

THE HOUSEHOLD.

HOUSE-CLEANING: THE BEST METHOD.

BY LILLIAN GREY.

"How I wish you could stay here a few weeks, Aunt Mary, instead of going on to Annie's to-morrow!"

"I should enjoy staying, but you know poor Annie needs me more than you do; that attack of pneumonia will help keep her weak all the spring."

"Yes; but I want you to keep John from being cross; he has spells of it just about this time of the year."

"John! John cross! Why, Hetty, it's hard to believe that; he's got a wonderful good disposition, an' always had. I've known him from a baby up."

"Yes: we'll admit that he's amiable and easy to get along with most of times, but his good temper can't stand the strain of house-cleaning. You should have seen the look of gloom and disgust that came over his face this morning when I asked him to get some lime so I could begin to clean house next week."

"But, Hetty, I re'ly hope you ain't thinking of beginning next week; why it's only the middle of March."

"Well, I won't get done then before some time in April, and I do like to have it out of the way early, so I can get at the spring and summer sewing before the weather gets so hot; and I've so much to do this spring; the children have outgrown so many of their clothes, and there's some quilting to do beside."

"But, my dear, I'm afraid you'll all get your death of cold if you have the house open and upset such damp chill weather: botter do your sewing first, and wait until its warm and settled. I think May is plenty early enough to clean in this part of the country."

"May! why, I was all done last year by the tenth of April, an' I meant to do even better this year."

"Let me see! Wasn't it last spring you had such a spell of rheumatism and neuralgia?"

"Yes, I was real sick; and how thankful I was that the cleaning was finished before it came on."

"Didn't you ever think that but for that same cleaning it wouldn't have come on at all?"

"I declare, Aunt Mary, you're as bad as John, for that's just what he said; he was positive about it."

"Poor boy! I'm afraid I should be cross too if I had to live in a house whose mistress was going to begin to clean it next week. Do you hire any help?"

"I don't usually. You know we are not blessed with much ready money, and so I would rather do the work myself and have the money saved to buy things with; there seems to be so much wanted all the time in a house. But, you see, with the other work it takes me a long time. I slight the general work as much as I can, too, but they all complain of the picked-up meals. I get clear discouraged sometimes over it."

"Well, dearie, it's a good thing I ain't going to stay here through it, for we should quarrel as certain as fate! Your way and my way are very different, and I should be almost sure to take John's part."

"You would? Then, I'm sure he'd be delighted."

"Yes, we would be two against one, Hetty, and you wouldn't like that or think it at all fair."

"Well, I hardly know; if you've got a way of getting along with unpleasant things better than I have, I hope I shouldn't be obstinate enough to quarrel."

"Oh, I was only joking as to that, but re'ly I do long to give you some advice. You're such a good practical, sensible woman, about most things, that it seems a pity you shouldn't be in this matter."

"Now, Auntie, I have tried to do the best I knew how; at least I've thought so, but—well, if I'm all wrong, I'm willing to listen to the right and be convinced. Now suppose you could step into my place—make believe you was me, as the children say—how would you do?"

"In the first place, I would set the very thought of house-cleaning off for at least six weeks, and tell John so, and ease his mind; then I'd get out all the summer clothes of the whole family, and have a

general overlooking, and plan what is to make over or combine together, and sort out the paper rags and carpet rags. Then, after I'd mended, fixed over, and made up everything on hand, I should buy all the muslin, cambric, and lawn wanted for the season, and make the sewing-machine run lively for a few days. I wouldn't put in many tucks and ruffles to iron on hot days either, but have a plenty of plain hemmed little dresses and aprons, for frequent changes are a comfort. After that was all done, on bright days I'd clean the bureaus, trunks, and closets; it is such a help to have them done when one gets to cleaning a room, and the first room I would do would be that large store-room; then everything not desired elsewhere could be stowed there, and not handled a second time."

"O, Auntie, that all looks so easy for you to tell it!"

"But before I began to clean it at all, I should have a grand day of cooking. I fully agree with John and most other men about picked-up meals; one of odds and ends in some crisis may be allowable, but no more; and when people are working unusually hard they need to have their strength kept up by nourishing food. Of course a woman can't stop to prepare much for every meal, but something like this would be my plan or bill of fare. I should bake bread, pies, and two or three kinds of good-keeping cake, and a pot of pork and beans, and boil some ham or corned beef, all this, with coffee, eggs, and now and then a can of vegetables, will afford good and quickly set meals for at least three days, and by that time there'd very likely be a rainy day, so I'd stop cleaning and cook up again. I should have plenty of brooms and all conveniences to work with, and clean and settle one room at a time; that's a special point on which a great deal of peace and comfort depends. Another thing I'd do, and that is to paper these staring white walls. I know lime makes a house look sweet and fresh at first, and much is said against paper, but I believe in it. It saves work, and a pretty paper makes a room seem half furnished in my eyes. Of course I should be careful to select paper without any green in it; aside from that, I consider a paper wall as wholesome as a white one. And wherever I could change things around for more convenience or a little novelty I should do it. It is restful to a housekeeper whose life is so monotonous to see even a picture hung in a different place, or the position changed of a chair or table. There, Hetty, I've delivered quite a lecture; but that is an outline of what I should do if I was in your place, and if I carried it out I should have no fear of John's crossness, or of a siege of rheumatism after. You have listened very patiently, my dear. Now, how do you like my way?"

"Why, it all sounds very nice, and seems easy to do, Aunt Mary, and I've a good notion to try it,—all but the papering; that's out of the question; we can't do it, and it costs so much to get paper-hangers out from town,—more than the paper does."

"Then I'll make you an offer. If Annie gets well and strong, I'll come back in May and help you. I can hang paper as well as anybody where the walls are not very high, and I like to do it."

"That's another inducement for me to put off cleaning, Auntie; but I'll accept your offer and take your advice all through. I'll go right at my summer sewing, although I can hardly wait to see how nice and new the rooms are going to look! John often says you are the best and dearest Auntie in the world: I wonder what he will say now?"—*Exchange.*

"A PENNY EARNED."

A "ponny saved is a penny earned."
—Old Proverb.

After all, with very many careful housekeepers, often there is much wasted in a kitchen. The little unperceived foxes destroy the vine. Among young inexperienced or thoughtless housekeepers enough is wasted sometimes in one month to pay for a first-class weekly or monthly periodical; and yet the mistress of these kitchens may bemoan the lack of means to buy these papers.

Now I wonder how careful many of you are about the following things:

In cooking meats, do you throw away the water without removing and saving the grease, and do you save the grease from

the dripping-pan? It seems a little thing, but that grease saved will do to use in frying. Pieces of bread left at one meal are thrown back into the bread box forgotten and left to dry or mold instead of being wrapped up and used for the next meal. Scraps of meat which would make excellent hash or balls or eke out a meat pie are thrown away.

Cold or mashed potatoes are left to sour or spoil. Preserves are opened, forgotten, and left to mold or ferment, instead of being used for the next supper or made into tarts for dessert for the next dinner. Dried fruits often become wormy, not being looked after. Vinegar and sauces are left standing in tins. Plated forks and spoons are left in pickles, forming most poisonous verdigris, and spoiling all of it. Corks are left out of molasses and vinegar jugs; the stopper out of the kerosene oil-cans whereby much of it escapes; the tea or coffee canisters left open, the strength leaving them. Food of all kinds is left on open pantry shelves, exposed to mice, and most frequently eaten by them.

Sugar, tea, coffee and rice are carelessly spilled in handling. Soap is left to dissolve in dish or scrubbing water and thus waste. Dish towels are used for dish cloths, while napkins are used for dish towels, and towels are used for holders, burned or get begrimed with smut so that they cannot be cleansed.

Sheets are used on the ironing board and burned or scorched. Two yards of unbleached muslin at six cents a yard will do for all except the very fine clothes. Carpets are swept with worn out stub brooms which wear out the texture of the carpet. Carpets are too much swept by most people. They will last longer if the threads lying about are kept carefully picked, or even gently brushed if it be very necessary. Good new brooms are used in scrubbing the pavement or kitchen floor. Nothing wears them out so quickly. Forks are used for toasting bread, and ruined. Tea and coffee pots are injured by being allowed to stand upon the stove or by being set on the hot coals. Silver spoons are used in scraping kettles, and the most useful wipe dishcloth,—made for this purpose,—forgotten. The pudding left from dinner to-day can be steamed over for to-morrow if enough, if not, eke out with a bit of pudding left from another dinner. Don't forget that desserts cost one-third of your living at least. Rice pudding can be made into croquettes.

Pails and wash-tubs are left dry and fall to pieces. It is a good plan when you have a little pie crust left over to make a few tarts instead of putting it away to sour. Ham often becomes tainted or filled with vermin for want of care. It should be kept wrapped up. Cheese is allowed to get too dry or to mold or to be eaten by mice. Toilet soap, when in use, should be kept in a dish on a perforated piece so the water will leave it. It will also be better to leave off the cover of the dish, so the soap will get dry. It lasts much longer in this way.—*Christian at Work.*

KITCHEN WRINKLES.

Keep a brick on the back of your stove. You will find it nice to set food on when you wish to keep it warm. Try using sweet, skimmed milk instead of starch for calicoes and gingham. Rub window glass with a piece of soft linen wet with vinegar, then with a dry cloth, and it will be beautifully clear. I make glue that is very good by dissolving the gum to be found on cherry trees, in water. Keep water on it all the time and it is always ready for use. Cut the thin skin from the outside of the leg of mutton, or the mutton chops, before cooking them, and you will not have the woolly taste that so many complain of. To clean the silver spoons and forks in everyday use, rub them with a damp cloth dipped in baking-soda, then polish them with a little piece of chamois skin. I have learned that I can wash two pounds of currants almost as quickly as one cupful, and that it is a great saving of time to find them ready for use when I need them. Rub salt on the inside of your coffee pot when washing it, and it will remove the coffee and egg very quickly. Be sure to rinse it thoroughly before using it again. Old lamp burners should be boiled often in strong saleratus water. Let them boil for an hour, polish them, and they will be as

good as new, and will not trouble you by causing a smoky light. To take letters from a flour sack, first dip the sack in cold water, and let it soak fifteen minutes; then soap it well, let it soak a little longer, and when it has been washed through one water, it is ready to be put through with the other clothes. Make stove-cloths of dark calico to use about your cooking, instead of using your apron or a dish towel whenever you wish to remove anything from the oven or off the stove. You will find them neater and more convenient. I have mine doubled and about twelve inches square.—*House-keeper.*

EMPLOYMENT FOR BOYS.

Netting is such a nice employment for boys during the long winter evenings at home.

Now, don't say: "Pshaw, such foolish work!" for it is not the least bit foolish. Do you suppose the fishermen think it is, as they sit making or mending their nets?

It seems a little difficult at first, but practice soon makes perfect. Fine string or twine costs very little, and the needle is not expensive. The mesh any boy can make. Nets in which to cook potatoes and onions will be nice to practise on. They can be easily lifted out when done, and mamma need not burn her hands trying to drain the water off while they are in the kettle. Make some for her and see how pleased she will be. After a little practice, you can venture to make nets for lawn tennis, hammocks, etc., until, after a time, you will find yourself able to do fine, pretty work. Then make the foundation for guipure work of crochet cotton; it is something that sister will appreciate, and there is little work more fascinating. Mitts of silk can be made; crowns for baby's bonnets, and many other things, that will suggest themselves as you become proficient.

TO TAN A SHEEPSKIN WITH THE WOOL ON.—Tack the skin upon a board with the flesh side out. Scrape with a blunt knife. Rub the skin with pulverized chalk until it will absorb no more. Then take it from the board and cover with powdered alum. Double half-way over with the flesh sides in contact. Roll tightly together, and keep dry for three days, after which unfold again and stretch on a board or nail to a door, and dry in the air, and it soon will be ready for use. These sheepskins are susceptible of brilliant dyes, and make beautiful mats or rugs of domestic manufacture.

FOR OIL CLOTH.—An old reliable English cook-book gives the following recipe as an oil-cloth restorer: Melt one-half of ounce of beeswax in a saucer of turpentine. Rub the surface all over with it and rub it with a dry cloth.

PUZZLES—NO. 8.

A HIDDEN PROVERB.

In the morning of thy days
Honor God in all thy ways,
Always ready to acknowledge
Him in either school or college
And he shall impart the light
To direct thy paths aright.

S. MOORE.

Quebec.

THE DISHONEST SERVANT.

Among the best of the many arithmetical ingenuities is that of the dishonest servant. His master had bought thirty-two cans of maple syrup, which he caused to be placed in the cellar by the servant in such a manner as to count nine cans on every side of the square counting on the line thus:—

1	7	1
7	7	
1	7	1

But the servant managed, despite this precaution, to steal twelve cans—that is, four on three separate occasions—and yet, when the master counted he found nine cans on each side, according to his original plan of detecting fraud. Now, how did the ingenious thief rearrange the cans so as to stand the test?

METAGRAMS.

1. I am a writing utensil.
2. Change my head and I am a bird.
3. Again and I am a moor.
4. Again and I am a boy's name.
5. Again and I am an animal's home.
6. Again and I am a number.

FANNIE HALL.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES.—NUMBER 7.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.—Seek good and not evil, Amos 5, 14.

A BOY'S NAME.—William.

TRANSFORMATIONS.—1. White, while, whale, shale, stale, stalk, stack, slack, black. 2. Nest, sent, slat, slam, slum, slum, grum, grim, prim. 3. Hate, have, lave, love. 4. Saxe, sale, hale, hole, pole, Pope. 5. Hand, hard, lard, lord, ford, fort, foot. 6. Blue, glue, glum, slum, slum, slat, seat, peat, pent, pint, pink. 7. Hurd, card, curd, cast, east, easy. 8. Sin, son, won, woe.

PUZZLERS HEARD FROM.

Correct answers have been received from Nancy E. Wagoner, Sarah J. Cook, Lillie A. Greene, Bert W. Denham.