciated; who never hear the words, 'Mother, I love you.' Say them sometimes when you kiss her good night, and as long as your mother lives I hope you will not outgrow that good night kiss, and see what a glad light creeps into the tired eyes. It will pay you, that look.

When mother is gone we think of our shortcomings, of her privations, of her noble self-sacrifices, of her perfect self-effacement, and then we blame ourselves for allowing it so to be. We remember how, when father died, the care all fell on her weak shoulders; how, for our sakes, she bore up and appeared cheerful, and managed the farm with a skill that put us on the road to independence. We recollect that she stayed alone evenings when we were at parties or lectures, and, coming home late, how we found a wet handkerchief dropped by accident near the chair—the only evidence of her loneliness and heart-ache.

We recall the only time when we ever urged her to go to a picnic—how the girls had cool, fresh muslins to wear, and she went in her old alpaca on that hot summer day. She journeyed along miserably in the old buggy, because nobody thought to tuck a pillow at her back and add an extra cushion to the seat. It is the host of little things which make or unmake mother's happiness. I want to urge mothers to ask for necessary things when you know they can be afforded. Take needful rest, though the floor remain unswept. The woman who lays every nerve and talent on the altar of household drudgery breaks down before her time and goes to a premature grave, or lives along but half a woman for the remainder of her days.

She has made a slave of herself so long that all take it as a matter of course. She catches up the pail and hurries out to do the milking that father and the boys may find the chores all done when they get home; it becomes a daily occurrence, and she need not blame them if in time they cease to protest against her doing it; she has taught them to expect it. She digs potatoes rather than hinder the men, and perhaps feeds the pigs and waters the horses, as I have known some farmers' wives to do, and then in a year pay out more money for doctor's bills than would have hired a man to do the work. This is blind, misguided regard, and the veriest unwise.

There may be times when it is necessary for a woman to do a man's work, but it is the uncalled for and unnecessary performance of such work of which we are speaking. In every position in life a woman is largely responsible for the place she occupies. Let her then determine whether she is to be mistress or slave, and accept corresponding conditions.

Not long since the writer visited a home where the mother had died comparatively young. There were no pictures on the walls, no carpets

on the floors, not a scrap of anything bright or pretty except the children's faces. This mother had been brought up in refined circles and graduated from one of the best Eastern schools, and came to Dakota, a young wife, to help make a home. Everything had been sacrificed to this end; relatives, society, ease, the refined surroundings that women of her stamp instinctively crave; even life itself had at last been given up in labor for her dear ones. The home did not contain even a rocking chair or crib in which the fretful baby might have been soothed to sleep. Think of the weary hours she must have passed in those hard, straight-backed chairs! Was not some one to blame?

There was a funeral once in a spacious farm house. The mother had died at sixty; thirty years too soon. The daughters mourned in crape and nun's veiling, and wet real lace handkerchiefs with their tears. The sons' eyes let fall hot splashes upon the wrinkled, cold hands and sunken cheeks where the white rose of death had blossomed, and the mourners followed the costly coffin to the most expensive lot in the churchyard.

When they came to look over mother's things they were surprised to find how few and poor her personal belongings. One decent black dress, an unfashionable bonnet, a shawl she had when she was married, a few old every-day gowns, a pair of patched shoes and two changes of underclothes; that was all. The reason why she never went visiting or to church was revealed at last. 'Girls,' said the eldest daughter, with sobs, 'to think that we should have neglected mother so! I never dreamed how stunted she was. I can never forgive myself—never, never!'

The sons had fine horses in the stable. They gave them fresh straw for bedding every night, and a heaped measure of ground feed for supper. In making a tour of the house after the funeral they found that mother's bed was a tick filled with straw, under which were hard slats that must have made her old bones ache and robbed her of hours of sleep. Her teeth, they remembered, were mostly gone, too; yet they never took pains to procure her any special delicacies on that account; she ate what the others did, and mumbled the tough steak or sucked a rind, and nobody noticed. They wring their hands in fresh pain. 'This is awful,' they wept; 'why didn't she tell us?' We were better to our horses than we were to mother! We cannot make it up to her now. She will never know how sorry and wicked and wretched we feel; and now it is too late, too late!—Mrs. Wells Ferrin, in 'The Household.'

BEST METHOD OF CLEANING BLACK DRESS GOODS.

Every one has or wants a black gown nowadays, and such goods as serge, cheviot, cashmere, Henrietta, etc., are easily cleaned. First remove the grease spots with naphtha, and remember that this fluid is very explosive when exposed to either light or fire. Make a lather of warm soapsuds, using a good, not strong, soap, and a teaspoonful of borax to every two quarts of water. Into this dip the goods up and down and wash between the hands; then wring gently and pat partly dry; hang in the shade, and when nearly dry iron on the wrong side with a moderately warm iron. Always rinse once in luke-warm water, and iron until the material is perfectly dry. Never rub a fabric that is being renovated on the washboard, nor wring it tightly, and in using naphtha remember that it roughens the hands, and that after using it it is well to put vaseline upon them and to wear old gloves. Wash alpaca in the same manner as cashmere, adding a little gum-arabic to the rinsing water. If the black goods are of a rusty color restore them by sponging with ammonia and alcohol. Always use a piece of the same material or one near to it to sponge with.—Ladies Home Journal.

RUMFORD KITCHEN MOTTOES.

During the World's Fair visitors at the Rumford Kitchen often were seen copying the mottoes which hung upon the walls. Since that time many calls have come from all parts of the country for these quotations, and Mrs. Richards has furnished them to the 'American Kitchen Magazine' that thus they may be in convenient form to send to inquirers and perhaps reach others who may find them useful in arousing interest in better foods.

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not?—Isa. lv., 2.

Preserve and treat food as you would your body, remembering that in time food will be your body.—B. W. Richardson.

The palate is the janitor, and unless he be conciliated, the most nutritious food will find no welcome.

There are three companions with whom you should keep on good terms—your wife, your stomach and your conscience.

Myriads of our fellow creatures have perished because those around them did not know how to feed them.—Fothergill.

Prayer and provender delays no man's journey.

The seat of courage is the stomach. The fate of nations depends on how they are fed.

Plain food is quite enough for me.—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

A man is what he eats.

It is an irritating, nay more, a deeply saddening problem for a wise dyspeptic to ponder, the superabundance in this little world of ours of things cookable, and the extreme rarity of cooks.—Maarten Maartens.

There is no pain like the pain of a new idea.—Bagehot.

The time indeed is at hand when systematic lectures on food will be part of medical education, when the value of feeding in disease is admitted to be as important as the administration of medicines.—Fothergill.

The scientific aspect of food must be united in the bonds of holy matrimony with a practical knowledge of the cook's art, before a man can discourse learnedly of food.—Fothergill.

Pain is the prayer of a nerve for healthy blood.—Romberg.

Courage, cheerfulness and a desire to work depends mostly on good nutrition.—Moleschott.

The stomach is a good servant; let his hours of repose be unbroken.

Keep as near as ever you can to the first sources of supply—fruits and vegetables.—B. W. Richardson.

Nothing surely is so disgraceful to society and individuals as unmeaning wastefulness.—Rumford.

An hour of exercise to a pound of food.—Felix Oswald.

BOYS ON THE FARM.

Every boy that lives on a farm—and every girl, too, for that matter—should have the use of a piece of ground. It need be only a small, out-of-the-way corner at first, a place for the child to dig and make plans; increasing gradually to the acre of corn or potatoes or turnips, or whatever it may be, as the child grows older. There are few farms that could not easily spare it, and few children to whom it would not be a benefit. Books and magazines and games are good, but they are for the mind and the leisure hours, and while they may keep the children at home, they can scarcely foster a taste for farming without something to supplement them. A child early learns the meaning of possession, and a few square rods of his own will be more to him than the broad acres of his father. Many a boy has grown to manhood on the farm, and left it at the earliest possible moment after he came of age. He has been made a mere machine—a laborer without a laborer's wages.

Every child has a love for the country, a love for digging and planting;

but every child has an imagination also, and if it is stunted and kept fallow at home, it will most surely seek to develop itself elsewhere. I wish every father could look into the busy workshop of his child's mind, and understand the longings and hopes and disappointments there; ay, and the plans as carefully made and relatively important as his own. If the child could be oftener treated as a sentient, responsible being there would be fewer disappointments. I doubt if there was ever a father who did not wish his son to grow up with a love for his own calling, and a desire to remain on the farm. Yet he sends him to school, and perhaps to college, but at home treats him as an irresponsible machine. Let his manliness be brought out instead of suppressed. Let the father talk to the boy and the boy to the father, as man to man. If the boy is to be a farmer let him begin his calling early and grow up with it. Furnish him with a small piece of land, and let him cultivate it with no other restraint or advice than he may seek himself. Trust him to discover the best methods and the best market. The profits may be insignificant, but they are his, and they mean as much to him as do the earnings of the largest farm in the country to its owner. And more than all, he is obtaining a practical interest in farming, and year by year it will strengthen and broaden, and by the time he is of age he will not only be a farmer physically, but in heart and brain also.—Frank H. Sweet, in N. Y. 'Observer.'

FOR SMOKING LAMPS.

When your lamps smoke remove the wicks from the burners and boil the burners for half a day in a solution of half a teacupful of baking soda to a quart of water; as the water boils down add more clear water. Use an old kettle, as it will injure a good one. After boiling at least four hours rinse thoroughly in clear warm water, dry perfectly, put in new wicks, and your lamps will burn clear and bright. Never throw away the burners unless they are broken. This treatment cleans out all the tubes and makes them like new. Lamps treated this way once a month will never explode.

TESTED RECIPES.

Corn Griddle Cakes.—Take the materials for muffins above, with the addition of a tablespoonful of wheat flour and a teaspoonful of baking powder. Add the sugar and salt to the meal, scald with the boiling water, add the cold milk and the flour, having first stirred in the egg, beat the whole well together and bake in small cakes on the griddle.

A New England Dish.—One very large fowl, or two medium-sized, should be cut as for a fricassee, and put into a large boiler with eight quarts of water. More than one-third of this may boil away, but there ought to be at least five quarts of the stew when cooked. Boil three hours, then remove the bones, and just before serving return the meat. Add now bits of celery, both stalk and leaves, pepper, salt, three sliced onions, one small turnip sliced, and a sliced carrot, one-quarter pound of pork cut in small cubes, and one quart of sliced potatoes. Let the vegetables boil ten minutes, then cover the whole top with small balls of biscuit dough, the size of an egg. Serve the dumplings (where no waitress) on a hot platter, and the remainder in a soup tureen. Flatfish soup plates are best to serve this on, giving with each portion of the solids a teacupful of the broth. A cheap knuckle of veal, the mutton bones left from yesterday's roast, a joint of fresh pork, or of beef, all are very toothsome and palatable when rehashed in a stew like the above. The remains of a roast turkey used thus are then fit to set before a king. The 'biscuit dough' is never of yeast, but that made from baking powder or sour milk.