

AFTERNOON RECEPTIONS.

SIMPLY, SEEMINGLY AND SENSIBLY.

Invitations should be sent out three or four days in advance, and a longer time if the reception is to be formal. The invitation may be written thus:

Mrs. Lewis Wilson,

AT HOME

November 18, from 3 until 6.

This invitation may be written on a calling card, enclosed in a white envelope, and delivered at the house, if in the city. It is not good etiquette to send invitations through the post-office. At the hall door a servant should be stationed, to admit each guest, before she has had time to ring. This servant also directs the way to the "unrobing-room," where the wraps are removed by another servant, who takes charge of them, and assists in various ways. The bonnet and gloves are almost invariably worn, the gloves to correspond with the rest of the toilet, in tone. The only ones privileged to appear unbonneted in a large reception are the ladies receiving with the hostess or assisting her to entertain her guests. They should always be bareheaded. Street dresses or the plainer reception dresses are worn. If possessing a fine old piece of lace or an exquisite handkerchief, now is the time to use it. Lace may be used for the neck, or for a tiny vest on the dress. The handkerchief is daintily tucked away between the buttons or folds of the bodice.

The hostess should stand near the entrance of the reception-room, and extend a welcome to each one as she arrives, and the guest should then be introduced to others in the room, especially if she be a stranger; in that case an unusual amount of attention should be given her. A guest can go at any time after the lunch has been served, but under no circumstance remain longer than the appointed time. In the winter time the house should be darkened, and lighted by gas, candles or lamps.

At a large afternoon reception, the guests are invited out to lunch in parties, at different times, by an assisting friend of the hostess. The hostess herself never takes refreshment, except at small and informal receptions, where all sit down at lunch at the same time. Usually an unmarried lady sits at either end of the table, who pours the tea, coffee or chocolate.

One dining-room, used on such an occasion, may here be described: The sideboard had been removed, and chairs were placed around the walls of the room; in the grate a fire was burning cheerily; on the middle of the mantel a large ivy was trained about a picture, two large baskets of Jacqueminot roses were placed on either end. The windows were darkened, and from the lighted chandelier festoons of smilax were hanging in graceful curves. Under the chandelier sat the table. The linen cover was beautifully white and fine. The tray-cloths were embroidered in tiny blue forget-me-nots. The china was beautiful polished. Large platters of angels' food, Graham wafers and cream wafers were on the table. Chicken salad and tiny white biscuits were handed to each guest, also preserved ginger, for a relish. At either end of the table a young lady was in charge, who served the coffee and chocolate. The handles of the china coffee-cups had a dainty blue ribbon, tied in a tiny bow, and the chocolate-cups were adorned in like manner by a pink ribbon.

In taking leave of the hostess, each guest should, in a few words, express her enjoyment at being present on this occasion, then pass out, and, after putting on wraps, depart without going into the reception-room again. The hostess should so exert herself that each guest can truly say, after going away, "What a charming woman Mrs. Wilson is, and what a delightful time we had at her home!"

To avoid confusion and overwork, let everything possible be done the day before, when the house should be arranged and everything put in spotless order. While not much variety is necessary, let everything be the best and daintiest of its kind. Good cream is indispensable, as Holmes says in the Autocrat, "Cream is thicker than water."

Evening receptions are conducted in the same way, except that gentlemen are invited.

Mlle. Sarmesa Bilcesco, a young Rumanian, has just graduated in law in Paris. She is 23 years of age, and is described as very attractive. She was graduated at 17 in science and belles lettres at Bucharest, and also took the first prize there as pianist. She went to Paris in 1884, was admitted as a student at the Sorbonne, and, after some demerit at the Faculty of Law. Her mother always escorted her, and in six years she missed only one lecture.

The Staff of Life.

It was a mild morning in April, the vision of outdoor loveliness greeted my longing eyes through every window, but I had a busy day before me and could only sigh for the pleasure denied. Baby was very fretful, the "next to baby" sick with cold, and the next in order in an upward scale of gradation, in a very selfish, domineering mood, so that with all these cares added to the household work I was trying to wade through, I felt like three rainy days, and doubt not I looked it, too. Gathering baby into my arms for his morning nap, I sat by the window as I hummed a tune; gazing through the elm tree where tender leaves begin to bear that exquisite young green, beyond into the blue sky, and nearly forgetting care in that refreshing azure depth. My attention was arrested by a sound from the street, and behold! a well-known vehicle from the country containing two—four—five people, come to stay to dinner! I tucked the baby away, and with the two others clinging to my skirts went to the door to greet my friends, and to reiterate over and over all the little lies of welcome; for it was Monday, the cook was at the wash-tub, the house-girl doing the kitchen work, and I had not provided for any extras.

While they were doffing their wraps I was chatting merrily and at the same time questioning my inner self about dinner; and so soon as I could leave them I rushed out to the cook, and taking her into the kitchen and sending the house-girl to the children, I surveyed the situation. Cook and I both uttered many ejaculations of gratitude because there was plenty of bread in the house; good, home-made, fresh, luscious bread. I had cold dried-apple pies, highly seasoned with spices and very much liked by my own family, all ready for our dinner, but they seemed so shabby to offer company. So the cook and I assembled our forces—bread, cheese, milk, butter, eggs, I felt to and helped her prepare some of the dishes; then, leaving her to cook them, and glancing on the table (which we had set at breakfast time) long enough to add more chairs and plates, jelly and pickles, I went back to entertain my guests. They never knew for one moment that I had any trouble over them, and I hope they are thinking to-day what a nice dinner I had had and at the regular hour. It was after ten when they came, and we had on the stove only asparagus and potatoes; but I rang the dinner bell at half past twelve. First, I made a bread pudding, while cook stirred a light custard into a boil. I sliced the bread thin, placing the slices as I buttered them into a buttered baker. I used butter on the first layer of bread, then I spread the next layer with plumb jelly, and so on alternated it till the baker was a little over half full. Over this we poured a light custard, made of one quart of milk, three eggs, three table spoonfuls of sugar, and put that into the oven to bake. I then sliced more bread and browned it in the oven, though, of course, it is better toasted; but as we had to have coals to broil the steak on, could not toast the bread. After the bread was browned, I went back to the company, having covered the bread with a dish cover and set the dish on the stove hearth—it softens the bread a little to shut it up in a hot dish.

At a signal from cook (she knocked a fork on a glass by my order) I went back, just at a quarter past twelve—the steak was broiling, the potatoes were mashed and baked, and she was just dropping the eggs into hot water to poach. From my big dish of hot browned bread I first filled the asparagus dish, then laid the asparagus on top and poured over it a rich dressing of butter and cream, adding salt and pepper, and having the dressing almost boiling hot when I poured it on.

I took five tablespoonfuls of grated cheese one-half pint of milk, a tablespoonful of butter, and melted that on the stove; then I buttered some more browned bread with the melted cheese and put that in a covered dish. I had yet another "bread dish," and laughed as I took my last toasted bread. I cut it in squares, as near the size of the poached egg as possible, buttered each piece, and laying them on a flat meat dish (heated like the bread), I covered each piece of bread with a poached egg, adding pepper and salt. I had raised some parsley in the house, which garnished the steak, and though I would never have invited my friends to dine on steak, still it was not to be despised; it was far better to make them feel comfortable than to make excuses.

It was a well broiled steak, juicy and tender; the coffee was excellent; a glass of young onions, together with the parsley, made the table look spring-like, while a green plate piled with wild violets was the finishing touch to the repast. The pudding we ate with whipped cream, and the little relish of curd was handed round after it. The latter is made in this way—or I should say this is one way:

Curd Relish.—Strain clabber into a thin muslin bag and hang it to drip; in four hours pack it down in a dish or bowl and press it like cheese. Then cut it into squares, which can be moulded in the fingers; wrap each square in either white tissue paper or in tinfoil. Another way is to add pepper and salt before it is pressed; and yet another is to flavor it with nutmeg and brown sugar before pressing.

A Few Table Don'ts.

- Don't smack your lips.
- Don't take large mouthfuls.
- Don't blow your food, in order to cool it.
- Don't use your knife instead of your fork.
- Don't find fault and pick about your food.
- Don't talk with your mouth filled with food.
- Don't soil the table-cloth with bones, parings, etc.
- Don't commence eating as soon as you are seated.
- Don't laugh loudly, or talk boisterously, at the table.
- Don't retail all the slanders you can think of at the table.
- Don't take bones up in your fingers to eat the meat from them.
- Don't call attention to any little mistake which may have occurred.
- Don't make yourself and your own affairs the chief topic of conversation.
- Don't take another mouthful, while any of the previous one remains in the mouth.
- Don't reach across the table for anything; but wait until it is passed to you or ask for it.
- Don't put your elbows on the table, nor lounge about; if not able to sit erect, ask to be excused.
- Don't frown or look cross at the table; it hurts your own digestion, as well as that of those eating with you.
- Don't pick your teeth, unless something has become wedged between them, then put your napkin up to your mouth while extracting it.

A Few Suggestions About Shoes.

Never try to wear a shoe that is too small for you, nor one that is not a good fit for your foot. By good fit is meant: one that fits sufficiently snug not to wrinkle, not to allow your foot to slip around in the shoe, yet loose enough to allow plenty of ease and comfort; with square toes, low, broad heels, and particularly from three-quarters to one inch longer than you could wear, if you allowed your big toe to go to the end of the shoe. A long shoe gives a more graceful effect to the foot, is more comfortable and lasts longer. Be careful not to run your shoes over at the heel or sides; this is the result of carelessness, and in many people really amounts to a deformity, besides quickly ruining a shoe. Never let shoes get hard or dry, by drying them by the fire, which dries and injures them badly; dry them gradually, and if quite wet rub on a little bit of castor-oil or tallow before drying, as the steam generated in a wet boot or shoe will scald it and cause it to crack. Occasionally wash off the old dry blacking, applying a little castor-oil. Do not put on a thick, heavy coat or two coats of blacking. When polishing shoes a gentle brushing, with a soft brush, is better for the shoes than the vigorous work of the boot-black. Never put on, or handle a patent leather, when it is cold; always warm it thoroughly before bending the leather; if put on when warm, and in a warm room a patent leather shoe may be worn out in the cold without injury. Do not wear rubbers over a nice, new pair of shoes, as they spoil the leather. Keep an older pair to wear under rubbers when possible; always take your rubbers off when entering the house.

A correspondent of the London *Graphic* excepts to Mrs. Lynn Linton's arraignment of the rudeness of Englishmen to women, and declares with charming frankness that her observation shows that "intentional personal rudeness from man to woman, unless she be his wife, is most rare and exceptional." So it would seem that comblial rudeness is quite the proper thing over there.

Considerable numbers of domestics have recently been brought from Scotland for service on the Pacific coast, where they give the best of satisfaction. One of their number was recently married to a civil engineer, the ceremony taking place at the house of the girl's employer, who warmly congratulated the groom, saying, "You have won a very noble woman." Possibly this appreciation of her faithful service had something to do in the case.

Save Your Hair

By a timely use of Ayer's Hair Vigor. This preparation has no equal as a dressing. It keeps the scalp clean, cool, and healthy, and preserves the color, fullness, and beauty of the hair.

"I was rapidly becoming bald and gray; but after using two or three bottles of Ayer's Hair Vigor my hair grew thick and glossy and the original color was restored."—Melvin Aldrich, Canaan Centre, N. H.

"Some time ago I lost all my hair in consequence of measles. After due waiting, no new growth appeared. I then used Ayer's Hair Vigor and my hair grew."

Thick and Strong.

It has apparently come to stay. The Vigor is evidently a great aid to nature."—J. B. Williams, Floresville, Texas.

"I have used Ayer's Hair Vigor for the past four or five years and find it a most satisfactory dressing for the hair. It is all I could desire, being harmless, causing the hair to retain its natural color, and requiring but a small quantity to render the hair easy to arrange."—Mrs. M. A. Bailey, 9 Charles street, Haverhill, Mass.

"I have been using Ayer's Hair Vigor for several years, and believe that it has caused my hair to retain its natural color."—Mrs. H. J. King, Dealer in Dry Goods, &c., Bishopville, Md.

Ayer's Hair Vigor,

PREPARED BY

Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass.
Sold by Druggists and Grocers.

Enjoyment at Home.

Don't shut up your house, lest the sun should fade your carpets, and your hearts lest a merry laugh should shake down some of the musty old customs here. If you want to ruin your sons, let them think that all mirth and social enjoyment must be left on the threshold without when they come home at night. When once a home is regarded as only a place to eat, drink and sleep in, the work is begun that ends in reckless degradation. Young people must have fun and relaxation somewhere; if they don't have it at their own hearthstone, it will be sought at others, and perhaps at less profitable places. Therefore, let the fire burn brightly at night, and make the homestead delightful with all those little arts that parents so perfectly understand.

Don't repress the buoyant spirit of your children; had an hour of merriment around the lamp and fire-light at home, blots out many a care and annoyance during the day, and the best safeguard they can take with them into the world is the warm influence of a bright little domestic circle. Put home first and foremost; for there will come a time when the home circle will be broken; when you will "long for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still;" and when your greatest pleasure will be in remembering that you did all in your power to put a song under every burden to make each other happy.

A Pretty Apron.

Materials: two widths line drawn, cut the desired length, and neatly sewed together. Press the seam flatly and make it as narrow as possible, so it will not interfere with your tucks; tuck the apron lengthwise, in narrow tucks, being careful to have the seam come under a tuck, with space between them to correspond with width of tuck. Mine is as narrow a tuck as the machine will allow. Tuck to within about five inches of bottom of apron, leaving it to form a ruffle, that hangs below as nicely as if gathered in place. Lace or embroidery added to ruffle completes the outline. At the top, lay each tuck up to the edge of the next tuck, to give fullness, and put a plain band over them. If the tucks are as narrow as mine, there will be enough of the material to tear strings off the sides. These are tucked across the ends.

Another pretty apron is made of one width of same material, turned up six inches at bottom and hemstitched. Three rows of narrow ribbon (any desired color) are run in and out through buttonholes at lengthwise in the hem, and worked very neatly. The buttonholes are so cut that the ones in the top row are opposite those in the bottom row. Top finished with ribbon shirred in hem, and tied at side with bow.

When one buildeth and another pulleth down, what profit have they but labor.