

THE HOUSEHOLD.

"A MORE EXCELLENT WAY."

BY CAROLINE B. LEROW.

Sickness secures ready sympathy. The illness of one person in a little country village becomes the anxiety of every family in town, and as the interest is shared by all there is no lack of outside assistance. The conditions of city life naturally limit the expressions of this neighborly spirit, yet fortunately they do not destroy it altogether.

The doctor's carriage at the door is sufficient reason, if the family is at all known in the neighborhood, for more than one friendly call and offer of service. "Be sure and let me know if I can do anything for you," is generally a sincere utterance of the sympathetic visitor, very encouraging and pleasant words to listen to. But one naturally dislikes to call upon outsiders for such help as is needed in a sick room, and such offers, though appreciated, are seldom taken advantage of. Yet this kind spirit, being a true one, does not rest satisfied with the mere verbal expression of its desire to do something. It very often takes tangible shape in little delicacies for the invalid. These are well enough in their place, though sometimes none of them are adapted to the place for which they are intended, and serve only as proofs of sympathy and good-will.

A few months ago I was visiting friends in one of our large cities—a family in comfortable circumstances though keeping no servant; the mother with the assistance of the eldest daughter, a girl of sixteen, preferring to do the work of the household rather than be annoyed by the incompetence of the average "help." This daughter was one of three, the others being nine and seven years of age, most lovely and interesting children. Within four weeks all of them died of diphtheria, after periods of sickness ranging from four days to a fortnight. While there was the most intense sympathy felt throughout the neighborhood the house was shunned by everybody, for there was a great fear of this disease. Some offers of help came by mail and by messengers in neither fruit nor fragrance could be tolerated in the sick rooms.

At this time it was impossible to secure a professional nurse, and father, mother and friend shared the duties to which three able-bodied persons were scarcely adequate. The law requiring burial within twenty-four hours after death, the long journey to the cemetery was taken by the whole family after the loss of the first child—the others being then in health—and five very wretched persons returned in the chill, gray nightfall of a bleak December day to the dreary house in which the kitchen fire had gone out, and nothing was in readiness for the meal which soul and body so much needed. A cup of tea, a bit of toast and an egg was all the nourishment taken by those who had scarcely eaten a mouthful for days, not only from lack of appetite but for the utter impossibility of taking time for its preparation.

Again, and yet again, the sorely-stricken father and mother went on that same miserable journey. The arrival of relatives from a distant State on the day when the last child was taken from the house made it unnecessary for me to accompany them; and after the solitary carriage had driven away from the door I opened for the first time a large basket which had been sent in that morning. Tears came readily in those dreadful days, but the only ones of joy or gratitude rushed to my eyes then as I looked upon its contents with emotions very different from any I had ever associated or expected to associate with food. A fine piece of roasted beef, fresh home-made bread, canned vegetables and fruits, plain cake—there was nothing for tired hands to do but place them on the table, while potatoes and tea were set to boiling on the stove.

At twilight, in a driving snow-storm, chilled, exhausted, broken-hearted, the bereaved family returned to the desolate house. The violence of their grief had temporarily worn itself out. The warmth and light of the cosy kitchen, the table with its abundance of nourishing food, which made very natural appeal to famishing stomachs, soon produced an effect not only on the cold and miserable body, but upon the bruised spirit as well. While it is true that "man shall not live by bread alone," it

is no less true that the physical body cannot long exist without it. The soul need not necessarily be located in the stomach, in accordance with the doctrine of certain old philosophers; but the condition of the stomach makes a greater difference to all the Christian graces of the soul than sentimental persons are willing to admit. Chemical operation is subtle enough to transmute beef and bread into a very appreciable amount of courage, patience and resignation.

The experience narrated was a revelation of a practical form of sympathy and help not generally recognized and yet of infinite service. In most cases it is not the invalid but the nurse who most needs nourishing. Sickness, too, under any circumstances, is a financial drain, felt heavily among those of limited means where the head of the family must give any of his time to the patient—as was necessary in this case—or where he himself is the victim; both work and wages being suspended when there is the greatest need of money. There must often be retrenchment in the daily supplies, or even if this is not necessary, the mother cannot spend much time over the cooking-stove.

Those whose hearts and purses instinctively respond to any trouble of friends or neighbors will do well to reform some old-fashioned and often futile attempts at service, and by a due consideration of circumstances, fulfil not only the letter but the spirit of the law of practical benevolence.—*Christian Union.*

MY WINDOW BOX.

Perhaps I may as well tell you about my most important window box. I had it made last autumn, and was greatly pleased with it. It is made of zinc, size one yard long, fourteen inches broad, seven inches in depth. To give it strength it is framed at the top with wood. You can have this of black walnut or stained in imitation. You can have the box painted any color you wish, or leave it unpainted. In the centre is Croton "Weismannii," on one side of it a fine *Eranthemum pictum*; its green leaves look as though they were painted with white streaks; on the other side, *Acalypha "Macraefegna."* These are the largest plants in my averaging six inches in height, but a few are quite small. They consist of very choice *Geraniums*—some of them handsome leaved—variegated *Abutilons*, *Lemon Verbena*, two bright *Achyranthes*, six very beautiful *Coleuses*, and four fine *Begonias*. There are others I cannot stop to specify. You will see that I have filled my box with what are, in themselves, beautiful without the aid of flowers, though I expect to have a few of these by-and-by. I am perfectly satisfied with it however just as it is. I had a large German Ivy growing out of doors, which consisted of several long vines. This I planted in one corner of the box, and then drooped and twined it on the outside. The change to indoor life caused the large green leaves to fall off, but already new ones have put forth, and the vines are rapidly growing. Everything else had been previously prepared so that there was no change in their leafage after being put in the box. It is a great addition to the beauty of the box to have vines of pretty foliage drape the sides. This autumn I have had it placed on a small, low table with castors, so I can change the plants every week, and thus avoid that turning toward the window which they always assume if kept in one position.

I first put in drainage, and then filled the box with rich mellow earth in which was a mixture of one-third sand. I have been thus particular in my description, for many, no doubt, who, like myself, have to make the most of limited space, will be glad to know just how to keep the greatest number of plants to the best advantage. Not only is there a saving of room, but of labor, and it is more cleanly.—*Bowditch's American Florist and Farmer.*

MRS. SANFORD'S NEATNESS.

Aunt Maria was paying us a visit, and out of politeness to her Mrs. Benson, Mrs. Strong and Miss Rylance had been invited over to tea. For some time the conversation had been kept up on general topics, but at length it had relapsed into downright gossip, and a mutual acquaintance, Mrs. Sanford, was under discussion. I sat, an amused listener, and from what I gleaned sketched to myself this little picture of Mrs. Sanford. If it is

not an exact likeness of her it bears a close resemblance to a certain class of women whom many of us have chanced to meet. She may be tall and thin, as regards her person, spare and very neat, while her hair is invariably done up in a very elaborate style. Puffs, frizzes, water curls, whatever may be the latest, or to her ideas the most becoming fashion of head-gear, is adopted by her. Her dress is cut and made in the extreme of fashion, for she always likes to outshine her neighbors. But her chief forte lies in her skill in management and housekeeping abilities. She contrives to get the most work done for the least money of any one in the neighborhood. And her kitchen is scrubbed every Saturday with the regularity of clock-work. But her disposition is far from pleasant, and her friends and servants both pity and despise her. I happen to know her lonely adopted daughter. How the poor child has suffered, bodily and mentally. Fond of reading, fond of music, with kind sympathetic feelings, she has constantly been repressed in the expression of them, and kept from her favorite pursuits by an almost wicked and certainly unnecessary application to the details of dress and housekeeping. It sometimes seems almost a wonder that despite all the pressure she is under that she has any originality or vivacity left. She is certainly very fragile, and she tells the cause of her nervousness, when she casually says: "Mamma does worry me so; she feels so very unhappy if her established method of doing everything is not carried out to the last degree." Happily the number of such women as Mrs. Sanford is not very large in proportion to the whole number of educated intelligent women, for she claims with some degree of right to be classed among them; but there are tendencies toward fussiness, and undue regard for dress and household appointments to the exclusion of higher and better things. Among many women, and it does require some effort to break from the meshes, household cares are constantly weaving around one's feet; but it can be done, and every loyal, true-hearted woman will look well to the ways of her household, and yet keep those ways subordinate to the forming of an elevated character.—*Christian at Work.*

One way in which women are over-worked by their own fault—a sin of ignorance frequently—is in the use of foolish clothing. We are all more or less in bondage here, for woman's dress is radically wrong. It is a weight and a hinderance everywhere. Clothing devised to suit the needs of the human body would be much more easily made and taken care of, and it would give a woman freer movement, greater ease and comfort about her work and play, and would be an aid to good health rather than, as now, a drag upon her strength. But a genuine reform cannot be made by any one woman, for it awaits the development of public opinion. But cannot we all lend a hand here, and say on all proper occasions, that woman's dress is absurd, and inconvenient, and unhealthful, and that we wish for something better? Most of us can put less work and care upon our trimmings, and none of us need wear a trained skirt, or one that touches the floor. We may all wear loose and warm clothing, and bear the weight upon our shoulders rather than over the hips. Various female weaknesses are supposed to be caused by active labor, by much standing upon the feet, by much climbing of stairs in the pursuit of one's daily industry. They may be aggravated by these causes after they have been once induced, but I have serious doubts whether these weaknesses are often really attributable to the causes above named. Corsets and heavy skirts are the real offenders. It is usually the case that the same work might have been done—the standing and the climbing—had the muscles of the body, both external and internal, been left free and unweighted by the clothing. How many feathers' weight are added to her burden of toil and worry by a woman's long skirts, as she goes about her work in-doors and out, upstairs and down, around the kitchen fire, or cleaning the floors in an unsuitable dress?—*American Agriculturist for March.*

RICE PUDDING WITHOUT EGGS.—Soak over night one-half cup of rice; two quarts of milk; sweeten and flavor to taste, and bake three hours.

PUZZLES.

A DIAMOND.

1, A letter. 2, A small pack-saddle. 3. Put in a box. 4, A rampart. 5, Greeted with a return salute. 6, Delegated. 7, To prevent by fear. 8, A male nickname. 9, A letter.

EASY CHARADES.

1.
A bud, an article, a vowel. My whole is a country.
2.
A cave, a spot. My whole is a kingdom.
3.
A river in Europe, territory. My whole is a country.

CHARADE.

My first, loud chattering, through the air
Bounded 'mid tree tops high,
Then saw his image mirrored, where
My second murmured by.

Taking it for a friend, he strayed
T'wards where the stream did roll,
And was the sort of fool that's made
The first day of my whole?

HIDDEN MENAGERIE.

Thirty-four animals, insects, &c., are hidden in the following story.

I called on my cousin Adelaide one day. We are very good friends. Adelaide, erratic and changeable as she is, has stuck to me faithfully, and I should be a real hypocrite if I should deny the real affection I feel for her. I found her dressing to go out.

"If," roguishly said I, "you could only see how pretty you look in that hat!"

"I, Geraldine?" answered she amazed, but going naturally to the glass to admire herself. "Do guess where I bought it, if you can. Try, at any rate."

"I know. I saw —'s advertisement upon your table. 'Selling out because of the panic at half rates.' I don't care for those shops that profess to be so cheap. Ignorant people alone are taken in by them."

"What makes you think so?"

"I was persuaded of it years ago; from other sources than my own experience, however."

"At least you might tell me what opened your eyes, if you think me so blind. Do tell me."

"Well, then, I will give you one instance. I was at the Fair, and a salesman was calling attention to his wares, warranted to take out any stain. A country-woman came up and pushed her way to the counter with considerable bustle.

"O, pardon me," said she to the man, "but can you take out grease spots?"

"Sapolio never fails, madame," said he blandly.

"Look here," said she holding out for inspection the front breadth of her dress. "Sperm in each fold, all the way down. Clean it if you can."

"The salesman came languidly around to the front, but his zealous work on the alpaca told that his languor was affected. After a few minutes there was a howl from his victim as she saw the color disappear from her dress. 'It'll be yellow, or may be worse! You've scoured it like a milk-pan! There's no trusting men.' Finally she epitomized her wrath by calling him 'Turk!' eyeing him fiercely, as if prepared to avenge her wrongs with blows. At this moment, so interesting and tragic, Alfred called me impatiently, and I was obliged to leave."

"Thanks, Geraldine. You are an excellent mimic. Owing to your story and the moral of it, I shall make you go shopping with me next week. Now, shall we go?"

"At once if you are ready."

We parted after a pleasant walk, and at last agreed on a day for our shopping expedition.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES OF MARCH 15.

A Peep in Walter's Basket.—Stand, arm, ease; napkin, tea, portfolio and urns. Peanuts, almonds.

Drop Letter Puzzle.—All your danger is in discord, All your strength is in your union.

LONGFELLOW.

Enigma.—Anna.

Change.—Lam B, Lam A, Lam E, Lam P.

Letter Puzzle.—The Letter O.

Twelve Men of Note.—Simon, Andrew, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, Peter, James, John, Iscariot, Judas, Philip, James.

Anagrams.—1, Loto. 2, Skating. 3, Magic lantern. 4, Archery. 5, Foot-ball. 6, Base-ball. 7, Lawn tennis. 8, Croquet. 9, Hide-and-seek. 10, Leap-frog.

Puzzle.—Broom-room.