

THE HOUSEHOLD.

LITTLE THINGS—BUT USEFUL.

BY MRS. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

Some articles that are very palatable when cooked fill the house with such offensive odors while being prepared that one inclines to dispense with their use rather than make the house so uncomfortable. But a little care will remedy this evil almost entirely. For instance, what can be more sickening than the smell of boiling cabbage or turnips? A lump of charcoal put into the boiling water with the cabbage will almost entirely remove the offence; and if a cook can be made to understand that the doors leading to the halls and dining-room from the kitchen must be kept closed, and those leading outdoors, together with the windows, must be open, no one will be annoyed by the fumes from boiling cabbage.

In boiling "greens" the atmosphere all over the house is often tainted with the offensive smell until it seems like a low-class boarding-house. Take a lump of bread as large as a hen's egg, tie it up in a clean cloth and put into the kettle with the greens and it will absorb all troublesome odor.

Housekeepers are often greatly troubled and perplexed by mildew from damp closets and from rust. By putting an earthen bowl or deep plate full of quicklime into the closet the lime will absorb the dampness and also sweeten and disinfect the place. Rats, mice, and many bugs that are apt to congregate in damp places have a dislike to lime. As often as the lime becomes slackened throw it on the compost heap if in the country, or into the ash barrel if in the city.

Often articles of value in polished steel, particularly knives, are left damp, or water is unfortunately spilt upon them. If this is discovered before the rust has eaten through the plating or polished surface it can easily be removed without defacing the article. But if they have lain long unnoticed and the rust has made its way through the surface they must be taken to some manufactory where there is an emery wheel used for polishing, or some jeweller will be able to finish them off as good as new. But in the case of knives and forks they will never be quite as strong, because in removing the rust they must be ground down before repolishing, and will consequently be thinner.

We have lately been informed by an accomplished housekeeper that she does not waste her time in trying all the new moth destroyers or preventives. For years she has used nothing but ground black pepper. She spreads out her blankets and such things as she desires to pack away for winter, and sprinkles them plentifully with fine black pepper, such as she uses on the table. She does not study economy in its use, but buying it by the pound, sifts it over with an unsparing hand. In the fall it can all be easily shaken out into a sheet, then put into a tightly covered can and kept for the next year. In the fall when needed for daily use, spread the articles on the line, and, imagining that a good chance to sneeze unrestrained is comforting and cheering, give each article a faithful beating. If no dampness has come nigh them while packed away the fine, dry pepper will be easily dislodged and leave no annoyance or disagreeable smell behind, like camphor and the various papers and preparations of carbolic powder. We have been in the habit of using cayenne pepper of late and found it a thorough preventive, but it is very severe on those who use it. The black pepper may be equally effective and far less troublesome.

Since hearing of this moth preventive we found the following, which is well authenticated:

"A lady, called to pack up her woollens and valuables unexpectedly for two or three years' absence, had little time or strength to be over-particular. So she tossed the pepper (black) with random laviness by the pound through each trunk, box, and bag of bundles, and sending them off to a great storehouse left them there untouched for three years. On her return she found all—wool garments fur-trimmed, and lined articles—perfectly unharmed. Well peppered, and without any extra care, every article is clean, fresh and undamaged. In fact this is the best way in which pepper can be used: better than wearing out the delicate tissues of the stomach by a liberal use in our food. It is, to be sure, useful when put into the shoes on a cold journey, or when the blood needs to be coaxed down to the feet; but in view of the

above evidence the chief end of black pepper is to defend mankind from powerful robbers, in form and color so indefinite that even in the matter of identity they are capable of deceiving their most familiar victims."

Now we have great faith in this statement. We have seen that red pepper does do this work thoroughly, and are confident that black pepper will be equally powerful and less painful to the applicant. If housekeepers will give pepper, of any color, a fair trial, we think it will be satisfactory. Certainly a less disagreeable agent than kerosene, which has been largely and satisfactorily tried to protect against moths, but is not a pleasant remedy.

Red pepper plentifully sprinkled in the tracks of rats and mice, thrown into their holes wherever found, and about the places where they have broken through, will most surely drive them away. Their feet are very tender, and if they once walk over such a fiery path they are not inclined to repeat the experiment. Why should not the moth be equally sensitive and sensible?—*Christian Union*.

POLITENESS AT HOME.

There is no good reason why a man should needlessly put his own wife to the trouble of wiping up tracks, when he takes great pains to cleanse his feet before crossing his neighbor's threshold; neither is it consistent that we women should be too severe on our husband and son for a little carelessness, while we assure our caller with the most gracious of smiles that "it isn't of the slightest consequence."

I would not have any one less considerate of those abroad. I hope we all enjoy seeing our husbands and wives polite to our neighbors, only let us be sure to practise our good manners at home.

There are husbands who would hasten to assure a neighbor's wife, who had in her haste burned her biscuits, that they "greatly enjoyed them where they were so nice and brown," who would never think their own wives needed the same consideration.

For my part, I think the laws of politeness are equally binding upon us at home, no unkind language or thoughtless behavior being allowable there, that would not be proper in society. No man can be a gentleman, though ever so genial abroad, who is a tyrant or habitual fault-finder at home; and no woman is a real lady who is not a lady at home in her morning-wrapper as well as in silks in her neighbor's parlor.

One member of a family who begins the day with fretful words and harsh tones, is generally enough to spoil the happiness and temper of the whole for the day. Not all who hear the impatient word give the angry answer, for many choose to suffer in silence; but every such word makes somebody's heart ache, and, as a rule, it is somebody whom we love and would do almost anything for, except to keep back the unkind, sarcastic word.

The life of hurry and overwork many of us live has much to do with our impatience, and if we can do anything to remove the cause, we ought to do it as a matter of duty. I know there are many fathers and mothers upon whom the burdens of life rest so heavily they can hardly get needed sleep. But many times the tired housekeeper and mother might "lighten the ship" a little.

When God sends trouble and care, let us bear it in his strength, but let us be very careful about the unnecessary burdens we take upon our own shoulders. Plain, neat hems, with a cheery-hearted mother, are infinitely better for children than a multitude of tucks and ruffles, with a sad, disheartened mother who has no time to help her family to be wise and good.

Don't let an ambition to outshine our neighbors, or even to have the best kept house and most glittering windows, blind us to the fact that sunshine and cheer are good for body and soul.

Then do not let us make ourselves miserable by borrowing trouble that may never come. We sometimes utterly unfit ourselves for the work of life by anticipating sorrows God never meant us to bear.

"Don't cross a bridge till you come to it, Is a proverb old and of excellent wit."

A little time spent judiciously in preventing the causes of sickness in a family, is better than years of waiting over "what might have been" or what may be.

A careful sowing of good seed to-day may save us from reaping a terrible harvest by

and by. Never fear that the good Father above will not send all needful discipline, and trust his care, but don't borrow trouble or engage in its home-manufacture.—*Arthur's Home Magazine*.

INITIALS.

This new and interesting game can be played in several ways, and can be used also in connection with other old games, to which it lends a new charm. Any number of players can join, each one of whom tells the initials of his or her name, which the others can write on a slip of paper if they do not prefer trusting to memory. Each player invents an initial sentence, using the letters of one of the names. This sentence may be humorous or sensible, complimentary or the reverse, and can sometimes be made to fit exceedingly well. As specimens, a few impromptu sentences are given on the actual names of some of the original players: Easter Eggs, Exquisite Elegance, Fairy Prince, Fried Pork, Wilful Negligence, What Nonsense, Serene Truth Triumphs, Saucy Toll-Tale, Goodness Brings Blessings. When all have prepared one or more sentences, the leader begins by addressing any person he pleases with the remark formed upon his initials, and each of the other players follows his example, also using the same letters. This attack is kept up indiscriminately on the person addressed by the leader, until he can answer the person who last addressed him before another of the players can say another sentence in the letters of his name, in which case the others all turn their remarks on the one who has been thus caught. The game then goes merrily on, as shouts of laughter always follow the quick conceits which are sure to be inspired by the excitement of the game. As a specimen of the way in which it can be applied to an old game, "Twirl the Platter," has a new interest when the players are called out by initial sentences, as the effort to discover one's own name in some obscure remark made by the twirler, in order to catch the platter before it ceases to spin, keeps every player on the alert.—*Harper's Young People*.

FRENCH BEDS.

When I was settled in my home in Paris, in a hotel as quaint as the one in Rouen, I had leisure to examine these delightful beds. The springs are of any pattern you choose; but they are always set into these stationary bed alcoves; the first mattress is filled with bareek, a dried seaweed, that retains the indescribable faint fresh odor of the sea; above this is laid the true bed, which is always made of carded wool. Every autumn, usually in the early part of September, these beds are ripped open, the covers are carefully repaired and washed; the wool is taken to the Seine, scoured thoroughly, and placed to dry on the banks of the river; then it is brought home; old women who make the work a profession card them with old-fashioned hand cards—such as we still find in remote country places in the United States—and card the wool into the most delicate fineness; then they replace it in the mattress, cover and tack it in place with long needles and stout threads. The whole mattress is so light that any child can carry it.

The pillows are made invariably of down, or of feathers which have been stripped from the pens. Both pillows and mattresses are sunned and aired every day. But it is this yearly cleaning with soap, water and sunshine that makes a French bed so sweet and so inviting. Nothing is more picturesque than the groups of women and girls in the costumes of their different pays, congregated on the banks of the Seine, right in the heart of Paris, particularly on the south shore near Notre Dame, washing the great fleeces and laying them to dry on the gravelly banks—for the Seine is low in the autumn—their many voices making the scene still gayer as they turn to answer the salutations of some passing ouvrier in the great white hat and blouse of a mason, or a swarthy *chocolatier* with his velvet-covered urn on his back, hurrying up to vend his cups at the flower markets.—*Herald of Health*.

LEARNING TO COOK.

A judicious mother will so manage her daughters that even at the early age of 13 they can, in an emergency, prepare "a meal of victuals." A thorough domestic training is very useful to a girl. At school, she always has a teacher or a fellow pupil at hand

to help her over hard places, but if she is set to make a batch of bread herself, and attend to it from the time the sponge is set till the loaves are taken, sweet, fragrant, golden-brown, from the oven, she learns meantime chemistry, caloric, perseverance, delicate manipulation, self-reliance, neatness, and acquires skill and the habit of carrying her work in her mind; as on an act of neglect or forgetfulness at any point in the process may spoil the whole. Be it said to the unwisdom of mothers do not see in the performance by their daughters of such household services a certain which cannot be acquired by their willingness to do themselves the kindness to their daughters to quire of them. Girls who waste a great deal of time in being utilized to their own ends, who can climb trees, who get out fatigue, or jump a great deal of time, who can sweep, and scrub, and iron, if she is not These are the ones who possess in order to though she may have at her call. Those who are curious to investigate that many of the most valuable literature and art were as accomplishments considered spec were with the pen or pencil or training girls to be useful, and meet any emergency, mothers can them an inestimable blessing.—*Selecta*.

THE BEST GIFTS.

The mother who hurries her little boy off to school that he may be "out of the way," and then sits patiently at embroidering his clothes for days together is not giving herself to her child. She is merely gratifying her own tastes in his dress while neglecting that cultivation of his mind and heart that she of all persons should be most capable of perfecting. The forming of right habits within him—habits of thought, of amiability, of observation, of politeness, of veracity—is vastly more important than the decoration of his clothing. Yet many mothers will protest that they have not time for this kind of work, while they do find time for a thousand trifles. This is no objection to the elaborate clothing, if other things are equal, but we are speaking of gifts intrinsically costly. The mother who plants the seeds of intelligence, of honor, of virtue, of nobility of character, of obedience to law, in the heart of her child, gives him the costliest gifts in her power to bestow. These she cannot give him without at the same time giving him herself.—*Ehrich's Fashion Quarterly*.

SODA IN COOKING.—W. Harnie says, in *The Country Gentleman*: "I would certainly discard soda in any form, and every preparation of so-called baking powder, also. Ask your doctor; ask those acquainted with the properties of saleratus, cream of tartar, &c., and if they are honest they will tell you these things are not fit to mix into our food at all, under any circumstances. In conversation with a doctor a day or two ago, I asked his opinion of the use of the various baking powders. He said the women will have the stuff, and therefore the purer it can be made the better. He admitted the bad effects of using this poison. (It is a poison when used in our food, and is even worse than a good, quick poison.) I recommend no substitute; but recommend, as I have often done, good, sweet butter, eggs, milk and cream, and a good cook, always without the salts in question. We have quite enough to do to digest the rich cakes, pies, and the many other superfluous, unwholesome and unnecessary things now so common, even among the hard working and otherwise healthy mechanics.

SEED WAFERS.—One-half pound of sugar; one-quarter pound of butter, creamed with the sugar; four eggs beaten very light; enough flour for soft dough; one ounce caraway seeds, mixed with the dry flour. Mix well; roll into a very thin paste. Cut into round cakes, brush each over with the white of an egg, sift powdered sugar upon it, and bake in a brisk oven about ten minutes, or until crisp. Do not take them from the baking-tins until nearly cold, as they are apt to break while hot.