

THE HOUSEHOLD.

THE EVOLUTION OF MRS. THOMAS.

BY MRS. MARY H. FIELD.

The whistles blew vigorously for noon in the little California city where Mrs. Thomas lived. Noon to her meant, chiefly, dinner-time. In just ten minutes there would be an irruption into her dining-room of six hungry boys and girls with their father, who, if not equally hungry, was sure to be in as great a hurry for his mid-day meal. Mrs. Thomas therefore made haste to take up her dinner. She was a slight, active woman, with capable, energetic movements, and with a pleasant, matronly face, lit by a pair of fine eyes of that peculiar hazel color which leaves one in doubt as to whether they are gray or brown, and which usually are the windows of a clear and strong spirit. Lines of care and toil marked her forehead, for the half dozen expected young people were all her own, and one doesn't have such possessions without paying the cost, especially where there has not been a full purse to make some of the burdens lighter.

The dining-room was simply furnished, and its clean, painted floor uncarpeted; but the table was nicely spread, and as the food was brought in from the adjoining kitchen it looked inviting indeed—roast lamb, with potatoes and turnips, white and brown bread, cabbage salad, and a great dish of fruit for dessert. It was scarcely on the table when in streamed the young folks, ranging downward in ages from eighteen to eight—noisy, happy, overflowing with young life.

"Hello, mamma!" shouted little Dick, the youngest and most uproarious—"Is dinner ready? I'm starved to death."

"Don't say 'hello' to mamma," said sixteen-year-old Mary; "it isn't polite."

"Run out and wash, boys, before you set down," said the mother—a command which she had issued at least ten thousand times before—and as the younger boys reluctantly filed out, the oldest of them, a young grammarian of twelve, fired back a parting shot: "It isn't set down, it's sit."

There was evidently a little western insubordination in the house, or at least a lack of deference, for a moment afterward, when the mother said to the eldest boy, "Albert, you better carve the meat, pa ain't in sight yet," she was again set right by a young critic—"Pa ain't in sight, you mean." Then, as the good daughter Mary saw a little flush run over her mother's patient face, she came to the rescue.

"Who cares whether mamma says isn't or ain't? She cooks the best dinners in this town. Look at this lovely bread!"

"Fact," said Albert, sententiously; "pass it this way, will you? Good bread's better than grammar any day."

The father came in—a quiet, gray-eyed man with an absorbed, reflective manner. His presence was not the slightest check upon the gay talk of the children, although they made place for him with affectionate eagerness. "You are late, papa," said Mary. "Is every thing right at the office?"

"Well, not exactly," he answered. "A few of the men are making a great ado about our giving a job to some Chinamen."

"The selfish, mean things!" cried Mary.

"The wise, far-seeing, hard-working men," retorted Albert.

"I can't get along at all with our work," said the mother, "if the Chinese laundry has to go. I believe in 'living and letting live.'"

"You haven't read history," said Albert, "nor political economy. You might think as men do if you had;" and the young lord of creation helped himself again to the delicately browned meat and perfectly cooked vegetables.

Mr. Thomas seemed too keenly appreciative of the dinner, and too far off in thought, to notice his wife's discomfiture. But he came back to present company and conversation with some animation when Mary said, appealingly, "Papa I'm going to bring my arithmetic home to-night, and get you to show me about some points in percentage."

"All right, Molly, I'll do it," he said, cheerfully, for if there was any thing Mr. Thomas liked it was "figuring." He had a natural taste for it, and his long experience as book-keeper for a lumber firm had kept him in practice.

When evening came the Thomas household settled down to work in very pleasant fashion. It was December, and the rain was pattering down outside in a soft and steady way, making the cheerful fire-light and lamplight within seem all the more delightful. The three little boys, Frank and James and Dick, had a new *Royal Press*, and put their eager young heads together to look at the "Young Folks' Column," as it lay spread out on the table. Albert and Mary were working with pencils and note-books, appealing occasionally to their father, whose opinions and explanations they received with great confidence. Albert was in the intricacies of book-keeping, and they talked about "balancing" and "debtor side" and "credit side," "single entry" and "double entry," with a knowledge which seemed to Mrs. Thomas simply wonderful. Mary propounded her knotty arithmetic questions to her father now and then, while Amy, a fourteen-year-old girl, was busily diagraming sentences from her *Lessons in Language*. Poor Mrs. Thomas, diligently darning stockings, felt strangely lonely and shut out.

Amy held up her note-book in triumph. "I've got through at last," she said. "Look at them, ma; see how we have to box up the words and hitch them together in this fashion."

Mrs. Thomas surveyed the work in mild astonishment, and Amy, not at all averse to a little display, said: "See, here's the subject with its adjective modifiers, and here's the predicate with its adverbial modifiers, and here is a clause branching off by itself, with its attribute complement, and here at the end of all is the object complement."

"Indeed!" was all that Mrs. Thomas could venture in reply. In her girlhood she had liked grammar and been quite a famous parser, but this new dingram jargon was all Greek to her, and she gave it up as she would a hard conundrum.

The boys, Frank and James, now clamored for Amy to join them in a game of authors.

"Well, who'll be the fourth one?" she said, "Dick can't play; he is too little, and it's his bed-time, too," she added, as she saw his injured look.

"I should think ma might," said Frank, in a reflective tone, "even if she hasn't read the books."

"No," said James, "she'd make as big mistakes as Dick. Let's wait for Mary."

Mrs. Thomas set her work-basket hastily aside. "Come, Dick," she said, "I'll go up stairs with you," and when Dick was tucked up in bed she stooped over him to kiss him good-night.

"Why, ma," he said, "your cheeks is wet; you ain't crying, are you, ma?"

"Never mind, Dick," she answered; "go to sleep." Then she went into her own room for a few moments and "had it out" in a burst of bitter tears.

She thought of her youth with its scanty opportunities, so well appreciated and used; of her love of books and intellectual things, which had only been put aside and smothered by the pressing necessities of her married life. She thought how she had gradually suffered herself to lapse into ignorance, scarcely taking time to read the weekly religious paper—and that only because on Sunday the mending basket couldn't be brought out, and so there was an hour or two of time which that blessed newspaper filled. And now her children were getting far beyond her in book knowledge, and in their heedless young fashion they had to-day shown in so many ways their perception of this fact. Was there no help for it? Must she just stay in the kitchen and drudge away her life, and let the children drift beyond her because she could not be a companion for them? Mrs. Thomas was a clear-headed little woman, not at all given to the blues or to useless tears. She had a way of arriving at conclusions. So she said to herself: "I believe there is no need of this; I am forty years old, to be sure, but I have good eyes and a good head! I'll see what I can do. These children shall respect their mother for something besides her cookery."

(To be Continued.)

SOME HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIES.

It is said that there is enough substance thrown away and squandered in American families to keep the moderate French or

English family; and although that is probably an exaggerated statement, there is a moral in it. The American marketer buys usually the best; it appears upon her table once, is sometimes warmed over for a second dish or for breakfast, sometimes not, and Bridget does as she pleases with the fragments, either giving or throwing them away. An English woman buys, let us say, a roasting piece of beef; she too, buys the best, because, as she will use it, it is the cheapest. The upper cut makes one day's dinner handsomely; the under cut, in thin slices, carved across instead of up and down fried in butter, and served on mashed potatoes or on rice, garnishing the dish to make it seem like something choicer, and add to appetite, makes a second dinner; then the long end piece, which has remained untouched, makes an excellent stew with tomatoes or carrots and potato balls for a third dinner, being cooked and cooled so as to remove the grossness, and then warmed up again; the various fragments either make a pie, or, hashed and spiced or curried, answer for a fourth dinner, which will be pieced out, as one may say, by a rather daintier dessert than usual, as the case will be also with the fifth dinner—a soup of the bones that remain, made hearty with vegetables; and, after all, there is left a store of invaluable dripping. An English woman is equally economical concerning the ham; when no more slices can be cut from the bone, there is yet a small quantity of dry meat upon it that would seem to most of our housekeepers as something rather worthless. Not so to this good woman; it is dried a little further, and then grated from the bone, and put away in jars, to be taken out and seasoned on requirement for the enrichment of omelets, for spreading upon savory dishes of toast which make a nice addition to breakfast or lunch, for stuffing olives, and making sandwiches, after which grating the bone serves to flavor soup. Whenever she has a few slices of heterogeneous cold meats, she has countless palatable ways of using them—doviled, broiled in a batter, scalloped, minced, into croquettes or mayonnaises.—*Exchange.*

FRUIT PRESERVING.

JELLIES, JAMS, AND JULY GOOSEBERRIES.

Early in July the good housekeeper begins to think of her jelly and jam. It is a great mistake to put off making currant jelly till the end of the season, for the best jelly is made of currants not perfectly ripe. Those used for preserves should be fully ripe. To keep a light color in jelly, care should be taken not to cook the sugar long, as this will darken the fruit and cause it to "candy." Some persons are very successful in making currant jelly by merely heating the sugar in the oven and, after the juice has boiled twenty minutes, adding the sugar and leaving it over the fire only until the sugar is thoroughly dissolved. This makes the jelly of a beautiful color and delicate flavor, but it is not usually so firm as that made by the common method of boiling twenty minutes before, and ten after, the sugar is added. Do not "skimp" your sugar, a pound to a pint is the only safe rule.

The best jelly-bag is made of new flannel. Take a square of flannel and fold it to make a double three-cornered piece; sew up one side; this leaves a large opening by which to put in the fruit, and the juice will all run to the point, the weight of the fruit pressing it out. Do not squeeze the bag. Very little juice can be gained in that way and what is will be of an inferior quality. It will not pay for the labor.

Currant and apple jellies are the easiest to make, as they are surest to be firm. Apple juice will help to harden jellies that incline to be thin. Much of the jelly in the market is made from apple stock with flavoring of various kinds to justify the labels attached. It would be well if nothing more harmful was ever used.

A delicious raspberry jelly may be made by using one quart of currants to a pint of raspberries. Pick over the fruit, leaving the currants on the stem, but taking out all leaves. Mash the currants and put them over the fire to scald, then pour them, hot, into the bag. Take the juice that runs out at once and pour over the raspberries. Scald this and put it into another bag. Let both hang over night. In

the morning measure the juice, putting currant and raspberry together, and weigh a pound of sugar to each pint of juice. Boil the juice well before putting the sugar in; it must boil twenty minutes at least. Add the sugar and let boil ten minutes longer; skim carefully; if the juice does not look clear, the white of an egg may be added.

Crab-apples make a very firm and palatable jelly. The Siberian crab-apples are easily obtained and are fine in flavor, but, if one can get them, the wild crab-apples (the sour, green things that grow on thorny trees in the country) give the greatest satisfaction. They have a spicy flavor and a pleasant acid which are particularly delightful to invalids. The juice of the crab-apple, of either kind, may be used for jelly with that of other fruits, such as peach, raspberry or cherry, and gives firmness without injuring the flavor. The proportion may be left to the taste of the jelly-maker.

Quince jelly is easily made from the parings, and odd pieces of fruit, left after preserving, but it is not well to leave the seeds in, as they tend to make the jelly sticky and rosy. Grape jelly should be made before the grapes turn. A good old cook-book says, "In making jelly, do but little at a time to keep it of a light color and crisp and firm. Bright, fair weather improves the color and flavor of jelly."—*Good Housekeeping.*

GRANULATED WHEAT BREAD.—Take a pint of actively boiling water, salted slightly, and add enough fine granulated wheat flour to form a thin mush. To this stir in a quart of tepid water, a small piece of butter, two eggs, well beaten, one-half teacup of New Orleans molasses, and one-half cake of compressed yeast dissolved in a little water; thicken it as stiff as it can be stirred with a spoon with cold-blast flour, and put each loaf in a separate pan; let it stand until it puffs up nicely, and then bake in a quick oven two hours.

PUZZLES—NO. 13.

WHAT WAS THE NUMBER?

A little girl, when asked how many Sundays she had been absent from Sunday-school, replied: "If you add the number of stripes Paul received to the number of days Paul was blind, divide by the number of years Paul spent in Greece, subtract the number of hours Paul spent in the deep, multiply by the number of years Paul spent in his own hired house, divide by the number of Paul's epistles, subtract the number of anchors cast out when Paul was shipwrecked, you will have the number of Sundays I was absent, and the answer to this riddle."

DIAMOND.

1. A vowel. 2. A servile imitator. 3. Gave rise to a contention between Juno, Minerva and Venus. 4. A forest tree. 5. The most frequent vowel in the English language. GEO. E. SMITH.

ANAGRAMS.

(Names of noted men.)

1. Then warm at odd.
2. We care in danger.
3. Our voters' bones listen.

ENIGMA.

I'm in gentle and in good,
I'm in ocean and in flood.
I'm in dove-tail and in wood.
I'm in sunlight and in fire,
I'm in heires and in sire,
I'm in lightly and in loud,
I'm in lowly and in proud,
I'm in raven and in dove,
I'm in hatred and in love.

HANNAH E. GREENE.

ACROSTIC.

The required names are all to be found in the Old Testament. Their initials, taken in order, name the sister of a great leader.

1. A name meaning bitterness.
2. One of the twelve tribes.
3. A son of Jacob.
4. One of the patriarchs.
5. A cave in which David concealed himself.
6. One of the twelve tribes.

PRIZE FOR SOLUTIONS.

For the best list of answers to these puzzles, received within two weeks after the date of this paper, a nice bound book will be given. Head your letters, "Answers to Puzzles No. 13," and give name and post office address in full. We will allow for distance and age in awarding the prize.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES.—NUMBER 12.

DIAMOND.—

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A N A
A N G L E
E N G L I S H
A L I V E
E S E
H

EASY ENIGMA.—"An ounce of pluck is better than a ton of luck."

BIBLICAL ENIGMA.—"Serve ye the Lord." (Joshua 24: 14.)

BEHEADINGS AND CURTAILMENTS.—1. I (evn'r). 2. P (ony). 3. T (wenty). 4. M (annalr). 5. T (winlc). 6. S (tonc). 7. L (ear)n. 8. K (nigh)t. 9. M (ada)m. 10. B (row)n.

PUZZLERS HEARD FROM.

Answers have been received from Hannah E. Greene.