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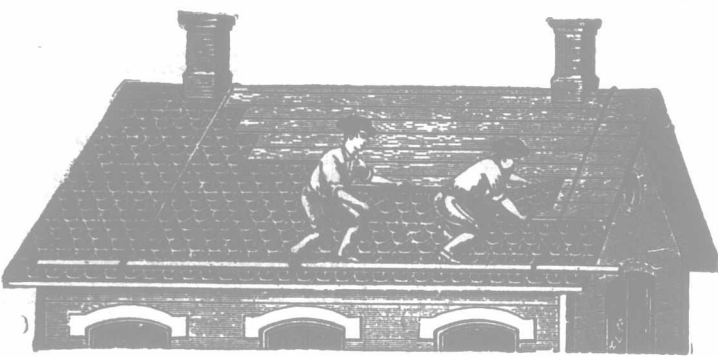
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By the Weight of a Feather.

Have you noticed how often our opinion of people and things is decided by some little thing which, taken by itself, might, perhaps, seem unimportant? The trouble is that, so often, the little thing is just an index to the greater one.

This was most forcibly brought to mind the other day by a remark which I heard about a young girl whom I knew: "Such an untidy girl! She always steps out of her clothes and leaves them in a ring on the floor!" Now, this girl is by no means a "sloppy"-looking specimen whom one would readily accuse of any deficiency in the bump of neatness. She is pretty, bright, and intelligent-looking, and so far as dress is concerned, always appears the pink of perfection; and yet, and yet, every night, she "leaves her clothes in a ring on the floor"; and this one untidy practice has given my friend, who made the criticism, the impression that Dot—we shall call her Dot—is untidy in all her ways.

Possibly she is, or possibly this clothes habit is only a pet weakness, uncorrected because unnoticed. In either case, the lesson may not be lost upon some of us. Lack of the virtue of neatness in a woman is one which, in these days, can scarcely be overlooked; and, as has been remarked before, in this respect at least, people are almost sure to judge us upon the evidence of some little thing. One of us may have the slovenly habit of leaving a bunch of hair in her comb, or on her dressing-table; another, perhaps, throws her hat and coat on chair or sofa, and leaves them there until someone has the grace to hang them up for her; one more pins her garments together at every available point, with the heads of all the pins showing, has her collars fastened unevenly, her "saree" gaping ever so little, and her skirts dipping in points; yet a last one—oh, let us hope she is not!—may be careless about hair, teeth, or nails. I knew one girl whose room always appeared in order, and whose clothes were always beyond criticism, but yet—one glimpse behind the scenes! That girl never knew where to find anything, and a veritable "hunt" of ten minutes usually preceded the discovery of the smallest article, even to scissors, or thimble. Chances itself would scarcely describe her dressing-table drawers. I can see her yet, when in a hurry, madly pulling and turning things, upside down, hot, flustered, and out of temper. And yet, even experience never seemed to teach that girl the wisdom of "having a place for everything, and keeping everything in its place."

By just such little things are we judged. Let us examine ourselves, and see if any such untidy habits are ours; not, perhaps, for the sake of escaping criticism, which, after all, would be a very weak and inadequate motive, but for the sake of the beneficial effect such vigilance must have on ourselves. We might go on and say how, by things of a different nature we are judged—the stinging word we let drop, the bit of malicious gossip we repeat, and so on, almost ad infinitum—but to-day there is not room. Anyway, we think the suggestion may carry as much weight as a full discussion; so, for this time, we will make way for someone else.

DAME DURDEN,

"The Farmer's Advocate" office, London, Ont.

From Helponabit.

Dear Dame Durden,—On taking up the last copy of "The Farmer's Advocate," I saw that you were back again, and I feel I must write and welcome you to the Ingle Nook, not but that you had a good substitute, and she gave us some very interesting articles. I was surprised to hear that you had been only on a farm, not far away, and I had been thinking of you touring through the old lands, or in South America studying farm life and the different modes of women's work,

and I thought what interesting letters you would give us about your trip.

I think the Ingle Nookers must be away travelling, or very busy, for they have not been to the Nook for a chat for a long time. I think it will be nice to tell how we spent Christmas. We had our usual family party—nineteen for dinner, thirty for the evening. In the party were nine children from two years to fourteen—quite enough to keep us lively. After dinner, the young folks went for a skate on the river, while the elders had a nice rest, and looked at the illustrated Christmas papers that had come in. When the skaters came back, and the other friends had arrived, we had the Christmas tree, which was placed in the bay-window in the dining-room. Each one brought the presents to give, and put them on, or under, the tree. While my nephew was dressing for Santa Claus, my husband was romping about with the children, and he went to the parlor fireplace. It had no fire in it, being so mild. He knocked with the poker, and called up the chimney to know if Santa were there, and if he would come down and give us our presents. The children were kneeling around and looking up the chimney, trying to see him. A voice called down to know how many children there were and their names. He was told. Then he asked if Cecil were a good boy. Cecil is a bright, interesting little boy, just at his first term at school. "No, he talks in school," was the answer. I shall never forget the guilty look on the little fellow's face, as he got up and backed away from the fireplace. Soon there was a stamping on the veranda, the door opened, a big blast from a horn sounded, and in jumped Santa. We took seats in the dining-room, and he cut the things off the tree for us; and how good he was. Such a lot of pretty and useful presents for all of us. We had three young Englishmen with us, spending their first Christmas in Canada, and Santa did not forget them. When the tree was stripped, he bade us good-bye, and promised to come next year. He would not stay to tea, said he had so many other places to go. After the tree had been taken out, and the litter picked up, we served tea in both dining-room and parlor. We have done this for the last three years, and find it much more pleasant than setting a table, as we all enjoy it together—sitting in groups. Our bill-of-fare was: White and brown bread and butter, cut thin; raspberry and lemon jelly; sponge, marble and Christmas cake; mince pies (little ones); tarts; grapes; oranges; almonds; raisins; tea, and coffee. This is such a pleasant time—laughing, chatting, and no hurrying to get one table through to set another.

After all had eaten, and the tea things were cleared away, we had the programme. It is interesting to notice how the little ones improve from year to year in their recitations and motion songs. After the children had got through their part, they gathered around the organ and sang some dear old songs, "the songs that never die." Then we had some hymns that all could join in.

And now I must tell you of a little thing that happened. We took a day to make the Christmas cakes, puddings, and mince meat. The puddings had been boiling for an hour, when one of the girls said: "Did you put any sugar in the puddings?" We stopped work and looked at one another and in the sugar-canister. Sure enough, not a bit had been put in. "Well," I said, "it cannot be helped; we will make a rich, sweet sauce." "But," said one of the girls, "Emily does not eat sauce." Now, Emily is a good cook, and an authority on what is right. Christmas day came; the dinner was nicely cooked; the twenty-pound turkey was done to a turn, and so was the mock goose, which was a rump of beef, boned and stuffed with sage and onions. When full justice was done to this course, on came the pudding, and, although we had only nineteen to dinner, and we often have twenty-