

of power—new, at least, to her realization—the exercise of which will be as easy and agreeable to herself as it will be effective in its influence over her children.—From “*Gentle Measures in the Training of the Young.*”

#### REAL LACE—HOW TO WEAR IT AND HOW TO CLEAN IT.

It has been said that women will fall down and worship a bit of dingy lace. Men wonder how ladies, dainty as regards the cleanliness of every other article of dress, will wear lace which is, to say the least, yellow, if not positively soiled. Point d’Alençon, one of the most beautiful and costly of the lace family, has a dingy appearance even when new—the dirt appearing to be in the thread itself. This doubtless arises from the fact that it is slowly made, from hand-spun thread, and wrought with the needle, and the poor lace-makers weave into it the sweat of their fingers, if not of their brows.

The fashion of dingy or yellow lace is one of ancient origin. In the days of Elizabeth, immense lace ruffles were worn at the neck and wrist, the lace being generally handed down from one generation to another. To have old lace was to have an ancient lineage. Of course, the yellow tinge of age was not to be bought by parvenus, and to have washed one’s lace forsooth! would have been to take away its prestige entirely.

But doubtless the fashion has another reason for its origin. The moment the delicate meshes are *wet* the tiny threads *shrink* and the lace “fulls” more or less. I have heard ladies say that they could do up lace to look “just like new.” Now, this very fact of shrinkage proves that it can not be done by any but a “professor.” The art of washing fine and costly lace is a trade in itself. It is spread, while wet, upon a cushioned table, and, after being pulled smooth, a pin is stuck into every mesh, to prevent shrinking; a whole day is sometimes spent upon a single yard of lace. When ladies can do that, they can perhaps do up lace to look “just like new.”

I once knew a lady, possessed of a rare collection of valuable laces, and also a rare passion for them, who washed and pulled them until they were dry, and then, slightly oiling some fine writing-paper, pressed the lace between the folds of it for several days. Of course she had not much else to do, and the lace, especially the Valenciennes, did really look beautiful; but it did not look new after all, and lacked the spirit-like delicacy of that which has never been wet.

There is no finish so perfect to a lady’s attire as a set of lace collar and cuffs. One

should wear linen in the morning, to be sure, the pure whiteness and washableness harmonizing well with the plain print or merino morning-dress. But for full dress one must have lace, fine and clear, both for beauty and fashion. To wash it is to spoil it. To throw it away as soon as it has become soiled—well, only people who wear diamonds at breakfast can do that; while to wear it positively dirty with oil from the hair or neck, is to forfeit the respect of all whose good opinion is worth having.

But there is a way out of this dilemma both easy and feasible. If a box of powdered magnesia be kept at hand, and the laces thrown in and covered as soon as they are taken off, and kept there until they are wanted again, they will come forth as clean and fresh as could be desired. The magnesia can all be removed by beating the lace across the hand. Lace which has become much soiled by long use may be cleaned in this way so as to be quite presentable over a dark dress; only, it must be thoroughly rubbed with the magnesia.

Lace-mending forms a separate branch of industry in Europe; as distinct, if not as widely followed, as lace-making. Like that, the trade must be learned, for the delicate meshes and pattern must all be restored. Ladies of rank often employ lace-menders to teach them their art—that being, I suppose, as fascinating an employment as embroidery. Charlotte Brontë, in “*The Professor*,” makes her heroine a lace-mender.—*Hearth and Home.*

#### SKELETON LEAVES.

Mr. J. F. Robinson describes, in *Hardwick’s Science Gossip*, a method of preparing skeleton leaves which seems preferable to the old and tedious method of maceration, and which he recommends to all young botanists, especially to his fair friends who take up the science of botany more as an intelligent amusement than for severe study. First, dissolve four ounces of common washing soda in a quart of boiling water, then add two ounces of slacked quicklime, and boil for about fifteen minutes. Allow the solution to cool; afterward pour off all the clear liquor into a saucepan. When this liquor is at its boiling point place the leaves carefully in the pan, and boil the whole together for an hour, adding from time to time enough water to make up for the loss by evaporation. The epidermis and parenchyma of some leaves will more readily separate than others. A good test is to try the leaves after they have been gently boiling for an hour, and if the cellular matter does not easily rub off betwixt the finger and