

outside every morning, taking them in again as the afternoon advances; syringe them too in the morning. Many of your plants may doubtless now want shifting into larger pots; but if you want them to flower early, keep them still in the smaller pots, and a little liquid manure will do them good. Those of your hyacinth bulbs that are in flower must be shaded from the sun, and afterwards, if your bulbs were put in a favourable situation, they can be planted next October in your flower garden. The mimulus does well for the window, either in a pot or in boxes. Give it a rich loam soil, and keep it watered while it is growing. A few annuals may now, perhaps, be introduced into your Wardian case, but see first of all that everything you introduce is perfectly free from insects. As for your window cinerarias, when they have done blooming—and no doubt by this time this is nearly the case—cut your plants well back and set them out in a cool situation, when they can afterwards be either fresh potted or planted out in about a month's time. The leaves of your myrtle or orange plants in your room must be well sponged, otherwise the foliage becomes in process of time neither more nor less than black; and you will find yourself well rewarded by a day's work of this kind, though the operation is certainly a tedious one, and the progress made at the outset may seem slow. In our fruit garden grafting is, where necessary, vigorously going on. On this subject we must refer our readers to what we said concerning it in our April number of last year; and in addition to this we are busy, too, disbudding and keeping a look-out against the early caterpillar. But it is generally about the middle of May that we find the caterpillar for the first time occupied upon the foliage of our currants and gooseberries. Two of our very popular fruits, the fig and the mulberry, are always late in putting out their shoots. As for the fig, if not already done, have it nailed at once, while any shoots that are most forward may be thinned, but only a little. It is certainly late in the season to attempt it, but the mulberry-tree may yet be planted. Let it be upon your lawn, where the fruit as it falls does not hurt or spoil so much as it otherwise would upon soil or gravel. The mulberry does not like a heavy loam, but an old tree is a good deal restored by a rich manure. The mulberry is a fruit-bearing tree up to a wonderful age. The writer

has seen one in this country traditionally thought to be going on for nearly 400 years old. It was supported and propped up in all directions, but was vigorous in many parts of it. Not much pruning of the mulberry is necessary, but a little attention should be paid to its head in the winter season. Like the vine, when first put in it likes a foundation of brickbats, but does not at all approve of being cut or pulled about when the sap is up and it is in a growing state, and it is for this reason that we have recommended anything in the way of pruning being attended to in the winter time, during good open weather. About this time we usually cease to be anxious about protecting our wall-fruit; and as to the plums, it has often been thought that much fruit is lost from not thinning out the superabundant blossom. Among the strawberries, except in places where you want to secure a supply of young plants, do not allow the runners to get ahead, but have them removed in good time before your plant, and therefore your fruit, is weakened by allowing them to remain on too long. In our kitchen garden, we go on with our fortnightly sowing of peas and beans. The spinach, too, should be sown pretty often, and carefully thinned after it has been up some little time; and about the middle of the month sow your full beet-root crop in rows some fifteen inches apart. The ground ought to have been manured some time previously, as if this were done only just before your beet is sown, it has been thought that it may afterwards grow what is called forked. Celery, too, may now be sown in slight heat, and afterwards pricked out carefully in the ordinarily and richly prepared beds, due precaution being, as usual, taken not to injure the heart of your young plants by choking them with soil or by careless handling. Mustard and cress will thrive nearly anywhere. Get the mustard in a couple or three days before the cress; and then the cucumber and melon frames will want watching now that we have just started them. If they were put up a month ago, a little lining with fresh manure, should a very cold season have intervened since their erection, might be beneficial to them. Our lawn, too, is having its first crop removed by this time, and this of itself, no matter how small it may be, presses heavily upon our gardening time when we are making a sort of rush to get everything into summer trim at once.

## THE MODEL MISTRESS OF A HOME.

A HAPPY HOME WELL ORDERED. BY A PRACTICAL HOUSEWIFE.

### CHAPTER THE SECOND.

**W**OMAN is queen of the kingdom of home. On the mistress mainly depends the happiness of its inmates, who, in nine cases out of ten, take their tone from her. It is due to her influence that peace, affection, mental cultivation, and cheerfulness pervade the household. While insuring their comfort, she must also command their respect,

at the expense of much constant self-denial and self-control—I had almost said self-effacement.

Few girls when they marry have any practical knowledge with regard to household management. Men are trained for their future life, but how many mothers instruct their daughters as to the approximate consumption of bread, meat, &c., per head; what things are in season during the several months; the amount of loss that food undergoes in course of cooking, or the articles actually needed for kitchen

use? Yet the best of husbands are by no means insensible to the charms of good dinners.

Home science requires time, thought, method, pre-arrangement, and common-sense. I knew a bride who ordered two legs of mutton for herself and husband, because he liked meat under-done and she well done. Nevertheless, there can be a great deal of discomfort and unhappiness in the best-managed establishment. Good housekeepers, duly impressed with their duties, are apt to make everything yield to the routine laid down, so that the household are deprived of the enjoyment of one of the greatest boons in life, personal liberty and freedom. Housekeeping is the sort of framework on which home comfort is built up, and the skeleton should be carefully kept in the background. The results only should be apparent. All the charm would be taken from the pantomime could we see the other side of the trap-doors through which our friend the clown and the sprite disappear—the pulleys, the dust, the sea of woodwork which exists beneath the stage. The mistress of a house should refrain from discussing domestic matters and the worries inseparable therefrom; for as much as possible worry, or at all events constant reference to the same, should be carefully kept from home.

On this account conversation should be cultivated; yes, I say cultivated advisedly. The dulness of English domestic life is owing in a great measure to the absorption in self-interests of each member of the family. Mothers of many children are apt to take but little interest in current topics, while young people give themselves up to society and dress. Meanwhile the jaded father of a family returns home to find nothing bright in his womankind, nothing to distract his mind and take the cobwebs from his brain. "An excellent thing is good conversation" as opposed to chatter and prattle. In our day the art of conversation is almost lost, and only a few women, at all events, are capable of those keen, incisive, intelligent, appreciative remarks on the subject discussed, that genial power of treatment which brings so much brightness and happiness into daily life, and adds so much to home enjoyments. Women also are sadly lacking in the sense of humour, and this should be cultivated. I believe there is nothing that makes women more universally popular among men than the power of seeing the funny aspect of things. It is astonishing how many comic sides life has if we will but see them. Kindness, sympathy, and unselfishness are the three chief virtues required in the house-mother; a nagging tongue, untidiness, and unpunctuality are the three worst evils to be avoided.

The proverb is that "those who serve at home are the better able to rule abroad." In the kingdom of home the man should be master, but the administration should rest with the woman, who will find that an appeal to the master as an ultimatum will be a strong weapon in her hands. Few households are well ordered where the man usurps the woman's duties, and none where the master is not duly honoured. Good management, indeed everything, should be secondary to the highest of all motive-powers, love. The hus-

band and wife bound together by deep affection, children loving each other and their parents, cannot fail to infuse an atmosphere of goodness and happiness on those around them. Such homes benefit the world.

Economies are among the great difficulties of house-keeping. Economy without meanness, and liberality without waste, is what we wish to attain. Servants seldom assist in this; they are apt to be wasteful of what costs them nothing, and to consider that lavish expenditure reflects credit on the family as well as on themselves. A "real lady," according to their code, is one who is blind to anything approaching to saving. They detest cheap things. I think it was Sydney Smith who induced his servants to prefer the cheaper kind of soap by putting it in the papers marked at the higher price, and this is a true key-note to their characters. Many women lack the administrative faculty, and it requires some training to know when to give liberally and when to hold one's hand. Accounts should be kept daily, and the daily orders *written down*; this will be found to prevent servants taking upon themselves to order in what they please, and to be a great check on extravagance. In the highest household in the land everything is done in this way, and these written orders are the check on the accounts, which pass through the Board of Green Cloth. If small households would only regulate their affairs after the same system of order and method as large establishments, there would be an immense saving of time and money. A short experience will teach what the consumption ought to be, and to this the servants must be taught to understand they must keep. Men work hard enough in this nineteenth century to earn money, and it is woman's imperative duty to learn how to spend her portion of the income to the best advantage. Many a man knows to his cost when too late that a fortune in a wife is far more valuable to him, even in a monetary sense, than a fortune with a wife.

Every mistress should invest in some manual of domestic economy, and not slavishly follow it, but bring her reason and experience to bear upon the advice given.

Mistresses should be early risers, or they are apt to be hurried and flurried throughout the day, picking up the lost half-hour of the morning, and an overwrought mistress is likely to spread a feeling of unrest throughout the house. But the best and wisest of women are but mortal. After all, mothers with large families must be subject to ill-health now and then, and it is a duty to save themselves, and to study their own health as well as that of the household. It does not do to be discouraged by failures; "the best-laid plans of mice and men" go wrong often. Things will not run smoothly always. You can only make the best of it, and not be discouraged for future efforts. Bear what you can't mend, but mend all you can. Experience always costs dear.

Order and punctuality save a good many hitches in the domestic machinery, but to my mind a house-mother makes a mistake in being over-busy herself; it

should be her art to set other people to work well, and have leisure and repose herself to sympathise and help and direct. Many a well-intentioned woman distresses her husband by aggravating pieces of needlework which she has always at hand for odd moments; there are men who detest seeing women at work, and most of them desire much individual attention from their wives.

Meals should be served punctually, to the moment; elastic hours demand often an extra servant. There should be a place for everything, and everything should be in its place. Wrapping-paper, writing-paper, blotting-paper, ink, pens, pins, string, all these the housewife should see are always where they are needed. The lumber-room should come within her special ken. Trunks last twice as long if carefully stored away, and a shelf round a box-room will be found to add much to its usefulness, smaller articles placed there being easily available.

Plenty of books are a wonderful brightener of the home atmosphere. These should be ready to hand. Periodicals, when done with, should be stored in some one spot, and either bound or given to a hospital, or a home for the sick and sorry, where they are sorely needed.

The superfluities of the wealthy minister to the necessities of the poor. Hoarding is a great mistake,

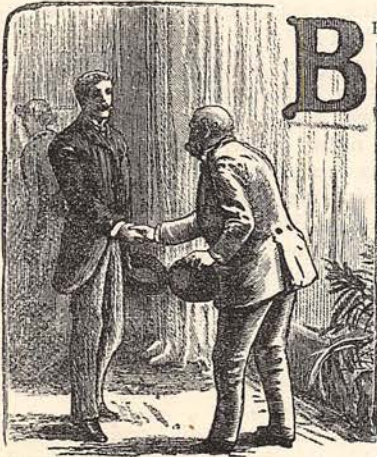
and I could not express on paper the happiness that I have seen shed abroad by the distribution of old household stores to the poor, such as beds, bedding, mats, chairs, anything in fact. Do not keep what is of no use, and can be of no use to you; it will be of incalculable benefit to some poorer neighbour.

The law of love is the finest preserver of order; scolding and hard words never yet produced a happy home. Courtesy tells with servants as with equals, and "company manners" would be far better kept for home use. They are more in place there than slovenly dresses, which women occasionally consider good enough for their own firesides. A wise woman will look her best at home as well as abroad. No one will appreciate her so much as her own belongings, who possibly all their lives will never tell her how much her dowdiness and want of neatness depress them, or her good looks and neatness delight them. "Do that duty which lies nearest thee" is a wholesome maxim for woman. Just as it is within her province to keep her house beautiful with the flowers which she can afford, and see that they are not permitted to remain when faded, so she should brighten the atmosphere of home by keeping family festivals, birthdays, wedding-days, and making much of them herself. She will reap her reward. "Strength and honour are in her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come."

## RALPH RAEURN'S TRUSTEESHIP.

By JOHN BERWICK HARWOOD, Author of "Paul Knox, Pitman," "Lady Flavia," "The Tenth Earl," &c.

### CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH. THE COMING OF AGE.



**B**RIGHTLY, if tardily, dawned the day on which Constance Wilmot attained her majority. It was the mellow autumn season, when leaves that have been green turn golden, and quite a flush of crimson-red, and russet, and yellow,

and fawn-colour dapples the distant woodlands. Then, too, there are pearl-greys and amber tints, and rose, and lilac in the sky, which garish summer cannot show us, but which have a coy beauty of their own. As there are seasons and seasons, so does a coming of age vary with respect to different

individuals. To such of us as do not own a square foot of land, or a single hundred in Consols—and such are the majority, even of the educated classes—the mere fact of being twenty-one years old does not represent much; but when there is property, it is a different affair. The magic breaking of that day made Constance not merely the mistress of Woodleigh and its 400 acres of pasture, plantation, and arable, but of what was far more valuable: money in the funds, shares, debentures, and so forth, the hoarded savings of her father's laborious life. She was young, beautiful, beloved, and she had wealth—or, at least, a handsome income—at her command, and, as such, should no doubt have been happy. Happy she was, but it was in the knowledge of Frank Preston's love, not in that of her own fortune. The real money-worshippers are those who never had any money to worship, who have gazed hungrily on the golden calf from afar off, or the grubbers who have fought tooth and nail beneath the very wheels of Juggernaut's car for a pinch of the pelf. It was not so with Constance Wilmot.

To no one, probably, who was in any way concerned with her interests did the mere fact of her attaining her legal majority appear of such trivial consequence as to Constance.

Miss Ashe, in the big guest-chamber, amidst her