

worth's withdrawal from publishing for a time, inquired—

"Why is the harp of Quantock silent?"

The "Ancient Mariner" was planned by Coleridge during a walk over these hills to Watchet; and "Kubla Khan" was written in a lonely farmhouse beyond Minehead.

There is near Alfoxdon a charming spot called Holdford Glen, through which rushes, over tumbled boulders, a small torrent, of which the poet said—

"No check, no stay, this streamlet fears."

This was a favourite haunt of Wordsworth. Here he wrote the touching lines—

"I heard a thousand blended notes
While in the grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind."

In this neighbourhood grow some of the rarest—well, I will not say what, but simply call them botanical specimens—to be found in England. Our clerical guide said, "I will show you their habitat, if you promise not to tell." As we easily understood his desire to preserve them from extinction by ruthless searchers, we readily gave the promise, and were rewarded by being taken to places where a few of the rare "botanical specimens" still remain. We were allowed to take away "just very small" specimens.

As we went back to St. Audrie's we hunted on

the great beech-trees for the letters W. W. which Wordsworth is said to have carved with his knife on one of them. Our careful search was unavailing, and we came to the conclusion that time had spread them in undecipherable gashes over the bark. How the rector, my friend, and myself enjoyed our visit! We talked theology on our outward journey and drifted down to politics on our return. Then we spoke of how the three poets had strolled here, or lounged on these heathery "cushions of the Quantock." We imagined we could hear the energetic talk of Coleridge and Southey, and see the meditative attention of Wordsworth. They had looked at these hills and these interlacing dells at all seasons, when the myriad fronds of the young fern gave a delicate green tinge to them, or later, when the golden hue of autumn and the yellow of decay mingled with the purple heather, or with the bright vermilion of the luscious whortleberry, or the turquoise bloom of the forget-me-not.

Wordsworth said that he remembered Coleridge once saying to Thelwell, when visiting the dell of which we have spoken, "This is the place to reconcile one to all the jarrings and conflicts of the wide world." Thelwell replied, "Nay, to make one forget them altogether." This would apply to the whole district which we venture to term the Classical Quantocks.

F. HASTINGS.

HOSTESS AND GUESTS.

(A HAPPY HOME WELL ORDERED.) BY ARDERN HOLT.



WISE hospitality is one of the duties of our lives, and yet in how few houses are stray comers invited to join the family meals! Entertaining most generally means parties. A hearty welcome comes well from the house-mother, and a man appreciates the fact greatly that he may whenever he pleases take a friend home unexpectedly, without being put to the blush by the deficiencies of his domestic arrangements, or being received with black looks. To bring

this about, the table should be always laid as neatly and well as though visitors were expected, and a centre flower or pretty ornament not omitted. With a press the table-cloth, even at the end of a week, may still present a respectable appearance; but the press must be well screwed down, and the cloth previously damped. It is best to keep distinct cloths for breakfast and dinner. It is no economy not to have a sufficient stock of table-linen; what a sufficiency is, depends on the size and requirements of the family, and valuable practical hints on these points may be found in almost any manual of domestic economy.

On the question of stores the most experienced housekeepers differ. On the one hand, it is said that only a sufficient quantity of the several articles re-

quired, had in weekly, prevents waste; on the other hand, that a shortness of supply is apt to lead to domestic discomfort. Things cannot be properly cooked without the necessary materials, and the science of housekeeping is to know what the *necessary* materials are. According to my own personal experience of some years, the best plan is for the mistress to keep a moderate store of such things as are known to be required, and to give them out herself in the quantities needed, but only at stated times, or she will find that servants will be coming to her at all hours.

Tinned soups and meat, and some preserved fruits, which will make an appetising sweet in a few minutes, should have their place in every store-room where unexpected demands on the resources of the establishment are likely to occur. Variety in food, and such food served in appetising fashion, are essential points in domestic management; and in domestic economy, good carving. Meat goes much further if it is well cut; the mistress should see that down-stairs this is properly done, but she will be able to do so with double force if a good example is set in the dining-room.

I will just give a few practical details as to the best methods of cleaning glass, &c., for on these things much of the necessary dainty appearance of the table

depends. To begin with the glasses, these should be washed in soap and water, and when discoloured a flannel with powdered blue dabbed about it will do much good. They should then be rubbed with a fine cloth or a silk handkerchief. A wash-leather should be kept to rub up decanters before placing on the table. Dish-covers should be cleaned with oil and whiting put on with a flannel, then rubbed with dry whiting and soft dusters, and polished with a leather. Port wine is apt to stain decanters. To remove it, fill the bottle with cold water and let it stand all night, then add a few dice-shaped pieces of bread after the water is out. Shake it up, rinse again and turn the decanter bottom upwards.

Plate is best washed at once in hot water and soda, and cleaned with rouge rubbed off with the hand, and polished with a leather; it should also be rubbed up with a leather whenever it is put on the table.

The first point to consider in entertaining is what your means are; do not attempt too much; but what you do, do well. Be given to what hospitality you can really afford; a warm welcome goes a great way towards making guests happy. In selecting people to meet each other, consider how they will assimilate and bring brightness and interest to bear yourself. Humdrum *tête-à-têtes*, constant discussions about domestic worries, do not add to the enjoyment of life or promote any of the pleasure mutual society ought to give. Morning visitors to a busy housekeeper are most likely to waste time, but visitors to the house in the afternoon should be encouraged; they bring a fresh atmosphere and fresh current of thoughts.

The pleasantest houses are those where the mistress is forgetful of herself; neither affected nor self-conscious, and warm in her welcome.

If you have guests in your house, or are inviting them for any parties, bear in mind that though a word from you may bring them together and add to their pleasure, they must be left to enjoy themselves the way they themselves like best. An over-fussiness of entertaining is a fatal mistake.

"Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest;" provide every little comfort in their rooms; train the servants to bring up the trunks quickly; remove straps and cords; offer tea, and be generally on the alert to minister to their wants. But do not consider it necessary to lay plans for every hour, or never to leave your visitors a moment to themselves.

There is one apparently trivial matter which yet peculiarly indicates a well-ordered house—namely, answering the door to visitors. There should be no delay. The knock or ring should be promptly attended to, and by a neat and clean domestic. In large establishments this is easy enough, not so where the number of servants is limited. Where a housemaid, parlourmaid, and cook are kept, the parlourmaid ought to be ready morning and afternoon; but where there are but two, the duty falls upon the cook in the morning and the housemaid in the afternoon; and it should be a rule, to which no exception is made, that the housemaid changes her dress by midday dinner. She should be duly instructed whether her mistress

be at home to visitors, and should be taught exactly how to announce them, and to be on the alert to open the door to them when they go out. They should also learn that on no account should they close the hall door until the visitors have quite departed, or the carriages have driven away.

There can be, in the present day, a great deal of pleasant society and enjoyable intercourse with one's neighbours without a heavy outlay in entertaining. People who care to keep a circle of friends about them in London, and other towns, set aside one afternoon weekly on which they announce they are always at home, and acquaintances drop in, and tea is served in the drawing-room, the tea equipage being brought into the room and laid on a special table. It is usually poured out by the hostess or one of her daughters.

Sometimes a five o'clock tea party is by special invitation, viz., by a visiting card with "At home" under the name, and "Four to seven o'clock" in one corner. If many are invited, tea is served down-stairs, and some amusement in the way of music or recitation may or may not be produced. In London, each season there is generally some one special attraction which goes the round—performing birds, Tyrolese singers, a Hungarian band, or whatever it may be.

Where there are young people, and expense is an object, afternoon dances give pleasure at little cost; the routine is much the same as any afternoon party, except, of course, one or more musicians are required, a floor-cloth laid down, and, if hot weather, ices, claret-cup, negus, and other light drinkables provided.

Well-served but inexpensive dinners are a sure proof of a good housekeeper. A round table and eight congenial people will help to make it pleasant. Just now flowers only appear on many tables, and where these can be had easily they are an economy, as but little dessert is required. Strips of embroidery, or red toile, or orange plush, or any other suitable material bordered with ivy, and a few well-arranged vases on this, set a table off at once. Ice is not an expensive luxury, but in summer adds much to the refinement of the table.

We are all like sheep at a gap, and so completely follow our neighbours, that the *menus* of half the dinners given to the same number of people in as many houses are almost identical; so that it is a positive kindness to your guests not only to diversify your dinner, but the serving of it. Happily in our day pretty things are to be had by poor folk—the poorest of all poor folk, poor gentle-people with heaps of wants and aspirations beyond their purses. Look about for, and pick up if you can, a few old Flemish or Venetian glasses, an odd bit of china or so, good in form if not of the rarest clay; introduce a little artistic colouring to please the eye. "Some folks have brains and some have money," you know, and it is astonishing what a little trouble will do. I was admiring a couple of beaten brass sconces set against the wall of a friend's room the other day. "Pretty, are they not? I picked them off a heap of old rubbish in the Old Cut one day, and they cost me a shilling apiece. I had them put together for another

couple of shillings, and would not take a pound for them now."

It is a good plan, even for daily use, to have a washable dinner *menu* on the table; china is the best, and one is enough at home. The master of the house likes to know what he is going to eat, if no one else does; and when friends are dining there should always be *menus*. If any member of the family is artistic, painted cards with the list arranged to slip in and out daily, will form a very small item as far as cost is concerned. One other little matter: if you wish your table to look well, be sure and have baize under the table-cloth, or it will have a mean appearance, and on no account have table-napkins starched.

A great deal of sociable society may be kept together by the tea-pot. If people are pretty sure to find you in, glad to see them, and with plenty to say, some new light to throw on some one thing, or a general knowledge and appreciation of current topics, not forgetting a warm quick sympathy in what interests them, you will find your tea-table rarely a solitary one. A good cup of tea is a desideratum, and I think this can only be insured by having the kettle or urn and making it yourself. Nice well-cut bread and butter, or a reputation for some one special cake, is not a bad

thing. If you care for good coffee, be careful in the making; roast the berries and grind them at home from day to day, and it will be twice as palatable.

It is so great a desideratum that young people should love their homes, that anything which tends to promote enjoyment and cheerfulness in the domestic circle should be encouraged. On this score charades, tableaux, round games, &c., though they may turn a house upside down, are not to be tabooed. Many holidays have been made red-letter periods of delight by the preparations they entail on young people home from the monotony of school.

Charitable cooking is a duty. There is scarcely a household in which many pints of strengthening soup cannot be given away to the poor weekly, with hardly the outlay of a shilling a month. The best plan is to throw all bones from plates, broken bread, broken meat, scraps of vegetables, indeed any odds and ends of food, into a large pot by the fire and to simmer them with a sufficiency of water. Here, however, the mistress' supervision is necessary. She must see that bones available for gravies and stock do not find their way thither too soon, and that the charity pot is not made an excuse for waste. Soup-meat thrown in, however, will be of service after it has served its purpose.

HOW MANY SENSES HAVE ANIMALS?



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HUMAN beings have five senses: * in other words, external objects affect a man's consciousness, and furnish elements of knowledge, in five different ways—by sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. There are, of course,

exceptions to the rule, but the exceptions are all on one side. No one has *more* than these five senses; but there are, unhappily, instances of defect, persons of whom, whether dating from birth or later, Milton's pathetic description of his own case is true—"Knowledge at one entrance quite shut out."

Again, men, and races of men, are not all upon the same level in regard to the degree of perfection in which they possess these faculties. Nor, indeed, is that degree constant throughout the life of an individual. Perhaps no two persons see precisely alike, and every one knows what changes the faculty of vision undergoes as life advances. The cultivation, too, of any faculty makes a vast difference. What education of touch, for instance, is required in the accomplished

pianist! The faculty of hearing is capable of remarkable rapidity of operation. It is stated on good authority that the ear, in a high state of cultivation, can distinguish sixteen sounds in one second.

When we turn from man to the rest of the animal world, we find not only individual variation as to the degree of perfection of the faculties, but differences also between species as to the attainable degrees of perfection. We find, too, in regard to each sense considered by itself the human faculty is often far inferior to the corresponding faculty in other orders of creation, though these may be in the scale of being very far below man. We find, moreover, species in which one or more of the senses are totally absent. Do we, on the other hand, find any indications of another sense, or other senses, over and above those which we ourselves enjoy?

Let us notice some illustrations of the statements just made before proceeding to answer this question.

We find, then, that the endowments of each species are adapted to its mode of existence. Those faculties are bestowed upon the living being which are necessary and useful to it. No others are given. This is a very important remark, for we see the evidence of creative purpose not only in the bestowal of faculties, but also in the withholding of them. A useless faculty, that is one which could not be used, would not only be an encumbrance, it would be a source of positive misery. Suppose, for example (and if chance ruled the world, such cases might well exist), that a creature

* We leave out of view the so-called "muscular sense."