

"It's getting close to Christmas. Across the hills and dells

You can almost hear the chiming and the rhyming of the bells."

XMAS IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. THE GIFT-GIVING SEASON IS AT HAND.

What could be a more suitable present than a year's subscription to

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE & HOME MAGAZINE ?

It will bring every week, to friends in this country or abroad, a pleasant recollection of your kindness.

If you send us \$1.50 we will mail one of the handsome cards shown below in time to reach the person whose name you give us

ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

Should the recipient be a lady, a handsome pebbled-leather wrist-bag, 3½ inches, leather-lined, nickel-plated clasp and chain, will accompany the announcement with our compliments. To gentlemen we intend sending a first-class farmer's knife, fine steel blade, strong and durable, beautiful nickel handle, manufactured by Joseph Rodgers & Son, Sheffield, Eng.

THIS, THEN, IS OUR OFFER : FOR \$1.50

You can remember a friend with a Christmas card, a year's subscription to the Farmer's Advocate and a handsome wrist-bag or pocket-knife.

Your relatives and acquaintances in the Old Country, Eastern Canada, and the United States, will never forget your thoughtfulness.

Our paper, including the magnificent Christmas Number, will keep them in close touch with the many advantages of prosperous Canada.

M.....
We have put your name on our circulation list for a full year's subscription to the
FARMER'S ADVOCATE & HOME MAGAZINE,
including our magnificent Christmas Number, and are sending you this day (pocket-knife or lady's wrist-bag).

We are doing this at the request of

M.....
with whom we join in wishing you A MERRY
CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Sincerely yours,

THE WM. WELD CO., Limited, London, Ontario.



WE HAVE just received a large consignment of the above celebrated Razors, direct from the manufacturers in Germany, with FARMER'S ADVOCATE etched on every blade. The manufacturers will not allow this grade of razor to be sold for less than \$2.00 each.

We will send one by registered Mail to anyone sending us three new subscribers and \$4.50, or will sell the razor for \$2.00.

With proper care it will not require honing for years. Address

THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY, LTD., LONDON, ONT.

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Our Competition.

To say that we have been pleased with the result of the Housekeepers' Competition is to put it tamely. In fact, we may say truly that, both in quality and quantity, this competition has been the most satisfactory that we have had. The letters have been invariably helpful, and have covered a broad range of housekeeping and home-making topics, so that the judging has been an unusually difficult matter. However, we have done the best we could, and instead of awarding only three prizes have awarded six, which go to "One of the Maids," Derwent, Ont.; "Help-on-a-bit," Humber Bay, Ont.; "Margaret," Athol, N. S.; "Bernice," Teeswater, Ont.; "Western Annie," Moose Jaw, N.-W. T., and "Wrinkles," Sutton West, Ont. All other contributors have a place in the Honor List this time. In order to economize space, we shall not publish this list to-day, but each name will appear with the letter to which it is affixed. We thank most heartily all who have contributed so kindly to the success of our competition, and we feel quite confident that the publication of the letters will give as much pleasure and satisfaction to our readers as the first reading of them has given to us.

We have only room to-day for "One of the Maids," who, by the way, in a little private note says: "If you consign my contribution to the waste-paper basket, I shall not feel a bit badly. I have got enough good out of just writing it to satisfy me." The other essays will follow as soon as possible.

DAME DURDEN.

"Farmer's Advocate" office, London, Ont.

NOTE.—As this competition has been more especially for the older folk, our next one will give the younger folk a chance for prizewinning. The subject will be announced before long.

PRIZE ESSAY.

Helpful Hints for the Housekeeper.

Surely "genius was burning" with Dame Durden when she proposed a housekeepers' competition of the "Matrons and the Maids."

I can see endless possibilities of good resulting from this new departure. I am sure all who take part will look on the mistress of the Ingle Nook as a pioneer leading them to a better and higher way of living. In order to take part in this competition we must sit down and think of the HOW and the WHY we do things. This will be something unusual to many of us, and will possibly result in some startling revelations, which may lead us to put more thought in our work. Work without thought is drudgery. The trouble with a great many of us housekeepers is that we do not think. We go on doing the same old things in the same old way, just because we have always done it that way, as our mothers did before us.

Visiting a friend, an unusually bright girl, where the family was quite small, I noticed that the potatoes were boiled in a large iron pot, which must have weighed pounds. Years ago the family was large, and graniteware scarce or unknown, and they had just gone on using the large iron pot, though the reason for it had long passed away.

In another home the family had once been so large as to require the full length of the long extension table. With the changing years the family had been reduced to four, but the length of the table had known no change, and every week the weary housekeeper polished the long length of table linen, when half the size would have been abundance.

In a farmhouse the pantry and cupboard shelves of white pine had been faithfully scrubbed for thirty years, and it never occurred to the owners to paint or cover them with oilcloth till it was suggested by a city visitor. This city visitor was of Dutch descent, and had elevated housekeeping to an art. We too often think there is no art required to do common things well, yet, as Sairy Gamp says, "There's art in sticking in a pin."

My Dutch friend made an art of the easy things, as well as those that were more difficult, and she had better results with less labor than any other housekeeper of my acquaintance. When she swept a room it was clean. The dust was not sent flying from the floor to the furniture, and then whisked off the furniture with a dry cloth or broom, only to settle again on the floor or wherever it might. After removing any removable furniture, and covering what was not, the floor was thoroughly swept with a damp broom; then the furniture and woodwork were dusted with a soft cloth, which had been wrung tightly out of hot water, and left just damp enough for the dust to adhere to. When the dusting was all done, a pail with some hot water, to which a little ammonia had been added, was brought in; also a mop with clean cloths. After wringing the hot water from the mop, the carpet was lightly mopped over, and it was wonderful how discolored the clean cloths were, in spite of the previous good sweeping. The carpet looked like new, and the room was beautifully clean.

Unlike the cook in "Isabel Carnaby," my friend was not "a woman of one gravy," but all her gravies had the rare quality of tasting well cooked. This was because in making it, after pouring the superfluous fat into the dripping pail, enough was left in the pan to cook the flour, which was sifted directly into the boiling fat. As fat boils at a higher temperature than water, the flour is thoroughly cooked and quite smooth.

Her bread was made in the simplest and quickest way—never more than three or four hours from start to finish.

I have told nothing new, and my friend's success was not that she knew more than other housekeepers, but in that she lived up to what she did know. The housekeeper on a farm has a harder life than her city sister, and as Rose Terry Cook says, "She eats her bread in full assurance of the primeval curse." Possibly, nay, probably, if there was more sweat of brain, some of the sweat of face might be missed, and we could make time for many more enduring things that are now crowded out.

The head of the family says, "The most really helpful thing about a house is a well-trained man." From my experience I decidedly agree with him. I think this is the most valuable suggestion—if not the only one—I have made.

ONE OF THE "MAIDS."

Derwent, Ont.

Humorous.

Teacher: "How do you account for the phenomenon of dew?" Boy: "Well, you see, the earth revolves on its axis every twenty-four hours, and in consequence of this tremendous pace it perspires freely."

"I hope they don't give my little boy any naughty nicknames in school?" "Yes, ma; they call me 'Corns.'" "How dreadful! And why do they call you that?" "Cause I'm always at the foot of the class."

Bill: "I believe them Oldhams is gittin' to be regular agnostics. They don't keep the family Bible on the center-table in the best room no more." Uncle Ezra: "Well, 'tain't their religion they're hiding. It's their age. Them Oldham girls is gittin' on."