

THE HOUSEHOLD.

HAVING "COMPANY."

The letter read, "My dearest Sue, Next Thursday I will spend with you; I won't enjoy my visit, though, if any trouble I bestow."

"O I'm so glad!" cried Mrs. White, "For company is such delight! But,—"looking round her in dismay—"I must get ready right away."

Armed with a dust-pan and a broom, she went to work in every room; she oiled and polished, cleaned and rubbed, and mended, scoured, washed, and scrubbed.

Then in the kitchen she began, while perspiration down her ran, at pies and puddings, cakes and bread, as if an army must be fed.

She toiled and fretted, cooked and baked. She hurried, worried, stewed, and ached. When Thursday came, she, nearly dead, just managed to crawl out of bed.

And Mrs. Company came too; they kissed and hugged like women do; and then began tired Mrs. White to make excuses, never right.

"O dear! my house" (then waxen clean) "is 'most too dirty to be seen; So shut your eyes—you're looking stout—Take off your things—I'm just worn out."

"You must excuse my cooking, too. It isn't fit to offer you." ("Twas fit for kings)—"Too bad you come just when I'm upside down at home."

And thus she welcomed and distressed and spoiled the visit of her guest, who wished she hadn't come to be a tired woman's "company."

"THE FATHER'S HOUSEKEEPER."

REV. GEO. B. KULP.

I know one of God's children who has been shut in for ten long years or more, and in these years has learned such lessons of perfect trust that heaven all the time is very near. Some time ago she needed a housekeeper, and finding some difficulty in securing one, she appealed to the ministers she knew, to her many friends, and finally, remembering her husband when living had been a Free Mason, she wrote to the lodge, requesting the members to interest themselves in the case of one who needed their help very much. But ministers, friends, and Masons all failed to secure the housekeeper needed. While lying all alone one evening the thought came, "Why don't you ask your Father?" and then she remembered her thoughtlessness in appealing to so many others and forgetting him who has said, "casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you." Lifting her heart to God, while tears of penitence rested upon her cheeks, she prayed, "Father, forgive me for my thoughtlessness, and send me a housekeeper, just such a one as I ought to have; and when she comes, if I don't think she is just the one I ought to have, make me take her, Father, for I want your housekeeper." And then she rested, leaving it all with the Father.

As the angel was commanded to, "fly swiftly" and answer Daniel's prayer; so I think the Father at once began the answer. The next morning a little boy, son of the woman who did the washing for our sister, brought home the clothes, and this "shut-in" said to him, "Tell your mamma I want to see her." In a few hours she made her appearance, anxious to know why she had been sent for. Upon being informed it was to receive some clothing, etc., our sister, being an almoner of mercy, had received for distribution, she replied, "Oh, I don't need them, thank you. We get along nicely, my boy and I. Just as much obliged, but there are others who are needy; let them have them."

Conversation upon various subjects then began, and finally drifted to "housekeepers," and our sister told of her dilemma, when the good woman said, "Why can't I keep house for you?"

You see the Father was all ready with a housekeeper, and had sent her one, but she didn't see just then that this was the Father's answer, and she said,

"But you have a boy." And then, what was worse for an invalid who needed and must have perfect quiet,

she found upon inquiry, "the boy had a dog," and she didn't want a dog.

But she had prayed, "Father, send me a housekeeper," and "If I think she is not the right one when she comes, Father, make me take her." Remembering this, she did not dare to interfere with the Father's answer, but finally said, "Leave it for this evening and come round in the morning." Then saying to herself, "If this is the Father's answer, it must be all right," she went to sleep.

Bright and early the next morning the washerwoman made her appearance and said, "I can come, and at once." And she moved in, and the boy moved in, and the dog moved in, and that woman has proved every day since that she is the "Father's housekeeper." She prepares the daintiest dishes, her attentions are proffered in the most delicate manner to our invalid, who regards her as sent in answer to prayer, and selected by the Father himself. Moreover, "that boy" is a perfect little gentleman. He treads so noiselessly. He bangs no doors. He whistles in an undertone. And the dog? Well, our invalid wrote a letter to a friend a few weeks ago, and describing her happiness in her surroundings, she said, "Our dog is a treasure."

The Father heard her prayer indeed, sent the housekeeper she needed, made her take her, as she requested, and then gave double measure of blessing by adding a "boy who is a gentleman," and a "dog that is a treasure." Friends, ministers, Masons, all failed her, but the Father who said, "In all things let your requests be made known unto God in supplication and in prayer," secured a housekeeper just as soon as he was asked for one. The Father knows all our needs, praise his name, and is more willing to give good things to them that ask him than we are to give to our children.—Michigan Christian Advocate.

WHY?

"Lord, is my service at an end? I am so slow to comprehend! Why comes this pause that seems to say 'Thou hast no work for me to-day?'"

Right at the threshold of the busiest month of the year, with spring cleaning staring her in the face, the summer clothing of the children needing prompt attention, and a prospective breakfast and sale at the church parlors calling for her share of aid, the busy housewife found herself "laid up," and the doctor gave only evasive, discouraging replies when questioned anxiously as to how long it was likely to be before the various labors of home and church could be resumed.

Only the day before some of these cares had looked oppressive, crowding as they did in quick succession. To-day they looked only pleasant, and like precious privileges, when a sudden stroke of illness made passive the powers fairly aching to continue the accustomed round of duties. There seemed no good reason for the unsolicited and unwelcome suspension of strength and ability; hands and feet had been willing to take up each day a burden of care and responsibility. No one else could take the place of the wife, the mother, and the active, useful church member. The inertia of sickness, thought by some to bring with it needed rest, was only tiresome and distasteful to this capable homemaker and ardent church worker, and yesterday everything was going on so smoothly, and the affairs of the household were slipping noiselessly into place in the usual orderly way;—why, why! need this unlooked for, disquieting change have come?

Few ever reach life's meridian without having paused to ask in irritated amaze—why? It takes intelligent humanity a long, long time to see the one simple reply that must invariably meet this question: it is plainly because this world is not our rest. But the wife and mother who in all the suggestive and impelling brightness of the spring day laid down on a bed of sickness, recovered from her surprise and fruitless questionings to hush the natural language of her energetic will, and cast about wondering if in some way she might not still be a benefit to her dearly beloved family. The different members had expressed dread among themselves, lest the very fact of being laid aside, and needing attention and services from those she had delighted in serving, might so prey on her susceptible

nerves as to increase, perhaps dangerously, the already critical illness. But after a few days she grew so quiet, her face was so placid that the doctor secretly announced his belief that convalescence might come far sooner than he had dared hope. On being asked if there was anything she wanted, her answer was almost sportive, as well as a great surprise: "Yes," she said, "I want to serve you all, and teach much-needed lessons while I lie here. For two days and nights I asked unceasingly—why? Why, at just this busy, driving season was I made an object of care, demanding constant ministrations from those I thought were calling for special services at my hands. Then God showed me that a pause in the midst of these bustling days was in his sight my greatest need, so I shall wait with patience his time for taking up the old accustomed cares."

Of all the lessons a Christian mother and householder can teach her children and her entire family, a lesson like this is one of the most salutary and abiding. In after life when the children are themselves parents, the lesson of how their mother ceased asking why, and confidently trusted herself to God's superior care, and the ordering of his will recurs time and again to teach unquestioning acquiescence to the will of God even amidst the pauses and interruptions that so disturb and interfere with our own nicely laid plans. It is true, and no Christian questions, but simply all accept the truth of Milton's wise phrase,

"They also serve who only stand and wait." Yet waiting is tedious, harder far than strength-requiring work. Yet on the bed of sickness, and in the chamber of tedious convalescence, let mothers remember God is furnishing rare opportunity for enforcing a kind of service that may help the dear children in many a forlorn pass of future days. We forget to ask why in saying "Thy will be done."

"Much serving" often hinders love, And care forgetfulness may prove: The busy hand may cheat the heart That also might choose the better part.

Then give me, Lord, no work to-day, But give what none can take away, The portion evermore most sweet, To sit like Mary at Thy feet.

THE LAMP.

BY MARY L. PALMER.

When night draws its curtain the advantages of well-cared-for lamps are apparent. So do not neglect the lamps. Neglect ruins almost everything, lamps no exception.

To get an excellent quality of light we must have burners and wicks in good condition, and oil must also be above low-test grade. Do not be afraid of soap and water in caring for lamps. Wash thoroughly without and within, and when burners show signs of gumming, or do not perform their functions well, good authority recommends the following: Into an old can or worthless vessel that will hold water put a lump of sal soda, size of a walnut, pour on a quart or more of hot water. Drop burner into this, bring to a boil. After five minutes steady boiling the work is done. Polish, wipe and dry, and they are again ready for use. By this process one may often avoid buying a new burner.

Sometimes when the burner is all right, oil good quality, lamp clean and shining, the lamp is still dim and gloomy. This is due to the wick. It has become clogged with dirt. Accumulated dirt is all over it, and perhaps through it, it will not carry the oil well. Possibly it does not fit well, too loose or too tight. Wicks are cheap articles. There is no excuse for poor ones. Kerosene oil is inexpensive too. Do not be beguiled into a cheap grade. Get the best. It pays. Keep the lamps full and well-trimmed. A lamp may burn partly filled, but the flame is not so bright, and it is said the oil consumes faster, and that there is greater danger of accident.

It is a good rule to fill the lamps each morning, to look after the burners, not trying to use those old and gummy; to have good wicks well cut, to use the best oil, to set lamps in a closet or place free from dust, to get new burners when needed and see that they fit closely, and in case of accident keep cool, pick up the part containing lighted wick, blow it out or smother with mat, blanket, or something at hand.

Many accidents from kerosene lamps would never occur if lamps were kept in good order, besides the satisfaction of a bright and cheerful light as the family circle gathers around the table at eventide. Do not consider time ill-spent used in care of lamps. "Around the Evening Lamp" has been told in store and sung in song. Let that light be a shining one.—Christian at Work.

CHILDREN'S LUNCHEON.

The intelligent mother realizes that it is her duty to make the brief period when her children depend upon her for comfort, bright and happy, and that an important part of that duty is to provide for them a pleasing variety of food, and to see that it is nicely served. In preparing a school luncheon, it should be remembered that if a great variety is impossible, the little that is provided may always be attractively put up.

The napkins used for wrapping the food should be fresh and clean. White doilies, that are good enough for the purpose, cost but a trifle. A dozen should be kept for the children's use, and the dinner napkins be spared the possibility of fruit and rust stains, etc. By giving the matter a little thought, the mother will be able to provide each day an attractive luncheon that will tempt the juvenile palate. She who waits until the last moment, and then hurriedly gathers together whatever odds and ends she can find in the pantry, or on the breakfast table, and crams them promiscuously into the basket, need not wonder if her little boy or girl returns home with most of the luncheon untasted, and with a white, tired-looking face, that bears testimony to the insufficiency of food eaten during the day.

Among the dainties that are suitable for luncheons may be mentioned little saucer pies, cup rice puddings, baked custards, or preserves. A baked apple in a "biscuit crust" is a welcome addition to the luncheon. A baked apple, quince, or pear, in a pretty cup, makes an appetizing relish, with bread and butter, but pickles and rich cake should form no part of the lunch. Gingerbread, or plain molasses cake, is an occasional luxury, but should not be regarded as a necessity.

SELECTED RECIPES.

PARSNIP FRITTERS.—To half a dozen boiled, mashed parsnips, add two tablespoonfuls of flour, two eggs, and a little pepper and salt. Form into small cakes and brown them in a little suet or butter in a frying-pan.

FRENCH TOAST.—One egg, well beaten, well added to one pint sweet milk. Cut the crust from thick slices of bread, dip them into the milk and then into fine bread or cracker crumbs. Heat fresh lard or butter in a frying-pan, and fry the slices of bread a nice brown. Serve hot, with or without powdered sugar.

TURTLE BEAN SOUP.—Soak one quart of black beans over night. Put them in a kettle with a gallon of cold water, boil slowly until well done, rub through a colander, and return to the kettle; season with salt, white pepper, and if liked, a little thyme. Slice hard-boiled eggs and drop into the soup; add butter and serve hot.

EGGS IN TIME.

Eggs form a standard breakfast dish and may be cooked in so many different ways that they present an almost endless variety. Boiling is the simplest method, but for this purpose they must be perfectly fresh. Cover them with boiling water and cook from three to five minutes as desired. Plunge them into cold water for an instant and serve in a warm, covered dish.

DROPPED OR POACHED EGGS.—Break the eggs, one at a time, into muffin rings placed in a saucepan of salted boiling water and cover. When sufficiently cooked, remove the egg and serve on a square of hot, buttered toast. Egg poachers can be obtained, in which half a dozen may be cooked at once.

BAKED EGGS.—Butter a deep earthen plate; break in as many eggs as it will hold, placing them carefully side by side on the plate. Put pieces of butter the size of a walnut on each, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake in a hot oven until the whites are nicely set; with a broad knife slip the eggs on a hot platter and serve, garnished with lettuce leaves or parsley. These are much nicer than fried eggs, and more easily digested.

SCRAMBLED EGGS.—Put into a frying-pan one cupful of milk and one tablespoonful of butter. When hot pour in five or six eggs which have been broken into a bowl. Add salt and pepper and stir constantly until well set. Serve at once in a hot dish. A little finely-minced parsley may be added.

CREAM POACHED EGGS.—Allow one egg to each person and one "for manners." Break these into milk and cream, one part cream to three parts milk, in the proportion of five eggs to a quart. Set on the stove in a double boiler, and stir constantly until the consistency of nicely lopped milk. Just before serving add salt, pepper, and a lump of butter. Serve hot.—Christian at Work.