

## The Little Cook.

Every child, especially every girl, has an instinctive desire to make and meddle wherever any culinary processes are going on; and every mother and every kitchen-maid are accustomed to give the little one a bit of dough when mixing bread or cake, and of letting her bake her own little confection in a saucer. It is a wise mother who takes advantage of this natural inclination in a girl to make her a cook betimes, and to turn the taste and tendency to account in the family. To be a good cook, to be a good nurse, to be a good needle-woman, are the three things absolutely essential to the happiness, and to the continuance in happiness, of the great majority of all women, whatever more it may be given them to be; and if the things leading to such desired proficiency are taught in season, there will be so much more time left for all the other things that invite after the foundation of the positively necessary is laid.

The business can be begun by letting a child of nine or ten, for example, make a bowl of gruel, overseeing its preparation so carefully that there can be no mistake made and that the consumer of the gruel can praise it so sincerely that her ambition will be fired for all the future, so far as gruel is concerned, to make it perfectly. She will put a quart of water in the saucepan over a good fire, and then wet a tablespoonful of oatmeal in a little cold water, and stir it smooth as the smoothest paste, and when the water boils she will pour the paste into the saucepan, stirring it all the time, when half done adding a saltspoonful of salt, boiling a half-hour, and straining through a fine wire strainer, when if it has not scorched, the mayid will have a fastidious appetite who is not pleased with it. Indeed, many well people find it an agreeable and satisfying dish; and we have known of a house-keeper, in distress for a soup, serving this oatmeal gruel, well salted, and with some celery tops thrown into the tureen as it came to the table, for the sake of appearances, and experiencing the delight of one who has made a new discovery at the relish with which her guests disposed of her white soup.

When our little cook is sufficiently accomplished in this simplest gruel, to which learning in later years panada and the more complicated sorts can be added, her attention can be turned to bread, that one most necessary thing in the support of civilized life; and her initial step in the process can be the concoction of some cream of vater biscuit, in which she will be shown how to rub a piece of butter the size of an egg into a quart of flour till there are no lumps, adding then a teaspoonful of salt and two heaping teaspoonfuls of cream of tartar, stirred in well, then wetting it with a pint of cold water in which a heaping teaspoonful of soda has been dissolved; when well mixed pouring it out on the board into enough flour to let it be moulded smooth, rolled to a surface half-inch thick and the biscuits cut out with a tumbler, if there is no biscuit-cutter, and baked in a well-greased pan. When her biscuits have been admired, as they ought to be, she can proceed to bread. Here the question of yeast complicates matters at the outset; but as yeast is now so easily obtained at the baker's and in the compressed form, we will assume that she has it on hand, and if she has to learn to prepare it, that exciting business can come afterward. If now she seals a half-pint of milk, and adds it to a gill of water in which a quarter of a yeast cake has been dissolved, together with a teaspoonful of salt and another of butter and stirs all that into a quart of flour, turns it out and kneads it till her little arms are tired, and another stronger person must finish the half-hour's kneading for her, and then puts it into a pan, and cuts a transverse slit in the top of the mass and leaves it to rise overnight, she will have completed the first chapter of her work. In the morning, when the dough may have doubled in height, she will take it out, and knead it again till the little arms can do no more and assistance is called in; then she will shape it into a loaf, put it into a buttered pan, prick it with the carving fork, and bake it in a hot oven three-quarters of an hour, when it will not be her fault, or the fault of her overseer, if she has not produced a good loaf of bread, and is not entitled to be called lady, or loaf-giver.

Gingerbreads and cakes and dainties will come into a later year of our little cooking-school, as in this year only the essentials are dealt with, although to hungry school-children cookies and snaps and jumbles sometimes seem more essential than bread and meat, and they quite agree with that wit who thought he could dispense with the necessities of life if he could only have the luxuries.

But all this accomplished week by week, it is time for the young cook to learn how to



FIG. 36.—No. 4708—LADIES' POLONAISE DRESS. PRICE 35 CENTS.

Quantity of Material (21 inches wide) for 30, 32 inches, 12 yards; 34, 36 inches, 13 yards; 38, 40, 42 inches, 15½ yards.

Quantity of Material (42 inches wide) for 30, 32 inches, 6 yards; 34, 36 inches, 6½ yards; 38, 40, 42 inches, 7½ yards.

If made of materials illustrated, 6 yards of 42-inch goods, 1½ yards of 21-inch velvet, and 8 yards of ribbon will be required to make the medium size.

Fig 36, Pattern No. 4708, price 35 cents

roast the meat, wiping and not washing the beef and mutton; how to boil it—in hot water if the meat is fresh, in cold if it is salt or corned; how to broil a steak, by searing each side quickly as possible in order to retain the juices; how to make and season a stew; leaving the dressing of a fowl to a much more advanced period of kitchen lore, together with the composition of *entree* and all such elaborate affairs. It will be time, too, with this roast or stew, to learn about the preparation of the simpler vegetables; how to cook potatoes, for instance, by plunging them into boiling water, and when done pouring off the water, sprinkling them with salt, and leaving them one hot evaporating bursting moment over the fire. And when with this our little maid has learned how to make a plain custard pudding, by beating five eggs with two tablespoonfuls of sugar into a quart of milk, adding half a teaspoonful of flavoring extract, peach or lemon, and a generous pint of salt, grating nutmeg over the top, and baking three-quarters of an hour, she can truthfully style herself a good plain cook; and she has learned her art, moreover, in a way as good as play.

## To See or Not To See.

Few of us realize the blessing we have in our eyes till we are about to be deprived of them. We often speak of the comparative blessings of the various senses, all but musicians, and those whose chief happiness is in music, agreeing that they would rather be deaf than blind, a few going even so far as to say, and that in the face of the well-known content of the blind, that they would rather be deaf than blind, if the choice lay with themselves. In view of this very evident value that we set on our eyes, is it not singular that we take so little care of them? Is it not strange that we so heedlessly expose them to all extremes of heat and cold, of light and darkness and semi-light, by using them under such circumstances that we strain them, and disregard and forget them, till all of a sudden they oblige us to remember, with the stings of pain and blurs of shadow, if no worse?

Every child is told, from the first reading of the first story, to put away the book when twilight comes. But every child sees the mother or aunt bending forward for the last ray of light on work or paper when twilight begins to purple the air and make it necessary to strain all the fine nerves of the eye in order to distinguish one thread or one letter from another. We all know that when the body is fatigued, it is not merely the back or the legs, but the whole body; and if the whole body, then the eye with it, that portion so closely and intimately connected with the brain, the organ of all sensation; but tired out, we throw ourselves down and take a book and put the eyes at work, the eyes as tired as any of the rest of us, and in so doing give the brain also more work and more fatigue, or we take up the needle and do this bit of fine stitching, thinking we are resting everything but our fingers meanwhile; and when we are too ill to do anything else, we are apt to think we are not too ill to write letters, to read a light novel, or to look at pictures, and forget that the eye has been weakened with all the rest, and needs shadow and nothingness—nothingness, if we except mollifying baths and the care that a vital organ should always have.

Just as many of us think it is wise to save an hour and add it to life by doing a piece of sewing in the morning before breakfast, or will have our children up and at their lessons on an empty stomach, without at all recognizing that the body needs refreshment before beginning its tasks, and that the eye is badly weakened by the effort which calls upon it for exertion before the body has been strengthened by the morning meal, the fact being that nothing should be done, neither walking, nor studying, nor sewing, till a cracker or a crust has been eaten, or one has had the sustenance afforded by a glass of milk, or something of that sort.

Never should we allow any one suffering under an enfeebling disease, or recovering from an acute illness, to use the eye at all. Never should we disregard the situation of the windows in our children's school-rooms, but forbid the children to be seated so that the light falls into the eye from the front. Never should we allow a bed to be placed so that the light is in the face of the sleeper, and always should we make sure that the eyes have good night rest by having the sleeping-room completely dark, and letting any fanciful love of seeing stars or moon or sunrise be gratified in another room.

Nor can mothers be too careful in the matter of their children's studies after nightfall. They should prevent and forbid as much studying then as possible, and when the exigencies of our present system of education make it absolutely necessary, they should provide the fullest and best light to be had, never permitting any use of the eyes by flickering fire-light, or any uncertain flame; and when they detect the first symptom of short-sight in a child, they should obtain optical advice at once, and have the child fitted with glasses to relieve the strain.

When the eyes are in trouble, inflamed, or aching, or suffering from a blow, it is of all times the time to be most careful, and if the trouble is serious in the least, to have medical advice, and try no other application beforehand than very hot or cold water. Plentiful bathing, pure water, and pure air, good food, just enough work, and all the rest it will take, is what the eye needs as much as any of the rest of the body for its perfect health and the preservation of its power.

## Only a Monthful.

X.—Do you know that man sitting at the table over there?

Q.—Yes; it is Jones, the greatest gourmand in the city.

X.—I know it, and he is eating away his senses.

Q.—That won't hurt him any; it is only a monthful to him.

## An Intelligent Cat.

A New-Hampshire physician has sent the following cat story, for which he vouches:

"Among other queer tricks, Dick will take off my glasses very carefully with his paw, hold them with one claw and survey them with great apparent interest.

"The first time he did this was one night when he had been napping and I reading. He is a great pet, and going to him I bent over, without indicating by any motion my meaning, and said gently:

"Dick, if you want to go to bed take off my glasses."

"He immediately reached up a paw and took them off as deftly as though it were an old habit. Thinking this a 'happy-so,' I put them on and made the same request in different words, with precisely the same result. After one more repetition he yawned and plainly intimated that was enough."

"Now, my dear," said the teacher, "what is memory?" The little one answered, after a moment's reflection—"It is the thing you th. forget w