About the House

HOME COOKING.

White Strawberry Pudding. A pudding made with corn starch can be molded in oval form, lined with lady fingers. When turned out, garnish it prettily with whole strawberries.

Steak and Bananas.—Surround the steak, when broiled, with baked bananas in their jackets. With a little salt sprinkle part, after removing one strip. Bake the bananas fifteen minutes.

Meat Balls.—Use only water, salt, and pepper. Add about two cups of water to one pound of meat. Beat well and drop from a spoon into hot fat. Tender, and fine grained balls and a larger amount for less money will result.

Apple Sauce Cake.—One and one-half cups of apple sauce, one and one-half cups sugar, one-half cup of chopped raisins, one teaspoonful of cinnamon, one teaspoonful of cloves.

Peach Surprise.—Boil together one quart of water and two cups of sugar. When cool, add juice of one lemon and one quart of peaches sliced thin. Freeze till mushy, then add the well beaten whites of three eggs and freeze till stiff.

Japanese Fritters.—Beat two eggs, add one-fourth of a teaspoonful of salt, one pint of sweet milk, and a teaspoonful of vanilla. Cut stale bread into strips, four by two inches in size, soak well in the custard, roll in dry bread crumbs, and fry in deep hot lard. When nicely browned drain and serve with maple syrup or powdered sugar.

To Prepare Pineapples.—Remove the top and cut the pineapple lengthwise in quarters; remove the core and with a sharp pointed knife slash lengthwise and across each quarter several times to form dice which can then be picked from the skin with a fork. This is quicker and easier than to pare the fruit and cut out eyes, and less wasteful.

Fruit Puffs.—One pint flour, two teaspoons baking powder, pinch salt, two tablespoons sugar, one egg, sweet milk to make batter that will drop from the spoon. Butter five cups and put in each a spoonful of batter, then some fresh sliced fruit or preserves. Then more batter and leave room at top of cup to rise. Steam twenty-five minutes and serve with sweetened cream.

Nut Loaf.—Make a cream sauce by melting two tablespoons of butter, adding three tablespoonfuls flour and two cupfuls of milk. Mix one large cup nut meats broken small, with one cup bread crumbs, moistened with one well beaten egg. Into this stir the cream sauce, season to taste, make into loaf, and bake. More nourishing than meat and cheaper. Try it in the warm weather.

Strawberry Cake.—Beat one tablespoon of butter with one cup of sugar until creamy; add three well beaten eggs, one-half cup milk or water and sift together two and one-half cups flour and two teaspoons baking powder; add to first and beat hard. Bake in two layers. When done and cool spread each layer with soft boiled icing and cover icing thickly with whole ripe berries, pressing in icing; sprinkle with sugar. A dainty dessert eaten cold.

Uncooked Preserves.—Take any fruit and put into a deep dish. Pour boiling water over to cover them; wrap the basin with a thickly folded towel and let it remain until the water is nearly cold; take them out one by one and rub the skins off with a coarse towel; put them into a jar, layer by layer, covering each one thickly and separately with granulated sugar, refined, pounded, and sifted, until the jar is filled. Close and seal it and set in a cool, dark place.

Chautauqua Pudding.—Yolks of two eggs, one-half cup of warm water, one-half cup of molasses, one cup of chopped raisins, one level spoon of baking soda, one and three-quarters cups of flour, as you want the batter thin; steam three hours. Sauce for same—Cream together one cup of brown sugar, two tablespoons of butter. When real creamy beat the yhites of the two eggs and add to the butter and sugar, then add two tablespoons of hot water; season with vanilla.

To Cook Steak.—Round steak can be made delicious if cooked in the proper way. Have it cut about an inch thick; score it lightly on both sides, flour well, fry in a moderate amount of bacon fat and butter. When well browned on both sides pour in enough hot water just to cover. Cover tightly and cook gently twenty to thirty minutes. Remove to hot platter and add more flour to gravy; thin with cold milk or water and boil up. Served with steaming hot potatoes or boiled rice, round steak cooked in this way makes an appetizing as well as economical dinner.

USEFUL HINTS.

When baking potatoes cut a little from each end and they will bake much quicker.

Keep your celery roots and dry them; they are excellent for seasoning soups and sauces.

When canning cherries save the extra juice and bottle it as you would grape juice. It is a most refreshing drink.

When beetles are on rose bushes put a pint of kerosene in a pan and hold under them and they will drop off into the pan.

To keep skirts in good shape, fold evenly at the belt several times, put a large safety pin through this, and hang it up by safety pin on a hook in the closet.

To keep furs from moths hang furs on the line for several days and beat them well. Put them in an unbleached muslin bag, tied tightly at top. Moths never will enter.

A serviceable house skirt is of dark blue denim, made in a plain, simple way. It is easily washed and will outwear all other kinds of goods. It sells at 12½ or 15 cents per yard.

A good way to hold a skirt in place without using pins is to take a piece of elastic tape long enough to fit around the waist snugly. Sew on a hook and eye and put on over your waist before putting on your skirt. In this way you can blouse your waist as much as desired and there is no danger of tearing it.

The bright light necessary in a room in summer is conducive to mosquitoes. To kill these pests on a high ceiling take the handle of a broom and nail on the top a tin box lid. Fill quarter full of kerosene. Whenever a mosquito is perched on the wall raise this machine and at the first whiff he drops dead from the wall.

Have screens made to fit the window on the outside of the window frame, put hinges on the right side, top and bottom same as a door, and two little bolts on the left side at the top and bottom to keep firmly in place. When dusty the screens can be swung out and brushed, and the windows can be opened from the top or bottom. In the winter the bolts may be removed and the screens put away for the following year.

ECONOMY IN HOUSEWORK.

If one woman must do all the housework let the amount of work be reduced until one can do it justly. Omit ironing stockings, underwear, sheets, towels, and even pillow cases. Change the shoes during the day. Take a few minutes' rest at noon. Adjust your work table to your height; if you are short have an inch sawed off the table legs. Have as many things within sight and reach as you can. A shelf above the table, with books beneath, makes a good substitute for a cabinet. Use fresh fruits instead of elaborate desserts.

Plan every day's work beforehand. Keep pencil and memorandum slips on sewing machine and kitchen shelf. Take a tray when going down cellar and bring all you need at once.

Put threaded needles in each pin cushion and do the mending when you discover the need of it.

Wear short, light-weight skirts while working. If you feel a discomfort of any sort remove the cause at once, if possible. Work, but don't waste energy.

PLAGUE SWEPT INDIA.

In Ten Years There Have Been 4,411,212 Deaths.

During the first three and a half months of 1907 the deaths from the plague in India totalled 494,000, the heaviest monthly mortality yet reported during the epidemic. According to the Indian World this would appear to show that the present year will exhibit a record number of deaths.

The plague records for the ten years October, 1896, to December, 1906, show that there was a large annual increase from 1901 to 1904, the deaths numbering 274,000 in 1901, 577,000 in 1902, 557,000 in 1903 and 1,022,000 in 1904, the worst year in ten years.

There was a small decrease in 1905, the deaths falling to 951,000, and a large decrease in 1906, when there were only 332,000. The total deaths for the whole ten years numbered 4,411,212. The improvement which was shown in the two years 1905 and 1906 has not, unfortunately been maintained.

From the first appearance of the disease up to the year 1901 the mortality was greatest in the Bombay presidency, but from 1902 onward, with one exception, the worst area has been the Punjab, and in 1905 the deaths in the latter province alone numbered 364,625.

Judkins—"I learn through your agent that you have bought the properties on either side of your residence and got them dirt cheap. How did you manage it?" Foxley—"Easy enough. My wife is an elocutionist, my daughter plays the piano, George plays a cornet, I play the violin, Bob plays a banjo, Charlie rattles the bones, and Johnny has a drum."

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"CUCKOO!"

"These trees will have to come down!" The breeze that gently shook the branches of the doomed oaks was reflected in the quiver that passed over Spencer Hay's face as he heard the words, but he answered quietly:

"Really- Any particular reason?"

The girl swung round on her heel, and faced him, anger imprinted on every feature of her pretty face.

"My reasons do not concern you. You have only to see that my orders are carried out."

"Thank you for reminding me of my position. It was wrong of me to forget. Any more orders?"

"Yes. I have thought of another improvement. That horrid lake facing the west wing gives me the dismals. It must be filled up."

Despite his self-control, Hay groaned.

"You cannot persist in such madness!" he cried. "You will ruin Brierly, stick and stone. Dear old Brierly! You are murdering the growth of hundreds of years, and the work of better people than you or I."

Evelyn's face flushed.

"Please don't put me to the unpleasant task of again reminding you of your place," she said, as she stalked haughtily away.

Hay looked after the retreating figure of the autocrat with anger and scorn clouding his brow. Where another eye would have seen a charming picture of a graceful girl whose hair caught the sun, he saw only the hated person of a usurper.

But a short time ago he had considered himself the natural heir of the fine old house and broad acres that he loved so well, and the shock of finding himself shot out of that position had embittered his whole outlook on her life; for, at his uncle's death, an unknown cousin—a London actress in light comedy—had profited by the will, and, cuckoo-like, had turned him out of his nest.

After the girl had arrived from town to inspect her property, he was ready to turn out immediately to seek a position in some office. His heart was heavy at the prospect, and when Evelyn, securely chaperoned by an aunt, had offered him the post of agent, he gratefully accepted the chance. But every day of the past week had brought him fresh pain and added humiliation at his powerless position. Change was the order of the day, and at every change the ominous incivility of the servants and the insolence of the villagers had inflamed Evelyn to crush the hostile feeling by taking a strong line. The chief sufferer in this course of action was Hay.

But in spite of his depression, even his heart was light within him when, upon waking the next morning, the soft light that filtered in through his windows from a blue, cloud-dappled sky, proclaimed a perfect hunting-day. Feeling that life still held compensations, he whistled cheerfully as he strolled into the dining-room resplendent in hunting pink. Then he started violently, for, to his astonishment, his cousin stood by the window dressed in a riding-habit.

"Are you ready to take me to the Meet?" she asked.

His first feeling was one of admiration as he looked at the graceful figure and the auburn hair that rippled from under the high silk hat. Then he frowned.

"Your hair will never keep up like that," he said.

Evelyn's brows arched.

"Really? More interference! And on a question of hairpins this time. I should have thought that I was entitled to be a better judge of a toilette; but—Well? Why are you staring? Another question?"

"Only one. Can you ride?"

"I've tried once or twice."

Hay looked at her with horror. In his excitement he forgot their quarrel of the previous day.

"Once or twice!" he exclaimed. "Oh, my dear girl, do be reasonable. Riding and hunting are totally different things. You ought to be thoroughly proficient before you attempt to attend a Meet. I—I beg you to give up this idea. Look!" He waved his hand at the portraits that hung round the walls. "Every one of these past ladies of Brierley rode straight to hounds—keen sports-women all. You are Mistress of Brierley now, and for their sakes, not for mine, don't disgrace them!"

The reference to the painted ladies was unlucky, for ever since her arrival Evelyn had experienced the pang of being an outsider. She turned on Hay in a fury.

"How dare you dictate to me?" she cried. "I'm as good a sportswoman as any of those dead and gone stick-in-the-muds. When I drove a motor through the Park, with practically no knowledge, all London said it was sporting, and I have not come to the country to sing small. All my friends will die of envy when I tell of my first run with the hounds."

Hay bit his lip, and his face was pale as he answered:

"Come on, then, and make yourself the laughing-stock of the district!"

Despite the freshness of the morning breeze, and the green and brown of the country, the ride was anything but pleasant. Hay's thoughts hovered round the approaching ordeal of the Meet, and when at last they reached Calverley Cross, and he turned to Evelyn, his face was hard and unfriendly.

The girl tried to laugh, although she was sorely conscious of her aching frame.

"Well, here we are," she said. "You've been a cheerful companion. Mercy, what a crowd! Tell me, how do I look?"

No admiration flickered in Hay's face this time.

"Your hat's crooked," he said shortly. "No; better not touch it. There's a strand of hair loose already, and you'll make bad worse."

In less than five minutes every member of the Meet was acquainted with the fact that Evelyn was the rawest tyro that ever sat a horse. She was unable to control her mount, so collided with everyone else, and twice she blundered into the hounds, to the visible fury of the huntsman. Hay felt the disgrace keenly, and even Evelyn's ears burned as she heard whispered comments and stifled laughter. When at last she found herself jogging solemnly after the others down a muddy lane she was only conscious of a desperate longing to retrieve her position.

Her chance came only too soon. The "Viewhallo" sent all the field suddenly charging heavily forward in pursuit, and she followed with the rest. Her hat blew off, and her hair streamed down, but she shut her eyes and put her horse at the nearest fence. The next minute she received a fearful shock and opened her eyes to find herself grovelling on a ploughed field. She wiped the mud away from her face and tried to screw up her hair. While she was thus occupied a hand was laid on her shoulder, and she saw Hay bending over her.

"You come back now," he said firmly. "You have made enough of an exhibition for one day."

In spite of her entreaties he dragged her away. Giving orders for the horses to be led back, he hired a trap at the nearest inn and they drove home in silence.

As they reached the gates, Evelyn suddenly spoke, rapidly, and with a quiver in her voice.

"I know I'm making a horrible failure of it," she said. "The people here hate me, and despise me for a mushroom. But I'll make them like me. In London I am the idol of the gallery as well as the stalls. I will have my friends down from town to-morrow and give the villagers the best entertainment they ever had in their lives. No bun-fight affair. They shall see all the music-hall stars. They'll soon change their tune!"

Hay shook his head.

"You won't win the hearts of the North-country people that way. When they know you, they will like you—if they mean to. I will give no more advice; but it will end badly."

All that night Hay dreamed of Evelyn. Strangely enough, the humiliating experience, while it angered him at the time, had revealed the solid foundation of grit and pluck on which her character was formed. He felt he had never liked her so well.

"She is a little fool," he reflected; "but she has the makings of a fine sportswoman somewhere."

It was in this softer frame of mind that he came home to dinner next day, after a round of visiting the neighboring farms. To his amazement he found the sweeping lawn that lay in front of the house scored and rutted with muddy welts. As he gazed, Higgins, the head-gardener, approached.

"Look at it, sir!" he cried, his rugged face working. "Look what they've done to my lawn, wot I've cut and mowed since I was a lad, and wot I've made others do since! That's the work of them baggages from Lunnon. They've been playing 'ockey, or summat. They've been cutting my flowers, too. I've give notice, though, after all these years—"

The man's voice broke, and Hay dashed into the house, his heart burning. In the hall the butler met him.

"Such goings-on, sir!" he said wearily. "Yes; that's part of it!" He pointed to a smashed marble bust of Apollo. "To think we should live to see such things here. We can't stand it no more. We're all going!"

Hay pressed his palm.

"So am I, Matthews."

He pushed open the dining-room door, and stood for a minute regarding the scene. In choosing her friends Evelyn had chosen badly, for in her desperate haste to secure the flower and froth of her profession she had chosen the scum. Hay gazed with horror at the coarse faces, flushed with wine, that stared at him insolently as he approached Evelyn.

"I've come to resign my position of agent," he said quietly.

The girl gave him a swift pleading glance, but her answer was impudent.

"So you're on strike, like the other servants! Consider yourself dismissed!"

A roar of laughter followed Hay as he left the room, while the pictured eyes on the walls looked down sorrowfully at his ejection from the home of his ancestors.

For how long he paced the park outside he never knew. The moon climbed higher and higher in the dark sky, but he tramped blindly on. Suddenly he felt a light touch on his arm. Evelyn stood by him with alarm in her eyes.

"Oh, do come and turn those people away!" she cried. "Their motors are waiting to take them back; but they won't go, and the servants won't listen to me."

Without a word they returned to the house. Surely its walls had never witnessed such a sight before as the revels of Evelyn's quodam friends, who, delighted with their new quarters, intended making a night of it.

Hay raised his voice.

"Clear out, everyone of you!" he said authoritatively. "I give you just five minutes."

The tone of his voice was compelling. In spite of a few murmured protests, in less than the allotted time the last guest had slunk away. Then Evelyn turned to Hay, with tears in her eyes.

"In spite of everything you are still master here," she said.

Her words were truer than she guessed, for next day Hay received the official news from his solicitor, who had just returned from Russia. A blunder had been made in his absence, and Evelyn, no longer mistress of Brierley, had been living in a fool's paradise.

As Hay stood at the porch the following morning, Evelyn came down the steps, wrapped in a travelling cloak.

"Where are you going?" he asked in surprise.

"Back to London, and drudgery, and my old, ugly life! I'm turned out, and quite right, too!" Her eyes were wet as he held up a warning finger. "Listen!" she cried.

On the clear air came the faint notes of a bird's call—"Cuckoo, cuckoo!"

But Hay suddenly seized the girl's hands in his.

"No; stay, dear," he said; "there's room in the nest for two."—London Answers.

FLORAL VAGARIES.

(By a Banker).

Of all the multitudinous diversities of form, colour, and structure of that gay and beautiful ornature with which Nature has so lavishly adorned our earth—the floral world—that strange genus, some deriving their nutriment from the boughs and limbs of trees, some from the earth, and some even from the air—the orchids, presents a greater variety of type and form than perhaps any other order. And, while some in this great family of several thousand species are extremely beautiful and attractive, others are quaint and even grotesque; as though Nature were in sportive mood when designing them, and would excite our wonder as well as our admiration.

And truly a large collection of well-grown orchids is a brilliant and yet curious display of colour and of strange forms. Here a flower which the imagination may picture as a glittering humming bird in full flight with outstretched wings and scarlet pensile tail; here a long rope ladder formed with geometric precision, every rung provided with a transverse pair of supports and ornamented with cream-coloured decorations; or here a fantastic cluster of light feathery whisps, hovering like a bevy of air-fairies disporting themselves in the sunlight. And perhaps stranger than them all, here the Masderallia Chimaera, as its name implies, a sort of imaginary monster, a long curved horn projecting from its strangely grotesque head and a pair of claws or tentacles proceeding from the extremity of its lower limbs.

And too several of the common orchids—or orchis—of the fields represent members of the animal world. The bee orchis is exactly like a twig up which half a dozen bees are climbing; the spider orchis represents a troop of those devouring creatures lying in wait for prey; the butterfly orchis resembles a number of greenish white graceful little butterflies settling upon the plant; and the fly orchis, as its name implies, represents, though not so life-like as some of the others, some of those insects resting upon its stem. And, apparently stranger than all, the much rarer man-orchis is said to resemble a hanging man, with fully-developed arms, body and legs.

And the more the wonders and the diverse beauties of Nature are studied and investigated, so much the more bewildered awe and amazement are excited at the august and majestic genius which planned and contrived it all. And yet He by Whom and for Whom all things—from mighty universes to the humblest of flowers—were made, was content to live a life of penury, and to suffer an agonizing death, in order that all who will appropriate that expiation for sin, may be absolved from the retribution due to Eternal Justice, and may dwell for ever in the midst of supernal joys.

DEATH IN A NEW GUISE.

Scheme That Landed a Hungarian Judge In Town Jail.

In a little village on the Hungarian frontier, not far from Pressburg, a peasant woman recently received 400 kronen (85) from her husband in America.

She promptly deposited it in the local branch of the Post Office Savings Bank, and then the next day went to withdraw the whole amount. The bank official was somewhat surprised, and asked for an explanation, when she said that Death had appeared to her during the night and threatened to take her away with him unless she had the 400 crowns ready for him the next night.

The gendarmerie were communicated with, and when "Death" made his promised appearance he was found to be very much alive, in the person of the local Judge.

The woman's money, adds a Vienna correspondent who sends the story, is still in the bank, and the Judge is in jail.

He: "Can I see you home, miss?" She: "Yes—if you wish to. All you've got to do is to stand perfectly still, and if you are not too short-sighted you'll manage it easily. I am living just across the road."

"I am going to see your father about you," said a teacher to a boy who had exhausted her patience. "If you do you'll never come back." "Why?" demanded the teacher. "'Cause pa's dead."

"It used to be the height of my ambition to own a motor-car," said the worried-looking man. "And what is the height of your ambition now?" asked his friend. "To sell it."

Mrs. Smart—"Here is an article entitled 'Much in Little.'" Mr. Smart—"All about tight shoes, I suppose?"