

## The Ladies' Page.

### LIGHT HOUSEKEEPING.

Do you, dear reader, know what "light housekeeping" means? Have you any idea, even a vague one, of the magnificent possibilities of home and comfort conveyed in that mysterious phrase to people whose purses are not plethoric, and yet whose aspirations are all of a superior order, and demand attention and consideration?

To give up and be poor in downright earnest, retire to a cheap boarding house, live on nothing, poorly cooked, go nowhere, and see no one, at the first stroke of ill luck, is to acknowledge yourself inferior to fate, and, if you have no wife, is an insult to your Maker. It don't cost any more to keep up appearances, if you go to work the right way, and that, next to keeping out of debt, is the prime consideration in life; and here is where light housekeeping comes in, and is so exceedingly jolly, nice, comfortable, and eminently respectable. But it isn't every one who knows how to "light housekeep" at first—I have only recently achieved success—and some never do and never will learn, because they are not gifted with perceptive faculties, and fail to see the eternal fitness of mind and matter that tend to genuine home comfort, no matter what the financial condition may be. Cause and effect are away beyond such people, and the idea of attaining happiness in three or four rooms is too severe for contemplation; but hosts of live men and women agree with me, and prefer a home, with all its delightful possibilities, if it is part of a floor in a city mansion; and housekeeping can really be made not only light, but charming and economical. It isn't money so much, or, rather, not so much money, that is requisite as tact and taste and a desire to produce grand results from apparent nothings. It may be in a culinary way, offering the beloved partner of your joys and sorrows an ambrosia, made of ordinary material enough, but flavored with a nameless divine something that makes it very good eating, and calls forth the honest praise that is so dear to the heart of woman, or it may be in exercising your ingenuity and love in the beautiful in making your parlor, which in light housekeeping is dining-room, library and serving-room as well, a very attractive spot, that to the eye of love at least will appear a bower of beauty and the abode of all the human virtues. The easiest and, to my mind, the only way to thoroughly accomplish and enjoy light housekeeping is to take furnished rooms. They are, to be sure, more expensive than unfurnished ones, but there are many compensations, and in the long run will be found to pay. They are generally cared for, more or less scrupulously, as the case may be, and you have no responsibility other than you choose to assume. The maid of all work is your servant *pro tem.*, and yet you are spared the annoyance and expense of regaling inevitable cousins and followers from your small larders. I suggest furnished rooms for another reason, that people addicted to moving periodically will appreciate. You can seldom in the city live more than a year in the same house, unless you are exceptionally and rarely blessed in a permanent landlord—one never rents rooms of a landlord, I notice—and I have yet to find that *rara avis*. I think they are no more a race, and prefer a roving life. The burden and anxiety of moving furniture once or twice a year is something fearful to contemplate, independent of the general wreck our household gods undergo. Don't I know to my sorrow and inexpressible grief that some seventy-five or eighty dollars' worth of rare vases that had followed my varied fortunes all over the world were in one fell swoop reduced to food for the ash-barrel at my last move? My sole consolation is that they can never be moved again, and I sha'n't have them to pack in fear and trembling, and this is the only joy I shall ever get now from my "things of beauty" supposed to endure forever.

My movable possessions occupy some six or eight trunks, exclusive of books, pictures, music, and a few scattering bags, baskets, and bundles which are of no earthly use; but I cherish them tenderly, and drag them from pillar to post, because I am a woman, and have a weakness for traps. I can pack up and change my field of action at short notice, though any other pastime is preferable, I admit. I only say I can, and the ability so to do is one of the chief blessings of my present existence.

Furniture is not a good investment unless you are the sole proprietor of a house wherein it is secure from the ruthless hands of carmen, who are veritable destroying angels, and seem to thrive on and enjoy their devastations. But to return to my subject and furnished rooms. Three will suffice for any well-disposed and not too presumptuous couple, and they should be in a private family, in a good, central locality—one that will sound well to mention in genteel circles, and look well on your letters, papers and parcels.

Of course a man and wife must have similar tastes and desires, and be mutually agreed and helpful, or there will be altercations and endless troubles, and three rooms won't be large enough to hold them. No semi-attached couple should undertake this experiment, for there is no getting away from each other; there can be no retreat or private refuge in a *ménage* of three rooms, and the chief requisites of success in this rather novel mode of living are peace and unanimity of opinion. You can't make up your individual mind to a beefsteak dinner, and your stubborn but doubtless better half to one of chops, and both be gratified; for your small

stove—and of course you have a small stove, or you wouldn't be at light housekeeping—has room but for one variety; so one must give up, or there will be no dinner for either that day. Now my better half is not at all stubborn, and, fortunately for him, likes what I do—except a dash of red pepper, to which he does not take as kindly as I could wish—and he allows me to do the providing for our establishment as seemeth to me the best; also the cooking, without making any exasperating allusions to the way his ancestors prepared the same viands; and he always says my results are tip-top. An atom of a stove that would stand on a dinner-plate does our cooking, and we are refreshed and edified with all sorts of good things, served in irreproachable style, and cleanly beyond a doubt. Such truly beatific coffee and oysters, such rare, tender and juicy steaks, such golden brown and fleecy omelettes, such superlative waffles, toast, Welsh rare-bits, etc., as are generated in that tiny machine almost pass belief. I can bake in a tin oven, small but hot, and very much in earnest, and I can broil on a genuine broiler; in short, I have yet to discover the thing I can't do, except roast a pig or a turkey, and I could manage those even, by cooking them in instalments. The outlay for fuel is almost incalculable, though I can safely say it is less than a penny an hour, and can not be deemed a wild extravagance. It is clean, no trouble, and is always ready; so, without more ado than applying a match, I can refresh a hungry friend in a few minutes, and never need have a fire for even quite an elaborate spread. Indeed, I wouldn't and couldn't "do" light housekeeping without this blessedly convenient and inexpensive ally. I won't say what my stove is, because I don't like personal allusions—and, besides, it is bought and paid for, and I couldn't make any thing out of the man now, but I will say this, that a gas stove will do as much, exactly as well, only it is very much more expensive, and entails constant fusses with the best of landlords on the gas question, to say nothing of the vexation and disappointment of finding the supply cut off at mid-day some time when you are famishing for a cup of strong tea.

But aside from pretty home-like rooms, good wholesome food well cooked and tastefully served, and the general economy of the arrangement, there are many other items in favor of light housekeeping; and the steadily increasing popularity of the fashion among our best and most sensible people speaks volumes for it. There is no privacy, no home life, in boarding. You are tied to hours, and the bondage becomes irksome after a while. Your friends come and go, but you have no realizing sense of having entertained them, though your heart may be full of genuine hospitality. You are constantly receiving attentions and favors, and are at a loss how to reciprocate; in short, you want and must have a home of your own, no matter how small, so it is a happy and well-ordered one, where you can welcome your friends, and be comfortable after your own devices; and I, from my own heartfelt experience, suggest as a relief from all these ills a trial of light housekeeping. Where and when the idea of revolutionizing the conventional modes of living originated I can't say, but the times and modern conveniences, and a growing desire for domestic pleasures, have been propitious for its growth, and to-day light housekeeping is an honored institution and an acknowledged success, as hundreds of happy, cosy homes in all parts of the city will testify.

### HOMEKEEPING VERSUS HOUSEKEEPING.

The truest homes are often in houses not especially well kept, where the comfort and happiness of the inmates, rather than the preservation of the furniture, is first consulted. The object of home is to be the center, the point of tenderest interest, the pivot on which family life turns. The first requisite is to make it attractive, so attractive that none of its inmates shall care to linger long outside its limits. All legitimate means should be employed to this end, and no effort spared that can contribute to the purpose. Many houses called homes, kept with waxy neatness by painstaking, anxious women, are so oppressive in their nicety as to exclude all home-feeling from their spotless precincts. The very name of home is synonymous with personal freedom and relaxation from care. But neither of these can be felt where such a mania for external cleanliness pervades the household as to render everything else subservient thereto. Many housewives, if they see a speck on floor or wall, or even a scrap of thread or bit of paper on the floor, rush at it, as if it were the seed of pestilence which must be removed on the instant. Their temper depends upon their maintenance of perfect purity and order. If there be any failure on their part, or any combination of circumstances against them, they fall into a pathetic despair, and can hardly be lifted out. They do not see that cheerfulness is more needful to home than all the spotlessness that ever shone. Their disposition to wage war upon maculateness of any sort increases until they become slaves of the broom and dust-pan. Neatness is one thing, and a state of perpetual house-cleaning quite another.

Out of this grows by degrees the feeling that certain things and apartments are too good for daily use. Hence, chairs and sofas are covered, and rooms shut up, save for special occasions, when they are permitted to reveal their violated sacredness in a manner that mars every pretense of hospitality. Nothing should be bought which is considered too fine for the fullest domestic appropriation. Far better is the plainest furniture, on which the children can climb, than

satin and damask which must be viewed with reverence. Where anything is reserved or secluded, to disguise the fact is extremely difficult. A chilly air wraps it round, and the repulsion of strangeness is experienced by the most insensible.

There are few persons who have not visited houses where they have been introduced to what is known as the company parlor. They must remember how uncomfortable they were sitting in it; how they found it almost impossible to be at ease, and mainly for the reason that their host and hostess were not themselves at ease. The children were watched with lynx eyes, lest they should displace or soil something; so that the entertainment of friends became very much like a social discipline. They must recall, too, how sweet the fresh air seemed out-of-doors, and how they inwardly vowed, in leaving that temple of form and fidgetiness, that something more than politeness would be required to incite them to return.

Home is not a name, nor a form, nor a routine. It is a spirit, a presence, a principle. Material and method will not, and cannot make it. It must get its light and sweetness from those who inhabit it, from flowers and sunshine, from the sympathetic natures which, in their exercise of sympathy, can lay aside the tyranny of the broom and the awful duty of endless scrubbing.

### FASHION HINTS.

Ruffs and fraises increase in fullness and in altitude until they are almost Elizabethan.

Crêpe lisse is the stylish material for wearing next the skin, but much of its dead whiteness is unbecoming; it is best to put one high side pleating of crêpe lisse, with an over-frill of Valenciennes lace, and outside of this a ruff of the dress material, lined with silk of some becoming shade.

A standing linen collar in English shape, with a double ruffle of box-pleated muslin edged with lace placed outside of it, is considered very stylish for morning and for semi-dress afternoon wear.

A favorite frill is of Swiss muslin three inches deep, edged with narrow Mechlin lace, and an inch-wide insertion let in; the whole is then laid in shallow side-pleats and basted standing in the neck of the dress, leaving the back its full height, and turning it down narrower about the throat.

A simpler ruff is of sheer muslin edged with narrow thread lace, hemmed, and a cluster of tiny tucks below the hem.

This would also answer for mourning if the lace were omitted.

Ladies with fresh, clear complexions wear linen ruffs in their mourning dresses. These have an inch-wide hem turned over on the outside and hem-stitched.

### HINTS TO DRESS-MAKERS.

A revers collar in front, with a box-pleated ruff behind, is a stylish way of finishing the neck of basques, and indulges at once both the prevalent caprices for the ruff and the gentleman's coat collar. Basques now have the wide English back formed of four broad pieces of the same width at the waist, and the waist is not defined by buttons. Two cords on the edge of basques are far more stylish than any finish of lace or fringe, though the latter is sometimes placed on the back, while the fronts are plainly corded. Instead of full postillion pleats, plain lappets are sewed in the seams, or else the square jockey basque is laid in pleats that are pressed flatly, and held down by two lengthwise rows of buttons. Sleeveless jackets, especially those of black or lark-colored velvet, will be again fashionable, and are already worn with grenadine and silk dresses, accompanied by sashes of velvet. These velvet basques are tight-fitting, and are more ornamented than the simple ones worn last year. They are sometimes merely scalloped and needle-worked around the armholes and basque edge, and a velvet ruff is invariably added; others are rich with jet galloon, jet fringe, and lace, while a more stylish fancy still is to border them with a band of ostrich feathers; some are gay with colored embroidery. The new blue steel beads are mingled with jet fringes for trimming black silks and velvets. A black velvet revers collar, with a velvet ruff, lined with colored silk, is sold for wearing with various dresses: price \$25. The silk or woollen ruff is now as universal for finishing the neck of dresses as bias bands have been hitherto. Instead of lining this ruff with a color, it is best to have it entirely of the color of the dress, and wear inside a silk ruff of any color that may be becoming, and still another ruff inside this of white muslin, lace, or crêpe lisse.

Beautiful suits for morning, either for house or street, are made of the new dark calicoes. Those with black grounds brightened by a shell or star of yellow or else dark blue with stripes or lightning-struck lines of white, make up most stylishly. They have the double-breasted redingote, belted, with two rows of smooth pearl buttons down the front, and a single skirt with two lapped, gathered flounces.

COCOANUT PUDDING.—Grate a cocoanut, make a custard (two eggs to a pint of milk), sweeten to taste, add a small glass of brandy and a little nutmeg. Stir the cocoanut into this, add a bit of butter size of a hen's egg. Line a shallow dish with puff paste, and bake of a light brown.

### HINTS FOR THE HOUSEHOLD.

If persons about to wash new calico, especially black, will first soak it in salt water, it will prevent the color from fading.

SUPERIOR APPLE SAUCE.—To 1 quart sweet cider, 1 pound sugar, 2 pounds sweet apple, cook until soft. This makes a sauce preferable to preserved fruit.

STONE JARS which have become offensive and unfit for use may be rendered perfectly sweet by packing them full of earth and letting them stand two or three weeks.

JUMBLES.—3 eggs, 1½ cups sugar, 1 cup butter, 3 tablespoonfuls sour milk, a little saleratus, flour to mix hard. After it is kneaded and rolled out, sift sugar over the top.

In removing ink spots from delicate colors, when oxalic acid or chloride of lime cannot be used without injury to the color, a concentrated solution of sodium pyrophosphate is recommended.

CREAM TARTAR BISCUIT.—Sift with 1 quart flour 1 teaspoon soda and 2 teaspoons cream tartar, then add a little salt, 1 well beaten egg, a piece of lard the size of a walnut, and mix with warm water.

BAKED BREAD PUDDING.—Take any kind of cold wheat bread, grate fine and cover with warm milk with a small piece of butter melted in it. Use 1 pint of crumbs to 1 quart of milk, beat three eggs and add them, 1 teacup sugar, and whatever flavoring you wish. Bake quickly in buttered dish.

SUET PUDDING.—Seed and chop fine one large teacupful of raisins; chop one cupful of suet, having removed all the skin; add a cupful of sour milk, one teaspoonful of soda, a very little salt, three eggs beaten together, and enough flour to make a stiff batter. Steam two hours, and eat with fairy butter or wine sauce.

VEGETABLE MARROW.—This excellent vegetable makes a nice soup, very similar to artichoke soup; it is also good mashed, like turnips, white; or *au gratin*, nicely browned; or cut in rather thin round slices, the seeds taken out, soaked for an hour in rather a thick batter, and then fried. Baked, it is an agreeable change from plain boiling. Take out all the seeds with a large apple scoop (or a bone knitting mesh will do as well), then fill up the cavity with finely-chopped meat, or cold fowl or game, or sausage well-seasoned and mixed with one egg; bake in a pie dish in a moderate oven, and serve with good gravy.

DRY CURRY.—Two and a half large spoonfuls of butter, simmer, and add two or three slices of onion to fry; when the onions are nicely browned take them out, and put in a tablespoonful of curry powder, with an onion chopped, and two or three cloves of garlic; fry for about ten minutes longer, then put in the meat, every now and then throwing in a little cold water to prevent burning. When the meat is tolerably well done add a cupful of water, cold or hot, and simmer gently; when all the water is evaporated and the meat thoroughly cooked, the curry is done. The mixture should be well stirred all the time, or it will stick to the bottom of the pan.

PUMPKIN PIE.—Cut the pumpkin into thin slices, and boil until tender in as little water as possible; watch carefully that it does not scorch; drain off all the water, putting the stew-pan on a warm part of the stove, that it may dry off the moisture, for ten or fifteen minutes. Mash, and rub through a sieve, adding, while warm, a small piece of butter. To every quart of the pumpkin, after mashing, add one quart of new milk and four eggs, the yolks and whites beaten separately. White sugar to taste, and cinnamon and nutmeg as desired; a very little brandy is a great improvement. The oven they are baked in must be hot, or they will not brown. It is as well to heat the batter scalding hot before pouring into the pie-dishes.

HOW TO DO UP SHIRT BOSOMS.—We have often heard ladies expressing a desire to know by what process the fine gloss observed on new linens, shirt-bosoms, etc., is produced, and in order to gratify them, we subjoin the following recipe for making gum arabic starch: Take 2 ounces of fine white gum arabic powder, put it into a pitcher and pour on it a pint of boiling water, (according to the degree of strength you desire,) and then, having covered it, let it set all night. In the morning pour it carefully from the dregs into a clean bottle, cork it and keep it for use. A tablespoonful of gum water stirred into a pint of starch that has been made in this manner will give to lawns (either white or printed) a look of newness when nothing else can restore them after washing. It is also good (much diluted) for thin white muslin and bobinet.

The lane that has no turning.—*Mousseline de laine.*

Some ladies are so economical that they constantly resort to tight lacing to prevent waist-fullness.

Ladies are beginning to use colored starch for their ruffs, as did the beauties of the court of good Queen Bess.

A Beloit editor takes it upon himself to say that cows, elephants, and rhinoceroses may run gracefully, but women never.

A North Carolina baby was born with its false hair on, thus establishing the genuineness of the divinity that doth hedge a woman.

The ladies do not like the term "scalloped" applied to the new style of arranging the hair, and have substituted the name "catpaw."

Haverstraw has a female barber, and it's curious how suddenly the honest old citizens, fifty and sixty years old, have put by their razors and fallen in love with a barber's chair.