

"ASTRA" TALKS WITH GIRLS.

(Correspondents seeking information in this department should address their queries to "ASTRA," Progress, St. John.)

LOLLY POP, St. John.—It depends a good deal on the way in which the praise is given, I have sometimes heard one girl praise another, and I know, just from the way she did it, that she hated the girl she was praising; but I certainly do believe that one girl can praise another, and admire her beauty, in all sincerity, and without a particle of jealousy. I am so fond of my own sex, to think otherwise, and besides I know that I love pretty girls myself and as I am a woman, I don't see why others should not be the same. (2.) I know that the girl most men admire is the one who is perfectly natural, good natured, and fairly amusing. Such a girl has ten chances of marriage, for every one that are uninteresting and indifferent beauty has, and indeed most of the girls I have known who could it they had chosen count their offers of marriage by the half dozen, have not been pretty but simply attractive. (3.) It is better not to do so, as you will be very likely to regret it at some future time. Your writing is fairly good, at it is a little lacking in firmness, as I have no idea of your age. I am not a weather prophet and therefore find it impossible to predict the kind of winter we will have, but I am always thankful when the frost is late in coming, as I dislike cold weather. I am glad you liked the answer to your former letter. "What is meant by flirting?" Well, flirting has been cleverly defined as "attentions without intentions" and I do not think I could describe the exercise better, if I wrote pages on the subject. I shall be glad to hear from you again.

MARIAN ERLE.—You are welcome back again, it is some time since I have heard from you. (1.) I think there is more than one, but, the names do not appear. It is published, as I daresay you know, by The Sabiston Lithographic and Publishing Co., at No. 4 King street East, Toronto, and at the Gazette building, Montreal. That is the proper address, just put "Editor of" and it will be sure to reach him, as it is not necessary to address an editor by name, unless the communication is a private, or personal one. If this information is not sufficient, let me know and I can easily find out the names. Many thanks for your kind inquiries.

GYRSEY, St. John.—Do you know that unless a letter is so impertinent as to be absolutely insulting, I never consider it unworthy of an answer? And I am happy to say I have only received one or two, of that description since I began to write for this column. I never received the letter you mention, or I should have answered it, and now I am giving you second one the place of honor, by answering it the very first, of all this week's budget. I do not know when I have read such a sensible letter as yours. I suppose the girls dislike to think that they may be confiding their joys and sorrows to a man in writing to me, yet they should exercise their common sense, and then I am sure they would see how impossible it would be for a man to edit a woman's column, even if they preferred to doubt my own assurance, that I belonged to the same sex as themselves. After all, as you say, what does it matter who, or what I am, so long as I answer their queries satisfactorily? (1.) If she knows him well enough, it is quite proper, as he could scarcely offer it unasked, but it is a mistake to ask a comparative stranger. (2.) Yes, I do, she would be very foolish to give him the satisfaction of knowing she cared enough about it, to be offended, and it would be a far more severe snub if she allowed him to think she had forgotten that he ever made the engagement. Would he apologize at some future time she could punish him quite sufficiently by finding it quite impossible to remember anything about it, and granting him your full and free forgiveness at the same time. He was wrong to make two engagements for the same evening. Not right in keeping the first one, and his excuse was so poor, that it was worse than none. (3.) "I should be very happy, but I am driving home" that is all that is necessary. (4.) Perfectly correct, as long as he is an intimate friend. (5.) Many girls are married at that age, and many more engaged and often with the very happiest results, but still, I think that the girl who waits until she is twenty-two or twenty-three, generally makes a wiser choice. You need not apologize for your writing as it is very pretty indeed, and the only fault I could find with your letter was that you wrote it on both sides of the paper, and that made it rather difficult to read.

GARNET, Amherst.—I was very much interested in your sad little letter, and I scarcely know how to advise you, but I will try to put myself in your place and do the best I can. The young man has treated you very badly, but I should be inclined to think some one had been making mischief, and would take the earliest opportunity of asking for an explanation from him. It would be so much better to know the worst and end it all, than to be in uncertainty, for then you could try to forget him, and you would soon succeed when you found he was unworthy. You are very fortunate in being able to go away, as change of scene is the greatest possible help in heart troubles and enables one to get away from the sorrow for a time at least. Tell your friend that you have observed a change

in his manner and that, although you are unchanged yourself, you would prefer to give him his freedom at once, if he has grown weary of you rather than have the engagement continue after he has ceased to care for you. (2.) No, I think the first love is seldom the best, although no after love is ever quite the same. Few of us would marry the man we loved first, even if we had the chance, once the glamour has worn off and we see him as he really is not the impossible piece of perfection we imagined him. (3.) Your writing is odd and rather cramped, but you could easily improve it, if you had the time. Try to cheer up, and believe that there may be a great deal of happiness in store for you yet. Let me know how things turn out, before you go, as I should like to hear.

BEETIE—St. John.—You are quite right, I have not the least idea who you are nor have I the slightest wish to be informed on the subject; your ten page letter was all I care to know of you, and I would willingly have been spared that. You take the liberty of informing me that I am "very narrow minded," you do not even say you think so, you assert it as a fact—and support your assertion by saying the reason you think so, is because you wanted to take some young lady of sixteen summers out driving and her mother would not allow her to go, and you understand that her reason for refusing permission was that she had read my opinion on the subject of young girls driving alone with young men. I should be glad if I thought so, I am sure, but I do not flatter myself that I had anything to do with it, the mother was probably too sensible to allow a child of that age to go driving alone with any young man, and I respect her for it. After giving me this very gratifying diagnosis of my mental calibre, you next proceed to ask me seventeen questions in succession, the extreme silliness of which would require the breadth of mind of a Robert Ingersoll to answer, since only great minds can be really tolerant of small ones, and I regret to say that the task is beyond my strength. I was deeply interested in the process of reasoning which enabled you to ascribe my narrow mindedness to the fact that I was not a Presbyterian: I had always been under the impression that the one fault usually found with that estimable body of Christians—for whom I entertain the greatest respect—was their slight tendency towards that very thing. You are right once more, I am not a Presbyterian, but I cannot help it, I was "born that way" as Artemus Ward would say.

DEACON, St. John.—What a delightful little deacon you are, and how the beginning of your letter moves my heart? Of course you can be in it and welcome. I think Dickens, but I am fond of Thackeray too. Yes we have an engraving of Addison and he has a fine face, but a very sad one I think. If you know anyone who is fortunate enough to possess some volumes of the Spectator or the Guardian, very old books indeed, published in the last century, you will find plenty of Addison's writings. He also wrote on political subjects, and was a poet of great merit. It is a favorite name of mine. Very pretty indeed. Geoffrey is quite well thank you, and I don't know whether I will give him your love or not, it might make him too conceited, but I will bug the pup. You may like Geoffrey as much as you please, because he has got very curly hair, beautiful hair in fact, and of course I am very fond of him, it would be strange if I was not. I do not quite understand your query about the Knight of the Garter, are you speaking of some special character, or do you mean just an ordinary knight of the garter? Tell me where you saw the term, and I will understand. You did not ask too many questions at all, and I answered you as soon as I could, I have such piles of unanswered letters on my desk.

HOW TO PREPARE A TABLE.

A Bright Housewife Can Do This With Very Little Expense.

If our "good plain cooks" could only be induced to garnish their dishes and serve them up daintily they would be far more appetizing says the Chicago Journal. This involves little labor after all, and is within the reach of every housekeeper. Parsley, especially, gives an edible look to even a dish of cold meat, and a box of it will grow easily in a sunny window all winter and require little or no care. A few sprigs around a dish, a little chopped up and sprinkled over fried potatoes or a beefsteak, makes all the difference in the world in their appearance. Take up some nasturtium roots in the autumn, cut back the ends and the buds, and in a few weeks they will begin to bloom again, giving you the prettiest decoration possible for your salads.

In fact you might have a regular little kitchen garden in pots and boxes with very little trouble, and it will be almost sure to interest and delight your cook. There are no end of things that make pretty garnishes for a dish. A few fried onions help out a beefsteak immensely; French chops look particularly nice if laid in orderly fashion around a neat hillock of mashed potatoes; a handful of watercress greatly helps the look of a roast of beef; croquettes served in a napkin look twice as well as if laid in a dish. A fragrant geranium leaf floating in the water of a finger bowl looks fresh and dainty. In fact, a clever woman can think of any number of little accessories that will help the appearance and attractiveness of her table, without adding in any way to the expense of her housekeeping; and her cook and waitress will be quick to learn a neat and tasteful habit of serving.

REASONABLE RECEIPTS.

Specially Prepared from Practical Tests for the Daily Readers of "Progress."

(Correspondents seeking information in this department should address their queries to "Editor Reasonable Receipts," Progress, St. John.)

How to Eat an Orange.

There is a time and a place for all things. There is also a best time, and a best place, at least, to eat oranges. Time; the first thing in the morning. Place; your bedroom where no one that you will "mind" seeing you is present, because to be thoroughly enjoyed, the orange must be eaten something after the way in which a small boy eats a stolen melon, behind the fence; i.e.—Cut it in two and proceed without ceremony, and without even trying, to remove the peel, to make the best of it in a natural sort of way. There is no complete perception of taste unless the sense of smell have a share in the sensation, and by thus pressing the half or quarter of an unpeeled orange to your mouth and at the same time squeezing it gently with the hand, both these senses (if indeed they be two) share and share alike, and you get all the good that there is out of the orange. Being just before the bath or morning wash the fruit soiled face and hands is no inconvenience. To serve oranges at the table in any other way than as a fruit salad or a compote is delusion and a "share." Above all don't be persuaded to use the "orange spoon" for that is the most unenjoyable and unsatisfactory way of all.

Frosted Oranges.

For all purposes choose Florida oranges, and the kind or brand known as "Indian River" are the best. Make a plain white icing as follows:—Put 1 cup of sugar, either granulated or powdered, and the whites of three eggs together into a bowl and beat rapidly with a wooden spoon, till a cool place for about ten minutes, or until you have a good white frosting too thick to run off, and yet thin enough to settle to smoothness. It becomes too firm, thin by adding the white, or part of it, of another egg.

Prepare the oranges by peeling, removing the inner white skin, and separating the natural divisions, without breaking the covering or getting the pieces wet with the juice. Have a skewer or long splinter ready for each piece, and fill a large bowl with salt or sugar (sugar would answer just as well) to stick the skewers in. Now stick the point of a skewer into the edge of an orange section, dip into the frosting, push the other end of the skewer into the bowl of salt, or whatever is used for the purpose, and let the pieces hang over the edge of the bowl in a warm place to dry.

Orange Honey Tartlets.

A rich sweetmeat variously known as orange paste, orange honey etc., is made as follows:—8 ounces of sugar, 2 large oranges, juice of two lemons, 2 ounces of butter, 4 yolks and the white of one egg, little rose water for flavoring. Put the sugar and butter into a bright sauce-pan, grate in the yellow rinds of the lemons, (using a tin grater, and scraping off with a fork what adheres), and squeeze in the juice of both oranges and lemons. Stir up and boil, add the eggs and let cook at the side of the range until it looks like melted cheese; use cold to fill tartlets and spread between cakes. The puff paste pattie cases, or small vol-au-vent cases described in this column some time ago, are nice for this purpose.

Hickory Nut Ice Cream.

A few days ago I was asked personally how many walnuts should be used to a quart of cream, for making walnut ice cream; I had to confess that I did not know; never having made a walnut ice cream and could not find it in any of my books. Since then I have found the following which will give the desired information, only substituting walnuts for hickory-nuts: one pound of hickory-nut kernels, 2 cups of sugar, 1 quart of cream, 2 tablespoons of sugar burnt brown. Pick over the kernels carefully for pieces of shell, then pound them in a mortar with a little sugar and water added. Set 2 spoonfuls of sugar over the fire without water and let it melt and brown. Pour in a little water to dissolve it, then add it to the cream with the sugar and nut paste and freeze in the usual manner.

Baked Apple Dumplings.

For eight dumplings, use the same number of large tart apples, three cupfuls of flour, one cupful of butter, the juice of one lemon, two table-spoonfuls of sugar, about half a cupful of cold water, a level tea-spoonful of salt, and a piece of soda the size of a pea.

Put the flour, salt, sugar, and butter in a chopping-tray, and chop until the butter is cut into little bits the size of a bean. Be rather scant in the measurement of the water. Dissolve the soda in it; then add the lemon juice, and pour the liquid upon the mixture in the chopping tray, chopping and mixing all the time. When the mixture becomes a smooth paste, sprinkle the moulding board lightly with flour, and turn the paste from the tray upon the board. Roll it down to the thickness of about half an inch; then fold and roll again, using as little flour as possible. Now put in a cold place, if possible on ice. Pare and core the apples, grate a little nutmeg in the centre of each apple, now cut off one eighth of the paste, or better divide the whole into eight pieces, and roll each piece separately into a round large enough to cover one apple. Place an apple in the centre of

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each piece of paste; then gather up the edges and press them together. Cover all the apples in this manner. Butter the bottom of a shallow cake-pan and place the dumplings in it, having the side where the paste was drawn together come underneath. Bake in a moderate oven for forty minutes. Serve with lemon cream sauce.

Sauce.

These are made of three eggs, one cupful of sugar, one scant cupful of sifted flour, one tea-spoonful and a half of baking powder, three table-spoonfuls of water, the grated yellow rind of one lemon, and two table-spoonfuls of lemon juice. Beat the sugar and the yolks together until light, and beat the white to a stiff froth in another bowl. Now beat the water, lemon rind, and juice into the yolks and sugar; then the beaten whites, and finally the flour and baking-powder mixed. Stir quickly and well. Pour this batter into little stone or earthen cups that have been well buttered, and cook in a steamer for half an hour. Have three table-spoonfuls of powdered sugar on a plate, and when the snowballs are done, turn them out of the cups upon the plate, and roll them in the sugar. Serve at once with a hot clear sauce, such as lemon or wine sauce.

Pumpkin Pudding.

A mixture like the above, with four ounces of butter added to each pint, a tea-spoonful of powdered mace, and a small nutmeg grated. Pour into a buttered baking dish, and bake in a moderate oven for about an hour.

THINGS OF VALUE.

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