



## THE MARCH OF LIFE.

Marching onward, ever onward,  
 Struggling on for truth and right,  
 We are letters of earth's hist'ry;  
 Shall this page be dark or bright?  
 Fighting, though but feeble maidens;  
 Powers of ill are on each hand;  
 Yet, we dare not plead our weakness,  
 When the word has gone forth—"Stand."

Marching, gaining ground each minute,  
 Yet unhurried aye our tread,  
 Stopping not to mourn past failures;  
 "Let the dead past bury its dead."

Marching, with our faces upward,  
 Shaking off earth's clinging dust;  
 We are bidden to "press forward,"  
 And we can do what we must.

Marching on, for time is precious;  
 Ev'ry moment, set in gold,  
 Of high aims, enshrined in action,  
 Shall be blessed a hundred fold.  
 Learnt at last the hard life lessons,  
 Trained each virtue, pruned each fault,  
 Mid the setting sunlight glory,  
 Then the word shall go forth—"Halt."

E. A. S. K.

## THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM.

By DORA HOPE.



"No, Joanna, I'm quite sure I never shall manage the housekeeping as well as you have done, if I live to be ninety and practise it all the time; I feel it is not in me," said a young girl to her sister, as they sat together, having a confidential chat.

"I can understand that it seems a great undertaking to you now, Madge dear. I felt quite as helpless at first, when I had to take the reins into my own hands after dear mother's death, but it is wonderful how soon one gets accustomed to having the responsibility."

"I hope I have been a tolerably apt pupil during the last few weeks. Have I?"

"That you have, dear; in fact, I am inclined to think you have a great deal of housewifely skill 'in you,' as you call it. The one thing for you to bear in mind is to be methodical

over everything, and never get into a slovenly way of letting things go till a more convenient season. With but one servant, my experience is that the only way to keep domestic affairs from utter confusion is to have a regular time for doing everything, and to do it then in spite of all obstacles. I mention this particularly, because I think your weak point is a habit of procrastination, and perhaps a little tendency to unpunctuality too."

"Yes, I know," said Margaret, dolefully. "But, oh dear! what a bad thing it is when elder sisters get married."

"There is one thing I have to suggest, Madge, that might be a help to us both, which is that you should write me a regular housekeeping-letter, say once a month, and tell me how you get on, and about any difficulties you meet with, and how you get over them, and I think by comparing notes of our experiences we may very likely help one another."

"Agreed; it is a splendid idea—it will be the greatest comfort to me. I shall not feel left so entirely to my own resources; whenever I feel despairing I shall write to you for advice; but in the meantime it is getting late, and I have several things to prepare for my personal adornment to-morrow. The toilet of a first bridesmaid is not a matter to be left till the last moment, and you have to finish arranging your presents, you know."

Joanna's wedding had only been deferred till Margaret was old enough to take her place as housekeeper. No very easy post for a girl coming straight home from school; but she had plenty of spirit and determination, and was resolved not to be easily beaten. The household consisted, besides herself and sister, of the father, and two boys, aged respectively 13 and 15. Though not by any means a poor man, Mr. Colville was neither able nor willing to indulge in extravagant expenditure, and the children had been brought up to under-

stand that though they might have all the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life, anything like waste, or needless extravagance, could never be allowed.

Margaret left school six weeks previous to the wedding, in order to have the benefit of a little instruction from her sister, whom some years' experience had formed into a first-rate manager and skilful housekeeper. In fact, it was whispered in strict confidence that the bridegroom elect had at first been attracted by the admirable way in which she managed her father's house.

Margaret threw herself heart and soul into the work of learning. She felt that her only chance of filling her sister's post, even fairly well, lay in the good employment of these few weeks.

The time flew by all too quickly for Margaret's peace of mind; as the day approached she redoubled her efforts to imbibe the greatest possible amount of information, till on the eve of the marriage she declared that she felt her brain was as "crammed with observation" as that of the clown in *As You Like It*.

It was some days before the excitement and upset of the wedding had subsided, and the Colville family had resumed its ordinary quiet; but at the beginning of the week following Mr. Colville gave Margaret the customary sum for the week's expenses.

"My dear," he said, "if you make me as comfortable as your sister did, I shall be more than contented; but, of course, I do not expect that just at first. My only advice is—do not get into debt."

So Margaret began her work; Monday had always been a particularly busy day with Joanna, and Margaret made up her mind to keep to all her sister's arrangements until she had had a little experience.

At half-past eight Mr. Colville and the boys always started, the former to business,



not to return till tea-time, at six o'clock; the latter went to a day-school in the neighbourhood, and came home for dinner in the middle of the day. Immediately after their departure, Margaret betook herself to the kitchen to make her arrangements for the day. It had been a strict rule of Joanna's that the weekly supply of groceries should all be bought at once, and no more allowed unless under exceptional circumstances; this plan she had found a great saving of time and trouble. Accordingly, Monday being the day fixed for it, Margaret proceeded to inspect the jars of sugar, rice, and all the other contents of her store cupboard, and having made out the list of things required, she set out on her marketing. Weekly books had been long ago abolished, as being an unsatisfactory arrangement when there is a small and limited income. It is difficult to remember how much one has in hand, and how much must be reserved for those dreadful books, which come in stern and unrelenting, and generally amount to considerably more than one has reckoned upon, and is prepared to pay.

The abolition of books, of course, also does away with the convenience of tradesmen calling for orders, and necessitates the housekeeper herself going to the shops. In some cases this might be an obstacle to the ready-money system, but Joanna being strong and energetic, felt it anything but a grievance to be compelled to go out every day, wet or fine, because, as she said, "If I were not compelled to go out, some days I should think I was really too busy to do so just for pleasure, and so should lose a walk altogether, whilst as it is, I am sure of having at least one every day."

Besides the advantage of getting a regular walk (a very important advantage, by the way), Joanna strongly advised her sister to keep to the arrangement, on the ground that it was so much easier to buy economically. Suppose she wanted fish, for instance, it very frequently happened that the particular kind she had ordered happened to be very dear that day, while by going to the shop to see for herself, she would find that some other sort was very plentiful, and consequently cheap; in the same way she would often find the green-grocer's shop crowded with some fruit or vegetable of which there had been a glut in the market, but which she would never have thought of ordering if she had not seen it.

The milkman and baker alone were permitted to call, and keep a weekly account, but as Joanna found that they trusted entirely to memory for the quantities they had left at each house, and she suspected that they were frequently remembered wrong, she had always kept a slate hanging up in the kitchen, on which Betsy put down the amount taken each morning. As they always saw her write it down immediately, the men were willing to accept the authority of her slate in a case of a discrepancy in the accounts.

Directly the family had begun breakfast, Betsy went upstairs to the bedrooms, stripped the beds, opened the windows, and so on, after which she had her own breakfast, and was ready to receive Margaret's orders when she came into the kitchen.

While Margaret was out, Betsy was expected to have washed up and put away the breakfast things, and finished the bedrooms, her mistress having helped her to make the beds before starting. This was one of her duties which Margaret strongly objected to, but Joanna had painted in such glaring colours the disastrous effects upon the beds if they were not properly turned and shaken, and the great difficulty of the servant doing it alone, that she could not make any more objections. She soon found that after a little practice had taught her the knack of shaking

the beds effectually, without at the same time shaking her whole frame immoderately, it really was not at all unpleasant work, and she began to take a pride in making them look smooth all over, and square at the corners, beauties which she had never before properly appreciated.

It happened rather unfortunately that Betsy was a new and inexperienced servant, her predecessor having had to leave suddenly. Under these circumstances Joanna had thought it prudent to write out a sort of plan of each branch of the household management for her sister's guidance. The order of cleaning rooms for the week, for instance, was arranged as follows:

Monday, the drawing-room to be cleaned.

Tuesday, one bed-room to be swept, and the dusters and kitchen towels washed.

Wednesday, two small bed-rooms, and the stairs to be swept.

Thursday, the two remaining bed-rooms.

Friday, the dining-room and hall.

Saturday, the kitchen to be cleaned, silver polished, and general putting straight for Sunday.

In these arrangements it was understood that the servant was only expected to do the actual cleaning; the dusting and re-arranging of ornaments was left for Margaret, who took this opportunity to look over the antimacassars, toilet mats, and other things in the rooms, to see which required washing and mending.

Monday was a busy day for both mistress and maid, for while Betsy was sweeping the drawing-room, Margaret had to put away, and very often mend, the boys' Sunday clothes.

Then there was the linen to be collected for the wash, and the list made out, so that frequently Betsy came to say she had finished her part of the drawing-room and was going into the kitchen to "peel the potatoes" before Margaret was ready. The finishing touches in the drawing-room took a long time, as Mr. Colville had a taste for china, and the room was full of fragile ornaments, which Margaret never allowed anyone but herself to touch, so that she had hardly time to begin the mending of the clean clothes which had come home from the wash on the previous Saturday, and which was considered part of Monday's regular work, before the boys came in from school, and dinner was ready.

The afternoon Margaret intended to spend in paying visits, reading, or sewing, but she often found that so many unexpected things occurred to occupy her attention that by the time she had done and could settle down to read and enjoy herself she was sure to hear her father's well-known and unmistakable knock.

On this particular Monday, she flew to open the door. "Oh, father!" she cried, as she kissed him and relieved him of his hat and coat, "I shall be able to repeat with the greatest sincerity to-night that little poem of our youth—

'How pleasant it is at the close of the day

No follies to have to repent;

But to lie down to sleep, and be able to say,  
My time has been properly spent.'

"That's right, my little daughter, and I assure you I shall be able to take up the strain, and say to myself:—

'Down I lie content and say  
I have been useful all the day.'

For I have been very busy too. Are the boys home?"

"Yes, father; they have gone upstairs to make themselves presentable, and tea will be ready in a moment."

In this household, tea, that most pleasant and sociable of meals, was lingered over and prolonged to a great extent. Mr. Colville wisely considered that in the absence of a mother to guide and counsel them, it was necessary for him to do all in his power to win

his children's confidence, and as breakfast was usually too hurried a meal for much conversation, he always took this opportunity of chatting with them over the day's occupations, and encouraged the boys to tell him of any school escapades or successes.

This day's doings may be taken as a fair sample of Margaret's occupations. As time went on, she found some parts of her duties grow easier with practice, while at the same time little things arose to puzzle and perplex which were not thought of at first. For example, though it sounds but a trifling matter, it was a considerable difficulty to Margaret to procure a variety in the way of breakfast. It had never occurred to her that it was possible to get tired of fried bacon, with the occasional addition of boiled eggs, until one morning, on lifting the cover at breakfast, and observing, for the fifth consecutive morning, a row of crisp little rashers, Mr. Colville gently hinted that a change might be agreeable, whilst Dick was heard murmuring,

"Bacon hot and bacon cold, bacon young and bacon old,

Bacon tender and bacon tough, we thank you, Madge, we've had enough."

After this a change was quite necessary, but Margaret racked her brains in vain to think of something new.

It happened that Joanna, whilst at home, had kept a small manuscript book, in which she was in the habit of jotting down any favourite new recipe, or any hints or ideas which occurred to her on domestic matters in general. This miscellany book she bequeathed to her sister, with some reluctance, as she had found it a very useful institution; but it stood Margaret in good stead now, as on many subsequent occasions, for here she found the very thing she wanted, an entry in Joanna's neat handwriting, headed, "Varieties for breakfast. Sheep's kidneys, fried. Fish left from previous day's dinner warmed with milk. Ditto, potted. Sausages (do not forget to prick them all over before cooking). Poached eggs on toast. Buttered eggs (break four in a basin and beat well; put 2 oz. of butter in another basin and melt; pour both into an enamelled saucepan, hold over a slow fire, keep stirring until hot, but do not let them boil; serve on hot buttered toast). Small pieces of cold meat, potted; different sorts can be used together, and, unless very fat, will be improved by the addition of a little bacon or ham. Omelettes (you must make these yourself; ordinary servants always spoil them). Stewed fruit, when not expensive; watercresses, or radishes, when in season."

With these to select from, Margaret was no longer at a loss for ideas, but unfortunately Betsy was not only an "ordinary" servant, but had even less than ordinary ideas of cookery, so if Margaret departed from the regular routine of bacon and eggs she would have to get up and prepare the dish herself, or at least superintend its preparation; and of all things her greatest difficulty was rising in the morning. She was rarely quite punctual for breakfast, and the idea of coming down in time to cook these little dishes was, she thought at first, impracticable. However, she decided to try it for a week, and she made a firm resolution to get up the moment Betsy knocked at her door (fortunately, Betsy was an early riser). She succeeded better even than she had expected, and her father's commendation more than repaid her for the exertion. He suggested that since she was in the kitchen so early, she might at the same time try if it were possible to improve the quality of the toast, which, as he pointed out to her, was usually tough, and nearly cold when put on the table. Accordingly, the next morning Margaret inquired into the matter, and found



that, to save herself trouble, Betsy put the slices of bread into the oven first, by which process they became dried up and hot through, so that the actual toasting took a very short time, but the result was highly unsatisfactory. She showed her how to make it better for the future, to cut the bread about a quarter of an inch thick, hold the slice a minute before a clear fire, to make it thoroughly hot through, then turn it, and when that side is hot, begin to move it gradually backwards and forwards till the whole side is equally browned all over. When the other side is done, instead of laying it down on a plate as Betsy had been accustomed to do, she stood each piece in the toast-rack on the fender before the fire, to keep it light. Betsy appeared to think all this very unnecessary trouble, but Mr. Colville's exclamation at the wonderful improvement in the toast convinced her that it was worth taking a little trouble over.

It was not until some three weeks after Joanna's wedding that Margaret took advantage of a leisure afternoon to begin the promised correspondence with her sister. Though a brisk interchange of letters had been kept up in the meantime, Joanna's were filled with accounts of the beautiful places they were visiting, while Margaret's consisted principally of apologies for their own brevity, the invariable excuse being that she was too busy to write. Let us look over her shoulder this afternoon, as her pen flies rapidly over the paper.

"Dearest Joanna,—Be prepared for a good long letter at last. I am going to take you at your word, and tell you about our domestic affairs. I have come to the conclusion, like you, that housekeeping in all its branches is nothing but a delusion and a snare. I do not know that you ever said so in those very words, but at any rate you tried to show me a little of the dark side of the matter, while I persisted in seeing only the bright side. My eyes are wide open by this time, I can assure you, and the difficulties are extremely visible to me now; so I hope you are satisfied.

"First of all, let me thank you again and again for the many kind hints you gave me about different things. It is very true that 'forewarned is forearmed,' and I should have been in despair long ago if I had not laid your wise saws to heart and acted upon them.

"I am getting quite to enjoy the shopping every morning, and it certainly is a very good thing to be able to choose just what one wants instead of being obliged to take whatever they like to send. Thanks to your teaching I can judge tolerably well of the quality of meat and fish by the look of it. I think your formula was that, if the meat be fresh and good, the flesh adheres firmly to the bone; and in beef is of a deep red colour, and the fat is firm and waxy, and not friable. Is that right? And that the best beef will have the lean intermixed with fat, so that it looks mottled. And I really think you would be gratified to see the 'cute' way in which your pupil selects fish that looks very bright and silvery, and the scorn with which she rejects as stale all that are limp and have a dull leaden appearance. In my heart of hearts, Joanna, I really believe the only true way with both fish and meat to find out if they are perfectly fresh or not is to smell them, but it *does* so offend my delicate nostrils that as often as possible I trust to the look of them.

"I have not forgotten your exhortation to keep accounts, and I do so, though it is rather irksome. Still, I begin to see that it is very necessary if one intends to be at all methodical. Father made me a present of a regular housekeeper's account book, on condition that he might be allowed to 'audit and find correct' whenever he liked. There are columns ruled for each of the ordinary

expenses, such as butcher and baker, and a line drawn for each day, so that at the end of the week the total expenditure and also each item can be clearly seen. I was not very successful in my accounts at first, as by the time I reached home I had forgotten how much the various items cost, but I have adopted the brilliant expedient of always carrying a scrap of paper in my purse, on which I put down the price of each article before I leave the shop. When I can afford it I shall buy one of those purses with a washing tablet in it, but at present I have the utmost difficulty to make both ends meet without indulging in any superfluities such as new purses. It really is the greatest comfort to know exactly what I have spent and how much I have still in hand, instead of the dreadful feeling that last week's books will be coming in soon, and I shall have to pay for what was all eaten long ago. The 'sundry' column in my account book is rather a snare—it is so pleasant to put down all unaccounted-for money under that head, but I suppose you would insist on the nature of the sundry being mentioned, would you not?

"I think I can hear you say at this point, 'Well, Madge need not have harrowed up my feelings by beginning in such a doleful tone, for she seems to have a tolerably good opinion of her achievements so far.' Quite true; and I only wish I could carry on this jubilant strain a little longer, but I am now going to plunge headlong into the valley of humiliation, and tell you about a very painful thing that happened last week.

"You told me I must not trust to Betsy to make the pastry, as she is so careless in measuring quantities. On Wednesday morning accordingly I put on an old dress (very old indeed), and retired to the kitchen to spend the morning in the exemplary occupation of making puddings. No sooner had I, so to speak, warmed to my work and got myself thoroughly sprinkled with flour and other materials (you know what a mess I always do make of myself) than the bell rang, and Betsy announced Mrs. Symonds. I should like just to say in passing that I think morning calls ought to be made criminal offences and punished with the utmost rigour of the law, don't you? especially when they know there is only one person in the house. Well, I could not go to see her in that state, for, as Betsy remarked with a cheerful smile, 'Even my 'air was a mask of flour.' So I rushed upstairs, huddled on another dress, pulled out about half of my raven locks in the attempt to make my hair tidy quickly, and walked into the drawing-room, flushed and breathless, having kept the poor lady waiting ten minutes. Was it not shameful? and she seemed rather angry about it, not unnaturally I must confess. When I told father about it in the evening, he was quite severe, and said it was a most unlady-like thing to keep a visitor waiting, just because I had an old dress on, and it would have been much better to go in as I was. (I wish he could have seen me.)

"Accordingly on Saturday morning when Betsy announced old Mrs. Trent, as I was in just the same predicament, I only stayed to wash my hands and shake my dress. When I went into the room, imagine my dismay at seeing that she had brought her nephew with her! that young Mr. Trent whom father thinks so highly of, you remember, and is always talking about. I saw in the pier glass that I had a patch of flour arranged coquettishly over my left eyebrow, so as all hope of disguising the fact that I had been cooking was gone, I thought I might as well tell the candid truth about it, which I did, and Mrs. Trent only laughed, and was very kind. But her nephew looked quite scandalized. I am sure he thought a young person in that state was not fit company for his aunt and himself.

"After that I thought I should have to leave the puddings to fate and Betsy after all. However, this morning I met Mrs. Trent, and she was so very kind that in a burst of confidence I told her my difficulty. She advised me to wear a large apron which would completely cover my dress, and promised to send me one for a pattern. It has just come, and is really splendid. It is made of rather coarse linen; the skirt is large enough to meet behind all the way down, and the bib reaches the neck, where it pins on to the dress. There are sleeves as well, made to slip on over the dress sleeves, and reaching the elbow, but Mrs. Trent says if one's sleeves are wide enough it is better to roll them up, and dispense with the linen ones.

"I am going to set about making myself some aprons at once; then I shall be able to put on a respectable dress without fear of spoiling it—and if a caller should come, I have only to nip off my apron, and, hey, presto! I am as neat as if I had never seen a pudding in my life. But, then, there is my hair! Should you advise a nightcap? Or shall I let the people think that it is an idiosyncrasy of female members of the Colville family to wear powder in the morning?

"You will perhaps wonder how I get on in the matter of making both ends meet. Alas! the very first week I had to ask father for another sovereign. My money was all gone by Saturday, and no meat in the house but the carcass of a sirloin of beef to offer my hungry relatives for their Sunday's dinner, so there was nothing for it but to ask for more money.

"The next week I resolved that nothing should induce me to run short, and accordingly I carefully measured the appetites of the household, and ordered only just as much of everything as was absolutely necessary. In consequence, one evening when a gentleman called, and father told me to order up some supper for him, there was literally nothing in the house, and Betsy had to race round to the nearest shop to buy something. That rather annoyed father, and considerably damped my ardour for economy, especially as an attempt in another direction was not more successful. I thought the washing-bills were too large, so made up my mind that one clean table-cloth should last a week, and the very first day that troublesome Dick spilt gravy on it at dinner-time. Thus the second piece of economy was knocked on the head. I felt that a remonstrance to Dick was not only allowable but quite a matter of duty, and perhaps I was rather too angry, but at any rate he did not at all like it, and went off sulkily to school, muttering that keeping house did not seem to agree with my temper.

"Now, Joanna, how am I to act to the boys? Am I never to scold them? You know what harum-scarums they are; there is no chance of keeping the house in any sort of order if they are left entirely to their own sweet wills, and yet, as there is so little difference in our ages, they resent my lectures very strongly.

"And also, how am I to be strictly economical and yet be prepared at any moment for an unexpected run upon the bank, or rather larder?

"Please send me your opinion upon these points as soon as you can, and any other hints you think would be useful. The smallest morsel of advice thankfully received."

Margaret's letter was here interrupted by a boyish voice calling,

"Madge, Madge, where have you hidden yourself? Do come, it's just upon tea-time!"

This Margaret knew to be a slight exaggeration; but, bringing her letter to a hasty conclusion, she gathered up her writing materials and ran down stairs to join her brothers.

(To be continued.)



May had been listening intently to this conversation, understanding little or nothing. But when Edith spoke she looked into her face so inquiringly that Edith explained to her in English what had passed.

"And we shall have newspapers and magazines and books and tea and coffee, if we can, and a harmonium, and I don't know what besides, if only we can get the money! and Meredith as secretary," she said, rapidly.

"And religious services, at which the vicar will assist when he can," added Evan.

"And the study of Holy Scripture," supplemented Miss Richards.

"And all sorts of treats," put in Miss Sophy, who was of a more volatile turn of mind than her sisters.

May's hand was fumbling in her little pocket. She drew forth something which she slipped shyly into Edith's hand, with the words, "To help to make the big room." It was the penny Uncle Laban had given her that morning.

"Our first subscription!" exclaimed Edith, holding it up. "We will put it under the foundation-stone," and then, while the others were commenting on this graceful action, she kissed the abashed child. "How cold she is!" And all of a tremble. Peggy, she cannot be well," she added, in Welsh.

"That is just what I have been thinking, for she has scarcely touched her bread and milk," returned Evan, whose best feelings were aroused by May's little donation.

Edith led her to the fire and tried to warm her, but she shivered so perceptibly that she found it of no avail.

"She took cold last night, I dare say," remarked Peggy, "and I'll warrant this head-washing has finished it."

This was a thrust at Evan, against whose somewhat arbitrary commands she would have occasionally rebelled if she could; but she was too obedient a wife, and had too wholesome a fear of her husband, to do so openly. He understood her, however.

"I am afraid I was hasty," he said. "Make the child a posset and let her go to bed."

While this passed, Miss Edith was asking May if her head ached, and being informed, in confidential whispers, that it did.

"Do you think Terpsichore's aches too?" enquired May.

"I am quite sure it does not; and yours will be well to-morrow if you will take a dose that I will bring you," replied Edith, rising and telling Peggy that she was sure a few spoonfuls of her mother's pick-me-up would be more efficacious than a posset.

The young ladies took their departure, after each had fondled May in her own particular manner. The child looked wistfully after them, but said never a word.

"I wish George was here," said Evan, rubbing his head.

George was one of Evan's many descendants, who was a young doctor, and was likely to come to reside in the neighbourhood, Mr. Richards having

offered him the post of surgeon to his miners.

"Mrs. Richards is better than an oaf of a boy like George," responded Peggy, who was feeling irritable, and who was helping the still trembling May to undress by the fire.

Mrs. Richards was, indeed, as good as a medical man, for she had made medicine a study with a view to helping the poor, when female M.D.'s were unheard of. It was to her, principally, that her daughters owed their useful education, and it was she who had early inculcated into their minds that they could find scope for all their energies in the sphere in which they were born. She said they had only to look around them, and they would find plenty of extraneous work; while, at home, they were the greatest comforts and helps to their father and herself.

She returned with Edith to see May. They found the child in bed, covered up, as it would seem, with all the clothing the house contained, Peggy's scarlet cloak on the top of it.

"She is very feverish, in spite of the shivers," said Mrs. Richards; "and we must take off all this heap of clothes. I think you may venture to give her the effervescent dose, Edith."

May was caressing Edith's hand much as she was accustomed to do her doll; but she let it go, and obediently swallowed the not unpleasant medicine her friends had brought her. Mrs. Richards thought that old Peggy should have some younger person with her, and Edith asked to be allowed to remain until May fell asleep. The request was granted, and Edith seated herself by the crib. But May was far too restless and excited to sleep. All the events that had been crowded into her young life during the last two or three months, which had culminated in that of the previous evening, had overpowered the silent, self-contained child, and resulted in an attack of fever. By degrees the pale, wan, little face grew flushed, and the limbs burning, while the restless head, with its offending golden hair, tossed hither and thither on the snow-white pillow.

(To be continued.)



## A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER'S DIFFICULTIES, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM.

By DORA HOPE.



"MY DEAR MADGE,—You will be surprised to have another letter from me so soon after the last. But it has occurred to me that, as you have always been at school hitherto at this time of year, you may not know exactly how to arrange for your Christmas preparations. It seems very early to begin to talk about Christmas on the 10th of November, does it not? But having only yourself and one rather inefficient helper (as I fear Betsy will prove) to depend on, you must allow yourself plenty of time.

"There will not be very much to do by way of preparation in our little home, as you may imagine, but last year I was quite busy about this time. I suppose you have already put away most of the summer things, curtains, linen sheets, &c.? I generally begin that the first week in November, as it takes a long while to look over and mend each article before putting it away. I hope you remembered my advice to have all the curtains and other things which are usually starched rough dried before the winter, as they are apt to become rotten if laid by starched.

"The next step in my preparations was to look over the inventory of glass and china, replacing the missing articles, so as to start with my list complete for the next year. And I generally found that the sets of pudding-cloths, and sometimes knife, glass, and tea-cloths wanted renewing. Should you have to buy new ones, be sure you get them stamped, 'Glass,' 'Tea,' and so on, according to their use. They are sold at most good linen-draper's now. If too dear, mark them *very, plainly* yourself, and be sure that Betsy keeps each to its own proper use. It is a curious phase in the character of some servants the fondness they have for using one cloth for all sorts of purposes, but the habit is always slovenly, and often disgusting, and should never be allowed.

"Then the cooking utensils ought to be inspected. If you do not know exactly what you have, I advise you to hold a grand parade in the kitchen some leisure morning. I fear I forgot to give you the inventory I made last year, so perhaps the easiest way for you to



ascertain if you have all that is necessary will be for me to send you a list of what I think requisite for a household of our size and means. Dear me! I must leave off talking about 'our household,' as if I still belonged to it, but it is so difficult to get out of the old way all at once. I actually signed my name 'Joanna Colville' yesterday in a letter to Arthur's mother, and did not discover what I had done till the letter was posted. Well, now for the list. Two frying-pans, one large, and one small for fish; four saucepans of different sizes, including an enamelled one; a colander; one chopper; one small meat saw; one gravy strainer; one suet chopper; one toast fork; one egg whisk; one dozen skewers, different sizes; one fish kettle (for any extra-sized fish, particularly turbot, you can hire a kettle from the fishmonger); one preserving pan; one bread grater; one nutmeg grater; pestle and mortar; mincing machine; kettle; one flour and one sugar dredger; pasteboard and rolling pin; chopping-board; salt-box; one funnel; spice-box; one dozen patty pans; two tartlet pans; meat jack and appurtenances; one large and one small cake tin; two wooden spoons; one baking tin; one paste cutter; one hair sieve; two wire covers (to protect meat from flies); one bread pan; four pudding basins; a set of six pie dishes; one jelly mould; one salt cellar; one pepper pot; one mustard pot; weights and scales; one fish slice; one egg slice; one flour pan or box.

"This sounds a long list, but I have put down nothing but what is really necessary, and there are many other little contrivances which you would find very useful, but which I refrain from mentioning as being outside the pale of absolute necessity.

"If your enamelled saucepans are worn out, get the common brown earthenware instead of them; unfortunately the largest size they sell at most china shops is only three pints, or I should recommend you to use them for all cooking purposes; but that size is large enough for most purposes for which you generally use the enamelled pans, and the earthenware is incomparably superior in many respects; besides their cheapness (the quart size can be bought anywhere for one shilling and fourpence, often for less), they are easy to keep clean, and do not allow the contents to burn so easily as iron.

"While on the subject of saucepans, I must say a word about cleaning them. You say you do not like cooking much yourself, because 'saucepans are such dirty things,' which remark gives me the impression that Betsy does not look after them properly. Saucepans need not be dirty things if properly kept, but you must see that they are washed directly they are done with, and upon no account allow them to be put away dirty from one day's use, to be cleaned the next. Have them well scrubbed with your saucepan brush, and occasionally some silver sand, and if you do not wish to run the risk of getting the next thing cooked in them spoilt and burnt, be careful that all the soot on the outside is well brushed off too. When they are washed, stand them before the fire for a few minutes to get thoroughly dry inside, before putting away, to prevent rust.

"If at any time Betsy is too busy to thoroughly wash the saucepan at once, let her fill it with hot water, and leave it on the fire to boil till she can attend to it; or sometimes, if its contents have not been at all greasy, she should pour off the water, after it has well boiled up, and wipe the pan round with a cloth, when it may be put away safely. The frying-pan should not be scrubbed, as that would roughen the bottom and cause the contents to burn; it should be washed in hot water with a little soda in it, and if done before the pan has cooled there will be no difficulty in wiping it clean with a cloth.

"Always make a rule of clearing up as you go on; it is a habit you will soon acquire, and which will save you a world of trouble. It is quite as easy to put a thing in its proper place when done with as to keep moving it about to make room for fresh requisites.

"You will, perhaps, wonder what the chimney-brush is for? I know there was one in the back-kitchen when I left home, but I do not think I explained its use to you. I was reminded of it this morning by a great commotion next door; their kitchen chimney had taken fire, and alarmed them all very much. It was entirely owing to negligence in allowing the chimney to get blocked with soot, so I determined to send you a word of caution, lest you should meet with a similar disaster. Once a week, or even oftener if you are having much cooking, you should instruct Betsy to sweep away the soot in the chimney, as far up as she can reach, with the brush provided on purpose. Your parlour chimney, and all others with registers which are much used, will require doing oftener, as the soot collects and catches fire so very quickly round the register.

"When all these matters are looked to, and put to rights, it will leave you a little breathing time before beginning the mince-meat and Christmas puddings. You will find such minute directions for both of these in the cookery book that I need say nothing about them, but will only suggest that you begin in good time, first stoning the raisins, because if anything should hinder you from finishing off quickly, these will keep quite well for a little while after stoning in a covered jar, while if you began with the other ingredients and were hindered from mixing them quickly the mince-meat would be spoilt.

"One word more, dear Madge, before closing. I hope you understood what I meant in my last letter about Tom and Dick. I have been afraid since I wrote it lest I had not explained clearly.

"What I think you should aim at is, not to have to tell them to do this or that, but to have such a good influence over them that a hint will be enough. And until you have acquired this influence I think you should ask rather than order them to do what you wish; boys are generally quite willing to oblige others, if asked politely, but they naturally resent being told peremptorily to do anything, particularly by one so nearly of their own age, and their faults are from want of thought, not want of will. You will find that love works wonders. Take the words of the Bible for your motto: 'Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous,' even to young brothers. Above all, do not lose your temper, for all boys (and girls, too) feel they have the best of the argument if they succeed in ruffling the temper of their elders.

"Do not be offended at my speaking so plainly, I appreciate your difficulties, and know that it is no easy task to keep order without giving any cause for offence to boys gifted with so large a share of mischief and good spirits as ours are; but be assured, dear Madge, that in your efforts you will always have the sympathy of your loving sister,

"JOANNA HELLIER."

"P.S.—I must tell you that in a letter a day or two ago father spoke of your management with the highest praise, and you know he never says anything like that unless he feels it very strongly."

The chilly days at the end of October were over, and November had set in damp and cold, proclaiming that the very threshold of winter was reached. A week or so before Margaret had performed the task of putting away all the now cast-off summer garments, and had prepared the household for the approach of winter by getting out the warm clothing. This piece of work had been anticipated with some trepi-

dation, and it did truly seem to be a formidable undertaking.

There were two boxes amongst the winter stores which Margaret approached with some curiosity. They contained some of her father's and brothers' winter flannels, and her own fur jacket, muff, and so forth. She had been at home the previous spring for a day or two, in consequence of sickness in the school, and in helping her sister to pack these things away there had been some discussion as to the best means for preventing moths, with which they were a good deal troubled.

"I am going to try something new this year, Madge. I cannot bear the smell of camphor, and Arthur says that bitter apple or lavender would do just as well," said Joanna.

Margaret was firmly of opinion that nothing could be so good as camphor, having heard it mentioned in a chemistry class, or some such lesson at school, that this substance was absolutely fatal to insect life, if sufficiently strong. She was, however, too wise to argue the point, when her sister's opinion was strengthened by that of her betrothed, but agreed to an experiment. One box was accordingly packed with two large lumps of camphor (bought at an oil shop for twopence per ounce); the other was to be dependent on bitter apple and two lavender bags.

It was these rival cases that Margaret felt some excitement in examining. First the lid of the camphorated box was carefully lifted, the top article removed, the next, and on through the box. "No," she cried exultantly, "not a sign of living thing; now for the other one."

The lid was opened, and a cloth coat raised. Puff! out flew a moth! "Catch it, catch it, Betsy," she cried, "I must send it to Miss Joanna." And, alas for the dignity upon which she prided herself! mistress as well as maid started round the room in pursuit of the offender, who was finally flicked down by a duster and captured. Now this was a very foolish proceeding, as in the meantime the other moths, had there been any, might have followed their leader, and gone in search of new fabrics in which to take up their abode. But happily there was but one more to be found, in spite of the most diligent searching, though these were quite enough to convince Margaret of the superior merits of camphor. In her heart of hearts she had a shrewd suspicion, which was really the truth, that any other aromatic substance would do equally well, provided the scent were only strong enough, the great superiority of camphor being due to its retaining its strength such a long time, and being cheap and convenient. She discovered afterwards another property of scents, that of preventing the formation of mould on ink, paste, leather in all its shapes, and even seeds, and very useful she found her discovery, for by putting amongst such things, kept in a damp cupboard, a piece of cotton wool dipped in any perfumed oil, she effectually preserved them from mould, that pest of housekeepers.

In looking over the winter things, she found that some new quilts would be required for the boys' beds; instead of the white ones, she was wise enough to buy Crimean blankets, which have a better appearance than any cheap quilt, and are also much more healthy, being lighter, though quite as warm, and the boys were delighted with their bright red colour. Margaret was in the habit of gleaning any little ideas of this sort from all kinds of sources, and always when reading books or articles kept her eyes open for any which would be likely to be useful; if it did not apply just at the time of reading, she would make a note of it in Joanna's miscellany book for future use.

At the same time Margaret took the opportunity of looking over the house and table-linen. She found, as Joanna warned her, that



one or two of the sheets were wearing thin in the middle; these she cut in two lengthwise, sewing together the sides, that the strongest part might come into the middle, which always wears out first. Several dinner napkins, too, which seemed beyond darning for table use, were degraded to the rank of fish or potato napkins; the worn table-cloths she darned so neatly with flourishing thread that she flattered herself no one would notice the holes, but lest any fastidious visitor should come with prying eyes, these were reserved for breakfast use, and a couple of new ones bought for grand occasions.

In mending the summer clothes before putting them away, Margaret had frequent recourse to the patch drawer, a most useful institution founded many years before, in which were kept pieces and patches of all sorts and sizes rolled up in neat little bundles, which, however unlikely it might seem, were sure to come in for use sooner or later.

It will be readily believed that with this amount of mending to do, Margaret had her hands quite full for some days. Betsy proved to be one of those good-tempered, willing girls, who, though slow at learning and requiring constant looking after, seemed to be capable of an almost endless amount of work. With her assistance, cheerfully given, the mending was soon accomplished, and Margaret was recovering from her exertions when Joanna's letter came. It was at breakfast, and she groaned aloud when she read it.

"Why that heartrending sound?" asked Mr. Colville. "Has Joanna discovered that Arthur is not the perfect man she supposed; or have either of them broken their arms, or what?"

"Oh, no, father; nothing of that sort. Only—well, I do think Joanna is really too particular and methodical for anything. Truly, if everything has to be looked after and bothered about to the extent she says, galley-slaves will have an easy life compared to mine and the unfortunate Betsy's."

"Who shall decide, when doctors disagree?" laughed her father. "I do not feel myself competent to act as go-between for two such accomplished housekeepers. But I do not want you to do too much, dear, on any account; have a charwoman in to help you at any time when you feel you have rather more than you can manage."

"Oh no, father, there is nothing more than I can do perfectly well," she replied, scorning the idea of a charwoman, "and I have no doubt at all that Joanna is right; but it was rather a blow, just when I thought there was nothing that *could* want doing for the next week, to be told by my mentor that the pots and pans have to be looked to at this identical time."

"As you are so overwhelmed with work for the next day or two I suppose I must send a refusal for that?" remarked Mr. Colville, with a twinkle in his eye as he tossed over to her a letter enclosing tickets. It was signed Wilfred Trent, and its purport was to request Mr. Colville's acceptance of tickets for himself and his daughter for a concert to be given in the town hall some few days later.

"How delightful!" she cried, her eyes sparkling and her cheeks rosy with pleasure. "Just look at the list of singers; it will be perfectly lovely, and it is such an age since I have been to a good concert!"

"But what about those pots and pans?"

"They will be all finished and settled by this time to-morrow, I'll engage, father. Oh, boys, I wish you were coming too!" she added, turning to them with a burst of kindness, in the exuberance of her pleasure.

"I should not have gone, even if Trent had sent me a ticket," said Tom, grandly; "there is a match on that evening, our eleven against

Southall Grammar School, that I am compelled to be at. Thanks all the same, you know."

The prospect of the pleasure in store kept Margaret in the best of spirits all that day, and the disagreeable "grand parade" in the kitchen, which Joanna recommended, was carried through with a light heart. Finding that, as is so often the case, her enamelled saucepan was considerably chipped, and as she meditated having all manner of dainty dishes at Christmas, she went to the extravagance of buying two of the earthenware pots Joanna mentioned, not the elegant but fragile French china lined with white, but common brown ware, like pipkins with covers to them. They proved afterwards most successful, as she could wash them out quickly, and then use them for one thing after another, without the unpleasant result of the flavour of the first thing cooked permeating the whole number. Having been rather economical during the previous weeks, too, and saved a little money,



OUR YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER DUSTING THE DRAWING-ROOM ORNAMENTS.

she expended two shillings and sixpence on a frying basket, which soon repaid her for the outlay by the clean and economical way in which rissoles and all other "fries" could be cooked in it, and the quickness and ease of dishing them up from it.

The evening of the concert came at length, and Margaret set out with her father for the hall, being assured by her admiring brothers as she stepped into the cab that she looked "awfully jolly," and ought to be dressed like that all day and every day.

And very sweet she certainly looked in her pretty pale blue cashmere dress, dainty lace ruffles at throat and wrists, and a knot of blue ribbons nestling amongst the shining waves of her soft brown hair. She thoroughly enjoyed the music, and as she sat drinking in every note and expression, many a head was turned to look at the bright, happy-faced girl, who, with glowing cheeks and shining eyes, seemed oblivious of all around her, seeing and hearing only the singers and the floods of melody they poured forth.

At the close of the concert Mr. Colville suggested that as it was a beautiful starlight

night, they should walk home, to which Margaret joyfully assented. As his road lay in the same direction, Mr. Trent joined them, and they walked home together. On reaching the house, Mr. Colville asked him to come in to get a set of engravings which he had promised to lend him, adding, "I suppose there is some bread and cheese or something for supper, Madge, if Mr. Trent will join us?"

By that time they were in the hall, but Margaret's rather dubious and hesitating, "Yes, father," made Mr. Trent reply, "I am afraid it will not be convenient to Miss Colville; she naturally does not approve of such late visitors."

"Oh, it was not that; it was very rude of me not to speak more cordially, and I hope you will stay; but—well, the real truth is, I am afraid you will think I am always playing the 'maid of all work,' for the last time you came I was all over flour, and now I told our servant not to sit up for us, as we have to be so early in the mornings, and that I would get the supper myself."

"Then, Miss Colville, I must thank you sincerely for giving me the opportunity of seeing that there is one young lady in the town (which I have had cause to doubt lately) who treats her servant as a fellow-creature and not a machine, and also (which I doubted still more) that there is one who does not consider it derogatory to understand and practise household work herself."

While this conversation was going on, Margaret had slipped off her gloves and bracelets, and donned the large white apron and sleeves which Betsy had put on the table ready for her. On the trivet stood a small saucepan, the contents of which, a savoury stew, she emptied on to a dish put into the fender to warm.

"You see," Mr. Trent, she said, laughing, "we are all blessed with such very good appetites, I knew it would be no use providing a few little delicate nothings, or they could have been laid out ready before hand, and besides, one needs something warm this cold weather. But our kitchen is not only downstairs, but down a very disagreeable flight of stone steps, so Betsy and I invented this arrangement between us. The second course is invisible to the naked eye, until pointed out;" whereat she produced from under the grate a pie dish, closely covered with an inverted tin baking dish. "This is only an experiment," she remarked, "but it seems to have been successful; it is a plain and humble rice pudding, made very milky to allow for some drying up."

"A capital idea, Madge; was it your own?" "Well, not entirely, father; as Betsy says, 'we goes partners' in culinary matters; I supply the brains and she the experience. I should simply have put the pie-dish on the top of the saucepan, instead of a lid, in most cases, but with the wind in this quarter our chimney has taken to smoking, and of course that would have spoilt both."

Supper over, and after a pleasant chat over the fire about music and musicians, Mr. Trent departed, and Margaret rose to go to bed, tired indeed, but full of delight at her happy evening.

"My child," said Mr. Colville, "I must tell you before you go to bed how pleased I am at the pains you take to make everything comfortable for me and all of us. I think you are a capital little housekeeper, and in your kind thoughtfulness for others you constantly remind me of your dear mother. That you may become in all things like her, my child, is the greatest blessing I could wish for you."

Need we say that Margaret's sleep that night was sweet and her dreams happy?

(To be continued.)



pencil or brush, the infinite delicacy of the gradations and the playful variety of oppositions of the tones presented to you by nature, but you must do your best to follow them, because each delicate tint of light gives both harmony and contrast to the tint which preceded it, and leads up to the point, or points, of highest light, which, without the relief that these afford, would appear crude and staring. And so with the deeper shades, the more numerous they are, and the more quaintly they are varied in their disposition, the greater the value of their combined effect.

Now a few words to direct your attention to a very important point—the feeling or sentiment which your drawing may be made to express. It is not practicable for me, here and now, to offer more than a hint or two, which your own intelligence and experience must serve to amplify.

If you are observant you will have found that in scenes where a sentiment of quietude and repose prevails, the principal light is usually separated from the chief dark by a considerable space, and that the intervening portions of the picture are occupied by a gentle scale of intermediate tones, whereas, in those subjects which possess a more striking and energetic effect, the deep dark is in closer opposition to the high light, and surrounding these are the varied gradations of half-tones.\* This example, crude and familiar as it is, will serve to make clear to you the line of thought to which I wish now to direct you.

Study these differences in the character of different scenes, and reason upon them. Bring the intellect and the sympathies to the aid of the senses, for it is by attuning your mind to a familiar and appreciative intercourse with nature and by a comprehension of her hidden meanings that you will alone be enabled to interpret her to others and to produce drawings which shall not be mere topographical descriptions, but shall shadow forth something of those qualities which stir our hearts with vague emotion at the sight of the beautiful, the tender, or the noble in nature.

As you come to attempt more extensive and ambitious landscapes you will find that these are by no means simple, but are complex in their nature, and that each component part is in itself a little picture, subject to the same rules and built upon the same principles as any other; and, further, that all these parts must be brought together in due subordination and in a definite relationship to form the entire picture.

Lastly, if all this seems to be a "hard saying," remember, for your consolation, that you are not now, perhaps not ever, to try to compose a picture. The rules and principles which I have so far set forth, or which I may yet bring to your notice, are only to be borne in mind when you are looking at nature, in order to guide you in your selection and to enable you to understand and recognise somewhat of the less obvious laws of arrangement which, although they may be, and are often, overlooked by the uninstructed, yet do as surely underlie the most beautiful scenes in nature as they do the most successful works of art.

(To be continued.)

\* To avoid confusion, I speak here only of the power of light and shade to express such qualities as those of repose, of stress, of tenderness, and so on; but the arrangement of the lines in a picture is also very important in this connection, and so are other more subtle constituents of the composition.



## THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM.

By DORA HOPE.



It was with something of an effort that Margaret rose rather earlier than usual the morning after the concert, so her eyes looked a little drowsy as she entered the kitchen, where she found Betsy engaged in filling the coal-scuttle with wood and paper to light the fire.

"Betsy," she said, "I'm going to lay and light the dining-room fire myself this morning, and I want you to come and watch, so that you can do it in exactly

the same way yourself for the future."

"Well, Miss Margaret, I 'ope I knows 'ow to light a fire without being showed," said Betsy, rather huffily.

"Well, how much wood does each fire take?"

"Pretty near a bundle, one with another."

"Why, Betsy, I think it is time somebody showed you, then, for you ought to make one bundle light three fires, including the kitchen. Do you know that you waste, at the very least, fifteen shillings a year by extravagance in fire-wood alone?"

Betsy was rather staggered at those plain statistics, and followed her young mistress without more ado.

"Now, you see, I first of all put a scanty layer of cinders at the bottom of the grate, next some crumpled paper, and about half a dozen pieces of wood laid crosswise, and lastly some knobs of coal. You must be careful always that the whole is well back in the grate, and leave plenty of air-holes between the pieces. When it has all caught fire you can put a shovelful of cinders on the top, and you will have a hot fire in no time. And that reminds me, Betsy, that I want to talk to you about cinders after breakfast; I am afraid we do not manage them as well as we might; but we must get on with the other work now, or breakfast will be late."

Betsy looked dejected; she did not altogether like Margaret's burst of energy in the morning; it was much less trouble to keep on in the old routine.

Breakfast over, Margaret returned to the kitchen.

"What do you do with the cinders, Betsy, after you have raked out the fire?"

"Oh, I puts a few large bits on the back of the fire, and throws the rest in the dust-bin?"

"Well, I have had a letter from my sister about it. I will read you what she says:—'You must remember that cinders are as much fuel as coals, and there is no more excuse for wasting the one than the other. They are much better than coal for some purposes; for instance, in a bedroom they are safer, as there is not the danger of sparks flying from them, and a better and hotter fire can always be made with part cinders than with coals alone. The best fire for cooking is made up of lumps of coal in front, and cinders at the back.' So you see, Betsy, we have been very

wasteful; but I hope we shall reform now. This wooden box on rockers, which I bought yesterday, is a proper cinder-sifter; and for the future I want you to place all the ashes into this wire tray at the top, put the lid on, and rock it for a minute; then if you leave it for a little while before taking off the lid, you will find that all the small ash has gone through the tray into the box beneath, leaving on the top only large cinders ready for use."

"Humph," said Betsy, "I never was in a place before where they could not afford coals, and had to burn up old rubbish."

Margaret flushed up, and felt inclined to be very angry, the more so as she had a little uncomfortable feeling herself that perhaps it was rather mean to watch every farthing so carefully; but she was determined not to lose her temper, so took no notice of Betsy's rudeness, and went on—

"For the next week or so I want you to save small ash in this large box, instead of throwing it into the dust-bin as usual; with this very cold weather I am afraid all our plants in the garden will be killed; so as soon as you have collected a good quantity, I will get a boy to come in and heap it round the roots of the delicate ones to protect them."

"But won't it spoil the look of the garden, miss?"

"It will not show much, and at any rate it is better than letting our plants be frost-bitten, and next spring we will have it dug into the ground, and it will very much improve our heavy clay soil. If the boys begin keeping fowls in the spring, as they talk of doing, they will be glad of all the ash we can spare for the fowls to scratch amongst."

"Please, miss, there ain't no 'mergencies left."

"No *what*, Betsy?"

"Why none of them 'mergencies in tins, miss, that you use when anybody comes in unexpected."

"Oh, ah! yes, Betsy, I understand," said Margaret, smothering her laughter; "I am glad you reminded me."

The meaning of Betsy's curious statement was that, on Joanna's suggestion, Margaret always kept a few tins of meat, soup, and fruit amongst her stores in case of emergencies, such as the unexpected arrival of visitors, when the soup could be warmed in a very few minutes, while the fruits and meats might be eaten as they were if there was no time for preparing them in any of the numerous ways described on the tins. These emergencies, as Betsy called them, were found to answer very well, and prevented any embarrassment at the appearance of an extra guest at the table.

That evening Margaret told her father about the cinders, and asked him if he thought she was getting too parsimonious.

"Decidedly not in this case," he answered, for if Joanna is correct in what she says, you must waste a good deal of money, and waste can never be justified even in the smallest trifles. Have you forgotten the injunction to 'Take care of the pence, for the pounds will take care of themselves'? But look at it another way. Suppose you find that by careful management you can save threepence a week, that would pay for the schooling of some poor child. If you spent your savings in that way you would not think it stingy, would you?"

Margaret brightened up at that, for it happened there was a poor family she very much wanted to help; but she had found so much difficulty in making her money last that she had not ventured to do anything for them. Now she determined to begin with the New Year to help the poor mother by paying for the schooling of at least one of the children.



It is true that at the close of the week sometimes a small balance would be discovered, but this was only occasionally, and any such surplus was sure to be needed, sooner or later, to replace broken articles, or to pay for new scrubbing brushes, or some such incidental expense. Margaret had a small cash box for these little savings, which was never opened except in case of real necessity. Just now the box was being watched with particular care, but it was never opened on any pretext whatever, for it had been long ago fixed that Joanna and her husband should spend Christmas at the old home. During this visit the expenses of the household of course be greater, and the savings of previous weeks would all be needed. Now the happy time was drawing near, and all Margaret's perplexities were being saved up till she could talk them over with her sister. The pleasure with which Joanna anticipated the visit was, it must be confessed, tinged with curiosity. Although conscious of her sister's strong desire to do well, she could not but wonder how the household management, conducted by one so young and inexperienced, would strike a new comer.

Thinking that perhaps Margaret would feel a little nervous about the approaching visit, she determined rigorously to avoid noticing any little delinquencies, or at any rate to appear not to notice them.

During the first day or two, though there were very few mishaps of any kind, still it was amusing to mark her air of utter unconsciousness when anything in the *ménage* went wrong. Even when Betsy got a little "mixed" over the sauces at dinner one day, and handed Joanna parsley and butter with plum pudding, she appeared quite unaware that it was not a usual accompaniment to sweets.

Betsy related this little episode to her young mistress the next morning with much contrition; Margaret laughed at her sister's delicacy, and at once saw through her schemes to spare her feelings.

"It is very kind of you, Joanna, to pretend not to see things, and of course I am thankful in a way, to see you looking abstractedly in another direction when accidents happen. But I would really rather you would pry about and find fault, and tell me of things you see wrong that perhaps I do not notice myself," said Margaret, as the two sat having a cosy chat before tea.

"There is little or nothing to find fault with, Madge; in fact, so far from disapproving, I am learning myself, but there is just one little thing I thought of at dinner that might be a useful suggestion to you, that is, to avoid getting so many spills on the cloth. You should not have the gravy put on the dish, round the meat, as you do at present; it is almost impossible to carve without splashing it over, and it is altogether much more convenient in a sauce-tureen. Then you should always spread a serviette under the carver's dish and plates to catch anything that may be dropped. I am afraid it would offend the boys, or I should advise you to put one under their plates too! Some people always have them—one to each person, or a long narrow cloth down the whole length of the table at each side. They are afterwards removed with the crumbs in them, which does away with the necessity for a crumb brush; but I do not recommend that to you, as the washing would be as expensive as frequent clean table-cloths."

"Thank you, that was one thing I was going to ask you about. I have a whole list of questions here, so prepare for a good catechising. Now, stand still like a good little girl, with your hands behind you and your head up, and tell me how to prevent the pipes bursting."

"Have you had any burst already?"

"Yes. Didn't I tell you? In that thaw last week, directly the water began to come into the cistern, Dick came running along to my room to say he thought the end of the world was come, for his room was flooded with water. It was pitch dark, like the dead of night, but it was really six o'clock in the morning. Poor Dick had to dress and rush off for the plumber, and he soon put it right, but the room was in a dreadful state, and the plaster is all broken off the ceiling; and you know it *might* happen in the middle of the night, when we could not get the plumber, and whatever should we do?"

"Well, dear, in this case, as in many others, prevention is better than cure, and the best advice I can give you is, in frosty weather keep your taps just dripping, and if there is a gas jet near any pipe likely to freeze, let one burner be always alight; that will generally give enough warmth to prevent it. And also any outside pipes should be covered up with straw or old carpet. They generally burst when the water is coming in; and if that should happen again, in spite of your precautions, till a plumber can be brought you should fasten down the ball in the cistern, tie it down with string or any contrivance of that sort, to stop the flow of water; and if you can get at the part of the pipe that has burst, stuff up the hole as well as you can with anything that comes first to hand."

"Well, I think I will try the prevention first. My ideas are generally a little hazy on first waking in the morning, and I am afraid I should not have presence of mind to tie down the ball. Now I will let you off the rest of my catechising for a little while, though I have hardly begun my list, but the other questions will keep."

On Christmas Eve the pleasant task of decorating the dining and drawing-rooms was accomplished, and it was a merry party that engaged in the work. Some dust sheets were spread on the carpet, and Joanna and her sister sat dexterously weaving wreaths and festoons, and giving directions to Arthur, Tom, and Dick, who were performing feats of gymnastics on the top of step ladders, in their endeavours to satisfy the demands of their task-mistresses as to the position of the decorations.

In the midst of the work Betsy appeared at the door, with a face of dismay, and beckoned Margaret out of the room, to tell her that the turkey was "froze as hard as a brickbat," and so was the sirloin of beef for Boxing Day.

"Well put them before the fire till they are melted."

"La! Miss Margaret, that will make them so awful tough; besides they will only freeze again as soon as I put them out, and that turkey won't taste no better than an old goat" (a favourite simile of Betsy's).

"Oh! dear me! wait a minute and I'll ask Mrs. Hellier."

A whispered consultation between the sisters resulted in the turkey and all the other meat in the larder being hung up in the kitchen, not near the fire, and there left all night, which proved quite as effectual a way of thawing and preventing their again freezing as the frequent plan of washing in warm water, with the advantage of not taking out the flavour.

Christmas Day came and went, as happily as it always must do when a family, scattered abroad through the year, are re-united to celebrate the anniversary of our Saviour's birth.

A few days later found Margaret in a bustle of business and excitement, preparing for the entertainment of some friends who had been invited to meet the young bride and bridegroom. This would be the first time that Margaret had had the ordering and management of anything larger than the addition of

one or two guests at their usual evening meal; but now friends, to the number of twenty, had been invited, so that considerable preparation was necessary. The guests were invited for tea at seven o'clock, and supper was to be at ten. Happily the contents of Margaret's little savings-box were not yet exhausted, so that she was able to provide for the party with the addition of only ten shillings extra from her father. The bill of fare for the supper was as follows: hot soup; turkey, ham, tongue, and cold sirloin of beef; hot Christmas pudding and mince-pies; one dish of trifle, one jelly, one blancmange, and sundry little dishes of tarts, biscuits, and fruits.

This list being decided upon, everything necessary for the carrying out of it was bought in and prepared, as far as possible, the day before; the soup was made and the meats cooked; the pastry, too, was made, and the jelly and blancmange—the two latter being kept in the moulds; then the dishes of biscuits and preserved fruits were set out and tastefully ornamented with twigs of holly. Even the table-cloths and serviettes were put ready, so that the next morning would be left clear for arranging flowers and giving finishing touches, for Margaret was determined not to be like many anxious hostesses, who are in such a bustle and flurry all the day of their party that when the evening comes they are quite too tired to enjoy it.

Immediately after dinner, Margaret laid the table for supper, and very pretty it looked with its display of spotless linen and glittering glass and silver. Mr. Colville had a great objection to the flowers or plants on the dinner-table being so high as to intercept the view of his opposite neighbour, and sometimes did not scruple to rise in the middle of the meal and lift off such an offending decoration, should his daughter happen to have forgotten his objection. Margaret therefore wisely contented herself with placing several small low glasses here and there about the table, containing a few feathery grasses and bright red leaves (gathered and pressed in the autumn for winter use), and whenever there was likely to be a rather large gap between the dishes she laid a device of coloured leaves and fern fronds flat on the cloth, completing the whole by placing in the middle of the table a handsome old china bowl full of glorious many-hued chrysanthemums.

Her tasteful fingers had also prepared some pretty cards, each bearing the name of a guest, and placed on the table to indicate the place he or she was to occupy. Some of them were decorated with little pen and ink sketches, copied from pictures, the selection of which had occupied the boys several evenings; others had a little painted flower, or a group of pressed flowers gummed on them.

This done, she was able to breathe freely and take a little well-earned rest, before proceeding to give a final look round in dining-room and kitchen (the drawing-room was left to Joanna's supervision). She took particular notice that the cold viands were all on the table, and the sideboard well stocked with clean plates, knives and forks and glasses, and then with a last entreaty to Betsy not to get excited and make mistakes, she went to dress for the evening.

When the guests began to arrive, Betsy took the ladies upstairs, and ran down again immediately to be ready for the next arrival. Each party was met at the drawing-room door by Mr. Colville, whilst Margaret stood near a small table in a corner of the room, to dispense tea and coffee after welcoming her friends. The two boys proved capital assistants, and handed round cakes and biscuits as though to the manner born.

When all had arrived, Margaret rang the bell, and Betsy removed the tea things, leaving the table free for the display of Mr. Colville's



engravings, and a number of books and pictures, part of which they had borrowed from friends for the occasion. The evening passed pleasantly for guests and hosts alike. Margaret had never permitted even the busiest day to pass without devoting a little time, though sometimes only ten minutes, to practising her music. Her father liked her to play to him in the evenings when he came home sometimes tired and jaded, and she was always ready to do her best, even though that best was not always of the first order. Her voice was neither powerful nor of great compass, but it was clear and sweet, and several times during the evening she sang with so much expression and with so simple a grace that even the critic listened with pleasure. She had provided a number of glees, and part songs, too, in which the musical members of the party joined, while those who did not care for singing, played various games, headed by Mr. Hellier, who proved a great acquisition in the way of originating new entertainments.

In the meantime Betsy after making sure that her soup and pudding were progressing favourably, had added a soup-plate for each person on the supper table, and a few

minutes before ten o'clock she carried up the soup, hot and savoury, in a large jug, from which she filled each plate; then running upstairs she knocked at the drawing-room door and announced that supper was ready. She came down again quickly to dish up the turkey, and directly the soup was finished, she placed it on the table for the carver to begin operations while she removed the empty soup plates. In the same way, all the appliances for the second course being ready on the table, she now went down to prepare the pudding and mince pies, which plan answered so well that there was not a minute's delay between the courses.

After supper the games were begun again with renewed energy, and it was nearly twelve o'clock before the last guest left, being unanimous in their expressions of pleasure at having spent so delightful an evening together.

So passed this happy Christmastide, rendered all the happier for the Colvilles in that they did not forget, in their own rejoicings, the sufferings of their poorer neighbours who had nothing wherewith to make merry.

It had always been a rule during the lifetime of their mother that each of the children

should try to give some poor child, if not a merry Christmas, at least a happier one than they could otherwise have had, and the plan was still kept up. For weeks beforehand Margaret had been busy mending old clothes and making new ones, while the boys had made scrap-books, bought tops and balls, and denied themselves many little indulgencies to have the more for charity. Mr. Colville, too, had given them some money to spend on meat and materials for Christmas puddings, so that when they started on their rounds, directly after breakfast on Christmas morning, they found their supply of presents so much larger than they could carry, that Tom had to way-lay a schoolfellow who happened to pass and press him into the service. Dick added to the general merriment by insisting upon fastening up a piece of holly and mistletoe in each poor room they visited, "to make it look Christ-massy," as he said. Many cheerless homes were made brighter that morning, and it was with joyous hearts they joined on their return in the grand old song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill to all men."

(To be continued.)

## MISS ROSAMOND CHAMPFLOWER.

### AND HOW SHE SPENT HER CHRISTMAS.

#### CHAPTER III.

##### THE MYSTERIOUS BOX.



THAT evening, just when the grey curtain of early winter twilight was falling on that Christmas Eve over Bellminster, a strange and wonderful thing happened in the house of Miss Champflower. A railway van called

at her door, and delivered a large box. The servant-girl took it in, for just then Miss Champflower and Keziah were out, and great was their surprise on their return to find it standing in the hall. Miss Champflower was certainly expecting no box of any kind, as she declared loudly, but then this box bore most plainly outside her name and full address.

With eager curiosity mistress and servant opened the mysterious lid. What could be hidden beneath all this cunningly wedged-in mass of paper padding? Miss Champflower's hand went searching about inquisitively, and pulled out something. She gave a little scream as she held it up to the light of the candle. It was a grotesque paper mask.

"Why, dear me, whatever is that?" cried Keziah.

"I don't quite know," said Miss Champflower, turning the grinning face about between her fingers rather nervously. "It's something horrid and odd, I think."

Keziah now put in her hand in her turn, and took out a popgun, which went off in her unwary grasp, and made her start and cry out.

"How can such extraordinary disagreeable things have been sent me?" exclaimed Miss Champflower, in indignant plaintive surprise.

"That's more than my headpiece can answer, ma'am," replied Keziah. "It's like Maze Monday in our house to-day. First that imperent letter, and then this here box. But we'll go further into the brains of it before we've done."

Keziah's next discovery was a doll with a sadly tumbled muslin petticoat.

"There's a bit of trumpery finery for you," was her remark. "Dear me! whoever could have wasted their time in packing up such a lot of rubbish?"

"Well, in all the years that I have lived in Bellminster I never experienced such a Christmas Eve as this!" cried Miss Champflower, her cheeks growing more and more flushed as the mysterious box revealed more and more of its incomprehensible contents.

"We shall have all Troy town here by-and-bye," said Keziah, as she brought to light a prancing wooden horse and a gaily painted parrot.

Miss Champflower sat down, as though overcome by the unpleasant novelty of the situation. Keziah persevered in her task of emptying the box, and before long the two elderly spinsters were surrounded by a whole nursery full of rattles, whistles, balls, tops, jumping mice, squeaking dogs, climbing monkeys, and nine-pins. They were a comical sight enough, as they sat gazing blankly now at each other, now at this

strange addition to their household effects, with their perplexed minds looking out of their bewildered eyes.

"There must certainly be some mistake about the box," said Miss Champflower at length. "I shall send down to the railway station, and see if we can make anything out about it."

Keziah shook her head, and murmured something to the effect that, in her opinion, it would be no use, for impudence had to do with the box as well as the letter; but Miss Champflower sent to the station nevertheless. She received no light from thence, however; the officials could only state that the box had arrived, by goods-train, addressed to Miss Champflower, as she herself had seen, and that they had forwarded it to her in their van accordingly. Miss Champflower and Keziah had, therefore, to go to bed that Christmas Eve with the box and its contents under their roof, and with the strange mystery quite unsolved.

Just at the time when Keziah and her mistress were in their deepest wonder over the box, the lady of the crimson-bows was standing at her window in the next house. A big round Christmas moon was just rising over the town, turning the church spires to shafts of silver, and the girl, as she looked up at it, kissed a ring that shone on her finger, and blushed softly, while the moonbeams shed a tender halo round her; blushed softly, and whispered a prayer.

It was Christmas morning, and all the air was full of a great golden harmony of bells, that went and came in waves of melody upon the frosty breeze; and hearts that had their cradles of child-



them, because, of course, as I have never walked all my life, I shall have to learn how to run."

Happy were the thoughts Tiny had, and many were the plans she made as she lay silently on her little bed, imagining what she would do in the new home where she was soon going!

But the days passed on, and the Lord Jesus did not come to fetch her. Why could it be? Emma had gone from the next bed but one, and little Mary from the cot just opposite.

"There must be some reason," Tiny murmured to herself one morning. "I'm so tired of lying here, everywhere hurts me, and

I can't go to sleep. Why doesn't the Lord Jesus fetch me as well as Emma and Mary?"

And the tears stole down the poor thin cheeks, for each day the waiting grew harder to bear, and hope deferred maketh the heart sick.

"I know the reason now," she whispered the next morning, a joyful light breaking over her wan face. "I'm just the littlest girl in the room, and when the Lord Jesus comes in He does not see me, I am so small and weak, so of course He doesn't know I want Him. To-night I will lie with my arms over my head, and then when He comes in He will think, 'There is a little girl here that wants

me,' and when He walks up to my bed, I will say, 'Oh, kind, good Jesus, take me with you to-night, for I am so tired, and I ache all over, and I want to go to your home.' Then I know He will carry me right away with Him, and I shall laugh and sing and play and love Him."

The night came round again, and when once more the day broke the nurse went to each little bed. Bending over one, she saw the little form upon it lying still and motionless, the arms raised over the head, sleeping the last long sleep. Then she knew that in the midnight watches the Lord Jesus had entered the room and carried Tiny away with Him to His own happy home.

M. A. B.



## THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM.

BY DORA HOPE.



ONE is my gladness, and fled the merry party

Which but as yesterday were gathering round the yule,"

sang Margaret one morning, early in January, as she tripped about the house, duster in

hand, giving a touch here and a vigorous rub there. The pathetic words and air were but ill matched by the brightness of her face, rosy with exercise, whilst the sprightly and somewhat jerky rendering of the song, interrupted as it was with attention to housewifely cares, did not add to its appropriateness. It was true that at any rate a portion of the "merry party" had fled, in the persons of Mr. and Mrs. Helier, who had returned to their own home, and Margaret had not been without a little feeling of desolateness for a few days after her sister's departure; but being a very resolute young person, with a strong notion of the futility of mourning over the inevitable, she set herself to forget her trouble, saying that there is nothing like hard work for bringing people to their senses.

The visit had been a very pleasant one in many ways, for Joanna's kind advice and encouragement were very grateful to Margaret's unaccustomed ears—unaccustomed, not from want of affection on the part of father and brothers, but what man, still less what boy, can guess half the little worries and anxieties that beset a young housekeeper in her daily round?

So far from condemning Margaret's economies—or, as she called them, her little mean tricks, such as sifting the cinders—Joanna approved of them highly; indeed, recommended her to add to the category. Considering the small sum out of which Margaret had to provide all the food and drink for the family—who, according to Betsy, were all "very 'earty," besides paying for washing, stationery, small travelling expenses, such as omnibus fares, and any incidental expenses, like breakages—Joanna said she thought strict economy in trifles was not only admissible, but absolutely necessary.

"How do you portion out the week's money, Madge?" she asked one day. "I

am curious to know if you have arrived at about the same result that I did in my time."

Margaret looked blank. "I do not quite see what you mean; I do not portion it out at all; it goes just as I happen to want it."

"Oh, but you ought to have an idea of the proportion spent in each branch of the outlay. If you will bring the account-book we will compare the bills for the last few weeks, and find the average."

This done, it was found that in Joanna's opinion the butcher's and grocer's bills swallowed up too large a proportion, which latter she said she had expected, as she had noticed Margaret's taste for all kinds of fancy dishes and sweet puddings. She advised her, therefore, to curtail her expenses in that direction.

"I will put down on paper, as nearly as I can remember, how I divide my money," she went on. "You know Arthur gives me thirty shillings a week, out of which I pay for the same things that you do. I always keep the real food expenditure under a pound, that is to say, when we are alone, though if we have friends, or anything extra like that, I cannot quite manage it. Now here is the list, which shows a fair average, though, of course, it varies a little. For instance, I often have fish instead of, or as well as, meat:—

	s.	d.
Grocer	-	3 3
Bread and Flour	-	2 0
Greengrocer	-	1 3
Meat and bacon	-	8 0
Milk and eggs	½	1 6
Laundress	-	2 0
Butter and cheese	-	2 0
Total 20 0		

This leaves me about ten shillings for sundries, under which head come stationery, breakages in the house, cab or omnibus fares, and small charities. To make a fund for kitchen requisites, such as scrubbing-brushes and pails, I put by one shilling at the beginning of each week. If I left it to the end I should be inclined to think I could not spare it, unless anything were really pressingly wanted."

"That is really wonderful, Joanna. I should not like to have to provide for *this* household on thirty shillings a week."

"You will have to allow more for meat in proportion to the other expenses than I do.

Two growing boys, with splendid health and appetites to match, will not be contented with those little dainty-made dishes which satisfy us, and can be made out of a morsel of meat or a few bones; but I still think your meat bills are much too high."

"But, Joanna, *though my butcher's portion* is to be so low, you find no fault with the large greengrocery average I have been having."

"No, I do not think the greengrocer is high; indeed, I think you should try to have even a little more green food than you generally provide. Two vegetables at dinner, for instance, make much more of a meal than having only one, with very little difference in the expense. But to counterbalance it, if there is any, you might have boiled rice occasionally, instead of potatoes, not too often, you know, but just now and then as a change. Lentils, too, and haricot beans are very inexpensive, and make a variety."

"Then you certainly ought to buy a little fruit occasionally. At this time of the year I know fresh fruit is dear, but you can get plenty of oranges, and they may be prepared in so many different ways that you need never be at a loss."

"I wish I knew how to preserve them, like those we had at Mrs. Barclay's on Tuesday."

"I think I can gratify you, for she very kindly gave me the receipt. Here it is: 'Cut off a little of the rind, either a diamond-shaped piece here and there or a ring all round; then put the oranges in cold water for three days, changing the water twice. Tie each one separately in thin muslin, and boil in fresh water till quite tender. Weigh the oranges before boiling, and make a syrup in the proportion of two pounds of loaf sugar to a pound of the fruit, and as much water as will be required to completely cover the oranges; boil it till the scum ceases to rise, then put in the fruit, still in the muslin, and boil gently for an hour and a half, which will ensure their keeping well. Put into jars and cover with syrup.' Mrs. Barclay says if you follow this exactly you can make enough to last all the year, it is sure to keep."

"But that would be too troublesome and expensive for everyday use."

"Yes, but there are many less troublesome ways of preparing this fruit. Nothing could be simpler than orange salad, for instance. You have only to peel the oranges, being careful to remove every particle of skin, then



either cut them in slices or scoop out all the pulp with a spoon, or leave them whole, and lay them in a glass dish, and sprinkle powdered sugar thickly over them a few hours before they are wanted; and if you want it to look particularly nice, cover the whole with whipped-up white of egg and sugar. For another variety there is compote of oranges. That requires a syrup, but it is very easy to make. Cut off the yellow outer rind in thin strips till you have about three ounces, which put on one side. Then peel them properly, and divide into quarters (as you persist in mis-calling the little divisions), being careful not to break the thin skin which covers them. Then make a syrup by boiling the rind with a pound of sugar in a pint and a half of water, and carefully remove the scum as it rises. When it has boiled about a quarter of an hour, put in the pieces of orange, and let them simmer gently for five minutes; then take them out with a spoon very carefully or they will break, and arrange them on a dish. If the syrup seems too thin, let it boil fast for five minutes longer to thicken it, then pour it over the oranges, and put the dish in a cool place till wanted."

"That sounds very easy; I think I shall make a large quantity now oranges are so cheap, and keep it for occasional use."

"If you do, you must make the syrup with two pounds of sugar to a pint and a half of water; one pound is only sufficient for immediate use. But to return to the subject of the butcher: you really spend too much on meat, and I think *might* easily economise a little in that way. Because though boys require a good quantity, you need not get them the more expensive joints. Keep strictly to the rule of having soup for dinner nearly, if not quite, every day. Have the stock-pot always going, and put all sorts of scraps into it; not only meat cooked or raw, but also scraps of vegetables, paste, and bread; all will add to the strength or flavour of the soup, and should the pot be getting low, you may buy a few pennyworth of bones. Be sure to ask the man to chop them up very small for you; some people even pound them, but chopping is much less trouble, and does well enough for ordinary purposes. When you have a good stock, you can make it sometimes clear and sometimes thickened, and flavour it in endless different ways, according to the directions in the cookery books. One of the nicest soups we have is certainly not an expensive one. We soak some lentils for nearly twelve hours, and simmer them for twelve more; then we pour the stock on to them, with scraps of anything and everything the larder contains; and if the larder happens to be particularly empty, we make up the flavour with a pinch of celery seed, burnt onions, or a small quantity of Liebig's extract, which improves it very much. If you begin the dinner with good substantial soup, the onslaught on subsequent courses will be considerably lessened."

"Oh, poor boys! fancy measuring their appetites and counting their mouthfuls in this way! How mean and stingy one does become under a course of housekeeping!"

"Then there are one or two other economies in trifles you might practise, dear, with advantage. You will excuse my saying it, I know, but when one asks for a piece of bread at tea, Betsy, or one of the boys, rushes at the loaf, and with great zeal cuts about three times as much as is wanted, and I have heard you say you do not know what to do with the pieces that are left, except occasional bread-puddings. You might take care that only as much as is required is cut, you will find a difference in the baker's bills even from such a trifle as that. Then should there be any pieces left, a nice way of using them is to pull them apart, place them on a tin, and

bake in a quick oven until crisp and brown, when they are a good substitute for cheese biscuits, which father is sure to like for a change. Crusts can be treated in the same way, only they must be cooked longer than the crumb, then grated, and kept in a bottle for raspings. There is also the vexed question of dripping; this often-despised article is most valuable, and may save you a great deal in butter and lard, if you clarify it carefully. Directly you take the dripping-pan from under the meat, pour the fat through a sieve into a pan of boiling water, and let it stand until cold, when you will find a cake of pure dripping on the surface of the water. Nothing can be better than this for pastry and frying. But besides this dripping, properly so-called, there are other kinds of fat that can be used in the same way. Then what do you do with pieces of fat left from joints of beef? Perhaps you never have any?"

"Oh, yes, we do, very often indeed; neither of the boys like fat, and sometimes a large quantity is wasted. But surely you are not going to tell me to make pies of scraps of cold fat!"

"Certainly I am, I constantly do it myself. I cut off as much fat as I think is likely to be wasted, and put it in a jar into the oven for about an hour, by which time it has subsided into a yellow liquor, which, when strained and left to cool, looks not unlike butter, and answers the same purpose for making all kinds of cakes and pastry."

Besides these economies, at Joanna's suggestion Margaret set up a tool-box, containing nails, screws, hammer, chisel, pincers, and screw-driver, all good and strong of their kind; also an old-fashioned iron glue-pot, and becoming expert in joinery, she saved many a shilling in this way.

At this time also a little change was made in the allowances for dress. Margaret's own allowance of £20 a year she had entirely in her own hands to use as she pleased. Hitherto the boys had had no fixed sum to be spent on their clothes; Mr. Colville bought their suits whenever he thought fit, while Margaret superintended their other garments, and applied to Mr. Colville for funds whenever they required anything new, or to pay for repairs. These frequent small sums spent on tailoring, other repairs, and minor articles of dress rendered it difficult to keep an account of the whole amount spent, besides which Margaret did not at all like so constantly applying to her father about such trifles as a patch on a boot, or a new collar; so after talking it over with her sister, she asked Mr. Colville's permission to make a change; and for the future Margaret had in her care £5 per annum for each boy, out of which she was to pay for everything with the exception of their suits and boots, which Mr. Colville still continued to buy himself. This had a very salutary effect on the boys, for when they were too careless with their clothes Margaret would fetch the account-book, and show them how little balance there was, with the warning that if they went on at that rate they would have to go ragged.

From this long digression let us return to our young housekeeper, as she whisks about the house, as bright as the fresh January morning itself. Having finished the round of the bedrooms, still humming her doleful ditty, she trips downstairs to the kitchen, where a damper is awaiting her in the shape of poor Betsy in floods of tears.

"Oh, Betsy!" she cried, "what is the matter?"

Betsy managed to explain amidst her sobs that a letter from home that morning told her of her mother's dangerous illness, and she must go home without delay. "Though in course, Miss Margaret, dear, I won't go till you are suited."

A looker-on at this juncture might have witnessed a melancholy tableau. The maid, in attitude of dejection, sobbing and sighing by the window; the mistress collapsed into a wooden chair, doing likewise, but less noisily. Much ashamed of her weak-mindedness, the latter soon recovered, however, and hoping her maid had not noticed it, she wiped her eyes covertly, and said briskly—

"Poor Betsy, I am indeed sorry for you, and very sorry that we shall lose you. But you must not think of waiting till we have a new servant. I will go at once and find a charwoman to come every day, and while I am out you must get forward with the dinner and then pack up so as to go by the two o'clock train; and you must take that soup that is in a jelly in the larder for your poor mother, and I will bring you in a few groceries to take too."

To get an honest and clean charwoman, who would come at seven o'clock in the morning and do the work of a general servant for the sum of two shillings a day, which was all Margaret felt she could afford to give, was no very easy task, but by inquiring from the tradesmen, one was found at last.

The next day Margaret went to see her good old friend Mrs. Trent, hoping and expecting to have the difficulty about a new servant solved at once, as so many former ones had been, by her kind advice and experience. On entering that lady's sitting-room our housekeeper was a little taken aback to find not only Mrs. Trent, as she had expected, but also her nephew, whose difficulty in rising from the sofa was a better proof of an invalid state than his appearance, which betokened his usual health.

"My nephew is suffering the penalty of neglecting his old aunt's good advice," said Mrs. Trent, smiling at her nephew, for whom she felt almost the affection of a mother, having had charge of him ever since the death of his own parents, when he was little more than a baby. "He sprained his ankle slightly on Monday, but he would persist in keeping his engagement to bring those books to show your father that evening, and, of course, he made it much worse, and now is compelled to give up moving altogether."

"And so tries to play the wounded hero with as much dignity as possible," laughed Wilfred.

After expressing the deepest sympathy, Margaret explained the object of her visit, but said she would not trouble Mrs. Trent about it now, but would call again when her nephew was better.

"Pray do not let me stop you, Miss Margaret," said Wilfred. "I take a great interest in that servant of yours who opens the door for me when I have the pleasure of calling upon you. She always smiles all over her face, and looks so thoroughly pleased to see one; it is quite refreshing."

After stating the case, Margaret asked if Mrs. Trent could tell her how to get a new maid.

"Had you not better wait a little on the chance of Betsy's being able to come back?"

"Oh, I think there is no chance of the mother recovering; besides, I do not think I am very sorry to lose her. I was at first; it seemed such a dreadful undertaking to have to get a new servant; but you know, Mrs. Trent, Betsy is really very rough and uncouth. I should so like to have a nice quiet, gentle girl about the house, instead of such an elephantine sort of whirlwind, though she does smile when she opens the door."

Mrs. Trent laughed at the comparison, and said she feared Margaret did not appreciate the rare qualities of honesty and good nature and truthfulness of the said whirlwind. However, as a change was inevitable, and not



knowing of any suitable person, she advised her to reply to an advertisement in that day's paper, which sounded very promising. This she did, and, at Mrs. Trent's dictation, dispatched a letter, asking for particulars as to the girl's capabilities, character, and the wages she required, the wounded hero meanwhile evincing an interest in domestic affairs which astonished even himself.

A satisfactory answer was soon received, giving the address of a former mistress to whom Margaret could apply as to character. In the course of a few days this too arrived. It was rather vague, and Margaret's inquiries as to honesty, sobriety, and cleanliness were cleverly evaded.

"Oh, dear! I don't know whether this is meant for a bad character or a good one," Margaret sighed. "It might mean either, but I am sure *any* servant would be better than this voracious charwoman. I should not have thought it possible for any human being to devour as much as that creature does."

Mrs. Trent next advised Margaret to see the young woman before engaging her, and as Margaret looked very much alarmed at the prospect, promised herself to be present at the interview. The result of it was the engagement of Rose Spooner, who informed her future mistress that she preferred being called Spooner. ("What jokes the boys will make!" thought Margaret.)

When Mr. Colville came home that night Margaret met him more cheerfully than she had done since Betsy's departure.

"Oh, father, I have engaged that servant I told you about. Mrs. Trent quite approved of her, or else I should have been afraid to take her; and I think she will be a most charming servant, she is so quiet and pretty-looking, and speaks so softly; so different from the bluff Betsy. I am delighted with her."

"I am glad to hear it, my child; I only hope she will not prove *too* refined; but as Mrs. Trent is satisfied, no doubt it will be all right."

(To be continued.)

## THE WORKER.

### A BALLAD STORY.

Words by F. E. WEATHERLY. Music by C. GOUNOD.

HE was a student, and very, very poor. He had gone to Oxford late in life. An honest wish to do good, as one of God's ministers, had sent him there; not that common and detestable notion that, by being ordained, he would be made a gentleman, for he was a gentleman born. He had been junior partner in a mercantile firm, and his share, when capitalised and re-invested, only gave him a pittance. But he had a brave little wife, and not brave only, but thrifty and industrious. And by the cleverness of her fingers she managed to add a little to their slender income. His disadvantages were great. What little classical knowledge he possessed when he left school, at the age of sixteen, for the counting-house, he had almost forgotten. For the small necessary amount of mathematics his business life had kept him in good training. How different his coming to Oxford was from that of so many of his fellow students! There was no one to greet him and carry him off to the old school club, to renew the pleasant acquaintances of his school life. There was no obsequious scout to welcome him to his college rooms; no bright, cheery dinner in the hall; no little notes to invite him "to spend the evening" afterwards.

He simply arrived in the hubbub of the "first night of term," and drove off in the omnibus—a weary, tiresome round of the town

—to be deposited, the very last of all the passengers, in their dingy lodgings.

"They are shabby, darling," he murmured apologetically, as he fancied he saw a shadow on his young wife's face. "But, you see, Oxford is such a dear place for lodgings."

"What does it matter, dear?" she answered; "we can be as happy here as at home. Besides, we can soon brighten up the place."

And so she did. That was just what she was always doing—brightening up the place. Brightening up his life, and cheering him when he was growing gloomy and down-hearted. Brightening up everybody, from the sour but faithful old Scotch servant they brought with them, to the grimy scavenger's man, who scarcely thought it worth his while to call for the small box of refuse from their tiny abode.

With all their own personal happiness, it was a melancholy life. To be one of the many students, and yet not to be one of them. To see them at lecture, at St. Mary's, on the river, on the cricket-field, and yet not to be really one of them. It was a great deal more than the loneliness and friendliness of settling in a new town. Then, a man's business, parish responsibilities, and so forth, sooner or later bring him friends. Further, there is no bright picture to set in contrast with the picture of his own life. He is not always being brought into contact with others like himself and yet unlike.

But John Shirley had his work to do. And John Shirley's wife was not the one to complain because she was not dressed as were the fellows' wives, and because she had to live in lodgings. There was much, too, to amuse and interest them; intellectual treats only to be enjoyed in great centres like Oxford—the lectures of the professors, the sermons of the select preachers at the University church, the beautiful services in the college chapels, and even in later days the gaiety of college concerts.

"And all," as the little woman would say, laughing to her husband, "all for nothing, John."

By degrees, too, they found friends. The curate of the parish, an indefatigable young fellow, whose zeal John Shirley admired at first and soon came almost to worship, called upon them; his popularity brought them other acquaintances. And though their little society may have been, as one grand Oxford madam termed such society, "On the margin of cultivation, don't you know?" John Shirley and his wife were not only very happy, but popular in their little circle. By dint of dogged perseverance and judicious teaching John Shirley passed his examinations one by one, till at last there was only one left, and the last term of necessary residence was reached.

They returned to Oxford after the long vacation, in a state of nervous excitement. Six weeks at the most would settle the matter, and if all went well he would put on his gown before Christmas; and as he had already attended the required professors' divinity lectures, he might be ordained at the ensuing Easter ordination.

So they planned it all. So they talked of it, so happily, so hopefully, to one another, to their immediate friends. But the young curate, who saw them most and knew them best, thought otherwise, though he did not dare to cloud their hopes, or to damp John Shirley's energies. He saw the hollow cheeks and the hectic flush that was the result of more than mere excitement.

Just before the examination a little baby was born. And it was with happy pride that Shirley began his work. Poor fellow! how little he thought, as he sat writing in the schools, that in a moment the scale of life had turned, and that his wife, whom he had left

apparently in safety, lay hovering on the brink of life and death. Next morning no one sat at Shirley's place in the schools, and the blinds were drawn in Chertsey-terrace. Inside there were a broken-hearted, crushed man, a little, weakly baby crying for its only comforter, and a white, dead woman lying on a bed.

The days and weeks went by. The baby drooped and died; it was happier so, people said. Shirley himself seemed too distracted to notice the little one's death. His ordination, his degree, seemed to fade out of his thoughts. He was as one in a dream. He just realised that both were postponed till the summer. Then he left Oxford for the vacation. And what a vacation it was—a blank, dreary emptiness. He had few friends, and no relatives for whom he cared. He came back to Oxford after a week's absence, took a miserable lodging in a more remote part of the town, and once more commenced his reading; but he had no heart. She who had cheered him, she for whom he had toiled, she with whom he had borne cheerfully the hardships of their laborious life, was gone. And what could take her place? For a long time nothing. After a while calmness and a more hearty belief in the reality of prayer took the place of his despair. And then, in the stillness of his nightly work, her presence was near him, cheering his loneliness.

All through the cold and mild spring weather he worked with a vigour that was all but unneeded, denying himself almost the necessities of life, seeming to find a sort of satisfaction in bodily privations. It was in vain that his friend, the curate, warned him that he was killing himself, urged him to take more exercise, more food. The kindly advice, even if it had been heeded, came too late. John Shirley would never take his degree. He would not live till the hymn should be sung on Magdalen tower in the early May morning.

One night he had closed his books, and had turned round to the fire for a moment's muse before going to bed, when he heard, as plainly as if in life, his wife's voice calling him from the bedroom. He started, pushed aside the chair, rushed to the door, when suddenly the whole place was filled with light. The poor, cheap paper on the walls faded away. The common room and all its rickety furniture was gone. He was looking out into the great vault of heaven, and there clearly, as when she was with him, he saw his wife's face, looking as it were over the blue clouds, happily, longingly at him. And through the stillness of the night he heard her voice.

"I come to thee anon,  
Toil on, my beloved,  
Thy work is well nigh done.

And then she was gone, and he was once more in his poor garret.

The next day, and the next, and the next, he worked with all his energy, but with a tranquil earnestness he never had felt before; and on the third night, reaching to replace a heavy book on its shelf, he overbalanced himself, strained forward to recover his hold, fell, and burst a blood vessel. There was no one to hear the fall, for it was late and the household was asleep.

He lay half unconscious till the first light of the morning. Then stretching out his arms, as if he saw his wife coming down to lead him home, he fell back dead. Next morning they found him as though asleep on the floor by the dead ashes of the fire. They saw the smile upon his face; they said he must have died without pain. But they had not seen the two spirits that had flown to heaven that night. God only saw their joy, for He had sent the wife to fetch her husband home!

F. E. WEATHERLY.



## IN MY GARDEN.

WE own no widespread lands,  
Our store of worldly wealth  
A little cottage home that stands  
A furlong from the shining sands;  
And mine a pair of willing hands,  
And youth and strength and health.

When daffodils betray  
The coming of the spring,  
The blackbird pipes his roundelay,  
The earth is very fair and gay,  
And in my garden half the day  
I blithely work and sing.

'Tis such a tiny patch,  
But full of simple flowers,  
The cherry blossoms meet the thatch,  
And pansies bold the sunbeams catch,  
And in this little nook I snatch  
My brightest, sweetest hours.

For pleasant thoughts must come  
When budding boughs are seen;  
Then through the woods I love to roam,  
Or wander by the rippling foam;  
But in my garden and my home  
I'm happy as a queen. S. E. G.

## THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER.

BY DORA HOPE.

"MY DEAR JOANNA,—Do you know, Spooner has her faults! I know you will be surprised to hear it after the description I sent you of her. I am very loth to confess it even to myself, because I did really think she was so perfect when she first came.

"For one thing, she is unpunctual and procrastinating. Every meal is a few minutes late, and nothing is ever done till the last possible moment. But I cannot blame her very much for that, because I feel too painfully that it would be a case of the kettle scolding the pot for being black. I remember your telling me that was my chief failing, and that I had perverted an excellent proverb into: 'Never do to-day what you can possibly leave till to-morrow.' But I am improving, I assure you, and Spooner is a solemn warning to me. She never does anything thoroughly; the knife handles are always dirty and rough, and the crockery and glass smeary, and when I complain, she says, it is because it is poor glass, but that cannot be true, for under Betsy's reign they were always bright. In strict confidence, I do not know how to wash them properly myself; I suppose there is some particular knack in doing it, but I am afraid you overlooked that department of my education.

"But that is not the end of my grievances; the table-cloth never looks fit to use a second time, because she has quite a genius for avoiding the proper creases in folding it up, so that it is crumpled and untidy. I have told her and shown her how to do it properly, and it was better for a day or two, but now is as bad as ever again.

"She does not at all approve of the stock-pot, and when I insist, she neglects to scald it out every few days, so the soup is often sour.

"Then the sink! You should see it. It is generally piled up with dirty plates and dishes waiting to be washed, a saucepan standing in a frying-pan, and most of the holes of the sink stopped up because she will empty the teapot straight into it, leaves and all, and even the scraps of the plates are left there till the end of the week, when she has a great clean up for Sunday.

"Perhaps I am not stern enough; I read the other day in a curious old book of maxims that if you are of a hasty temper you should never scold your servants till the day after the offence has been committed, but it does not answer at all in my case, as my rage has quite evaporated by the next day, and Spooner is not in the least affected by my mild insinuations.

"But, to be honest, I am afraid the real cause of my non-success in making her mend

her ways is that I cannot teach others what I do not understand myself, and I really have no idea what is the correct thing to do with the contents of a half-empty tea-pot, for instance; nor why some people make glass look quite dazzlingly bright, while others never do, even with the best intentions (for I tried in private myself, and the result certainly was not equal to Betsy's).

"If you could send me a few hints about these matters, and others of the same kind, you would confer the greatest kindness on

"Your loving sister,

"MARGARET COLVILLE.

"P.S.—I had such a beautiful bouquet sent me on Valentine's day; I cannot think who it could be from."

A few days after Margaret had written this letter, Mrs. Trent called to ask how she liked her new servant.

"She looks nice, does she not, Mrs. Trent?"

"At the first glance, yes; but feeling rather responsible for her, I took the liberty of looking more particularly at her than I should otherwise have done, and, on closer inspection, I am afraid she is not at all neat. I notice that pins too often take the place of hooks or buttons, or a fold of her dress is carefully arranged to hide a hole which ought to be darned."

"I think that is a very fair index to her whole character; as long as one does not notice details it is all right."

"But the details are just what a good house wife does particularly notice. You know the old saying:

"If you would thrive most prosperously,  
Yourself must every corner see."

"Yes, I suppose that is true; but Spooner cannot bear my going downstairs and poking about amongst the cupboards, so I shrink from doing so, as it always raises more or less of a tempest. Though I must say that very fact makes me the more uneasy; for, do you know, Mrs. Trent, I hardly like to suggest such a thing, but I am very much afraid she drinks rather more than she ought. I found several bottles which I did not remember in a cupboard, and when I smelt them to see what they contained I felt certain it was spirits, and two or three times she has seemed so very strange and excited, that I was quite afraid of being alone in the house with her. But if she had any weakness of that kind, her mistress would have been sure to mention it in her character, would she not?"

"No, I am afraid you cannot depend upon that. So many mistresses, from a false idea of kindness, give most deceptive characters, quite forgetting that honesty and truthfulness

are quite as much a duty in domestic affairs as in anything else. They quiet their consciences by not actually stating anything false, but nevertheless they do not hesitate to give an entirely wrong impression by being silent on disagreeable points; and no doubt that is the reason the character you received was so carefully worded."

"But it seems to me absolutely dishonest, and I do not see that it is really a kindness to the servants, for if they are allowed to go from place to place with impunity, a bad habit of that kind is never likely to be checked."

"You are quite right, but people yield to a feeling of compassion without properly considering the facts of the case; of course, it is equally wrong, if not worse, to give a bad character to a servant who has simply been discharged in a temper, or because of some slight fault. What is wanted is a stronger sense of justice and honesty, and a desire to act honourably by both the lady and the servant. But in the meantime I am not helping you out of your difficulties; I would offer to speak to Spooner for you, but she would naturally resent my interference."

"Yes, I am afraid I had better speak to her myself, but I do so dislike doing it; and besides, it *might* not have been spirits."

"I certainly should not advise you to say anything till you are sure; but the next time you think her manner strange, wait a little while till she has had time to get over it, and then ask her to explain it."

The opportunity Margaret wanted came only too soon. That very evening, on going into the kitchen to give some directions, there was such an unmistakable odour of whiskey, and Spooner looked so confused at Margaret's sudden entrance that there was no choice but to ask the meaning of it. She protested that it was imagination, and that she did not smell anything, but Margaret insisted that she was right, and asked further what were those bottles in the cupboard. At the mention of the bottles, Spooner lost her temper, and putting on an air of injured innocence, said that no one had ever accused her of such a thing before, and if she was not trusted she had better leave.

"Not at all," said Margaret; "I do not want to send you away; and if you can prove that I am wrong I will not only trust you entirely for the future, but apologise for having accused you falsely now. All I want at present is to know what is in those bottles, so if you will tell me it will settle the matter at once."

This, however, Spooner absolutely declined doing, and answered so rudely that Margaret could not but say she had better leave; and



after a private consultation with her father, told her she had better go the next day, and she should have a month's wages, instead of the usual month's warning.

The next morning Margaret went to tell her troubles to her unflinching adviser, Mrs. Trent, and asked her advice as to how to get another servant.

"I should recommend you," said that lady, "to call at the shops at which you deal, and inquire if they know of anyone likely to suit you. Respectable servants in want of a place very frequently mention it to the tradespeople with whom their mistresses have dealt; and if that does not succeed, you must either go to a registry office, or answer another advertisement; but in any case let this be a lesson to us both, never again to be satisfied with a written character. It is time I had learnt that already, but I confess I was deceived by the girl's quiet, respectful manner.

"Even if it involves a good deal of trouble, you should make a point of seeing the girl's former mistress. It is the only way in which you can be sure of getting at the truth, and also by the appearance of the house in which she has lived you will know the kind of work to which she has been accustomed.

"I have heard just the same tale from a bachelor friend of mine," said Wilfrid, who had come in during the conversation. "He had a very evasive sort of character for a man servant, but being ignorant of the convenient equivocations practised by masters in giving characters, he supposed it was all right, and engaged the man; but now he finds that as soon as he has gone to bed, this estimable servant slips quietly out of the house, and spends the first few hours of the night carousing with his friends, leaving a window open through which to return quietly, which of course is equally convenient for the easy entrance of robbers."

Margaret was much impressed, and went to ask of the tradespeople if they could tell her of a good servant.

While she was still prosecuting her inquiries in the neighbourhood, she had a letter from Betsy, saying that her mother was dead, and as she was no longer required at home, if only her "dear Miss Margaret" would take her back, she would work as much as two servants.

This put Margaret rather in a dilemma. She had now learnt to appreciate Betsy's honesty and good temper, but it was a trial to have to go back to her rough ways and untidy habits. Accordingly she wrote her a letter, telling her frankly the state of the case, and saying that she could not take her again unless she would promise to be more careful and thoughtful over her work and neater in herself.

All this Betsy eagerly agreed to, adding that her mother, who was as "gentle as a real lady," had talked about her rough noisy ways, and she had promised her to try to be more "perlite in her behaviour."

So once more Betsy was installed in the kitchen, and peace reigned in the house of Colville.

But before her arrival, Margaret had received a long letter from Joanna, in which, after condoling with her troubles, she went on to answer her questions as follows:—

"The knives are very often a difficulty, as servants persist in putting the whole knife into hot water and soda, which not only discolours and cracks the handle, but in time loosens the cement which fastens the blade to the handle in cheap knives. The blades only should be dipped one at a time, not left in, and wiped at once; the handle is then washed quickly in warm water *without soda*. You will find that very few servants are willing to take this trouble, but you should insist upon it, or your knife handles will soon be spoiled.

"As for the glasses, they are generally smeary through careless drying. They should be washed in *cold* water (Spoooner probably used it nearly boiling), and rubbed first with a coarse glass cloth, and then polished for a moment with a soft leather or old cloth. This sounds troublesome, but really takes hardly a minute longer than drying with only one cloth, which probably is wet through before you get to the end of your task. It is a great mistake to be too saving of your cloths.

"Crockery looks dull from various causes. If you were to go into the kitchen some day when your domestic is washing the tea-things, you would very likely find her emptying the contents of the cups into the water she was using; and it is more than possible that there would be a pile of greasy plates at the bottom of the pan; of course if that is the case you cannot expect to have china bright. There should always be a basin at hand into which to drain all the cups and jugs. The plates should be put aside till the smaller things are finished, and then when all the pieces have been collected and thrown into the fire (failing a pig or fowls who will devour them with a relish), wash the plates in hot water, not luke-warm, give them one rinse in a pan of cold water, and put them on the rack without drying them. If they are very greasy a *little* soda or soap may be added, and above all, do not be sparing of water, but change it frequently.

"I am very sorry to hear of your difficulties about the sink, because it is really an important matter. Take great care that nothing that can possibly clog the holes is ever thrown in. The tea-pot may be drained through the spout into the sink, if it is really necessary to waste the tea, then the leaves should be taken out and thrown behind the fire, unless you are likely to want some for sweeping the carpets, in which case you should lay them in an old plate or basin, till they are required, but they must have the air on them or they will go mouldy. Do not use more than are quite necessary, as they are apt to leave a stain on the carpet. The tea-pot must then be rinsed out with hot water, but not emptied into the sink, as the water will wash out the small leaves which have remained in the pot, and they will certainly clog the holes."

"There are very nice little wooden sink tides to be bought now, with a division for soap and others for sand or flannel, which would help you to keep the place in order. I suppose you have a sink brush, if not, you should get one at once, and insist upon its being used every day. They are made very much like those for saucepans, but an old scrubbing brush does quite as well.

"If, as you say, your kitchens are left in a dirty disorderly condition, I advise you to have a charwoman before your new servant comes, to thoroughly clear up everything, and rearrange it all according to your own taste, you will find it much easier than making alterations after she has arrived.

"I think that is the end of your questions. But there are one or two other suggestions I have to make to you on other domestic matters.

"The first is that pork is just in season. I am quite aware that you do not like it, but probably the boys do, and at any rate it is less expensive than other meat, and it is considered unwholesome after March, so I should advise you to have it once or twice before it is too late. But you must take especial care that it is very well done; when undercooked it is most indigestible. I always have a little sweet oil rubbed on the pork with a brush or feather, it makes the crackling more crisp and brown than dripping does. Do not forget the apple sauce; besides being a nice addition, it also renders the pork more wholesome by assisting its digestion.

Certain vegetables will soon be over too, in particular savoy cabbages, celery, and beet-root, though the latter may sometimes be obtained all through the year. Beetroots are cooked in so many different ways, nearly every family who eat them have a favourite mode of their own. They need careful handling or they will lose all their beautiful colour. After washing, they must be put into a saucepan of boiling water, and boiled till tender, which will take about an hour and a half; then lift them out very carefully, *so as not to break the skin*, and lay them in a dish till quite cold before attempting to peel them, unless they are to be served hot as a vegetable, in which case they must be peeled and cut into slices as quickly as possible, and sent to table covered with melted butter. They are sometimes stewed with onions, but perhaps the nicest way, and one which I am sure you will find will please the boys, is to boil a little vinegar with some spice in the proportion of a small half ounce of peppercorns and three cloves to a pint of vinegar. Many people add pounded ginger, and horseradish or capsicums, but I do not think you would care for it. When cool, strain this, and pour it over the sliced beets. This pickle can be used at once, but is improved by keeping two or three days.

"The particular attraction of this dish for boys is, that they feel they are eating pickle, which they always like; but at the same time they may safely be allowed to take as much as they please of it, which is not generally permitted with ordinary pickles.

"You must remember the pancakes on Shrove-Tuesday. Lest you have not a recipe for them, I send you mine, which is a good one. Put a quarter of a pound of flour into a basin, break into it two eggs, with a little nutmeg, and half a pint of milk. Mix as smoothly as possible; the consistency should be like cream. Put a little butter in the frying-pan, and when melted pour in two tablespoonfuls of the batter. As soon as one side is done toss over to the other. When well browned lay on a dish, one on the other, till all are done, then sift sugar and squeeze a little lemon juice on each, roll them up, cut them in two, and serve directly. Should there chance to be any snow at the time of year, it takes the place of eggs, allowing two heaped tablespoonfuls to one egg. In this case the batter should stand an hour or two in a cool place before cooking.

"As to marmalade, which you asked me about, you must watch your opportunity for buying the Seville oranges when they are cheap and good. The best time is usually about the end of March or beginning of April. Choose the largest oranges, with nice clear skins; cut them into thin slices, carefully removing all the pips, of which there are innumerable small ones. Put the sliced fruit in a pan, cover with water, and leave for twenty-four hours. Then boil till the pieces of rind become soft, and let stand another twenty-four hours. Now add sugar in the proportion of one pound and a half to one pound of fruit and juice together. Then boil up again for about an hour, or until the peel looks transparent and the juice thickens. This is a much simpler recipe than that ordinarily used, and will, I think, please you better.

"I have neglected to tell you before to look occasionally at the covers on the sides of the mattresses, to see that they are not dirty. You will notice, if you have not already done so, that before I left home I made new covers of glazed holland, which I tacked on with strong thread, to cover the edges of the mattresses. They are sewn with long stitches, so that they are easily taken off to be washed when necessary. I did not use them when I first began housekeeping, thinking them one of the unnecessary fads of housewives, but I soon



changed my mind, for the sides of one bed became so dirty that I had to take the whole bed to pieces to wash the tick."

This letter came just in time to allow of Margaret's following the advice it contained, to have the kitchens well cleaned and re-arranged before Betsy's return.

She bought a sink-tidy and brush, and arranged the kitchen drawers and cupboards according to her own fancy, so that on Betsy's around she was able to take her round her domain, and show her that there was to be a place for everything, and everything in its place.

(To be continued.)

## THE QUEEN O' THE MAY.

By ANNE BEALE.

### CHAPTER XXI.

A MUSICAL TOURNAMENT.



FLOURISH of trumpets heralded the appearance of the Welsh choir in the orchestra of the Crystal Palace—a flourish of trumpets and cheers long and loud. As they took their places and turned their bronzed faces to an audience of twelve

thousand people, it is no wonder that the cheers were prolonged. That five hundred Welsh miners should come all the way from the Principality to do battle with the musical world, if that world so chose, was matter of general interest. When Caradoc, the ex-blacksmith as they called him, appeared, bâton in hand, it seemed as if the noise that greeted him must have shivered the glass-roof above, and when he took his seat in front of his choir, waved his wand, and so moved them to stand, the very foundations must have shaken.

May sat among the *soprani*, by the side of Rachel, conspicuous for her fairness and sunny hair. Tears were in her eyes, and her heart throbbled as if it must burst as the uproar subsided and she fixed her eyes on the leader. But emotion soon ceased when, at a stroke of the bâton, the competition began. The pieces selected were not only classical, but difficult of execution. They were—Bach's motett, "I wrestle and pray;" Beethoven's "Hallelujah chorus," from *The Mount of Olives*;

Mendelssohn's "See what love hath the Father," from *St. Paul*; and "Come with Torches," from *The Walpurgis Night*, also by Mendelssohn.

It is sufficient to say here that all these fine works were reproduced with an ease and precision that astonished and delighted the auditors, and that the applause which succeeded each was vociferous and unanimous. But the two pieces that suited best the fiery natures of the musical miners were the "Hallelujah Chorus" and the "Come with Torches." The latter especially was given with such energy and enthusiasm that the effect was almost electrical. The *soprani* particularly distinguished themselves, and as their ringing voices pierced through the arched palace, it seemed as if a chorus of birds was penetrating to the sky beyond. As to May, she was carried away by the music, and stood as if she were really a Druidical rather than a Christian maiden. Someone had told her the story of the *Walpurgis Nacht* and had said that it was especially hers, because it was on the first of May that the witches had met on the Harz mountains on that particular night to scare away the Christians, and that Goethe and Mendelssohn between them had written the piece in honour of the Druids. The Welsh were as much the descendants of the Druids as the Germans, and she was their May Queen; so, said her patriotic informant, the composition was especially hers. Be that as it may, she sang with a will, and looked almost inspired. She had taken off her bonnet, as others had done, and as she stood pouring forth the weird, wonderful, descriptive music, she might have been a fair Scandinavian singer rather than a Cymric one. This fact caused remarks to be made upon her by various members of the audience.

Still, she was only one in a great whole and, where all did well and each was eager as she for the success of the choir, she merely played her part; but she thought she must have sunk through the orchestra when the final plaudits came. Not only were *bravas* shouted, but hats and handkerchiefs waved until the fairy palace of glass resounded with irrepressible applause. Only the judges were immovable, as in duty bound.

Surely the honest toilers underground were gratified, and they looked so, with smiling faces and exultant hearts, they climbed up to the Handel orchestra to make room for other competitors. The lesser choirs had tried first, but efforts had been made north and south by Mr. Willert Beale, originator of the competition, to induce choirs from afar to run the gauntlet with the sturdy Welshmen; but none had cared to enter the lists save Mr. Proudman, with his tonic sol-fa choir, three hundred strong. He was said to be an ex-saddler, as Caradoc was an ex-blacksmith, and the members of his choir were of a class in London no wise superior to the Welsh miners. But how different their appearance! Pale instead of bronzed faces lined the orchestra, and striking was the contrast between the denizens of London and Wales. Still, the London

choir was excellent, and in some points of finish superior to the Welsh, and they gained much and deserved applause, but chiefly from the Welsh portion of the audience, the English having caught for once the Celtic enthusiasm, and exhausted themselves in doing honour to the Principality.

Critics were doubtful as to the decision of the judges, who had been sitting on the dais in front of the orchestra, and were the well-known composers and musicians, Sir Julius Benedict, Mr. Barnby, and Sir John Goss, who entered into rest only last year.

"The English have done best! We shall lose the challenge cup!" whispered May to Rachel.

She had listened with breathless attention to the rival choir, and, by an intuitive appreciation of what was excellent, had discovered much in them that she felt or fancied the Welsh lacked, and with spontaneous generosity had silently awarded them the palm.

Indeed, she had much sympathy with "the palefaces," remembering her own childhood. But her divided affections were soon reunited when she heard another mighty shout, and learnt that the judges had decided in favour of the Welsh choir—that the challenge cup was theirs, and they were "the champion singers."

It was long before the hubbub, noise, enthusiasm—call it what you will—subsided.

"I am so sorry for them; they deserve the prize as much as we do," said May, her heart much troubled at sight of the white, still Londoners.

She was somewhat consoled, however, when she learnt that a fifty-guinea harmonium was awarded to them as a "consolation prize," while, in addition to the challenge cup, the Welsh choir were to receive a purse of one hundred guineas.

"I think it is better to lose than win. I should not like to compete again," said May to Uncle Laban and Meredith, as they walked on either side of her through the wonderful mazes of the Crystal Palace, when the choir were on their way to luncheon in jubilant procession.

"Is your name Madeline Goldworthy?" suddenly exclaimed someone in the crowd.

The trio saw a gentleman making his way towards them through the procession that immediately preceded them. They could not pause, so he joined them and walked abreast with them.

"That is her name," said Meredith, making way for him between himself and May, who looked with wondering curiosity at the stranger, but did not recognise him.

"I was sure it was the same: there could not be two heads of hair precisely like that—every hair a separate golden thread, untameable by art. Do you remember sitting for your portrait about twelve years ago? You stood with your arms over your head, a little, dancing, airy, golden-headed child."

"I do! I do! Oh, sir, how did you know it?"



## NEW MUSIC.

BOOSEY and Co., 295, Regent-street, W. :—

*The First Letter.* Words by F. E. Weatherly. Music by J. L. Molloy (in two keys).—A first letter from a sailor lad, of which the singer says—

“ ’Tis the first that I’ve had from my sailor lad,  
There are no fine words of tender passion,  
But it’s all just expressed as I like it best,  
In his own true, simple, honest fashion.  
‘ My dear little girl, I’m so hard and so rough ;  
And you’re sweet and good, and I’m not good enough,’ &c.

Let us hope that love did not blind the sailor lad or mislead him into supposing that his “ dear little girl ” was better than she really was. This is a charming and simple song, sure to be successful if sung brightly.

*The Children of the City.* Words by F. E. Weatherly. Music by Stephen Adams (in two keys).—This is a truly beautiful song, the study of which is sure to be profitable. It tells of the unfortunate children of the city, with no one to care for them. In the workshops and in the street toiling for bread, and life seems so hard for them that—

“ They lose the glimpse of heaven,  
And there seems no better life.

Abba Father, Abba Father,  
From their bondage set them free  
Abba Father, Abba Father,  
Suffer them to come to Thee.”

Stephen Adams has illustrated these beautiful words sympathetically and well, and we heartily recommend the composition.

*That Sweet Story of Old.* Sacred song. Set to music by Theo. Marzials (compass, D to F).—Every girl knows the words, “ I think when I read.” This simple and familiar hymn is suitably set to music, and forms a composition admirably adapted for Sunday use.

*The Cavendish Music Books.*—Messrs. Boosey are sure to have a large sale for these books (about thirty in number). Each book is sold for one shilling, and contains thirty-two pages of valuable music—songs, duets, &c., No. 1 Book, for instance, is called “ Songs of the Day,” and contains ten songs by Sullivan, Molloy, Diehl, Cowen, Pinsuti, and others.

GODDARD and Co., 4, Argyll-place, Regent-street, W. :—

*Resignation.* Words by Longfellow. Music by Percy G. Mocatta.—Every girl knows the poem—

“ There is no flock, however watched and tended,  
But one dead lamb is there ; ”

and many will be glad to have this suitable setting of it.

Augustus Buhl has written seven short Studies for the strengthening and equalising the fingers of young players ; and “ a wrist and finger exercise ” in a single study, which must be of immense benefit to any one who will carry out the author’s advice of practising them from ten to fifteen minutes daily. These exercises are not intended for a beginner, as they require the hand to be sufficiently developed to grasp an octave. The method of fingering each exercise should be carefully attended to, and practised slowly and firmly until quite mastered.

*A Romance Sans Paroles.* By Henri Stiehl.—The air, which is produced by the left hand, is very smooth and pleasant. The accompaniment is light and graceful and played with the right hand.

LAMBORN COCK, 23, Holles-street, Oxford-street, W. :—

Has sent us four of six musical sketches by Claudius H. Couldery—Nos. 1 and 2 separately, and Nos. 3 and 4 together—all of which are admirably adapted for young players, well fingered and marked, so that, by careful practice, there can be no doubt as to the pleasure they will afford. No. 1 consists of only two pages: an andantino, easy to read, and very sweet.

No. 2.—Another two-page piece, is of a different style, graceful, and well-defined.

Nos. 3 and 4, published together.—No. 3 is in waltz time, and No. 4 is a beautiful slow movement which must become a favourite.

*A Gavotte.* By H. Fliege.—A very spirited piece in march time, quite military, with its staccato and crisp octaves.

Fragments selected from the instrumental works of Haydn: No. 1, a romance from the symphony, *La Reine de France*. A smooth and easy arrangement in three flats, without any great difficulties either in execution or time.

*An Allegretto Grazioso*, by Charles Steggall, requiring a little more advanced pianiste and careful playing. The composer has marked the character of each bar most plainly.

*A Rondo à la Valse*, upon one of Rossini’s well known operatic airs, not at all difficult, and well carried out.

*Gai Réveillè.* By Henri Stiehl.—A brilliant little piece, working up to an accelerando crescendo which will awaken the dullest listener.

*Lost.* A romance for the pianoforte. By Richard Dressel.—The introduction in the first page prepares for the andantino movement, which is “ singing,” leaving the player to imagine and arrange her own romance according to the suggestions of the music.

METZLER and Co., 37, Great Marlborough-street, W. :—

*The Language of Flowers* (by Frederic H. Cowen) is a much more pretentious composition, capable of testing the high taste and execution of the performer.

Six flowers have been selected: No. 1, the daisy (innocence); No. 2, the lilac (first emotions of love); No. 3, the fern (fascination); No. 4, the colombine (folly); No. 5, yellow jasmine (elegance and grace); No. 6, lily of the valley (return of happiness); each of which is supposed to demonstrate the character of its subject.

It is arranged both as a solo and duet for the pianoforte, and, if only as a study for clever reading, will be found useful to the diligent student.

NOVELLO, EWER and Co., Berners-street, W. :—

*Pianoforte Solo.* Gounod’s sacred song, “ There is a Green Hill Far Away.” Transcribed for the pianoforte by Berthold Tours.—The name, both of composer and transcriber insures a production of more than ordinary merit. The well-known air is treated in a simple and effective style, and is sure of success.

An easy arrangement for the pianoforte of Fritz Spindlar’s *Husarenritt*. By Berthold Tours. In the key of D. We can recommend this as being easily committed to memory, and sure to give pleasure.

THE LEISURE HOUR for April, 1881. *The Girl’s Own Paper* Office, 56, Paternoster Row, London.

*The Sisters.* Duet for female voices. Words by Alfred Tennyson. Music by Arthur Sullivan. Surely it is a sign that the magazines issued from 56, Paternoster-row, are keeping pace with the progressive musical culture of the English public when we see in its oldest maga-

zine, the *Leisure Hour*, a duet, the words of which are written by the Poet Laureate and set to music by Arthur Sullivan. The words are taken, by Mr. Tennyson’s permission, from “ The Sisters,” a long poem just published in his new book of “ Ballads,” and characteristically set by Mr. Sullivan in his usual charmingly-melodious style. Every musical girl who desires to keep herself well informed upon the subject of new music should at once procure the above number of the *Leisure Hour*.

ROBERT COCKS and Co., New Burlington-street, W. :—

*To Inez.* Words by Lord Byron. Music by H. F. Limpas (B to D sharp). A graceful and superior composition, suitable for a trained mezzo-soprano voice.

J. B. CRAMER and Co., 201, Regent-street :—

*Minster Windows.* Words by Jetty Vogel. Music by Ciro Pinsuti (in three keys). An easy, effective song, with a moral which is cheering to a saddened heart. The stained Minster window of martyr and saint soften the heart, for they “ show of a sorrow greater than mine.”

*The Dream.* Words by Adelaide Ann Procter. Music by Luli (compass B to F). A pleasant and easy spinning song.

## THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM.

By DORA HOPE.



BETSY’S return was indeed a happy event for the young mistress of the house. The visit home and intercourse with her sick and dying mother had, as Margaret phrased it, “ a chastening effect,” and now, with the little brusqueness and angularity rubbed off, the maid was all that could be desired, willing,

neat-handed, scrupulously clean, and honest as ever, and it is to be doubted whether Margaret ever again longed for a pretty, refined attendant.

One fault still remained to trouble both mistress and maid, for the latter regretted it almost as much as the former, namely, unpunctuality.

“ I can’t think how it is, Miss Margaret,” she said one morning; “ only look at last night, I thought as I was sure to be in time with the tea, and yet before I’d done laying the cloth I heard your pa’s knock, and when I finished it off as quick as I could, and run downstairs, I give a look at the clock, and there it was gone seven, and my meat not dished up.”

“ In future, Betsy, you must come up and lay the cloth half an hour, or even longer than that before the meal, then you will not be all in a drive at the last; there is nothing like being *beforehand* in preparing for everything. You know you take your time early in the morning and afternoon, and then as the meal hour approaches you get quite in a flurry. So try to be quicker early in the day, and get forward



with the work beforehand; that is the only way to be punctual."

"Then you see, miss, perhaps I shall get a bit too punctual, and have things done too soon, and then they're spoilt that way."

"Quite true, Betsy; that is almost as bad as being too late, in cookery. But if at any time you should have to keep roast meat after it is perfectly done, you can prevent its spoiling by putting it in an old dish on the oven, with a dish-cover over it, and over that a cloth. To keep greens hot you should put them into the colander, leaving the water in the saucepan; then cover them and set the colander on the saucepan, and the steam from the boiling water will keep them quite hot without their getting either dry or sodden. Potatoes are the greatest difficulty; it is almost impossible to keep them hot without their getting discoloured. The best plan is to strain off the water till they are quite dry, then lay over the saucepan first a cloth, several times folded, and then the cover; take off the lid of the boiler, ours fortunately being one which you can open, and stand the saucepan over the entrance in place of the lid. But of course there is no reason for adopting these plans unless papa is late home, or the meal delayed from some such reason. Your part is to have all ready to the minute; if you cannot manage it you must always be ready five minutes beforehand.

"But now for to-day's bill of fare. I am expecting two young ladies to dinner, so as we shall be sitting in the drawing-room, you can lay the cloth as early as you like. We will not have soup; but as fresh herrings are just coming into season, I should like you to boil some, and if you do exactly as I tell you they will be as nice as mackerel. When you have cleaned them well, get a saucepan of water, quite hot, but not boiling. Put the fish in with a little salt, and boil them pretty fast for about fifteen minutes. You must be sure to take them out directly they are done, and serve up in a fish napkin as usual. They will not require any butter, they are quite rich enough without."

"There's no meat in the house but the cold beef, miss."

"No, but it is no use attempting a great meal, so we will make that do. I want you to try some *potato-chips* to-day. They are perfectly easy, and I will tell you how to do them:—

"Peel the potatoes, and cut them. Give me one and I will show you exactly how to do it. There, you see, I have cut it into slices, as thin as possible, the thinner the better. When this is done, take the small frying-pan and half fill it with dripping, and as soon as it boils put in the slices of potato. Boil them for about five minutes, take them out with the egg slice, and serve directly on a nice hot dish, but do not cover them, as that would take away the crispness. The only thing you must take particular care about is that the fat is hot enough before you put in the potatoes, not bubbling up, but perfectly still, which is the sign of its being at boiling-point. The dripping, of course, can be used again, so you must save it, and put it away in a jar."

"And what pudding will you have, miss?"

"I shall make a small rhubarb tart."

"Rhubarb! why miss, it isn't even showing above the ground down home."

"No, of course what we get now is forced; the garden rhubarb will not be ready for a long time. But the forced is not at all expensive, and will make a delicious tart with a little lemon-peel and juice under a short crust."

Margaret had taken the opportunity of Betsy's return to make one or two changes in the arrangements which for some time she had thought would be an improvement. First, as to the maid's tea and sugar. Hitherto there had been no special allowance of these

items, but now it was arranged that she should have a quarter of a pound of tea and half a pound of sugar per week, to use how and when she chose, which plan proved more satisfactory to both parties. As to beer, she never took anything of the sort, and was still too unsophisticated to ask for money in place of what she never dreamt of requiring; so that Margaret was saved the twopence a day, an extortion to which so many housekeepers feel compelled to grudgingly submit. Even with Spooner she had not paid beer money, as Mrs. Trent had advised her to have a clear understanding on the subject before engaging her.

Then there was the "day out" question. Betsy's father had now come to live in the same town, and Margaret thought it only right that Betsy should have a little time with him occasionally. So it was arranged that once a month, when convenient, Betsy should have a half-day to spend with her father, besides which Margaret arranged as often as she could spare her, to send her out for a walk, frequently giving her permission to spend half an hour with a friend, on condition that she always came back punctually at the time fixed for her return, and as Betsy soon found that the repetition of these short outings depended on her keeping scrupulously within the time, she took care that there should be no complaints about unpunctuality.

A little management was necessary to arrange for the half-days out without inconvenience to the household. Betsy cleared away the dinner with the greatest expedition, and at once laid the cloth for tea. Cold meat was made to suffice at that meal on these occasions, and everything put ready in the kitchen; there was nothing for Margaret to do but make the tea and toast, and bring the eatables up into the dining-room, which, with the assistance of her brothers, was an undertaking she rather enjoyed.

After tea Margaret and her young assistants would carry down to the larder any viands which would spoil by remaining in a warm room; then the family adjourned to the drawing-room, leaving the rest of the clearing away, and the washing up, till Betsy's return; unless, which frequently happened, the young mistress had a burst of kind feeling towards Betsy, on which occasions she would remove the tea things herself, and wash them up too, that her gay handmaid might not find a great quantity of work awaiting her on her return. The only drawback was that callers were sure to choose that very day for coming to the house. Margaret was forced to open the door to them with the best grace she could. If she considered an apology necessary, she at the same time explained how matters really stood, and those whose opinion was worth having thought none the worse of her for her candour.

Amongst other preparations for Betsy's return had been the organisation of a housemaid's cupboard. Hitherto all the requisites for housemaid's work had been kept here and there in the kitchen and pantry; but it occurred to Margaret that a small cupboard under the cistern on the top floor would answer the purpose of a regular housemaid's cupboard, though it hardly deserved so imposing a name. Here were to be kept a pail, dust-pan and brush, hot-water cans, brush for cleaning water bottles, cloths, dusters; in fact, everything that was exclusively for bedroom use. As there was both hot and cold water laid on upstairs, none of these articles had to be taken downstairs, even to be washed, with the exception of the cloths which were to be returned immediately after drying.

It was a little trouble to Betsy at first to keep all the contents of her upstairs cupboard in their place, but she soon came to appreciate the increased convenience and orderliness gained by the arrangement.

It must not be supposed that our young

housekeeper's mind was so taken up with domestic matters as to have no interest in pleasure and amusements.

As the Easter holidays drew near she joined with zest in her brothers' excitement, and many were the discussions as to how the week should be spent. Joanna's house boasted but one spare room, so that an exodus thither of the whole family was quite out of the question. Mr. Colville thought that, for himself, two or three days spent quietly at home would be the most refreshing form of holiday, and Margaret declared that under those circumstances she could not possibly go to her sister's, even had it been practicable in other ways.

"For you and Betsy between you would turn the house upside down without me to look after you," she cried, when her father suggested her leaving him.

Thus it was that the two boys set off in high glee, the day after breaking up, to spend a week with Joanna and her husband, whilst Margaret reconciled herself to the prospect of a quiet, very quiet, week.

As she went to her room the night after the boys' departure, she thought to herself, with a little sigh, that now she was indeed settled down into a humdrum old housewife.

"Oh dear! how dull it will be without the boys," she pondered, as she stood brushing out her long rippling hair. "I never have spent such a dull Easter as this is going to be! How different it was last year with Joanna at home, and Arthur Helier staying here, and I, a scatter-brained young ignoramus, without a thought about such horribly prosaic matters as boiling potatoes and balancing accounts. Oh! who'd be a housekeeper! Fancy a whole week of dullness, when everybody else is merry making."

Then, feeling repentant, she went on.

"There, now I have grumbled enough for one evening I consider, and I shall have quite enough to do to keep father from being dull when severed from the charms of business, without getting so myself; and he certainly deserves a good holiday," and throwing him an imaginary kiss, she hopped into bed, and was soon asleep.

The dreaded week passed only too quickly; Margaret had never had her father "all to herself" before, nor had she ever before thoroughly appreciated his companionship and bright clever conversation. Mr. Trent, too, must have shared Margaret's fear lest Mr. Colville should find the leisure days dull, for he came in repeatedly, and seemed to have an unending supply of new books and pictures for his entertainment, though, as Mr. Colville remarked privately to Margaret after one of his visits, he must have thought him interested in a strange mixture of subjects, for a large number of the books and magazines seemed much more adapted to interest a young lady than an elderly gentleman, but he supposed he bought anything the bookseller recommended without troubling to look into them.

Easter Monday was the day Margaret had most dreaded; for, as usual on Bank Holidays, the town was not agreeable, being full of holiday makers mooning about and wearing anything but a festive air, though certainly as the day wore on they became decidedly noisy.

Mr. Colville spent the day in a long walk out into the country with an old friend. Hearing of his intention, her never-failing friends, the Trents, insisted on Margaret's accompanying them to the house of a relative some miles away, which was reached by a pleasant drive through pretty country lanes along which the trees and hedges were just bursting forth into foliage, and the fields were dotted with early spring flowers.

Here, far from the haunts of men, one could go one's own way without being con-



stantly reminded that it was Bank Holiday. After early dinner, a walk through the woods was unanimously agreed to. Under a blue sky, the air filled with the songs of birds, and the clear April sunlight, it was hard to realise that it was not already summer.

"I really think spring is the jolliest season of all the year, don't you, Miss Colville?" asked Wilfrid.

"I used to once," replied she, plaintively, "but now I always associate it with that dreadful spring cleaning; however, I suppose you don't know what that means?"

"Oh! don't I? I assure you I am not so ignorant as you might suppose, for anyone who has once suffered from a spring cleaning will never forget what it means. Every article of furniture put out of its proper place and turned quite upside down wherever such a revolution is anyhow possible; meals eaten in any room but the right one, and all for no earthly reason that I can discover, for I declare when it is all over everything looks precisely the same as it did before, neither better nor worse."

"Ah, that is because gentlemen never do appreciate clean furniture and rooms; but I assure you it is the proper thing, or else why does everybody do it?"

But though Margaret expressed so decided an opinion, she was far from feeling equally sure as to its necessity, in her own mind, and determined to consult Joanna on the earliest opportunity as to the possibility of doing without the disagreeable affair.

It had been arranged that Mr. Colville should terminate his walk at Mrs. Trent's house, and, accordingly, soon after the return of that lady and her party, he arrived at the hospitable mansion, and, as Margaret said after they reached home, "Their delightful day was wound up with a still more delightful evening." Mr. Colville was in his most lively mood, and kept the whole company merry, while Margaret frequently enlivened them by some of her sweetly-sung ballads.

Seizing an opportunity when the gentlemen were deep in talk, Margaret whisperingly asked Mrs. Trent whether this alarming spring cleaning were really necessary.

"Well, dear, not to the extent to which some people carry it. If you keep your house clean all the year there is no need for a thorough upset in the spring, though a little extra 'doing up' of the house for the summer is certainly advisable. It is a great mistake, however, to do this until it is warm enough to leave off fires, for the dust and dirt arising from them soon sullies the purity of the most spotlessly 'cleaned' house."

"Oh, thank you; I should never have thought of fires affecting the question at all. There is one other thing I want to ask you about. You promised the other day to tell me of some variety in the way of sweets, and as fruit is still so dear I thought you would not mind my reminding you of it."

"Have you ever tried a prune tart? No? Well I think your father would like it. You must stew the prunes till quite tender; being dry, they require a good deal of water, about a pint and a half to a pound of fruit. Let them get cold, put them in a pie-dish with the juice and a little sugar, cover with a rather thick crust, and bake it."

"The other receipt I spoke of was simply for a good but most economical plum pudding; not that it can be considered a *new* dish, but it is such a favourite with young people I think you will find it useful. It is this: Take of flour, suet, sugar, and scraped carrots each a quarter of a pound; half a pound of potatoes boiled and mashed, and half a pound of currants. For flavouring add a little spice and essence of lemon, and boil it in a cloth for six hours."

"Why, do you know, Mrs. Trent, there is a

similar recipe in Joanna's old miscellany book, but I thought it such a repulsive idea to make a pudding of vegetables."

"It is only in idea that it is repulsive, I can answer for the pudding being well received; but now, dear, try and forget your house and its puzzles. My nephew has been frowning at me for the last ten minutes for monopolising you so. If you are not too tired, give us my favourite 'Mary Morrison,' please, and you shall come and lunch with me on my 'repulsive' plum pudding to-morrow."

Thus the days passed by happily enough. Tom and Dick were heartily welcomed home, and their first evening was merry with tales of the adventures and fun of the holidays. As the family separated for the night, Margaret said, with an arm round the neck of each sturdy boy: "Well, father, boys are a great trouble in some ways, but I should not like to be without them after all, should you?"

(To be continued.)

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

### COOKERY.

MARIE STUART.—Put one egg less in the recipe, as there may be too much liquid. The oven should be a cool one for cocoanut cakes also. Your writing is neat.

CHRISTMAS ROSE.—Inquire at a furnishing ironmonger's for the frying basket. It is a light wire one with a wire handle. If desirous of continuing the acquaintance, recall yourself to his memory by mentioning where you were previously introduced.

F. T.—The oven used for your cake was probably too hot—a cool oven being requisite, as the cakes must first dry a little, so as to turn out properly. Wash the combs in tepid water, though, if cleaned with bran and well rubbed, they really do not need washing, but they take more time in the cleansing.

JEANIE L. M.—Buckmaster's recipe for hotch-potch is as follows:—"Grate coarsely two young carrots, and slice three carrots, three turnips, and three onions; then cut up one lettuce and a bunch of parsley. Take a pint of green peas, shelled, and the sprigs of a cauliflower, and put half the peas away in a basin. In a four-quart saucepan place three pints of mutton broth, and all the vegetables save the peas in the basin, as well as some half-dozen cutlets off the neck of mutton. Let them come slowly to boiling. Add two ounces of rice or pearl barley, and simmer till the meat be ready. Skim, and season with pepper and a little loaf sugar. Boil the remaining peas separately, and add them to the hotch-potch just before serving."

### HOUSEKEEPING.

POPSEY.—We have just given full instructions to another correspondent about to be married respecting the house-linen that may be required. As to materials, that for the table should be damask linen, more or less fine; the sheets either of linen or calico, or perhaps linen for the top and calico for the under sheets; and calico sheets and pillow cases for the servants' beds. Huckaback and Russian diaper for the towels, and some Turkish bath towels. Linen for the best pillow-cases.

MAIDEN HAIR.—For restoring a marble chimney-piece read what has been said at pages 223, 255, 511, and 592, vol. i. Your Tudor bedstead, which you say has been already painted, might be made very handsome by means of good "decorative panel painting;" but to paint pictures over it, in patchwork screen fashion, would be in very bad taste. Had it been of old oak, we should have advised the removal of the paint with emery paper, and a thorough waxing and polishing.

A DAUGHTER OF EVE.—Try putting some unslaked lime in the kettle to remove the coating; and, when clean, keep an oyster-shell in it.

### ART.

VIDA.—We propose to give some instructions on the art of colouring photographs. Grey hair at an early age might be an hereditary peculiarity, or they may show a need for the strengthening of the general health.

A NATIVE OF HOBARTON, TASMANIA.—Our competitions take place about three times a year, or every four months. If you were prompt in your response, and as the mails take six weeks only, we think you might be in time. Thank you for your kind letter of acknowledgment.

CELIA.—We could not tell you how much it would

cost, but it could be made by an ordinary carpenter. Probably the cheapest way of procuring a screen would be to utilise a common clothes' horse, which you might cover for yourself. Your writing is very faulty.

CLARICE.—1. Procure a manual on the subject of painting. You may paint in oils either on canvas stretched on a frame or on prepared millboard, also on panels. 2. The origin of calling the first four weeks after marriage the "honeymoon" is derived from a practice of the ancient Teutons, who drank hydromel, or honey-wine, for thirty days after marriage. Attila, the Hun, died of his excessive drinking of this wine at his wedding feast.

PANSY and FORGET-ME-NOT.—Perhaps an article on leather work may be given.

### MUSIC.

BARBITON.—Go to a good second-hand musical instrument dealer. We have lately seen a very excellent violin which cost under 30s. second-hand. We should advise no delay in consulting a doctor.

HAUTEUR.—Unless they had arranged to have music, or you thought them likely to have it, you would not take it. We could not say, unless we know what kind of a performer you are.

EDITH A. W.—We think you could improve yourself much during the winter with one music lesson a week and diligent practice. We know of no method except advertising.

TERPSICHORE.—Read "How to Play the Harmonium," page 472, vol. i. Grease your skates to take off the rust. Your writing is shocking.

G. J.—Your writing is good. We do not give addresses.

FLOSSY.—We do not advise you to sing under the circumstances. As you know nothing of music, we think it extremely likely that you will break down. You spell very well, but write a poor and badly-formed hand.

IRENE HELEN M. and ADA.—Judging from the list of your acquisitions, music appears to be the study in which you are most at home, and for which you possess certificates; so we should advise you to try that branch of work, and endeavour to find employment.

MIRANDA.—All the hospitals appear to be glad of magazines and newspapers. The house surgeon is interested in the question sometimes.

### EDUCATIONAL.

ECONOMY.—Apply for information on correspondence classes to Miss Arabella Shore, Taplow, Maidenhead.

IVY.—The first step to knowledge is to know your own ignorance. The most learned have been ever the first to feel how small is the sum of their own acquisitions; so do not be discouraged by your "profound ignorance." We think that "The Handbook of English Literature," by Angus, 5s. Paternoster-row, E.C., would be a most helpful book for you, and would instruct you how and what to read. You could learn French alone, but you would need lessons in the pronunciation of it.

JUNE.—The "New Companion to the Bible" is especially suitable to your purpose, 5s. Paternoster-row, E.C., price 2s. 6d. We could not give advice on the entire discontinuance of your musical studies, unless we were better informed.

BRIC A BRAC.—If the lessons be gratuitously given in a friendly manner, you would probably give pain by offering money for them, but there would be no objection to your taking advantage of the Christmas season to make some pretty acknowledgment.

DORY.—All maps issued for the current time and suitable for candidates for the Cambridge and Oxford Examinations are to be found in the map shops round Trafalgar-square: one in the square, one at the top of Parliament-street, and a third in the Strand. Your writing is good, but too upright.

GERTRUDIS.—The correct way of writing the French sentences which you quote is "Mon père et moi nous irons," "J'irai de ma visite," "J'irai aux cartes," "J'y a été pour prendre le thé." We cannot give advertisements. Inquire for the book at your bookseller's, who could procure it. You write well.

STUDENT.—It is quite impossible for us to tell you what an imaginary foreigner may charge for private lessons in modelling.

A LOWLAND LASSIE.—Your question seems so entirely a personal one that we can give no opinion on it, as we do not, of course, know of what value your services are to the managers of your school. The whole question hinges on that.

W. A. S.—Consult Dr. Angus's "Handbook of the English Tongue," page 118. You will find excellent and clear rules for the use of the letter "h," which he says "ought always to be pronounced at the beginning of words." The seven exceptions to this rule are—"heir, heiress, hour, humour, hostler, honesty, honourable." Your handwriting is clear, but irregularly formed.

AN APPRECIATIVE READER.—1. We should not advise your proceeding to the Cape without having previously obtained a situation, unless, indeed, you have friends there with whom you could remain. 2. It would be advisable to have your mother's advice.



while if even Sarah found herself "over-set," as she phrased it, she would make free to tell Miss Catharine. What would become of the house and of her delicate mamma when Catharine was married? Eleanor brightened as she remembered that she might then take a rest from books and throw herself into the gap,—

"And utilise all this hardly acquired knowledge?"

She didn't see what niche it would find in the household economy. Very little of it would be wanted, and she started as it occurred to her how deficient she was in household matters. She knew nothing of the mysteries of store-room and linen-press, of wine-cellar and meat-safe. She wouldn't know how to order a dinner, or choose a chicken in the market. She couldn't show a servant where she was wrong if mistakes occurred, nor judge of the time that any household task should take in its accomplishment. But Catharine did, and had long relieved her mother of all but a nominal responsibility.

Mrs. Townsly had apologised for Eleanor by saying that she had no adaptation for such duties. But then Catharine had not found them easy at first. She had acquired her knowledge by using her powers of observation, in lack of the instruction she ought to have had. She had never been above learning from inferiors, and she had practised and persevered in habits of order, early rising, watchfulness over others, and self-denial, till they had become a second nature. It was only her just reward, then, that her mother should feel in losing her that she was losing the one out of her family whose absence must create the greatest blank. Eleanor could not but acknowledge that it was, and when she thought of Catharine's duties as devolving upon her she felt perfectly dismayed. Never did the sum of little sacrifices, and the occupation of little fragments of time in little acts that would be noticed only in omission, seem to her so great as now. She knew that she could not step into her sister's place at her pleasure; she had no fitness for it.

"But why should a human being's time, even for the sake of others, be consumed in such material work and such unconsidered trifles?" she asked bitterly. "Ah, if I had the ordering of things, society should go back to a much plainer style of living. I would banish a lot of the superfluous, inartistic ornamental. I would have plain meals plainly served, and there should be no elaborate antimacassars on chairs, or rug-work on fender stools. The engraving, the drawing, the vase filled with flowers, should be my style of decoration."

Yet to this the persistent voice replied that rarely were the flowers in the vase of her arranging.

Even this small service of the beautiful must be performed by her mamma or the unflinching Catharine.

At this moment entered the youngest boy, Harry.

"Oh, you're here, I thought Catharine was," he exclaimed, in a disappointed tone. "Do you know where I shall find her, Eleanor?"

"She went out a quarter of an hour ago. I saw her pass down the garden-walk."

"What a bother!" he exclaimed, beating a quick retreat.

"Harry!" called Eleanor.

"Well, what?" he returned to ask.

"What did you want Catharine for?"

"The wind's high; I can't keep it on. Such a nuisance!"

"And could no one put you an elastic in your cap but Catharine?" exclaimed Eleanor, as she reached out her hand for it.

"Oh! I knew you *could*; but you always say you're 'engaged,' and 'not just now.' It's a shame to bother you, Eleanor, when you've such lots to do," he added, as he saw the look of pain that passed over her face, and saw, too, that she had been crying.

"No, it's no shame, Harry. An elastic is soon sewn in. The question is where to find one. I'll look in mamma's work-basket."

"Mrs. Townsly supplied her with a piece, and the boy's bright look when he thanked her, mingled with an unmistakable expression of surprise, went to Eleanor's heart, convicting her of more lost opportunities for sowing little seeds of kindness than she could bear to look upon. But a feather will show where the wind blows from, and a wise mariner, by knowing the quarter it is in, knows how to take the tide and accommodate his course.

It is possible that Eleanor may alter hers if she sees that it is better for her to do so.

(To be continued.)

## THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM.

By DORA HOPP.



HE time for Margaret's *bête noir*, the dreaded spring cleaning, had now indeed come; had it been longer deferred, its name would hardly have been applicable, for the spring was passing swiftly away.

Margaret had borne in mind Mrs. Trent's advice not to begin to clean till fires were done with; but a very cold and late spring indicated that

fires would be necessary for some time to come, so that lady advised her no longer to put off the evil day, though, when practicable, fires should be given up first.

Having kept her house as clean as possible, taking every room and passage in turn, so that no part had been neglected, she felt justified in departing from the time-honoured custom of having a thorough upset. It is always necessary, however, even in a house the daily or weekly cleaning of which is rigorously performed, to have a sort of "wash

and brush up"; for, in the cleanest house, the summer sun, penetrating into every corner and cranny, will discover a kind of dingy air, the result of long days of fog, and damp, and smoke.

Margaret's first step was to turn out all the cupboards and drawers in the house. Each drawer as it was emptied was carried out into the little yard at the back of the house, and thoroughly brushed out, then relined with large sheets of paper, which Margaret had bought for the purpose, before being brought back into its place.

As the cupboards could not be treated in quite the same way, a dust sheet was spread at the bottom and in front of them, and Betsy, armed with a dusting brush, swept down the walls and every corner, while Margaret was looking over the contents. When both those operations were finished, everything was put back that was not condemned as rubbish, of which a wonderful stock seemed to have accumulated during Margaret's short reign.

The *crétonne* chair-covers and bedroom hangings were next looked over, two or three dirty ones sent to be cleaned, and a note made of the fact that directly the cleaning was over two new covers must be made for two drawing-room chairs to replace the very shabby ones, which would just do to cover the old chairs in the boys' bedroom.

The window blinds next called for attention. All the upper rooms of the house were fitted with white ones, while the sitting-rooms had venetian blinds. The bright sunshine showed very plainly that the white linen was getting very dirty, and Joanna had told Margaret that washing it did not answer, as it always hangs badly after that process. But, as Margaret was cherishing a scheme for wonderful improvement in the drawing-room, she was loth to spend the money on anything so uninteresting as new blinds. She concluded, however, that it was imperative to get them for the two front rooms; but for the back of the house she simply took them off the rollers and turned them top to bottom; the upper parts, being rolled up all day, were hardly soiled at all, and looked quite nice and fresh.

Another day was devoted to the book-cases, and the labour of that devolved almost entirely upon Margaret. She allowed Betsy to help her at first, but found her simple mind quite incapable of perceiving the advantage of putting a magazine for 1880 next to one for 1879; nor could she understand why volumes of poetry, history, and science should not be all put upon the shelves indiscriminately.

"Sure, Miss Margaret," she said, "mine looks the best, if you'll excuse me saying so, for I've put all the green books together, and you've got the colours all mixed up anyhow."

She was very useful, however, in dusting the books. Clapping them together to shake off the dust was an operation which she thoroughly enjoyed, and made such a noise over that Margaret, who was getting a violent headache with the repeated bangs, was compelled to go away and leave her alone to clap in peace, though she knew the books would be in a state of hopeless chaos on her return.

In this way every department of the house was looked over and examined, but Margaret wisely determined to postpone the shaking of carpets, and all the other branches of cleaning which tend most to the discomfort of the household, till they should all be away for their summer holiday.

When all else was done, the winter curtains were taken down, shaken, brushed with a soft curtain brush, and stowed away on the top shelf of the linen press. They were replaced by cream-coloured lace ones in the drawing-room, as that colour keeps clean much longer than white, and in the dining-room by plain book-muslin edged with a frill, and looped back with a broad band of ribbon.



Margaret could not but be amused at Betsy's utter want of thought in sweeping a room. She had never before happened to witness this performance, and was amazed to see her maid begin to sweep just inside the room, and sweep away from the door, leaving the corners till the last, when she would rake out of them all, or as much as she could get, of the dust she had just swept in. As she frequently left the windows shut during the performance, the result of all her labour was simply that the dust flew up from the carpet, and settled on the sheets with which the furniture was covered, till they, in their turn, were hastily taken off, when it was shaken back on to the floor again. By this process the dust was perhaps more evenly distributed over the room than it had been before, but certainly none of it was entirely removed.

The morning's dusting was conducted in much the same way, simply being a flapping of dust from one place to another.

Betsy was astonished at her own stupidity when it was pointed out to her, and saw at once the wisdom of brushing from the corners into the middle of the room first, when a good deal of the dust and flue could be collected in the dust-pan and thrown into the fire. The advantages of the wide open windows were so evident that they hardly needed pointing out. Margaret advised her also, instead of hastily dragging off the dust sheets, to fold them over carefully so that the dust which had been allowed to settle on them should not be shaken off again, and then to carry them straight out into the yard and shake them there. In finishing the room, all possible articles were quickly wiped over with a slightly damp cloth, that being, as Margaret had often observed, the only way of really removing dust. Those which would not bear this treatment were done in the ordinary way, only that she insisted upon its being performed carefully, so as to, as far as possible, collect the dust into the duster, which was then shaken outside, instead of being slapped about in the usual style.

"Well, miss," said Betsy, "it do seem so simple when you just point it out to me, but then I never can think on these things unless I'm showed."

And Margaret felt thankful for a servant who did not mind being "showed." Another perplexity had lately been about the management of the linen press. This was placed in a small room, the rest of which was used for a box-room. Being against the outside wall of the house, it was somewhat damp, and now and then a few spots of mildew on the linen would fill Margaret with dismay, especially as she felt powerless to prevent this evil. A letter from Joanna in answer to one telling of her difficulties contained some suggestions:—

"It is indeed a great trouble to have a damp linen press. Do you remember how capital mine is? Of course ours being a new house we have many nice arrangements that you do not meet with in old houses, and amongst them, our linen press is heated by a hot-water pipe from the kitchen. I cannot tell you what a comfort it is.

"In your case I should recommend you to have everything thoroughly dried and aired before putting away; take the linen straight from the fire to its place in the press. Then on any bright clear day you should open the doors of the cupboard, and also the window and door of the room in which it stands, so as to get a draught of air passing through. But never do this if there is any feeling of moisture in the air, that would cause further harm.

"If the things feel damp now, take them all out and spread them in the sun if possible, or before a good fire, and leave the press doors open wide for a couple of days, then replace the contents and start fresh on my plan of airing everything before putting away; if you

do this, I think you will not be troubled with mildew again.

"To ensure using the linen in proper order, you should put the articles as they come from the wash, week by week, at the bottom of the pile, then of course you take from the top, and there can be no using out of turn.

"I should paste the inventory of the house linen inside the press door if I were you, so that it cannot possibly be lost again.

"If any tablecloths are really too far worn for use you might perhaps get a piece out of the middle large enough for a sideboard cloth, or at any rate for fish napkins.

"Apropos of napkins, you know that Arthur is very particular about having his potatoes quite hot, and yet it is impossible to keep the cover on the dish or they become sodden. Well now, I always have them brought to table folded in a napkin in the dish, then when you take one you just raise the napkin with the spoon; it keeps them beautifully hot, and dries them as well.

"I should think none of your white curtains will require mending if you repaired them before putting away last autumn; but if at any future time they need it, let Betsy rinse the starch out, and then mend them before they are sent to be got up. If any are too far gone for repairs they will be useful for many purposes: the large pieces will make short blinds for the back windows, and the small pieces are useful for tying up herbs and spices when making soup—for straining, and so on.

"Possibly it may not occur to you when putting away the winter blankets that they are highly attractive to moths; they are more likely to be attacked than almost anything, so do not forget to put plenty of camphor bags between them.

"You asked me in your last how to preserve eggs for winter use. I have never been able to buy them sufficiently cheaply to make it worth while doing it; but if you are more fortunate you can preserve them either by rubbing them over with butter, which closes up the pores, and so prevents evaporation; or a still better way is to put them when quite fresh laid into a tub of lime-water made in the proportion of one pint of unslacked lime, and one pint of coarse salt to a bucketful of water. If too much lime is put in it will eat away the shells. The eggs should be covered with the solution, and kept in a cold place, and they must be new laid, or they will not keep.

"You say you find a difficulty in getting a sufficient supply of gravy for your various dishes, as the stock made from bones looks such a poor colour that you cannot serve it as gravy. That is easily overcome by simply colouring the stock. The flavour necessary can be added with herbs. You had better make a supply of 'browning' to keep always at hand. A very usual way is to put two ounces of powdered sugar into a stewpan over a slow fire; as soon as it begins to melt commence stirring it till it is of a good dark colour; then add half a pint of cold water. Another way is: on two tablespoonfuls of chicory pour a good half-pint of boiling water, and let it stand. These should be put into bottles well corked, and a few drops of either will be sufficient for a small tureen of gravy. Or, if you do not object to the flavour, the burnt onions which you buy at the grocer's do very well."

The letter then went on to other household topics upon which Margaret had been in perplexity. One weak point in Betsy's cookery was melted butter, so-called, for certainly the solid starch-like mass sent to table under that name was like anything rather than butter. Her way of making it remains a mystery, but after once adopting Joanna's plan she never returned to the former style. The recipe was as follows:—

Take two ounces of butter; cut up small,

that it may melt more easily; put it, with a large teaspoonful of flour and two tablespoonfuls of milk, into a stewpan; mix these with a wooden spoon to a smooth paste. Then add about six tablespoonfuls of cold water with a small pinch of salt, and still less of pepper; put it on the fire, and stir one way till it is just about to boil; then leave off stirring, and when it boils it is done. To make the butter thinner add more milk.

One evening soon after this, the boys sallied forth towards the country lanes which lay just outside the town. They had provided themselves with baskets, old gloves, and knives, and told their sister they were going in search of country produce.

What was her surprise when they returned with baskets full and brimming over with young nettletops!

"Oh, boys! what did you get all that rubbish for?"

"Now, Madge, don't call it rubbish till you know what it is used for. You've got to boil them or frizzle them or something, and then they will be just like cabbages," responded Tom, knowingly.

"But what ever made you think of such an absurd idea," asked Margaret, laughing.

"That's always the way with girls. You think nobody makes inventions but yourselves."

"Now, Madge, he's telling stories," chimed in Dick, excitedly, "we didn't think of it at all. Only to-day at school young Melrose made us guess what he had had for dinner, and I guessed hedgehog, and Tom guessed cat, and all the fellows guessed things, and then he said 'nettles,' and then we didn't believe him, and he said, 'Well, you try,' and his mate never told him what it was till they had eaten it all; and they kept on saying what nice spinach it was, and so we thought we'd have some too, and we only cut the young tops off, so they are sure to be good. Only, Madge, if ever you go gathering them, mind you go alone, for if there's another fellow with you, and he's stooping down getting them, you feel you can't resist tipping him over into them."

"Yes, that's what he did to me, only I went clean head over heels and alighted on my back, so I didn't get stung a bit, so it was a sell for Dick," remarked Tom.

"Well, I'll try them to-morrow, certainly, though I don't know how to do them," said Margaret, resignedly.

Accordingly the next day this enterprising family enjoyed a dish of nettles, which were decidedly successful, tender and nicely-flavoured—in fact almost undistinguishable from young spinach. They were cut up small and boiled in exactly the same way as spinach.

Shortly after this, Dick's fourteenth birthday came round, and on this important anniversary he was to have the privilege of inviting a select party of his friends to tea and games. Margaret felt a little anxious concerning this entertainment in both its branches. As to the tea, she wished to make it as far as possible agreeable to boy palates, and yet substantial withal; and the arrangement of her small *ménu* took her some time. In the end it was very simple; plates of white and brown bread and butter, with various kinds of jam, were a matter of course; then followed Dick's favourite dish, potato-cakes, which he had specially requested might be included in the banquet. They were made from a recipe given Margaret some time before by the mother of Dick's particular friend, Melrose. She was an enterprising lady who was very fond of trying experiments in cookery, as was proved by her dish of nettles, and as she was always ready to give anyone the benefit of her experience, Margaret found her a very useful friend. The recipe was as follows:—"Boil a few potatoes (or use any



which have been left from dinner), mash them up with a little butter and a pinch of salt. Empty on to the paste-board, rub in a little flour, and mix to the proper consistency with milk. An egg beaten up and mixed with the milk or half a teaspoonful of baking-powder is an improvement; but is not absolutely necessary. Roll it out, shape it into small cakes, and bake. Then cut them open and butter them, and serve whilst quite hot."

Then followed a heterogeneous collection of buns, toasted scones, and so on; amongst them some gingerbread cakes, which one of the epicures on the occasion pronounced to be "nice enough to make an old man young."

The recipe for them, as Margaret copied it for Joanna's use, was this:—1½ lbs. treacle, ½ lb. butter, 1 lb. raw sugar, 3 eggs, 3 teaspoonfuls of baking powder, ½ oz. ground ginger, 1 teaspoonful of salt. Mix the butter, melted, into the treacle, beat the eggs and pour them in; add the other ingredients, and then as much flour as you can possibly mix into it. Make it into small cakes; put them a little distance apart on a tin. Bake in a moderate oven for a quarter of an hour.

And finally, as a delicate finish to the repast, there were two dishes of apples in custard. The apples were the dried chips, bought at a grocer's for sixpence a pound, stewed, sweetened, and flavoured with lemon.

As the family sat chatting round the fire the evening before Dick's birthday, Mr. Colville mentioned that he would not be home till late the next night, and hoped Margaret would not find any difficulty in superintending the amusement of her guests.

"But they will not want any amusing, I hope; boys generally seem to shake down and enjoy themselves when they get over their shyness. And Mr. Trent said he should very much like to drop in after tea, and play at being a schoolboy again, but I thought perhaps Dick might not like it; so, as it is his party, I did not respond very warmly."

"But I should like it very much, he is such a jolly fellow, and I'm sure the other fellows would like him, and we'll make him do those conjuring tricks he knows. I vote we ask him," cried Dick.

"Yes, Madge, I think you had better get him to come in," said Mr. Colville. "If he really offered to look after the boys it would save you all anxiety."

"I say, how awfully often Trent comes here lately!" said Tom, meditatively, from his post on the hearthrug, where he lay sprawling at full length.

He expected to be reproved for saying "awfully," but no one noticed it. Not choosing to have his remarks thus ignored, he went on, "I like him; he's an awfully good sort of a fellow—don't you think so, Madge?"

"I certainly see nothing 'awful' about him," replied his sister, severely.

"I say, father, I don't believe he would come so often if one of us four was away, do you?" he went on, with that knowing air peculiar to budding youths, raising himself on his elbow and staring at Madge. Whereon she fell to blushing, whilst Mr. Colville replied, unconcernedly enough,—

"I don't perceive that he shows any particular partiality for any one member of the family above the others; but his father was a very old friend of mine, and he naturally feels at home among us. I am glad if you boys think he has taken a fancy to you; for he is a nice, intelligent, sensible young fellow. Now, lads, off to bed with you, it is getting late."

"All right, father. Give us a hand up, Dick. Good-night, Madge. Why, how red your face is to be sure, and you're not near the fire either."

And with this parting shot the irrepressible boy departed.

(To be continued.)

## NEW MUSIC.

J. & W. CHESTER, Brighton.

We can very highly recommend a "Suite in A flat," composed by John Glendhill. No. 1.—*Musing*. No. 2.—*Rustic Dance*. No. 3.—*Cradle Song*. No. 4.—*Barcarolle*. No. 5.—*Lied*; each differing in style, according well with the lines which inspired the composer, and equally telling. The *Cradle Song* is a perfectly peaceful "lullaby," and we are sure we shall be thanked for advising our friends to procure the pieces and to commit them all to memory.

WILLIAM CZERNY, 349, Oxford-street.

*Honi soit qui mal y pense*.—A pretty little "amourette musicale," for the pianoforte By G. Bachmann.

*Caprice Mélodique*. By A. Ergmann.—A very pleasing, lively, and showy piece.

NOVELLO, EWER, and Co., Berners-street.

*Rameau's Gavotte*. By Berthold Tours. It is in the key of D with the introduction of a page of quiet minore, returning again into the original key. An average player will find no difficulties to hinder the right performance of this short and bright gavotte.

A. C. Mackenzie has written three characteristic pieces for the pianoforte entitled "Scenes in the Scottish Highlands." No. 1, *On the Hillside*. No. 2.—*On the Loch*. No. 3.—*On the Heather*. *On the Hillside* is a march in three four time. *On the Loch* is a slow movement; the pedal is in constant use, but the composer has left no doubt as to the right use to be made of it, having carefully marked every bar. *On the Heather* is in a rapid cantering style. In the performance of all three pieces, which are moderately difficult, the wild Scotch pipes can be recognised.

LAMBORN COCK, 23, Holles-street.

Henry C. Lunn has taken Tennyson's lines:—

"Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
Shadowy, dreamy Adeline?"

and composed a reverie with *Adeline* for its title. A sweet singing air with a flowing accompaniment, smooth and soothing.

FORSYTH BROTHERS, 272, Regent-circus.

*Danse Magique*. By Cotsford Dick. *La Vinandière*. By F. Vivian.—Two agreeable and easy pieces for the pianoforte.

BOOSEY and Co., 295, Regent-street, W.

*Two Loves*. Words by Thomas Moore. Music by Alfred J. Caldicott. Compass D to G.—A bright and simple song with a chorus in false time.

*The Cottager's Lullaby*. Words by the Poet Wordsworth. Music by Charles Vincent. In two keys.—This charming song is sung by Madame Antoinette Sterling, and is a composition which will be much enjoyed by girls who like a quiet domestic song. The accompaniment, which is descriptive of the rocking of a cradle, is original and clever.

*The Parting Hour*. Words by Maidan. Music by James Kennedy. Compass B to D.—The words of this easy and effective song are above average merit, and more suitable than many to hear a home-bird singing.

"There's something in the parting hour:

Will chill the warmest heart,

And kindred, comrades, lovers, friends,  
Are fated all to part.

But well I know, for many a pang

Has pressed it on my mind,

That he who goes is happier far

Than those he leaves behind.

"God wills it so and so it is;

The pilgrims on their way,

Tho' weak and worn, more cheerful are

Than all the rest who stay.

And when at last man's course is run,

His spirit unconfined,

In realms above he's happier far

Than those he leaves behind."

Oh, the truth of this statement! We all have felt the pangs of separation; but few more so than Mr. James Kennedy, the composer of this very song, who has just lost a son and two daughters in the terrible fire at Nice. One of these daughters used to sing "The Parting Hour" before enthusiastic crowds in Scotland and elsewhere.

EDWARD PHILLIPS, Sterndale House, Clapham-common, London, S.W.

*St. Mildred's Well*. Words by Alfred Phillips. Music by Joseph L. Roeckel. Compass D to D.—It is evident that the words of this song were written simply to be wedded to effective semi-religious music. Notwithstanding this not very laudable intention the composer has made a pleasant song which many of our girls may enjoy.

*Her Father's House*. Words by Alfred Phillips. Music by Joseph L. Roeckel. Compass D to G.—The subject of this song was suggested by the celebrated painting bearing the same title and exhibited at the Royal Academy. The subject is better than the words; but the music, like that of the previous song, makes it worthy of purchase and performance.

ENOCH and SONS, 19, Holles-street, Cavendish-square, London, W.

*Two Roses*. Words by Mary Mark Lemon. Music by Milton Wellings. In two keys.—This is a little love poem set to music by the composer of "Banbury Cross," and "At the Ferry." Many admirers of the writings of this popular composer will like to hear of this melodious song, which we must admit, however, to be inferior to the two songs which we mention above.

J. B. CRAMER and Co., 201, Regent-street.

*The Night*. Words by Barry Cornwall. Music by Ciro Pinsuti. Compass D to E.—The words, by the father of Adelaide Ann Proctor, are too well known and too much admired to be given here. The music to Signor Pinsuti is beautiful and refined, as are most of the compositions of this much-respected musician.

*Sweet is the Wandering Breeze*.—A duet for soprano and contralto. Words by Charles J. Rowe. Music by Ciro Pinsuti.—An easy and pleasing duet.

GODDARD and Co., 4, Argyll-place, Regent-street, W.

*Six Sacred Extracts* arranged for the pianoforte. By Lindsay Sloper. No. 1.—*My Heart Ever Faithful*. By J. S. Bach. No. 2.—*Ave Verum*. By Mozart. No. 3.—*La Carita*. By Rossini. No. 4.—*But the Lord is Mindful and How Lovely are the Messengers*. By Mendelssohn. No. 5.—*Benedictus*. By Ch. Gounod. No. 6.—*Prayer from Mosè in Egitto*. By Rossini. Each of the above extracts is a separate publication, and is the easy and, we may add elegant, transcription of a composition of a great master, with a correct fingering plainly marked. Mr. Lindsey Sloper, whose article in our last volume on "How to Accompany a Song," has been so useful to inexperienced musicians, is known by his writings and transcription in every musical English family. Students of the pianoforte will be wise if they select one of the above extracts for home practice, for, as is very different from the incessant playing of an ordinary music "piece," they will never get really tired of the subject.



ness to me; it will be sweet news for her, I'm thinking."

"Tell her, oh! tell her, Bessie," went on the girl, her voice trembling, as the rising tears made their way into her sweet eyes, "tell her, I love her, though I never saw her face; tell her, I strive so hard to be brave and true for God."

"Yes, I'll tell it all, Miss Ruby."

"Are you in pain, darling?" asked the father, drawing now nearer. "God knows, I wish I could bear it for you."

Bessie looked up with a smile as sweet as that of the sleeping child.

"Don't grieve, father dear," she said, "He is making it all so light and easy for me, as light and easy as it used to be when I ran home from school; and I am going home now too."

"But you were coming home, in those old days, to your mother and me, Bessie, and now you be leaving us."

"Oh, father! that's just the hard part of it, leaving you and mother; but you'll come after me, both of you, wont you? You'll try to live so that we shall all be in heaven together. And then think what a dear Lord and friend I'm going to; no one that has read His holy book can fear to go to be with Him."

"Ay, child, He is a friend; your mother and I found Him one, sure enough, in the time of sickness and scarcity of work when you were born; your mother said, when she first looked upon your face, 'See, John, God has sent an angel to help and comfort us in our trouble,' and an angel you have been to us ever since, my Bess."

"And father, mother," went on Bessie (they were both bending over her now, grasping each other's toil-worn hands the while), "bring up little Annie as you brought up me, to know the dear Lord who bought us, the Lord who took the little children in His arms, and she will be your joy and brightness as years go on; He who is doing well I know for us all in taking me, though we can't see how yet, will make her His own child."

"It will be a rare long while before she takes your place, Bessie," sobbed the mother.

"And mind," began Bessie again, "you take care of my hymn book for Annie, and the three little books I won as prizes at school; my Bible, that I should like Ben to have, if he would but prize and read it."

Ben was Bessie's only brother, and, strange to say, considering the honest, God-fearing family from which he came, one of the wildest lads in the parish. Ruby, who was especially fond of teaching boys, had coaxed him sometimes into the Sunday-school, and she and his sister had a certain good influence over him; but it was a power that often grew faint, and died altogether.

Bessie was silent after she had made her little will, looking in turns at Ruby and her father and mother. At first her face was very calm and bright, but gradually an uneasy expression came into it, and she began to cast restless glances towards the door. By-and-bye, she said:—

"If only Ben would come; I am so afraid he won't be in time," and her

breath began to come and go more heavily and slowly.

After that, there was a great stillness in the house, a stillness broken only by the sound of that same weary, laboured breath, and the faint sighing of the wind at the window, and the ticking of the tall clock which had belonged to Bessie's grandmother, and had been ticking just the same when Bessie's mother was born. The father's lips were moving all the time, and once a fragment of prayer broke from him, as if he could not hold it back.

"Help us, Lord, who died on Calvary, help us in Thy mighty, everlasting love."

Once, too, the mother spoke, spoke beneath her breath, in her husband's ear:—

"John, I'm thinking that when any good thing comes to me I shall grieve and weary so to tell it her."

"Very like, Mary, the Lord in heaven will let her know it," he answered in the same soft tone.

And Bessie, too, once broke the silence to say:—

"Mother, I had forgotten one thing, I should like you to have my warm shawl to wear on Sundays."

Those were the only words uttered for a long time in the cottage, and still the slow breath struggled on, and the wind sighed on, and the clock ticked on, but the brother did not come. Those wistful, shining eyes of Bessie watched ever the door, but the pale lips breathed no impatient sound. Ruby wanted to say something to comfort them all, but her young spirit could not find exactly the right words; and, besides, she knew that a better comfort was with each one of them. She pressed Bessie's hand from time to time, and the girl's face showed that she thanked her for her sympathy.

"Hark! What was that sound? It was only the little child stirring in her cradle, and murmuring something in her lisping baby talk. The mother bent over her to soothe her.

"She is dreaming," she said, "and saying something about the angels."

"I have often heard Bessie telling her beautiful stories about them," answered the father in a whisper. "Mayhap, who knows, she can see them coming for her sister."

The minutes sped on, the trembling breath grew weaker; the sister's eyes grew piteous in the anguish of their long watch; would he, or death's mighty angel, be there first?

"Could you not go out to look for him?" asked Ruby in a low tone, turning to the father.

"It's a chance where he may be, Miss Ruby, and, besides, I do set such store on every minute with her now."

At length there was a patter of quick feet on the frost-hardened road outside, and a ring of shrill, boyish laughter; an instant after, a handsome, but resolute-faced lad of about fourteen burst into the cottage, calling out "Good night" to some companion as he entered. Bessie raised herself, a great, joyful light flashed across her face, and her voice, which had been lately very low and weak, rang out sweetly as she cried,

"Ben! dear Ben!"

When the boy came in, eyes and lips were all dancing with mischievous smiles, but the moment his glance fell upon his sister a deep, sad, softening shadow fell upon his face. At first he stood still, as if half shy and abashed, as if he were on the threshold of some holy place which he feared to enter. But when she held out her arms towards him, and fixed upon him those earnest, pleading eyes, he drew nearer slowly, and knelt at her side, and her weak embrace clasped him closer.

"Ben, dear Ben," she whispered, with her head nestling on his shoulder, "come and trust in Him. He is making me feel so safe and happy now."

Then there were some moments again of solemn stillness, broken only by great sobs from the boy; and all the while the breath came weaker and weaker. After that there was one long, quivering sigh, and Bessie had gone to join the waiting angels.

(To be continued.)

## THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM.

By DORA HOPE.



"H, dear me, what a heap of mending!" sighed Margaret, one Monday morning, as she raised the already partially open lid of her stocking basket. "The basket actually will not shut—it's so full! and what big holes! However is it that boys' socks always wear so much worse than anyone else's?"

Taking out the top pair, and unrolling them, Margaret held them at arm's length in dismay. Such yawning chasms of holes, and so many of them, it would be but labour lost to attempt to mend. She remembered that very pair of socks, a week or two previously, as having looked decidedly thin in several places, but having no actual holes in them they had been rolled up and put in Tom's drawer, ready for wear. And this was the result; and as she reluctantly put the mutilated socks aside for kitchen use, remembering at the same time one or two previous similar experiences, she learned anew the old but invaluable lesson about "a stitch in time." Never again would she leave thin places to come into these awkward, even unmendable holes, but, by taking them betimes, save herself endless labour, expense, and time.

The stocking basket, well stocked with needles, yarn, scissors, and socks was kept handily in a work cupboard, whence it could be lifted out whenever there was a little time to spare.

Margaret found she could not afford to waste even the odd five minutes which come to the busiest people sometimes. The two brothers would rush home from school, perhaps with some long tale of the morning's exploits to narrate, or Mr. Colville, before starting in the morning, liked to read extracts from the paper, commenting thereon; and Margaret, not from want of interest in either,



could not help feeling fidgetty at letting the precious moments slip away when there was so much waiting to be done. So she would quietly take some piece of mending from the cupboard and go on with it the while, or, failing mending, she kept always a piece of knitting in hand—a sock for her father, or stocking for herself—which could be readily taken up and laid down again.

Thus she soon got into the way of almost mechanically taking up her work in these odd minutes. But when she felt she could spare time for a real rest, she *did* rest—no work then, but snugly nestled in the recess of the largest and easiest of easy chairs, she would give herself up to the enjoyment of a favourite author or poet.

For it must be confessed that this young damsel was not by nature fond of work. It is probable that, had her lines fallen in different circumstances, her time and energies would have been chiefly devoted to music, reading, and so on, without a thought anent household affairs or the conservation of leisure moments. So she may be excused for banishing even her knitting, when, on very rare occasions, she gave herself to "luxuriating."

But to return to Margaret as she sits examining her pile of mending. Her thoughts are not solely fixed on the task, for they will wander prosaically to the larder which is at present bare, and, moreover, must speedily be filled, or else dinner will be late. The problem was what to have for dinner, for this question still often proved a puzzling one, particularly on Monday, when it was advisable to have a joint that could be eaten cold next day, because Tuesday was washing day.

Washing day was not a very imposing matter in the Colville household, because nothing was washed at home save the kitchen cloths, dusters, and so on, and Betsy's clothes, excepting her cotton dresses. Monday was sometimes a cold-meat day, and then a nice savoury hash or stew formed the Tuesday's dinner, as it could be gently simmering by the fire whilst the washing was going on. But Betsy would have felt aggrieved at being expected to cook anything more elaborate than a stew on this great day, and hence the problem.

"Let me see! Last time we had hot meat on Monday—it was roast beef; and the time before I think it was roast mutton, and before that I've no doubt beef again. Oh, I have it! We will dine off boiled mutton with the usual trimmings, à la Mr. Weller, and that will give an opportunity for telling Betsy the rules for boiling meat, which I've long suspected she is slightly 'mixed' about."

The next few minutes were spent in instilling into the mind of the domestic the fact that if you want to extract the goodness of the meat—for beef-tea, for instance—put it on the fire in cold water, because the act of boiling draws out the juices of the meat. But if it is desired to keep the strength and gravy in the meat, let the water boil first and then put it in, as otherwise it cannot but be tasteless and poor, because all the goodness has been drawn out into the water.

"And you must, of course, keep the liquor the mutton was boiled in, Betsy," went on Margaret, "and on Wednesday we will use it for oyster soup. You have the recipe?"

"Yes, miss, but will you be so kind as read it out to me, I can seem to take in the meaning better when you read it up."

"But you will have forgotten it all by Wednesday. However, if so, you must ask for it again. You require a tin of oysters, the tinned ones will do as well as the fresh for this occasion. Three pints of white stock, not quite half a pint of milk, one and a half ounces of butter, one ounce or rather more of flour, and salt, mace, and pepper. First, take the oysters from the tin and put

them in your soup tureen; then take a pint of stock and simmer it with the liquor from the oysters for half-an-hour; strain it and add the rest of the stock, with the seasoning. Boil it, add the butter and flour for thickening, let it simmer for a minute or two, stir in the boiling milk, and pour all over the oysters. There, that is very simple, and now I must go out and order the leg of mutton."

"But please, miss, about the upstairs fires, as it's come so warm lately and you generally lets the fires out in the morning, I was thinking whether I need light them any more for the present."

"Well, you need not do so to-morrow, and we will see whether anyone feels chilly. If we decide to leave them off altogether in the drawing-room you must thoroughly clean and blacken the grate, take away those bars and put in the bright ones."

"Yes, miss, and beautifully bright they are; I just give them a bit of a rub with a cloth, and they look just like new, through being put away covered with a thick paste of sweet oil and unslaked lime: there's nothing like it for keeping off rust on brights."

"That is all right. Do not forget to fasten down the register. The dining-room grate can be left as it is, because you know we like a fire occasionally even on a summer's evening, but that register must of course be closed too. Only I hope you will not forget to raise it when we have an occasional fire again."

This idea of keeping the fire laid all the summer through was Mr. Colville's, who failed to see why one should sit chilly and comfortless on a cold evening simply because it was the month of July and August.

"Of course it *ought* to be warm, I grant you," he would argue, "but it *is* cold, so by all means let us have a fire."

There was no difficulty about this, as Margaret had worked a pretty pair of curtains in crewels for the fireplace, which effectually concealed all traces of coal and stick. When the fire was to be lighted the curtains were simply looped back by their bands, the register raised, and the grate was ready for the application of the match.

*Apropos* of grates, Margaret's calmness had been put to a severe test on the night of Dick's birthday party. Wilfrid Trent came to preside in Mr. Colville's absence, and Margaret retreated from the noisy scene after tea, but returned to be present at the promised conjuring tricks. The room after a time becoming warm, a window was slightly opened, and the draught blew directly on to the mantelpiece, causing the candles to flicker, and presently to begin to drip grease down upon the marble.

The conjuror stood immediately in front of the fireplace, and Margaret did not like to interrupt the performance by getting up to remove the candles, so she had to just sit and watch, with growing anxiety, the likewise growing heaps of wax.

Her precious marble mantel! It was very handsome, fine, and white; the one thing in the house in which she felt a pride. Every day, with her own hands, she rubbed it tenderly, using a soft cloth only, rightly judging that the application of soap and water would be prejudicial. And now to have to sit and calmly watch the slow, steady trickle of grease was indeed anguish.

"Never mind," she said to herself, "I must smother my feelings till this is over, then I will rush for Joanna's book and seek a remedy whilst the company is having its lemonade and cake in the dining-room before going home."

This she did, and luckily found there an excellent and simple way of removing grease spots from marble. Carefully detaching with a knife as much as she could without scratching the surface of the mantel, she applied some finely-powdered magnesia, to be left all night,

and then, with an easier mind, rejoined the merry party in the next room.

The following morning, on wiping off the magnesia, the grease marks had disappeared, and a second application was not necessary.

The Colvilles' house was an old one, and though it consequently could not boast of modern improvements such as heated linen rooms, yet it possessed one advantage rarely met with in a new house, namely, a fairly large garden.

It was not a remarkably productive garden, but that was, perhaps, because there was so little attention given to its culture. The lawns were kept closely shaven and the paths neat and trim, but beyond that the old-fashioned rose-bushes still blossomed on (or not, as the case might be), free from the rivalry of standards; the lilacs, all untrimmed, grew into perfect bowers, whilst honeysuckles and clematis climbed and wandered about in a delicious tangle, just as their own sweet wills led them.

One corner of the garden was dignified by the name of orchard, though all that remained to merit the title was one gnarled old apple-tree, hoary with age and long past bearing. But here were a number of fine hardy gooseberry and currant bushes, which some enterprising tenant had planted, and in spite of the neglect of the present very unagricultural family, the bushes were laden with fruit, year after year, with unabating plenty.

Tom and Dick would commence their onslaught on the crop whilst the fruit was still in the condition of small green bullets, acrid and indigestible beyond words to describe, and continued it as long as there was a berry left, but still there was abundance left for pies and puddings and preserving.

This year Margaret resolved to be content with bottling a quantity for winter use, instead of preserving any, for it must be confessed that she felt a little timid of trying her 'prentice hand on preserves. Following what she took to be the traditional family recipe for gooseberries in the miscellany book, she selected the fruit when fully grown but before it was ripe. They were gathered on a dry sunny day, and with the "heads and tails" cut off, they were placed in wide-mouthed bottles, which had to be perfectly dry inside. These, well corked, were put to stand up to the neck in a pan of cold water on the fire, which was allowed to come to a boil very gradually till the fruit looked scalded or "coddled," to use an old fashioned phrase. The bottles were then taken out and the necks dipped into the following cement for keeping out all air:—Put two pounds of resin, with two ounces of tallow (that from a dip candle will do) into an earthen vessel; melt over a slow fire till well mixed, colour with a little stone blue or yellow ochre, and let it cool till it is only just liquid.

"The currants require rather more care in gathering, so as not to bruise the fruit, and their treatment afterwards is somewhat different. To every pound of fruit, half a pound of sugar is allowed, pulverised and dried by the fire. They are boiled with the sugar for a minute, then when cold put into bottles with a little sweet oil on the top. A piece of bladder and a little sheet lead are good coverings for excluding air, and finally, the bottles are put away in a cool, dry cupboard, and their contents subsequently testify to the excellence of the way of preserving, for they taste like fresh fruit.

It was during the gathering of this fruit that Betsy confided to her mistress a very agitating and interesting piece of news. It seemed that during her sojourn "down home," Betsy's pleasant face and manner, and her devoted attention to her sick mother, had quite won the heart of a rising young baker. In fact, so devoted was he that, not being



actually discouraged in his suit, he had left his native village and taken a situation as foreman in a thriving establishment not far off, ostensibly to better himself, but also, as Betsy could not but surmise, with the idea of renewing his proposals.

"And now," continued the damsel, hiding as best she could amongst the friendly gooseberry bushes, her face always rosy, at this agitating moment absolutely carmine, "now the young man was pressing for a decided answer, and a letter had come that very morning urging for it in eloquent terms."

"But you don't mean that—he doesn't want you to marry him directly, surely?" asked Margaret, lost in amazement and perplexity.

"Oh, dear heart, no, miss," replied the damsel, unable to refrain from a smile at her mistress's simplicity, "'tis only to keep company, as the saying is; and I thought as father hasn't no objections, and if you hadn't no objections, and he's a very steady young man and getting on well in his trade too—"

"Your father knows him, then?"

"Oh yes, miss, from a child, I might say, and me too. We was at school together, and was always friendly like."

"Well, Betsy, it would not be right for me to hinder you in a matter like this, so long as your father is content, and I feel sure he would not allow you to have anything to do with one who was not very steady and good and nice."

"No, miss, certainly not, nor I wouldn't wish to. Should you have any objections to me seeing him now and then, miss?"

It was Margaret's turn to smile now, for the idea of not being allowed to see one's betrothed even now and again struck her as droll. She was on the point of saying he could come as often as he liked, but, on second thoughts, prudently replied, "Of course I wish to do what is best for you, so I will think it over, and let you know what can be arranged."

Margaret's "thinking about it" meant, as usual, "ask Mrs. Trent or Joanna about it," for this was indeed a new experience for her. She knew, poor child, that a whole day's thought would bring her no light on such a subject, and though she felt much interested in the affair (as what girl of eighteen would not?) she wished she had not to give an opinion on it.

As soon as possible she set out for Mrs. Trent's, timing her visit so that Wilfrid would be certainly safe at his business.

After hearing the state of the case, Mrs. Trent congratulated Margaret on Betsy's having made so good a choice, for she had heard the young man spoken of in high terms by his employer.

"As to his coming to see Betsy, it has always seemed hard to me that while Miss Belinda in the parlour may have her beaux, Betsy Jane in the kitchen is not permitted to have a 'follower!' One wishes to be kind and considerate in such cases, but too frequent visits are not satisfactory; it unsettles the girl, as she is in a constant state of expecting him to come, and it may tempt the young man to waste the time when he ought to be at work. Now, I advise you to give him permission to come every other Sunday afternoon, have tea with Betsy, and go to church with her in the evening. On the intervening Sunday she will see him no doubt at church, but he should not come into the house on any other occasion, save by very special permission."

"Oh, Mrs. Trent, only once a fortnight! Why, if she is very, very fond of him, she will want to see him every single day! I'm certain I should," Margaret exclaimed, blushing and laughing.

"Ah! well, we cannot have everything we want, love; supposing he lived very far away, once a fortnight would seem delightfully often. But you had better propose that to Betsy, and I feel sure she will be well content, and he

too. Now, dear, I will give you that recipe for the marking ink with which my linen was marked when I was married thirty years ago, and, see, it is as black and clear as if it were freshly written. Here it is. Take two drachms of powdered gum arabic, one scruple of sap green, and one drachm two scruples of nitrate of silver; dissolve these in an ounce of distilled water. That is the ink; but before using it, it is necessary to prepare the linen with a mordant, made by dissolving one ounce of carbonate of soda in half a pint of water. Moisten the place to be marked with this mordant, and when dry proceed as with ordinary marking ink, finally holding the newly written letters to the fire for a minute."

"Many thanks, Mrs. Trent dear, I have been so troubled with bad marking inks: some of them wash out directly, and others, still worse, eat away the linen into large holes. If this is a little more trouble to use I'm sure it will be well worth it, for the names on your linen, done so long ago, are far clearer and better coloured than any I can get now."

"Yes, I think you will be pleased. In looking over my old papers, searching for that recipe, I came across this one—it is a delicious conserve, made of rose-leaves—which I have never seen or heard mentioned since I was a child, and used to have a spoonful for dessert on Sundays as a great treat. Yes, you may well open your eyes, but after all it is not a very different thing from drinking the infusion of tea-leaves. This is the recipe:—Take red-rose petals, remove the white part at the bottom of each, sift them through a sieve, to remove seeds and other particles. Weigh them, and allow three times their weight of the best loaf-sugar. Boil the leaves till they are tender, reckoning about a pint of water to the same measure of petals. Then add the sugar and boil, stirring all the time till the syrup is nearly all taken up. Then put away in little jars, covering as for preserves."

"I shall so like to try that as soon as our roses are in perfection; it is such a pretty recipe, and it is so poetic actually to eat a conserve of rose-leaves."

"Then I saved two simple custard recipes for you. They are such an improvement with rather sour early fruit, which will be soon coming on now. Here is one of them:—Take a pint of milk, add two large eggs, both whites and yolks, and a little nutmeg. Beat these together for five minutes, and pour into a saucepan. Stir over a clear fire till the mixture thickens. Put into a jug a little drop of almond flavouring, or vanilla (half a teaspoonful is ample), strain the custard into the jug, strain it once more, and serve cold. The other recipe is equally simple and economical. For it you must boil a pint of new milk, with a little lemon-peel, two bay-leaves, and sugar to taste. Meanwhile, rub down smooth a dessert-spoonful of rice-flour into a cup of cold milk, and mix with it the well-beaten yolks of two eggs. Take a basin of the hot milk and mix with the cold, then pour that into the saucepan of boiling milk again, stirring it one way till it thickens and is on the point of boiling. Next pour it out into a jug or other vessel, stir it for some time, adding a table-spoonful of peach-water, and any flavouring you please."

"Those certainly sound very simple. I have never been very successful with custards when I have tried the more complicated recipes, but surely I cannot go wrong with such clear and easy directions as these. How lovely that bouquet of lilac is! Surely they are not the same clusters that I saw here more than a week ago?"

"Yes, indeed, they are the same, and they are as sweet as ever, are they not? It is because there was a little charcoal put in the water in which they stand. There is nothing like it for keeping flowers fresh."

"Well, I hope Betsy will not think me very hard-hearted about her interviews with the young man," said Margaret, as she rose to take leave.

"She will be unreasonable if she does; but you need not fear it. I hope you will meet with no worse treatment from the powers that be when your own time comes."

(To be continued.)

## NEW MUSIC.

J. B. CRAMER and Co., 201, Regent-street:—  
*Lost on the Prairie.* Descriptive song for baritone or bass. Words by Charles W. Rowe. Music by Ciro Pinsuti. Compass, A to F. This vigorous song comes to us as a pleasing variety after many maudlin sentimental love songs. It may be that *Lost on the Prairie* is more suitable for a man to sing; nevertheless we are sure that many girls will enjoy a change of subject upon which to exercise their vocal talents, and this song can safely be recommended both for its invigorating nature and its excellence as a descriptive composition. If Signor Pinsuti had not written hundreds of other excellent songs, this alone would have made for him an enviable reputation, but it seems to us that each new song written by this composer is better than its predecessor. This song is full of variety and contains a mine of excellent themes with which to play upon the emotions of an audience. It opens with a recitative in E minor:—

"Silence profound, no path, no track is there

To guide the wanderer on his homeward way,

*Lost on the Prairie*, far from human ken;  
Save for my steed alone, through night and day

He, the dear comrade of my many toils,  
Hungered, athirst, exhausted, near me lies;  
While carrion vultures, scenting quick new prey,  
Sail circling round and watch with greedy eyes."

The time and key change as he descants on his visions and dreams of home, and asks with declamation, "What to me now this treasured gold?" for which he "toiled with such wild haste." But the key changes again and the time increases, and in a pianissimo accompaniment we hear the gallop of horses, and in an allegretto recitative the lost man cries, "But hark! what sound is that? It speaks of help, of life, of hope, of home!" and the finale of this splendid composition ends with:—

"O God, I thank thee for this aid

Sent in our direst need!

Courage, my steed, my gallant steed,

We're saved!"

*Three Tokens.* Words by Nella. Words by Henry Parker. Compass, E to A; also

*My Treasures.* By the same writer and composer. Compass, D to E.—Sung by Madame Patey. These two songs are melodious, and written in a popular style. They will not suit girls whose voices are not crisp and flexible.

*Autumn.* Words translated from the German. Music by King Hall. Compass, C sharp to D. And by the same composer,

*The Moss Rose.* Compass, E flat to F.—The words of this song, translated from the German of Krummacker, give the legend of the moss rose. On asking the Angel of the flowers for an additional grace, the rose had thrown over it a veil of moss, which has since that time made its appearance different from the other roses of the garden. The music of *Autumn* and of *The Moss Rose* is quiet and beautiful,



from you it may receive nothing but what is good?

After the bath a baby is generally ready for its food, and the meal is pretty certain to be followed by its morning sleep. If the mother nurses her infant herself and a young helper has washed and dressed it, the latter should put away the articles that are done with, empty and dry the bath, and expose night clothes and towels, if possible to the open air. Never be in a hurry to wrap up clothing or cover up beds. Let them have plenty of fresh air, or at least as much as you can possibly give them. I ought to have said the moment baby is taken out of his cot, the bed should be shaken up and all the bedding spread out and thus exposed. It is an excellent plan to have two sets of sheets in use, one for nights and the other for days; then this airing can be well carried out.

Often, when travelling in Switzerland, I have been struck with the carefulness of the people in airing their beds. As you pass through a village in the early morning, if you look from the windows of the diligence, you will see the beds, which are small, light, and much more portable than ours, hanging from every casement. They are turned over and exposed for hours to the fresh air and light, a process which must tend greatly to their purification and to the health of those who use them.

By all means imitate as far as possible this excellent example, and, though our cumbersome beds cannot be hung out in like manner, we may give them the benefit of frequent exposure to air and light.

Baby's little bed or mattress, from its small size, has a better chance than any other, so let him have the full advantage of this.

In my next chapter I shall try to give simple instructions on "How to Nurse the Baby."

(To be concluded.)

## THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM.

By DORA HOPE.



Do your friend is to arrive to-day, is she, Madge?" said Mr. Colville, one morning in June, as they sat at breakfast. "Miss Dolabella—let me see, what is her name?" "Dorothy, papa; Dorothy Snow." "Sweet thing in names, certainly," remarked Tom. "I say, Madge, what is she

like?"

"Well, I have not seen her for more than two years, as, being my senior, she left school before I did, and we have never met since. But I used to admire her immensely; she was very tall and very dark and handsome, and I thought her very clever, but then I think school-girls always exaggerate the good qualities of their friends."

"H'm, glad she's nice-looking," said Tom, complacently, with a glance at the pier-glass, as he fingered his collar and tie delicately with his finger tips, to make sure they were arranged as they should be. Tom was at that age when, though exceedingly boyish in many ways, he still felt himself very much grown up and manly. He began to feel an interest in the cut of his coat, and displayed even anxiety about the shape of his hats.

"Oh, my dear boy, she will very soon crush you if you evince any admiration, I'm quite sure," cried Margaret, laughing. "Do is so splendidly strong and tall, she could pick you up in her finger and thumb, almost."

"May we call her Do, too, Madge?" asked Dick.

"No; of course, you must say Miss Snow, unless she tells you you need not. She used to be so teased about her name at school, they always used to call her 'Do Snow,' but I beg you won't do that."

The meeting between the friends was hearty and warm, for, though a correspondence had been kept up, they had not seen one another since the old days at school, and there would be large arrears of talk to make up during Dorothy's fortnight's visit.

Margaret knew quite well that her friend's home was a more luxurious one than her own. With plenty of servants it was not likely that she would take any part in household matters herself, and Margaret could not help wondering what she would think of the innumerable duties which devolved upon the mistress of the Colville household.

The morning after Dorothy's arrival, Margaret, with some little hesitation, asked if she would excuse her for half an hour, and having no idea of attempting to hide anything of the sort, explained that she usually made the pastry herself instead of trusting it to a not very efficient maid.

To her surprise, Dorothy begged to be allowed to come and help, or at any rate look on, for her mother had lately taken up the idea of her learning all about cooking and cleaning, and so, having been "learning hard" lately, she would be delighted to continue her education.

Of course Margaret was only too pleased, and so it happened that some of their merriest times were spent by the two girls in the kitchen.

One morning, as Margaret was tying on her large apron and rolling up her sleeves preparatory to a plunge in the flour tub, Dorothy bethought her of certain items of cookery in which she considered herself proficient.

"Did you not say, Margery, that the Trents are coming to supper to-night?" asked she.

"Yes, they are," replied Margaret, "I want you to see Mrs. Trent, she is such a good friend to me."

"Oh, then, do let me make some delicacies for supper," cried Dorothy. "You need not look so alarmed, I can make a select few dishes *beautifully*. Now, if you will consent, you shall have the loveliest jelly you ever tasted, which will cost a mere nothing. Do you happen to have any very cheap claret in the house? That at rod. a bottle will do."

"No, I fear we have not, but Betsy shall go and get a bottle; or stay, perhaps, as she is a teetotaler, she might not like the errand, so we will go ourselves as my pastry will not be required."

"But we must provide something else for supper besides. One jelly is hardly enough."

"No, hardly. Let me see, there will be the cold lamb and mint sauce—"

"Will you not have a salad with mayonnaise sauce also? I feel competent for that; even mamma praises my mayonnaise sauce!"

"That will do very nicely, and, with a dish of gooseberry fool, I think there will be enough. We do not usually make much difference for the Trents."

After their purchases were made the girls set to work at their cooking, Dorothy having borrowed one of Margaret's aprons and pairs of sleeves.

"Now, look here, Margery, you ought to learn how to make this jelly; it is so nice and cheap withal," said Dorothy, as she uncorked the bottle of wine. "See now, I simply put into my earthenware pot 1 oz. of gelatine, a

fourpenny jar of red currant jelly, the rind and juice of one lemon,  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. of loaf sugar, and the claret. They are to simmer gently till the gelatine is melted, and then boil for five minutes. That is the whole process. Now I strain it into this mould, which has been standing in cold water meanwhile, and there you are."

"That is an easily-made jelly, certainly," said Margaret, admiringly; "and I must say it looks nice, too."

"I should think it was nice indeed!" Dorothy exclaimed. "At home, when we want it specially good, we put in a small cupful of brandy also. And when the jelly is turned out we pour round it some cream, sweetened and flavoured with almond or anything we choose. But it is quite good enough for ordinary occasions without these expensive adjuncts."

"Now for the mayonnaise sauce, Do. But would it not be better to leave the making of that till nearer the time?"

"Oh, no, it will not *matter*; of course, we will not pour it over the salad till just before supper. You have to put the yolk of an egg into a basin, so (oh dear, how difficult it is to separate the yolk and white!) also a little white pepper and salt, and a quarter teaspoonful of mustard. Then you mix them well together."

"How much salad oil shall you allow?" asked Margaret, looking on with much interest.

"I believe tastes differ about that, but I have been instructed that  $\frac{1}{4}$  pint is about right. It must not be put in all at once, you observe, but just very slowly, drop by drop, stirring all the time with a wooden spoon, until about half of it is used. Next, I put in the least little drop of vinegar, Tarragon and the ordinary kind mixed, and then go on very slowly adding the remainder of the oil. There, this is turning out very well, as smooth as cream, and yet not oily-looking. Now it ought to have a teaspoonful of whipped cream added, but perhaps town milk does not yield cream?"

"Yes, it does, more or less," answered Margaret, fetching a basin from the pantry. "Betsy always puts it to stand when it comes in, and though the cream is not as thick as it might be, still we should not fancy our tea and coffee without it. Why, how clever you are, Do; and you pretended to be *such* an ignoramus."

"So I am; I have very nearly come to the end of my cooking capabilities already, and I know simply nothing of the management of a house. Now we must put this sauce in the very coolest place you have till it is wanted, and then, please, let me watch you make the gooseberry fool."

Margaret began by putting the green gooseberries into a jar with a little water, and a good deal of sugar.

This was set in a saucepan of boiling water, which was let boil till the fruit was soft enough to mash. After being reduced to a pulp, it was worked through a colander into a basin. Next some cold milk and cream should have been added, but, as the latter was not plentiful, Margaret used a little corn flour instead. Allowing a pint of milk to the same measure of pulp, she put it on to boil, then mixed the corn flour (in the proportion of one teaspoonful to each pint of milk) in a cup of cold milk, and added it to the rest in the saucepan. After boiling, it was slowly stirred into the fruit. Margaret then tasted it, and made a wry face at the sourness.

"What, sour after all that sugar?" exclaimed Dorothy.

"Yes, it does take such a quantity," Margaret replied, as she added more, "and it is simply uneatable if you stint the sugar. Now you have seen the whole mystery of gooseberry fool, so, when I have told Betsy to be sure and put *plenty of sugar to the mint sauce,*



suppose we have a run round the garden before dinner?"

Mr. Colville unexpectedly joined them at that meal. As this was a very rare occurrence, he said he would be treated as a guest, and refused to take the head of the table, which post Margaret was anxious to vacate, declaring she would be too nervous to carve properly with her father looking on.

"But you carve splendidly, Madge; I have often noticed and admired your skill," said Dorothy.

"I do better than some girls, I think, because it is not usually considered necessary for them to know how. I was determined to learn, because I have to do it so often."

"And it is certainly a very useful accomplishment," said Dorothy; "one feels so utterly stupid at having to refuse if asked."

"It is still worse to make the attempt and fail," remarked Mr. Colville. "You know, Miss Snow, many people, ladies particularly, think it quite enough if they are able to cut a joint to pieces; anything beyond that they consider gluttonous epicurism. Of course, one undoubtedly enjoys one's dinner more if it be well cut, but the chief thing is that a joint goes twice as far, so it is most economical. And, as old Dr. Kitchener says, 'A dexterous carver will help half-a-dozen people in half the time one of your would-be-thought polite folks wastes in making civil faces to a single guest.'"

"What delightfully plain speaking," laughed Dorothy.

"Then, every carver ought to know which is considered the best part of whatever he may be serving," continued Mr. Colville, "for some people would be quite offended if, when dining out, they were not helped to, for instance, some of the thin part of salmon as well as the thick, or the fins of turbot, or if they had any other part than the wing of a fowl, the back of a hare, or the breast of turkey. However, I must defer the rest of my discourse on the merits of good carving till a more favourable opportunity, for I see it is time I was off."

The next day the two girls had betaken themselves to a pretty summer-house in the garden for a chat after dinner, when Betsy brought some letters to them which the postman had just left.

The summer-house was a rustic and, it must be added, an unsteady-looking erection. It had been built, at great pains and labour, by Tom and Dick, as a pleasant surprise for their father on his return from a recent short absence from home. They intended the family to have tea in it on the evening of Mr. Colville's arrival; but Margaret thought she detected a slightly slanting tendency about the walls, and trembled for the safety of her pretty tea-set, and likewise of their own heads. So she suggested tea on the lawn, from whence they could look at the summer-house, and, as she pointed out, see it much better than if they were inside. And a happy thing it was that her idea was carried out, for during their merry meal Dick stepped into the edifice, and, to prove its strength, rashly shook one of the uprights with both hands. The whole affair tottered for an instant, and then entirely collapsed, burying the young architect in its ruins. The hapless youth, when extricated, was found to be unhurt (save in his mind, which was considerably wounded), and with the aid of a carpenter the summer-house once more reared its head in beauty and strength, surpassing its original state.

In fact, it could now be pronounced safe, and here it was that Margaret and Dorothy sat to read their letters that fine June day.

"Do you know, I think Betsy must have had a letter from her dear baker, she looked so beaming," said Dorothy. "I have heard from home, and mamma says she hopes I shall

one day blossom forth into another such a model young housekeeper as you are. But she does not seem very sanguine about it, I must confess."

"Now, Do, don't you flatter me so; pray, what have you been saying to Mrs. Snow about me? I must write and tell her the truth. My letter is from Joanna, and I think I will read it out loud to you, because, whether you like it or not, it will be very useful for your education. I asked a number of questions the last time I wrote, and she says, in answer to one *à propos* of my bill file, 'By all means keep your paid and receipted bills, all of them, excepting those for very trifling sums. Put them on the file till the end of the quarter, then take them off, and having labelled and stitched them together, put them away in some safe place.'

"For cool summer drinks nothing is better than different sorts of 'ades.' The nicest possible lemonade is made thus:—Remove the peel and every scrap of white, and also the pips, from three lemons. Slice them and lay them, with the peel of one, in a quart jug. Add half-a-pound or more of loaf-sugar, and fill the jug with boiling water. When cold, this is just as good as some of the complicated lemonades. Another pleasant drink is made by substituting for the lemon slices of apples, peeled and cored. This does not require so much sugar, and a squeeze of lemon improves it. Again, raspberry vinegar and water with lemon juice is very agreeable. All these are immensely improved by the addition of a lump of ice.

"Then you asked me, I think, about preserving—"

"Yes, I did," put in Margaret, "but I changed my mind, and am now going to be content with the fruit I bottled."

"I should like to hear about it, though, please," said Dorothy. "It may come in useful some day."

"Well, here are Joanna's sentiments on the subject:—'Let the fruit be perfectly dry when you gather it—that is to say, no rain ought to have fallen for at least twenty-four hours previously. If it should chance to be showery weather, so that you cannot keep to this rule, boil the fruit an extra long time, or it will soon be mouldy. The fruit should be preserved as soon as possible after gathering. Use good sugar; it is economy in the end, as it requires less skimming, and hence there is less waste. As a rule, allow 1lb. of sugar to one quart of fruit. Very economical people do not add the sugar till the fruit has boiled some time, and all the skimming is done; but I do not think the preserve would be thoroughly sweet, nor would it, I fancy, keep equally well. If you use a brass pan, be sure it is perfectly clean and dry; the least dirt or moisture left in it after the last time of using will have produced verdigris, which, as doubtless you know, is deadly poison.'

"If you ever have to preserve, Do, take my advice and use an earthenware pan—then there is no danger of verdigris, and it would be much easier to clean," remarked Margaret. "But Joanna mentions the brass one because she knows we have one. Let me see—where was I? Oh, here is the place:—'Have a good red fire—not a blazing one. Let the preserve boil as fast as possible, but be careful it does not boil over. Stir all the time with a wooden spoon, removing the scum as it rises. When it thoroughly boils, do not stir violently, or you will mash the fruit, and the beauty of preserve is to keep it whole and distinct. If you leave off stirring, the fruit will stick to the bottom of the pan in a mass, and the whole will be spoilt. When it has boiled fast about twenty minutes, try a little on a plate; if it sets in five minutes or so, it is done enough. Pour it into pots, and when cold, cover it down. The best and simplest

way of covering is to take a piece of paper the right size, brush it well over with white of egg slightly beaten, and press it over the pot. It will adhere firmly, and is quite airtight. An improvement to strawberry jam is to add red currant juice. Stew the currants in a jar in a cool oven till the juice is thoroughly out; strain it, and pour it into the strawberries, allowing the same proportion of sugar as for other fruit."

"Are you tired of this instructive letter, Do?" asked Margaret, laying down the third sheet. "Please say if you are. You see I ask so many questions, that Joanna's letters are necessarily rather long."

"No, indeed, I am not tired; pray go on if there is any more of the same nature."

"'Beans are in season now,' continued Margaret. 'Gather them before they are quite full grown and throw them at once, after shelling, into boiling salt and water, with a bunch of summer savory, which is boiled with them, as mint is with peas. When done serve them in a vegetable-dish, with a piece of butter stirred amongst them, or else make a tureen of melted butter, in which is chopped the cooked savory.'

"'Arthur tells me that beans and bacon are quite an aristocratic dish now! I always considered it a very homely one. The two should be cooked separately, as the bacon spoils the colour of the beans. Put the former into cold, and the latter into boiling water, when cooking them.'

"Now I come to 'lastly,' which is the rather unpleasant subject of the dust-bin. You must be most particular that no greens, cabbage leaves, and such like are thrown in, neither should there be scraps of meat or bone. In fact, try to keep it free from everything from which a disagreeable odour could arise. Then it must be cleared regularly once a week during the summer; do not on any account let it go longer, and now and then have the inside whitewashed. You might occasionally also throw in a little chloride of lime.'

"There, Do, I hope you feel a great deal the better for hearing all that?"

"Oh, Madge, I think it is well to be you to have such a sister. What would you do without her?"

"Indeed, I do not know," answered Margaret, folding up her letter. "But, you know, I feel dreadfully dependent on my friends, for in the least difficulty I always go, at least, write, to Joanna. Then Mrs. Melrose, the 'lady with ideas,' as you call her, is very kind in giving me hints; and then as to Mr. Trent—"

"And as to Mr. Trent?" interrogated Dorothy, mimicking her friend's tone.

"Well," said Margaret, stiffly, "I don't know that Mr. Trent's acquaintance is of vital importance to my housekeeping."

"Oh, Madge, why, you *are* ungrateful after the cunning way in which he extricated the stopper from the decanter last night."

"Did he do so? It must have been whilst I was upstairs with Mrs. Trent."

"Yes, it was most firmly fixed; we all tried in vain, when Wilfrid, with charming modesty, said he thought he could get it out. I fetched, at his direction, a basin of hot water, in which he plunged the neck of the decanter, tapping it gently on each side. Still it would not come out, so the ingenious thing asked for some oil, of which he put the least drop round the stopper, just where it enters the bottle, held it before the fire for a minute, and out it came in a twinkling!"

"Oh, it was rather sharp, perhaps," replied Margaret; "but it was a pity to spoil the sherry by mixing it with oil."

"Now, Madge, you are in a very contrary frame of mind. There was not much wine in the decanter, and it was not spoilt, because I very quickly wiped the inside of the neck with



a clean serviette from the sideboard drawer. And even if it did taste oily, it could be used perfectly well for cookery. So you may just as well admit that Wilfrid Trent is a very clever, ingenious, handsome, good, and altogether nice fellow; certainly he would admit the same and a good deal more of you."

"Particularly the 'fellow' part of it!" retorted Margaret. "No, Do; the first time he saw me I was most shamefully untidy and floury, being in the midst of pastry-making, and that filled him with a repulsion for me that he has never conquered."

But a merry look in the girl's eyes either belied her words, or else proved that the fact in no way affected her peace of mind.

(To be continued.)

## ELEANOR'S AMBITION.

By the Author of "The White Cross and Dove of Pearls," "Selina's Story," &c.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### SOVING SEEDS OF KINDNESS.

"We receive but what we give,  
And in our life alone does Nature live."



HOUGH there was nothing Eleanor liked better than an evening at the Rectory, she did not, on this particular evening, recover either her spirits or her self-satisfaction. When she

reached home the sight of Catharine's happy face made her feel more woe-begone by its contrast with her mood. James Lovell was there. He stayed to supper, and took more notice of Eleanor than he usually did.

Mrs. Townsly asked her if she had heard any more particulars of Anna Fitton's illness.

"Only that as the important day drew nearer she worked all the harder, and scarcely allowed herself any sleep," said Eleanor in a low voice.

"Mind that you don't follow suit," said Mr. Lovell, in an undertone. "I feel now as if I had a brotherly right to dictate to you. I hope you won't resent it."

"No. If my angles are not rubbed off by incessant friction they ought to be," she said, with a poor attempt at playfulness.

But soon an animated discussion was going on *pro* and *con*. the higher education of women.

Eleanor took no part in it. To her great disgust, Frederic, who had done much, years ago, to form her mind, and for long had given her great encouragement in her endeavours to improve, declared that women who were omnivorous readers, and who cultivated a speciality or two, without carrying it to the pitch of boredom, were charming; but these young girl graduates were the reverse of sweet, in spite of their golden hair.

Eleanor was annoyed; yet she knew how Frederic had been embittered against girl-graduates, and that the views he now expressed were due to the revolution she had wrought in his former opinions on the subject.

Everything combined to irritate her.

She was glad when James Lovell took his leave, and the hour came for retiring. Then, in the solitude of her own room, she thought that this had been no white-letter day.

Fuel had been added to the painful excitement of the morning. She had gone to the Bible-class for relief, hoping that, by some kind of magic, she might be made to feel more amiable—for there is sometimes more superstition mixed with our religious faith than we are aware of; and, even under the cover of a subject so foreign to the events of her day as the wedding at Cana, the Rector had managed to convict her of fresh faults. She had a strong impression that he had been talking *at* her. Then, though the conversation at home rose naturally out of poor Anna Fitton's illness, it was most painfully personal, and perhaps not quite unconsciously so.

As Eleanor brooded over it she grew more and more resistant, but she took up her little text-book, as was her wont, and this text met her eye,—

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

Her eye softened as it dwelt on the inspired words. Was it God who was humbling her, and making her so dissatisfied with herself? Then she must be willing to be humbled; she must not contend with Him.

All she could do was to pray, "What I see not teach Thou me"; and above all others she must commend to God's love and care her suffering friend. As she lay awake she wondered how Anna would view the circumstances of her illness if she recovered. Would she own to having made a god of intellect? Would life, when consciousness returned, seem to be given her for any deeper purpose, any loftier aim than she, for all her noble aspirations, had as yet recognised?

What was meant by finding life in losing it, losing it in finding it? Eleanor had some intuition as to what those words might mean. She knew what finding life would consist in to her, but such a finding God might call "losing," inasmuch as it included no spiritual gain or ministry of love to others."

In a maze of confused impressions she fell asleep, but there was a "kindly Light" waiting to lead her through the tangle, and none who follow that Light can fail to find the way wherein they should walk, lost as it may seem to them.

Now it so happened that Eleanor, with all her troubles, had gone to sleep more easily than Catharine. Catharine was awake, not to build castles in the air; not to think of James Lovell; she was thinking of Eleanor.

Naturally kind, her new happiness had made her kinder, and the look on her sister's face when she walked out of the conservatory, her expression when she thought she was not noticed in the Bible-class, and again when she came home, affected her deeply. Eleanor was unhappy, and they were all teasing her; no one was saying a kind word to her.

It was true that lately they had been shut out of her confidence so that no one could tell what the workings of her mind might be, but if she were in want of a helping hand how hard it was not to reach it out to her. As Catharine thought of her younger sister she perceived that she had not always been so forbearing and so kind as she ought to have been. She had been impatient with her faults, had spoken sharply now and then, and had sometimes joined others in the laugh which her absence of mind and want of *savoir faire* occasioned. And Eleanor, too proud to show that she was wounded, had perhaps been secretly stung.

"She is running on wrong lines," said Catharine, "but I do wish I could help her to get off them. She *used* to be such a fine girl, and no one knows what she might be yet, if she would not turn her brain into a magazine of miscellaneous knowledge that she will never have any use for."

And Catharine wondered if she could be induced to retire from the list of competitors and submit to a year's steady house-drill, so that when she married she might take her place and not feel at a loss. Catharine thought that to train Eleanor to the performance of her duties would be the very best thing she could do both for her and for her family. But since neither mind of man nor woman can admit of two absorptions at the same time, she wisely resolved that it should be conditional on the abandonment of her present enterprise.

She did not know how Eleanor might regard such a proposal. She might be very indignant. So she would not urge it too much upon her lest she might after all be in the right and might live to regret being turned aside from her own steadfastness of purpose.

Both the sisters wore an air of deep thoughtfulness next morning at breakfast, but neither knew what was passing in the other's mind.

Harry had had earache all night, and his cheeks were white and his eyes swollen. His mamma told him that he ought to have laid in bed. She had been to him two or three times and had put a little cotton-wool dipped in laudanum in his ear; but though it had benumbed the pain it had not taken it away. Of course there was a dispensation from school, but what would he do with himself?

"I know what would be jolly," he said. "The pain mightn't come on bad again if I could forget that I had any ears. I'd like to lie down on the sofa and press the bad one hard against a cushion, and have such a stunning good story read to me as Eleanor once read when I was a little chap and had the toothache."

"How long was that ago? I mean, how long is it since you were a little boy?" asked Catharine, laughing.

"Oh, it's an age: quite two years since I had the toothache and Eleanor read, oh, such a jolly tale she wrote out from the German. Do you remember, Eleanor? It was called 'Aslanga's Knight,' and it had no long words in it?"

(To be continued.)



sat down to her machine with a full, bursting heart. She knew well what hard words were, but this was something worse. Tears blinded her eyes as she tried to work, and she longed to run away and hide herself. But there she was in the crowded workroom, and there she must stay all the afternoon. Suddenly she remembered Miss Johnson's words: "You cannot feel a sorrow, but He feels it, too." "Jesus knows," said she to herself; "He knows how hard it is to bear. Why, it was only the other day I was reading how they plaited a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and blindfolded Him, and struck Him on the face, and spit on Him. That must have been far worse; and yet He was so gentle, and never answered back. And I suppose I mustn't, either."

Just at that moment the girl whom Katie had helped passed behind her chair.

"Never mind, Kitty dear," she whispered; "I like you much better now than I did, and the girls will soon get tired of teasing."

Happily, when the time came for leaving, they were in too much of a hurry to get home to pay any attention to Katie, and she was allowed to go her way in peace. Only Bridget said, as they stood together outside for a minute, "Well, Kitty, you are a brick! Why, if anyone had said all that to me, I should have knocked them down, bang! Well, good-bye. I told you you'd catch it hot, but I never thought you'd be as plucky as that!"

Months have passed away since then, and Katie has found Miss Johnson's words come true. "Looking unto Jesus," all things have become easy. In His strength she was able to bear the petty persecutions which met her day after day for many weeks. But, one by one, her companions have left her alone, and she has made not a few firm friends among them by her gentle kindness and ready help. It was not so long ago that one called her "The Sunbeam of the Factory," so surely and steadily has she risen in their favour. And if, now and then, an ill-natured remark is passed, she takes no notice, and lets it drop.

She still lives with her stepmother, but the home is different now. Many a jeering remark and harsh word did Katie have to bear at first, but the change in her life was too real to be mistaken, and gradually the ice round Mrs. Morton's heart melted away in the sunshine of Katie's forbearance and love. Her manner now is more gentle—sometimes almost respectful—towards the young girl, and it was a happy Sunday to both when Katie first induced her to attend the simple service in the mission-hall close by.

And Katie herself is happy. She still has her trials—who has not?—but she has learnt to pour them forth—even the least—into the ear of Him who careth for us all. Meanwhile, more than one are ready to bless God that ever Katie Morton was born into the world. Her life may be long or short, but, let her go on as she has begun, and one day she

will hear the voice of the Saviour whom she loves: "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

### THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM.

By DORA HOPE.



As the summer advanced, and the weather became warm and sultry, Margaret found herself confronted by several difficulties which during the cool weather had not presented themselves to her mind.

The principal of these was the extreme difficulty of keeping meat and fish sweet, for the larder was small, and not sufficiently ventilated by the small window; yet it did not answer to leave the door open, for once when she had done so a cat had got in and was discovered by Betsy in the very act of devouring a sole which had been put there in readiness for Mr. Colville's tea.

Necessity is the mother of invention, and Margaret being several times driven nearly desperate by perceiving that the meat was slightly tainted, had no choice but to invent a remedy. She sent for the carpenter, and after a consultation, they devised the expedient of taking the larder-door off the hinges, and substituting for it, just for the summer months, a sheet of perforated zinc, fitted into a wooden frame. This answered capitally in so far that it caused a thorough draught through the larder, but its very success was the cause of another difficulty, for where the air could enter so freely, flies could enter too. This further difficulty was met by keeping the meat always under one of the common wire-netting meat covers, and by placing in the middle of the floor a saucer of strong green tea, well sweetened, which attracted and destroyed the flies. The ordinary fly papers, being poisonous, could not of course be used where food was kept.

It required a little extra trouble to keep the butter cool and hard, in fact Margaret had almost given up the attempt, being convinced that soft and oily butter was an unavoidable evil in warm weather, but Tom, who considered himself an authority on all matters of natural science, explained to her one day the principle of keeping things cool by evaporation; so she thought she could not do better than test his theory on the butter.

Accordingly she half filled a soup-plate with water, and put the butter-dish in it;

then she spread a wet cloth over the dish, letting the ends dip into the water in the soup-plate. Thus the cloth was kept constantly moist, and she found to her delight that the butter was always cool and firm.

In spite of all her care, on one or two occasions Margaret perceived that the meat became slightly tainted, not very much, or she would have been afraid to use it; indeed, Betsy, whose olfactory nerves were not so sharp as those of her mistress, thought it was all nonsense, and declined believing that there was anything at all wrong.

Joanna, on being applied to as usual for advice, recommended her, whenever she perceived the slightest taint, to dust the meat over with charcoal, an hour before dressing it, and advised her also to keep a piece of charcoal in the larder during the very close weather. She always adopted that plan herself, she said, except in the case of meat intended for boiling, when she found the taint more effectually extracted by putting a couple of pieces of charcoal, about the size of an egg, into the pan in which the meat or fish was to be boiled.

To keep soup and stock sweet, she strained it very well when first made, and skimmed off every particle of fat, and again strained it every day into a clean vessel which was always kept uncovered.

One evening towards the end of July, Mr. Colville, who had been silent for some little time, suddenly broke in upon the conversation.

"Madge," he said, "do you think you could tear yourself away from home next week for a little while?"

Margaret looked up *questioningly*.

"Well, the fact is, I mean to go away for a little holiday next week, and I thought perhaps you would like to come, too. What do you think?"

There was no need for Margaret to say what she thought; her face sufficiently expressed her delight, till, catching sight of the boys' rather woeful faces, she recollected that there were others to think of besides herself.

"But what about the boys, father?"

"Perhaps we might prevail upon them to come, too."

The delight of the boys knew no bounds, and Mr. Colville was overwhelmed with questions as to when they were going, and where, and how. To all these inquiries he replied that he would leave it entirely to them to decide; all he wanted was a quiet holiday.

The next hour was spent in the study of maps and time-tables. A dozen plans were proposed and rejected; but at last they decided to go to a sea-side town they had visited as children, and the boys were soon deep in consultations about fishing-rods and other holiday matters.

"Father," said Margaret, when quiet was obtained by the departure of her brothers, "do you think it will be safe to leave Betsy alone in the house for a whole month?"

"I dare say she would be safe enough; but I would rather you did not try it. How should you like a month alone in a house, yourself?"

"Oh, father, the very idea of it makes me shudder! But then, you know, I am an arrant coward. It is to be hoped that Betsy has more strength of mind than I have."

"Probably she has; but I think it is too much to expect of so young a woman as Betsy; nor do I think it advisable, even if she herself is willing. If we were only going for two or three days, it would be a different matter. But you had better write and consult Joanna; I shall be quite content to leave it to the decision of two such able house-keepers."

Margaret had no need to write to her sister,



however, for the next post brought tidings from her. Mr. Colville had mentioned in a letter a few days previously that he hoped to be able to take his children for a holiday, and Joanna, foreseeing Margaret's perplexity, wrote to her as follows:—

"You will probably feel some difficulty about leaving Betsy. I advise you to inquire at once for some respectable woman to come and sleep in the house; very likely the tradespeople may know of some one whom they can recommend; but I need hardly say you cannot be too careful whom you employ—far better leave Betsy alone than have a woman in the house whom you do not know to be thoroughly honest and clean. You will probably find some person who goes to work during the day, and who would be glad to keep Betsy company at night for the sake of the breakfast and supper which would be provided for her; but it is better to pay her a small sum, and let her provide for herself.

"As for Betsy's provisions, it is much the most satisfactory plan for all parties to give her board wages, and let her buy whatever she fancies. The usual sum is ten shillings a week; it seems a good deal, but you know it is so much more expensive, in proportion, to provide for one person than for a family.

"You must have a clear understanding with Betsy before you go, about all the cleaning you expect her to do in your absence; of course you will take the opportunity to get your blankets and counterpanes washed, and the carpets shaken. I advise you not to let her attempt the heavy washing alone; if you have a charwoman for the day it will be done far better. You should give her full instructions how to wash the blankets and other woollen things, for nothing is more easily spoilt in the washing. Perhaps I had better give you a few hints about it, in case you do not quite understand the subject yourself.

"In the first place she should not upon any account use boiling water, nor, still worse, boil them in the copper, as I have seen careless servants do. The water should be only warm, in fact the cooler the water is the better, as long as it is just warm enough to cleanse the blankets thoroughly. First of all, give each article a good shaking, to rid it of any dust and stray feathers that may have caught on it. They should next be put to soak in cold water for a little, then well washed in a lather made of soft soap. They will require washing out again after this in a lather rather hotter than the first, but still not near boiling. The best way to make this lather is to use some of the best yellow soap, boiled to a jelly. Do not wring the blankets after washing, it destroys the soft pile, and makes them go into hard patches; but let them drain for a little while, and then hang them out in the sun, well shaking them every now and then to prevent their clogging, as it is called. Betsy had better arrange with the woman to come only if it is a fine day, and if wet, to come the next day; it is an endless task to dry blankets when the weather is cold and sunless. When quite dry, give them a final good shake, and fold them away, carefully covered from dust.

"This is the opportunity, too, for shaking any carpets that may require it. Betsy can do the small ones quite well with the aid of a charwoman, by throwing them over a line and beating them with a long, thin stick, and afterwards shaking them; but the heavy ones must be taken away by a regular carpet-beater.

"While the carpets are up you should have the sweep in for any chimneys that require his attention, and then have the floors scrubbed and the walls brushed with a long-handled broom, having a soft duster tied over it, and all the paint and wood-work washed with

cold water and soap. Some of the chintz hangings will very likely require cleaning, and even if not, the bed and window curtains will look all the fresher for being shaken, folded up, and put aside whilst all this is going on.

"I noticed while I was at home that the wall behind the back kitchen sink looked very dirty and discoloured. Do you not think it would be a good plan to have the wall plastered? There is a kind of cement I have had put round mine which is almost as hard as stone, and can be thoroughly washed at the same time as the sink, so that there is no difficulty about keeping it clean. I think you would find it a great aid to cleanliness.

"I remember, too, that you pointed out to me at Christmas how dirty the walls and ceilings of your kitchen and pantries were. If Betsy were a little older and more worldly-wise, I should say, of course, this is the time to have them whitewashed and painted, but Betsy is so young and thoughtless it would hardly be safe to leave her with strange workmen in the house; not that I would for a moment doubt her honesty, but you cannot always be sure that you do not get dishonest workmen, who would easily talk over an unsuspecting girl like Betsy, and get to know all about the doors and windows, and the safe places where she keeps the silver during your absence. So under the circumstances I should advise you to have all the necessary painting done before you leave home, while you can look after the workmen yourself, and leave Betsy only simple cleaning to do.

"I am sorry to hear your fruit is not doing well this year. You will have to invent some devices for making it go a long way. A plan I sometimes use when fruit is very expensive is to mix a little rhubarb with it. I know you always have abundance of that much despised vegetable, and if you will wash a little very well, then cut it into small pieces, and bake and sweeten it, and then mix your other fruit with it, you will find it makes a very nice tart. It is a peculiarity of rhubarb that it takes the flavour of fruit with which it is mixed, and if very finely cut up, and well washed, you would not be aware that you were eating any other than the one fruit. This is particularly the case with raspberries.

"You say father has taken a fancy for tomatoes. I am glad to hear it, for they are said to be one of the most wholesome of vegetables; but I can quite sympathise with your finding them so expensive. Perhaps you do not know that for making sauce, or as a simple vegetable, tinned ones do quite as well as fresh. They are best cooked in one of those invaluable earthen pipkins with lids, which I use for all small dishes now. There is nothing like them for cleanliness and convenience.

"To serve as a vegetable they simply require gently simmering for about half an hour; but for sauce you should add a few spoonfuls of stock or gravy, a little chopped onion, carrot, sweet herbs, and cloves, with salt and pepper. After simmering slowly for an hour, strain it through a hair sieve. Some add Tarragon vinegar, but I think the flavour quite sharp enough without it.

"If you can get the yellow tomatoes, you can make a very pretty dish by laying a few red and yellow ones on a dish of lettuce and endive. Most people who like tomatoes at all like them raw very much. For a little supper dish, cut off the tops of some fresh ones, and scoop out the inside with a spoon. Then make a paste of finely-minced meat (the remains of cold meat will do), a few bread crumbs, a very little strong gravy, and the pulp you have taken from the inside of the tomatoes. To this add herbs and onion, and whatever other flavouring you may fancy, and, of course, salt and pepper. Fill the tomatoes with this mixture; put on the tops again, and

bake them in the oven with a little butter. I think you will find this a very popular dish.

"I wonder if I ever told you about our watercress bed? I have heard so much lately about the wonderfully health-giving properties of watercress, used either cooked or fresh, that I determined to have a good deal of it for the future; but my ardour was a little damped by discovering that some of the professional gatherers are not at all particular where they get it, and do not confine themselves to pure water. Also, I visited a very poor and very dirty family in a small back room the other evening, and found that the head of the family, who was a watercress vendor, kept all that was left of one day's stock-in-trade in the room where all the family lived, till he started on his rounds next day. But now I have found a brilliant expedient. I cannot take the credit of it to myself, however, for I always thought watercress would only grow in water, till a friend of Arthur's told me he always grew his own, so I thought I would get some seed and try, and it answers splendidly. I water the plants plentifully every day; and by getting up five minutes earlier in the morning I am in time to gather a dish of it for breakfast.

"We have it cooked sometimes, but I buy it for that purpose, as I cannot afford to gather sufficient from our little bed; and I think the boiling must wash out all impurities. I wash it first in salt and water to clear away insects, then stew it for ten minutes; then I drain and chop it, add a little butter, pepper, and salt, and heat it again in the saucepan. Before serving, I give it the smallest possible sprinkle of vinegar, and garnish the dish with sippets of toasted bread."

The same evening that she received this letter, Margaret had a visit from Wilfred Trent.

"Miss Margaret," he said, "I know you are always ready to help any one in distress, so as my aunt is away from home I have come to tell you about a poor woman, the widow of one of our men, who died a few weeks ago. He was a very steady fellow, but since he died she has been ill and lost her work in consequence, and came to me to help her, for her husband's sake; but as I don't know much about women's work I am at a loss how to advise her. She is indignant at the idea of charity, and only wants some work."

"Why, how fortunate," cried Margaret, "she is the very woman I wanted to come and help Betsy while we are away; and then if she does pretty well I can recommend her amongst my friends, and she is sure to get plenty of work."

And so that difficulty was settled, and Margaret was able to leave home a few days later with an easy mind.

They found the watering-place they had fixed upon even more beautiful than they expected; and Margaret and the boys went quite wild with delight, and even Mr. Colville forgot business, and cares of all kinds, and gave himself up to having a thoroughly "good time."

After they had been there about a week, Margaret was one day astonished and delighted to meet Mrs. Trent on the beach.

"How delightful!" she cried. "Did you know we were here, Mrs. Trent?"

"No, my child. My nephew said there was no such place in England for rheumatic people, and insisted on spending his holiday in bringing me here for my health. I thought it was all kind consideration for me, but—"

"How very thoughtful of him!" Margaret broke in.

"Yes; oh, yes! very," replied Mrs. Trent; but it was spoken dubiously. Her belief in her nephew's entire self-sacrifice in the matter had been a little shaken by the meeting.

(To be continued.)



gentle-natured man, who had always been scrubbed by his two elder brothers and not much considered by his parents. They had all been fond of pomp, and had carried their heads very high in the world, while he was a shy youth, with quiet habits, and a decided leaning towards mercantile pursuits. And he was a youth still when he said farewell to the old hall, and went out to the coffee-plantations of the Brazils.

A lifetime went by before he set foot on his native soil again. Very few letters ever went to him from Hurst Hall after his sister ran away from her home. She had been the only member of his family who had returned his affection, and at last he ceased to hear even from her. Then he himself married and formed fresh ties, and new interests began to twine about his lonely life and make it beautiful. He found royal compensation for the coldness of parents and brothers. God was good, and earth was kind to one who had known but little kindness in his youth.

There is often an Indian summer for those who have been chilled in their spring-tide. If we look closely into the lives around us we shall see that many who sowed the seed in tears are now reaping a golden harvest. We meet men and women, known as liberal souls, giving freely of the treasures that their own honest hands have won; and then we remember the forlorn boy who was the ugly duckling of his home nest, or recognise in the genial woman that pale girl who used to be the trampled one of the family.

And we shall find, too, on fairly thinking of it, that when there are only thorns and thistles in the home-garden the heartsease is sure to bloom outside its walls. Some of God's singers have had their songs despised, ay, and even stifled, by those who were the first to hear them. Afterwards, when the world shouted applause, the home circle swelled the burst, and admiring relations followed in the train of one who had been "without honour" while he sojourned among them. Well is it for them if their genius has a kindly nature, and is willing to overlook the past. They, at any rate, are seldom too proud to crawl to his feet, and pick up the scattered laurel leaves that have fallen from his crown.

Charles Hurstone had never been a genius, but he possessed certain serviceable gifts, which he turned to good account. He was making one fortune when his wife brought him another; and, better still, he had received the blessing "that maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow thereto."

Many and many happy years were spent in that tropical home; children played among its rich flowers and gathered its wealth of fruit, but they did not live to see manhood. At last, in the decline of his days, Charles Hurstone found himself a lonely widower; and then came the summons to the old hall, whose empty rooms were waiting for the last of the Hurstones.

A happy man was Charles Hurstone when he had found the child and grandchild of his dead sister. The house was theirs; his wealth was theirs; all that

he asked in return was love, and a few of those attentions that are so sweet to the old. But he was by no means an exacting man; affection and tenderness had been so scantily doled out to him in his boyhood that he would have been content with but a small portion in his age.

Cecily and Daisy, however, were cheerful love-givers, and Mr. Hurstone's life seemed to be growing brighter and brighter as it neared the close.

(To be continued.)

## THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM.

By DORA HOPE.

THE middle of August found the Colville family home again, and settling down to work, each in his or her own direction.

For Tom this was an important epoch in life, for he had now left school, and was to begin business as clerk in a commercial house in the town. Not a very exalted position, it is true, but Tom, though not altogether free from the little conceits and follies usual with boys of his age, had wit enough to perceive that by industry and careful attention to his work he might confidently expect promotion and ultimate success, though the beginning was but small.

Knowing how easy it is for a youth to pick up undesirable acquaintances, and by joining in their pleasures to become careless and neglectful of home, Margaret determined that this should not be the case with Tom if she could prevent it. Always eager to hear anything he had to tell of the affairs of the day, and to help him in any little difficulty, and always ready to join him in any amusements or walks in the evenings, she proved such a pleasant companion and confidante that there was nothing which Tom did not tell her about. She would see him off in the morning with a cheery word and smile from the doorstep, and make a special point of being at hand on his return in the evening. A sister's loving attention in little matters like this, bestowed judiciously, but not obtrusively, would in many cases keep a young man straight when otherwise, feeling there was no one at home specially interested in him, he might be led astray.

Dick meanwhile was developing a somewhat roving spirit. Never too fond of study, during the past year or two he had found school life irksome, and now implored his father to let him leave with Tom, and go to sea. This idea of going to sea, however, was considered by the authorities to be merely the transitory whim which seizes nine boys out of every ten, and was promptly quenched, though Mr. Colville consoled him by saying that after a year's steady, earnest school work, he thought it possible that Dick might go to join an uncle who was coffee planting in Ceylon, and who was anxious to have one of his nephews with him. Dick was delighted with the idea, and forthwith set to work at his studies with a will during school hours, though to work overtime, as the more studious Tom had occasionally done, was too much to expect in his opinion, and his half-holidays were still spent in long rambles and prowls round the country in search of "fresh fields and pastures new."

One Wednesday, in September, he arrived home with a large basket full of capital looking mushrooms, which he had hitherto sought far and wide in vain.

"I had to go over the hills and far away for them. Aren't they beauties?" he cried, turning them out on to the table.

"Yes, but are they all really mushrooms?" asked Margaret.

"Oh, they are all right; see how easily they peel," he answered.

"Yes, they do, but that is not always a true test, and I should feel more easy to try them in my own way, which is to sprinkle the underside with salt. If they soon turn black, I shall know they are all right, but if they turn yellow, or any other colour, they are poisonous."

Finding them all to be real mushrooms, Margaret had some cooked for tea in the nicest way she knew of. Selecting some large ones, free from grit and insects, she removed the stalks and skins, and laid them on a dish. Then she put on each several little pieces of butter, sprinkled them with salt and pepper, and put them in the oven. The fire being very hot, she covered the dish with an old plate, and when the juice began to run out, and the gills fell down, the mushrooms were taken out and served at once.

A second supply of the small button mushrooms, brought in by the invaluable Dick after an early morning walk, were stewed thus:—The peel and the ends of the stalks being removed, they were left a minute or two in a basin of water, slightly flavoured with lemon juice; next they were laid in the stewpan with a little butter, pepper, salt, and lemon juice, covered and stewed for nearly half-an-hour. Then a sauce of milk, thickened with flour and slightly flavoured with nutmeg, was added, and the mushrooms stewed till perfectly tender, when they were ready for serving.

The skins and stalks, it should be said, were saved for ketchup, in which Margaret was particularly successful by following a recipe, the combination of several which she borrowed from her usual advisers in these matters. To a gallon of mushrooms, stalks, and skins, a quarter of a pound of salt was allowed; the mushrooms were put in a pan in layers with a sprinkle of the salt between, and left for two days. At the end of this time they were well stirred up, and the whole squeezed through a cloth till all the liquor was out. To this was added half an ounce of bruised ginger, of whole pepper, and of allspice, and a morsel of garlic, chopped fine; and then the liquor was put on the fire to boil for three quarters of an hour. Finally, when quite cold, the ketchup was put away in well-corked bottles, and sealed in the same way as bottled fruit.

Perhaps it was the pleasant holiday that had braced Margaret up to a state of unusual enthusiasm in domestic matters, but at any rate she was full of reforms in the culinary department, and was resolved to have everything cooked as well as had been done at the hotel which they had visited, and set herself to find out how things were done, and to give Betsy the benefit of her researches.

"Betsy," she said one morning, "our vegetables are not so nice as they should be. It is partly because we cannot always depend on those we buy being quite fresh, but you can revive them very much before cooking by laying them in a pan of water with a handful of salt in it."

"Well, miss, I always puts them stalks upwards in salt and water, to get out any insects there might be in, but I haven't noticed no particular reviving in them after it."

"No, but then you must leave them in the salt and water an hour or more to freshen them up, whilst a quarter of an hour is all you allow them to wash out the insects. Then you must always use soft water for boiling green vegetables in, it preserves the colour wonderfully more than the hard; and also let them boil as quickly as possible."

"I haven't always got the soft water, though, miss; it often runs short this dry weather."



"But I can always soften the hard water for you by adding a teaspoonful of carbonate of soda to a saucepanful."

Betsy opened her eyes very wide at this, but made no remark. She did not altogether enjoy her mistress's reforming moods. Though she always listened to and acted on whatever she was told, still she listened in a silence which betokened disapproval.

"I have ordered some damsons for making damson cheese, which will be coming soon, and I want you to do the first part for me, Betsy, and I will finish them off in a few days. You have only to pick off the stalks, and put them into some of those wide-mouthed glass bottles from the store cupboard, without water or anything; cork them loosely, and put them in a very slow oven for four or five hours. Then drive the corks in firmly, and set them aside with the mouth downwards till I have time to finish them."

At this moment a discordant shout outside the kitchen window announced the arrival of one of the tradesmen, who proved to be the greengrocer with the said damsons.

"Why, them's nothing but bullaces, miss," Betsy exclaimed with scorn, as she took them in, "they're no damsons. Why, these here things grow wild by the bushel down home, and nobody troubles to pick them."

"Oh, Betsy, do they really?" said Margaret, in a melancholy tone, "I thought they were so nice, and they are certainly the best to be had in the town. Perhaps they will do for preserving and for the damson cheese."

"Oh yes, miss, well enough for anything of that; but a real damson is as large as a small plum, and full and plumpy-looking—quite different from them poor little hard things. As they're here so early, perhaps I can finish them off for you, miss, if you will please to tell me the rest of the way."

"You take them out of the bottles as soon after they are cold as you like, and press them through a sieve to keep out skins and stones. Then boil up the pulp till it becomes stiff with half a pound of this broken loaf sugar to every pound of fruit. Then pour it on to some of the common dinner plates, buttered, and put it in a warm dry place till the cheese is quite dry and firm."

"Well, it don't sound over much like cheese, miss, though no doubt very nice. And what about them birds master brought home last night, please, miss? There's one of them, in particular, won't keep above a day or two."

"Oh, the partridges! We cannot use more than one for tea to-day, so you had better half roast the other, then it will keep several days longer, and will be just as good as ever when re-roasted. The bread-sauce for to-night is very simply made: break up some stale bread, taking off all the crust and hard pieces, till you have three-quarters of a pound of crumb, then pour a pint of milk over it, and leave it to soak. While it is soaking get a small onion, cut it across twice, and put it into hot water for about a quarter of an hour, to steam out the strong taste and smell."

"Well, I never! Why, it will wash all the goodness out, miss."

"No, it leaves in quite as much flavour as anyone likes. Very few ladies will eat onions at all, simply because the strong taste and smell are so disagreeable, while if they would only soak them first they might have them in all sorts of dishes without any unpleasantness. But to finish the sauce. When the bread has soaked long enough, put it in a clean saucepan, and simmer it gently for an hour; when it is about half done, put in the onion, and a little butter, salt, and pepper."

"How long must I leave the onion in, miss?"

"Oh, you can leave it in all the time, and

serve it up in the sauce. Many gentlemen like it, and in that way they can help themselves to it if they like."

"Yes, miss; but there's three birds, and one of them—well, he really do seem as tough as an old goat, and his legs is as blue as your new bonnet, instead of nice and yellow, like the other two. I were thinking as perhaps you'd have him made into soup, or something of that."

"I never heard of partridge soup," said Margaret, dubiously; "but I will look in the cookery-book, and if it says anything about it we will certainly try it."

The quest proved successful, and the tough old partridge furnished an excellent soup, treated in the following way:—It was cut into pieces and fried with a little butter and a slice of ham cut small. When the butter was thoroughly melted, a little flour was added, and all kept well stirred till it was lightly browned. Then the breast, legs, and wings were taken out and put aside, and the other contents of the pan put into a stewpan with a pint of stock flavoured with onions and celery, and a half-pint of water. It was then strained, and the fat carefully skimmed off, the breast and other portions put back, together with a lump of sugar and a little salt and pepper. The whole was boiled up once more, and skimmed, and the soup was ready for serving. Betsy was very anxious that one of the partridges should be boiled, instead of roasting them both, for the sake of a change; but Margaret declined spoiling the birds, even for the sake of variety, murmuring to herself, as she left the kitchen, the old cook's adage:—

"By roasting that which our forefathers boiled, And boiling what they roasted, much is spoiled."

During the first weeks of September, Margaret and her brother were much occupied in the arrangement of a boating excursion to be made on Margaret's birthday, which fell during that month. The spot chosen was a good way up the river, where the woods came down almost to the river bank. The day came—fortunately, gloriously fine and sunny; the lunch, consisting of cold joints, fruit pies, and so on, all cold, was packed into the hampers before breakfast, so that all was ready by the time the party assembled at ten o'clock. They landed for a very early lunch on the river bank, and the long afternoon was spent in rambling through the woods by the lazy ones, and in a long walk to look at the ruins of the old abbey by the energetic ones. The tea was fixed for five o'clock, and of course it was the duty of the hostess to see that it was ready at the time; but when the guests came to the trysting place, all with excellent appetites, Margaret was not to be found. Mr. Colville was quite anxious, and feared she must have got lost in the woods; but Dick, who seemed to be struggling, not altogether successfully, with the desire to go off into fits of laughter, assured him she was all right, and proceeded to play such ridiculous pranks during the business of getting tea ready, that one old lady, who had been invited because she so seldom had the chance of a little pleasure, whispered to her neighbour a fear that "Richard's mind would not bear the strain of going to business so young; and she hoped poor dear Mr. Colville would not have the grief of seeing one of his sons go crazy."

At last, seeing that the party were really being kept waiting unreasonably long, Dick volunteered to go and fetch Margaret, and he appeared to know where to find her, for they soon returned. He must have met Wilfred Trent in the woods, for he came too, looking as beaming and happy as though he had been doing his duty, and attending to the other guests all the afternoon.

Everyone was sorry when it was time to

turn; and as they floated gently down the stream, more than one of the party noticed how silent Margaret was. And yet her eyes gleamed, and her face was flushed with a radiant happiness which made her sweet face beautiful, and left no need to inquire if the day for her had been a happy one.

The next day, after a letter to her sister had been written and despatched, Margaret commenced one to her friend, Dorothy Snow; which, as it may throw some light on the mysteriously radiant and rather excited state of our young heroine, we may be allowed to intercept and read. It ran thus:—

"MY DEAREST DO,—

"I have a wonderful piece of news for you. I do not know how to tell you, for I can hardly believe it is really true myself. On my birthday, yesterday, we went for a picnic, and what do you think happened? Mr. Trent asked me to be his wife. You can just imagine how surprised I was, for I never thought such an idea had entered his head. I am not half good enough for him. He ought to have married somebody grand and beautiful—you have no idea how good and noble he is; but, oh, dear Do, I am so happy! And father is very pleased, and says he could not wish for any happier lot for me; so we are really engaged. As to dear Mrs. Trent, she seems nearly as happy as I am, which is saying a great deal. But I am really too happy to write any more. I must go and have a long talk with Mrs. Trent; but I do wish I was clever and good and lovely. I am not a bit fit to be his wife; it makes me feel so dreadfully ignorant and stupid when I think how clever he is.—  
Your loving MADGE."

(To be continued.)



#### DURHAM DEGREES FOR WOMEN.

THE University of Durham has for many years past conducted examinations of girls, as well as boys, on a system very similar to that of the Cambridge local examinations, and has lately decided to make women eligible for the actual degree of B.A.

To obtain this degree, it is necessary for the candidate (a) to pass a matriculation examination; (b) to reside for not less than two years in a house provided by the University, attending lectures and conforming to special discipline; (c) to pass a second examination at the end of the first year, and the third and final examination after the conclusion of the required period of residence.

The subjects of all the examinations will be the same for women as for men, and they may either take a pass degree, or enter for honours—classical or mathematical.

Matriculation examinations will be held on October 11th, and at the beginning of each term afterwards.

As yet no entrance scholarships are open to women, but it is probable that the friends of higher female education, at whose request the University has decided to admit this class of students, will shortly come forward with the funds necessary to establish a suitable college endowed with adequate scholarships.

Anyone intending to become a student ought to write to the Registrar of the University of Durham.



the village the wheat was fast ripening in the warm air; orchard-boughs were laden with fruit; juicy cherries were piled up in baskets ready for the market; and labouring men and women saluted them with smiling faces. Two sturdy boys and a pretty little dark-eyed girl made bows and curtsies from one cottage gate, and Daisy's eyes brightened at the sight of them.

"There are the little Weevers," she said; "how rosy and happy they look! Uncle Charles thinks that their mother will come back to them by-and-bye."

The friends parted at the gates of the Hall, promising to meet again before the day was done; and indoors there was a letter that set Daisy's heart in a flutter of delight.

Lord and Lady Hazlewood might be expected at the Thicket on the evening of the next day; the letter was written quite in Cecily's old strain, and was full of anxious inquiries about her (Daisy's) welfare. Cecily, the countess, kept her old love warm in her heart, and would never let it go, no matter what changes the coming years might bring.

(To be concluded.)

## THE DIFFICULTIES OF A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER, AND HOW SHE OVERCAME THEM.

By DORA HOPE.



ONCE again we find Margaret full of pleasure and excitement, at the near prospect of a visit from her sister and brother-in-law. They had now been married nearly a year, and were coming to spend the anniversary of their wedding-day at the old home.

Margaret no longer felt extremely nervous at her sister's advent; a year's experience had taught her so much she might anticipate the visit without much fear. Nevertheless she was a little more particular than usual in searching in all holes and corners for any trace of dust or neglect, which she felt sure would never escape Joanna's eyes, though it might have done her own. Duster in hand, she went from room to room, and not a table-leg or book-case-ledge was there which was not well scrutinized.

The weather having already begun to turn chilly and autumnal, Margaret, without waiting till the orthodox time, the end of September, commenced to put away the thin blankets, and lightest cotton and linen garments, on a spare shelf at the top of the linen press, replacing them by others a little warmer. The light curtains and quilts she determined to keep in use a little longer, for she was in no mind to hurry the approach of winter, in spite of donning warmer apparel. But a little later on these two were all looked over, mended, and washed, and put away rough-dried but carefully folded and covered up, in the same convenient place; the upper shelves of the linen press, there to remain till the spring should come round again.

Margaret was interrupted in her occupation by the entrance of Betsy, with the announce-

ment: "Mrs. Melrose to see you, miss, awaiting in the 'all.'"

"Oh, would she not come in?" "Well, miss, I knowed you was busy, so I never asked her in, but she is sitting on the 'all chair, though," replied the maid, smiling pleasantly at her own shrewdness.

Margaret looked aghast, and began to run over in her mind all the callers who had been to the house lately, and to wonder how many of them Betsy had treated thus.

"Oh, dear me, Betsy, I thought you knew that you must always ask people in, however busy I am," said Margaret, agitatedly picking off the scraps of fluff that had clung to her dress from contact with the blankets. "I know you meant it kindly, but please don't do it ever again, it is enough to offend any one."

There was a half smile on Mrs. Melrose's face as she rose to greet Margaret, but she cut short the latter's apologies by declaring she knew exactly how it had been, and thought Margaret ought to congratulate herself on having so considerate a maid.

"I came to bring you some new wheat, for frumenty," she went on, when seated in the pretty little drawing-room. "Do you remember some time ago you were wishing you knew how to make that excellent dish, and I said I would tell you about it when the corn was ready?"

"Yes I do quite well, and I had been wondering if you would remember, but did not like to remind you of it," replied Margaret.

"Well, it takes some time to make, for, to begin with, you boil the wheat, a pint, say, in water till it is thoroughly well swollen; and this takes a good many hours to accomplish. I generally put it to soak overnight, then set it on to boil first thing next morning, and keep it on all day, so as to be ready for supper. Then take a handful of currants, and another of raisins, washed and stoned; stir these in a quart of milk, and set it on to boil with the wheat from which the water has been strained. Then add the beaten yolks of two eggs, with a little spice and sugar; stir over the fire a few minutes, and serve hot. If it is not sweet enough you can add the sugar at table, in fact many people do not sweeten it during the cooking. We very often have it for breakfast; if you make a good quantity you can always warm it when wanted, and it is just as good as though freshly made.

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Melrose; I always fancied frumenty was a purely country dish, and could not be made in town, for some reason or other. I know I am very presumptuous to offer any suggestions to you, but have you ever tried stewed celery?"

"No, indeed, it is quite a new idea to me, in fact we cannot grow celery in our garden, and I do not like bought vegetables."

"Oh, I should be so pleased and proud if you would accept some of ours; we have quite a quantity, and we find it makes such a nice dish stewed either in water with melted butter poured over it when served or in milk, or broth. I will send Betsy out to get a few heads."

Betsy soon came in with some nice crisp young celery on a dish, and a search through drawers and cupboards ensued for a piece of paper and some string to wrap it up in.

"I have found it such a good plan" said Mrs. Melrose, who had been watching the search with some interest, "to reserve one shelf in my work-cupboard for pieces of paper and string. If one wants to make up a parcel in a hurry, it is often most provoking to have to hunt high and low for materials."

"You buy sheets of paper, then, I suppose, Mrs. Melrose?" asked Margaret.

"No, indeed, I never did such a thing in my life, nor string either, but every piece that finds its way to the house is folded up and put on the proper shelf, and there is a constant supply, though of course the stock gets rather

low sometimes. I keep a little bag into which I put all the string, each piece folded together and tied, so that it does not get lost or entangled. In the same way I keep an old folio for scraps of writing paper, fly-leaves, etc., which are often wanted for memoranda of various kinds."

"What brilliant ideas you have, Mrs. Melrose; I shall certainly adopt those at once."

"Perhaps you would like another one. In addition to the tool-box, which is always in the box-room ready for use, I have a small wooden box in which I keep all sorts of odds and ends, such as castors of chairs and that kind of thing, and sometimes little pieces get broken off the furniture, and they are put in the box too, till the convenient season comes for repairing them. My husband often laughs at my little contrivances, and says I was cut out for an old maid, and ought never to have married, but in spite of his ridicule I find the house is much more orderly than it would be without these little neat ways."

"How does your farmyard prosper, Mrs. Melrose?" asked Margaret.

"Oh, capitally, thank you, though it is rather reduced in numbers at present, and deserves the title of farmyard less than ever. To tell the truth, I used to get really more eggs than I wanted, as we none of us care for them boiled, and we never put them in our milk puddings except on special occasions."

"Milk puddings without eggs! I never heard of such a thing. Betsy would scorn to make a pudding without at least two."

"Then I advise you to make a change in that department at once, for it is really quite unnecessary. If you allow them plenty of time to cook slowly, indeed, the milk thickens and it tastes so rich you would hardly know there were no eggs. Well, finding I had more fowls than were really needed, I exchanged some of them for two fine young goslings, one of which is being fattened up for Michaelmas. You know I am so patriotic and proud of my country's exploits that I never neglect an anniversary of that kind."

Margaret looked so utterly mystified that Mrs. Melrose went on to explain.

"Why, surely such a learned young lady as you must know that it is in commemoration of the destruction of the Spanish Armada that we always eat goose at Michaelmas?"

"I am very sorry to be so ignorant, but I really did not know it, and I do not quite see the connection now."

"Oh, there is no particular connection between geese and Spaniards, only Queen Elizabeth happened to be dining off roast goose when the news was brought her, and she was so delighted that she commanded that a goose should always be served on that day in memory of our country's deliverance. I cannot vouch for the truth of the story, but I dare say it is as true as the origin of most of our anniversaries. By the way, Miss Colville, to start another domestic subject, since attending those lectures in the town on hygienic cooking, I have been trying to carry out some of the theories propounded in them."

"Oh! I did not hear them. I think father was afraid of my trying experiments on him, so he did not recommend my going."

"The lecturer said a good deal about the excellence of haricot beans as an article of diet. 'Such a high-food value,' was his expression, 'and so nourishing; even better than lentils.' I have found them most excellent, and very easy of digestion. I should like my boys to make their dinner off them sometimes, but they do not quite approve of that idea, so I often make a stew of haricots and other vegetables, with just a little meat in, to take away the idea of a vegetarian diet, to which they strongly object, and I find it agrees with us all very well; or sometimes I use them simply as a vegetable. I put them



to soak over night. Next morning I set them on the fire in plenty of cold water, and let them simmer till quite tender, which will take about three hours. Then I drain them, and put into a stew-pan with butter, salt, and pepper, a few shreds of onion and a squeeze or two of lemon, toss them well, and serve at once. The liquor I save for soup."

After a little more conversation Mrs. Melrose took her departure. Margaret returned to her work much amused, and yet full of admiration for her original friend, the "lady with ideas," as Dorothy called her.

Shortly after Joanna and her husband arrived, and a few very happy days were spent in *réunion* with her family.

The party at dinner on the anniversary of the wedding-day was increased by the arrival of Wilfred Trent, and the young man was cordially received by his future sister and brother.

The year had wrought many changes in the family. Joanna and Arthur were, as the former declared, settled down into a sober married couple; Tom changed from a noisy, mischievous schoolboy into a business man, as he fondly thought; whilst Margaret had grown from a child into a woman.

"Certainly, being engaged does make one feel rather old," she said, as she and her sister lingered for a little final chat that evening. "How differently I felt twelve months ago, when I was so dreading your leaving me alone with all the cares of a household. When I think of it, it seems as if years had passed, and that was long ago, in the 'sunny days of childhood' that we used to sing about."

"Why, dear, you will feel much older when you are a year married," said Joanna, with cheerful conviction.

"Oh, but I am not going *ever* to be married, Joanna," cried Margaret, emphatically. "I don't mind being engaged, but — Why, how could I ever leave papa and those sweet boys? and, however could they spare me? It is simply absurd to think of such a thing."

And here we must leave our little heroine for a time; and where could we better leave her than in the company of those dearest to her, and happy in the consciousness of having striven to do her duty?

Perhaps before we next meet her she may have changed her mind.

## BOTH IN THE WRONG.

### CHAPTER IV.



THAT it meant was that two miles away from home Arthur Tremaine was lying upon the road, helpless and unconscious! Riding home

in the gathering darkness, his horse's feet had slipped on a treacherous ice-encrusted pool, and he had fallen heavily upon his side, flinging his master with violence to the ground as he fell.

They found Tremaine as he lay there, and quickly and carefully he was borne home, and

the assistance of both surgeon and physician called into requisition. But for long their best skill was powerless to rouse the injured man from his deathlike unconsciousness. He had sustained a severe wound on his head, and the surgeon feared serious internal injuries, while coupled with these was the exposure to the severe cold of the night air. There was cause for the gravest anxiety.

And so, suddenly, fear and trouble fell upon the inmates of the Towers, and for days the angel of death hovered over that stately home with his sword drawn.

From his deadly stupor Tremaine only woke to the delirium of pain and fever, and each day the doctor paid his visits he grew graver and graver, and had no word of hope or encouragement for the young wife, who hung upon his verdict as if her very life depended upon his word.

She watched by her husband's side with unweary love and care, with no thought for self, apparently unconscious of fatigue in her terrible dread and anxiety.

Poor Sophy was excluded from the sick-room, though she pleaded hard to be permitted to share the watching.

"You could do no good, my dear child," said old Dr. Merlin, who had known her all her life. "It is no sight for you, nor would he know you. Rest assured that you shall hear when there is the slightest change, and God grant it may be a favourable one. Go and rest, my dear," he added, pityingly, touched by the white misery of her face.

But Sophy could not rest. Instead she would sit for hours just outside the bedroom door, that she might ask news of each and all who passed out. And there she would wait in a sort of heartbroken patience, torturing herself with the recollection of the breach that had grown between her father and herself, reviewing her own coldness and sullen behaviour, and seeing all at last in its true light.

"Oh, papa, papa," she moaned to herself, "I will be a better daughter to you than I have been if only you will live! To please you I will even try to love her, though it was she who seemed to separate us first. And yet — no; it was I. I was so jealous of your love. But you really loved me all the time, didn't you, papa? And you'll love me again, if only God will spare you to us."

And then she would bury her face in her knees, with broken prayers, which seemed too deep and heartfelt for utterance.

And so the weary days of anxious suspense passed by, and the fear and gloom deepened.

One day old Dr. Merlin with difficulty prevailed upon Evelyn to go and rest for an hour in the drawing-room. He thought there might be a change that night, he told her, when she would need all her strength and endurance.

"I am not at all tired now, doctor. Please let me stay," she pleaded. "I cannot bear to leave him."

"My dear lady," he replied, with gentle authority, "there cannot be any change just now; or, if there were, you should be called at once. You have not closed your eyes for so long that, though your anxiety causes you to forget your fatigue, I fear your strength may fail you when you most need it. Let me persuade you to rest for an hour at least, and you shall be told when the smallest change comes."

Reluctantly she obeyed, and slowly left the room for the drawing-room, as she had been bidden. Dr. Merlin had spoken of a crisis coming soon, and though he had spoken very guardedly, she could tell only too well

that he feared the worst results. The fever had run its course with such unabated violence that the strength of the patient was almost exhausted. Was it possible that all medical skill, all love and care, all prayers and tears, would be impotent to stay the death angel's sword?

"He means I shall need all my strength for the last good-bye," she said to herself. "Oh, I cannot bear it! It would kill me to lose him!"

Sophy was sitting in the drawing-room as she entered with her weary step and wan, white face. The girl was standing by the window looking out over the wintry waste of country with eyes that saw nothing, and with a heart full of bitter trouble. She did not turn round as Evelyn entered; she hardly was conscious of her approach. But the young wife, almost wild with anguish, and with a passionate yearning for sympathy in her extremity, drew nearer, and, sinking down upon a chair, held out her hands imploringly towards the girl, with a piteous cry of entreaty, "Oh, Sophy, help me to bear it!"

Sophy started at the words, but more at the tone in which they were uttered, and turned hastily round. She saw her young step-mother sitting there, with her wan, white face, and grief-dimmed beauty; with dark shadows under her blue eyes, caused by sleepless nights and anxious watches, and with a world of misery in her appealing tones. It seemed to Evelyn just then that she must have some help, or the strain would be too great to be borne.

The piteous appeal of her tones, and the sight of the young wife's anguish, roused all that was best and noblest in the girl's heart. In a moment she had forgotten all the soreness and bitterness of the past—all the small jealousies and trifling annoyances; and she remembered only how the wife was breaking her heart for the sake of one who was the dearest on earth to his daughter's heart, and who even now might be slipping away from them. She only remembered how dear he was to both of them, and in the unity of their common sorrow she impulsively sprang forward and threw her arms round Evelyn's neck, with a gesture of loving sympathy that spoke more eloquently than words. Then, with a tender womanliness, she drew the weary head down upon her shoulder, and smoothed the golden hair, until Evelyn's overcharged heart found the relief of tears. She wept hysterically for a time, with passionate sobs that shook her from head to foot, while Sophy waited silently and patiently until she grew calmer. Not a word was spoken between the two of regret or forgiveness, but peace was proclaimed, and in this hour of bitter sorrow all the barriers had fallen down between them, and this storm of trouble had done what the calm sunshine of prosperity had failed to do.

"Don't give up all hope," Sophy whispered at last. "I cannot think God means to take him from us, and he so dear to both of us." And then she persuaded Evelyn to lie down upon the sofa, and sat by her side until she fell into an easy slumber, when she stole away silently, returning almost immediately to be ready, when the weary eyes unclosed, with a refreshing cup of tea and dainty little repast to tempt her appetite.

But it was the thoughtful care and the girl's unaccustomed gentleness which did Evelyn more good than the fragrant tea; and as she kissed the girl and glided back to her anxious watch it seemed to her as if her misery was robbed of its overwhelming bitterness by the thought that she had gained the girl's heart.

And Sophy stole away to her own room to pray, to watch, and, if it were possible, to sleep. And her heart was warmed and