

HOW TO HELP IN THE HOUSE.

By DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.



HERE seems to be a very general feeling abroad that, in the present difficulties with our servants, we shall find the best solution in the aid of our own daughters, who will assume the duties now performed by our maidservants, and

execute them with the superiority born of education, and higher training, and loving goodwill. Women are not all born teachers, doctors, or artists; and when the clever ones are all educated and filling the higher posts, there will still remain a large proportion to be provided for without the abilities with which their more talented sisters are endowed, but who, by their excellent everyday cleverness and common sense, are thoroughly well fitted for the duties of the home in all their several divisions, *i.e.*, house and parlour-maids, nurses, cooks, and kitchen-maids. Thus we shall have real helpers—not the careless servant, who makes as much work for others as she does herself, and neglects all she ought to do—but educated work, which will be lightened by good methods and thoughtful care in small things, the head in all things saving the hands and feet.

I am told also that this idea exists more among country people than among Londoners, and, when put into practice, has been found to work most successfully, and with comfort to all parties concerned. "And do they wear caps and aprons?" was one of my queries. "Certainly," was the answer. The cap and the apron are nothing to be ashamed of, surely? They are the badge of service in the home, just as the uniform of the nurse is in the hospital or the private house, and that of the soldier is of the army, or that of the sailor which shows that he belongs to the renowned navy which has made our country safe and respected.

A lady writer, some months ago, made a practical suggestion as to how to obtain the needful training. "We must prepare for the life," she says, "by adopting the simple method of our poorer sisters. Let the gentleman go as 'help'—if she prefer the word—in a small domesticated family, and there let her learn all there is to learn in home work, not 'picking and choosing,' but conscientiously doing with her might the work that has to be done. She will thus discover for which department of house-work she is most fitted and may prefer, and can eventually make her choice of another home accordingly. But she must learn first, and be content with a learner's remuneration."

Now, to my mind, the best place to find this much-needed training would be in the most suitable as well as the most natural place, *i.e.*, her own home, where she could see how everything was done, and go through the training in a more pleasant and suitable way than in another person's house, under the authority and constraint of a stranger and a stranger's home. Why should she get her training in this somewhat fraudulent manner without paying for it? There is no thoughtful mistress of a house that has not felt the *dishonesty* of the present system of our servants' method of obtaining their information and training. What more common thing than to hear some lamenting mistress say, "As soon as I had taught her all I knew, and made a good servant of her, she left me to 'better herself?'" How often does

a servant come into our house who has to be taught everything, and who is hardly worth her wages during the process of teaching. What pains we take with her; and many of us try in every way to make a better girl of her, and while we teach house-work, endeavour to train the mind and heart as well. I have often thought that the universal habit of paying our servants while we are really teaching them, and making servants of them, leads to some of the unconscientiousness of which we hear so much complaint. We often pay them wages which we have earned and they have not; for until they were instructed they were not worth even the food they ate. A mistress has no redress, however. If her work has to be done, and she has an ignorant person to deal with, she must teach her, and the law does not take cognizance of how the work is done, nor whether the servant knew her work, when it enforces the payment of her wages. "Domestic service," said an eminent social economist one day, "is the only trade or profession where no apprenticeship nor training is required before entering it, and where both are obtained without payment, the law requiring the wages to be paid whether the servant was competent to earn them or not."

Now this training which we are obliged to bestow on our servants, whether we like it or not, we should be much wiser in giving to our daughters; nor could we bestow on them a more valuable provision for their happiness in after life than to make them competent in every department of domestic service in the house. I feel sure that thoughtful and competent womanly service will do wonders for our homes. It will make our work lighter in the first place, because we shall get rid of much of the dirt-making of which we are at present the victims; and we shall learn the value of absolute cleanliness and tidiness in everything that we do. We shall keep everything in its place, and have a place for everything; and it is only in the practice of these rules that we shall find out how much they will lighten the burden of the house duties.

There is a right way and a wrong way of doing everything in the house. There is a labour-saving way and a laborious way; and it is my anxious desire to show, in these few articles on "Helping in the House," how we can best manage, by good methods and a little forethought, to lessen labour, and to give such a wise, helping hand to all household departments, that our young people may be taught in the best methods, and the wheels of the household may turn easily with less exertion and less effort. One of the best directions to begin in to help in the house is in the dusting of it. For dusting is one of those things which takes some time to do properly, and much of the prettiness and comfort of the house depends on its being done well. "Dust," said Lord Palmerston, "is merely matter in the wrong place." And dusting consists in removing, every day, all the atoms which the ever-moving atmosphere floats about, and which finally settle on each and every article in the house. But we must also remember that the true art of dusting does not consist in displacing dust, and to drive it from one resting-place to another, but to get rid of it entirely, and to adopt the best means for so doing.

And here I find a short sentence, written by Miss Florence Nightingale on this subject, which shows that that able woman thought of other practical things as well as nursing, which, in fact, included them all. "No par-

ticle of dust," she says, "can be got rid of by the present method of dusting. Dusting in these days means nothing but flapping the dust from one part of the room on to another. It is better to leave the dust lying in its original position if you are not going to remove it altogether. The only way I know to remove dust, the plague of all lovers of fresh air, is to wipe everything with a damp cloth."

The damp duster will need, Miss Nightingale further explains, frequent rinsing and wringing dry, or the furniture will be made smeary, and streaked with the mud that has resulted from the dust and the wet of the duster; and the work of the dampened duster must be supplemented by that of the dry one. So you will require two dusters, the dry one carried over your arm, to use when needed as a polisher. Now you must quite understand that what Miss Nightingale advises is not a wet cloth, but a damp one, and if you do not comprehend the difference, you had better try to find out by actual experiment.

The dry duster will need shaking in the open air in order to get rid of the dust contained in it; and in doing this, if you go to a window, you must be careful not to shake the duster so that the dust contained in it will be blown back into the room, and settle down there again. The best way is, to leave the room you are dusting, and shake the duster from a back door or small back window, where there is no draught of air to blow the dust back. All these cloths should be soft and pliable, not hard and rough, for if so they are likely to break delicate ornaments and glasses.

Dusting a room and its furniture should be done soon after the sweeping, and when the dust has settled down; and the windows should be widely opened to allow the fresh air to circulate. Before beginning to dust close nearly all the windows, and commence with your feather or soft bristle brush, and gently dust the picture-frames and all ornaments hanging against the wall, being careful not to move or pull them, and to put all back as you found them. Until the dusting of the walls be concluded you should not take off the dusting-sheets, which, I am supposing, are on the furniture all this time; and before you begin attending to the pictures you ought to have given your attention to the fire-irons, fender, and grate, polishing, black-leading, or cleaning everything in the latter.

Although I mention a feather dusting-brush, I do not think them so good for any kind of dusting as a soft cloth, but they must be used for pictures out of reach, ornaments, and any article with crevices in it. But common sense tells us that shaking the dust into the air must imply its resettlement somewhere; and so when rooms are dusted entirely with the feather or hair brush there would be no chance of getting rid of the dust, but only of changing its place, so the air of the room would not be freshened, nor the dust carried away.

The orderly method of dusting is to begin in one corner of the room and work all round steadily and carefully to where you began, taking every chair, table, sofa and ornament in your way, and paying particular attention to all the woodwork. In many houses the mistress herself dusts the ornaments, and the maid only goes over all the larger things, leaving the more delicate work to her mistress. One lady whom I knew told me that it took her exactly one hour to dust the drawing-room after the maid had cleaned the furniture, and that she did her own part three times a week.

The windows and blinds should be carefully

wiped in your journey, the panes and sashes rubbed with care; and if this be remembered, the windows will not need half as much cleaning as they usually do. It is not always needful to sweep before dusting; it is often better to go over the carpet with dustpan and brush, and wipe the floors, when polished or matted, with a cloth, and to set apart a regular day for a good turn-out and sweeping. The dusting, however, should be done every day, and with care, for the enemy to be met is a swift destroyer of everything, and shabbiness and dinginess soon set in the undusted and uncared-for house. The furniture may be old and faded and the home poor, but we know the instant we put our noses inside the door whether the duster has been used; for the nose is an unfailing detector of a stuffy house, where every footstep and movement raises a cloud. Dust is one of the things that can be smelt; and even if we do not see it, we must always remember that it is there all the time, and that our lungs breathe it in—to our great detriment. Now that we know so much about "microbes," we may be sure they are to be found in all the household dust. Many of our houses would be far healthier and more enjoyable if they were more empty. We gather round us furniture, ornaments, rugs, curtains, and drapery, bedding, and personal clothing, as the barnacles grow on a rock, and they ever accumulate, and harbour our insidious enemy. It is a surprising thing to observe how few of us have the courage to get rid of our dusty encumbrances, and how we cling to old furniture that would be better out of the way. The craze for art

muslin draperies and Japanese fans is evaporating, and we are getting rid of dust traps of other kinds from our living rooms, much to our advantage and the benefit of our health. All curtains are dust traps, and unless great care be taken they may be as injurious to health as a dirty carpet is. They speedily show, however, by their smell when they are dirty, and the house-mother who values health and good spirits at home will banish them from the family living rooms. I know many a house where the curtains are stiff with dirt and dust, and where no amount of shaking would avail to get rid of it. In these houses there is a great parade of opening windows, while the true source of offence and evil is allowed to hang on uncleaned and unwashed. Excepting so far as their warmth is concerned—weighted as we are with ill-fitting windows and ill-hung doors—we should be better off if we banished all curtains and hangings, and we could supply their place with screens, which are most useful and easily portable articles, neither collecting nor harbouring dust and dirt. They are so inexpensive at present, that we can all have them; and if not real screens, then that easily-made and useful substitute, a clothes' horse; with some short curtains of cretonne if for a bedroom, or covered neatly with the same material for the use of the living rooms.

The tidying-up of the room should go on during the process of dusting it; everything should be put in its proper place, cushions beaten and dusted, antimacassars arranged, chairs put straight, and the books on tables dusted and put in order. Where many papers

are about, they will require dusting and careful rearrangement. Gas brackets and glass shades should not be forgotten, nor *should the table-cloths be left unshaken*. Dusting is a perfect index of personal character, and we should not be disappointed in trusting much to a woman who was a careful duster.

There is something special to be said when you come to dusting books. The general way of doing them is to push them back on the shelves and dust the front only. Now the best thing for the daily dusting of the books is a small hair brush with long bristles, which enables you to brush the tops of them without trouble. When there is time—at least once a fortnight or so—the books should be thoroughly dusted, not by taking them all out and throwing them in a heap on the floor, but by taking half-a-dozen out at once and dusting them and the shelf they came from well, and putting them back in the *exact* order in which you found them; in this way they will be kept in their proper places always.

After all it is in the little things we can show our faithfulness. There are no great actions required of us, and it is not often given to either man or woman to be a hero or heroine.

... "Nothing can be so mean,
That with the tincture, 'For Thy sake,'
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine,
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
Makes that and the action fine."

—George Herbert.

THE STUDIO MARIANO.

By EGLANTON THORNE, Author of "My Brother's Friend," "Aldyth's Inheritance," etc.

CHAPTER V.

MORE visitors arrived, everyone ready to admire the room and compliment the fair owner. For some time Enid was kept busy at the tea-table, whilst Julius Dakin made himself useful in handing the cups to and fro. At last, when everyone was supplied, there was a pause of a few minutes, and Enid had leisure to observe the social qualities which Julius Dakin was displaying. He seemed a different being as she watched him now from the man who had explained to her every point of interest attaching to the Coliseum. What an inexhaustible supply of small talk he seemed to possess! What nonsense too he talked; and yet it was a clever kind of nonsense. It was clear that he was a great favourite with the ladies present, and no wonder, Enid thought, as she heard some of the words he addressed to them. Now he was admiring the pretty gown worn by a girl present, and subtly suggesting to her that it was becoming; now he was talking to a young mother of her fine boy; and now congratulating a rather worn-looking spinster who wore glasses on the hanging of one of her pictures at a recent exhibition.

"He aims at making himself generally agreeable," thought Enid. "I shall know what it means when he pays me compliments."

The next moment he was at her side.

"You are taking no tea yourself, Miss Mildmay. Now do let me give you a cup. I assure you I know just how you

English ladies like it. Three lumps of sugar and plenty of cream. That is right, is it not?"

"Not for me," said Enid laughing. "I take no sugar."

"No!"—with a look of surprise.

"Oh! I forgot; it is the Americans who like it so sweet. But what is this?" he added, catching sight of the easel Enid had drawn into the corner by the tea-table, hoping it would escape observation. "Miss Marian did not paint that?"

"No," said Enid, "that is an attempt of mine. Don't look at it, please."

"Indeed, I must look at it. It is very good. The bloom of the fruit and the colour of the leaves is excellent. It is really"—he lowered his voice—"the best thing of the kind in the room."

Enid coloured.

"Oh, please don't," she said hurriedly. "I hate to be complimented."

"But I am not uttering an empty compliment," he said, looking at her. "What! you do not believe me?"

"I think you are clever at making pretty speeches, Mr. Dakin."

He laughed, and evidently felt complimented.

"So you have been taking notes, I see. That is the way with you quiet people. But surely one is bound to try to make oneself agreeable, and ladies as a rule like that kind of thing."

"And men are quite superior to it, I suppose?" said Enid mischievously.

"Oh, of course," he said, laughing again. "But really, Miss Mildmay,

you mistake me if you think I was not speaking sincerely when I said that was the best thing in the room."

"And yet you would not tell Maud that."

"Why should I? It would be most *gauche* to do so now I know it is not her work. Surely one may have regard for truth without saying with brutal frankness exactly what one thinks?"

"Well, yes, I suppose one must exercise some reserve," said Enid. "Yet I like people who say straight out what they mean, even though they are sometimes guilty of bluntness."

"Then I will try to please you in that respect, Miss Mildmay. I promise you I will pay you no compliment from henceforth save that involved in telling you the exact truth on every occasion."

"Thank you," said Enid. "I assure you I shall consider that a compliment. But who is this gentleman?" she asked, glancing at one who had just entered the studio, and whom Maud was welcoming with enthusiasm. "He is surely an artist?"

"He is," replied Dakin, "and one of the most distinguished in Rome. He will please you, Miss Mildmay, for Herr Schmitz is famous for saying on every occasion exactly what he thinks. Really I wonder at Miss Marian's audacity in sending him an invitation."

The painter was a man of short, thick-set figure, with a large leonine head covered with abundant grizzly hair. His countenance was homely in the extreme,

small throb of her self-seeking little heart, but the throb had been at the notion of her early release from her house of bondage down in Kent, not for the sake of poor Dick, who had been decidedly the more disinterested of the two in the brief flirtation. When she had seen it could not be, when she had found him sent away, she had submitted with the best grace in the world—a reasonable docility which had done much to reconcile Dick's mother to the offender.

"It will be awfully hard to leave it all when the time comes," chimed in Beata, who was nevertheless less vehement in her sensations and expressions.

"But you are going back to the country, to the ripe corn and the harvest moon, to the nuts and berries in the hedgerows, and later the glow-worms in the lane, of which your brother used to speak," suggested Flora shyly.

"Oh, we don't care a bit for the

country," asserted both sisters. "The Gardens and the parks here are quite enough country for us. What do we want with ripe corn? The gas-lamps are a great deal more useful and more to be depended upon than the moon is, not to say than horrid little worms such as Gil actually touches with his fingers, and brings in his hands for us to admire! If we were going to the seaside or the moors, like you and Dorothy—lucky girls!—with your yachting dresses and your moor and covert suits, it would be different."

"But you are going home," persisted Flora.

"Home, worst luck!" muttered Minnie, with a pout. "We have more than enough of such a home, where we are shut up, and nobody comes from week's end to month's end, as the lover of the woman in the poem never came when she waited for him"—an ambiguous reference which Flora did not take up.

"Your father and mother will be glad to see you back," pleaded Flora.

"I daresay," granted Minnie listlessly.

"But they get on very well without us." Beata made the amendment—"They have each other, you know. Married people should be everything to each other," she reminded Flora, with a yawn. "And of course mamma is very much occupied with her great book, and papa with his clever inventions. But as each has a pursuit, it renders them the better suited for each other."

"It must be dull for your brother without you," hesitated Flora.

"Oh, not at all. He has the garden, and his newspapers and magazines. Besides, he is so dull when we are with him that he can hardly be duller without us. I do believe he is getting duller and duller every day. It is waste of time and trouble to seek to enliven Gil," finished Minnie, with the utmost confidence.

(To be continued.)

ON HELPING IN THE HOUSEWORK.

S WEEPING.



AM sure it will surprise many people to be told that there are two opinions about sweeping, and that it is possible to sweep carpets too much.

We constantly hear of a room being given a good sweeping each week or each day;

but our relations across the ocean talk of sweeping a carpet or room perhaps six times a year. They consider that more wear is given to the threads of the carpet by the constant recurrence of this practice, than by the ordinary use of daily life.

The theory, as explained by American house-keepers is that the dust on the surface of the carpet is driven through the texture by violent and hard use of the broom on the surface, thus causing the vast accumulations of dust which are found stored up under it when it is taken up after one or two years' usage in the ordinary way. This dust represents an amount of wear to the separate threads of which the carpet is composed which is quite useless, and might be avoided if the dust were lightly taken off the surface of the carpet each day by means of a light hand-brush and dust-pan, the operator going over the floor on her hands and knees, and, in fact, dusting the carpet as she would dust any article of furniture in the room.

There seems much to recommend this theory, for we can all see that the hard sweeping must rub off the nap, and then wear the threads; and the dust, when driven through the material, must be a constant source of mischief to ourselves. Even as we walk across the floor we raise an impalpable powder of dust by every footstep and the touch of our skirts, which motes we inhale with every breath we breathe.

The first step to take on putting down a carpet is to lay under it sheets of coarse brown paper, which may be purchased by the yard of any stationer, and is manufactured for this special purpose. If it can be afforded, of course felt is the best foundation to lay under

carpets; and here the first cost is the worst part of the expense entailed, for it lasts so well as to wear out many carpets, and it saves money every day it is down. A good carpet, with a felt foundation, will show very little dust under it when taken up, and such as there may be is more easily shaken out, and does not seem to have become so ingrained in the substance of the carpet. An old carpet is also well employed when it is put under a new one; but it should be well shaken and cleaned before being taken into this form of wear, or it will add to your dust collections in a very unpleasant manner.

The three kinds of carpet seen in ordinary houses are the tapestry, Kidderminster, and Brussels. During the last few years felt carpetings have been brought more into notice by the æsthetic movement, as they present a plain and uniform surface, and are made in suitable dark colourings, to show up the Indian and Oriental rugs which are usually placed upon them in various parts of the room. Felts used not to be thought good in wear; but wherever they have been used with a felt lining under them, and have been carefully swept, they have worn admirably; besides, it has been recently discovered that they can be dyed and take a fresh colour, looking as good as new after the process. Tapestry and Kidderminster are both very dependent for their wear on their having something underneath them; especially the latter, as the under side is protected; and when turned, the colours will be found much brighter. Brussels seems to be the general choice, for it is not every purse that can arrive at Axminster, Aubusson, Wilton, or at Turkey carpets for the dining-room. The first two are made in squares, like a Turkey carpet, and are not often nailed down, their own weight holding them straight; but brown paper should always be laid beneath them; and they should be shaken in preference to futile endeavours to sweep them. They may be also turned over and swept on the wrong side to get the dust out harmlessly.

My next and most important heading is carpet brooms. These are divided into those of American fibre, or brooms with long

handles, which are generally sold for sweeping carpets, but which, if used immoderately, inevitably brush the nap off the surface, and wear the threads. They are best for sweeping cocoa-nut matting; and if used for carpets, it is best they should be damp, or even wet, in pursuance of the idea, that the dust should be taken off, not driven in. These American brooms should always be hung up, as they preserve their shape, and sweep better, than if left standing. In America they are often dipped in warm water after having been used, and then hung up to dry. This cleans them, and restores their stiffness. When a broom is worn unevenly, soak it in warm water for half an hour, then sew it along, below the original stitching, with a rug-needle and some twine, and thus hold it together, so that you may restore it to its original shape. Then trim off the split and broken ends with some old scissors. Even at the very last the thrifty American housewife will cut the handle and trim up the broom, to make it serve as a kitchen hearth brush. The aphorism that "A stitch in time saves nine," is most applicable as regards this class of broom; for directly the broom becomes loosened, and the stalks commence to fall apart and to strew the floor in sweeping, the broom is worn out unless immediate care be taken to mend it, by sewing it lower down, and thus binding the stalks together again. Many people use the leg of an old sock or stocking to draw over the centre of the broom and sew it on; and failing this, they use a stout band of some kind of strong material, which they sew round, and thus perform the same office by binding the stalks firmly and closely together.

The hair broom with long handle is used for sweeping stone floors or polished boards of rooms and passages, and halls that are covered with matting or oil-cloth. The "Turk's-head" broom is used for the walls of the house; and in place of this a clean towel is fastened round the ordinary broom, so that the walls may be wiped clean.

Of late years, however, the short-handled brush with two kinds of bristles, one hard and one soft, is preferred, the harder side to brush the carpet, and the softer one to gather the

dust into the dust-pan. The maid goes over the carpets in this manner each day, and thus takes up all the surface dust.

Managed in this way, a carpet would require sweeping about once a month or so. One method, in England, of thoroughly cleaning a room, seems to be as follows: We begin by shaking off and wiping all the dust from every article, and then we cover them up with dust sheets, having bestowed all the extra dust we could remove upon the carpet. Then we proceed to scatter wet tea-leaves all over it in lumps; and taking the broom, we sweep violently, scrubbing our broom most likely over the carpet, and driving the dust, if we be inexperienced sweepers, towards the fireplace, instead of the door. It is to be hoped that we go into the corners of the room, and move all the furniture, in order to get at the hidden dust underneath. Then we take up the spoils of our broom in the dust-pan; and (it is also much to be hoped) we immediately take it to the kitchen-fire and burn it, after we have opened the windows "to lay the dust," *i.e.*, to allow the dust we have raised to settle again on the carpet and furniture.

The use of tea-leaves is very excellent, provided we wash them in cold water, and use them damp, not wet. If we employ them without this washing, they will stain a delicately-hued carpet with the brown or yellowish colour of tea. In America, Indian meal, or maize-meal, is thought a better medium for the purpose of the sweeper than tea-leaves. It is scattered over the carpet and lightly brushed in with the broom before sweeping. Wet bran, and salt also, are used, when dry, to revive the colour of a carpet; and in very cold countries dry snow is used in the same manner by the housemaid to clean and revive her carpets. In England our climate is so mild we know nothing of dry snow; our snow is always wet, for we have no intense frost to freeze it into a powder.

The method of cleaning a room seems rather different in America. There they first take all large articles of furniture that can possibly be moved, out of the room, in order to obtain a clear field, and cover the carpet with sheets, or some coarse material made into a cover for the purpose. After this they proceed to dust everything carefully, just as if the floor had already been swept; and when this is finished, go on to clean the carpet as follows: Put into a pail of clear water one gill of ammonia; go over the entire surface of the carpet with a large clean cloth, wet in the liquid, and wrung fairly dry. As a general rule one pail of water and one gill of ammonia are enough, but not always. Thus every atom of dust is removed, and no injury has been done to the carpet, while it will look fresher than ever, and the colours in it will be wonderfully revived, as well as cleaned.

Another American recipe to cleanse and brighten a carpet is to wipe it over with a house-flannel which has been dipped in kerosene oil, and then wrung out quite dry. After this treatment the room must have the windows opened for at least forty-eight hours, and neither matches, lighted candles, gas, nor fire must be allowed to enter it.

Another recipe, of English origin, however, is to wipe the carpet with a damp flannel wrung out of a pail of warm water, containing a pint of ox-gall. In case the carpet be *very* dirty, it may be scrubbed with this mixture, but it must be afterwards washed over with warm water, and rubbed dry with a clean towel. This will be found to restore a half-worn carpet in a wonderful manner.

From what I have said you will see that there are some new ideas on the very old subject of sweeping a room, and that some sensible and even scientific thought has been brought to bear upon it, which has resulted in our being told that the less dust we raise in

sweeping, the better. Indeed, the funny thing seems to be that the ordinary housemaid has not seen long ago that dust is a substance which has to fall somewhere if it is raised. The sight of the woman who jerks and flips her broom, raising clouds of particles of all descriptions; whose aim seems to be to stir up as much dirt as possible without a thought of the obvious fact that it must settle down again, is one of which it is to be hoped we shall see less and less as the years go on. In this instance, Lord Palmerston's clever definition of "dust" as "matter in the wrong place," well applies to all that which accumulates in our households; and dust, especially in London, must be battled with every day.

A recent writer gives us a definition of dust (or dirt, as it really is)—"Dirt consists of atoms of decaying matter; so that when matter decays it does not go into nothing, but breaks up or *powders* into the tiny atoms we call 'dust.' These float in the atmosphere, and the moving air wafts them from place to place, and they settle on everything that comes in their way." The air that we breathe is full of life; and unless we be careful, full of dirt also.

Dr. Angus Smith tells us that "Animals are constantly giving out a quantity of solid organic matter from the lungs in the act of breathing. If this condensed breath be put on a piece of white porcelain and allowed to stand a few days, it will become the abode of living animals, which may be seen with a good microscope. The impure exhalations of living bodies, therefore, become condensed on cold bodies, and form a kind of glutinous organic plaster. We often see a substance of this kind on the furniture of dirty houses, and in this case a disagreeable smell is always perceptible. This will show the necessity for constant cleaning, and tells the reason why everything becomes dirty."

Most of my readers have heard more or less of the "germ theory" of disease. Germs are living atoms, and mean the very beginning of animal and vegetable life. All disease is caused by their presence, a certain number of them floating in the air; and when they find prepared ground, they plant themselves at once. Dirty houses, dusty and ill-ventilated, soiled clothing, and, still more, unwashed people—these form the ground prepared for the germ. The more impure the air, the faster they multiply. Nothing is so good a hiding-place as dirty woollen clothing. In this they will exist, if laid by, for four or five years, and when let loose, are quite ready to be transformed into scarlet fever or any other infectious disease. They are none the worse for their long seclusion, and only great heat would destroy them, unless we choose to be converts to cleanliness, and wash them away with pure water.

So you see where my chat about "sweeping" has led us; and we find that dust forms really one of our greatest dangers; and thus we recognise the fact, that there is great reason why "raising a dust" when sweeping should be avoided, and that it is better to take it away quietly, and neither scatter abroad nor breathe what may be germs of disease, but ever remember that in the dust around you may lie the issues, not of life, but of death.

It is not a pleasant thing to feel that even by our breathing we pollute the atmosphere around us, and that others are doing the same; neither does it afford any pleasure to reflect that science says all disease is preventable—or, in other words, that it is someone's fault; for one is dirty and unclean in person, another in house and surroundings, or in personal habits; and thus disease is produced. And with this thought—over which I hope my girl readers will ponder—I must leave the scientific side of sweeping.

I have not yet mentioned the "carpet-sweeper"—a little machine which has been introduced into many houses. It is within the attainment of everyone, as the cost is so small, and with ordinary care there is no fear of breaking and having to replace it. It appears, so far as can be seen, to come up to the chief requisite of sweeping, as it takes up the surface dust, and does not drive it into the texture of the carpet. I notice, however, that there will be additional duties entailed on the maid, for she will have to dust the corners of the rooms with a duster; and, indeed, she should go round the edges of the carpets each day with a damp cloth, or else the space between the wall and the carpet is turned into a receptacle for dust. The "carpet-sweeper" must not be driven too fast, and the movement must be as smooth as possible—not jerky and uncertain. The "carpet-sweeper" is thus an excellent invention for taking up the twenty-four hours' dust from the centre of the carpet, for sweeping up crumbs round the dinner-table, and for bedrooms, when the floor is quite covered with carpet. It is to be hoped that its inventor will be able to make it a *noiseless* machine in the near future.

Matting should be swept, as I have said, with a soft hair-broom; but once a month or so it will need washing over with a mixture consisting of two handfuls of salt and a pailful of cold water, and well dried with a clean towel afterwards. If the matting has become discoloured, you may restore the colour with a wash of soda and water, made rather weak. This will make it of a pale corn colour. Matting can also be washed in a gallon of water which has had a bag of bran boiled in it—about a quarter of a pound of bran in the bag. After this it must be well dried.

Oil-cloth should never be scrubbed, nor should soap be used to it. It should be washed over when needed with a coarse sponge, or a flannel, and clean cold water. To revive the colour and polish it, you will find a little beeswax and turpentine, mixed, and well rubbed in, successful; it is used very thin, and put on sparingly, so as to avoid making the surface slippery. Tile floors should be cleaned with cold water and a clean flannel once or twice a month. They can also be rubbed over with a little whiting and water as thick as a thinnish cream. This should be wiped off afterwards with a wet flannel.

There are several methods of removing grease from carpets: a piece of blotting-paper and a hot iron laid on it is the best known. A little French chalk scraped on the spot and left on a short time is very good; and so is covering the spots with a little clean flour or oatmeal, changing it every few hours, and brushing the old application off it until the spots have disappeared. Benzine is also an excellent thing to apply, using a piece of clean flannel to rub it on with. A red-hot poker held over a small grease spot will cause its disappearance in a wonderfully short time; but do not burn the carpet.

Whether we have to practise the art of using the broom or not, it is of little consequence. Both as mistress or as the helper in the house, we shall find the benefit of knowledge on the subject. Do you remember the lessons of King Lemuel, and the prophecy that his mother taught him? And in her enumeration of the virtues of the beloved wife—in whom "the heart of her husband shall safely trust"—we find evidence that she was not uncultivated nor unlearned; and in the midst of her household she studied, and enquired, we may be sure, into the best methods and the best ways for carrying out all practical work. And while she held to "the law of kindness," she is said to have "opened her mouth to speak words of wisdom and knowledge."

exactly in the ordinary tone of conversation, "Shall we go up the steep hillside together?" nor how they went up hand-in-hand, and on through the gates into the wonderful Hobby Drive, where a very interesting conversation took place which must remain a dead secret to just those two, except this little fragment.

Tom is saying, "You do not expect me to explain why my feeling towards you is different from that towards Miss Ayre. It is only the old story over again, Mary—I like her, but I love you. I do not know how it is that your nature attracts me more strongly than hers, nor how it is that my nature is so perfectly satisfied in its intercourse with yours, especially in these last few days. You have altered, Mary, since I knew you first; you have developed, have grown more sympathetic. How is it?"

"Partly, I think," Mary said softly, "be-

cause my own feelings have been strengthened by suffering, and so I am more alive to the feelings of others; and partly because you have broken down the reserve that was between us," she went on more softly still, "and I can trust you now fully, Tom, and believe in your love."

They went on for some time in silence, and then Tom said, "There is no need to talk of this; we have both known it these few days, and have trusted in each other, and so the barriers fell down that had before divided our souls, and they mingled freely. I loved you from the first, Mary, but it was better not to let you know it then; you were young and unformed, and I wanted you to choose your part in this world's life without any bias from me. But when I heard of your life here, and that Mr. Adams did not apparently enter into

any part of it, I came down with a glad heart, determined to win you if you would let me try."

"If you had only known, you might have saved yourself the trouble," Mary said archly; "for you won me without trying more than a year ago."

And so we leave this "happy pair," happy in the knowledge that is denied, alas! to many a so-called happy pair—happy in the happiness that comes only to a few in this uncertain world, in the union of soul with soul and mind with mind, without a shadow of doubt or fear, in the feeling that here on earth has been vouchsafed to them the highest of all earthly blessings—the walking together with mutual help and encouragement towards the Kingdom of Heaven.

[THE END.]

ON HELPING IN THE HOUSE.

THE ART OF WINDOW-CLEANING.

By DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.



I AM fully convinced, before I begin, that there are dozens of people who will be quite ready to inform me that there is only one way of cleaning windows, and that there is nothing

new to be learnt on the subject. No doubt, therefore, they will listen with some incredulity to me when I inform them that, when I began to look about me, to add to my own knowledge on the question, I found half a dozen opinions for consideration, and as many different ways of "How to do it properly."

I have many ideas myself on "How to do it;" and, for instance, I should advise my readers to eschew grease, and to see that greasy pails, tubs, towels, and water are carefully guarded against, and that there should be no lack of towels and cloths. A damp or rainy day should be avoided, and also a very sunny one, or at least a time for cleaning the windows should be selected when they are in the shade, as windows cleaned in the full sunlight are sure to become streaky, a fault which is caused by the fact that the sun dries the glass quicker than we can rub them dry, and the water dries just as it is put on by the cloth with which we have washed. A cloudy day is not a bad one for cleaning them, but I need not say that a frosty day should be carefully avoided.

If we could induce our housemaids to dust and wipe over the windows every morning when they dust the rooms, our windows would not require cleaning half so often as they do. The dust and dirt which they acquire *inside* are double the amount they contract on the outside; and this is especially the case where gas is burnt, as well as coal and coke. At any rate, before beginning to clean, the windows and the frames, both inside and out, should be thoroughly dusted, and a small paint-brush will be of much use in cleaning out the corners and crevices of the putty. When the dusting is finished, then proceed to clean the paint about the windows, the frames, and the ledges; for if this be not done at the beginning, you will not manage it afterwards without smearing the glass. The

inside of the window is cleaned first, not the outside, and you had better finish cleansing the whole of the inside before you begin on the out.

No soap is used in washing windows, I need hardly remark; nor, indeed, is soap a good adjunct in washing any kind of glass. The only thing to make it look polished and bright is clean cold water. I find, however, that some people have a strong prejudice in favour of very hot water, and with a little lump of ammonia in it. Others like some Californian borax; while some put in a lump of washing soda to soften the water. The use of the ammonia is said to give the glass a polish. I am told that in America carbonate of soda is used to rub on the panes, applied with a damp cloth.

From that enterprising land also comes the idea of kerosine, or paraffin, oil, for the agent in cleaning windows; this being applied with a cloth wet with the oil, which is used very sparingly, and rubbed off again with a clean cloth. I hear also that newspaper is used beyond the seas, and that the printer's ink is a valuable polishing medium. This last idea is said to have originated in the northern parts of the country, where the intense cold prevents the windows from being washed with water.

Amongst my treasures I have a wonderful old manual of housekeeping, published in the days when the nineteenth century was quite in its teens, and therein I find, under the head of "Window-Cleaning," a recipe which shows that cleaning with newspaper and not wetting the glass is not a novelty. My ancient authority thinks "that the panes, if wetted, cannot be so thoroughly and immediately dried as not to catch the dust again, as soon almost as it has been cleared off."

"In large towns," my authority goes on to say, "it is usual to employ glaziers to clean the windows; for they, being in the business, do it most thoroughly and effectually. The mode is, first, to dust them with putty-powder (sold under that name at the oil-shops) enclosed in a linen bag, afterwards rubbing it off with two wash-leathers, the one very slightly damp and the other perfectly dry. Two men should be employed, one outside and the other in, to save the time; and the charge made by every professed glazier is sixpence each window."

I read this description of window-cleaning as performed more than half a century ago

with much interest, and it explains what has always puzzled me, *i.e.*, the use of chamois leather in window-cleaning; and that the early ideas of polishing glass were founded on the plans adopted for polishing silver. We find the *raison d'être* of the polishing leather when we find out that putty-powder was the old name under which whiting was sold; putty, as made by glaziers, being composed of whiting rubbed into a stiff paste with boiled linseed oil, to which, I believe, white lead it added. So the use of the leathers has remained, while the reason for employing them has become obsolete.

In a modern book on the subject of cleaning in the house, I find the use of a wet and a dry leather recommended; and if the windows be very dirty, a little whiting may be used to clean them. Nothing is said about polishing, but it is evident that housekeepers of olden days thought a great deal about it, and expected their windows not only to admit light, but to reflect the clear sky and the bright sun, and to add the beauty of their polish and their bright reflecting surface to the appearance of the house. To-day we *clean* windows; in those days they *polished* them, to make them beauty-spots in the sun.

In cleaning stained-glass windows, nothing but pure tepid water and a sponge must be used, and special care must be taken not to lay any weight on them in the cleaning, as the lead in which they are set will not bear the least pressure. This is also the case with many of the modern doors which we find in our houses, and our servants should be particularly warned, or we may find ourselves with a somewhat serious bill to pay for repairs. I am told that no soda should be used to clean stained glass, and that a sunny dry day should be chosen for the purpose, so that the glass should not remain wet.

Looking at the condition of the stained-glass windows in many churches, as well as private houses, I am of opinion that people imagine that they require no cleaning, or else that they clean themselves, for they are much neglected, and the frames are left undusted and unwashed. Muffed and corrugated glass should also be attended to when other windows are washed.

Amongst the troubles of the window-cleaner in a newly-built house are the spots of paint which are sure to remain as window decorations. These are hardened, and will not

yield to washing, and will need to be otherwise dealt with. A little spirits of turpentine dropped on each spot from a pointed stick, a pen, or a pencil, and allowed to remain for some hours undisturbed, will generally take out the fresher stains. Perhaps several applications may be needed. Wet paint spots may be taken out at once with turpentine, and

I may also add that sulphuric ether will also remove them.

The following, from the *Builder*, may be useful in connection with my subject; it is a recipe for taking out glass from window-sashes without trouble:—American potash three parts, unslacked lime one part. Mix, lay it on both sides with a stick, and let it

remain for twenty-four hours; the putty will then be soft enough to cut out easily.

And as a last hint on the subject, I will say that the mistress may avoid many colds and coughs if she will see that, when the maids clean the windows, they keep the doors shut and put on a warm jacket themselves, and tie a muffler over their heads.

"I'VE GOT NOTHING ON THAT'LL SPOIL."

By "MEDICUS."



ON'T you worry, Willie," said Nora; "I've got nothing on that'll spoil."

"What!" exclaimed; "not that saucy bonnet—or is it a hat?—which your pretty sunshade will hardly protect; not all those fluffy faldarals and gauzy fandangos, yak face and furbe-

lows?" Nora laughed.

"A capital hand you are," she said, "at describing a lady's dress. Why don't you write for the *Journal des Modes*? Your contributions would at least possess the merit of originality."

"Nothing on to spoil!" I added. "Why, my dainty cousin, you'd spoil yourself if exposed to the violence of a Highland thunder-storm."

"If you worry I'll go back," she said with decision.

Well, that was putting her foot down on me with a vengeance. But it was a way that Nora had, and I knew better than to say another word.

The facts of the case, reader, are soon explained. A poor old woman in the glen beneath us, while lying ill, had dreamt she was eating cloudberry, and next morning was superstitiously impressed with the notion that if she could only get some of this delightful fruit she would soon be well, and, as she expressed it, "make an *omadhaun* (fool) of the doctor."

Well, my cousin Nora and I were then on our way to get some—that is all. The cloudberry is a kind of delicious Alpine strawberry, found growing high up on Scottish mountains where the clouds rest; hence the name. It is said the fairies hide them from all but good people; but Nora and I thought ourselves good enough to find a lot.

But if Nora had a fault, it was that she was a trifle self-willed. The morning had been still and sultry, and she would not be advised by me to "rig out," as sailors say, in cloth or serge.

"You are not going to a garden-party, you know, Nora," I had said.

"I know I'm not."

"And that mountain yonder is five miles to the top, and in height just half a mile above the sea-level, and if a storm should come on and the temperature rush down to thirty-two degrees, where will we be?"

"Why, on the mountain, of course!"

And yonder now the storm was coming, and we were barely half-way up. Shapeless masses of cloud were gathering and banking up in the

horizon, though but dimly seen through a kind of sulphurous haze; thunder was muttering and growling in the distance, and every now and then a streak of lightning told me that the storm was making rapid strides towards us.

There wasn't a bit of shelter anywhere—only bare bluffs covered with stunted heath and Alpine flora, with here and there a plateau in which were pools of water as dark as porter.

But all at once we reached a splendid patch of the delicious fruit we had climbed to seek. I held my peace. I was wondering what Nora would do. She was looking nervous and uneasy. Nearer and nearer came the storm. Already all was gloom in the glen far beneath. Then a few drops of rain were blown in our faces by some mysterious wind or another.

"I say," said Nora, suddenly placing one hand on my arm, "Can't we mount above it?"

Why, as she spoke she positively looked inspired.

Next minute we were hurrying higher and higher towards the mountain's summit. Says Longfellow—

"The shades of night were falling fast,
As thro' an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, mid snow and ice,
A banner, with a strange device—
'Excelsior!'"

But I do believe that had the bold youth been with Nora and me now, we should have taught him a lesson in hill-climbing.

In less than half an hour we had reached the summit, and stood high above the storm, which was now raging in all its fury along the glen—as solemn and impressive a scene as any I ever have beheld, to say nothing of the wild grandeur of the view all around us, hill piled on hill, with loch, and moor, and stream.

We stayed here until the storm had entirely cleared away, and the sun was once more mirrored in the lake below. Then we descended to the brow of the hill, and filled the basket with the tawny cloudberry.

The story stops here. But it furnishes me with two texts on which to found my little health-sermon.

"I've got nothing on that'll spoil." Nora and I were fortunate that day in escaping the storm. Had it come on half an hour before, we should have been in it shelterless and unprotected. For myself it would have mattered little or nothing, being inured to changes, but even many a strong girl has caught her death from exposure to weather not half so inclement as the drenching rain, the cold hail, and sleet, of a thunderstorm on a bare hillside.

Britain in general, but possibly England more than Scotland, possesses the most uncertain climate of any country in the world, and girls would consult their own safety, even in summer, and especially if at the seaside, by never going from home unprepared for consequences. Sauntering about the parade or

sands, it does not signify; but near to all seaside resorts there are what are called places of interest; thither you will drive, usually in a brake or *char-a-banc*. It may be warm, and clear, and fine before you start, but towards mid-day, or afterwards, a summer storm may come on; and down rushes the temperature, and before you are aware what has happened you are chilled to the bone. Perhaps no amount of after care or attention will enable you to shake off the effects of that chill, till you have passed through a long dark cloud of sickness, and emerged a sadder and a wiser girl—but looking years older. You had "nothing on to spoil," had you? That is what you said before you started;—and it wouldn't be rain, and an umbrella looked ridiculous, and a cloak was cumbersome, and so on, and so forth. Besides, you had been in the habit of thinking yourself so strong and robust, and possessed of such a constitution. Believe me, girls, it is often people who boast thus who go down first, and have even more difficulty in getting up again than your thinner, more fragile, but "nerveful" girls. I coin the word "nerveful" in contradistinction to "nervous," which is generally understood to mean the possession of nerves that are weak and shaken.

A girl then should remember that, although she may have no dress on that will spoil, she has health, and she may spoil that.

Many people catch cold soon through the feet and legs. And it is a fact that, if these are well protected by warm, thick stockings—on a journey or pleasure trip, the wearer can weather almost anything. The reason is this: the feet and lower parts of the legs are but sparsely protected by muscle, yet all the blood in the body passes through these about once in every three minutes. If these portions of the body therefore are ice-cold, and you are sitting still in a *char-a-banc* or boat, the blood is bound to get chilled, and to pass upwards towards the heart in this cold condition. In a lesser degree the same holds good—or bad—as regards the hands.

If I can but succeed in getting my girl readers, or their mothers either, to remember and profit by these wholesome truths, this paper will not have been written in vain.

I should add, that there is often more danger of a chill while going out for a sail or row than in taking a drive. It may feel warm and balmy on shore, but your boat has no sooner made a bit of offing than the wind blows round your waist, and seems trying to cut you in two. In going, therefore, for either a sail or drive, do not forget your mackintosh; and should you expect to be out after sunset, take your feather boa also. You are even better provided thus than you would be with an umbrella. I myself have all a Scotchman's prejudice against an umbrella, much preferring a plaid in all weathers, and I am not going to recommend the umbrella to my readers. The girls of any other ladies' magazine may look like dowdies if they choose, but I should be sorry to have our girls look like that.

possible all the misery that lay at his doors. Until his visit Alethea was looked upon as in disgrace. She was too old to be sent to bed or put in the corner; but these penalties were, figuratively speaking, inflicted upon her. Her aunt and cousins addressed her as seldom as possible, and then with averted glance. Accustomed all her life to be "made much of," and to be treated as an important member of the household, this coldness made the poor girl very miserable and desolate. But she did not waver in her purpose—not even when the friendly old clergyman tried to dissuade her from its fulfilment.

"My dear young lady, just consider. What would become of society if the daughters of our wealthy homes were to insist on leaving the positions and duties of their recognised sphere to bury themselves as you propose to do? The confusion and the pain inflicted would be simply tremendous, and more harm than good would be the result."

"But, you see, I have no exact sphere or duties of the kind you mention, Mr. Marjoribanks. I am not in the place of daughter to anyone—I have no home duties. My aunt has Maud and Harriet as companions. I should of course fulfil my obligations to her so as to allow her plenty of time to make fresh plans, if necessary. I am quite independent and alone in the world, and am consequently free to carry out my own convictions of what is right."

Foiled at this point, the clergyman tried another mode of attack.

"You will only pauperise the people, instead of really helping them. As soon as they know there is money to be had for the asking, there will be a rush for it. The drink-shop will be the gainer—that is all. Indiscriminate charity is the curse of civilisation."

"I have no intention of giving money away for the asking. I want to give, as far as I can, *myself*, and to help people—especially the women and girls—in a wise way. This can be done by personal effort, surely. I have consulted many who have given their lives to the work, and I have made certain plans that I do not think are absurd."

The Rev. Septimus Marjoribanks was interested in spite of himself, and allowed Alethea to tell him her schemes at length.

"Well, well; but surely you are not one of those women who revert to the superstitions of the Middle Ages, and believe in celibacy as more pleasing to God than the sacred ties of home life?"

Alethea blushed a rosy red. "Certainly not; but it will be time enough to decide on that when it comes before me. I need not stop such work because—if I marry. Dear Mr. Marjoribanks, my duty seems to me to be, to take the work lying ready to my hand. I

am quite sure my purposeless life of pleasure is not the right one. I need not concern myself about the future."

"Well, my dear, God bless you!" said the old man; and he afterwards angered Mrs. Lorraine by speaking warmly of Alethea as a noble and sensible young woman, who knew what she was about. Like Balaam, he had been called in to curse; but he was compelled to bless.

This only increased the ire of Alethea's relatives. Mrs. Lorraine tried every possible means to deter her from her purpose, which was now daily assuming a shape of alarming definiteness. But all was in vain. At last she burst out to Maud, "Alethea is obstinacy itself. It is hopeless to try to deter her any longer. But I am determined on one point. Poor Charlie Sinclair shall be prevented from sacrificing himself to her whims. If she is bent on this mad folly, she must take the consequences."

"Do you know, I think Charlie is getting interested in her schemes, and half inclined to join in them. He was talking about painting some panels for her work-room the other day," observed Maud. "He is very easily influenced."

Mrs. Lorraine said nothing; but there was an ominous tightening of her lips. She fancied that Alethea was not indifferent to the kindly, gentle young fellow, who, in spite of a certain free-and-easy *insouciance*, was invariably ready to hear what she had to say, and, as far as he could, to sympathise in the present troubles of her position. Different as the two were—nay, partly because they were so different—they might come together in time. This should be prevented.

The next time Charlie called he was informed that Alethea was not at home, and that Mrs. Lorraine would like to speak to him in her boudoir.

"My dear boy, you know I look upon you almost as a son. I want to give you a word of advice. Do not waste your time in vain hopes and idle pursuit. I have of course read your heart," continued Mrs. Lorraine tenderly. "But, believe me, what you are thinking of is altogether out of the question. Alethea has given up all thought of marriage as incompatible with her new life."

"Do you know this from herself, may I ask?" enquired Charlie, turning rather pale.

"Certainly!" returned the crafty woman. "How could it be otherwise? I rather believe she hoped I should tell you so, and so save you both further pain. But of course as to *that* part of it I cannot speak with certainty. It is for the best, believe me," continued Mrs. Lorraine mysteriously. "There is something behind this excessive persistency, this extraordinary obstinacy. I must not speak

clearly—but—*family history* has a little to do with it."

As she spoke she tapped her forehead with a significant gesture.

"Good heavens! You do not mean to suggest—I never heard there was insanity in the Bruce family!" cried Charlie, startled into frankness.

"My dear fellow, pray do not put it into such brutally explicit language," cried Mrs. Lorraine, shrinking back with an elegant gesture. "People do not talk of these things. I say no more. I know what I know; but if you are wise, *be warned*."

Charlie snatched up his hat and retreated abruptly, with the briefest of farewells.

The next thing heard of him was that he had left town rather suddenly. He was about to take a voyage. Some said he was going to make sketches among the Himalaya Mountains, which, as everyone knows, abound in scenery to repay the utmost efforts of the artist's pencil.

Alethea quitted her aunt's roof soon afterwards, and in spite of the tenacity of her purpose she was worn by suffering. The persecution of the selfish and worldly people who represented all she knew of family love, had well-nigh broken her heart. This last stab was the "unkindest cut of all," though she knew not who had inflicted it. She trusted, however, in a strength higher than her own, and strove to forget her own trouble in the far deeper troubles of others. She succeeded beyond her utmost hopes, and soon became engrossed in the world of which her favourite novelist writes, "Everybody who once visits that world must go back to it. Those who work in it never want to leave it." For it is "the world where the women suffer."

Alethea's life is not what many would call a happy one. Her nearest friends will not forgive her, and she never grows quite inured to the sense of loneliness which their cruel behaviour causes her. Her aunt, angrily compelled by her desertion to live in a fashion somewhat less extravagant, always speaks of her as "That ungrateful, that unnatural girl!" Her cousins allude to her, among their intimate friends, a little less bitterly, but more contemptuously, as "quite mad, you know, my darling." But she sees the fruit of her work increasing year by year. Year by year she loves it more, and grows more passionately interested in the wants and sorrows of the poor sisters among whom she toils. And since this is so, nothing can prevent her from realising, even on earth, the peace and consolation of those concerning whom it is written:

"BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

ON HELPING IN THE HOUSE.

THE MANAGEMENT OF FIRES, ETC.

By DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.

ALTHOUGH the management of fires has been put first, a few words must be given to the cleaning of the grates, the washing of the tiles, and the polishing of the steel, if there be any. About the modern grate there is very little, but in the old-fashioned houses, the drawing and dining-room grates are of shining steel, the polishing of which is no inconsiderable part of a servant's work in the morning, before she arrives at the point of laying the fire. Polished steel should never be touched with anything that can scratch the surface; to preserve its

brightness it needs nothing but to be secured from moisture, and a daily rubbing with the wash-leather. Moisture, even a moist hand, should be carefully guarded against, for once the steel is rusty, it can hardly be recovered even by the most persevering work, and the steel polisher's best efforts cannot restore the smooth and even surface of the polish. The earliest indications of rust are dull spots; these should be dusted over with a little dry whiting tied up in a small muslin bag, and afterwards rubbed off with a leather. A good polish for

bright grates is made by mixing equal parts of sweet oil, turpentine, and fine emery powder. When the steel has been much neglected, it may be covered with a paste of sweet oil and fine emery powder. This paste should be as thick as cream, and should be left on to dry, and then rubbed off with a leather dipped in emery powder. If grates have to remain unattended to for any time, they should be well greased before being left, to prevent rust.

Iron grates need regular blackleading to keep them in proper condition. If in really bad

order, the best way of restoring them is to scrub them well all over with some soft soap and water and a hard brush, to take off all the dust and grease, and after this thorough cleaning, to paint them all over with Berlin black. This treatment will restore their pristine blackness, and they can be blacklead when they require it, which, however, will not be for a long time. This painting with Berlin black is an excellent treatment for bedroom grates, for the grates in summer, or for any grates that are not often used: it saves so much trouble, as they need nothing but dusting to keep them looking nice. An old-fashioned plan for these little-used grates was to blacklead them well, and then to give them a coat of copal varnish. This was kept up to a high degree of polish by an occasional rub up with the blacklead polishing brush. I always find that the appearance of the kitchen grate is an index to the character of a servant. In Canada great pains are taken with the tin tea-kettle, on account of the idea with which it is associated, viz., that the brightness of the kettle as it sings on the stove is a sure sign of a good and capable girl, and a good husband and a comfortable home are believed to be the result of care in this direction.

The close stoves or ranges, called more generally kitcheners, need far more care than the old open ranges, but they are far superior to them in cleanliness; the pots and kettles are neither burnt nor smoked, and the kitchen itself is much cleaner. There is an impression that they are more extravagant in their use of coal, as their draught is so great, and a favourite complaint of the cooks relates to their intense heating powers. This great heat will be the result of her own careless use of the dampers, and the top of the kitchener should never be allowed to become red hot. When the cooking is over the dampers may be closed, and the fire kept in till again required, by cinders or small coal.

Great improvements have been made in kitchen ranges, as well as in our household grates, within the last few years, and none seems to have been of greater value than that of the closed warm chamber underneath the grate, where it formerly used to be open to receive the constant draught of air: a large part of the heating power of the fire was used in warming up this chilled wind, and so both our heat and our coals were wasted. Now, the best made and newest grates are constructed so as to close in front, forming a warm-air chamber, where the oxygen needful for combustion can be warmed before performing its work, thus decreasing waste immensely.

People who are not fortunate enough to possess one of these modern ranges, can in a measure supply the place by having a sheet-iron front made, and most working iron-mongers will understand what is wanted if applied to. The same thing may be arranged for any grate where the proper iron ash drawer is not already supplied, or forms part of it. As a general rule the saving in coal and the increase in the warmth will quickly compensate us for the small expenditure, for in some cases, no doubt in most, the draught is so great that it blows right through the fire up the chimney, and carries the heat with it from the fire. This extreme draught is also the cause of half the dust and dirt in our houses, and we shall see the difference here assuredly very soon. We shall also be enabled to keep a *small* fire cheerful to look at, when large warming fires are not needed, but when our living rooms will certainly fall below the requisite and healthful 64° if we try to sit in them without a fire. There is a great danger in chilly rooms—and we constantly find them between April and October—and many people, who ought to know better, will let out their fires in the early part of May and go without

them till the 1st of November. This small economy will perhaps save a pound, and will cost them many others in doctors' bills and medicine. 64° Fahr. seems to be the lowest amount of heat the human body can safely do with in the living-rooms of the house; one degree less is dangerous, and two degrees more is safer and wiser. We may test these assertions for ourselves, and soon find out their truth.

With regard to the cheapest method of managing the fires in the house, we must make up our minds to the fact that the best coals are the cheapest. I learnt this fact practically some years ago from an experienced maid-servant. The extreme whiteness and abundance of the coal ash in the grate attracted my notice, and I commented on it to her. She at once said that the cause was too cheap a coal, the best coals making little ash, and that not white in colour. Poor people, she added on being questioned, never buy cheap coals—they could not afford it; nor, so far as she knew, were they ever hawked about in small quantities in the streets, or sold by the small dealers, who are generally greengrocers also. These people almost invariably sell good coals, running to at least 22s. per ton. "Who, then, burns the cheap coals?" said I at once. "Well, ma'am, it's mostly, I suppose, people with plenty of money, who think that they are a saving because they are perhaps 5s. or 6s. less a ton."

The use of coke is certainly a good method of saving coals, and also of adding to the heat given out by the fire. Coke is coal from which the gas has been extracted, and it resembles charcoal in the fact that it burns without flame, makes no smoke, and produces a clear and very hot fire. The complaints of its sulphurous smell usually arise in small houses where there is either not enough ventilation, or the chimney in which it is used has not a sufficient up-draught. But in a closed range or kitchener it is a valuable ally, and a wonderful economizer of coal. Even in our bedrooms and living-rooms, if it be broken finely and evenly mixed, there will be no cause of complaint, I think.

Small coals and coal dust should be "slacked," or sprinkled with water, in order to cake them and assist them to burn; in fact, a little water makes the fire burn fiercely, as it is quickly converted into steam, which increases heat. A large volume of water puts out fire, because it cannot be immediately converted into steam. A good deal of correspondence has been recently carried on by some of the newspapers on the subject of fire-balls, which are still made and used in Wales, and used to be made by the poorer classes when coal was dearer. They are a mixture of equal parts of sand, clay, and small coal-dust. These are well mixed, wetted with water, and rolled into balls with the hands; then they are left to dry. Of course one lot of them must be prepared before the last lot is used up. These fire-balls are placed on the top of a clear fire, and will soon get red hot, and will give out an intense heat. The recent coal strike brought out much old-fashioned experience in this direction. Our modern substitute for the fire-balls seems to be in the square bricks or briquettes, which are made of coal-dust and some kind of petroleum. They are in two sizes, and are found useful in keeping in a fire, and I think when used with coal they add to the heat, and prove economical as well. They must not be broken up until they are half burnt at least, and then care must be taken to prevent their falling into dust. I did not find them very successful in the kitchener, but they certainly do keep in a fire in the afternoons when no cooking is going on, though it is best not to try them when you want a hot fire. I have been told that they are invaluable for keeping up a fire all night, requiring only to

be put on when the fire is good in the evening so that they may become thoroughly ignited.

It always seems a great pity to me that the American system of a hall stove cannot be adopted for England. In many of the small American and Canadian houses this central fire heats the house, no other fires being needed in the drawing or dining-rooms, nor in the bedrooms during the day, the heat being spread by the use of drums to collect the heat on the upper storeys. The stoves used are high, round, and drum-like; they burn hard coal or anthracite, as well as coke, and require attention twice in the twenty-four hours; there is an inner lining of fire-brick, which makes them safe, and the heat they give out is very great. The difficulty in England lies, first, with the chimneys; for the American system of stove-pipe holes does not obtain here, and if your house is one of a row, the wall where you would require a hole for your stove-pipe is your next door neighbour's dining-room; and though there is a chimney, I fancy the permission to make a hole on your side would be obtained with extreme difficulty. The next trouble is, I am told, with the fire insurance offices. This I do not understand the nature of; as many of them have branches in America, they must be quite used to the system there. I am quite convinced that one of the keys to economy in coal, increase of warmth, and decrease of smoke production, lies in the adoption of the hall stove in our houses. Our personal health would be improved and our freedom from constant colds and coughs might be almost insured.

There is a strange difference in the ways of laying a fire, and there is unquestionably a right and a wrong way to do it. Some people will lay it so cleverly that it seems sure to burn, while others will do it so that it has to be coaxed and petted, and sometimes after all to be laid all over again. The secret lies in the arrangement of the fire, and in the air or oxygen which must pass through the structure without any obstruction. Therefore, the fire must be laid in a certain order, but lightly and loosely; for if packed tightly together our object will be defeated.

The first process in lighting a fire is to clear out the grate, taking out the ashes and cinders, and if we have it, passing them through the cinder-sifter; then we take the brush and sweep as far up the chimney as we can reach, so as to bring down all the lodgments of soot. This will in many cases prevent the chimneys taking fire, and will also prevent the falling of soot, which is so annoying and so destructive to our furniture and houses. It is not always needful to blacklead the grate, but it should always be rubbed with the polishing brush.

Everyone who has to handle coals or clean grates should keep a pair of old gloves close at hand to use, for the fire must be laid with the hands, and this will spoil the appearance of them if we have no gloves. I consider the hands of all servants are a very important part, and they should always be thought of, and guarded as carefully as their duties will allow.

The second process in lighting a fire is to lay a foundation of a few cinders; then tear some paper into pieces and crumple these up in your hands like balls, and lay them on the cinders; then take your sticks and lay them in the shape of a wheel, with a space between each stick, with one end of each stick resting on the middle bar of your grate, the other end of course on your paper in the grate. The sticks should be dry; and it is very easy to dry them on the iron grating over the kitchen range, but in no case should they be placed in the kitchen oven, or in any position where they might *cause* a fire. Now lay some small pieces of coal, the size of a turkey's egg, or what I have heard people call "nubbly" bits, on the top of the wood, and lastly, some large bits, and then you are ready to light your fire,

by setting fire in several places to the paper. Mind that all your fire is completely laid before you proceed to light it; do not set fire to the wood before the coals are half laid on and expect it to burn successfully. No person should at any time be permitted to put on coal from the scuttle, pouring it on like so much water. This habit is as fatal to true economy as it is to the fire.

The other way of laying the fire is what may be called upside down, or lighting it at the top. In this case a piece of paper is cut to the size of the bottom of the grate so as to cover the bars and stop the up-draught, and then the large pieces of coal, the small pieces, the wood, the paper, and lastly the cinders. This fashion is said to ensure perfect combustion, or nearly so, of the fuel. Some years ago there was a Dr. Arnott, who invented a stove

which was supposed to ensure this; as I suppose you know that if combustion were perfect there would not be either smoke or soot, and in an ordinary way five-sixths, or perhaps more, of our heat is blown away up the chimney, so if in the dining-room grate forty pounds of coal are consumed in twelve hours, you can easily calculate and find out exactly how much of it benefits you, and how much in the form of smoke makes other people miserable.

This method of fire-making is, I believe, excellent where the chimney is a smoky one, but I am not sure it is a very exhilarating fire, as of course it smoulders, and does not blaze. I remember to have seen old-fashioned servants make up a fire by making first a hole at the back of the fire, then putting the cinders from under the grate in the hole, and lastly the fresh coal was put on the top. This was done of

course to ensure the burning up of the cinders, though I did not know the reason at the time.

Many of these older plans for economical fires are now carried out in our newest grates, but, alas! we are a long way from a perfect fire or a perfect system, as the quantity of wasted fuel in the shape of smoke shows us.

The proper allowance of wood for lighting is one bundle of wood for three fires. Some maids, however, cannot light a fire with a whole bundle, while one of my many capable instructresses used to boast of her prowess in lighting a fire with six sticks. A somewhat recent experience causes me to add a caution against permitting anyone in your house to use kerosene or paraffin oils to help in the fire-lighting. It is a very dangerous practice, and the culprits are usually very sly and secretive about this bad habit.



SACKCLOTH AND ASHES.

By RUTH LAMB, Author of "One Little Vein of Dross," "Work, Wait, Win," etc.

CHAPTER XXII.



COUNTRY eyes dearly love to gaze on "fine feathers." When Ida Ewbank came to Ilford Park as the friend and guest of Aileen Clinton, the beauty and variety of

her costumes exercised the eyes and minds of the village folk, and caused quite a pleasant excitement amongst them. Not that the city girl's garments were of a showy kind, but the least cultured taste could discern that the materials were of wondrous quality, beautiful to look upon, and perfectly suited to the wearer.

Miss Ewbank could not have been happy in any place without the consciousness that she and her surroundings were objects of attention and admiration. It delighted her to think that her movements were furtively watched by shamefaced cottagers, who hid behind their lattices to count her changes of costume, and think how rich she who wore them must be to afford so many.

She pictured the village dressmaker endeavouring, in her humble fashion, to imitate the simplest of these dresses, and smiled as she thought how hopeless would be the attempt. Was not the apparent simplicity of her favourite walking dress a result of highest art, according to a fashionable *modiste*?

"Your ears must tingle, Ida," said Aileen, as the girls returned from a first walk through the village. "Were I inclined to be jealous, I might well be so now; for I am sure everybody had eyes for no one but the 'stranger young lady,' and at this moment you are the

subject of cottage gossip all over Ilford."

"All new comers are," said Parry Clinton, who had accompanied the girls.

"Only more so, in Ida's case," said Aileen. "Everybody is furtively stared at, and then talked about, but everybody does not furnish the same food for admiring eyes as she does."

"Ilford folk will doubtless look at the stranger for a moment, but their eyes and tongues will be speedily diverted to their regular channel. Aileen is the reigning sovereign; I, the foreign visitor, to be stared at and then forgotten."

Ida did not wait for a reply, but ran lightly upstairs to prepare for luncheon.

"Miss Ewbank's self-estimate is more correct than she believes it to be," said Parry, as he looked admiringly at his cousin's face, all aglow with pleasure at finding herself once more at home, and amongst the poor neighbours towards whom her thoughts had wandered lovingly during her stay at Millcaster. "Miss Ewbank will be noticed, admired, talked about," continued Parry. "There will be endless speculations as to the cost of her attire, and wonder as to what she can want with so many gowns. Then your village friends will decide that the 'stranger Miss' does not know what to do with all her money. Next, there will be comparisons, and the gossips will say that she might learn a lesson from someone who shall be nameless. Further, that the latter looks better in a cotton frock than any other human being could possibly do in silk and decked with diamonds. Between ourselves, Aileen, I am of the same opinion."

The speaker gave a rapid glance round to assure himself that no third person was within hearing, then caught his cousin's hand and held it in a firm, detaining clasp as she was about to leave him without a word. She knew

that the covert compliment was intended for her. There was no mistaking Philip's look or tone, but the admiring glances and flattering words gave Aileen no pleasure. They only foreboded the recurrence of an old trouble, which she hoped was ended, and her face bore a pained expression as she strove to withdraw her hand, and to follow Ida upstairs.

"Aileen, you must listen to me," pleaded Parry. "You cannot imagine how long the time of your absence has seemed to me. Your village friends, for whom you are always thinking and caring, are glad to welcome you back. Think what I must be. Yet I doubt if you give your cousin as large a place in your heart and memory as the poorest cottager in Ilford claims as a right."

"I give you a cousin's place, Parry," said Aileen firmly. "I can give no more."

"Do not say that, dear. I want you to give me more and better—the first and dearest place in your true, warm heart, and to take mine in exchange. I know I am not worthy of you, Aileen. Who could be? But if you will be my wife you shall mould me as you will. With you by my side as a life partner, I should become like you, for your lightest wish would be law to me."

"It can never be, Parry," said Aileen. "You call me 'true.' It is because I strive to deserve the character that I can give you no other answer. I trusted you never to introduce the subject again. I am grieved to give you pain, but it is not my fault. When you last spoke, I told you my answer must be considered final."

"Who that truly loves can be contented to give up hope at the first bidding?" said Parry, still retaining her hand.

"Then believe me when I repeat my former words. I cannot change. Be content with what I can give, and ask no more."