

# "ASTRA'S" TALKS WITH GIRLS.

[Correspondents seeking information in this department should address their queries to "Astra," Progress, St. John.]

**ROLLING STONE, St. John.**—Thank you for your confidence. No, I do not know the name at all, you know I am quite a stranger. I should think you would be much better in a drier climate, fog is so very bad for anyone of the kind. I am glad that you keep on trying, nothing could be better than practice. Perhaps I too may be converted some day to the delights of an *al fresco* existence, but just at present I think I prefer four good strong walls and a roof. I hope the coming venture will be successful. Be sure you measure me as I shall be anxious to hear. I have met your guardian. Don't imagine I am not fond of the country. I love it, but I am not sure I should care for camping out.

**MISS BORED.**—I do not wish to seem disagreeable, but of all the troublesome letters I ever received yours was certainly the worst, and I only wonder at myself for answering it at all. True, you did not write on both sides of the paper, in the ordinary sense of the term, but you did much worse; you took two sheets of paper, put one inside of the other, and then wrote over one side of each page in the proper order of sequence, turned it over and wrote on the other side upside down, as if you had been exerting all your ingenuity in trying how much trouble you could give me. I do really think the girls who write to me should take the trouble to comply with the two very easy rules I have laid down, namely, that their letters shall be written "straight ahead" and on one side of the paper only, and letters must be in the office on Friday of this week, if the answer is expected in the next week's issue. From what I succeeded in gleaming from your "tale of woe" you are indeed an object of sympathy, and if you are averse to the use of an Indian club as a discourager of the youth's too ardent attentions from humane motives, why not tell him plainly when he annoys you that you have another engagement? Be very decided and shake him off emphatically when he shows a disposition to attach himself to you. If I had been in your place on the occasion you mention I should have told him I was going to meet a friend, and bowed a very decided good evening to him. I fear you will be more than satisfied with the number of defects I have pointed out to you in your letter, but I trust you will not take my objections to your style of writing so much to heart as that. The dog would be very indignant if he knew you spoke of him as a poodle. He is a spaniel and a very handsome specimen of his kind.

**J. C. S. Halifax.**—I am sorry to say that I cannot give you the authorship of the quotation, nor would I care much use for me to look it up. Nothing is more difficult to find than a prose quotation, except perhaps the proverbial needle in a bundle of hay. If you have chance to come across it in the course of your reading, and remembered it well and good, but otherwise you might search for days and never find it, so many extracts of that kind are taken from the speeches of great public men, that they are very difficult to place. I am glad you enjoy reading our "Talks." Yes, some of them are more than foolish, they are maddening. Will any correspondent oblige J. C. S. with the author of the following quotation and if possible the name of the person to whom it refers?

"He was more admirable as a man than any I had ever known. He is thoroughly in earnest for the right and the good—hence all hypocrites are easy in his presence."

**PERFECTION, St. John.**—What a conceited girl you must be, to be sure, if you really think you are perfect. Although I am sure you are very nice. (1) Yes, I think it is decidedly too young, she should be still in the schoolroom. (2) Not more than four, unless you wish to make yourself rather conspicuous, or are engaged to the young man. (3) My dear child it is two or three months too early yet, to know, or even predict anything about the winter fashions you must wait until October for that. (4) No, it is very forward and disrespectful, unless the case is a special one. For instance, if one school friend was writing to another, and the friend's brother should be near and say, "remember me to your friend," there would be nothing at all out of the way in his doing so, since it is probable they have both heard of each other, but for an utter stranger to do so would be very bad form indeed. (5) Every time you wash your hands dip them first in water and then in silted oatmeal, and rub till it forms a paste all over your hands, then wash it off in pure water; keep a box or pot of oatmeal on your washstand and also rub your hands well with lemon juice on going to bed. (6) It has become the custom now, but still I confess that I scarcely like to see a lady so engaged, it does look masculine. (7) Your writing is lovely, so you must not believe all that people say, at least I think so. I hope that now you have broken the ice you will no longer require so much courage to write again.

**TRUNA, Halifax.**—I am glad to know you enjoy our corner of the paper so much. I am afraid you have come to one of the best people in the world to advise you about the making of children's clothes, but I should think the model you suggest would be very effective and pretty. I think Geoffrey would agree with you perfectly as he is foolish enough to be quite satisfied.

## A Word About Washing.

A skilled laundress who is very successful in doing up such cotton dresses as gingham and dark satines and prints uses no soap, but cleanses the fabric by using flour and water. If two dresses are to be washed, she makes starch by mixing a cupful of flour with a pint of cold water, and then adding three quarts of a pint of boiling water. Put half the starch in a tub holding four gallons of warm water and wash the dress in it, in the usual way. Rinse in two clear waters and dry.

The dress will be stiff enough without additional starch, which is little used for petticoats and wash dresses, except in the form of starch water. A stiff starched dress or

skirt marks a bye-gone fashion. White dresses and light prints are not washed in this way.

Wash the second dress in the same way as the first, using fresh water and the other half of the starch.

It colors run, put half a cupful of salt in the last rinsing water. A faded blue is sometimes restored by adding two table-spoonfuls of vinegar or acetic to the last rinsing water.

The white suede shoes and gloves so much worn this summer both for morning and evening may be cleaned by the use of pipe clay. Buy a few cents' worth at the druggist's, dip an old toothbrush into the clay, rub with all your strength, the harder the better—care must, however, be taken to rub with the grain of the kid. Dress trimmings of white broadcloth, even when much soiled, may also be cleaned with the clay, which in this case must be used wet. At first you may think you have made a bad matter worse, but continue to rub with a clean brush and an abundance of clear water, and when dry the cloth will be white and clean. This method of refreshing white gloves and trimmings is used by the men in the British army in keeping their uniforms spotless. Gloves of white chambray are washed with white castile soap and tepid water, and rinsed thoroughly in water of the same temperature.

## Chinese Women's Small Feet.

The dragon festival is a grand fete in the Chinese garden outside of Shanghai. In the procession was a gaudy dragon 60 feet long. Here I saw women with all kinds of feet—little feet four inches long, medium feet, and big feet. I find there is no caste connected with little feet. Poor women in obscure and filthy quarters have them as often as the wealthy classes. It is simply vanity. It is common to see women in rags hobbling along on stumps of feet as ungainly as a man walking on wooden legs. If it were not for the jimrikhas and wheelbarrows many of them would never go a square from home. They are proud of the deformity, and grin all over when an American lady notices them.

I have been told repeatedly in China that no Chinese lady ever allowed a photograph taken of her feet. Today, after buying a pair of rich China merchants, I prevailed upon him to let a Kodak be taken of his wife's little feet.

"Such pretty, pretty feet," I said, admiring the little silk baby shoes.

He assented after much reluctance, and his wife sat for the first photograph of the tiny feet of a Chinese lady weighing 150 pounds. Her feet are only four inches long. I found the four small toes rolled under and entirely embedded in the bottom of the foot. Only the big toe went to the toe of the shoe. It was not a foot, but more like the thigh bone of a chicken, a triangle of solid flesh and bone, the lady could walk very well, but with a hobbling gait.

## Nothing Allays Nervous Irritation quicker than the judiciously administered bath, whether it be the invalid or the supposedly strong and healthy person that is made the subject, says Good Housekeeping.

How often the fretful, moaning invalid, weary and worn by the simple friction of the nervous system, finds comfort and refreshment in a gentle sponge bath, and yields to that restful sleep which brings strength to medical agent can supply! The busy housewife, perplexed by a multitude of cares, and sweltering in the heat of her narrow rooms, can find no better source of strength than to have for a brief half-hour and enjoy the luxury of a bath, from which shall be banished all thought of haste, all consideration of fleeting time, or whatever else may enter to annoy and distract. Coming from the bath chamber, renewed in body and in spirit, she will find that half the terrors of her former hours have vanished away, while she is inexpressibly stronger to meet those which remain.

## A Gipsy Burial.

A gipsy burial took place at the catholic cemetery in Weissenau, near Berlin. The son of the gipsy chief was carried to the grave accompanied by members of the race from far and wide. A band of music opened the procession, followed by gipsies playing the fiddle or clashing cymbals. The splendid metal coffin was carried in a first-class hearse, on each side of which the cousins and uncles of the dead man rode on horseback, their bridles and saddles being covered with crepe. Close behind the coffin rode the six oldest members of the clan, beating tambourines, while they muttered prayers. Then came a troop of gipsy men, women, and children in carriages, on horseback, or on foot, clad in their picturesque costumes. The procession was closed by the parents of the deceased, accompanied by four "mourning women," who raised a fearful howling. The sight attracted thousands of spectators. The burial was accompanied with the usual Catholic rites, but afterwards the gipsies offered up a dog as a "sacrifice to the moon," in an open field near by.

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# SEASONABLE RECEIPTS.

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[Correspondents seeking information in this department should address their queries to "Editor Seasonable Receipts, Progress, St. John.]

## A Tempting Table in Warm Weather.

"During the hot weather housekeepers should constantly bear in mind the wisdom of appealing to the eye as well as the palate," says Maria Parloa in her *Kitchen Companion*. "The sight of broken ice and something green is refreshing, especially on the breakfast table. Berries and such dishes as sliced tomatoes, cucumbers, water-cress, lettuce and other uncooked vegetables are alike refreshing to the sight and taste when cracked ice is used as an accompaniment, and when such dishes have been thoroughly chilled before being served. It also gives the table an appearance of coolness."

I am led by Miss Parloa's remarks to supplement the following information about ice decorations which is not generally known: For luncheon or dinner tables a very pleasing centre piece can be easily and cheaply made out of a block of clear ice about nine inches square and eighteen inches high, tapered to the top like a pyramid, with an ice shaver, or even with a hatchet. Ferns laid on the sides of the pyramid will adhere, and add greatly to the beauty, while moss makes a pretty base for it and also conceals the tin dish on which the block should stand.

## To Make a Dome of Ice.

Another inexpensive, but beautiful ice ornament for the centre of a luncheon, dinner or supper table (and this has the merit of being uncommon) is a hollow dome of ice with an electric lamp or fairy lamp burning inside. It is made as follows: A copper heating bowl with a round bottom is the best thing in which to warm the shape, but as few private houses possess one of these most useful of all culinary utensils; and this is one reason why professional cooks make better work than domestic cooks, they must have proper utensils to work with. It wears me a copper heating bowl, when she ought to have a copper beating bowl set in a pan or pail of pounded ice. Fewer cooks must be full of resources; if you haven't a beating bowl, take a common glass dome such as is used for covering wax flowers, handle it carefully and it will answer the purpose. It should be about eight or nine inches in diameter and eleven or twelve inches high. Fill it nearly to the brim with water and mix in a dessert-spoonful of cochineal. Set the vessel in a freezing mixture of crushed ice and coarse salt in the proportion of one part salt and three parts ice, and let it freeze to the thickness of a little over an inch. Pour out the water in the centre, and with a red-hot poker make a small hole in the bottom, so that, when inverted, will be the top. The heat of the room will generally be sufficient to loosen the ice from its mould, when it can be slipped out. The cold causes the cochineal to fall slowly to the bottom while freezing, and the result is a beautifully tinted and shaded dome. It must be placed on the table. It is ready to be placed on something suitable to catch the melting ice, which stand can be covered with moss.

## Real Ice Dishes for Fruit.

These are very much easier to make and while scarcely ornamental they are more useful for serving various fruits and ice cream. The common two pound coffee strength that is used in the house, is obtained from the grocer. Take as many as will be needed, fill with water, colored as for the dome, and freeze in the same way an inch thick, pour out the unfrozen water in the centre. Set your ice dishes thus made, on any flat dishes or even plates with a dolly between them, then with fruit or ice cream spooned out of the freezer, piled high and rough, and sprinkled with granulated sugar that has been made pink by mixing with a few drops of cochineal or other coloring matter. Time to freeze about two hours. Cost, nothing but the water, cochineal, and the very little trouble, besides the ice and salt.

## Delicious Cherry Cream.

As cherries are now plentiful I would recommend this delightful summer dish to those who do not mind taking a little pains to secure something uncommon.

Stalk and wash a pound of cooking cherries, stone them, then crush the stones. Give all a boil up, press them through a fine wire sieve with a wooden spoon until only the skins and shells are left. Again put the fruit into a clean stew pan over the fire; add enough sugar to sweeten, and when dissolved pour into an earthen dish to cool. Then take a pint of cream in a basin, add one ounce of sugar, and a dessert spoonful of orange flower water. When the sugar is dissolved, beat in the whites of two eggs. Stand the basin in a larger one, half full of small broken ice; this helps to bring the cream etc. to a froth. Beat the mixture with a wire egg whisk, and as it rises remove the froth with a pierced spoon or skimmer, put it on a hair sieve reversed over a plate to drain. Place that which remains on the top in the centre, or as a border to the dish containing the cherries, and serve.

## A Stimulating Drink.

"Cousin Madge" in the *London Truth* says: "If you ever feel thoroughly run down do not fly to a B. and S. as so many women do nowadays, and also eschew wine, for these are stimulants only impart a fictitious strength and energy for a short time, only to take them away again with dreadful suddenness. Try the following mixture, and you will ever thank me for having introduced it to your notice: Half a teacupful of French Food Extract, one teaspoonful of powdered sugar. Mix well together, and pour upon them sufficient boiling milk to fill a breakfast cup. Stir vigorously and drink it off when cool enough. You will feel wonderfully invigorated after it. I have tried it and know." This struck me as a valuable item, but being unable to get the French food extract called for in the receipt I experi-

# A Thing Greatly Abused.

HARDLY anything receives less thanks and more abuse than a shoe. It is never thanked for the protection it renders against the cold of winter, the heat of summer, against thorns, tacks, glass, dust, sticks and stones. It is kicked about, scoffed at, trampled under foot, knocked around and thrown violently here, there or anywhere. Its eyes are blinded, its tongue torn out, and its very "sole" ground to powder in its constant, uncomplaining servitude.

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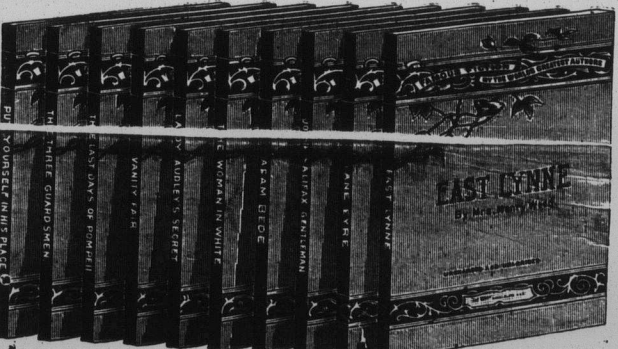
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