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about carefully for footprints, and found some which did not look like those of a cat. He made a still closer examination, and in one hole a faint skunk-like odor was detected. But what could a skunk be making so many holes for? It was known that he fed on chickens and sucked eggs, but there were none of these here. Did he feed on the roots of plants? What could he be after? It was decided to ask someone who knew, and then the gardener learned that the skunk—which this turned out to be—which occasionally kills chickens and eats eggs, and sometimes annoys by his penetrating odor, is really a friend of gardeners, and destroys many injurious insects, among which are cutworms. And, if this skunk had been killed and examined, undoubtedly some of these insects would have been found inside it. On again looking at the holes, it was found that they were much more numerous in places where the soil was sandy and warm; and all gardeners know that in sandy soil cutworms are, as a rule, most numerous. Here was a nature study which would never be forgotten, and would lead to further studies of the habits of animals in the fields and woods.

"The amateur gardener's joys, which are perennial, receive an annual revival when New Year's seed and plant catalogues come in. What pleasant hours are spent in studying the names and descriptions of plants, from abronia to zinnia, only the lover of plants knows. And then those glorious days in spring-time when the thrill and ecstasy of life is in us and all about us! The turning of the soil and the feel of it in our hands! Even though our plants may later be destroyed by frost or cutworms, it is worth the labor just to feel that contact with the warm and steaming soil in spring. Then follows the sowing of the seeds, their germination, thinning to ensure perfect development, cultivation to conserve moisture, aerate the soil, and promote a healthy growth of the plant, the benefits of which are learned by experience, and hence are never forgotten. With what expectancy he watches the developing flower buds, and when, at last, the tender petals expand, what pleasure is derived from studying the form and color of the perfect flower!

"The vegetable garden furnishes ample food for thought as well as for the table. Its economic value is only of secondary moment to the true amateur. He grows his vegetables mainly for the love of it, and hence watches his crop with quite different feelings to the man whose livelihood depends on it. There are few methods of studying nature that are at once so practical and yet so delightful as gardening, for definite knowledge of nature's methods is here obtained by personal observation, which is one great object of nature study.

"Not only is the amateur gardener a true student of nature, but he is a public benefactor as well. His garden is a delight to all who see it. It improves the appearance of the city, town, or place in which he dwells, and even if everyone who attempts to follow his example does not catch his enthusiasm and the true spirit, he will exert a very powerful influence for good.

"One of the most hopeful turns which nature study has taken is the establishment of school gardens, where each child, with a little garden of his own, prepares the soil, sows the seed, cares for the plant, and where he should learn more about nature from his own practical experience than could possibly be taught him by another. If his garden is in a city, or town, the child will probably be more interested at first in studying the growth of ornamental plants and perhaps of fruit and vegetables, for these are what he has been brought most in contact with, and, in the teacher's effort to create a love for plants and a definite knowledge of how they grow, success will be quicker and surer if he begins with known rather than with unknown objects. In the country, where pupils are likely to become farmers or farmers' wives, special attention should be paid to economic plants, such as wheat, oats, barley, pease, corn, potatoes, grasses, and roots of various kinds, and fruit. Here nature study will, in part, take the form of elementary agriculture, although the main purpose, as elsewhere, should be to uplift the mind of the child to a nobler conception of life."

BLACK ANTS.

Kindly inform me, through your paper, how to get rid of large, black ants.

SUBSCRIBER'S WIFE.

Durham Co., Ont.

According to "Smith," there is no better plan for getting rid of ants than the use of carbon bisulphide. Pour a quantity into the openings of the hill, closing them up with the foot as treated. As carbon bisulphide is very inflammable, be careful in the use of it.

If the ants are in the house, and you do not know where their hill or colony is, get a couple of sponges, fill them with sweetened water, and put them where the ants congregate. As they become filled with the insects, drop them into hot water and repeat until the ants disappear.

LETTER FROM "PANSY" SIMPLIFYING WORK.

Dear Junia,—I have been a silent reader of your columns all winter, and have enjoyed them very much. I also received some very helpful hints.

I quite agree with "Gloria," from Kent Co., in her idea of a box for a baby. I have raised two that way, and now have a ten-months baby, and put her in one every day, and find it much better than allowing her to be on the floor. I am a town-bred girl, but have been on a farm for some years back. We live in a large house. I am not very strong, and as I have already said, I have three small children. I enjoy reading very much. My husband has always lived on a farm, and is still on the same farm he was born on. He is right at home with his surroundings and the community. I still do not feel "at home" in a great many ways, as I would in a town, and find it very hard to interest myself in the outside. I am alone with the work, and do all our plain sewing, and find my strength taxed to its uttermost. I have no time for flowers, reading, or much visiting. I have no relatives near me, but my husband is surrounded by his and is content in every way. Cannot you give me an idea or two to help me feel more at home on a farm? The two letters in the Mending Basket column of March 27th are splendid, only I do not quite agree with "Marie" in all her ideas. I think often a man expects his wife to work as hard as he does, when often she has not half his strength. The Good Cook says, "Man shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow." I think it is a man's place to work hard for his family. If it takes every ounce of a Roman's strength to do her work inside the home, I think she is doing her duty. I believe in standing up for one's own sex every time.

Hoping this, my first attempt in writing to your column, will find a place and bring an answer that may help one who is sorely taxed at times.

"PANSY."

Northumberland Co., Ont.

Pansy, I think you are just a bit overtired. Of course, with three small children you must have plenty to do, and it may be that you will just have to wait for rest-time and leisure to read until the bairnies grow up a bit; yet, there are surely a few ways by which you can economize health and strength.

Let us think about it.—What about closing up a part of that big house for the summer. Could you manage that? And have you paint or linoleum on all your "bare" floors? If so, a dustless mop, or even a homemade one, made according to directions in to-day's Scrap Bag, should simplify that part of the work a little. As for other dusting, why not pack away a good many of the knick-knacks for the summer.

The laundering is always a heavy part of housework, so what can be done about that? If the weather should chance to be hot, what about letting the little ones run about in rompers and overalls most of the time? Then, eliminate ironing on everything possible. "Everyday" sheets, towels, tea-towels, stockings and knitted underwear certainly do very well without even the touch of an iron, while working dresses and shirts may be straightened out sufficiently to "do" by hanging them on the line, direct from the rinsing water, without wringing them at all, but taking care to pin them on so that the water in running off will follow the natural lines of the

garment when worn. By using cotton crepe (which scarcely requires the touch of an iron; a slight pressing with a warm one on the hems being sufficient) for afternoon dresses, blouses, and night-dresses, the process may be simplified still more.

In the kitchen, have a zinc top put on the work-table, and plan your cooking to make as little work as possible. It is easier to make simple things than elaborate things. A friend of mine in town here has brought about quite a revolution in this respect. Instead of pie and pudding, she now serves brown, raisin or currant bread, with fruit most of the time, and has found that the family like it even better. Cake, too, has almost disappeared from her tea-table, upon which milk-soups with biscuits, lettuce with cream and sugar, green onions, vegetable salads, cheese, sliced tomatoes, egg-salad, and cold meats, give plenty of variety, with the inevitable fruit—raw, with sugar, whenever available—to finish. "More wholesome and less trouble," she says.

Of course, I do not know your circumstances, so do not know whether you can afford labor-saving utensils, etc., or not, but if you can afford them you will find them a great comfort. The blue-flame oil-stove, the steam-cooker, the fireless-cooker, the washing-machine, wringer, rubber or galvanized-tin bathtub (where porcelain cannot be had), carpet-sweeper, dustless mop, bread-mixer, plenty of pans and kettles, and knives and spoons for all purposes—who that has ever owned these would care to be without them?—to say nothing of a baking cabinet and refrigerator. If you are interested, you may find some ideas in a Women's Institute paper, by Mrs. Nott, to be given, nothing happening to the contrary, in an early issue of this paper.

You are not interested in the out-of-doors? That must be because you are too busy to find time for any of the interesting things,—too busy to fuss with a few flowers, or with little chickens, or with the vegetable garden. Perhaps a few books would stimulate your interest, if you can afford the money and time; a good poultry-book, Bailey's "Manual of Gardening," Neltje Blanchan's "Bird Neighbors," Alice Lounsberry's, "A Guide to the Wild Flowers." Many others might be mentioned. The happiest women I know take an interest in all these things.

Then there are the neighbors,—have you tried being interested in their interests, in being just your nicest, friendliest, sweetest, most generous self with them? If so, you must surely have touched a chord here or there. Perhaps they have been a bit afraid of you because you came from town, and so have been reserved, and you have been a bit reserved, too. If so, there may be a few barriers to break, but frank and kindly sincerity can do much.

Perhaps I have not answered very well your question, "How can I feel more at home on the farm?" but I do not know what more to say. Personally, I love the farm—when it is made a place for intelligent effort and the right balance of things rather than a place of mere drudgery—and I love the country, the animals, the birds, and the plants, so perhaps I have a different view-point.

THE RIGHT SPIRIT.

Dear Junia,—As Mr. Pearson has offered a prize again for Peel County flower-gardens, I wish to enter the competition, and hope I may be as successful as last year.

I hope you may receive at least 100 names for this competition. I cannot understand why all the farmers' wives and daughters do not show Mr. Pearson that they appreciate his generosity, by making as fine a flower-garden as possible, even though they may not be successful in winning a prize. Think of the pleasure they will have all summer watching the flowers grow. Wishing all the competitors success with their flowers.

A PEEL CO. COMPETITOR.

I have taken off the name of the writer of the above letter, not knowing whether she might wish it to appear or not. It certainly seems to me to express the right spirit in this competition, or in any other competition; it is not the prize, but the "game," that should count most.

The writer of the above has been en-