

THE HOUSEHOLD.

DO THE DRIVING.

(By Constance Conrad.)

'Aunt Kate, don't you think the winter days are rather stupid and dreary?'

The speaker, Mildred Crane, a fresh-faced young woman not a score of years past her girlhood, had been ushered five minutes before into her aunt's cosy sitting-room. She had brought in with her the crisp freshness of the outside air, and a bright color in her cheeks, but now that she had settled herself in an easy-chair, in a warm corner, and the glow of the walk in the keen air had left her face, a weary, dissatisfied expression had taken its place.

'Not all the days are dreary,' answered the elder lady, in a cheerful, wholesome voice. 'I know to-day has been under a cloud, but even this dark afternoon is going to end with a glorious sunset. And many of our days are full of sunshine.'

'I don't mean sunsets and sunshine. I mean the life we lead in the months that follow Christmas. Before I was married they were the gayest months of the year, full of social life and good times; but now Frank comes home tired, and prefers to sit by his own fireside, with a book or paper, and we do not like to leave the children often, anyway. But that isn't all; even the work is different. Every other season brings its own tasks that must be done, but after the rush of Christmas, everything settles down into a sort of dull routine, without a bit of inspiration.'

Aunt Kate smiled, a sympathetic, interested smile. 'Then it is not occupation you want? You are in search of inspiration?'

'Yes, that is just it. There is always enough to do. Last year Ned and Mollie's measles, in the fall, put my work all back, and it was spring before I had them ready for winter. I at least had no time to get dreary, and wish for impossibilities.'

'No,' returned Aunt Kate, 'but I should not like to see you come to another summer as completely worn out as you were last year. Illness is a great consumer of time and strength, but when you are free from it there is a much better way to do one's work than to be driven by it. Have you ever thought of driving your work, instead of being driven yourself? Have you ever known Ned or Molly to prefer being horse to being driver?'

Mildred's face lighted up with an amused smile. 'No, it is one of my daily tasks to see that there are turns in holding the reins.'

'I thought so,' replied Aunt Kate. 'We can often learn from children. These opening months of the new year, with their steadily lengthening days, are the key to the whole year. It is the one time that we can grasp the reins ourselves, and if fortune favors us, very often need not relinquish them again to the year's end. The sales in the stores suggest the work for January, with their advertisements of table linen and sheeting and underwear. But before purchases are made it is well to have a thorough review of the stock on hand. There are many bits of thrifty house-keeping can be put into this work, that will save the not too plentiful dollars, for things you will want later. Have you ever turned any sheets?'

'Why, Aunt Kate! I thought that was as old-fashioned as the hills.'

'I think it is a little old-fashioned; many good ideas are; but it pays if you have the time. You must be your own judge there. If you will take the sheets after they begin to look thin in the middle, but as yet have no breaks, and overhaul the selva edges together, and hem the outer edges on the machine, you will find your sheets will last at least two years longer than they otherwise would have done. The firm ends of old table cloths will make good common napkins, while the slightly thin-

ner portions, cut in small squares and fringed, make much softer, finer wash cloths than those newly purchased. Then there are bread cloths to be made out of the remainder of the table cloths, and a pile of dish cloths to be made out of old towels.

'When this is all in order you will be able to judge better just how much material you require. I have known young housekeepers starting with a good stock of these foundations of housekeeping, but having no regular season for replenishing, to come to a time of severe illness, and find the contents of their linen closet had run so low that there was nothing with which to fill out the added calls. And a time of sickness is a very poor time to be driven by outside work.'

'I know I have work waiting for me in my linen closet,' said Mildred, 'and it is pleasant work, too, if something more important is not pressing. What next, Aunt Kate? You are like a general laying out a campaign.'

'Next comes the underwear. There it is again a question of time. When you had your hands full with nursing, a year ago, you did well to buy the little ready-made garments that prepared the children quickly for winter, but I know you want to be a real helpmeet to Frank, and that his salary is not large. By purchasing a good quality of muslin, and making the little garments yourself, you will not only save in the expense of each article now, but the stronger material will also outlast most of the muslin used in any but very high-priced ready-made underwear.'

'Oh, but, Aunt Kate, you've forgotten the worst work. Frank's shirts need new wrist bands and collar bands now, and I've been shutting my eyes to it for days,' said Mildred, laughing ruefully.

'Then I'd open my eyes and begin them to-morrow,' returned Aunt Kate. 'When the starch is washed out of the shirt, and the band and wristbands are ripped off, and carefully ironed, it is not hard to get the pattern. The rest is simply perfect accuracy and careful measurement.'

'I certainly didn't think that I had come over here to-day to get an inspiration for those shirts, but I think I will start them to-morrow. The sooner I begin them the sooner they will be done,' replied Mildred. 'I think I know what you would suggest for March. All the pretty gingham and wash fabrics are out then, and it would be nice not to have the sewing and house-cleaning clash for once.'

'You are right; and the house-cleaning loses half of its rush and hurry if it isn't hard pressed by something else. Then, too, you can give many little lifts in the early months of the year, renewing curtains, recovering chairs, covering bad places in the wall paper, and refreshing anything that needs an extra touch.'

'Later on closets and bureau drawers in warm rooms can have their spring cleaning, but one thing don't do. Don't become so inspired with your own progress that you are tempted to clean house in March. I shall never forget the shining cleanliness of a home where I attended a funeral one early April day, with the knowledge that its beloved mistress might have been for many years still the light of that home but for a heavy cold contracted in an early house-cleaning. But I think you will find you have enough to do without that.'

'Yes, indeed,' said Mildred, rising. 'I must go now, Millie White said she would bring the children home at five o'clock. But you certainly have taken the stupidity out of the winter months.'

'Don't try to do too much at once, and remember this work is not driving you, so your many interruptions need not bring with them the worry that comes when each piece of work must be done in a limited time. When you drive your work you are always free to tie it up and leave it. When it drives you, you are never free. I am sure you will find driving your work an inspiration.'

CARE OF THE HOUSE.

How many homes there are in which more care is lavished upon expensive adornments than upon the free, every-day comforts and blessings of nature! There are many women who, with the best intention for the care of their houses and their children, still commit one heinous, hygienic sin by what may not be inaptly called 'furniture worship,' and so careful are they of carpets, sofa coverings and curtains, that some rooms in their houses are maintained in a cellar-like darkness except for short intervals when they are thrown open for 'company.' If one thing is more certain than another, it is the fact that all sorts of microscopic growths love the darkness. One has only to search a dark spot in the forest to find myriads of them, and dark, sunless closets and corners come a close second with moulds, and, if we examine carefully, a dust filled with spores. —Exchange.

SELECTED RECIPES.

Oatmeal Griddle Cakes.—Two cups of well-cooked oatmeal, two cups of milk, one egg, well-beaten, salt to taste, about one cup of flour, or enough to make stiff enough to turn well, with an even teaspoonful of baking powder. These are very delicate.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

SEEDS

**FOR FARM GARDEN,
KITCHEN GARDEN,
FLOWER GARDEN.**

**Special Offers to Subscribers of
the 'Northern Messenger'
for 1896.**

The collections of seeds proved so successful last year that enquiries have already been made by many subscribers who have written hoping the offers would be repeated. This has encouraged the publishers to renew the offer of last year, with but slight alterations. It was thought some improvement could be made in the selections, and the decision of a gentleman of the highest authority was that the three collections formed the very best, most useful and most easily grown varieties. Thus the SEED OFFER for 1896 is presented to subscribers, and it is our greatest desire that the placing of flower and vegetable seeds in this form will tend to greatly increase their growth in our Canadian homes. What can be more palatable to the taste, or conducive to health than nice fresh vegetables, and what is more pleasing to the eye than the beautiful flowers of the garden?

These collections of seeds are put up specially for the 'Witness' and 'Northern Messenger' by a first class seedsman, in packages as stated in each separate offer, and no package of seeds can be exchanged from one offer to another.

The seeds are all fresh and reliable, and are not sold for less than the price marked on each packet, and are tested as to climate and quality.

The Vegetable Seeds comprise the very best varieties, suitable for all parts of the Dominion.

The Flower Garden Collection comprises the best flowering varieties for show and cutting. Also adapted for all parts of the Dominion.

MANAGEMENT OF VEGETABLE SEEDS.

Sow Peas, Onion Seeds and Spinach as soon as the ground is dry enough to work; also Carrots, Beets, Parsnips, and a few early Turnips, and Lettuces, Cabbages and Tomatoes may be sown in a box in the window to give plants to set out. Corn, Beans, Cucumbers, Squashes and Melons, on the other hand, must not be sown till the ground is quite warm, when they will come up in a few days and grow rapidly. Needless to say, keeping the ground loose and clean, greatly hastens the growth, increases the size and improves the quality of almost all vegetables. Sweetness and crispness depend on quick growth, which is greatly helped by frequent stirring of the soil and keeping down weeds.

MANAGEMENT OF FLOWER SEEDS.

Mignonette, one of the hardiest annuals, will grow almost anywhere, yet will yield more flowers, and be more fragrant in good soil and sunny situation. Portulaca should be sown in the sunniest spot. Zinnia, Tropaeolum, Marvel of Peru, Petunia and Verbena too, all delight in bright sunshine; Pansy should be sown in a cool spot, and

shaded from the mid-day sun. Sweet Peas should be sown very early, in the richest soil to induce prolonged season of vigorous bloom. Phlox Drummondii is slow to germinate, and should be sown early; so should Candytuft, Chinese Pink and Ten Weeks' Stock; also, Convolvulus Major, the well known Morning Glory; and seed should be covered very lightly with fine earth. The exceptions are Sweet Peas, Morning Glory, Tropaeolum, Marvel of Peru, and perhaps Balsams.

HOW TO SECURE THE SEEDS FREE.

To secure the Farm Garden Collection of Seeds free (the total value of which is \$1.75), send a list of eighteen subscribers to the 'Northern Messenger,' at thirty cents each.

A list of ten subscriptions to the 'Northern Messenger,' at thirty cents each will entitle the sender to the Kitchen Garden Collection free.

Send thirteen subscriptions to the 'Northern Messenger' at thirty cents each, and the sender will receive the Flower Garden Collection, containing seeds to the value of \$1.25 free.

Offer No. 1.

The Farm Garden Collection.

\$1.15 will secure this collection of seeds post-paid, and the 'Northern Messenger' one year.

Beans, Golden Wax	5
Beans, Wardswell's Wax	5
Beet, Ex. Early Turnips	5
Cabbage, Early Etampes	5
Cabbage, St. Denis	5
Carrot, Half-Long Nantes	5
Carrot, Long Orange	5
Cucumber, White Spine	5
Corn, Early Cory	5
Corn, Evergreen	5
Lettuce, Imperial	5
Melon, Nutmeg	5
Nasturtium, Dwarf	5
Onion, Yellow Danvers	10
Onion, Silver Pickling	10
Peas, Early, First and Best	5
Peas, Stratagem	5
Parsnips, Hollow Crown	5
Parsley, Triple Curled	5
Radish, Olive Shaped	5
Radish, Scarlet Turnip	5
Pepper, Long Red	5
Spinach, Round or Summer	5
Squash, Hubbard	5
Squash, Vegetable Marrow	10
Tomato, Acme	5
Turnip, Strap Leaf	5
Turnip, Purple Top Swede	5
Sage	5
Summer Savory	5
Total	\$1.65

In addition to the above, a ten cent package of Giant Yellow Intermediate Carrot will be included, the latest novelty for Fall and Winter use for stock feeding. It is also useful as a table vegetable, introduced from Europe: easily grown and good keeper.

The Farm Garden Collection to 'Northern Messenger' subscribers, post-paid, 95 cents.

Offer No. 2.

The Kitchen Garden Collection.

70 cents will secure this collection of seeds post-paid, and the 'Northern Messenger' one year.

Beans, Golden Wax	5
Beet, Egyptian Turnip	5
Cabbage, Early Etampes	5
Carrot, Nantes	5
Cucumber, Long Green	5
Corn, Crosby's Sweet	5
Lettuce, Early Cabbage	5
Melon, Nutmeg	5
Onion, Yellow Danvers	10
Parsnip, Hollow Crown	10
Parsley, Triple Curled	5
Peas, First and Best	5
Radish, Long Scarlet	5
Squash, Hubbard	5
Tomato, Perfection	5
Turnip, Early Stone	5
Total	\$0.85

In addition, a ten cent trial package will be included of Breadfruit White Seed Turnip. Sweet and remarkable for its nutritious quality and long keeping properties.

The Kitchen Garden Collection to 'Northern Messenger' subscribers, post-paid, 60 cents.

Offer No. 3.

The Flower Garden Collection.

85c will secure this collection of seeds post-paid, and the 'Northern Messenger' one year.

Mignonette	5
Pansy	10
Zinnia	5
Tropaeolum or Nasturtium	5
Portulaca	5
Candytuft	5
Convolvulus Major	5
Chinese Pink	10
Balsam	10
Coropsis	10
China Aster	5
Marvel of Peru, or Four O'Clocks	5
Verbena	10
Ten Weeks Stocks	10
Sweet Peas	5
Phlox Drummondii	10
Petunia	10
Total	\$1.25

In addition, a ten cent trial package of a new, large flowered English Pansy will be included. This is an entirely new variety, and sure to give satisfaction.

The Flower Garden Collection to 'Northern Messenger' subscribers, post-paid, 65 cents.

Address,

JOHN DOUGALL & SON,

'Witness' Office, Montreal.