

Chat.

THE annual reception of the Young Women's Christian Association of the City of New York was a pleasant ending of the seventeenth year of its existence, and of the first year in its beautiful building; and it is a pleasure to record that the year's work has been extremely satisfactory, nearly twice as much having been accomplished in every one of its departments as during the previous year. During 1887, over eight thousand women and girls, exclusive of the Bible Class, received instruction or aid through the various departments. The Bible Class had on its annual roll over six thousand names, while there were over one thousand members in regular attendance.

In addition to the religious instruction and comfort afforded to these thousands of women, the value of the social and educational advantages to those dependent on their own exertions for support can hardly be overestimated. The number of applicants during 1887 for admission to the various classes was greatly in excess of previous years, and only the lack of sufficient funds prevents the introduction of other industrial pursuits. The Business Training Class, in which the course is arranged with special reference to the requirements of business life, is the last one instituted. In the Employment Bureau, which is open to all Protestant young women seeking employment other than domestic service, the records show an increase of one-quarter in the number of applicants, and in the Needle-work Department the showing is equally satisfactory. Here orders are received for all kinds of family and fine sewing, and women obliged to do sewing at their own homes can thus find employment. Various articles are also kept on sale, particularly children's and infants' garments, which are sold at moderate prices; and fancy articles, artistic and useful, are sold for the benefit of the makers, only a small commission being charged.

The Board Directory, through which self-supporting women, both resident and from out of town, are introduced to comfortable homes, has also increased its facilities; and the fact that nearly two thousand applications were satisfactorily filled during the past year, testifies to its efficiency. Indeed, the work of this noble Association is so many-sided that its scope can hardly be defined; and the success of the past furnishes encouragement for the future. Its doors are ever open, and the members ever ready to lend a helping hand to all women striving to help themselves.

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THE Empress Victoria, says the *Germania*, has been the good genius of the Emperor throughout his illness. According to the reports of those immediately around the Emperor, she deserves the name of German *hausfrau* in the highest sense of the word. Every day she is in the kitchen to see for herself that her husband's food is properly prepared; day and night she attends to every one of the doctors' orders; in moments of danger and at operations she assists like a skilled nurse, resolutely helping even to move the bed.

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ROSA BONHEUR, as seen in the streets of Paris, is a large, elderly lady, rather plainly dressed in black, her gray hair tucked under a close bonnet, and unless for the peculiar strength of her face and her piercing, attentive eyes, it would not be noticed that she differs from any other woman in the crowd, except that she wears the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor. Years ago she dressed as a boy so as to attract less attention from the hangers-on of the stables, cattle-yards and menageries, which were visited chiefly by men, and she still wears male attire at home at work, and a wide-brimmed felt or straw hat. In this costume she appears lower in stature and looks like a remarkably well-pressed middle-aged man.

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THE Queen Regent of Spain has a mania, almost, for being photographed in company with her children. A recent picture presents a most charming family group: the Queen Regent pouring tea at table, the baby King in his high chair at her side, and the two Infantas looking demure and beautiful in their dainty white dresses.

Household.

Comparative Housekeeping.

III.

HOW TO SET THE TABLE ON TWENTY CENTS A DAY FOR EACH PERSON.

Luncheon.

PEOPLE have the vaguest ideas about luncheons. The very class to whom they should be of most value is precisely the one to ignore them; namely, that class for whom it is necessary to study the strictest economy.

The fact is that people are really ignorant of the value and meaning of luncheons. They are, in reality, a modern innovation, and peculiarly British. French and German families rarely indulge in them, not, however, because they do not recognize their value, but because their household arrangements are based upon the old-fashioned order of things, an early dinner. The middle-class housekeeper in Germany or Switzerland considers one o'clock in the day a late dinner-hour; and in France the second breakfast, at eleven or half-past ten, entirely precludes all question of lunch as we know it. The introduction of late dinner in England, or, rather, the gradual change of dinner-hour from noon to five or six in the evening, compelled a supplementary meal in the middle of the day; but this was, and, indeed, except in second-rate families, still remains, a light meal. In story-books and descriptive novels we read a good deal about elaborate luncheons; but in actual experience of English life we find the "hearty luncheons" are the exception, not the rule, and peculiar to a certain class, corresponding to the business class here, the families of successful city men, the "set" from which aldermen and lord mayors are drawn. Among "the upper ten thousand," luncheon means a dainty table set with appetizing trifles, thin sandwiches, perhaps, or *bouillon* or jellies, so simple in all its appointments that the presence of servants is unnecessary.

Then it is that absolute freedom of conversation is possible; and so much liberty, in fact, prevails in regard to it, that in many cases the various members of a family come in and help themselves to biscuit or sandwich without even the formality of sitting down. This is the orthodox luncheon as originally instituted, which in the hands of the imitative crowd has become the extraordinary meal we often find it in middle-class English society, a succession of heavy dishes only differing from dinner in that it is served early in the day; while in America it has a still stranger development in its accompaniment of tea and hot biscuit, both of which are utterly out of place.

Here, in fact, there would appear to exist a most mistaken idea about it. Formerly the early midday dinner necessitated an evening meal, and to save trouble, probably, the English fashion of five or six o'clock tea and a later supper gave way to a sort of compound or heavy tea, accompanied by meat, called, in general parlance, supper; this heterogeneous meal still holds its own in large sections of the country, and is in itself enjoyable enough, and peculiarly American. But when fashion or necessity pointed to the desirability of a late dinner, a sort of compromise appears to have taken place; supper, that is tea with meat accompaniment, became luncheon, and the heavy midday meal was transferred to a later hour. But the class which accepted such a change from necessity, the business class, lost sight of the first reason for it, and so we have the present familiar jumble, in which heavy breakfasts are succeeded by luncheons of the same character, to be followed in turn by elaborate dinners.

Boarding-houses are in some sort evidence of ordinary expectation, and in New York, at all events, luncheons are universal in middle-class life. This would be a wise and satisfactory arrangement if it were sensibly carried out, and would be yet wiser in the case of a still larger class of our population, those, namely, who, having very small means and very hard work, find a difficulty in making both ends meet; but with the usual perversity of things, with this class, to whom it is all-important to know how to live on 20 cents a day, early dinners and evening heterogenous meals are common. A little consideration and common sense would alter this for the better.

Housekeepers have a strange and mistaken idea that late dinners make more work, and where one servant only is kept, in England as well as here, there is a prejudice in favor of early dining, on the plea that with late dinners a girl's work is never done. There is very little sense in this. As a matter of fact, the preparation of dinner in the morning is such an interruption to housework that it more than counterbalances any economy of time in the afternoon. There is no reason why the cooking of an ordinary dinner should upset household order in the afternoon, when there is no cleaning going on (or ought not to be); whereas in the morning a thousand things demand attention. I would recommend all housekeepers on small incomes, with help limited to one servant or to occasional assistance, to consider this fact, and especially in reference to that inevitable washing-day familiar to us all. A still more important feature in regard to it suggests itself when we consider the necessities of that immense population engaged all day in stores and workshops, counting their earnings in single dollars, many of whom, from a most mistaken idea of economy, live near their places of business and rush home for dinner during the free midday hour, or take their dinners at cheap restaurants, relying upon the compound supper with tea at night. If middle-class and working families could realize the possibilities of lunch shorn of its absurd appurtenances, late dinners would become universal, and luncheon for 20 or 25 cents both satisfactory and enjoyable.

For a luncheon ought to be light; that is its very first essential, quite apart from all considerations of pocket-book. Meat, even warmed-over meat, really has no place there except an incidental one; tea is an atrocity, harmful positively. And as this is universally true, it is scarcely necessary to insist upon the absence of these two extravagances as peculiar to the limited expenditure of the strict economists; but as people do dearly like to be "in the fashion," it may at least comfort those who *must* do it for necessity, to know that the luncheons of those who in England lead the van in fashionable life are simplicity itself. A little *bouillon*, a simple salad, a dish of fruit or jam, daintily served, represent the luncheon of the refined portion of the community. Why should it not find its counterpart here? It is not a question of pocket, but of common sense.

In the busy household where claims are made upon the mother from morning till night, in those where the mother is the bread-winner and perforce absent, as well as in the thousand families all over the country to whom economy is essential, a simple unpretending luncheon would mean ease of pocket and economy of time. It should be, *in character*, what the *déjeuner à la fourchette* is to the economic Frenchman, while the essential elements must vary according to circumstance. It should comprise a simple soup, costing but a few cents, made without stock; a salad, when lettuce or field-salad or water-cress is cheap; a little stewed fruit, perhaps; grated cheese, or the like. How few people realize that nourishment is afforded by vegetable or plain soups as well as by strong meat. They are manifold in number, easy of preparation, and above all absolutely economic, for nothing

is wasted. And where change is liked, consider the economy and value of eggs as lunch diet whenever they are cheap; and even when costing two or three cents apiece an omelet (which can be varied almost to infinity) costs but twelve or fifteen cents. It is in the use of ordinary articles of everyday knowledge that the hope of economy lies, not, as so many people aimlessly believe, in the invention or discovery of new ones.

There are plenty of economic and successful housekeepers who are remarkably clever in making up dishes from cold remains, and such knowledge is invaluable and will be insisted upon by us later on; but when expenditure is limited to the sum of one dollar a day for five people, all such genius must be applied to the consideration of dinners.

Luncheons for straightened purses may have all the merit of being highly refined, for they certainly cannot embrace meat, although occasionally, when fish is plentiful and easy of attainment, it may be introduced, but is not highly recommended for the simple reasons that it requires more care in preparation, is less nourishing, and less *digestible* than light soups, salads, or eggs. In conclusion, merely as suggesting greater possibilities, these simple luncheons are given, any one of which will come easily within the stipulated sum for luncheon, 33½ cents for five persons.

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| I. | II. |
| Carrot soup, served in cups.
Water-cress salad, with simple
French dressing.
Toasted Bread. | Omelet (made with four eggs), with
thyme.
Milk toast (toasted bread soaked in
milk, no butter).
Marmalade. |
| III. | |
| Bean soup (of small haricot beans).
Lettuce or field-salad, with simple
dressing.
Bread and butter. | |

These soups, made in simple French fashion by merely cooking either carrots or beans in water till perfectly tender, then rubbing through a colander, adding a small piece of butter, pepper and salt, are most inexpensive, half a pint of beans, and three good-sized carrots being all the material required, respectively. In the same way celery, which can be bought cheap when not sufficiently white or crisp for table use, or indeed the root only, which is generally thrown away, makes a most admirable simple soup when merely cut up and boiled till perfectly tender, then strained, thickened, and brought to the boil. A list of such simple soups, prepared either as the French, Germans or Swiss prepare them, may be of great value to the American housekeepers, and will be given in a later article.

JANET E. RUUTZ-REES.

From Cellar to Garret.

III.

THE BED-ROOMS AND BATH-ROOM.

THE upper part of the house next occupied our attention. Upon examination we found that the plaster upon the walls, originally of poor quality and rather badly put on, was cracked in several places, and had been pasted over with cloth and paper, to cover and strengthen it, until it was in a most dilapidated condition; and as it only hung to the lath by the corners and occasional patches, there was no other way than to take it off altogether. The entire plastering on the upper story was, therefore, cleared off, new lath put on where it was required, and the flues in the chimneys put in perfect order and closed with hooded pipe and slating at the top. The wood-work and floors were in good condition with the exception of several coats of cheap paint upon