

I thought of that, and then, as I glanced round at the flowers and inhaled their scents, the bright fields near Templemore Grange floated before my dimming eyes, a feeling of suffocation came upon me, and the room seemed to swing round. I believe that for the first time in my life I should have fainted, so painful were the memories evoked by her words, when a sharp knock and ring at the door echoed through the house, following instantly upon the dull fall of a letter, and the sharp click of the letter-box.

It was like an electric shock to me, and without a word I darted into the hall, panting with excitement, and my hand at my throat to tear away the stifling sensation.

But it was a letter. I could see it through the glass in the letter-box, and I seized it with trembling hands, inspired as it were by some strange power.

"Jack! dear Jack at last!" I gasped as I turned it over, and saw it was a strange, blue, official-looking letter, formally directed to me.

Even that did not surprise me. It was from Jack, I knew, and I tore open the blue envelope.

Yes, I knew it! The inner envelope was covered with Australian post-marks, and, ignorant as I might be of its contents, I was raising it to my lips to cover it with passionate kisses, when I saw it was open.

Then a mist came over my mental vision for a moment, but only to clear away as, half stupefied, I turned the missive over and over, held it straight for a moment; and then, with a sigh of misery and despair, I stood mute, and as if turned to stone.

"Grace, my child! In mercy's name tell me——"

It was Madame, who passed her arm round me, and looked horror-stricken at my white face and lips. The next moment I dimly remember she had caught the letter—his letter—my letter—from my hand, and read it aloud: "Mr. John Braywood, Markboro, R. County Melbourne," and then, in her excitement, the great official sentence-like brand upon it—"Dead!"

That was the beginning of my first and only illness, during which Madame tended me like a mother, even to giving up her business afterwards, and retiring to live with me here in this quiet street, where she died, and left me well-to-do, as you see. I have grown old since then, but I am not unhappy, great as was the trial, and it has led me into what has, I hope, been a useful life. And, besides, why should I sorrow, knowing as I do that which came to me years and years after—that Jack died with my name upon his lips—died true to her he loved? and I am but waiting till we shall meet again. GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

WASHING AT HOME.

BY A PRACTICAL WOMAN.



As a rule, the middle classes are wont to consider washing at home a domestic discomfort, only to be undertaken from an unavoidable pressure of circumstances, at all events as far as the dwellers in towns are concerned; and from time immemorial, poets and poetesses, not too proud to select humble themes for the subject of their muse, have descended on the miseries of the washing-day, to which "nor peace belongs, nor comfort," according to their showing.

And yet in France a great deal of washing is done at home without such discomfort, and in Edinburgh the laundry work, as a rule, is all carried out in the house, as it is in most of the well-to-do establishments in the country in England. The chief advantage of the plan is its economy. Careful housekeepers know that the expense of washing at home is about a third of what it costs to put out, and this in the present day is a most important consideration, for as a rule incomes do not increase in proportion to the higher prices which have to be paid, alike for labour, house rent, rates and taxes, and all the necessary articles of household and domestic consumption.

We propose, therefore, to lay before our readers a few useful general hints on the subject of the household laundry.

In the first place, it is a decided economy to invest

in such aids to the labour of washing as have resulted from the fertile brains of modern inventors. Too much paraphernalia is as bad as too little, and judgment and experience are required in the selection, as well as method and exceeding cleanliness in carrying out laundry work.

Weekly or fortnightly washes are better than monthly or the three-monthly ones which find favour in Germany, for clothes rot and mildew lying about damp and dirty, and wine, ink, and other stains cannot be removed easily after they have remained in some time. The best mode of taking these out is by a bleach. Bleaching liquids of course can be bought, and applied with care they need not be mischievous; but they should be *only* admitted into the laundry for the purpose of taking out stains, and a home-made bleach is generally the safest, for which proceed as follows:—Pour some boiling water on chloride of lime, bottle it, keep it well corked, and be careful in using not to stir it, so that none of the sediment escapes. This will have a powerful effect, and even bring holes in the material, as will any other bleaching liquid, if it is not (immediately after the stain disappears) well washed and boiled out.

Two rooms are required for laundry work—a wash-house and an ironing-room, where also in bad weather the things can be dried. The wash-house, for which a scullery has to do duty sometimes, should have a stone-flooring, with sink-stone or gutters through which the

surplus water may flow away; and, above all, good ventilation: open windows, ventilators, and ordinary fire-places best effect this.

An abundant supply of hot and cold water, and one or more coppers, are among the other necessities, and where there are no permanent coppers, portable iron ones can now replace them. The number of tubs and of stands to set them on that will be wanted, must be regulated according to the amount of washing, and whether a washing machine is used, when of course the number required will be much less, many of the machines serving the purpose of a rinsing-tub when not otherwise in use.

Machinery is to washing much the same thing it is to sewing—it does the work in a quarter the time, with a great saving of labour, but knowledge and experience are required. In choosing a washing-machine, be careful not to select the makes which subject the clothes to undue friction or wear-and-tear; and, as a rule, the simplest are the best. Having bought them, do not put them in ignorant or prejudiced hands, and see that the directions which accompany them are carefully carried out. In all cases a wringer will be required. If a machine is used, one will probably be attached to it. They are of two classes—viz., india-rubber, the secret with regard to which is that the india-rubber be thoroughly well annealed on to the centre iron, or it will soon shrivel and spoil; the other kind is larger, and consists of either two or three wooden rollers, and in small families it serves for a mangle as well as wringer.

Soft water is invaluable in the laundry, so secure as much of it as ever you can, either in water-butts or in troughs and cisterns; charcoal, or filtering it through sand, will purify it if required.

Things for the wash must be carefully sorted, very dirty kitchen towels, greasy cloths, &c., being kept apart from the other white things; and fine things, coloured things, and flannels in distinct classes. All white articles (but on no account flannels or coloured things) should be previously soaked; it saves the clothes, and it saves labour, whether a machine or subsequent hand-rubbing is resorted to. It is merely necessary to soap the dirtiest portions and lay them over-night in the tubs, covered with lukewarm water. The greasy and very dirty things should have a tub to themselves; if this cannot be done, they should be placed at the bottom.

All white things should be washed through twice—that is, in washerwoman's parlance, "firsted" and "seconded"—being turned inside out between the processes. With a machine the same plan holds good, some ten minutes each time in the machine being necessary; they are put in with water and soap jelly, made by boiling down the soap beforehand, and adding soda.

With proper management only soap and soda are required for washing white things. If not absolutely deleterious, washing powders are superfluities, and rough-handed and inexperienced washerwomen are apt to use a superabundant quantity to save themselves hand-labour, and then the result cannot fail to be bad. There is little fear of their using too much

soda, as it injures their hands. Soda crystals form the best kind of soda for the laundry work, and in soap pale primrose—viz, the superior kind of yellow soap—or next to that, mottled.

After the "seconding," white things must be boiled, and rinsed twice—once, thoroughly out of the soap they are boiled with, and then in bluing water, and so hung up to dry.

For coloured things no soda must on any account be used, nor must they be allowed to lie about damp, but must be washed off quickly, and dried in the shade or in the dark. For coloured stockings and many other coloured things, a pinch of salt in the water will preserve the colour, as will alum, and also ammonia.

Flannels should be washed in a soapy lather of lukewarm water, and be neither boiled nor left long in the water, but dried quickly, though not by the fire. For vests, and other things which are apt to shrink, it is an admirable plan to have a wooden form made the exact shape, on which to stretch them to dry.

Drying out of doors is an easy matter, good lines being necessary, with props and pegs (of the latter, the American, cut out of the solid wood, with no metal band, are possibly the best), and nothing is so good for the clothes, making them sweet and a good colour, as pure fresh air. When bleaching is required for clothes that have become yellow through lying by, they should be placed on the grass in the soapsuds, and sprinkled with water from the rose of a watering-pot; night air and frost will restore the whiteness to any yellow-white article.

For indoor drying, ropes and pulleys can be stretched across the ironing-room, which must be heated by a useful stove; or one end of it can be fitted up as a drying-closet, with circular revolving iron horses, or with a series of metal horses which are drawn in and out as required, and heated by a furnace.

Drying completed, the clothes are damped and very carefully folded for mangling. In using a mangle remember that it hinders rather than hastens the work to over-fill it. Such things as require starching have also to be prepared. For table linen a little starch is generally mixed with the bluing water, but it must be a very little.

Linen collars, and cuffs, and shirt-fronts should be starched first with boiled starch, and allowed to dry, and then with raw starch, and be ironed after they have lain an hour; they should be well ironed on both sides, and, with a little piece of rag, slightly damped again; after this the glossing or polishing iron should be employed, having a convex base. With this method the linen will look equal to new.

Two kinds of starches are required, the blue and the white—the blue which is used for ordinary things, hot; the latter for fine things, cold.

There is a great art in mixing starch, so that it be quite smooth; for the hot starch, if boiling water is employed, it need not be boiled, and a little borax added gives a gloss often sorely needed in linen. This must be previously dissolved in hot water and allowed to get cold, and then mixed with the starch. The art in starching is to thoroughly permeate the article starched without leaving any lumps.

Ironing requires patience and labour. There are ironing-machines, which generally take the form of iron rollers, heated when required, but they are little used in home laundries. The ordinary flat-iron, of 8 lbs. or 10 lbs. weight, has as yet found no real rival. The box-iron seems to be too heavy for a day's ironing, and it is mostly patronised by amateurs, who show a partiality for another useful thing of the kind—viz., an iron heated by spirit, and so arranged that the face revolves, and one side is always hot.

Cleanliness is a necessary virtue in the ironing-room. A dirty iron does a great deal of harm, and a stove to heat them so that they do not come in contact with the coals is necessary. These may be warmed by gas, coke, or coal; small gas stoves for heating goffering and other small irons can be had, to hang against the wall by a burner.

Ironing blankets should be thick and securely fastened to the table. For ironing embroideries, lace, crochet, tatting, &c., additional folds of flannel are needed, so that the raised portions of the patterns sink into the soft material, and by the aid of the point of the iron are made to stand out well. Things should neither be too damp nor too dry when ironed, and afterwards they should be hung up in the warmth, and thus allowed to stiffen. For this purpose you may procure small stands with many arms for fine things; folding horses, and brackets with several iron arms attached, which hang down when not in use, and take no room.

We have thus cursorily run through some few items which we think likely to assist home-washing. Among the chief things to consider is, how it can be carried out with the least discomfort. Great care should be taken to prevent the steam and smell from the laundry permeating the house, and for this purpose it is ad-

visable, when possible, that the rooms appropriated should be quite distinct and apart; the ventilation in them must be carefully attended to, and intervening doors well closed.

One of the servants would be able to carry out the washing of an ordinary family, but many people prefer to have a washerwoman for a couple of days, letting the cook or nursemaid assist in the washing, and then carry out the ironing unassisted.


A little practice will soon teach how much soap, soda, blue, starch, &c., are required, and these—where economy is an object—should be given out each wash, always remembering that soap goes twice as far if kept some time before using. Too much of all these materials is as bad as too little, and extravagance should be avoided, by never leaving the soap in the water, and using the soapsuds judiciously: those which flannels have been washed in, for example, will serve again for white things, but not *vice versa*, on account of the soda; and the soapy water from the copper, in which clothes have been boiled, does subsequently for washing. The copper first serves to supply the necessary hot water, and then is ready for the clothes to be boiled. Care should be taken not to be too economical, however, with water, for a fruitful source of things being a bad colour is that too many are washed in the same water.

In large families, especially where there is a number of young children, washing at home is worth a trial, for the money saved will bring many additional comforts. We would advise a great deal of forethought and pre-arrangement, and a careful investment in such things as have from time to time been invented to lessen the labour; and then we are inclined to think that washing-days need not be much dreaded.

PROUD MRS. BRANDLETH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DINGY HOUSE AT KENSINGTON," "THE BRIDGE BETWEEN," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.



HE was a proud old woman. Many West Indians are endowed with more pride than is good for them, and she was an instance. Perhaps it was the blacks, or the climate, or living on an island where there was no aristocracy save that which was constituted by money. She was very rich, there was no doubt of that; and she had a very lovely daughter, there was also no doubt of that—a fair-haired girl, with large dreamy eyes, and a fair skin, and lips that suggested a pout, yet broke into the most enchanting of smiles now and then—not very often either; perhaps because the girl's life had been lonely, as an only child's often is, and perhaps because she was half afraid of her mother. Her happiest days had been her school-days; she had been sent to England for her education, and when she returned to the narrow circle, and the stiff uncompromising mother, who since her husband's death had managed the estate herself, and was

absorbed in the produce of sugar and the politics of Government House, Alice felt lonely and weary enough. Yet Mrs. Brandleth was very proud of her beautiful daughter, and waited serenely, convinced that the day would come when a wandering duke, or perhaps a stray prince sent over to improve his knowledge of the tropics, would fall in love with her and insist upon laying his name, rank, and fortune at her feet. Having this conviction strong upon her, it was provoking when one fine day Alice informed her, tremblingly enough, that she had engaged herself to Hugh Trevor, a young surgeon who was vainly trying to get a practice in the island—for the population was more inclined to trust its broken bones and epidemics into the hands of the older practitioners.

"If you dare to think of such a thing," she exclaimed, "I'll leave every penny away from you, and what is more, I will let you starve rather than give you a shilling;" after which comfortable assurance, having no money and no prospects, the pair prudently got married on the sly, and trusted to "luck."

if not, this is an extra duty. The dhoby comes once a week, and the time taken to see clean and foul linen counted is often quite an hour and a half. In India every one changes daily, and two or three vast bundles of linen are taken weekly. The washerman, whose wife helps to get up the linen, lives in the "compound," and only washes for one family, unless the family be limited, and he gets permission to take in other washing.

The lady now feels weary, and thinks she will rest awhile. Not yet. "Phine clât—khappa walla [cloth-man], memsahib," calls out the hawker; and if the man is sent away, it may be days before he comes again; and some things being urgently needed, the lady directs that the cloth-man be taken to an ante-room, when a door being cautiously opened to admit him—for the hot air still blows as if from a furnace—he displays his goods, and the lady entering, is soon deeply engaged bargaining and buying "phine clât" (fine cloth), till the house-clock warns her of the hour 5.30, and the ayah that the afternoon tea has been served in the lady's dressing-room. Often the tired master is back from kutcherry, and joins his wife in a cup of tea; or sometimes a very intimate lady-friend is venturesome enough to come out for a gossip over the social tray. However, tea being discussed, the weary woman seeks half an hour's rest, but very often this is not allowed her, and she dresses for the evening drive, taken about 6.30 or 7 o'clock. Oh, how warm it is at this hour! how weak a woman feels!—as if she had no vitality left. The coachman stops at the bandstand, and the tired and pale lady reclines in her carriage and listens to the band, and to the conversation of gentlemen who come to have a little chit-chat. The lamps are now lighted, and the order given, "Ghur chullo" (Go home). And now to dress for dinner—if, as there is to-day, a "burra khana;" if not, a flower in her hair is enough; and seated at her

table, the lady dispenses hospitality, or enjoys a quiet dinner with "Hubby," who, though tired, seems to appreciate the varied viands and well-iced wines. Conversation and music close the evening. But you must not think mamma has forgotten the little ones, for after the return from her drive, and before she has made her toilet for dinner, the mother has been to the nursery, has seen the pets take their milk-and-water and bread-and-butter, and has helped to robe them in the sleeping-suits worn by children in India. The little lipsers have said their prayers, and each in his tiny cot reposes before the mother quits the room. The punkahs swing, the thermantidote stops not, and the doors between mamma's and the children's room are thrown open. Mamma kisses each little face, giving baby an extra one, and *then* she goes to dress. Thus passes each day in India. Varied it may be by other duties; but occupation is found for each day in the week.

There are women in every quarter of the globe who neglect the duties of wife and mother. In an Indian household where such a woman reigns queen, discomfort, debt, and unhappiness will surely follow. To live comfortably in India, "to make ends meet," as the saying is, and live on your husband's income, requires entire and constant supervision by the mistress of the house. She must be cognisant of each detail in the household expenditure, and take nothing on trust a servant may say. The natives of India are as a rule a thieving race, in whom truth is not to be found. Each servant tries to steal all he can. And when an establishment consists of twenty-five or more servants, all intent on peculating, it becomes a serious and most difficult matter to manage the expenditure and keep it within your husband's income; for though incomes in India seem large to people in England, they are not really so, the expenditure being commensurate with them. A LADY FROM INDIA.

WASHING AT HOME.

BY A PRACTICAL WOMAN.

ECONOMY is a necessity to many of us, and a real pleasure to a few, those few being decidedly of the feminine gender, if it takes the form of petty economies in small things. In the matter of home washing, a very great saving may be effected by learning how it should be well carried out. We all know what a heavy item are the clear-starchers' bills; and yet a great deal for which they charge heavily can, with care, be satisfactorily done at home. With regard to the getting up of lace, muslin, &c., we would remind our readers of that sage axiom, "If you want a thing well done, do it yourself." In the present paper we propose to show how to clean various things which in our everyday life are wont to puzzle us. With that sage advice in our minds about self-help, we will begin with lace.

A little soaking is always advisable, and a pinch of borax in the water helps to dispel the dirt. If very dirty, as lace caps and other things will become, they should be put for a quarter of an hour or so in a moderate oven, covered with water and shredded soap, a plate being placed on the top of the earthenware pie-dish or pipkin (the best things to place them in), great care being taken that they do not get burnt. We have known lamentable instances in which, left too long, the contents have almost if not entirely disappeared. Well rinsed, and subsequently allowed to simmer in a saucepan of cold water, muslin or lace, however dirty, becomes a good colour.

Old laces require time, trouble, and also delicate manipulation. Small pieces are best treated as follows:—Wash in a soap lather made with the best curd soap, the mode of washing being merely to pat and press the lace daintily with the hand, and not rub

it; fine laces will not stand such rough usage. Really valuable lace should neither be tacked nor have the flowers or prominent portions of the pattern raised with an ivory punch or other instrument. The object is to make it look as much like new as possible with but little wear-and-tear. It should not be perceptibly stiff. Sugar, a favourite stiffening medium, as also gum, makes it yellow, and we are inclined to think the thinnest water-starch (white) is the best, rinsing the lace again in clear water after it has been used, and then, having exuded all the moisture possible, patting it into form with the hand. It is a tedious process, and we have known it take a whole day to bring one yard of lace to perfection; but then it was impossible to tell it from new. It is needless to say the fingers should be scrupulously clean; and the manipulator should sit leisurely pulling each stitch almost, and clapping the dainty morsel from time to time. This clapping removes the sticky feature of the stiffening matter, and not the stiffness. Book muslin washed in a frothy soap lather well beaten up, stiffened with gum-water, and clapped till dry, will be as clear as any clear-starcher can make it.

An easier and less tedious process of lace-cleaning is to tack it, thoroughly securing every point and picote, on coarse linen, and so wash and stiffen it, allowing it to dry on the calico. When untacked it will be quite in shape, and we find the plan easier and as effectual as pinning the piece on a board or round a wine-bottle covered with flannel; the latter, however, having this advantage, that the drying may be expedited by filling the bottle with warm water. For staining lace the favourite *écru* or cream shades, Judson's dye does admirably, applied to Irish crochet, Maltese, Yak, and other coarse laces; but either tea or coffee, according to the tint required, is best for more delicate pieces. This should be applied after stiffening instead of a clear rinse; and before using it for the lace itself, the exact shade required should be tested on a morsel of useless material.

Green tea or ammonia in the water is the best medium for washing black lace, and will restore the colour if brown. This should be treated after the same manner as white, which it is far better never to iron, though sometimes it is found necessary, and then it should be done between paper; but to black lace an iron must never, on any account, be applied—it is certain to turn it brown.

In an article on "Home Washing" in CASSELL'S FAMILY MAGAZINE for June, 1876, we gave practical directions how collars and sleeves, shirt-fronts, &c., should be got up, and also how starch should be made; there is, however, another stiffening medium of which we would say a little. A bottle of gum-water should be always kept ready, made by pouring a quart of boiling water over four ounces of gum arabic, letting it stand twelve hours, and then pouring it from the dregs. It is useful for mixing with starch and for applying alone to muslin; and when muslin dresses have become limp, and require ironing without washing, they should be thoroughly sprinkled with this, and it will bring up the stiffness well.

The washing of muslin curtains is expensive according to the usual method pursued, but we would recommend our readers to try soaking them first in cold water, then washing them thoroughly, and stiffening with water-starch, and finally, without wringing them, pinning them well out over a sheet on the floor, care being taken that the selvages are stretched evenly. It will be found that they are unusually stiff and crisp, and that the pattern stands out well and clearly. It is best to stretch them out the last thing at night, and they will be ready in the morning.

For the washing of muslin, lace, and all such things a wringer will be found almost a necessity, for it squeezes out the moisture without tearing or straining the fabric.

Few people seem to know how to wash silk stockings. White ones should be washed in a cool lather of curd soap, and should neither be rinsed nor ironed; merely press them as dry as possible, then turn them to the right side, pull them into shape, roll them in a cloth, and finally, rub them gently with a piece of flannel. It is no longer the mode, as formerly, to colour them with pink cudbear.

For black silk stockings put a little ammonia in the water.

There is a fashion about the use of certain things, and just now bran has become very famous for some sort of laundrywork. The School of Art Needlework specially recommends it for washing crewels and some silk embroidery. With proper care, that is by washing in a soap lather, and *drying quickly* (a most important point, for it is in lying about wet that the colours run), crewel wool embroideries ought to wash well; but bran is safer. The method is to tie about a quarter of a pound of bran in a muslin bag, stir it in the lukewarm water till there is a lather, and then immerse the things. Neither soap nor soda should be applied, the bran answering every purpose. In the same way it may be used for washing muslins, imparting, moreover, a very tolerable stiffness.

Brown holland, which is now becoming fashionable for blinds, and has always been occasionally used for covering up furniture, is apt to become white with washing; the way to obviate this is to rinse it in water in which hay or tea has been boiled, or to use starch made with hay-water.

Coloured things always present difficulties in washing, and require care. Certain chemicals, as well as familiar materials, aid in preserving some colours, and are mostly applied in the rinsing water, as alum for greens and blues, soda for violets, pearlash for purple and blue, and ivy-leaves boiled in water for black. Ox-gall is useful, though apt to brighten colours wonderfully for a short time only, when they become more dingy than before, more especially when used for carpets. Vinegar or ammonia, as a rule, is the safest means of fixing colours. A teaspoonful of turpentine in starch will often work wonders where coloured things are concerned, and the coloured starches now sold are worthy of a trial. We have found them most successful. Fireproof starch is also a very admirable invention of modern days.

Antimacassars, odious as they are to most men, find a place in every drawing-room, and in London and other towns soon lose their pristine freshness, but, sad to relate, are very apt to be spoilt in washing. If made of guipure d'art, lace, or crochet, they are often far too stiff, and quite out of form, and the pattern blurred; all this may be obviated by using the weakest water-starch, rinsing in cold water afterwards, and then ironing with a very heavy iron over many folds of flannel, pressing the raised portions of the design well out with the iron. Woollen antimacassars, Affghans, and children's woollen quilts are more troublesome,

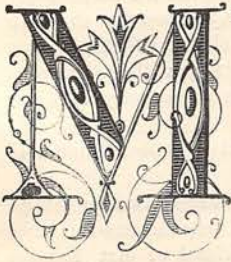
still they are to be done in a satisfactory manner. Wash them in two lukewarm lathers of curd soap, the last weaker than the first, rinse in weak vinegar and water, pass through the wringer, and dry quickly in the shade, the secret being to *wash and dry quickly*.

Chamois leather is now much commended by the Faculty for wearing next the skin, and once badly washed is spoilt. The water should be lukewarm, the soap should be thoroughly expelled by rinsing, and when dry it should be pulled out and rubbed until quite soft.

These hints will, we trust, meet a few difficulties which occur from time to time. ARDERN HOLT.

LOST OR STOLEN?

TOLD OVER A COUNTER.



RS. CHAPPELL had lost her gold-rimmed spectacles—that is, she could not find them; and I found *her* in a state of nervous excitement and agitation, far in excess, as I thought, of the occasion.

She was fidgeting amongst boxes and bottles, with a look of extreme worry on her countenance.

“Oh! they will turn up somewhere when you are not looking for them!” said I, in an off-hand manner.

Mrs. Chappell's elder sister, a Mrs. Merton—a very shrewd woman, who took full credit for her farsightedness—was in the shop at the time; she answered drily, “I'm not so sure of that. When bank-notes, and books, and such trifles disappear mysteriously, and are never found, it is possible that gold spectacles may be *lost* after the same fashion.”

“Now, do be quiet, Maria!” cried Mrs. Chappell petulantly. Then, turning to me, she added, “Miss Saunders, our shopwoman, has left us to-day, and my sister here will insinuate that she has stolen them, as if a girl who owes everything to me could possibly be so ungrateful!”

“Mrs. Marbury,” said Mrs. Merton, still addressing herself to me, “I call Jane Saunders a Calamanco cat, and expect no more gratitude from her than from a cat!”

“Oh, Maria! how can you?” exclaimed Mrs. Chappell.

“Now, Mrs. Marbury,” argued Mrs. Merton, “Theresa has dismissed more than one good servant with cobwebs of suspicion clinging to her, yet when her gold spectacles disappear mysteriously, simultaneously with the departure of the Calam—well, the shopwoman—she will not hear one word against her—not even believe they are stolen.”

The florid and forward shopwoman had been no favourite of mine, yet I had seen a good many so-called mysterious disappearances; and my prejudice against Miss Saunders did not blind me to the fact that it would be a positive calamity if a taint of unfounded

dishonesty followed her to a new situation, and I expressed myself strongly on the subject.

“With all due deference, Mrs. Chappell,” I said, “you ought to have had a thorough investigation when the bank-note was stolen, rather than suffer your domestics, and now your shopwoman, to leave your service with characters smirched, when one person only will be the culprit. It is a serious matter for the innocent on whom the cloud rests. And, after all, it is possible the missing articles will come to light some day.”

Mrs. Chappell shook her head, and called John, the messenger, to light the gas.

Whilst this was being done, I resumed my arguments to show the danger of hasty judgment, and the responsibility of employers. As a case in point, I narrated an incident which had come under my own observation.

“You may recollect,” said I, “that on my first interview with you, Mrs. Chappell, over this counter, in November, 1870” (well had I cause to remember the date), “I produced amongst my testimonials a letter from a lady in whom you recognised an old school-fellow?”

“Ah, yes! Anne Coates, to be sure. I have not forgotten. But what of her?”

I answered the interrogation at length.

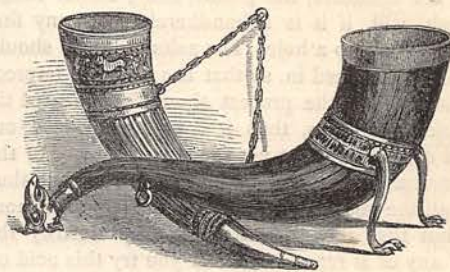
“Well, her youngest child, a fair-haired boy, about seven years old, romping in the nursery at bed-time, fell into the bath the nursemaid was preparing, before she could add the cold water. He was half undressed, and consequently severely scalded, though she plucked him out almost on the instant. Mrs. Coates was at the time dressing for a dinner-party at the house of a near neighbour in Gloucester Crescent.

“His screams penetrated to her dressing-room. She is a woman of impetuous temperament, whose children are the stars in her sky. Up-stairs to the nursery she rushed, one sleeve of her mauve moiré antique dress hanging loose, and in that same condition I found her when the hastily-summoned family doctor sent for me an hour and a half later, the rich silk ruined with linseed-oil and lime-water. What was dress to the mother, with her boy in agony and

to the seventeenth century, in which the principal event surely was that of the introduction of forks on to the table. The custom came to us and to others from Italy—so it appears from the observation of a traveller, one Thomas Coryate, who having visited that country, says that “the Italian, and almost most strangers who comorant in Italy, doe alwaies at their meales use a little forke when they cut their meate;” and then he proceeds minutely to describe how this wonderful performance was managed, and concludes by remarking: “I think no other nation of Christendom doth use it but only Italy.” He had the honour of teaching the English its use. But the chief objects of consideration were the drinking cups and vessels, of which, it would appear, our ancestors had apparently as great a variety as of liquors. There were noggins and piggins and whisksins, ale-bowles, wassell-bowles, tankards and kannes, small jacks and great black jacks—the use of which latter caused the report in France that the Englishmen drank out of their own boots! There were cups “made out of the horns of beasts, of cocker-nuts, of goords, of the eggs of ostriches, others made of the shells of divers fishes brought from the Indies.” There were “tankards and flagons and wine bowls, some white, some purcell-gilt, some gilt all over, some with covers and some without, of sundry shapes and qualities.” What a goodly array, to be sure!

During this, the eighteenth century, the fashion for gold and silver table utensils and ornaments grew apace, and it became the ambition of many to exhibit

as much plate as possible, so that every article that could be made of gold or silver was made of those metals. It therefore came to pass that in time the accumulation was great, and we had silver salt-cellars and mustard-pots, cream-jugs and sugar-basins, butter-dishes and meat-dishes, épergnes and wine-



DRINKING HORNS.

coolers, till the tables fairly groaned beneath the weight of all these costly and heavy decorations. The effect of all this glittering grandeur was striking, it is true, but on the other hand it looked ponderous and solemn. By-and-by there came a revulsion, and most if not all of our silver decorations were swept off our dinner-tables. But this was done for the purpose of putting china and glass in the place of silver. The arrangements of the table in this our day are increasingly augmented and varied, and show a complete and striking contrast to the bare boards at which our early ancestors ate their repasts. E. C.

WASHING AT HOME: THE ERADICATION OF STAINS.

BY A PRACTICAL WOMAN.



IN a former article on “Washing at Home,” which appeared in CASSELL’S FAMILY MAGAZINE for June, 1876, I alluded to the subject of eradicating stains preparatory to washing, and gave a receipt for preparing a chloride of lime bleach, which with care could be successfully applied to wine and fruit stains without injuring the fabric.

I am afraid, however, that from time to time other difficulties will arise in the home laundry which will not be so easily combated. As a general rule, all fruit and wine stains yield to treatment with this chloride of lime water, properly boiled out subsequently, but I have known obstinate cases, more especially of walnut-juice, where a very weak solution of ammonia, hartshorn, or sal volatile (in good truth all one and the same) was far more efficacious. It must be borne in mind the solution should be weak; if too strong it will not answer the purpose.

Many old-fashioned people will not admit chloride of lime in any form into their laundries, and are content, when wine-stains occur, to apply salt at once, and wash them out in plain water as soon as the

cloth has been removed. Soap sets the stain, and should not be used until it has been taken out. Milk is often effectual where water and other things fail; this should be applied by putting the wine-spot in when the liquid is tepid, and letting it come to the boil.

Where many other kinds of stains are concerned, milk is a very valuable ingredient indeed. Should by any mishap a bottle of ink be spilt on a print dress, as will sometimes occur in the best-regulated school-rooms, fly at once to the milk-jug and saturate the place with milk, rubbing it and rinsing it in the milk till it disappears, which it will do with a little patience, without injuring the colour. Moreover, if in the course of this misfortune a spot or two of the ink falls on a nice new carpet, put plenty of milk on them, and sop up the inky fluid as soon as it becomes inky, renewing the fresh milk. If, instead of the carpet, it is the woollen table-cloth, put a basin of milk beneath it, and let the stain soak in, and it will very soon be invisible, a sponge with clean water removing all the traces of the milk afterwards.

I have come across, in many receipt-books, a variety of directions for removing ink and ironmould from white things, and I have tried many of them, always

returning to my own unshaken faith in salts of lemon, to be applied, mark you, with care. My plan is to damp the spot thoroughly, and then stretch it over some pewter vessel, with a nip of the salts on the stain. Now there is a little secret even in doing this—if you do not make the place moist enough to slightly dissolve the chemical, the grains, being rather rough and harsh, will, if it is a handkerchief or any fine material, rub it into a hole. The salts of lemon should be thoroughly worked in, so that the stain is impregnated with it, and the process should be repeated till the mark disappears, then it should be rinsed out over and over again, that not the slightest trace of the acid remains. It is well to bear in mind that thus you get all the good out of the salts of lemon without injury, but that it will most decidedly destroy the fabric if any of it remains in. If you try this acid on coloured things, it will take the colour out; but should the use of milk as I have recommended above fail (it may if the stain be dry), try saturating it with hot tallow, and washing the grease out afterwards.

You may always tell the improper use of deleterious compounds, washing powders, and bleaching liquid, by the effect they have on the marking ink in names or initials. There are, however, occasions on which you may wish to obliterate marking ink, when it appears in the form of a blot, or shows a wrong name. The washing powders or bleaching liquid would be too lengthy a process to try for such a purpose, and would possibly be only attended by partial success, rendering the mark faint, but not quite obliterated. A solution of cyanide of potassium is the only sure method; it is, however, a dangerous liquid, and should in truth be used only by the chemist, who applies it with a camel's-hair brush, the place being well washed out afterwards. I repeat this latter instruction on all occasions, but my readers may accept it as a pretty sure rule, that nearly all the ingredients used for eradicating stains are deleterious, and unless they are well washed out, will do far more harm than the original spot.

Grease, although we have a wholesome dread of it, is after all more easily expelled than almost any other kind of stain. From silks and all woollen goods, benzole, or the more familiar benzine collas, is a sure remedy if it is applied as it ought to be, the only drawback being the disagreeable odour. I am quite aware that various liquids purporting to be scentless benzine, or scented, have been brought before the public, but none of them to my thinking do the work so effectually. Proceed as follows:—Lay the stain over several folds of linen (a folded chamber-towel answers the purpose well) and saturate it with the liquid, then shift it at once to another part of the underlying linen, so that the grease

which has passed into it with the benzine may not return to the fabric, then as quickly as you can rub the spot in a circular manner, being careful that the edges dry thoroughly, in which case not the slightest trace will remain either of the grease or of the means which have been taken to remove it. Should the result not be quite so satisfactory, and there is a distant outline visible, apply a very little plaster of Paris, let it remain a short time, dust it off, and then rub with some stale bread. Soda in the water will remove grease from white things when most obstinate.

We have been talking all this time of eradicating grease; but grease itself is useful in removing tar, a tiresome, obstinate sort of stain, which requires the application of a great deal of butter, well rubbed in. This possibly will have to be taken out in its turn, according to the material on which it has been used, by the methods detailed above.

I think it was Lord Palmerston who characterised dirt as merely a thing in the wrong place; and paint, however good it may be on canvas, houses, or palings, is very much in the wrong place on any material whatsoever. I have only discovered one satisfactory manner by which it can be expelled, viz., turpentine, after the application of which, as with benzine collas, the article must be exposed to a strong current of air.

Scorches are one of the troubles which beset inexperienced ironers: it requires a knowledge of the iron as well as of the art of using, to know exactly when it has attained a proper degree of heat. Young people—and inexperience and youth go together—are apt to be in too great a hurry, and scorches are the consequence. They should be taken out at once with onion-juice (obtained by crushing a boiled onion) mixed with vinegar, white soap, and fuller's-earth, a very small quantity of each being required. It is needless to say this must be well washed out afterwards.

We women are very apt to drop tea or coffee on our dresses; and if these marks are allowed to remain in until the gown is washed or cleaned, the chances are they cannot be removed without leaving some trace: pure cold water applied at once with a sponge is the best means to use, however delicate the colour or material.

As a rule, the simplest remedies are the wisest for private persons; those which dyers and professional cleaners may resort to require professional knowledge. I have specially avoided in this chapter any reference to many acids, such as sulphuric and others, which as a broad rule can only be used by inexperienced persons with danger, although under certain conditions they may work wonders.

ARDERN HOLT.

