



I have just been thinking that, now that the spring house-cleaning is over, some of you will have come into possession of valuable "ideas" during the operation. You will have arranged your rooms to your liking; you will have learned a few things by mistakes which you have made; or you will have formulated plans to be carried out during the fall season of overhauling. So many people now, you know, do their papering, etc., when the dust of summer is a thing of the past, and there is need of installing new and cheery things to counteract the effect of the dreary winter. So, I have thought that a new subject for discussion, bearing on the question of house-furnishings, might be interesting, instructive, and opportune. Our subject, then, will be, "My Ideal Dining-room and Sitting-room." Tell the kind of paper, curtains, carpet and furniture you would use, adding, if possible, the probable cost of each. Pay particular attention to the "color scheme," and give a few hints as to arrangement. Last of all, make your letters as short as you can, keeping them, of course, interesting and easy in style; I am well aware that a mere catalogue of details can be neither. Now, I know every woman loves to plan ideal apartments, so will hope for a number of letters on this subject that will be interesting and helpful to us all. Address, DAME DURDEN, "Farmer's Advocate" office, London, Ont.

Notes from Katharine Blinkbonny.

In buying table linen see that the material is good. It lasts longer and looks better than a thin, flimsy one. You may make soft cloths look better and keep clean longer by starching slightly; iron carefully without folding; afterward fold and iron after each fold; dry thoroughly before placing in the drawer. When taking the cloth off the table after meals do not wrinkle and roll and fold into a hard bundle; then take it out and shake it, put it across your arm somehow, come in the house and fold it every way but the way it was done at the time of ironing. . . . Rather a better way: Use a soft cloth to brush the crumbs off onto a plate, and fold the cloth carefully and quickly, the same way every time. If it is to be shaken, lift it carefully by the edges and hold high to do so, then fold without wrinkling. It may be kept clean a week longer by placing pieces of table linen, about thirty by twenty-four inches, at the end where the serving is done, and also at places where the tablecloth is likely to be soiled. When these end pieces are soiled, remove and use others, or do without any. Much labor may be saved by leaving the dining table set from meal to meal, if it is not needed for other purposes. When there are children a nice piece of oilcloth may be placed under each plate, and a large oilcloth bib used.

The flavor of tea is improved by washing the teapot after every using. After steeping the tea lift the cover of the teakettle and place the teapot on top of kettle, over the steam from the boiling water, and leave there to draw not more than seven minutes; serve immediately. This is a secret of a lady famed for making delicious tea.

Have a different cloth for different things—dishes, kettles and pans, milk pans or cans, milk pails, churn, and lamps—also have dish towels, dusters, and a cloth to remove baking to and from the oven. Some may think this is all very foolish and unnecessary, and that it takes too much time, but those who do it certainly would not discontinue the practice.

A useful clothes-pin bag of any shape or pattern one wishes may be tied on one like an apron when hanging out

clothes. For those whose fingers nearly freeze at the clothes-line in cold weather a pair of mittens is useful. These are made from old soft woollen underwear, and should have thumb and first finger separate, like a harvest glove.

Coat hangers galore may be made by sawing wooden barrel hoops the required length; cover with lining or cotton, and hang with a strong string.

When the screw on a fruit-jar is too tight to remove, pour over it some warm water, and see the result.

I am afraid I am taking too much space in the Nook, and some will be weary and yawning, so will finish by giving a recipe for

DELICIOUS SOUR-CREAM CAKES.

Into a mixing pan put one and a half cupfuls thick sour cream, one-half cupful white sugar, one unbeaten egg, one scant teaspoonful salt, and one of soda. Mix soft with flour, and roll about half an inch thick. Bake in hot oven.

KATHARINE BLINKBONNY.

Hillsburg, Ont.

System.

Dear Dame Durden,—Housekeeping, house-making, is one of my dearest delights, and after years I enjoy it more and more. I always try to do everything so orderly and well that I have as little waste as possible. In this way I get time to read and play, when, in the old days, before I put thought into my work, I was a slave to it, driven instead of driving.

I love home work, and I love to teach girls. The trouble with so many of our girls is that they have never been taught, and they either want to do things well, but don't know how, or don't care, because housework is "so pokey," etc. If we can teach them to "mix work with brains," and to take pride in it, we will develop a class of wonderfully happy, successful women, who will love home better than a clerk's place behind a counter.

We Western women have great issues in our hands. Our brave men may raise wheat and stock, but never at their best, only as they go forth from ideal homes. Our lives are so rich in opportunity; in the chance to control environment, if we can but realize it. You see, I am an enthusiast on these lines—indeed I am. I like your department; it is good. I've known a few others, so I imagine I am something of a judge. Of course you need the co-operation and sympathy of the women you are trying to reach—for your work is something above and beyond the drawing of your pay. The pay is important, but to help others we always need to be helped. None of us stand alone.

One of my greatest helps in housekeeping is to be systematic. I've found that a place for everything, and a time for each task, is the rule that helps me more than any other to drive my work, rather than to be driven by it.

In the winter, after the holidays are over, I begin on my bedding. Every quilt is put in repair, new comforters tied, and all the piecing done. By doing some every year I keep my supply up. After the heavy bedding come the sheets, pillow covers, and table linen. Sheets are turned, common pillow slips made from the ends of old ones, and the new ones that will be needed for the year are all made and laid away. I've often found a willing "masculine" hand to run the sewing machine on a stormy winter day, and that is a great help.

After the bedding come the muslin underwear, summer skirts, shirts, etc.; then in March the wash dresses are made for the summer. A seamstress for a while at this time is often a great saving; by having her one gets all these things done and ready before the heavy spring work comes, when the days are longer, and there are more men to cook

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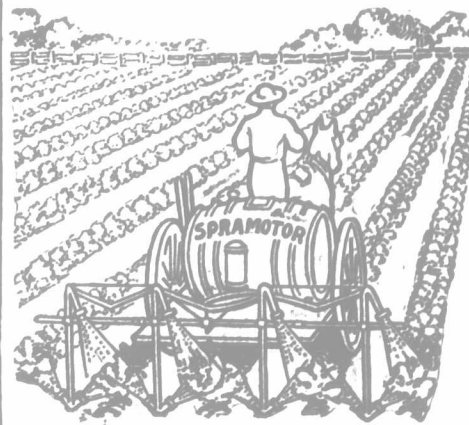
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