

"ASTRA" TALKS WITH GIRLS.

[Correspondents seeking information in this department should address their queries to "ASTRA," Progress, St. John.]

I wonder if any of you will be going fishing on the 24th, girls? And whether you will enjoy yourselves, and catch many fish? I do sincerely hope you won't! I am sure you won't go fishing, I mean, of course—because I have a horror of women who fish, and I think that if I were a man I should turn and flee from any girl who was capable of stringing a poor, helpless, writhing worm on the cruel barbed hook, with which she hoped to catch an equally helpless fish, by the tenderest and most vulnerable part of his body, his mouth. And I should furthermore feel certain that a girl who possessed sufficient sense to drag the struggling captive off the hook might also possess enough force of character to administer condign punishment to her husband when she thought he needed it. "The gentle sport" it has been called but I see very little gentleness about it, and I wonder what the fish would say, if they could speak? And yet, I suppose, we all fish sometimes, don't we? At least people say we do, and sometimes we land our fish with commendable suddenness, before he has had a chance to play with the line, while at other times we keep the poor fellow on the hook just to gratify our own vanity until he asserts his independence by snapping the line, with one vigorous effort and swimming away, a scared and saddened, but much wiser fish. I really think I shall have to write a book on "Angling, considered as a fine art," some of these days.

MARION ERLE—St. John—Yes, I remember, you very well, and I should be only glad to help you in any way in my power, but you have no idea how hard it is to give any advice that will be really useful and practicable. Indeed I do know all about it. I shall never forget the first story I ever wrote for publication. I was only sixteen and with the callow arrogance of extreme youth I decided to aim high, and choose only a first class publisher for my maiden effort. With this end in view, I selected the Appleton's of New York for the honor of bringing out my story, and I sent it to them with some stamps and a note, the easy confidence of which must have afforded them intense amusement, provided they had any sense of humor. Then I awaited results and made calculations about spending the proceeds of my venture. That was some years ago, and I have not heard from them yet. But this I must say, that I don't believe I have ever written anything as good since, and that I think the Appleton's were pirates to keep those stamps, and the story, too! I really believe I have mounted more over the stamps than the story. I have also met with the still more puzzling experience of having my first contribution accepted and my second rejected without explanation. So you see I can sympathize with the troubles of young authors. I really do believe that the American journals are the best, and I know they are the most liberal; but then I am afraid one must be either well known or well recommended in order to obtain an entrance to their pages, but still I recommend you to *The Ladies Home Journal* before you give up. After all you can but fail, and it is best to try. Then there is *Toronto Saturday Night* and *The Dominion Illustrated Monthly*, either of which should be a good market for the work of young Canadians, provided it is good. If you can write bright, short stories suitable for young people or children there is little doubt of your finding an opening in *The Youth's Companion*, though the latter magazine is rather hard to please, I must admit. Don't get discouraged. Keep on trying, and the best advice I can give you, and I only wish I could do something more tangible in the way of helping you. Write your Ms. clearly and legibly, paying great attention to punctuation and the proper division of your sentences, for a great deal depends upon the appearance of a manuscript and its workmanlike style. If you could have it typewritten, so much the better. I shall be interested in hearing how you succeed and if I can help you in any way, please let me know.

FLORA McFIMMSY, St. John.—I am an glad you were pleased, and it is very nice of you to write and tell me so. I think it must be a very delightful exercise, and though, at first sight a lady does look rather masculine on a bicycle, it is merely because we are hardly accustomed to the idea yet. You know once upon a time skating was considered a bold and masculine amusement for girls, and I remember myself, that the first time I saw a lady on snow shoes I was shocked, and very much inclined to blush. I do not see the slightest charm about the horrid song it is not even "catchy" like "Down went McGinty" and I cannot imagine how it ever became popular; the words are nothing and the music is less. Do you think so.

ROSE, St. John.—Kiss him good night, by all means, my dear little girl; the greatest pride in the world could scarcely object to giving her betrothed lover a good night kiss, and what good is a sweetheart to a man if she refuses to show him a little affection, and give him the caresses he certainly has a right to. How do you know that he will not grow tired of you cold a piece of perfection and seek a more human love? You would be very sorry then, wouldn't you not? So take my advice and give "Jim" a good petting the next time he comes to see you; don't be afraid of his finding out that you love him, because that is what he wants you to do.

An Eccentric Frock.

If you are fond of something a bit eccentric you will find it in my illustration, a very pretty negligee made up in Turkish stuff. You cut the breadths bias at the top in order to form the plaits and train, and the sides are also bias about the waist. You don't make the usual goreds, but substitute very small ones at the waist, and there must be material on the right to make the fold over. Cut the left side as usual and finish with a velvet ribbon. On the right the revers is sewed on with reversed seam.

The cascade in jabot style may be of surah or crepe de chene. There is a straight collar and pocket flaps, and cuffs are of velvet.

LESSONS IN DRESSMAKING.

Hint: That if Followed Will Save Money in the Home.

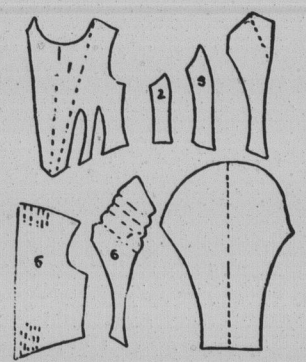
In spite of the prevalence of Russian blouses, deep basques are, on the whole, decidedly going out of fashion, and the majority of dresses are now made with short waisted or pointed bodices, generally accompanied by some form of corset. The difficulty of making a perfectly fitting corset prevents this style from becoming very popular with amateur dressmakers, but the corset may be imitated by straps of velvet or ribbon, which are equally fashionable, and offer no difficulties whatever.

The bodice illustrated at figure 1 gives a good example of this strapping, and is specially suitable for dresses of plain woolen material.



The skirt is made either in four-reau shape or gored, and trimmed all round with bands of inch and a half wide ribbon velvet. These rows of velvet, with their alternate spaces of the same width, form a trimming from twenty to twenty-four inches wide, or about up to the knees: there would be about seven rows of velvet. The effect on a skirt slightly trained at the back is very pretty, on a short, round skirt it is not so good, being too barrel-like.

The bodice is made up on a lining cut like figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the diagram. The front may be made with or without a seam down the centre; provided a good fit is secured, the presence or absence of the seam is quite immaterial. The fastening is on one side, and the center part, between the slanting lines, is covered with velvet, which may be plaited or laid on flat, but which



must be without a seam. The draped fronts are cut like No. 5, with fine plaits at the shoulder and again at the waist; the front edge is the selvege way of the material and is simply turned under to make the first fold.

The back, No. 6, is also arranged in plaits at the top, leaving a small v-shaped opening to be covered with velvet. The velvet straps start from the side seams and end in points in front; the lower strap forms the waistband, which is fastened on the point of the bodice at the back with a little rosette or bow. The sleeves are trimmed with bands of velvet up to the elbow, and the collar is trimmed with three rows of velvet, fastened on one side with little bows.

This makes a very pretty and simple morning gown for young ladies, and looks well in gray and black, fawn and black, and in any of the plain, rather light colored woollens that are always worn in the spring.

THE USE OF FLOWERS IN DRESS.

Wherein the English Woman Distances Her American Cousin.

The American woman, while she claims she loves flowers, does not seem to have the same ability in arranging them as personal decorations as is possessed by her English cousin. An English woman will select the finest artificial flowers and garland an evening gown with them until she makes herself look like a veritable "walking flower," which is what Heine says that all women should be. After the flowers are found, dressmaker and dress wearer will study how they can best be arranged for evening wear. A pretty blonde who was going to the races, who had discovered that deep dark Russian violets best mirrored her face, had a jaunty bonnet made entirely of these blossoms, while she wore about her shoulders a lace cape with a medallion collar formed of violets, their leaves and stems. A ribbon exactly matching the flowers in hue caught the lace cape just in front. She was a wise blonde, for she realized that not only did she look as pretty as a picture, but she was wearing the flower that everything masculine most admires.

Another pretty floral garniture is intended for wear with an evening bodice. It is a plastron shape composed entirely of primroses, and has as its finish on each shoulder a flaring white ribbon bow. Just at one side of the corsage is placed a small love bird, and its mate is behind the ribbon bow on the left shoulder. This was placed on a white silk bodice. Such an addition to one's gown will do much to make it look almost as good as new. The knowing how to dispose of the small adjuncts of dress is really what makes a successful toilet, and this is the art of the French woman, who knows how to suit every part of her costume to the hour of the day and the occasion. English women excel in their evening toilets, but the American is rapidly gaining wisdom from each of her cousins, and will in a short time lead the procession, so far as good dressing is concerned.

SEASONABLE RECIPES.

Specially Prepared from Practical Tests for the Lady Readers of "Progress."

[Correspondents seeking information in this department should address their queries to "Editor Seasonable Recipes, Progress, St. John.]

Some Ways of Serving Sweetbreads.

Sweetbreads are daily becoming more and more in demand, both to tempt the capricious appetite of convalescing invalids, and for dainty dishes on dinner, luncheon, or tea tables.

While by no means difficult to cook, care must be taken to follow the directions for their preparation, the process, being the same, no matter which of the receipts chosen. In selecting the larger, plumper and more fleshy they are the better. Put them first into tepid water, letting them remain from fifteen minutes to half an hour, then set them on the fire in cold water, to which a little salt has been added. As soon as the water begins to boil, put it off, and slip the sweetbreads into a pan of cold water and leave them until perfectly cold. This parboiling and chilling, which is termed "blanching" makes them fair and white. Next remove the pipe and skin. Here is where the woman cook with her scissors can do better work than a man with his knife.

Sweetbreads Whole with White Sauce.

Blanch the sweetbreads in the usual way. Put into a saucepan of a size to hold them in one layer, but no larger, as much white stock as will barely cover the sweetbreads. Thicken this with a little white roux (flour and butter worked together smoothly), add a sprig or two of parsley, a small onion, and a little pepper, salt and grated nutmeg. Let it simmer two or three minutes, then add two tablespoonfuls of thick cream, or if none handy, milk will do. Put in the sweetbreads, and let them simmer in the sauce for about half an hour. Take the onion and parsley out of the sauce, let it cool for a minute, then mix a spoonful of the sauce with the yolk of an egg. Add this gradually to the rest of the sauce, stir until it is smooth, then put the sweetbreads on a hot dish and pour the sauce over them. If liked, the egg yolk may be omitted, and a desert spoonful of lemon juice added to the sauce, which should be rather highly seasoned. White sauces should not be insipid; though delicate, they should be piquant, i. e.—sharp, pungent. For the thickening, allow one tablespoonful of flour and butter the size of a walnut—for each sweetbread.

Sweetbreads With Tomato Sauce.

It came to my ears last week that I had made a mistake in serving tomato sauce with braised sweetbreads. I have the authority of the best cooks on cooking, and have observed the practice of many professional cooks to the contrary notwithstanding.

Blanch the sweetbreads, trim them, and cover them with thin slices of fat bacon. Take a braising pan, or a stew pan with a tightly fitting cover. Put into it a carrot sliced, and a moderate sized onion. Lay one or two slices of bacon on the vegetables, then put in the sweetbreads, and sufficient good veal stock to almost cover them. Sprinkle a little salt over them, put on the cover with a sheet of buttered white paper between it and the stew pan and put it on the top shelf of the oven, and cook thus for about thirty to forty-five minutes or until the sweetbreads are slightly browned. The bacon must be taken off when they are about half done to allow them to brown. To make the sauce, strain a can of tomatoes, and before rubbing the pulp through a sieve, pour off the liquid, and nest part of the liquor, and add the gravy that the sweetbreads were cooked in to the tomato pulp. Season with salt, pepper and a little nutmeg. Stir over the fire until it is hot and smooth. Arrange the sweetbreads in a circle on a hot dish overlapping each other, and pour the sauce in the centre.

Asparagus—How to Cook It.

Of all the succulent herbs a fine dish of asparagus cooked to a nicety, seasoned to a charm and spiced by a good appetite, is fit for the gods. It is more, it is healthful, but not especially nutritious; it forms one of the most valuable of vegetable luxuries. The plant has been brought to perfection by sensible cultivation; it is a native of Southern Europe and found growing wild along the shores of Italy, Greece and Turkey.

Asparagus is a great favorite in London, where it is consumed in large quantities.

The following is the way to cook it:

The bunch should be plunged in boiling water, which should be well salted, set down on the root end, with the tips well out of the water, as the steam cooks them quite sufficiently; almost any asparagus will be well cooked after twenty-five minutes' boiling. It can then be put into a colander and drained, the strings carefully cut and the vegetable arranged on toast to serve. Several sauces are used with it, either plain butter, pepper and salt, a la Hollandaise, or drawn butter be poured over it. Sometimes when the tips of the asparagus are served with toast as an especially great dainty, the stalks are well boiled and strained for soup; this makes a delicious soup, more so when cream is added. Asparagus can be steamed to warm it over, cut in small bits and stirred into an omelette, if any happens to be left over.

How to Eat It.

I notice that a Canadian work on cooking and table etiquette says "it should never be held in the fingers, but the tips should be cut off with a knife on the plate and eaten with the fork." I am afraid the writer of that work has not "dined out" very much or she would have observed that where asparagus toasts are not provided, the best people invariably use their fingers to convey it to their mouth, taking each stalk separately and daintily between the thumb and fore finger; dipping the head into the dressing first. Properly, it should be served as a separate course after the meats, or even after the game, if there is any. It is as often served cold as hot, and makes a refreshing summer luncheon dish served ice cold with an oil and vinegar dressing.

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Marrow Bones.

Marrow bones are cut from the shanks of beef, about five inches long. They are considered a great delicacy by many. They are usually served as a savory entree at the end of the dinner. To cook them, stand the bones upright on a flat tin plate with a flour-and-water paste over the ends. Boil them in a sauce-pan, but do not let the water come higher than half way up the bones. Time to boil, 30 to 40 minutes. When done remove the paste and roll each bone in a napkin folded to the length of the bone, and serve on a strip of dry hot toast. The marrow should be scooped out with a marrow scoop and quickly spread lightly over the toast, and then freely sprinkled with pepper and salt.

Breast of Lamb with Green Peas.

The breast of lamb is the cheapest part, and can be cooked in various ways.

1. Cut up the meat into neat pieces, strew a little pepper and salt over them, place them in a stew pan with as much weak stock, or water, as will cover them, and let them simmer very gently for an hour or more. Take out the meat when tender and place it on a hot dish and keep it warm. Thicken the gravy with a little flour and butter, and add a can of the best French peas, or a pint of fresh green peas, cooked in the stew for twenty minutes. To serve, pour the gravy and peas over the meat.

2. Trim a breast of lamb and put it whole into a stew pan with as much water as will cover it. Add a bunch of sweet herbs and an onion stuck with one or two cloves, and let it simmer very gently until it is sufficiently tender to remove the bones, then take these out and let the meat get cold while it is pressed between two dishes. Then cut into neat pieces, sprinkle salt and pepper over them, egg and bread crumb them, and fry a nice brown. Drain and serve with tomato sauce.

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Will arrive at St. John from Sussex, 8.30; from Quebec and Montreal (excepted Monday), 9.25; from Point du Chene, 12.45; from Halifax, 19.30; from Halifax, 22.30.

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