

RANDOM NOTES FOR THE BUSY HOUSEHOLD.

It would appear from the weekly contributions to some of the society journals that the good old domestic art of cooking is not practised by the present generation of young women. One of our exchanges commenting upon this view, says:—

The young girl of the present day seems to think it adds to her attractiveness, when conversing with young men, to boast of her utter ignorance of domestic affairs. She claims,—oh yes!—to know when things look well, and can give a sharp reprimand to the unfortunate or careless maid who has forgotten some detail of table service, or illy arranged certain ornaments of the parlor; but for knowing how to manage house, how to buy provisions, how to calculate the expenditures and keep them within reasonable bounds, no matter how large the income, or how to economize, in dress, if necessary, and still be well and even handsomely attired,—the modern young girl claims utter and blissful ignorance of these necessary acquirements.

What young man of moderate circumstances or whose income is even beyond that point, cares for a wife who openly declares her inability to perform such wifely duties? Even though he should ask his wife to do more than oversee the members of her household,—if she cannot do this, and asserts that she does not care to know how, he is a brave man who will risk his future fortunes with such a companion. Take the case of a young man of a moderate salary, would you not consider him on the verge of insanity if he would venture upon a life partnership with such a girl no matter how charming she might otherwise be!

If a mother is so foolish as to train up her daughter in the belief that a thorough knowledge of domestic economy is not one of the qualifications of refined womanhood, all that can be said is: "Alas for the daughter of such a mother!" and let us hope that the latter may have enough native common sense to see for herself, as she attains womanhood, the mistake of an affectionate but mistaken parent. A pretty wife, well-dressed and with fascinating ways is a charming picture to contemplate in the home; but let her add to this an earnest interest in her household and in the comfort of her family, and she is more than an ornament,—she is a helpmeet, a housewife, a joy in the possession of which her husband may count himself blessed among his fellows.

Dr. Rainsford, a New York Protestant minister, recently discussed some phases of this question at a public meeting. He said:—

If proper education means the fitting of young women to be their best selves in their day and generation, then I hold that our young women in this our great city are not getting the education they must really require. The American city girl, until very lately at any rate, has been one of the worst cooks on earth. She is dependent upon the store around the corner for the purpose of half-pre-

pared food, and even when half prepared she generally spoils it. Very rarely can she make her dresses or even mend them. Rarely indeed has she any knowledge of housekeeping. I do not malign her when I say she cannot cook well, sew well or wash well. Now what prospect has she got before her?

As long as her parents live she can bring her \$4 or \$5 a week to add to the family store, and take the most of it out again, if not the whole of it, to spend on her dresses and her car fare. But when that home is broken up what is she going to do or where is she going to go? She can't live by herself on \$5 a week.

It is almost impossible for her to make the two ends meet, whereas, if she could sew well and could cook well her housekeeping expenses would be greatly decreased.

Let me dwell for a moment on the other side of this question:—

These girls that crowd to the factories and stores are not willing to take domestic service. What result has this? The result is that the servant question is the most exasperating of modern questions. People are giving up housekeeping and are going into boarding houses and hotels. Sixteen years ago, when I came to New York, the movement from hotels back to family life had begun. It was a time of home-making, and there were few hotels in New York. It is not a time of home-making now. People are giving up homes and going back into hotel and boarding-house life.

Much has been said and written about the "Japanese cup of Tea"; songs have been sung in our academies by little tots to illustrate the sweet solace it affords. An English medical practitioner recently laid down the following rules for making "good" tea, no doubt believing that the subject was far from being exhausted. We give them for the benefit of the readers of this corner:—

1. Always use good tea.
2. Use "two" hot, earthenware teapots.
3. Use soft water which has just got to the boil.
4. Infuse about four minutes.
5. Pour off into the second hot, dry teapot.
6. Avoid second brews with used tea leaves.

The fact that tea as served in France, is so often bad, may be accounted for by the omission of some one, or perhaps all of the above rules in its preparation. They are all necessary to make a cup of really good tea, and if they were more often strictly adhered to tea would oftener be a delicious beverage.

Even at the best "afternoon tea" rooms in England, America and France I do not believe that "two" hot, "dry" teapots are often used to make tea "fresh for each customer," or that the tea leaves thereafter are thrown away.

There is considerable truth in the remarks of a well known professor regarding study, and the danger of overworking the student. He ex-

pressed some time ago, his regret that:—

"The luxury and beauty of scholarly leisure" at the universities have passed away forever. "It is quantity to-day rather than quality I fear," he said recently. "The tutors become teachers far too young, and they work so hard that they have no time to look to the right or to the left; and what is life if not a continually glancing to the right and left? They give themselves no time to develop. They take a good first class and then give out what they have learned as teachers. This engenders the money-making spirit. I have no word to say against it, but it all tells on the spirit of the university."

The present system of constant examinations finds no favor with him. "They stunt our young men," he said; "they have no time or opportunity to be idle. Now, do you know, it is my idle friends," he added, "who have become distinguished men in later life? I believe in cultured idleness: It gives a man time to read for himself. But look at these examinations; why, a man knows exactly what he has to read frequently to the very page. You don't call that study."

The professor confessed that at first he had been opposed to the girls' colleges, but that he was a great success, "and it is a real pleasure to me to see the young girls so eager to learn. Young men do as little as they can, young women do as much as they can; too much, indeed. Again, they work more systematically, and their knowledge is better arranged. I wish the men could be ashamed and spurred on to further effort. Indeed," he added, laughing outright, "a friend of mine and his wife went in for the same examination; she took a first class, he only a second."

In a series of interesting lectures given to young mothers by a medical practitioner, a number of practical suggestions were laid down regarding the sleep necessary for infants and growing children. Never wake a child unless absolutely necessary. Good sleep is a necessity if health and growth are to be maintained. A healthy normal baby will sleep 18 out of 24 hours, which gradually diminishes until at two years 15 out of 24 hours will suffice. This amount of sleep is gradually reduced until at 15 years old, 11 out of the 24 should be spent in bed. The midday nap for babies is most desirable. At this time they should be entirely undressed and put to bed. After the fourth or fifth year children will not sleep in the daytime. In regard to a child's bed, a good spring bed, a hair mattress and blankets not too heavy should be provided. A feather bed should never be permitted, only when a child is exceptionally delicate, and difficult to keep warm. Otherwise it is too heating. Children should be put to sleep in a comfortable room, not too warm. If possible, they should always sleep by themselves, and never in any case with a sick person.

Their dogs were taught alike to run. Upon the scent of wolf and friar. Among the poor Or on the moor Were hid the pious and the true, While traitor knave And recreant slave Had riches, rank and retinue.

Truly Thomas Davis, as a poet has a high place and a secure one in the estimation of the Irish race; it shall not be disturbed for ever.

It seems to me that some of our young litterateurs are inclined to be a little hard on writers who do not think and work in the manner they like best. I was present some time ago at a lecture delivered in London on the poetry of Clarence Mangan. The lecturer was appreciative, and estimated the number of Mangan's poems that are of high order, and will live, at about twenty-five; a subsequent speaker brought the number down to fourteen; another held that only three were of the first rank, and one of the three had some blemishes. Fortunately the discussion closed at that point; had it lasted much longer the remaining two might have been wiped off with the rest. This sort of thing happens when critics have tastes theories, and ideals of their own, and judge other writers thereby. Yet they might remember that the garden of poetry is a wide one, and in it are flowers of many kinds; they might recollect too, that there is a fashion in poetry as in other things, and that the styles and subjects most favored in one period are often thought very lightly of in another. It is not very long since the run was all in color. Then the poet was bound to put any number of reds, blues, browns, yellows, purples, greens, and greys into his verses. He should stipple in a bit here and a bit there—just a little more pink in the third line, or a little more amber in the fifth, or a touch of gamboge in the seventh, and so on—until he had completed his "picture." Tennyson may be said to have set that style going, but then his was a master hand; his imitators laid on the pigments more heavily, and of course failed to reproduce the same charming effect. Then came the deep, profound, mystic, unintelligible style, subjective, meditative, poetry; soul-questionings, psychological underings. While that vogue was on the "higher criticism" would hardly deign to look at a poem the meaning of which lay on the surface and was appreciable on a first reading. Lately amongst a particular school or group of Irish writers the poetising is largely concerned with wraiths, ghosts, fairies, sheefros, phoekas, banshees, and linan-shees—banshees preferred. The cult may not have a long continuance, the vein appears to be nearly worked out, but certainly we have got from it some very interesting additions to our stock of Irish poetry. Long life to their authors and to the critics who so highly commend them; but let them not deal ungenerally with the humbler versifiers who are able to handle only less ethereal subjects. The eagle soaring in the sun should be willing to let live unharm'd "the small birds piping in the snow."

Although quite foreign to the subject of Irish poetry, we cannot help adding the following note, from the same pen:—

"The breaking open of the tomb of the Mahdi at Kartoum by Col. Kitchener and his staff, and their treatment of the remains of their dead foe form one of the most disgraceful and disgusting episodes of modern history. The conduct of those 'civilized' warriors was utterly savage and barbarous; short of cannibalism there could be nothing worse. . . . The tomb having been rifled the body of the dead Chief was taken on board a British gunboat and, it is said, burned to ashes, the head having been first cut off and preserved as a relic for the entertainment of British persons. The question is now being asked, who has the head, and where is it? Is it set up as an ornament in a messroom or ship's cabin? Col. Kitchener, we have been told, presented it to Major Gordon; the Major is alleged to have said that it is not in his possession. 'But he had it,' says a correspondent of the 'Daily Chronicle'—'he made no concealment of the fact that he had it, everyone knew it, and he told one of my friends that he was thinking of presenting it to the Royal College of Surgeons.' Another London paper says, 'the story goes that the head is in a building not far from Trafalgar Square.' That might mean the Royal Horse Guards, the National Gallery, the official residence of the Prime Minister in Downing street, or the House of Commons! Wherever it is, and however its possessors may ultimately dispose of it, the whole incident is shocking and scandalous, and has evoked feelings of profound disgust in every civilized nation in the world."

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Nature Should be Assisted to Throw off the Poisons that Accumulate in the System During the Winter Months

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Drainage of Irish Bogs.

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A couple of weeks ago, Professor Thomas Johnson, D. Sc., read a very interesting paper before the Royal Dublin Society, on the subject of "Improvement of Bog Land."

"He said he did not attempt to cover the whole field of bog land, but rather to give an illustration of what had been done in some parts of Germany. The subject of improving these bog lands was a very large one. He would omit telling them the results of the operations pursued in Germany as these were shortly to be published, but he would indicate the line of investigations pursued. Early in this century an enquiry was instituted into the drainage of bogs in Ireland, and in the National and their own library they could see the valuable work that had been done. In the inquiries he had made he found not the least trace of that commercial jealousy which was said to exist between the two countries. The bog to which he specially referred was situated about eighty miles from Munich, and had been taken in hand by the Bavarian Government. A scientific expert was sent down and the bog was placed under investigation. The Government carried out the drainage, manuring, etc. He described in detail the course adopted in which by chemical analysis the very best results could be obtained. After it was ascertained that the bog contained certain elements they must proceed to work it up. To do that they must first know the exact state of the bog as regards trees, roots, etc. Bavaria was very much like Ireland. There were 2,000 square miles of bog in this country and much of it was more or less reclaimable.

Mr. Sherlock, D. L., said this subject was of enormous importance to Ireland, and he hoped Prof. Johnson would be able to go into it a little more fully at another time. He referred to the large quantities of vegetables and leguminous crops grown in bogs in Germany, and remarked that the Government in this country would do nothing for utilizing the bogs of Ireland. He had himself reclaimed about 40 acres of his own, but when he applied to the Government for a loan they simply laughed at him although they would give him any money he asked for improving other land, which he did not think half as valuable as the bog. There were vast quantities of cut-away bog in Ireland, and he must tell them that bogs were being boomed at present. There were three companies in England formed to work up the bogs; in one of these there was £30,000; in another £20,000, and in another £50,000, and the latter company wanted to spend money on bogs in Ireland. He thought the paper was one eminently deserving the thanks of the Society. Professor Barrett exhibited a specimen of Canadian bog."

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Two of Ireland's Sweet Singers.

From time to time, the well-known Irish poet, essayist, and parliamentarian—Mr. T. D. Sullivan—contributes a column of literary notes to the Dublin "Weekly Nation." In the issue of the 4th of March, his facile pen has traced a few paragraphs regarding two of Ireland's greatest poets—Davis and Mangan—which we feel our readers will enjoy and appreciate. No man is more competent to treat such a subject, and no writer of our day has a stronger claim on Irish favor than the gifted T. D. Sullivan. We take the following from those brief, but happy notes:—

"Mr. W. B. Yeats is coming in for sharp and angry attacks in a Dublin paper for having said, on the occasion of a lecture lately delivered by Frank A. Fahy, in London, that much poetry of Thomas Davis was mere 'journalism,' and that his ballad of 'Tontenoy' is a specimen of that class of work. One writer says: 'Remarks such as Mr. Yeats is reported to have made may be accounted for by assuming that he has not read the poems referred to.' But that is an impossible assumption. Another writes, 'Popularity and vitality go hand in hand as tests of merit. Davis's work enjoys both. The work of Mr. Yeats and the majority of his colleagues can pretend to neither.' A third lets himself go in this fashion:—

"If Mr. W. B. Yeats in literary efforts confined himself within certain limits, he would charitably be suffered to indulge in his whims and fancies; but when he attempts to criticise the

works of genuine Irish writers he cannot expect much consideration."

For my part, if I may venture to express an opinion, I would say these gentlemen do not rightly appreciate Mr. Yeats, who is a literary man of genius, a poet of distinction, and an Irish Nationalist; but I can respect the patriotic feeling that flames out in their indignant protestations. I think also that the estimate of Davis as a poet held (apparently) by Mr. Yeats is beneath his merit, and I do not wonder that a somewhat brusque expression of it has given a certain shock to many Irishmen who hold the name and fame of Davis in tender regard. Mr. Yeats can plead, quite truly, that his remarks were entirely apart from and irrespective of political sentiment, and were merely a literary judgment of literary work. But I think it is a pity to view such a man as Davis in that cold dry light. Besides, it might well be remembered in this connection that the whole world loves and cherishes many poetical compositions that touch the feelings and sway the human heart even though they may have certain defects discernible by experts, grammarians, professors, and other cultured people. And so loved and cherished—by the Irish race at all events—so potent, so imperishable are several of the poems of Thomas Davis—"Tontenoy" amongst the number.

Thomas Davis is as a poet, had his limitations—like other men—I was about to say like other artists, but charming a title like that is hesitate to apply it to one who was so

natural, so earnest, so sincere. Art was not what Davis cared for. He was a serious man, he had a serious—and a very noble—purpose in view, and for its furtherance he wrote his political poems for the "Nation" just as he wrote his leading articles. To that extent and in that sense his songs and ballads may be called "journalism," but they were poetry nevertheless. Yes, he had his limitations. Of wit, fancy, humor, there is not a trace in his compositions. There is not a laugh between the covers of his book. For scope, play, and variety of human feeling, he is not to be compared for a moment with Moore, Burns, or Byron. There are some graceful and tender love songs among the poems of Davis; all the rest have Irish nationality for their inspiration and their theme. Let us grant that his range was limited, that his "scale" or gamut was comprised within a few notes; but within that compass what noble effects he produced! All round this planet has rung the thunderous refrain of his inspiring song, "The West's Awake"; for half a century Irish hearts have been touched and tears have been brought to Irish eyes by the fine poem that closes with the pathetic record:—

On far foreign fields from Dunkirk to Belgrade Lie the soldiers and chiefs of the Irish Brigade.

What Irishman has not in his heart some portions at least of his poem on the penal times, when— They bribed the flock, they bribed the son, To sell the priest and rob the sire;

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