

THE HOUSEHOLD.

A WISE SELFISHNESS.

Can a mother spend herself too freely for her children? Hundreds of thousands of good mothers all over the land will answer unhesitatingly: "No! there is nothing too much for a mother to do for her child." It is true; but, like all truths, it has its limitations. What does the wise mother desire for her child? Perfection of character. She wishes to guide and train it so that it may pass through this life a blessing to itself and to those with whom it comes in contact. Can she do this by always yielding to its desire for pleasure and personal comfort? By making its own case the first thought, by removing every roughness from its path?

When the question is put to her she says: "No; of course not; no one would be so foolish as to expect it." And yet, when it comes to be a question between her gratification and her child's, does she not always put her own aside? The woman who sits in a darkened room, evening after evening, rocking her baby to sleep because the small tyrant will scream if she leaves it, is sowing seeds of selfishness. If, later, she tries to educate it more wisely, she has to trample down, or pull up, the weeds which ought never to have been allowed to sprout.

She owes the evening to herself and her husband, who has a right to some share of her time.

It always seems to me intensely sad to see faults in children which are the consequence of over-indulgence by those in authority over them. When a child speaks impertinently to his mother, or rudely to his brothers and sisters, when he lifts his hand to strike his mother, or persistently disobeys her, one knows without the need of long explanations that the early training has been defective. Is there a sadder sight than to see a young girl taking the best of everything for herself, to the utter disregard of the mother who has spent her life for her? The girl has been brought up to place herself first and her mother second in everything; she is scarcely to blame if she does it almost instinctively. Unless she has a very noble nature she will do it without any compunction.

If the family means are small, she must have the prettiest dress, the freshest ribbons, the most expensive hat. Her mother says: "Oh, it is no matter about me!" and the daughter echoes the sentiment, which should never have been uttered. When both cannot go on a pleasure trip it is the mother who stays at home, saying to herself: "Young people ought to have a good time; the cares of life come soon enough to us all!" She does not remember that the selfish spirit she is fostering is a bad preparation to meet them. If there is disagreeable work to be done the mother assumes it, because she cannot bear to see the pretty hands reddened. Household work should be a delight to a healthy girl, and one of her sweetest pleasures should be to spare and save her mother.

A little glycerine and rose water will make her hands smooth and soft, and there are harmless cosmetics which will restore her complexion. If she lets her mother overtask her strength while she stands idly by, she is laying up a store of remorse many tears will not wash away. She will not do this if, all her life, she has been accustomed to see her mother treated with deference, her tastes consulted, her advice sought, her wishes followed. She will feel that naturally a part of the burden should rest upon her strong, young shoulders, and shrink from the idea of allowing her mother to do anything she would consider it derogatory to do herself.

A mother does spend herself too freely for her children when she gives up her own rights to them, effaces herself so that they do not recognize her superior claims, makes it difficult for them to "honor" her, as the Fifth Commandment demands that they shall do.

It is a wise selfishness that makes the mother insist upon keeping her proper place in the family as the crown and centre of home, tenderly loving her children, serving them all in legitimate ways, but seeing that they take their fair share of the burdens of life, instead of weakly bearing them herself.—*Elizabeth Robinson Scovil, in Ladies Home Journal.*

BLESSINGS.

Dear sisters. How many of you on this lovely Sabbath morning are feeling discontented and unhappy because you cannot go to church, because of ill health, your distance from church, or the size of your family, maybe. Suppose you are ill, think if you have no blessings for which to be thankful, and if you are a Christian that is enough of itself to be thankful for. If there is no church near you, as in my own case, you may still have much to be thankful for. I have been to church once in fourteen months, but I have many other blessings.

My trust in God need not be stayed, nor need it vanish away, because I cannot go to church. I am thankful for the blessing of a good husband, children, home, good neighbors, first-class literature, and the privilege of playing and singing to God's praise, with my little ones about me swelling the chorus. I have been compelled to stay at home from church and from visiting much by the size of my family, but it has never troubled me in the least. I remember a dear friend who came to me some years ago and begged me to join the W. C. T. U. I did so. Not long after, she came and asked me why I did not attend the meetings. I told her I could not without neglecting my little ones. She said, "We are disappointed in you; we had expected you would be one of our most earnest workers and meant to put you in as corresponding secretary."

I said, "My dear friend, I consider that you have no more zealous worker among you than myself. It is by no means necessary that we should attend every meeting to show our interest in the cause of temperance. Let every woman in the land bring up her little ones in a proper manner and there will be no need for temperance meetings, and, while I don't attend the meetings, I never leave a stone unturned to help the work along."

I further told her that when my little ones were large enough to leave alone there would be time enough for me to attend such meetings, but while they were small my life should be devoted to them. A few days after another friend came to me and asked, "Why don't you come to church any more?"

I said, "Let some of the good sisters who go to the church twice a day and to Sunday-school too, besides prayer-meeting twice a week, come just once a month and take care of my little ones and they will be doing God service in a most commendable manner, and I will show you how quickly I will go to church."

The Thursday night following a kind neighbor did come and care for my four little ones and I went to prayer-meeting. Twice I left them with my brother, and for one year that was the extent of my church going. When our little son was eight months old he died, and how glad I was that I had stayed at home and devoted my time to him and the rest of my little family.

A lady friend was mourning her inability to attend a quarterly meeting in the village in which she lived. A minister came to the door and asked for a drink of water. She told him how badly she felt at not being able to come out to the meeting. The minister replied, "My good sister, have you never thought that there were many ways of doing God service. Has it never occurred to you that this is the very work He has set you to do?"

She told me his words did her more good than all the meetings would have done, and that she never complained again. Many women complain of the continual routine of household labor, and the great care a family devolves upon them, never thinking that the life of a faithful wife and mother is the noblest life to live.—*The Housekeeper.*

HOW TO ENLARGE CLOTHES-CLOSETS.

How often people, especially the ladies, wish that they had larger clothes-closets. Too often houses are built in such a way that very little room is left for closets and the small apologies which are constructed, and which are fitted up with a single line of hooks around their limited sides makes the tidy housekeeper wish that she had been consulted when the plans for the

house were drawn. It is usually quite out of the question to change the partitions after they are once settled, and the expedient of putting up a second line of hooks either above or below the first is apt to be very unsatisfactory, for the garments hung from the upper row will cover and conceal those hung from the lower hooks.

So men for the trouble; now for the remedy. While you cannot increase the wall space of the closet you can easily utilize the space between the walls. Fit a good wide board across one end of the closet, the side down, supporting it by cleats fastened to the walls or in any other convenient way, at such a height that you can walk under it and yet easily reach it. Then buy a couple of dozen wire hooks, iron or brass, about two inches long, with a screw cut on one end. They cost but a trifle and are very simple and neat. Take down your board and screw these hooks into the under side, putting them four or five inches apart. Then put the board back in its place and you will have two dozen more available hooks than you had before. And the beauty of the thing is that your garments will hang straight down and be easily reached, while by the old plan of multiplying side hooks the under-garments are out of sight and almost inaccessible. Even in a cottage chamber-closet with a slanting roof, a board may be fitted to follow up the slant and the hooks be set at such an angle that they will hang perpendicularly. This little device can be used in a hired house as well as in one of your own, and in either cases you will be surprised to find how much even a small closet will hold and how nicely your garments will hang. In small houses where closets are at a premium, these overhead hooks when once used will be found to be indispensable, and I am sure that thousands of houses they will help to solve the problem of undersized and overcrowded clothes-closets.—*Josiah Keep, in New York Witness.*

ABOUT POTATOES.

To God Housekeeping, we are indebted for the following suggestions about potatoes. They are from the pen of Maria Parloa. That statement is commendation enough.

How to Cook a Potato.—The prevailing opinion is that every one knows how to cook a potato—a doubtful certainty after finding a number of people who cannot, or do not, pare one creditably. Aside from the fact that the greatest amount of "mealiness" lies nearest the skin, the thrifty soul inspects half-inch parings with disapproval; nor will patches of skin left on here and there atone for the waste. A blunt table knife is not the proper instrument to use—let it be a small, sharply-pointed knife, to deal with deep-set eyes and awkward protuberances. New potatoes should be scraped whenever it is possible.

There is an art in boiling potatoes well. To cut them if they are not of uniform size; to have just enough water to cover, pouring off quickly at the right moment before they fall to pieces; these are some of the small things that insure success.

It is claimed that certain potatoes—the later-growing varieties—cook better if placed over the fire in cold water. This can be easily tested for one's self. Potatoes touched by the frost are slightly improved by so doing; and whatever their condition, it is a good plan to let them lie in cold water a short time before cooking.

Cold Boiled Potatoes.—There are many possibilities lurking in a dish of cold boiled potatoes. The descent of company need cause slight uneasiness when these are all ready in the pantry. A good way is to reserve some before mashing those wanted for dinner. Get a wire potato-masher; it will seem like mere play after having used an old-fashioned wooden one, and a flaky, creamy mass will reward dexterous handling.

The amount of milk, butter and seasoning given to mashed potatoes, depends on individual taste; and it is well for the cook to remember that what may easily be supplied at table cannot so easily be eliminated. Oversalting spoils hopelessly, and as milk is apt to turn sour, rendering unfit for use what might be made available for another meal, it is not well to add it unless the quantity prepared is only sufficient for the present. Whatever is left can be used in bread-making, for by its use bread is more

nutritious, keeping fresh and sweet; or, to make a nice supper dish, mould the remainder into small flat cakes and fry in sweet lard. Dipped in beaten egg and cracker crumbs they are made richer—and less wholesome.

Fried Potatoes.—A potato will possibly always be a potato but fried potatoes may be several different things, varying with the intelligence of the cook. If, as some doctors declare "Mischief lurks in the frying pan," they probably mean in homes where the definition of the verb "to fry" is "to soak in grease." The vegetable we present suffers heavily in the general condemnation. Given the conditions of pure lard, and a hot fire to insure a quick browning, the capabilities for harm are somewhat lessened; but it is a pity that in so many kitchens the sphere of the potato is narrowed, vibrating only from boiled to fried with monotonous regularity. The same potatoes, thinly sliced and placed in an earthen dish, each layer covered with a single sprinkle of flour, together with bits of butter, a seasoning of onion, salt and pepper, and the whole nearly covered with milk, will, after two hours' baking in a hot oven, come forth a tempting-looking, wholesome dish.

Stewed Potatoes.—For six people use two quarts of thin-sliced raw potatoes, three ounces of fat bacon, half a teaspoonful of grated onion, half a teaspoonful of pepper, and one even teaspoonful of salt. Use a deep pudding dish that can be placed on the table. Have the bacon cut in thin slices, and spread about one-third of it on the bottom of the dish. Sprinkle the onion over this, and then put in one quart of the sliced potatoes. Over them sprinkle half of the salt and pepper, then put in the rest of the potatoes, and sprinkle over them the remainder of the salt and pepper. Lay the remaining slices of bacon on the potatoes and moisten the whole with four table-spoonfuls of water. Cover the dish closely, and put in a moderately hot oven. Bake for half an hour; at the end of that time take off the cover, and cook for twenty minutes longer. The top slice of bacon should be crisp and brown at the end of that time.

SELECTED RECIPES.

RICE BLANC MANGE.—One quart of boiling milk, one-half cup of rice flour rubbed smooth, powdered sugar to taste. Boil till thick; when cold add one teaspoon of vanilla. Pour in a mold. Set on ice. Sauce.

SWELLED RICE PUDDING.—One quart of skimmed milk or half water, one-half cup rice, two table-spoonfuls sugar, one-half teaspoon salt. Bake slowly for two hours, covered, then uncover and brown. It will be a creamy mass and delicious to the taste. Serve it without sauce.

RYE BREAD.—Make a sponge of one quart of warm water, one teaspoon of yeast thickened with rye flour. Put in a warm place to rise over night. Scald one pint of corn meal; when cool add to the sponge. Add rye flour until thick enough to knead, but knead it but little; let rise, mold into loaves, place in deep tins, let rise and bake.

SPANISH ONIONS, SCALLOPED.—Peel and slice the onion and parboil it in milk and water for a short time. Pour off the water, put the onions in a dish with alternate layers of bread-crumbs and butter; and salt and pepper to taste. Bake about half an hour and serve in the dish in which it was baked. Ordinary onions are nice cooked in this way.

TRY A POUltICE of tea leaves as a cure for burns and scalds. Pour boiling water over the tea, and as soon as the leaves are softened, apply the poultice while warm; cover with cotton batting, and the pain will be ended almost instantly. It was discovered by Dr. Searles, of Wisconsin, and has since proved efficacious in severe cases of burning, and it is so simple!

FRIED APRICOTS OR PEACHES.—Drain a can of apricots or peaches in a colander. Have ready a kettle of fat for frying crullers. Beat two eggs in a dish. Have a plate of dry flour. Roll the apricots in the flour, dip quickly in the egg, then again in the flour, and drop immediately into the smoking hot fat. When a delicate brown drain from the fat, lay on paper, dust with pulverized sugar, and serve.

CREAM SAUCE.—One pint of thin cream, one large table-spoonful of flour and salt to taste. Put the cream over the stove in a basin, let it come to a boil, have the flour mixed smooth with some of the cold cream saved out; stir the flour in when boiling, and let it cook two or three minutes. This is very nice for fish or vegetables.

EGGS IN NESTS ON TOAST.—For six nests use six eggs. Separate the two parts of the eggs, putting the whites into a bowl, and keeping the yolks whole by letting them remain in the half-shells until the time comes for using them. Put a teaspoon of salt with the whites, and beat until a stiff froth is formed. Toast slices of bread, and, after dipping the edges or crust in hot water, spread them with butter and place them on a tin sheet or pan. Heap the whites of the beaten eggs on the toast in a kind of round shape, making a depression in the centre of each round. Then put one-fourth of a teaspoon of butter in each depression and drop the yolks into the hollows. Then place the pan in a moderate oven and cook for three minutes, or so. Serve immediately in a warm dish.