

School for

Housewives

by Marion Harland

TRUE FURNISHING

The False Idea

of Handsome Pieces

EVERYTHING FOR USE AND BEAUTY

EVERYTHING FOR SHOW

WHEN WILLIAM MORRIS made public his creed of furnishing, that part of the world which was sufficiently interested to notice him at all fairly gasped at his radical ideas. That nothing should be done except to furnish each year a definite, practical use, and that every one of those "somethings" should be made beautiful on absolutely simple lines, was the burden of his creed, advanced at a time when all sorts of elaborate monstrosities were introduced under the title of house decoration.

The first point to make is that paper

and floor coverings and the furniture which is to go with them are all in harmony. Many a room which cannot be done over for a while can be made infinitely more attractive by being rid of part of its furniture and fully half of its pictures and bric-a-brac. Strip it down to first principles and see what you have to work from and with. Perhaps the various chairs in your house need only to be sorted out — unconsciously the wrong types have drifted together, when they need nothing but rearranging.

Let your rugs be few and as good as you can afford, avoiding striking effects and strong colors, for the same reason that you avoid an elaborate frame for a good photograph — you don't want rug or frame to be conspicuous, they are only part of a setting.

Don't get any furniture except something that there is a positive need for, and test everything you get to see if it fulfills that purpose perfectly. Make a point of having every chair comfortable; there's nothing more astonishing than the number of uncomfortable chairs which are made every year, so that ordering chairs home at random is a mistake.

Watch the grouping of furniture as carefully as you watch the choice of it. Let your ornaments be as simple as possible. Don't crowd them. A pretty candlestick and a vase of flowers are enough for the average table.

Simple line, with its beauty of simplicity, is the only way to the simple, almost bare treatment of the room. Every piece has room enough in which to show its own beauty.

Elaborately carved bookcases are loaded down with useless bric-a-brac, the kinds hopelessly confused. A plaster Cupid may share honors with a bronzed (not bronze, save the mark!) Bacchante (not Bacchante, save the mark!) Bacchante, the space between littered perhaps with useless trash-trinkets with no value at all, even from a collector's standpoint, and with no excuse certainly for breaking the beauty of the straight, simple lines.

A bookcase isn't the sort of thing to be heaped with bric-a-brac. One or two things are all very well, but it is pre-eminently a thing with a use to it — for you store your books — and when it divides that honor with the questionable one of acting as a shelf to pile things upon, it is made anything but artistic.

Go into some houses, filled to overflowing with so-called "handsome" pieces. You have to be careful where you walk — there are fussy little chairs here, and absurd little cabinets there — not cabinets bought to hold treasured curios, but got to look effective by virtue of their gold paint and pink plush linings; their curious, intricate carvings, bought to fill them up as elaborately as the overcrowded room they echo.

Sofa pillows — not piled in a comfortable confusion, but set importantly one by one — are hopeless sort of affairs, made of white or pink or yellow satin, embroidered or painted in a way that is a relic of the (fortunately) lost art of making lies.

Hangings share the same general fate — the pair of curtains apparently isn't enough for anywhere, and they are straight hanging a thing never by any possibility indulged in. Carpets and paper and furniture clash inharmoniously — it's as though everything had a voice and was trying to make itself heard, high above the rest. The worst of it all is that there is absolutely no excuse for that sort of thing — not even the excuse of economy. For those frills and elaborate carvings and upholsteries and the other details of the confusions are costly. Bad taste is made to pay!

And on the other side, there are no two minds, when once the question is fairly looked into. The simpler types wear well in the sense that you don't get tired of them as well as in actual hard wear. The others, as you develop, were bought for show and the show has bored you.

A Laundry Hint

The first step in pressing blankets after the tedious process of washing, is to fold them evenly when they are perfectly dry, pulling them into shape on one side or corner has become stretched. Then cover with a clean sheet, place a board on top and pile weights upon it, leaving the blankets for a day or two to "iron" themselves.

About a Housekeeper and a Homemaker

TO THE reader of COMMON SENSE IN THE HOUSEHOLD, her name is not unfamiliar. She has been my household oracle for thirty years and more. She is, therefore, not young, even by courtesy. She is not ashamed to own to 70. Why should she hesitate to detail the experiences of threescore and ten, when every year is marked with a white stone?

It is of Mrs. Sterling as a practical housekeeper and homemaker that these papers will speak. I told her yesterday, that I regard her as the too frequently missing link between Housewifery, Past and Present. She is, to-day, as she has been for fifty years, her own housekeeper.

"For half a century I have never, for a single day, when at home, failed to order with my own lips the three daily meals to be eaten by my family," she says, with pardonable pride. "Even when confined to my bed by illness, I have summoned the cook to my room, and told her what to do."

It follows, inevitably, that she is "au fait" to every department of cookery and all that pertains thereto; furthermore, that she is mistress in her own house, and competent in the management of it whether servants give warning, or whether they will forbear.

Afternoon tea is a daily function with the blessed woman, and we, her disciples, have a way of dropping in between 4 and 5 o'clock to lay our troubles before the true burden-bearer and to entreat her counsel. The quality of the counsel may have something to do with our belief that such tea never regales our senses anywhere else. Some day I will coax her into a talk upon "Tea — and how to make it."

But to our present subject: Mrs. Martin, a Southern woman, who has lately come to our city, was regretting that we cannot look up groceries as they do in Virginia — giving out daily supplies each morning.

"Who pays for them and has the right to say how and when they shall be used? Here, a cook will not stay one day in a house 'where they turn the keys on you. It's same as sayin' as how a dacent, livin'-out gurrel is a thafe iv'ry time she gits a chance to stale."

The mimicry is so good that we all laugh, and the lively malcontent is encouraged to go on.

"Result — we are all partially robbed! I no more believe that all the butter, sugar, flour, etc., brought into my house is honestly consumed there, than that I devour it all myself. What with the calls for charity at the kitchen door, and the relatives of cook, chambermaid and waitress, to whom a pound of tea, coffee or sugar is a 'rale mercy,' the toll is continual, if not grievous."

"When not dishonest they are wasteful," said another. And a third — "Wastefulness is dishonesty when one handles another's property."

The tea-pouring is over, and Mrs. Sterling is sipping thoughtfully the last cup served. We are silently expectant of a solution of the problem. When she puts on what Mrs. Martin calls her "charitable-remissive look," we know that help is not far off.

"Thirty years ago" — is the promising beginning — "when I was forty years old and had been keeping my own house for twenty years, and supposed myself tolerably proficient in ways and means — my cook was one Margaret Daly, industrious, respectful, and willing to work, or to oblige. She never 'gadded,' she was sober, pleasant of temper and manner."

A model maid, you will say, and that I would think, not twice, but many times, before I exchanged her for any other. Yet, I had about made up my mind to make the change. Margaret had a drunken brother-in-law, and his wife, her sister, had six children and a chronic whine. Mar. art, as I knew, divided her lawful wages with her. Whether or not she contributed of my abundance to relieve the necessities of her suffering flesh-and-blood, I could not say. Certain it was that the said abundance was unreasonably depleted in some way. I must call a halt. Should I tell the woman that she wasted my substance wantonly, or accuse her directly of theft?

"I am, as some of you know, a firm believer in what people call — for the lack of a better name — special providences." As if every providence were not of special appointment, and expressly labeled for the recipient!

"So, when my eye caught the advertisement of a popular brand of soap, uppermost upon the page of a magazine, lying on my desk, and the name reminded me of a visit I had paid to that particular soap factory, once upon a time, and the pretty village in which lived the operatives, each of whom was a stockholder in the mighty business — when, I say, my mind laid hold of the central principle of the firm, as explained to me by one of the partners, I detected significance in the happening. 'We have never had a strike among our hands,' the partner had said. 'Men don't strike against themselves.'"

"My resolution was formed within five minutes. Margaret should be a stockholder in my company! I rang the bell for her to come to my room."

(Concluded next week.)

Marion Harland

For a Book Lover

In a Harmony of Simple Lines

A Lesson in Serving Dinner

By Mary E. Carter.

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AS soon as you are seated at table and have taken the bread and napkin off your plate, the serving maid should be ready to set an oyster plate before you. Let your signal for her to change the plate be the signal for her to change the plate, precisely as if it had been removed and must be washed later. Next let her bring the soup tureen, place it, remove the cover carefully, turning it upside down as she takes it off to carry it to the side table. Then there would be drops of moisture on the inside of the cover, that might fall upon the tablecloth or the floor when she is carrying it away. She should return immediately to hold the soup plate conveniently near for you to put a ladle of soup in it and then set it down on the cold plate before you. Soup plates should not be more than two-thirds full to be passed with no danger of an accident. When served by the hostess, the person at her right hand gets the first helping. When you lay the soup spoon down in the plate, that is the signal for her to take it away and, after she has removed the soup tureen, bring on the next course.

She should place the meat platter first, napkin in her "hand" under it while you are at the table. Immediately before the cold plate, you should take up the cold plate — making the exchange so deftly that you will not be one moment without a plate of some sort, hot or cold, before you. This order obtains throughout the entire service of a well-ordered dinner.

Setting the cold plate aside, she immediately passes the vegetable dishes, uncovered, a tablespoon in each one, and so placed that when she holds the dish for you to help yourself the handle of the spoon will be directly towards your right hand, for you to take it with ease. When passing vegetables the bowl or the spoon should be ready, holding one helping in her hands, which thing for people to help themselves the waitress goes invariably to the left. The propriety and convenience of this is thus enabled to use the right hand in serving themselves. Carelessness in this one particular marks the waitress. But in filling glasses, which the maid does herself, she goes to the right and fills without taking them up. No glass should be filled above a half-inch from its brim. Teach her to avoid

letting a drop fall upon the cloth. As she stops pouring she should touch the edge of the glass with the spout of the pitcher or the mouth of the decanter, or bottle, thus leaving the last drop in the glass just filled.

When you lay your knife and fork side by side down upon your plate she will know that she may make the change. (It is awkward, therefore bad form, to lay the knife and fork down sprawling, and those who risk an accident and may confuse even an accomplished waitress.) The next course, being salad, the maid, when exchanging, gives you a cold plate. Salad is handed in the same manner as the vegetables, the salad fork and spoon-handles to the right of the plate, and when there is actual service, the fork with a few leaves of salad upon it and the spoon, ready to hold them in transit from the bowl to your plate. But if the salad is something chopped or cut, then the spoon should be holding a portion. Every dish should be held near, and low, enough for one to serve one's self with ease. This cannot be too strongly emphasized. Tell the learner that all these seeming trifles, carefully observed, constitute a neat and competent waitress. It is a good plan to have the waitress use a napkin, all the time, partially unfolded and covering her hand while the dish at the same time rests upon it. During the progress of the dinner, whenever any one wants more bread the waitress should be alert to see — and supply it from the plate upon the side table, using the fork to bring the plate of bread with a fork at the diner's right side and bread down on the tablecloth beside the diner. (The height of good service is where one's wants are anticipated and the waiting is at once attentive and unobtrusive.)

Chocolate Fudge.
One-pound cake of chocolate.
One cup of granulated sugar.
One cup of cream or rich milk.
One teaspoonful of vanilla.
Large-sized piece of butter, about an eighth of a pound.
Dissolve the chocolate over the tea kettle, then mix with it the sugar and cream and return to the stove. After it comes to a boil stir in the butter and salt. Boil the mixture for five minutes, then pour it into a mold. When it is set, cut it into pieces when picked up. Best vigorous sitting. The vanilla when the candy has cooled slightly. Pour into but squares with a knife. Four into but squares with a knife. This is also an excellent icing for chocolate cake.

WHERE THE DECORATION IS DIFFUSED

A GROUP OF STYLES THAT CLASH

The Housemothers' Weekly Conference

I WOULD like to tell "Inexperience," whose inquiry regarding packing eggs is answered in "our paper," how I keep eggs. I think mine the safest way, as well as the most satisfactory.

I pack the eggs — a few every day — as they are gathered. Use a box, large or small, or anything of the kind. Get common barrels of the pail, stand the eggs in the bottom of the pail, and cover with a small other layer of eggs. Then place an egg on top and cover with a small other layer of eggs. Then place an egg on top and cover with a small other layer of eggs. Then place an egg on top and cover with a small other layer of eggs.

We have had no simpler process than this submitted to us, among the many for Chatter and a good deal of talk. The method prescribed by the member who uses the salt merely as a "foundation" — packing the eggs above it, and laying a cloth, covered with salt, above all.

To Cook Red Cabbage.
I want to give you a good recipe for cooking cabbage.

One good-sized head of cabbage, about five good-sized apples, and three or four slices of bacon with the rind on. Slice the cabbage as for stew and chop the apples, wash the bacon and scrape the rind clean. Put all together in a kettle, with enough water to cover. Cook until tender, about an hour. Add a little sugar and a little salt. Some other time I will give you a recipe for Chatter and a good deal of talk. The method prescribed by the member who uses the salt merely as a "foundation" — packing the eggs above it, and laying a cloth, covered with salt, above all.

Your red cabbage dish suggests German cookery, as the directions for making the Spanish stew, given in our recipe column, would seem to indicate tastes founded upon the culinary processes of southern Europe. We broaden our views and secure variety in our menus by studying the cookery of other nations. Provincial housewives have a way of calling all highly flavored and unimpaired dishes — "French." In fact, the progressive American cook calls upon the kitchens of England and Germany —

even upon those of Italy — as often as she copies French methods of preparing food.

You will find "The Vampire" in any full edition of Ripley's poems. It is so well known that it will doubtless be sent in for you. Underneath the "Snow" has gone to you by mail. Will you kindly write your address in full for me?

I thank you for the wise family proverb.

Spanish Stew.
One pound of fat salt pork cut fine. Put into a saucepan with one pint of water; stew down twenty minutes on a slow fire. Don't let it stick to the bottom.

Two young chickens, jointed, and two quarts of tomatoes strained through a colander; one teaspoonful of black pepper; one teaspoonful of red.

Stew until the chickens are tender. After it is cooked, ready for the potatoes, mash, with one-quarter pound of butter. When done put on a dish with a can of French peas boiled and spread over the top. Drain the liquor from the peas.

To Cook Potatoes Virginia Style.
(Contributed.)
Dish and boil in as little water as possible. Drain; add butter, a little sugar, salt, and pepper. Let them brown, then pour over them milk thickened with cornstarch. Let them boil and thicken slightly. Serve hot.

Honeycomb Pudding.
(Contributed.)
One cup of molasses, one cup of raisins, one cup of milk, three tablespoons of melted butter, one teaspoonful of soda, nutmeg and cinnamon. Mix together as stiff as gingerbread. Steam three hours.

Sally Lunn.
(Contributed.)
One quart of flour; four eggs; half cup of melted butter; one cup of warm milk; one cup of yeast; one teaspoonful of salt; half tablespoonful of soda, dissolved in hot water.

Beat the eggs to a stiff froth, add the milk, butter, soda and salt. Stir in the flour to a smooth batter and beat the yeast over them. Let it stand in a warm place, in which it must be baked and sent to table. If you wish to turn it, set to rise in a well-buttered mold. It will not be light under six hours. Bake steadily three-quarters of an hour or until a straw thrust into it comes up clean. Eat while hot.

This is the genuine, old-fashioned "Sally Lunn," and will surely give place even yet to the newer and sadder compounds known under the same name.

Recipe Asked For.

Will you publish a recipe for making candied violets?

Mrs. C. W. K. (Philadelphia).
Referred to candy makers.

Spanish Stew

Is it too late to send a recipe for Spanish stew asked for by a correspondent? This may not be the one desired by "L. V. A." of Minneapolis, but is a very excellent one.

K. S. J. S.

The "excellent dish" has an honorable place in the recipe column.

A Simple Way of Curing Ham.

I saw in your department lately a recipe for curing hams. As I have a auto better and simpler way, I send it to you.

After the ham is trimmed to the proper shape, lay it upon a table, skin side down, and put on the end of the hock and on all the flesh where there is no skin, about one-half inch in depth, the following mixture: Salt, 2 cups; granulated sugar, 1 cup; wash stirred together. Every morning loosen the salt and pack it back on the ham again.

Three weeks of this is enough for a twelve-pound ham. When salted sufficiently, wash the ham in cold water, and wrap in three or four newspapers successively, covering all the ham, three or four thicknesses with paper so the flies can find no crevice to get in. Lay the ham in a cool place, and on the hock and hang up. Do not use either hook or string.

Mrs. W. L. (Bowling Green, Ky.).
The recipe to which you allude was given to me by a Virginian, and vouched for as the method by which the most delicious hams in the world are put up. Yours is what Virginians know as "cured ham" — not really "cured." I advise that the paper next to the meat be not newspaper. Printer's ink should never come into contact with food.

Garments for Young Boys

My friend, having two nice boys, the one six years old and the other 3 years old, wants me to write and ask you what you would suggest for their clothing, and dressing a boy 2 years old. She has been dressing him just in frocks, the same as little girls wear, but she thinks now he ought to wear something different. She does not want him to look girlish.

YOUNG MOTHER (Philadelphia).
There are divers styles of blouses, knits and the like garments, belted with leather girdles, and adorned with fancy buttons, that are not girlish. One of Scotch plaid, with a device upon the buttons, and a Highland bonnet, or a Glenarry cap of the same material, the eagle's feather at the side fastened with a gilt thistle, would become the lad.