

Receipts, &c.

HOUSE CLEANING.

WASHINGTON IRVING associated inseparably the charming month of May with house cleaning, by his graphic description of the busy, bustling turmoil of the day in the city of New York; that being the general time for tenants to change homes, and consequently the most general time for house cleaning.

When you have house cleaning on hand, and have not help enough to do it without interrupting the regular work of your family, it is well to make every arrangement so as to go at it "with a will," as sailors say. To save yourself from a waste of sympathy with the woful feelings a man's visage always indicates on such occasions, persuade your husband to dine out for a few days, so that your undivided attention may be given to your work; then arm and equip your whole available forces with buckets, brooms, and brushes, and let the early dawn and dewy eve see the work of purification going on. "The harder the storm, the sooner it will be over," is a good saying then.

Where there is a supernumerary servant in a family, who is competent and reliable, we deem it a better plan to let her take a room at a time leisurely, so that you may never know the ludicrous trouble masculine humor has so revelled in depicting. But whatever method you may adopt, be sure that you have everything on hand that you need—soap, sand, brushes, glue, paint, tacks, etc.

When ready for action, have your pictures, mantel ornaments—in short, all easily moved articles, taken to a room, where a careful hand may put them in perfect condition, while the rooms are undergoing a similar beneficial process. Having removed the carpets, sweep the rooms thoroughly. Clean and cover up perfectly all furniture too heavy for removal. Clean out and arrange the closets; then, with a clean long-handled straw broom, sweep the ceilings and also the walls perfectly free from dust. If the ceilings are to be whitened, let that be done next; then proceed to clean the windows and woodwork generally. If the floors have no grease on them they need but be washed perfectly clean, giving particular attention to any part the carpet does not cover. The room is now ready for the carpet again, provided there is no papering or painting to be done. Carpets should be well and straightly stretched, and then secured with tacks or hooks. Every house should be supplied with a carpet stretcher, which is furnished with teeth like a saw; these fasten in the edge of the carpet, and enable one to push and hold the carpet to its place until tacked.

As the same general directions apply in cleaning from cellar to garret, we subjoin a few practical hints on the various processes employed in the different branches of this dreaded but indispensable work, and we cannot close our general remarks without hinting that every housekeeper who will daily look over the parts of her house *used every day*, and once a week over *all* parts of her establishment, requiring all things to be kept clean and in place, will find general house-cleanings become comparatively a light work. We see no reason for waiting for all the windows, or curtains, or blankets, or brasses about a house to get dirty before any are cleansed. A set of curtains or blankets are scarcely felt when added to a week's washing, whereas a general washing of such articles is an herculean labor. Neither is it necessary to wait until the carpets are all taken up to clean the windows, mantel, presses, etc., of any much used or abused room. Spread a sound piece of

stout oil-cloth on which to set your buckets, brushes, etc., and a neat person may clean paper and paint, if necessary, without damage to the best carpet. But be very sure of the care and skill of the person you intrust such a work to.

SCOURING.—This process is almost superseded by the use of paint on the woodwork of our houses, floors of halls and kitchens, and outsides of most domestic utensils. Nevertheless, scouring is left to test our industry and love of neatness, and we feel a kind of reverent admiration for the housekeeper who, with large families and small houses, all guiltless of paint or carpets, kept the very floors clean enough to have taken a meal from without a wry face. But to the business. Look over the vessel or floor to be scoured, and over any grease spots rub a mixture of soap and sand (if the spots are in soft wood or look obstinate, strong soft soap is better). Rub these with a stout floor-cloth or scrub-broom, well. Then sprinkle clean river sand, or finely-pulverized sandstone, over the floor, pour on enough hot soapsuds, and scrub perseveringly until grease marks and dirt are eradicated. Then continue to rinse your floor with clean water until the water is colorless. You may be sure your work is well done then, and you may proceed to dry the floor with a clean mop or clean floor-cloth. Small scrub-brushes, made of splits of tough wood, are best for vessels and the like, and old, soft, coarse linen the best floor cloths.

CLEANING WINDOWS.—If the sash are to be cleaned, it is done with a small brush or soft cloth, as you would any other varnished or painted wood. If you wish to clean the glass by washing in water, have a tub of moderate soapsuds and another of clean water beside you; wash the window first in the suds, and then rinse thoroughly in the pure water; set the windows away to drain and dry without wiping. When dry, rub thoroughly with soft paper, and your window will be faultless. If there are any spots of paint or putty on the glass, put strong soft soap, or soda wet into paste, for a few minutes, to remove it. A mixture of whiskey and water will cleanse glass nicely. Whiting spread on the glass wet, and rubbed off when dry, will also clean it well, and is easily practised when you do not wish to take the sash out.

CLEANING PAINT.—Some hand brushes—at least a small stiff one that will get into corners and cracks—some soft cloths, and soft towels to dry with, and a couple of buckets, are the necessities for the business. White paint may be best cleaned with lukewarm water, having a teacup of whiting mixed in a bucket of water. Colored paint should be cleaned with lukewarm suds, made of mild hard soap. In both cases the work should be done briskly, rinsing in pure lukewarm water immediately after the suds, and drying quickly. Strong soap, soda, or any alkali, cleanses but injures the paint. There are times when this work may be done with great ease and rapidity, when you will find that fly-specks and all soils will disappear like magic before your hands. Rainy days are very convenient for such purposes. The work is more easily done, and you are not likely to be interrupted by company. Of course you have step-ladders, tables, oil-cloth to lay down during the operation, strips of carpet for coming and going over, and your own watchful eye to oversee all.

WHITEWASHING.—The wholesomeness of dwellings and out-houses is also much promoted by their being frequently lime or whitewashed. Whitewash is applied with a broad, flat brush, working in a uniform direction, up and down the wall. Should the surface have been previously whitewashed, it is requisite first to remove the dirt by washing it, with a

brush and abundance of clean water. Limewash is prepared by placing some freshly-burned quicklime in a pail, and pouring on sufficient water to cover it; if the lime is fresh, great heat is given out, and the liquid boils; boiled oil (a preparation of linseed oil, sold by all oilmen) should then be immediately added, in the proportion of a pint to a gallon of wash. The whole should then be thinned with water to the required consistency, and applied with a brush. Care should be taken not to leave the brush in the lime-wash for any length of time, as it destroys the bristles.

CAKES OF FINE MEAL.

THE February number of the LADY'S BOOK, in its department of Receipts, etc., has an instructive article on "Cooking with the Ancients," in which reference is made to the three angels for whom Sarah made "cakes of fine meal." (*Genesis xviii. 6.*) Now, as meal is defined by Webster as "ground maize, called Indian meal, or *cornmeal*," is it to be understood that Sarah made cakes from *cornmeal*? I am quite willing it should be, for common as the article may be thought by some, it is nevertheless a healthy, and, when rightly made, a most excellent bread. The meal, as converted into cakes at the Newport Aquidneck House, will prove this just as conclusively as did Queen Victoria's cakes of Indian meal. It will be recollected that during the Irish famine, when ship loads of our good rich corn were sent to their relief, the people disliked the new food. That this dislike arose from ignorance of its true qualities was proved by the change in popular taste, when it was publicly announced that the Queen had cakes of *cornmeal* served up for her breakfast. Prince Albert probably arranged this at the "command of her majesty;" for he was a plain, good, common sense man; as much so as the Prince William who makes "cakes of fine meal" the nutritious luxury of the Newport Aquidneck House, which, by the way, is the gem house of the island.

But has the fine, clear, peculiar air of Newport anything to do with the superiority of this particular cake? I have sought in vain for the luxury in Philadelphia, and so have others. A volume has just been issued by a gentleman of Boston, Mr. Geo. G. Channing, who passed his youthful days in Newport, and whose mother was the daughter of William Ellery, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. In his "Early Recollections of Newport," he notices the *cornmeal* cakes in some passages which may be of real service to the immense multitude of mothers who are readers of the LADY'S BOOK. He says: "I was a sickly child, thin and pale. My mother's mind was made up that I should live." One of this mother's reliances was on "cakes of fine meal;" they, and daily dipping the thin, pale child in cold water, made a strong, healthy man of him. The author of this pleasant volume says:—

"I was fed entirely upon bread and milk, and whitepot (*whitpot*). This was strictly a Rhode Island dish, and sometimes called the 'poor man's custard.' It was compounded of the best white Indian meal, pure new milk, with enough molasses to give it a yellow tinge. After leaving my native home I made repeated efforts to obtain a taste of this favorite dish. I procured the same meal, but always failed. If I could have taken with me a 'Newport cook,' all would have gone well. The 'journey cake'—vulgarly called *Johnny cake*—how can I sufficiently extol it? Its manufacture is a lost art. No breakfast could compare with it for tastefulness and nourishment. By this method of dieting, if such it could be called, * * * I thrived until my bones began to grow, and were soon covered with abundant flesh of uncommon whiteness and purity. From being a miserable looking boy I became a vigorous youth, and an athlete of no mean pretension.

Thanks to a good Providence, and to maternal tenderness for a long life of almost uninterrupted health."

The author of this volume, the son of such a mother, the grandson of that pure patriot whose name graces our noble Declaration of Independence, and the friend of Washington, bears such testimony to the great virtues of the "cakes of fine (corn) meal that I hope you will let the LADY'S BOOK mothers know how they may make strong men from weakly babies, and at the same time help to bring down wheat flour from eighteen dollars a barrel. Approximating, as your issue does, to a million of readers every month, its influence for good may be so vast in improving and cheapening the daily food for the people, that I will take some pains to procure for the LADY'S BOOK the receipt for making cakes of fine meal, from the

AQUIDNECK.

MISCELLANEOUS COOKING.

Mutton Cutlet Patties.—Trim your cutlets neatly, and remove all the fat; set them in melted butter, lukewarm, with pepper and salt; dip each into beaten yolks of eggs, and then in bread-crumbs; do this twice to make as many crumbs adhere to the cutlets as possible; then broil them on a gridiron over a quick, clear fire for ten minutes; dress them on your dish in a crown, and serve them either plain or with a nice sauce.

Brisket of Beef Stuffed.—A piece weighing eight pounds requires about five or six hours to boil. Make a dressing of bread-crumbs, pepper, salt, sweet herbs, a little mace, and one onion chopped fine and mixed with an egg. Put the dressing between the fat and the lean of the beef, and sew it up tight; flour the cloth, pin the beef up very tight in it, and boil it five or six hours. When it is done, take the cloth off, and press it until it is cold. This is to be cut in thin slices and eaten cold.

Spiced Veal.—Take some of the thick part of a loin of veal; cut it in small pieces, and pour over as much hot spiced vinegar as will cover it. To half a pint of vinegar put a teaspoonful of allspice, a very little mace, salt, and Cayenne pepper to the taste.

Potatoes Fried with Batter.—Nicely wash and pare some floury potatoes; cut each into any form you fancy, such as a large lozenge, etc., then thinly slice them so that the pieces may be of a uniform shape; dip them into either a sweet or savory batter, fry them in plenty of butter, and serve them quite hot, with either salt or pounded loaf-sugar strewn upon them.

To Dress Kidneys.—Cut them through the centre; take out the core; pull the kernels apart; put them into the saucpan without any water, and set them on the fire where they may get hot, not boil; in half an hour put the kidneys into cold water, wash them clean, and put them back into the saucpan, with just enough water to cover them; boil them one hour, then take them up; clean off the fat and skin; put into the frying-pan some butter, pepper, and salt; dredge in a little flour, half a pint of hot water, and the kidneys; let them simmer twenty minutes; stir them often; do not let them fry, because it hardens them. This is a very nice dish for breakfast.

Beef Stewed with Onions.—Cut some tender beef in small pieces, and season it with pepper and salt, slice some onions and add to it, with water enough in the stewpan to make a gravy; let it stew slowly till the beef is thoroughly done, then add some pieces of butter rolled in flour to make a rich gravy. Cold beef may be done in the same way, only the onions must be stewed first and the meat added. If the water should stew away too much, put in a little more.