

MICHIGAN FARMER

AND STATE JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE.

DETROIT, MARCH 25, 1884.

THE HOUSEHOLD---Supplement.

AN IDYL OF THE KITCHEN.

In brown holland apron she stood in the kitchen,
Her sleeves were rolled up, and her cheeks all aglow;
Her hair was coiled neatly; when I, indiscreetly,
Stood watching while Nancy was kneading the dough.

Now, who could be neater, or brighter, or sweeter,
Or who hum a song so delightfully low,
Or who look so slender, so graceful, so tender,
As Nancy, sweet Nancy, while kneading the dough?

How deftly she pressed it, and squeezed it, caressed it,
And twisted and turned it, now quick and now slow!

Ah me, but that madness I've paid for in sadness!
'Twas my heart she was kneading as well as the dough.

At last when she turned for her pan to the dresser
She saw me and blushed, and said shyly, "Please go,

Or my bread I'll be spoiling, in spite of my toiling
If you stand there and watch while I'm kneading the dough."

I begged for permission to stay. She'd not listen:
The sweet little tyrant said "No, sir! no! no!"
Yet when I had vanished on being thus banished,
My heart staid with Nancy, while kneading the dough.

I'm dreaming, sweet Nancy, and see you in fancy,
Your heart, love, has softened and pitied my woe,
And we, dear, are rich in a dainty wee kitchen
Where Nancy, my Nancy, stands kneading the dough.

—The Century.

BRAINS VS. HOUSEWORK.

I think I shall have to take some exceptions to A. H. J.'s letter on "A Housekeeper's Dues." She seems to half imply, as I take it, that a good many shortcomings can be forgiven to the woman of whom it can be said "she is a good housekeeper," and that it cannot be expected she shall know much else. Now "there is reason to roasting of eggs." No woman has any business to forget that she has a brain and a heart, as well as hands, nor ignore what they can do for her. A woman has a duty to herself as well as to her house. And I would remind our readers of the distinction made in Mrs. Wines' paper, published in the Household of February 5th, between *house* and *home*. Many a woman keeps an immaculate house, who has not an idea that keeping a home is a nobler and a dearer duty. And these women who spend their time and strength in an eternal struggle with dust and cobwebs, are generally those who in their care for the shell of the home, neglect what is infinitely more essential, the home spirit.

I have had nine years of practical work

in housekeeping, during which time I did all the work of caring for my house, and from that experience I am certain that unless a woman has a family more numerous than that of John Rogers of martyr memory, there is no earthly use of spending all her time in sweeping and dusting and getting up warm meals. There were few days except when I had to cook for a baker's dozen of threshers, that I could not find an hour for books, music or flowers. When I could not find the time I took it. Perhaps it was arrogant, but I assumed that my own physical and mental welfare was of more importance than shining up the cookstove or scrubbing the paint off the kitchen floor. If a woman has a large family, of course her duties are largely increased by the demands of her children in the way of food and clothing. But it is a manifest duty to teach them to be helpful; a duty to them as well as to herself. I have no patience with the women who give themselves soul and body to the "Dirt Crusade," to the exclusion of everything else. To attune a mind to trivial details and obstinately keep it there, is to hopelessly dwarf it; we must get above the dustcloth. If a woman was created only to wage a ceaseless warfare against dirt, it would have been economy in her Creator not to have troubled her with a soul.

If a woman will allow herself to give up everything for the sake of being a "man Friday" to her husband's establishment, she will find every facility for so doing. There will be plenty to praise her devotion to the pots and pans, plenty to contrast her with her neighbor who "sits down in the middle of the forenoon to read," to the disadvantage of the latter. I do not wish to disparage good housekeeping; it is essential to the family's happiness; I only deprecate the idea that it, and it alone, should absorb a woman's whole energies. The wife and mother ought to know more than the details of housekeeping, to be a companion to her husband, and a counselor and instructor to her children. It is a great thing to know just how much to do and how much to leave undone, to temper work with reason, to plan, and arrange the day's labor to save strength and time, and to have the resolution to deliberately pass over work we might do, but which is unessential, and take the time thus gained for self-improvement. We do not find that the women of whom all one can say is they are good housekeepers are the

"makeweights" in the community, but those of whom it is said "she is a real smart woman," are the ones who are both good housewives, and by their intelligence, strength of character and culture, exert an influence for good among their neighbors.

When a woman cannot enjoy a guest's visit because she has not pie or cake in the house, it shows plainly that she is giving minor considerations the place of honor in her mind and practice. The truth is we American women are slaves to pie and cake. What farmer's wife would dare set before a visitor the simple meal of bread and butter, conserve, and tea which the English lady has served to her on ancestral plate and china in her drawing room? We are arrant cowards so far as our table is concerned; we kill ourselves in the manufacture of cakes and pastry, because others do. Think of finishing up a rule of fried cakes at ten o'clock at night, as I have known women do!

I shall accuse A. H. J. of striking the mythical chip from my shoulder when she quotes and comments on the statement that housework occupies the hands but leaves the thoughts free; I recognize it as one of the clauses of my creed. I admit one must have their brains "bought their business" on baking days, but it does not take all a human intellect to decide how much of ironing goes to a shirt. I have memorized more than one favorite poem while my hands have been paring potatoes, folding clothes or pushing a flatiron "with grace and agility," and taken my hands from the dishwater many a time to jot down a bright thought or a conclusion in the little blank book, carried in my pocket on purpose to catch such stray fish, and my housework did not suffer. I admit I did not trouble myself to learn the contents of my receipt book, but consulted it whenever I had occasion. Books were few and well read and digested, and not a little of the process of assimilation was carried on with my head tied up in a towel, and both hands affectionately embracing the broomstick. To this persistent interweaving of study, reading and reflection, with mechanical work, I attribute zest for the one and liking for the other; for though like most girls, I "hated housework" when I begun, I learned to take a genuine pleasure in a neat and well ordered house, (I always had a weakness for good things to eat,) and I enjoyed books with a keenness and relish I find is dulled by satiety.

And this is what any woman can do and be a neat housekeeper too. I do not say she can thereby attain to the height of culture, by this union of the two, but she can keep herself from becoming a mere automaton to do so much manual labor daily.

A woman whose mental ambition has once been stirred, cannot be satisfied with merely a housekeeper's laurels. She must have more. She wants and will have a chance to "loungue in an easy chair and read the truths solved by other minds" and occasionally do a little thinking on her own account. And when she has lounged a little, she will rise and attack the work with fresh zeal, and perhaps be heard to repeat Jean Ingelow's lines:

"Hence we may learn, if we be so inclined,
That life goes best with those who take it best;
That wit can spin from work a golden robe
To queen it in; that who can paint at will
A private picture gallery, should not cry
For shillings that will let him in to look
At some by others painted."

BEATRIX.

THE QUESTION AGAIN.

The question submitted by our Household chief for discussion is a many sided one, yet given certain conditions, only one answer, and that an affirmative one, is possible. Any woman of average intelligence, who has a disciplined mind, habits of industry, and a conscientious regard for duty's calls, can in a few months master the details of housekeeping, and make it a success, no matter if she had no early training or natural liking for the work.

This implies, of course, that she must have opportunities for observation, or the advice and direction of some one who understands the business, for like all trades it wants some practical lessons in order to achieve success. Theories and printed rules will sometimes fail the uninitiated, there will be some little detail that the well informed will "take it for granted" that every one must understand, that to the tyro will necessarily prove a stumbling block. A story may illustrate: Two fishermen who had come to America, soon decided to go west, take up some land, and together keep "bachelors' hall" while clearing up a homestead. Totally unused to the culinary art, they were anxious to improve all opportunities for instruction, and were much interested in some twisted doughnuts that were served at a house where they had stayed over night, and they asked the lady for directions for making them and she very kindly gave the full formula. Soon after they had taken possession of their new home they together attempted to produce the article which had so much pleased the palate. With great care the written directions were followed, but one point was wanting. The strips were cut, dropped into the smoking lard, watched by the earnest eyes of both, but all was not right, and Sandy burst out with, "I say Jimmy, why don't the little beggars twisht?" It had been taken for granted they would know they must "twisht" the dough.

This would not spoil the cooking, but it disappointed them, and cast a doubt on the good faith of their informant, for

they had "followed directions." As small a mistake in some other connection, might spoil the cookery.

The case seems to turn more on the question whether a woman who is not trained to housework when young, will with good will, earnestly and faithfully take it up in later years, or whether she will consider it only a disagreeable necessity, to be evaded as much as possible; a burden to be endured under protest, and working with such a spirit make herself and all around miserable, and make a miserable failure of her housekeeping also. As a rule, girls, rich or poor, can be taught the cardinal principles of housekeeping in youth, without interfering with other duties, and such knowledge will never do harm, if not used.

A. L. L.

GREENFIELD, March 15th.

A WOMAN'S TEARS.

"Maybelle" quotes an item from the FARMER, "Woman's tears cost little and avail much," thinks the reverse is true, and wonders why husbands are so indifferent to their wives' tears. Well, in a wet time, you know, when showers are frequent, we carry our umbrellas and expect to get sprinkled. I suppose the husbands of these "Job Trotter" style of women get so accustomed to dampness and dumps that they don't know what it is to have the house dry and cheerful. A woman who takes refuge in tears and a pocket handkerchief on every slight provocation need not expect her husband to pay much attention to her; the means of arousing his sympathy, resorted to too frequently, lose their potency. The husband whom Maybelle instances as saying his wife's tears fell "as easy as rain and amounted to about as much," had evidently had the game played on him too many times. That wife should try some other scheme.

Seriously, a wife has a very efficient weapon in her tears if she knows how to manage. She must remember that a woman, I don't care how pretty she is, is perfectly hideous when she cries. Her nose gets red and swollen, her eyes ditto, complexion inflamed, she is anything but a picture for a "beauty-loving eye." She should not indulge in any such extravagant demonstrations. The diplomatic wife who proposes her tears shall "avail much," never lets one fall. There is a good deal of poetry about pearly tears adown beauty's cheek, but it is all bosh; in real life they have a great tendency to travel by way of the nose, which rather destroys the poetic illusion. The woman who understands her business widens her eyes, as if surprised that her husband can be so unjust or unkind to her, then lets them slowly suffuse with tears, being careful not to overdo the matter lest she make her celestial nose strawberry color. Then she gives him an appealing, grieved look, makes as if she was going to say something but don't; then turns aside her face to conceal her emotion, or perhaps dabs gracefully at her eyes if she happens to have a pretty handkerchief at hand. If this does not "break him all up" he

has a heart harder than the nether millstone, and a regular thunder gust of tears and reproaches won't stir his compassion. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred this treatment proves effectual, unless the hammer-and-tongs process has been worked on him till he is hydropathic by nature.

Most men, being hard-headed and not lachrymose themselves, have a certain contempt for emotional women. They will concede the point at the time to keep peace in the family, but every such concession is dearly won; it is at the price of the wife's influence. Tears, after the fashion I have described, should be the last resort, only to be used in cases of necessity and urgency. There is always danger in substituting emotional power for reason. It is an attribute essentially feminine to weep readily; it is not *womanly* in that stronger and higher sense in which we are coming to use the word.

Some of these husbands who according to Maybelle, seem to delight in provoking their wives to tears, might be surprised by a change of programme on the part of the latter. Let the unkind words be received as if they were jestingly said, and a cheerful reply returned; or seek refuge in quiet dignity which returns no reply; is in fact as if it hears not. Then turn the tables by some wifely courtesy or kindness, and see if there is not first an astonished, then an ashamed man. It is a great thing to have tact, and nowhere is it more useful than in one's marital relations. A woman with tact can manage her husband with such *finesse* that he will never know what is the matter with him as he revolves around the orbit of her little finger.

BRUNEFILLE.

DETROIT, March 17th.

BREAD-MAKING.

To raise the fermentation, I would advise the use of yeast cakes in preference to home made yeast. I am quite sure I could detect the disagreeable "hop taste," if ever so small a quantity of the latter was used. I have used a dozen different varieties, in as many years, with equally good results. At present am using Stratton's; they are excellent.

The bread should be treated similar to salt-rising, the prime essential being warmth without scalding; knead it fifteen or twenty minutes. If I bake more than twenty loaves in a week (as I do through part of the year), my conscience tells me I shall not be required to give it more than one mixing, that is, mold and form into loaves at one and the same operation; then it is superior to bread made by any other method. The biscuits that are made by adding melted butter and a small quantity of white sugar to a part of the sponge, are too good to describe, but are much sought for at donations, pic-nics, etc.

Please may I speak to the girls, those of whom the fond mothers expect so much? I wish to tell them if they have a great many dishes to wash, to provide themselves with mosquito-netting for dish cloths, the new is best, but old will answer after it has been thoroughly purified;

also use the metal rings to clean ironware. I can sympathize with the girls, for hands will ache, and grow large and rough from steady application at this "soul-inspiring" business. I endorse all A. H. J. says; will remark that as a rule, women are too exacting of their sister housekeepers. My troubles often remind me of those of a German florist, as he related them to a friend and myself many years ago. He said: "I have so much drouble mit de ladies ven dey come to buy mine rose; dey vants him hardy, dey vants him doubles, dey vants him moonldy, dey vants him fragrand, dey vants him nice goulter, dey vants him ebery dings in one rose. I hopes I am not vat you calls von uncillant man, but I have somedimes to say to the ladies, 'Madame, I never often sees de ladies dat vas beautiful, dat vas rich, dat vas good temper, dat vas youngs, dat vas clever, dat vas perfection in one ladies. I see her much not!'"

I am hopeful that Beatrix will "sum up the question" after it has been duly discussed.

E. S. B.

BRIGHTON, March 15th.

MOLLIE MOONSHINE'S VIEWS.

This morning, while striving to bring order from the chaos of papers upon the table in the sitting-room, my eye rested, by chance, upon the article by F. E. W., in the Household of March 4th.

Notwithstanding the fact that my work was not finished, down I sat and read it to the end. And when, half an hour later, I vigorously gave my kitchen stove an extra polish, and hung the broom and duster in their respective places, with a self-satisfied ejaculation of—"There! my work is done and it is only half-past eight!" I felt that the five minutes wasted (?) in reading, had not been idly spent, for as I worked my thoughts were busy also, and I am sure they ran in different and perhaps more profitable channels than they would have done, had I not stopped my work to read this article. I often find it highly beneficial to pick up a book or paper and read five or ten minutes after breakfast, before beginning the day's work. Right here let me say the above plan was suggested to me some time ago by my husband, who does not believe in a woman's working until she is all tired out before she sits down to read. Try my method, you who can. Choose well your reading and it will turn the current of your thoughts; you will work better for it and feel refreshed the whole day.

You all see by this time, that I am expressing different views from most "good housekeepers." Nevertheless, I, too, was a "schoolma'am," decidedly inexperienced in housekeeping matters, but able and apt to learn, and I flatter myself that I have, in a measure, succeeded. Nearly ten years of my life were passed in the school-room, in the capacity of teacher. Human nature in all its various phases was there presented for my moral and persuasive powers and my patience to work upon and do justice to by clearing away the cobwebs of ignorance and implanting seeds of knowledge which might take deep root, and aid in forming good

and wise men and women in after years. I tried then as now to do my work faithfully and well.

My own training for a teacher's work and the principal knowledge of books I possess, I received at the hands of true and tried men and women in one of the Empire State's best Normal schools.

My husband is not a farmer at present, although he is "one of the boys," of the Michigan Agricultural College, and consequently has everything pertaining to farming truly at heart, and, moreover, expects before the present year rolls away, to become the happy occupant of as fine a farm as any of which Northern Michigan can boast. Then I shall be a farmer's wife, and expect I shall often trouble the Household for information, or bore its readers by my egotistical reference to my "stron'ary 'cess" in butter-making, fowl raising and the like. And now, as my sixteen months' old boy is asking for a "p'int" to be put on the pencil with which he is playing, I will sign my old *nom-de-plume*, which may not be strange to some of the Household readers, though never before seen in its columns.

Editor, please tell me if I may come again.

MOLLIE MOONSHINE.

DETROIT, March 14th, 1884.

[Yes indeed, Mollie, come again and come often. We shall hope to hear of your success in the new home, and extend our best wishes that the change may be a pleasant one.—HOUSEHOLD ED.]

INSECTS INJURIOUS TO HOUSE PLANTS.

The reason given by florists for the presence of white worms in flower pots, so far as I have ascertained, is overwatering. I have from my own observation concluded to add to that, the use of undecayed barnyard soil, which contains the germs of the pests mentioned. I have seen clouds of flies in the air over and around the yard in a warm afternoon when the ground was wet, and they were precisely like, and I think identical with those. As they evidently feed upon the nutrition of the soil and not the plants, they are not so much to be dreaded as any of the other enemies of plant life, which we are often forced to combat. Lime water is most frequently recommended, but I prefer soot to that, and a few drops of carbolic acid in a quart of warm water to either, to exterminate the worms; and pyrethrum powder fixes the flies instantly. If we desire plants for the house we wish them thrifty and ornamental, or we would rather have none, and to induce a good growth we must study and meet their requirements, which are simple enough, and altogether reasonable. A good mixture of leaf mould or decayed sod with sand, to porous and rich garden soil, all mixed and sifted together, is the best I know of for any plant, and occasionally a spoonful of ammonia is added to the water used to water them; and once a week enough of liquid fertilizer from the cowstable, to darken the water, will insure health and growth. It is best when purchasing, or exchanging plants to examine closely, that there should not with

the plants come more than is bargained for, in the shape of Aphids, Thrips, Red Spider (*Acarus tellarius*), scab insect (*Coccus*), mealy bug (*Coccus Adonidum*), which feed upon the very life of plants, and unless quickly exterminated are a sure destruction. Fumigation with tobacco is the common remedy for Green Fly, or a weak tea made by steeping it and washing them with that, and rinsing in clear water. Pyrethrum powder will effectually rid the plants of them if used in the way recommended to use tobacco fumes; place the plant by itself or a number under a box or tub, and with an atomizer, or if one is not at hand, any tube which you can use, blow the air full of the powder around the plants, and close for an hour or so; rinse well with tepid water before returning to the shelf. None but tepid water should be used for plants at any time, either for washing, sprinkling or watering, as cold water, like cold draughts, is detrimental; and water only when the plants are dry; plants are more easily injured by too much water at the roots than too little, while the leaves are syringed or sprinkled too infrequently, nor the necessary care taken to protect them from dust, which is very important, as cleanliness promotes the health of plants, and prevents the multiplying of insects. Thrips dislike tobacco or insect powder, so may be doctored as recommended for Green Fly, while for scab insect there is nothing better than a few drops of carbolic acid in an ounce of sweet oil with which to thoroughly sponge the plant. While we hope to never make the acquaintance of the Red Spider, we feel sure of drowning him easily; he is no hydropath and yields quickly to the "water cure." The best insurance against the depredations of plant enemies, are healthy condition of growth, rendered by a plenty of air, (not cold draughts) light, atmospheric warmth and moisture, good porous soil, moderate watering with tepid water, freedom from dust and extremes of temperature; then if these most unwelcome visitants should intrude, they must most emphatically "take something."

AARON'S WIFE.

FENTON, March 18th.

AN EXCLUSIVE MEMBER SPEAKS

I knock at the door of the Household, and I give you warning that if you open it and let me in, the serenity of the Household circle is apt to be marred.

When we had one and a half columns allowed us for a Household and two-thirds of that was travels we "grinned and bore it," but welcomed the first little paper that we received where we had a Household exclusively our own. But there was gnashing of teeth when the last number came, and mortgage sales, chromo cards and farm law stared us in the face. Let us keep the paper small enough so there will be nothing in it, but what every woman will feel makes that one paper invaluable and it "must be saved."

I admire the "hints" we have been having in the last numbers, and will give some in return.

Pretty and serviceable tidies can be

made of gray carpet warp, crocheted macrame style, with bright ribbons woven in. Unbleached carpet warp crocheted in thick and thin squares, with fringe on the front and ends, makes durable couch spreads.

Bright hit or miss carpet rags knit garter stitch can be sewed into very pretty rugs.

I wonder how many there are who do not spend time enough on unnecessary ironing every week to write us some of their experience in housekeeping. I am a young housekeeper myself, and I would like to have some one tell me how to make hop yeast bread, and have it good every time; sometimes mine is good and sometimes it is not, and I try the same every time. I believe with Daisy there are too many who are willing to "take something," but if it is to be poor bread, there is one who would beg to be excused, and that is

TOM'S WIFE.

KALAMAZOO, Mich.

[The Household Editor recommends a trial of E. S. B.'s recipe for bread-making, published in the Household of Feb. 18th. We have eaten bread and biscuit made by that method, and both are delicious. Several ladies have already reported their success with it. Hon. Wm. Ball reports Vermont housekeepers give it warm commendation. We will hear from some of our hop yeast bread makers, however, if they will kindly favor us with their methods; and hope "Tom's Wife" will keep the Household well stirred up.]

Contributed Recipes.

GRAHAM COOKIES.—One cup of sour cream; one and one-half cups of sugar; one-half teaspoonful soda; mix soft, do not roll too thin.

GRAHAM GEMS.—Two cups sour milk; two eggs; two tablespoonfuls sugar; one tablespoonful lard; four cups flour without eggs, and less with eggs; one teaspoonful soda; pinch of salt.

LEMON PIE.—Grate the rind from one lemon and squeeze out the juice; stir in one tablespoonful of flour to a smooth paste; add one cup boiling water, one cup sugar, pinch of salt, butter the size of a walnut, the yolks of three eggs, well beaten, saving the whites for frosting. For one pie.

WHITE CAKE.—The whites of six eggs; one cup sugar; one-half cup of butter; one-half cup sweet milk; one and one-half cups of sifted flour; one tablespoonful of corn starch; three teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Stir the sugar and butter to a cream, then add the corn starch well dissolved in the milk, then flour and baking powder, well mixed; last of all the beaten eggs. Flavor with lemon or vanilla. S. M. PITTSBURG, March 25th.

What They Say of Us.

Mrs. M. A. FULLER, of Fenton, says: "I am delighted with the new Household. I have often wished it was in that form, it is so nice to keep or refer to. I am also pleased to see so many new contributors."

Miss MILLIE BENHAM, of Homer, Calhoun County, says: "My father takes the MICHIGAN FARMER, and I like the Household very much." Miss Millie writes a very neat and pretty hand for a twelve year old girl.

HON. D. D. T. MOORE, of the Philadelphia Tribune and Farmer, says: "Your new Household is very creditable, both in appearance and contents."

VICTOR CHURN.

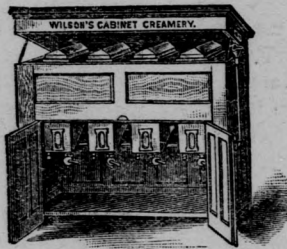
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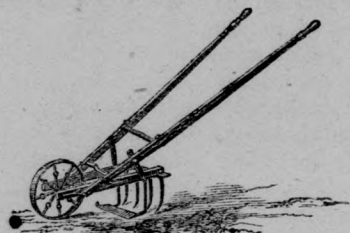


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