

TRUE ECONOMIES IN HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT.

BEING THE ESSAY FOR WHICH THE PRIZE OF TEN POUNDS HAS BEEN AWARDED BY THE PROPRIETORS OF "CASSELL'S FAMILY MAGAZINE."

NOTE.—The Editor, in printing the successful Essay, does not necessarily endorse all the views of the writer, or hold himself in any way responsible for them.



CHAPTER THE FIRST.

SEVERAL few words in our language are more frequently misapplied, and misconstrued, than the word "economy," may I venture at the outset of this paper to point out its true meaning? "Economy is the management, regulation, and government of a family or household; a frugal and judicious use of money, that management which spends money to advantage and incurs no waste, frugality in the necessary expenditure of money; a judicious application of time, labour, and the instruments of labour." We see then that to be truly economical is not to be parsimonious, for that implies saving at any cost or inconvenience; yet these two words are generally used as though their meaning were synonymous. "With economy few need be poor, and without it few can be rich;" and it is my intention to deal briefly with the subject in its relation to all domestic matters, regarding nothing as too trivial for notice. While I write, food, fuel, dress, and a host of followers in their train, seem to rise before my mental vision, and cry out for attention, needing reformation in a thousand ways; and by treating each matter separately, we may at least arrive at a true idea of real economy.

Such suggestions as I shall offer will be of practically little value to the very rich or the very poor; the former class are out of my pale; they are to be blamed if anything averse to order and regularity rules their homes, yet where lavish expenditure and superabundant supply are the rule, I fear there will always be more or less of waste. The much-needed reformation in the habits of the latter class will never be thoroughly effected until women cease to become bread-winners after marriage. I know in some cases, owing maybe to the illness or death of the husband, it becomes necessary for the wife to put her shoulder to the wheel; I am referring to the system generally, and none can wonder if, after a hard day's work in a factory, she reaches home tired out in body and brain, and cooks her scraps of food without regard to nutrition or economy. When the rising generation shall in their turn become parents, I trust they will more fully realise that when weighed in the balance against neglect of home duties, wasting of her own strength, and the ruin of her offspring, body and soul, there can be no economy in the fact that the wife may if she chooses add a few shillings to the weekly store. Education is the only power that can bring a better state of things about in the lives of our poorer brethren.

I feel, therefore, that I am addressing myself chiefly to those whose lot it is to keep up what is called a position on an income of one hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds a year; though there are many others to whom some of my remarks will apply. These constitute a class who often find it hard to "make both ends meet," for such families must live in a respectable locality, be given to hospitality, dress fairly, keep a servant; and, in short, were the means at their disposal doubled, Mrs. Grundy would expect no more of them.

Residents in the country of course gain advantages in the shape of reduced rents, enlarged garden ground, and the like; but I am now referring to dwellers in towns. And here let me say a word to those who may be contemplating setting up a home of their own: don't, for the sake of appearances, take a larger house than you require, at a rent you can't afford; many people take one double the size needed, forgetting that it means extra labour, as well as a high rent; and as "three removes are as bad as a fire," don't be always knocking your goods about from place to place, unless the reason for removal is a good one.

With reference to the all-important food question, abler pens than mine are writing daily on the use and abuse of God's great gifts to man, yet the old lamentable waste goes on, owing not so much, I honestly believe, to sheer inclination to throw away, as to the lack of a practical knowledge of the uses that may be made of the remnants and scraps so often condemned as worthless, by converting them into tasty dishes at a minimum of cost and trouble.

"Want of variety leads to satiety," and the food that is relished and eaten of heartily in January will be turned from with distaste and loathing during the sultry days of July; so if the bill of fare be varied as well as the manner of cooking, you will avoid waste and all will be satisfied; and remember, we must eat to live, and as bone, nerve, and flesh all need constant replenishing, our diet must be a mixed one, flesh-formers, heat-producers, bone and nerve-formers, all finding their respective places on our tables.

Bread, "the staff of life," is a serious item in the weekly expenditure, and all frugal housekeepers will make it at home; for besides being a step on the road to economy, there is a tempting sweetness about genuine home-made bread that all other kinds seem to me to lack. I prefer loaves "baked on the hearth" to either "tin" or "cottage;" tin bread having a tendency to get dry very quickly, and cottage cutting up to disadvantage on account of there being so much crust. To those who have hitherto eaten white bread only, I recommend a trial of "whole meal." You can't

afford to dispense with its sustaining properties; it is simply invaluable to growing children, and only prejudice precludes its consumption in many a household.

With regard to meat, valuable though it undoubtedly is, it would be well for many people if they ate far less; and those who partake of it lavishly two or three times daily are not only wasteful, but may thank themselves if they suffer from coarseness of flesh, chronic dyspepsia, and many other ailments so often the result of over-indulgence in animal food. Let your motto be, of meat, little and good. There is no saving effected by obtaining for a penny less per pound the hard, stringy, flavourless stuff, that requires the patience of a Job to carve, and the stomach of an ostrich to digest; and as experienced buyers of cattle can tell with "half an eye" the quality of the beast, if you go to a good butcher you will get the best meat. Well-hung meat being so much more tender and superior in flavour to that freshly killed, I advise you to have hanging in your cellar one joint at least of size proportionate to your family; it is so rare to get just the weight and kind required when meat is sent for in a hurry; and a leg or loin of mutton, ribs or sirloin of beef, if at hand, will supply you with reliable chops and steaks at a moment's notice, costing far less than if fetched in single pounds from your butcher. By boning your meat previously to cooking it, you will carve it more easily, and the bones if chopped small will form the basis of good nourishing soup; and by saving all your pot-liquor and remnants of vegetables, and bringing a little skill and ingenuity to bear on the manipulation of the ingredients, you may vary your soups *ad libitum*. Remember, "It's the seasoning wot does it."

Lentil soup is simply invaluable, being so cheap, nutritious, and palatable; it is especially suitable for cold weather, and will keep good for a week. The Egyptian lentils are the best; they cost 2½d. per lb. I recommend the following recipe as an excellent one:—

Four quarts of stock made from bones to one pound of lentils, after having thoroughly washed and soaked them for twelve hours; add half an ounce of salt, a tea-spoonful of dried mixed herbs, a pinch of celery seed, and a few cloves and peppercorns; simmer for three hours, strain through a coarse sieve, add mixed vegetables to taste (these must be boiled separately, and cut small), and two table-spoonfuls of Yorkshire Relish.

Previous to roasting meat—if lean, it is especially necessary—cover it well in every part with melted dripping, as enveloped in fat it will cook at a greater heat, retain more of its juices, and is proof against dryness.

I came across the following lines a short time ago:—

"Turkey boiled is turkey spoiled;
Turkey roast is turkey lost;
But for turkey braised the cooks be praised."

Without endorsing the opinion of the writer as conveyed in the first two lines, I will say, I believe in braising as the acme of economy; and anything lean cooked in this way is sure to be liked. Your meat

will be tender, and your gravy may be made excellent; and when once the liquid has reached boiling-point, less heat will cook the joint than would be required to roast one the same size.

Fat meat is distasteful to many people; and it often happens that a joint to be large enough for a family will have a greater proportion of fat than can be eaten. Don't waste it by having it left on the plates day after day; but before cooking trim off all superfluous fat, cut it up, add a quarter-pint of water to each pound, simmer it for half an hour, or until all the fat is dry and shrivelled, let it cool for a minute or two, and then strain it off. The fat thus clarified will be beautifully white, and answer admirably for frying purposes, plain cakes, pastry, &c. In clarifying cooked fat left from cold joints, &c., use less water, and simmer as long again; then pour off into a basin of water, for the fat to cake on the top, and the impurities to settle at the bottom. In straining dripping from roast joints, in the same manner, avoid losing the real essence of the meat by letting that too run into the basin.

With reference to the respective meals of the day, I pray you equip with the best of all weapons, a good, substantial breakfast, those of your family who have to turn out and battle with the elements. There is good reason for this meal being a hearty one: the digestive powers are stronger after their rest, and many things will agree with the stomach at this hour that would cause positive pain later on in the day. As a rule, one dish at least should be a hot one; and whatever your drink may be, that which suits you should be the best of its kind. Much of the "prepared" cocoa is dear at any price; so is inferior tea, for no matter how much you use, it will always taste "too strong of the water." The best "Mocha" berries should be used for your coffee; and if you want the benefit of the full aroma, grind them freshly every morning. Don't forget to scald your pot and the milk, and please don't believe in the injurious properties of chicory; on the contrary, a little added to coffee is wholesome, and an aid to digestion, besides being economical.

The little folks need a different diet. Oatmeal or hominy porridge, lentilla, bread-and-milk, Indian corn-meal, and many cereal productions may be given to growing children with advantage, and will furnish them with a sustaining meal. The great bugbear to good breakfasts is the too prevalent habit of late rising. One hour in the morning is worth two in the evening; and all the bustle and hurry in the world won't overtake that lost hour. Early rising is a habit that needs to be but once acquired to insure constant practice, for few ever willingly fall into the old bad ways again.

Your income will, to an extent, influence you in the preparation of dinner; but in passing let me say, it is anything but economical to make cold dinners (except in very hot weather, when cold meat should be served with a nicely-dressed salad) a regular or frequent thing, hot meat being so much more satisfying; and if the mid-day meal be an insufficient one, you

must make up later on for its shortcomings, so nothing is saved by the practice after all.

I must add a few words in favour of tinned meats; and before turning up your noses and shrugging your shoulders, listen for a moment to my arguments: that these valuable commodities are as different from those of only a few years back as chalk is from cheese, and that, as their consumption increases yearly, the exporters find it to their advantage to improve the quality of the meat, and the manner of cooking. Some of the plain "roasts" and "boiled" are still stringy, but the "corned" and "compressed" are excellent, so are the ox-tongues, and decidedly cheap. There is a great difference in the quality of the various brands. I have tried and found good "Paysandu," "Progressio," and "Napier" tongues, and all tins of meat bearing the name of "Black and Co.," "Cunningham," "McCall and Co.," "The Western," or "Melbourne Meat Preserving Company," may be relied on, though no doubt many others are as good. Never be without tinned goods in the house; they are nice for a change, useful in a hurry for unexpected visitors, &c., and even from the plain roast and boiled tasty dishes in many forms may be made, while they are very useful either as a "make-up" or addition to a meal at any time.

The tinned fruits recommend themselves. What a luxury are the tomatoes when those delicacies are not in season, and how useful, either in quarters or rings, are the apples when fresh fruit is scarce and dear! The pines, apricots, peaches, pears, and plums are all delicious and cheap in the highest degree. Tinned milk, coffee-and-milk, and cocoa-and-milk are all useful in cases of emergency; and most will agree that the lobster and salmon are delicacies for which we ought to be thankful.

"Be not the first to cast the old aside,
Be not the last to leave the new untried,"

is advice well worth following. 'Tis a pity so many people will persist in condemning things and practices of which they know nothing.

The nicely-dressed dishes of vegetables, served as a separate course, so common in Continental hotels, are certainly to be met with in England on the tables of vegetarians; but how rarely in middle-class families generally do vegetables in anything like an attractive form present themselves! And if by chance a few of the plainly-boiled are left at dinner, how often are they thrown away as if good for nothing! Surely this must be want of thought, when one considers the tempting curries, tasty ragouts, and dainty salads that may be made from cold vegetables of any kind; all are delicious fried; haricot beans especially, "boiled soft and fried brown, with a little sage or parsley, are 'a dish fit for a king.'" I have made no especial mention of the potato, for the most casual observer, and the least ingenious cook, must be aware of some of the many ways of re-dressing cold potatoes, either

as "sweets" or "savories;" and I am sure a little more attention given to your vegetable dishes would be not only highly appreciated, but effect a considerable saving in your butcher's bills.

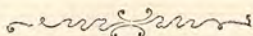
Fish is so rich in phosphorus, it ought to be classed among the necessaries of life, and cold fish "scaloped," "flaked," "pulled," "curried," or made into "croquettes," forms acceptable breakfast dishes.

Let me point out the necessity of a system of what I may call "personal marketing." It often happens that there is a glut of fish, fruit, or vegetables in the market, and you are thus enabled to buy many things for which you would not have thought to ask had you not seen them. It is so rarely safe to give discretionary power to ordinary servants of the present day, that it needs some one with a personal interest and a practised eye to see and know what will answer the purpose.

"Best of its kind, cheapest in the end," is true of groceries generally, and especially so of raisins and currants. Don't begrudge the highest price if you want "fruity" fruit; it is sheer waste of money to buy stale, gritty fruit for any purpose whatever. The value of canisters for your condiments cannot be over-rated, so many being comparatively worthless after exposure to the air. Soap and candles should be bought in large quantities; the former should be cut up and hung in twine-bags, and the candles suspended from the ceiling. This will save you much in the consumption of each, and the candles will give a better light. Cold-water soap should be in every house; I have tried it and can verify all that has been said in its favour. Tea may be bought at a considerable reduction if a quarter-chest be taken at a time, and as the profit on tea is "the pig that pays the rent" of most retail traders, this hint is worthy your attention.

A gas-cooking stove is an incalculable boon if you get one of "the latest improved," which will cook to perfection, and economise the consumption of gas to a greater extent than those of a few years ago; properly managed they are very economical, and there is the clean, cool kitchen during the summer, *versus* the heat, smoke, and dust inseparable from the ordinary range or open grate. Speaking of the merits of gas over coal for culinary purposes, reminds me of the desirability of laying in a stock of coal at the end of the summer for winter use. During an ordinary frost it is always raised in price; and in the event of a winter like the past one, your sixpenny cobbles may cost you tenpence. Coal-dust wetted to a paste, and allowed to "cake" on the back of the fire, will throw out a glowing heat, but the poker must be conspicuous by its absence after this is added. A fire-brick for each open grate is another economiser. You may now get all shapes and sizes; and I don't hesitate to say that an outlay of a few shillings in this way will reduce your coal-bills by at least a fourth.

(To be concluded.)



present. My father made his money in Woolton, and I am ready to give a Woolton man a helping hand at a pinch. So the things will be put back, the half-year's rent cleared, and wives and bairns will——"

They gave him a cheer, and drowned his voice with their cheering. Poor young Mrs. Clarke, with her baby in her arms, dropped on her knees in the street, weeping, and kissed his hand. And her pink-faced boy-husband, flushed with drink, yet came up, all the good in his honest heart astir.

"You're a trump, Mr. Frank," he said; "they may say what they like, but you're the real thing, right through. I'll give up old Jenkins, and I'll work for you, sir, till I drop——"

Frank was a gentleman. He had none of the uneasy feeling of distrust, awkward pride, awkward shame,

that stands between so many of us, of different degrees, when we want to be friends. He stepped forward and took young Dick Clarke's hand in his, very kindly, but without a tinge of condescension.

"You and I are friends, Dick," he said; "and if there comes a rainy day for *me*—who knows—you'll be my friend still. We'll have a chat together when things get quieted down, and I should be glad of you, but, you know, you belong to Mr. Jenkins, and he values you as a good man for piecework. Steady should be the word with us all."

The furniture was scuffled back again into the bare rooms, the crying children were taken back; the vans drove off empty, and to Frank Preston's ready purse, Frank Preston's ready wit, was due the change in the situation at Clegg's Place.


END OF CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

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CHAPTER THE SECOND.

 PASS on now to the enumeration of a few articles—for which we are chiefly indebted to the Americans—that will save time and labour, though not strictly necessary; but if you once possess them you'll look back and wonder how you managed so long without their assistance. First among the low-priced goods stand the apple and potato-paring machines; one of the former, costing 8s., will peel, slice, and core in one operation; but I give the preference to the "Diamond Combined," that will serve for paring anything and everything similar in shape and size; the cost is only 12s. You must have a cook's knife, with a sharp-pointed end; you may get one with a saw-back for 2s.; and don't omit the sharpener. Buy one called the "Victor;" it will sharpen all kinds of knives and scissors, will serve as an ice-pick, and cut glass: 2s. will buy this useful article. A "Rotary" grater will grate to perfection bread, lemons, vegetables, horse-radish, &c., to the last bit, in less time than the hand-grater, though it costs a shilling or two more. A pestle and mortar may be bought for a few shillings; they are now made of a "composition," and answer as well as the expensive marble ones. Their use is almost too palpable and manifest to need any recommendation; if nothing more, the advantage of deriving the maximum of flavour from the minimum of material by pounding is considerable. First, "let the ticking clock guide the boiling crock." And with

regard to kitchen requisites generally, scales and weights must not be forgotten; they will save their cost soon in preventing many a dish being spoiled by superfluous quantities of ingredients being thrown in hap-hazard, besides checking the weight of all goods purchased. I regard a cinder-sifter as an absolute necessity, though its use is far from universal. I recommend the "Rocker" as cheap, excellent, and cleanly in use; it may be bought for 8s. and upwards. The advantage of cinders at hand to make a fire burn quickly and clearly, to say nothing of the saving, is apparent to all. A meat-chopper and a "digester" are indispensable; the latter will enable you to get all possible nutriment and flavour from bones and vegetables for your soup.

I presume your family washing is done at home; besides being cheaper, you run no risk of clothes being ruined by the injurious washing-powders so often used by laundresses, for many of them contain chemicals that rot the fabrics very quickly. But I assure you that if your labour is to be lightened, time and fuel saved, and washing effectually and expeditiously performed, machinery must step in to assist you. You will never regret the cost of a really good machine. One of the best, however, is a washer and wringer combined, that will also serve as a bath for your children, and, with a top, as a kitchen table. Ironing is, to put it mildly, anything but a pleasant occupation; but by means of a gas-heating stove, or, better still, a gas-iron, you need not get uncomfortably warm, or soil your fingers.

The author of the truism, "The apparel oft proclaims

the man," might with equal truth have added, "the woman too." The dress of a person is, as a rule, a fair indication of the mind: a slovenly and untidy appearance suggesting disorder in the home, and show and finery proving that comfort, usefulness, and suitability are totally ignored.

By means of the sewing-machine, and help of a daily dress-maker, the majority of ladies' and children's costumes may easily be made at home; and if two or three dresses for the latter are cut from the same piece, you may effect a considerable saving; for most people are aware, though they do not always think, how one garment cuts into, or out of, another.

By buying a "piece" of calico for under-clothing, you will not only get it cheaper, but be enabled to cut just the length required. This is an advantage, as in a family there seems to be always something to be made or mended. Dress-lining should be purchased in the same way.

Linen pillow and bolster cases should always be used, as they keep clean so much longer than calico; but I prefer good twilled or herring-bone sheeting to linen for winter use.

There is nothing like "linoleum" for hard wear in the general sitting-room, or nursery, or where there is much traffic and dust. For bricked floors "Manilla matting" is capital; so warm to the feet, while the wear is almost everlasting, and the patterns very rich. This is the best possible floor-covering for a damp room. In buying carpets, steer clear of "felt" ones; as a rule, they are not worth the trouble of sweeping. There is nothing like Brussels for showing a smiling face to the last bit; and the five-frame, that is, the best qualities, are now as low in price as the tapestry or imitation Brussels of a few years ago. Kidderminster—all wool, mind—on account of their reversible patterns, are very economical, but are especially suitable for bed-rooms.

Good boots, gloves, stockings, and socks, are all worth the extra money asked for them—so much is long wear dependent upon good shape. Even such trifling articles as tapes, cottons, &c., should be best of their kind.

Shun shops where it is the rule to make "alarming sacrifices," and sell goods "under cost price." You may sometimes meet with bargains at clearance sales, I know, if you buy what you really want; but great caution is necessary.

Acquaintance with the symptoms, as well as modes of treatment, of the "ills that flesh is heir to," should be acquired by all who take upon themselves the duties of wifehood and maternity; for a timely poultice or plaster, or simple dose of medicine, may be the means of saving—under God's blessing—a valuable life; and when sickness does come, the value of suitable diet, or "kitchen physic," as the doctors call it, during the convalescence of your patient, cannot be over-estimated.

Speaking of the sick induces me to mention that although there are many valuable patent medicines and proprietary articles, both for external and internal use, yet an equal number are often simple commodities

showily labelled, and sold under high-sounding names, at fabulous prices, to a gullible public; many have gained a just reputation, but whenever a cheap substitute may be found—as it often can be—in your own house for an expensive article you may be tempted to buy, remember that price is not in all cases a test of quality.

I hope all your purchases are made on the "cash system;" so many things are sent for on credit that might and could be dispensed with; it's an old saying and a true one that "people with limited means should never get into debt, and those whose means are unlimited are best out of it."

In reading a magazine or newspaper, many a recipe, hint, or suggestion is met with, carelessly read, and soon forgotten, and it is well worth the trouble to keep a "reference book" in which to jot them down; index it properly, or it will be of no use to you; and you'll be astonished to find how much you may learn, and save, in this way alone.

It is better to keep clean than to make clean; and without order, there is no comfort; without comfort, no health; without health, no perfect happiness. Yes, from garret to casement there must be order and regularity in every department of domestic labour, and sound practical knowledge and powers of contrivance brought to bear on the work of each day. And, oh! mothers, I know there are times when you long for the wheels of the household machinery to be silent if only for a moment, you get so weary of "the trivial round, the common task," and the labour seems so much in vain. Ah, well! you know after all that it will not do to slacken your hold upon the domestic reins, or all will soon go wrong; and if you have the satisfaction of conviction that you are doing all in your power to instil into your children habits of tidiness, order, and punctuality, and the necessity of having "a place for everything, and everything in its place;" if you are daily impressing upon them the fact that all waste, whether of food, time, money, or talents, is sin, you are casting bread upon the waters that must bear good fruit in the days to come, and providing them with weapons that shall stand them in good stead in the life-battle that is before them. Habits formed in childhood are seldom, if ever, totally eradicated. Home must be the real training-school; see that it is the charmed magic circle it ought to be; let books and music find a place—and that a prominent one—in your house, for by their influence they do much towards knitting together all members of a family in bonds of love, kindness, and harmony.

To you, daughters, let me now say a few words. Do you think that the fact of seeing your mother cook, iron, mend, make, alter, plan, and contrive, day after day, will serve to make you perfect when similar burdens shall fall on your own shoulders? Would you be content to look at a sheet of music and go away convinced that you could play upon the piano? No! you know that constant daily practice is necessary for proficiency, and it is no less so of household duties. Remember, you cannot learn too much, and if you would one day reach perfection's height you must

first be content to climb; "all things must yield to industry and time."

I know that no hard-and-fast rules can be laid down, for individual circumstances must guide individual expenditure, but it is clearly the duty of the head of the family to provide—if ever so little—for a rainy day. So, husbands, one and all, don't say, "I can't do it." Let me quote Mr. Smiles again; he says, "There is no greater cant than can't. . . . When economy is looked upon as a thing that must be practised it will never be felt as a burden, and those who have not before observed it will be astonished to find what a few shillings or pence, laid aside weekly, will do towards securing moral elevation, mental culture, and personal independence. There is dignity in every attempt to economise, it indicates self-denial and imparts strength to character, it fosters temperance, it is based on forethought. Above all, it secures comfort, drives away care, and dispels many anxieties that might otherwise press upon us."

If you have never read Mr. Smiles's "Thrift," purchase a copy at once; it is a book that ought to be read by every person who can think.

Give your wife a fixed sum for housekeeping expenses, as well as for her own clothing, and that of your family; a certain sum should also be laid aside for the replenishing of the household goods and chattels generally; for where money is given out in dribbles and no account kept of the sums, it is so easy to fall into the error of living beyond one's means. Insure your household furniture against loss by fire, the rate of insurance being only about two shillings per cent. And, as life is uncertain, pray don't run the risk of your wife being left a widow, maybe with a young family, and not even the smallest sum in hand to meet current expenses; don't shirk your responsibilities, but by every means in your power provide for those near and dear to you something that shall, at least, "keep the wolf from the door," should you be called away.

Have I seemed to attach undue importance to the value of little things? If so, it is because I know, and feel, that the words which fell of old from the lips of the Master are true to-day as then. Obey His voice, and "gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost."

LIZZIE HERITAGE.

GARDENING IN JANUARY.



FOR January, digging is very suitable work. Our land to be dug being first marked out, we dig out across the length of this piece, and at one end of it, a long ditch or trench, *one* spade wide and *one* spade deep. The soil thus removed we then wheel off in our barrow to the other end of the

piece; then, returning to our long ditch, we continue digging (having our back towards the mound of soil that we have just wheeled to the other end of the plot of land we are digging), filling up the small trench just in front of us with the soil next to it, turning the soil, too, completely topsy-turvy, and so working on until we find our heels touching the mound of earth originally wheeled off to the boundary of our land: this mound, of course, fills up the trench or ditch *last* dug. Now, "trenching" cannot be better described than as *double* digging, and is therefore exactly "worth *two*" of digging; for the trench that we *now* make should be *two* spades wide and *two* spades deep. This is, of course, a more thorough and complete upturning of the soil, and is proportionately more beneficial to it. It involves twice the labour, twice the exertion there-

fore, that digging does, and is perhaps on that account too often shirked. And now a word about the hoe. A lazy and indifferent way of using it is to merely scrape the surface of the soil, without penetrating or loosing up the soil itself. Of course, the first is the easiest way of going to work, and it involves less trouble; the weeds are broken off short, and their roots remain in the ground. This sort of thing we see at a glance will never do. It is a mistake, by the way, to have too heavy a handle for the hoe, and this perhaps it will be some consolation to the easy-going gardener to hear. A few days' practical experience under a good gardener in matters of this kind is worth twice the amount of theory and description. A few lessons in good all-round manipulation with such things as the pruning-knife, the shears, and even the broom, and, after these, any of the general hints that we have given will, in our humble opinion, be read with greater advantage. Now as to the digging and trenching: so long as the spade can be sent well home, there is no reason why this operation should not be proceeded with even during a hard frost. Indeed, unless of course the frost be so severe as to transform the ground into cast iron, the very burial of the frozen earth, and the exposure of fresh soil to the action of the frost, is positively beneficial. That depth of earth pierced by one action of the spade is called a "spit," and that portion of the soil which we then expose as we go on may thus be called the lower spit. The larger lumps of earth should be slightly broken as they turn up, for the purpose of enabling them to get all the benefit they can from the frost.

Those of us who live in towns very often fall