

A Sealed Book

By ALICE LIVINGSTONE.

Grace did not sleep that night. She thought a great deal, and prayed a good deal, too, asking for some sign from Heaven, if possible, to tell her whether it would be wrong to leave home secretly, even if it were for her parents' good. She knew very well that if she showed this slip of paper, which she had treasured, and asked if she might answer it, they would not give her permission. No matter how hard the poor mother might have to work, no matter how cruel the continued separation, they would keep her happy and sheltered at home. They would not let her go out into the world. Early next morning she was up, sitting at her desk writing the letter which, though it had seemed easy, proved hard to compose. In the end it was a simple production, almost childlike, though Grace wrote a pretty and firmly formed hand for so young a girl. She merely stated that she had a mezzo-soprano voice, which had been well cultivated; that she had sung in the choir of the church; that she thought she could play the piano well enough to give pleasure; that she had never left home, but that she should be glad of this engagement because it was necessary for her to earn money, and that she would do her best. The one servant of the household, a woman growing old now in the service of the family, was only just down, and stirring about her preparations for her breakfast, when Grace slipped out of the house to post her letter.

If it had not been for her mother's presence the day might have seemed long, but as it was it passed all too quickly. Very early on Monday morning the little electric brougham stopped once more at the vicarage gates, and after an eight o'clock breakfast the beautiful woman in the dark-green traveling dress was whirled away. Had this not been her custom, Grace would have thought it odd that her mother must go at such an hour, when her duties as a singer would not begin till evening. But she had begged Marie with tears to stay longer—only a little longer, but the answer had been that there were works to be done in the daytime, too—work which could not be neglected; and never again had Grace complained or asked questions.

Often Grace ran up to her room and cried after her mother had gone, not quite knowing when she would be able to come back; but to-day she did not cry, because her heart was so full of joy and excitement and hope that she would be able presently to create a magic change. By this time, she said to herself, the letter was in the newspaper, and it would be called for or posted soon, no doubt. Next morning she might have an answer.

She had not given the vicarage as her address, or mentioned that her father was vicar of Stoke Mendon, because to have done so would have seemed to her like trading on her father's name. Besides, she was not sure that she would confide her family history to her employer, if she were favorably answered. It might be that she would not be fair to her own dear ones to do so, since she would leave home—leave it she did leave—secretly and without their permission. When the employer saw what a young girl she was he might blame her parents for letting her go, and she would not wish such undesired blame to reach them.

Exactly how she should manage to maintain such a reserve she did not know; but it was not necessary to think much about it until she had received a reply to her letter. This was to come addressed simply to "Miss Grace Aymer, Stoke Mendon." But would it come? She did not want to receive a letter at breakfast, lest her father should remark it, and on Tuesday she was dressed and down by half-past seven, at which time the postman might be expected.

Standing at the dining-room window, throwing crumbs to the birds, she saw the postman open the gate, and with a fast-beating heart, stepped out through the long window to meet him before he could reach the door and knock at her father's study.

There were some papers, the usual morning letter for the vicar, and—yes, one for "Miss Aymer," addressed in a strange hand.

Breakfast was at eight, and there was time to run to her own room and read the letter.

"Lord Wendlebury thanks Miss Aymer for her letter," she read, "and thinks it possible she may be suitable for the position. He would like to see her, and if Miss Aymer could call on him at Wendlebury Towers, near Wendlebury, Hertfordshire, on Wednesday afternoon, when he hopes that Miss Aymer will be able to play and to sing, and have her met at the railway station."

Grace gazed at the letter, half frightened. It seemed alarming to her that the position for which she had so long turned out to be one of such importance; but then, she told herself, she might have guessed, by the generosity of the salary offered.

How could she go to this grand place, which she had never heard of, and be inspected, perhaps found unsatisfactory, and sent home again? In her doubt and distress (for this was an affair of deepest seriousness to her), she turned to the Help which never fails in time of trouble. It seemed to her that if she prayed, and afterwards felt a strong impression that this plan was an unwise one, and should be given up, she must take it as an answer.

But such an impression did not come. She rose from her knees, still feeling that, if it were possible, she must go to Wendlebury Towers.

The only way to do this was to leave home at night, trusting that Lord Wendlebury would engage her. She could not go, return again, and then start out a second time. If Lord Wendlebury sent her away, she must try to find work somewhere else, for, once she had put her hand to the plough, there was no turning back.

She had longed for this chance to be of use, but now that it had perhaps been given to her, she almost wished that it had not come. It was true, she thought that this was her last day at home, for months—maybe for years.

again. And the young man was not sorry for his change of work. It had seemed a great thing for him, on coming down from Oxford—uncertain as to his future career, yet anxious to work and cease being dependent on the mysterious, unseen relative to whom he owed his fortune. He had been a secretary to a successful diplomat and politician like Gerald Darke, and he had enjoyed seeing the world in the society of such a man.

But the more he had known of Gerald Darke the less he had liked him. The things which Darke had done which seemed actually dishonest in Hugh's eyes, though to his employer they were apparently a matter of course. He had seen that it was impossible for him to protest; and for several months he had been torn between his sense of gratitude to Darke for employing him, and his conviction that he could not in honor carry out all the instructions so carelessly given him.

Just at the time when he had been ready to tell Gerald Darke that he could not act as his secretary no longer, he had been told by Lord Wendlebury that he had never seen Lord Wendlebury, but he was a student of contemporary history, and he knew that as Premier of England, Darke had been very great.

He was glad to think he could be of use to him; and then, when he had seen the portrait of Darke with its keen eyes, dimmed, and its frame of snow-white hair and beard, his heart had been stirred with loyalty and pity.

Just at the time when he had been with Lord Wendlebury, for he had been wired for, and had arrived on Monday. Now, here he was at the station, ready to perform his duties, and he was to be counted among a secretary's duties, but willingly undertaken to please the sad old man who lived in the darkened room. Many letters had come from women, young and middle-aged, who wanted the position Lord Wendlebury offered, but he had never seen any of them.

It must be Miss Aymer, Hugh decided; but he had imagined a little, plain wife of a creature, and this was the loveliest girl he had ever seen in his life. For some reason, which he did not understand, Mr. Darke was exceedingly interested in this experiment of Lord Wendlebury's, and had made Hugh promise that he would write, when a young man had been actually engaged for the position, to describe her appearance and general characteristics. Hugh remembered this promise now, and was regretting it. He walked quickly to her, taking off his hat, and asking her if she were Miss Aymer.

When she had said "yes," rather timidly, he hastened to explain that he was acting as Lord Wendlebury's secretary, and that, when her telegram had come from town, he had been asked to meet the train and explain things to her a little before she should arrive at the Towers. He guessed that her unusual accomplishments were as perfect as her face. He would pity her so much if she were to be sent away by the stern old man whose falling eyes could scarcely see her loveliness, that he did not know what desperate thing he might not be inclined to do.

He arranged that the bag should be taken to the clock-room until called for, and took Grace to the carriage which was waiting outside the country station. "You are prepared, then, to stay on from town to-day, if Lord Wendlebury should ask you to do so?" he said. "Yes," Grace answered frankly. "I am here for as long as I do not know what I—"

"What?" she stopped and bit her lip. "Hugh could not help feeling very curious. The girl was so beautiful, and so delicate, that it was extraordinary she should have been allowed to come to a strange place alone. He had heard of her, broken in the middle, would have been, if finished: 'If not, I don't know what I shall do,' but he dared not say so. He was sure that she was a beautiful child (she seemed little more) had been compelled to leave her home and go out into the world."

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WOMAN AND HER WORK

ARTISTIC USES FOR CRETONNE.

Cretonne has always been appreciated by housewives who have an eye for combining economy with artistic effect in house furnishings, but never was the material in such high favor nor its possibilities so fully demonstrated as at present.

It is so convenient of its popularity this season one has but to make a tour of the fancywork departments in the large stores, where whole counters will be devoted to the display of all sorts of novelties developed wholly or in part of cretonne, and which may easily be reproduced at home by the neat-handed woman and at half the cost of the ready-made ones.

Sectional baskets of cretonne are especially useful and attractive. The size of the baskets depends upon whether they are to be used as "catch-alls" in the living or bedrooms, waste paper baskets or as receptacles for soiled collars or handkerchiefs.

In all instances the same general directions for making apply. The foundation consists of five pieces of cardboard or light-weight pasteboard, one for the bottom, the others for the sides. The bottom piece is cut perfectly square, the sides pieces are cut to measure, and the lower edges with the bottom; the top edges may be rounded, pointed or square, as one prefers.

Each piece of the cardboard is neatly covered on both sides with pretty cretonne, and the edges finished off with a binding of tape or narrow ribbon, and fastened the flap in place either with a button and loop of silk floss, or with ribbon ties.

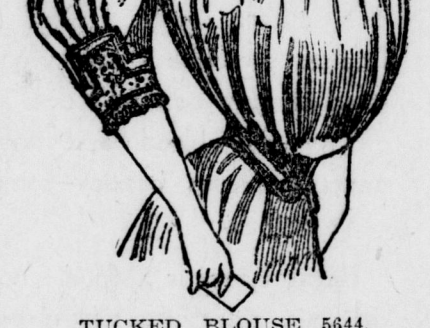
A photograph case of cretonne to protect one's pictures when traveling among the seasonal novelties. For this purpose cretonne showing a small pattern should be selected—a cream ground showing small sprays of violets, rosebuds or other small flowers would be most dainty and suitable. Make the case exactly after the fashion of a large flap envelope, binding the edges with narrow ribbon, and fastening the flap in place either with a button and loop of silk floss, or with ribbon ties.

Dainty little square and oblong cretonne-covered boxes, to be used as receptacles for gloves, handkerchiefs or trinkets, may be made in the same way. Cut six pieces of cardboard, two for the top and bottom, two for the side pieces and two for the ends.

The size and shape of these pieces will, as a matter of course, depend upon the use to which the box is to be put. Cover both sides of each piece with pretty cretonne of some small design, and bind the edges with narrow ribbon, matching in color the flowers in the pattern. At each corner of each piece of the covered cardboard, except the one that is to form the top, fasten a three-inch length of narrow ribbon.

By means of these ribbons join the pieces so as to form a box. Fasten the cover to the box by means of ribbon ties.

HINTS BY MAY MANTON.



TUCKED BLOUSE 5444.

The blouse with prettily tucked yoke is always an attractive one, and here is a model that includes cuffs to match and which is as charming as well can be. In the illustration it is made of apricot cretonne, but any other material of the color of the yoke and the lower portions of the cuffs of cream colored lace and the bands of apricot cretonne are placed with black. The combination of color is a new and fashionable as well as exceedingly effective one, and the material is excellent for the separate blouse and the entire gown. But such a waist as this one has almost limitless possibilities. It can be made from silk or light weight wool, and it is really much to be desired for linen and cotton fabrics.

Cretonne and lace are used for the cuffs and again. Embroidery can be substituted for lace or the entire yoke and cuffs can be made of one material such as inserted tucking with only a band of insertion finishing the edges.

The pattern 5444 is cut in sizes for a 32, 34, 36, 38 and 40-inch bust measure and will be mailed to any address by the Fashion Department of this paper on receipt of ten cents. (If in haste send an additional two cent stamp for letter postage, which insures more prompt delivery.)

PATTERN ORDER.

Cut this out, fill in with your name and address, number and description. Enclose 15c and mail to the Pattern Department of The Free Press.

No. Size

Name

Address

SOME THINGS WORTH KNOWING.

Kerosene exposed to the air will not burn brightly and will form a crust on the wick after being lighted, therefore oil cans should be kept tightly corked.

Stains on white silk can usually be removed by soaking in a solution of soda and rubbing in lump magnesia; as much should be rubbed in as the gasoline will absorb.

So-called clear soup is often cloudy because every trace of fat has not been removed from the stock. Allow the stock to become cold and solid then remove all the grease.

A badly faded garment may be made white by washing in a boiling solution of cream of tartar—one tablespoonful of cream of tartar to each quart of water is the proper proportion.

paper to keep them from turning yellow.

If the coarse salt and chopped ice need to freeze ice cream are mixed together in a separate vessel and packed around the freezer can, the contents of the latter will freeze more rapidly. The proportions should be two-thirds ice and one-third salt.

Files may be kept off screen doors by rubbing the frame work and wire netting with kerosene. The odor seems to be offensive to flies.

When olive oil is used at the table it should be put in dark colored bottles and removed to a cool, dark place immediately after the meal. It is injured by being kept in the light.

Rubber rings used for fruit jars that have become hard may be made pliable again by soaking for half an hour in a solution of two parts water and one part ammonia.

Seven pounds of fruit, a pint of vinegar and three and one-half pounds of sugar is the standard proportion for all sweet pickling. Spices may be varied to suit the taste.

If an open window makes too much of a draught on the bed, a board six or eight inches high and just the width of the window below the lower sash, if stood in the window, will give a constant change of air between the two sashes without a direct current.

When the scalp is healthy, hair brushes should be used about twice a week and not too often. When the scalp is affected with dandruff in any form it is absolutely necessary that they should be washed each time that they are used.

MEALS FOR A DAY.

BREAKFAST.
Steel Cut Oats. Grape Fruit.
Mackerel in Malted Butter.
Strips of Swedish Toast.
Coffee.

LUNCHEON.
Keebee Balls. Saratoga Chips.
Hot Rolls.
Prune Whiff. Tea.

DINNER.
Stock Tomato Soup. Celery.
Breaded Veal Cutlets. Rice Border.
Asparagus on Toast. Waldorf Salad with Aunt Lena's Butter Pie. Coffee.

Swedish Toast—When baking bread take out one cupful of dough and set in refrigerator on ice. Next morning roll out as thin as pie crust, cut in strips and fry in hot lard like doughnuts.

Keebee Balls—Two pounds round steak, two teaspoons salt, a dash or two of pepper, one teaspoon chopped peanut meats, two tablespoons grated onion, melted butter, four tablespoons "chopped" parsley. Chop the meat very fine, running it through the meat grinder two or three times. Mix all together thoroughly and make into small balls the size of walnuts. Let these simmer for twenty minutes in one quart of strained tomatoes, in dish; thicken the remainder of tomatoes, previously stewed. Drain balls and place in dish; pour the tomato sauce over tomatoes with one tablespoon flour in one tablespoon butter. Pour over balls and serve hot.

Waldorf Salad—Equal parts of apple, bananas, celery, cut apple in cubes; an equal part of English walnuts, and a little orange. Mix well with mayonnaise dressing.

Aunt Lena's Butter Pie—Two eggs, two-thirds cup sugar, two tablespoons flour, butter size of an egg (or one-third melted), one cup thin cream, one teaspoon vanilla. Put strips of crust on top.

DOMESTIC HINTS.

Boiled Rice Pudding.
Wash two teaspoonfuls of rice, and soak in water for half an hour; then turn off the water, and cook the rice with half a pound of raisins, stoned and cut in halves, add a little salt; tie the whole in a cloth, and pour the rice into a bowl; swell to twice its natural size, and boil two hours in plenty of water; serve with wine sauce.

Silver Cake.
Two cups sugar, four cups flour, one-quarter teaspoonful salt, two teaspoonfuls baking powder, six teaspoonfuls Baker's extract of almond, six teaspoons of vanilla. Cream butter and sugar, add the flour, milk and four mixed with salt and baking powder; then the extract and the stiffly whipped whites. Beat well, and bake in loaf pan in moderate oven.

Apple Omelette.
Six large plump, three eggs, a tablespoonful of butter, six tablespoonfuls of sugar, nutmeg and one teaspoonful of vanilla. Cream butter and sugar, add the flour, milk and four mixed with salt and baking powder; then the extract and the stiffly whipped whites. Beat well, and bake in loaf pan in moderate oven.

Fish Croquettes.
To two cups cold flaked halibut or salmon add one cup of cream, and spread on a plate to cool. Shape, roll in crumbs, egg and crumbs, and fry in deep fat. Drain, arrange on hot dish with parsley, and garnish with parsley. If salmon is used add lemon juice and finely chopped parsley.

Coffee Custard.
Four cupfuls of scalded milk, put in a basin with one cupful of very strong coffee; add five yolks of eggs and one and a half ounces of powdered sugar; mix well; pass through a sieve; strain; fill the cups with the mixture; skim off carefully all froth from the surface, put them into a flat stewpan, with cold water to half the height of the cups, put the stewpan, with live coals on its cover, on a very slow fire for fifteen minutes; water should boil, bubbles slightly. When set let the custard cool in the water. Vanilla custards may be made in the same way.

Little Creams for Luncheon.
Two tablespoonfuls of apricot jam or peach or plum jam; mix with a wine glassful of sherry. Rub through a wire sieve, then whisk the pounded jam with a gill of cream and a tablespoonful of castor sugar. Whisk also the whites of two eggs; lightly fold them into the cream; pour the mixture into custard glasses. Decorate the top of the creams with pink sugar and just chopped pistachio nuts. Serve with sponge cake or lady fingers.

Corn Chowder.
Corn chowder is prepared as the codfish chowder with one exception, the corn is cooked with the vegetable and the codfish is added just before serving as cooking the fish toughens it.

We always have on hand a large assortment of used Squares and Upright Pianos at \$50 to \$100, payable 50 cents per week. Heintzman & Co., 217 Dundas, corner Clarence.

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