

THE HOUSEHOLD.

FASHION BURDENS.

When I began to talk of having a new suit, Cousin Fanny, who, of late, has been my assistant and oracle in matters of the kind, said that I had better have it made a plaited skirt, as those seemed to remain rather the prevailing style for such goods as mine.

"But I have withstood the mode thus long," I replied, "and I think I will not begin now. Besides, they have become so very common that I do not believe I want one, even if I were not prejudiced on account of the weight they impose upon the wearer."

"But when nicely made they look well," returned Fanny, "yet plain, and suitable for any occasion. And what fashion is not common?" she added, "or how will you have a skirt made in these days, and it not be heavy, except it may be of a print or gingham dress?"

"But these plaited skirts, must be unwarrantably heavy," I replied, "and there can be such a thing done as to put in less cloth than this style demands, even though it may be possible, perhaps, to put in more. And as for carrying such a load of dry goods as this mode demands, it is something I will not do while I have my senses, fashion or no fashion," I said very decidedly. "To be exact, let us for a moment consider the component parts of one of these modern plaited dress skirts. First, comes the foundation skirt of stout material, this faced on both outside and inside at the bottom, and usually a lining up part way of stiff wiggins. To be sure the skirt is not wide, which is its only redeeming feature, if we except the absence of a train. Then over this foundation skirt comes the plaited cloth, threefold of either silk (often heavy black silk) or wool goods, more or less weighty. The plaits often reach nearly to the top of the skirt, and then over these is placed yards of cloth, draped and puffed on as fashion or fancy may dictate."

"You make it appear quite a formidable affair," said Fanny, laughing.

"And it is formidable, more, it is abominable as well as absurd to think of women and slender girls wearing such skirts, of mothers, who ought to consider the matter, thus weighting their own bodies, or allowing their daughters to carry such needless burdens. And to make it worse, the whole weight is usually borne upon the hips, thus pressing upon the delicate organs of the diaphragm, while men must have suspenders to help them bear the weight of their trousers, scarce a tenth part as heavy as some of the fashionable dress skirts."

"Just so," said Leonidas, chancing to come in at this juncture, "I lifted one of Fanny's dresses from the chair the other day, and it fairly lamed my arm to hold it a moment."

"Poor, weak cousin!" interrupted Fanny, "won't you have the liniment for your lame arm?"

"Weak! Why, if I were obliged to wear such a skirt down town," continued Leo, "I should need two canes and a pair of crutches to help me along, and then quite likely have to hail an omnibus before getting to the office. And how comfortable it must be, to be wrapped up in so much cloth this warm weather," he went on, as he took a fan and commenced to use it vigorously.

But to return to my own skirt. I finally compromised the matter by deciding to have it plaited in spaces, which would require not more than half the width of cloth which is put into close plaits, and also to have them reach only part way up the skirt, the top being finished by drapery.

"And not too much drapery either, Fanny," I repeat, as she prepares to model the suit, "for I must have a dress which I can walk comfortably in whenever I choose to do so. And we do not wish to spend too much time upon the making either, for life has other work than this to perform, though reasonable attention must needs be given to apparel suited to one's circumstances and tastes."

When at last the suit was finished it looked plain, and yet it was sufficiently trimmed, but not so elaborate as are countless rows of ruffles or fine plaits. Even now it is too heavy for comfort in walking, though lighter than most which are made and worn by others. I could bear my own slight discomfort in silence, only that I am thus led to think of the burdens which the larger ma-

jority of women and girls who make any pretension to dress, willingly assume.

Were it only ladies of leisure, who ride oftener than walk, and have few laborious tasks to perform, the matter would assume a different aspect, even though these have no right to set the example to others, or needlessly injure the health, which might with proper sense and care be preserved. But it is not these alone by any means.

Every day I see passing my window or meet upon the street, young women going to and from stores, offices or other places of employment, where they must be on their feet much of the day, burdened with the weight of heavy, fashionable dress skirts, these weighing upon the hips, and thus bearing upon the more delicate organs of the body. I note teachers in our public schools, the music teacher in her rounds, school girls who need to be much in the open air, and to walk freely and buoyantly, wearing these weighty garments which I feel are helping to bring on diseases and invalidism for the future of their lives. It is this, I believe, with other follies, which harms far more than any downright hard study is liable to do.

Not only are dress skirts made altogether too heavy, but the long, weighty cloaks of the past winter or two have been extremely burdensome. Far better be clothed in warm undergarments of light material than wear such weighty dresses and cloaks as have been more or less adopted of late years.—*A Martyr of the Period.*

WHAT SHALL OUR CHILDREN READ?

With many people the fact of their children being so-called "great readers" is enough. They neglect to inquire what sort of literature is attractive to them, and what influence it is having in the formation of their characters, and if they provide at all for this want it is in the most economical (?) manner. The mother is very anxious as to the materials and manner of making of every garment and of every meal prepared for her child. She feeds the body and arrays and beautifies it, and neglects the jewel within the casket till it is seared by the fires of vain imaginations, fostered by the improbable, too often impossible, tales of the modern writers.

First of all, every child should be taught a love for "the old, old story." Let the Bible be the most attractive book in the house. We frequently look at the "big Bible" pictures and talk about them, and read its large print together, and the time when each child is old enough to own a Bible of its own is one eagerly looked forward to. I do not approve of ever making a task of committing texts, but every little one may learn faith in the Saviour who has said, "Suffer little children to come unto me." In learning each text its application may be taught, and soon an interest in such matters is established.

There are books now that should be in the hands of all children, specially adapted to every-day use, and from which they may learn texts, and gain strength and help for the little daily cross bearing that comes to us all. We have in use "Morning Bells," which has a morning text, reading and hymn for thirty-one days. A suitable book for evening readings is "Little Pillows," which the least child may read and go with sweetest thoughts to its rest.

For struggling young Christians there is another excellent book, "Coming to the King," which has lovely forms of petitions and readings, and coming from a mother to her child, a teacher to pupil, or a pastor to one of his flock, is a most suitable gift, and furnishes "milk for babes," and nourishment for any who will avail themselves of it. These books are prepared by Frances Ridley Havergal.

This sort of reading matter is most important, and the many helps to the Sabbath School lessons now in use should be studied by parents, and the best to be had furnished to those who need them.

Natural history and biography in attractive forms and by really good authors are now within the reach of many. But to those who do not have the "wherewithal" for the purchase of books, these are unattainable.

Can we not encourage our young folks to deny themselves some luxuries, some extra ornaments, and devote that much to the procuring of really suitable literature, for the everlasting adornment of their minds. Great care should be exercised in se-

lection—not all instruction—some sugar. Sweets to the taste of each, spiced or acidulated. Many homes now mourn the loss of their hold upon the children whose ideas of life have been formed by the highly colored, overwrought, if not immoral, tales of some so-called "young folks' periodicals." Parents, see to it you do not one day wish you had cared to know what sort of tastes your children are forming, and guided them in a proper choice, by furnishing what is good and pure and true even if their stomachs and bodies go without unnecessary luxuries.—*The Household.*

ACCIDENTAL POISONING.

If you have swallowed a poison, whether laudanum, arsenic, or other poisonous drug, put a tablespoonful of ground mustard in a glass of water, cold or warm, stir and swallow quickly. Instantaneously the contents of the stomach will be thrown up, not allowing the poisonous substance time to be absorbed and taken into the blood. As soon as vomiting ceases, swallow the white of one or two eggs, for the purpose of antagonizing any small portion of the poison which may have been left behind. Let the reader remember the principle, which is to get the poison out of you as quickly as possible.

There are other things which will also serve as a speedy emetic, but the advantage of mustard is, it is always at hand, it acts instantaneously without any other medicinal effects. The use of the white of an egg is, that although it does not nullify all poisons, it antagonizes a larger number than any other agent so readily attainable. But having taken the mustard or egg, send for a physician; these are advised in order to save time, as the delay of twenty minutes often causes death.

CURES OF BITES AND STINGS.

Almost all these are destructive from their acid nature, consequently the cure is an alkali. Spirits of hartshorn is one of the strongest, and is kept in almost every household, and you have only to pour some of it out in a teacup, and dabble it on with a rag. Relief is immediate. If you have not hartshorn then saleratus is a suitable alkali. Moisten it with water, and use as in the case of hartshorn. Or, pour a teacup of boiling water on as much wood ashes, stir it, in a few minutes you will have an alkali.—*Hall's Journal of Health.*

FRUIT SYRUPS.

Making syrup is an all day affair, and a good plan is to set the jars of juice in the oven at evening and keep a low fire all night, finishing off next afternoon. Six quarts of grape-juice should make one of syrup, wine-colored, luscious, of delicious, refreshing perfume and flavor. One tablespoonful in a glass of water gives a delightful drink, like fresh grape-juice, the true substitute for wine with all temperate people, and the finest medicine for correcting a feverish, bilious state ever known. The syrup itself is valuable for restoring strength, and consumptive persons should take it by the tumbler daily, sipping it leisurely, with sugar, if too tart for the taste. It makes new, rich blood, it cleanses the system, clears the brain and feeds starved nerves. It has the hypophosphites which doctors prescribe for waste of tissue, and taken freely will arrest even critical stages of disease. People fed on pure food with abundance of fruit need never dread cancer, Bright's disease, gout, neuralgia, dropsy, or a dozen other of the worst scourges of the race.—*Vick's Magazine.*

A HAPPY THOUGHT.

"It is a grave mistake which so many house-mothers make to crowd Saturday so full of extra work—cleaning and baking, and mending and making—until midnight commands the needle to fall from the weary fingers. One of the sweetest and saintliest of the mothers of the generation now growing old, used always to call Saturday 'The Preparation Day,' borrowing the old Jewish designation of the day before the Sabbath. Morning was given to the careful preparation of house and food and apparel for the holy morrow; afternoon to the preparation of herself. Not religious preparation—her soul was always ready for spiritual joy—but she would not have a tired body or a jaded mind to drag upon the upsoaring spirit. The hours were spent in reading, in still idleness, in looking over and cutting slips from accumulated newspapers,

in a walk, a drive, above all in companionship with the children.

"Many a rainy afternoon was spent in repeating to them the poems with which her richly endowed mind was stored—cantos of Scott, sonnets of Shakespeare and Milton, long poems of Goldsmith and Cowper and Dryden, ballads of Burns and Motherwell, the earlier poems of Longfellow and Tennyson, the Hebrew melodies of Bynn, the sacred songs of Keble, or Newton or Montgomery. Many a winter afternoon was spent in pasting pictures into the great scrap-book, which was one of the institutions of the family, in learning the intricacies of the Chinese puzzle, or in solving the enigmas or charades of "Merry's Museum," the one children's magazine of those days. Blessed Saturday half-holiday! Day of sweet and joyful preparation! Why cannot mothers and mistresses take the initiative in the new reform, and inaugurate such a half-holiday in all the households in the land?"—*Good Housekeeping.*

GRAHAM GEMS.—Two cups of graham flour one tablespoonful of sugar, a small teaspoonful of salt, two even teaspoonfuls of baking powder stirred lightly in and mix with cold water as thin as griddle cakes or till it will run in a nearly continuous stream. The secret of success lies in the baking. Set your buttered gem pan, the cup shaped are the best, on top of the stove and let it become very hot, then pour in the mixture, let it set a moment and put in as hot an oven as you dare. Don't open the door till they are done, which will be in about ten minutes. Sometimes we leave out both sugar and baking powder and they are very nice hot, and especially grateful to a dyspeptic member of our family.

PUZZLES.

WORD BUILDING.

Each of the following puzzles is to be solved by forming a series of words, building the words by adding one letter at a time, and sometimes changing the order of the letters. For example, ten, tape, prate, tapers, repeats.

- Inflammable air,  
By one letter, with ease  
You may make into clothes,  
Old and worn (if you please).  
These, to something sweet-tasting,  
Now change, in like manner,  
Then change to a squadron  
Of troops, with a banner.
- Frame now for me  
Of letters three  
A woman, vow'd in single life to live;  
Now add one more—  
So making four—  
And change her to a substantive,  
Add now to this,  
A vowel 'tis,  
And you will marriage find, I hope;  
Change, and add one;  
When this is done,  
Behold a servant of the Pope.
- A knock at the door  
I change, if you wish,  
With one letter, into  
A long living fish,  
Then that, in like manner  
If you have a mind  
To what mourners wear,  
Can be changed, as you'll find,  
With a consonant, now  
Make what covers a floor  
And a part of a book  
By one letter more.

BURIED CITIES.

- Eight buried cities.
- I cannot make this sewing-machine go; there is something the matter with the upper thread.
  - Did you hear the smash this morning? I was pouring out some water in my bed-room when down went the whole thing on the floor, breaking into a dozen pieces. It must have been a very weak cover.
  - Just look! What a pretty green thing that is gliding through the grass. Do you call that horrid thing a "pretty" reptile?
  - Don't you think that Dora Weston is a dear little thing? She may be a dear girl; but she can hardly be called little, I think, when she weighs about 130 pounds.
  - Really, I cannot go with you, pa, until I have finished this sketch for Sue.
  - I wonder by what means Jo found out that secret about the surprise-party?
  - Mary and John went South by land; but Willie went by water, looking out for gaining good from the voyage.
  - What a delicious breakfast we had this morning at the hotel. Yes; pretty good; but they gave us a very poor omelet.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN LAST NUMBER

- WHAT IS IT.—Splash,  
plash,  
lash,  
ash,  
sh.
- RIVAL SCHOOLS.—Allopathy, Homoeopathy.
- TRANSPOSITIONS.—Nails  
snail,  
slain.