

HOW TO WASH A WOOD-FLOOR.

"Top-dust" can be washed off without great labor. Have the water only moderately warm, especially when the floor is of soft wood, because hot water sinks in so rapidly, and occupies so much more time in drying, than cool water upon wood. Drain the mop pretty well before putting it upon the floor, thus wetting the floor but little. The object is to wipe up the dust as thoroughly as possible, rinsing it off from the mop into the water, and changing the water for cleaner very often. If you put much water upon a very dusty floor, you have a big troublesome mud-puddle to sop up or rinse away. Experiment has convinced me that a floor of pine or basswood looks best after cleaning, if a small amount of water has been put on each portion of it. Use as much water as you please on the whole floor, the more the better, if you wash and wipe only a small portion at a time, and then throw out the dirty water, and begin the next division with clean water. The sooner a soft wood floor dries, the better it looks. I have seen women work very hard to scrub a pine or basswood floor white, and the result has been quite disappointing. They would put a great deal of water upon the floor, and then scrub with a broom hard and long; after this would sweep all of the dirty water out, and rinse the floor with as many waters as they could afford. When at last the well-soaked floor was dry, it was undoubtedly clean, but it looked dark and somewhat weather-beaten, in consequence of remaining wet so long. It is a question of health with me, in winter, to have a floor dry as soon as possible. A little lye in the water has an excellent effect upon floors. It may be poured directly upon decided greasy spots, but the whole floor is whitened with very little hard rubbing, if a small amount of lye is mixed with the water. Too much makes the boards yellow. How much should be used depends upon its strength. Never put lye into the water with which you wash a painted floor, else you gradually but speedily remove the paint with each weaning. If you let an unexperienced hired girl have her own clay with a painted floor, she will probably use her boiling suds upon it, and soon remove nearly all of the best paint. Clean warm water is best for painted floors. If you have a nice hardwood floor, be thankful, especially if it be of white oak, but never let its spotlessness become dearer to your heart than the family peace. You learn by experiment how much nicer one of these hard floors look, when washed with clean suds, than when washed with the boiling suds of Monday.

Let those who like get down upon their knees, and scrub their floors with brushes and floor-cloths—such work is not for me nor mine, and I consider it pitiful business for any one. I hear of long-handled scrubbing-brushes, and doubtless these are suitable for human beings in the work of floor-cleaning. What I most want is a cheap and easy mop-wringer, for I dislike extremely to put my hands into the mopping water. Of such a wringer I have heard, but have had no experience of its merits.

BATHING: HOW OFTEN, AND WHEN.

Habit has something to do with our supposed necessities in regard to bathing. Some respectable persons never bathe the whole body except in warm weather. Others cannot be comfortable, cannot feel clean, without a daily bath. Those who have a daily bath usually take it on rising from bed in the morning. For this purpose, some use water of any temperature which the season may make most convenient, even taking icy water in winter, and bathing in a cold room. Some who have followed this practice for years, have become convinced that it has wrought much mischief, and that only great robustness of constitution ever enabled them to endure the tax upon their native vigor so long. Most physicians do not advise so frequent bathing, considering a weekly or semi-weekly bath sufficiently frequent for cleanliness. Something depends upon the season or climate, and much depends upon the manner of bathing and the previous condition of the bather. It is an established rule that no general bath should follow very closely upon a meal. The stomach should be allowed to monopolize the first consideration for at least an hour after filling it, during which time no great demand must be made upon brain, muscles, or skin. The stomach, when full, demands more than its usual portion of blood, so that the surface of the body is sometimes made chilly on account of a heavy or difficult meal. When cool water, or much friction, is applied to the skin, an immediate demand for blood is made at the surface of the body, and of course stomach and skin cannot both successfully make these demands at the same time. Sudden death has been known to result from a full

bath immediately after eating. I can't help thinking that many little children have suffered from the carelessness or ignorance of their mothers, or nurses, in regard to this rule. I have known more than one mother to bathe and dress her little child immediately after its dinner, just because this time was most convenient. This rule, however, does not apply strictly to infants while fed wholly on milk. The stomach of a little babe holds but a very small quantity, and this being wholly fluid, does not require a very long period for its digestion. It does not seem necessary to wait more than half an hour after nursing a baby, before giving it its mild little bath, which, of course, is never given in a cold room. If you wait too long, baby sometimes gets very hungry and complains loudly before the dressing is all completed. Physicians sometimes recommend that baths be taken when the body is at its greatest point of vigor, or near noon, but however this may apply to sick persons in respect to their curative baths, it cannot well be obeyed by busy people in their weekly or semi-weekly baths for cleanliness. A housekeeper will usually take her bath on rising in the morning, or when she changes her clothes after the dinner work is done, or when she goes to bed. One should not bathe when much fatigued, but if not especially weary, a bath just before bed is a good thing—not a "tonic" or cold bath, but a good washing with comfortable water, rapidly given if the room is cool; but if possible the room should be warm.

GRAHAM BREAD.

This is an easy and good way to provide loaves of graham bread. When making common white bread, set enough sponge at night to spare a little for a graham loaf next morning. For one common tin-loaf take a little more than a pint of the sponge, add a tablespoonful of sugar, and stir it thick with graham flour. Stir well with a spoon, but do not knead it or it may be too hard and dry. Turn it into the buttered pan, let it rise in a warm place, and bake it slowly for an hour or longer.

Of course several loaves may be made in this way, setting a fine flour sponge at night, and stirring graham flour into the whole. Most people will prefer this to loaves of undiluted graham bread. Unless you put in sugar or molasses, your graham bread made with yeast is not half so sweet as graham-gems, especially if these are mixed with sweet milk, either new or skimmed. Many prefer to steam graham loaves for an hour, and finish by baking 20 minutes—to prevent a hard crust.

SOUR MILK AND SODA.

I presume I can say nothing under this head that has not been said before in these columns. But I perceive that there are experienced housekeepers who have yet to learn how to use soda with sour milk. A woman of double my experience told me, not long ago, that she had now got so that she could make sour milk biscuit that her folks would eat. Now she mashed the soda and mixed it with the flour, then stirred in the sour milk or buttermilk. Before this she "put the soda in a cup," but the biscuits were always streaked and spotted. This would not happen, I am sure, if the right quantity of soda was taken, and if the soda was carefully dissolved in water, either warm or cold, stirred quickly and thoroughly into the sour milk, and rapidly beaten up with the flour.

In giving directions to another, I think I should advise a thorough incorporation of the soda with the flour, after both soda and sour milk have been exactly measured. For then the effervescence (or foaming) would all take place in the dough, the gas would raise the flour, and the mass would surely be light. A careless cook will perhaps mix her sour milk and soda together, and while it is foaming and settling again to quiet, she is perhaps getting her flour and hunting up her rolling pin, and of course she doesn't "have good luck" with her biscuit. If she would get everything ready, even the buttered tins, and then measure out a level teaspoonful of soda for each teaspoonful of sour milk, or a rounding teaspoonful for each pint, then dissolve entirely the soda in a cup by itself, and stirring it quickly into her sour milk or buttermilk (sour of course), pour the whole into the flour before the foaming fairly begins, and work it together quickly—there would be no streaks and no heaviness. But the best thing to do with baking soda, is to avoid its use as far as possible, for accurate measurement is impossible so long as there are varying degrees of sourness in milk, and different sized spoons and cups; and good things, and plenty of them, can be made without any soda.—*American Agriculturist.*