Her Housebreaker

By Florence Morse Kingsley.

CHAP. II.—(Cont'd.)

Then another thought swiftly crossed her mind. Hurriedly she opened an unlocked drawer in her desk; the little roll of bills lay in the corner, just where she carelessly had left it. Nothing had been disturbed in the dining room, where the bowl of mignonette and sweet peas gave forth a sickly odor. She opened the windows; then, still pondering the circumstance of the muddy floor and the missing candle, went out to the kitchen. For an instant her heart stood still, as her frightened eyes took in the empty plate and the crumbs on the kitchen table. Hastily she examined the larder. Someone had satisfied acute hunger during her absence. The kitchen windows stood wide open, admitting sun and air. This last bit of circumstantial evidence reassured her. The hungry marauder had evidently left by the same way in which he had entered. The unbroken catch puzzled her, till she recalled the fact that she had not examined the parlor windows.

Mrs. Brett's nearest neighbor was a quarter of a mile away. She recalled this fact uneasily, as she hesitated at the foot of the stair. But, she reasoned, the person who had entered her house was not an ordinary burglar, for neither money nor silver had been touched. Without further reflection she mounted the stairs and passed into the white perfection of her room. Here the pictured face of her son brought back her grief, half forgotten during the tense moments of her discovery. She crossed the hall to his bedroom.

Mary Brett was a brave woman—brave enough to have sent her only son to the rescue of the dying on that terrible elongated battle-front across the sea. She neither screamed nor fainted when she saw, lying on her sons' couch, the relaxed figure of a man. For an incredible instant it seemed that it must be George, lying there so soundly asleep. His face was turned from the light, and his dark curling hair on the crimson pillow, his sturdy length and breadth, his boyish abandon to slumber, brought an aching lump to her throat. There was a loaded revolver in the drawer of a table in her own room. It did not occur to her to fetch it. She sat down in a chair by the window and waited.

After a little the sleeper stirred uneasily, as if half aware of her presence. Then he turned on his pillow and half opened his eyes, blue as corn flowers under their long curling lashes. Mrs. Brett continued to gaze at him steadily. She did not feel at all afraid, even when scared consciousness awoke in the boy's face. He sat up suddenly, staring about him, as if struggling to recall the events of the previous night.

"You broke into my house," Mrs. Brett said to him calmly. "Was it last night or the night before? I've been away two days."

His shamed eyes sought the floor.

"It was last night," he mumbled. "It was raining. I—was hungry."

"Yes; I judged so." A faint smile touched her lips.

"I—I didn't mean to go to sleep. I just thought I'd rest—for awhile. Then I meant to go on. I suppose you'll have me arrested?"

He remembered that he was wearing the blue bath-robe and the gay slippers. His coat lay on the back of a chair. He put it on, awkwardly folding the garment which he had appropriated.

"I—I was all wet," he apologized, "and my shoes——"

"Sit down," she ordered, with gentle authority.

He obeyed.

"You must explain—tell me all about it. How did you come here—to my house?"

"I was tramping. I had a little money and I—lost it."

"Where did you come from?"

A dark flush sprang to his forehead.

"From a town back a ways. Must I tell you everything?"

She pondered his question:

"You have broken into my house. You have eaten my food. Yes; I think you must tell me everything."

He drew a deep breath.

"I think—I should like to tell you everything," he said slowly.

Then he added, as if to himself: "I never had a mother."

"You mean that you don't remember your mother?" she corrected him.

His blue eyes studied her face.

"You look like—somebody's mother," he said, still as if thinking aloud.

"I am," she told him. "My son—" she lifted her head proudly—"has gone to France."

His gaze, grown timid, returned to her after a swift glance about the room.

She nodded confirmation of his unspoken question.

"Yes; this was his room," she said. "He left me only yesterday."

"I guess you'll hate to think I slept here, when I tell you what I've done," he said, after a pause. "But I'll tell you.

She was noticing the little beads of perspiration on his forehead.

"Not now," she suddenly decided. "You are hungry; so am I. We will have breakfast, and afterward——"

She moved toward the door; then paused with a sudden impulse.

"You will find everything to make yourself tidy among the things he left. He will not need them—for a long time."

"Do you mean you want me to—?"

"Make yourself presentable—yes."

She smiled at him as she might have smiled at her boy. Then swiftly she went down stairs.

"If he has lied to me," she said to herself, "he will take the opportunity to escape."

For awhile she heard him moving about overhead.

Silence followed and her heart beat suffocatingly fast. She had left her bag containing money on the bureau in her room—and there was the loaded revolver! She bent over the broiling bacon, striving to steady herself. Why had she not telephoned to her son's friend in the village?

His voice from the doorway startled her.

"I thought," he said apologetically, "you wouldn't mind my wearing his slippers till I could clean my shoes. They're not fit, you know."

An immense relief, amounting almost to joy, took possession of her. Clean and fresh, an appealing light in his blue eyes, he stood gazing at her with a look which put to shame her dark suspicions.

"I'm sure you are a good boy," she said warmly. "Come, everything is ready."

She had found time and courage to gather a bunch of the purple asters for the centre of the breakfast table. He gazed at them curiously as he sat down rather awkwardly in the chair she indicated. She felt rather than saw that the simple appointments of the table were unfamiliar to him and that he did not understand the reverent bowing of her head before the untasted meal. Some inner voice prompted her to utter her thanksgiving aloud.

(To be continued.)

Woman's Sphere

Plan To Save Steps.

How to make work easier if we are to go without help, that is the great problem which confronts housekeepers, city and country. Electricity and labor-saving machinery go a long way towards solving the problem in town, but doesn't do much to help out the farm woman except in a small number of cases. But there are a great many ways in which the far-seeing country woman can make her work easier if she keep an open mind and is willing to adopt new methods in the kitchen as her husband is in the fields.

Fireless cookers—home-made or store—make it possible to go without a fire during the heat of the day. Gasolene or charcoal irons, mangles which will do the unstarched pieces, a home-made kitchen wagon for wheeling the dishes to and from the table, water in the house before there is a car for pleasure riding in the barn, these are only a few of the things which the country woman can have and should insist upon if she wishes to retain a vestige of youth and health.

There is one thing, though, which can be gotten more easily than any of these in many country houses and that is the elimination of miles of needless walking. The thing which impresses the city visitor most when she takes stock of her country sister's work-a-day problems is the countless number of steps which the farm woman takes during the day. Used to small, compact houses, the city woman wonders that the country woman has lived to her present age, whatever it be, when she sees the steps which the arrangement of the house makes necessary.

A large number of farm homes, it is all too evident, were built in the days when lumber was cheap and large families with daughters who stayed home and helped mother were the fashion. Those days are now numbered with other good things of the forgotten past and only the houses are left as a legacy to the twentieth century housekeeper with her "no help problem." Mammoth rooms are fine if you have help, but, O, the backache if only one poor woman has to keep in order. And, O, the tired, aching feet after a day of trotting from stove to table, table to sink, sink to pantry and pantry to woodshed, all at the greatest possible distance from each other.

Small kitchens, with every inch of space utilized, is always my slogan. My present kitchen is just 11x8, about the size of many a farm home pantry. There is no pantry, only a small refrigerator room. Table, sink and stove are all near enough together so that only a couple of steps are necessary in moving from one to the other. This has been large enough to do the work for seven people.

Immediately I hear a cry arise, "No milk to take care of, and no washing done in the kitchen.' All very true, but had it been necessary to do the laundry work it could have been done in as small a kitchen by installing laundry tubs instead of the table, and building a cover for the tubs which could be utilized as a table when washing was not being done. This is worked out in many city flats and has proven satisfactory. As to the milk, careful planning and a little alteration of the average farm cellar would make it possible to care for the milk there, if we weren't so wedded to custom.

Many women, however, find a larger kitchen better for their particular needs. With small children who always must be where mother is, an 11x8 kitchen is not just the coziest place in the world. If your kitchen is large and you want it so, then the next thing to do is to plan to make it convenient. The sink must remain where it is, unless you wish to engage a plumber, which perhaps at his present rates you do not care to do. But even that would pay you in the long run, if moving the sink would save you many steps. You can move the table, however, and the cupboards if they are not built in. And by buying a few lengths of stove pipe and an elbow or two you may have the stove where you will. Sit down and study your own kitchen. Figure out how you can re-arrange things to make it possible to take the fewest number of steps in getting a meal and washing dishes, and then proceed to have a general shake-up.

Don't run up and down cellar more than is necessary. If possible make an iceless refrigerataor. And don't run down three or four steps and a half dozen rods out to the milk house for all your butter, milk and eggs, as some women persist in doing. Keep what you will need for a day's supply in the house. You can keep the milk cool by sitting it in cold water. And the eggs you will use in a day aren't going to spoil if you do keep them in the house.

Plan to save steps. This is a thing we can all do. Get all the kitchen helps you can, everything that makes work easier is a necessity these days. But while you are buying labor-saving devices don't continue to work overtime walking several miles unnecessarily.

Dishes the Threshers Like.

Did the drouth catch your early potatoes and are you worrying about how you will cook the old ones, so that the threshers will relish them?

Well, then, why not scallop them and make some potato salad? The sheshers who come here surely relished these two dishes, or seemed to.

"Scalloped potatoes!" you gasp; "with butter sixty cents a pound and salad dressing takes too much time to make." Wrong again. You need little butter and can make a large bowl of salad dressing in three minutes. Instead of butter alone, use small cubes of salt pork and salt, pepper and butter, cover with milk and bake in the usual way. If you have some cold milk gravy left, add it in the place of part of the milk. This saves the gravy and makes the potatoes better.

For the salad I use cold boiled potatoes, onions and cucumber pickles salted and peppered, and chopped together. For the dressing I use one tablespoonful of prepared mustard to two tablespoons of sweet cream, one teaspoon sugar and vinegar to taste. Line the dishes with crisp lettuce leaves, garnish with a couple of sliced hard-boiled eggs, salted and peppered, and then watch the men wade in.

I found that the men preferred cold tea, and as we had no ice I steeped the tea in a granite dish, with as little water as possible, letting it cool, and at the last minute pumped in the coldest water to be had. From three to six glasses to the man tells what they thought about that.

Another thing, perhaps not so economical as the before mentioned, but on the rapidly disappearing order, was brown bread. Our recipe is as follows: One cup of sour cream, two cups of buttermilk, one scant cup of sugar, four tablespoons of cooking molasses stirred together well. Sift in graham flour, to which has been added two teaspoons level of soda and one heaping full of baking powder, also one teaspoon of salt. Stir rather thick and bake in two loaves. It is better to bake a sample the first time, for unless the batter is thick enough the bread will fall and it is rather too expensive to waste. For gems you will find this recipe hard to improve upon.

I also put a mirror, soap, comb, towels and dishes to wash in at the well, under a big shade tree, setting the table on the verandah, and fancied I got along easier this year than ever before. I find that simplicity combined with plain substantial food, suits the men better than all the fancy dishes I used to make before the old H. C. of L. put his foot on my neck.

For the Pickle Shelf.

Cucumber Catsup—1 dozen large cucumbers, 1 quart vinegar, 1 tablespoon salt, ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper. Gather cucumbers before the sun strikes them and keep in a cool place until used. Peel and grate the cucumbers and drain off the water. Heat the vinegar and spices to boiling point; pour at once over the grated cucumber, bottle and seal. Cucumbers bottled in this way retain their freshness and make a particularly good sauce for steak.

Curry Pickles—Boil together for five or ten minutes, two quarts of vinegar, one tablespoon of salt, one teaspoon of black pepper; take one tablespoon of curry powder, one and one-half tablespoons of corn starch, four tablespoons of ground mustard, one tablespoon of sugar, or more if desired. Mix these thoroughly with a little cold vinegar, then put into hot vinegar mixture and stir all until it thickens. Take about three hundred small cucumbers and wash thoroughly. If medium-sized ones are used, cut in small pieces. Pour the boiling sauce over the cold cucumbers, bottle and seal.

Apple Catsup—1 quart apple sauce, 1 teaspoon vinegar, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 teaspoon cloves, 1 teaspoon pepper, 1 teaspoon mustard, 1 teaspoon onion juice, 2 teaspoons salt, 1 pint vinegar. Simmer slowly until thick, bottle and seal. A similar catsup can be made from plums or grapes, and spiced to taste. Sorghum or molasses may be added if a sweet sauce is liked.

Minard's Liniment Cures Garget in Cows

He Had Hopes.

It was a beautiful little place. The house was small, but perfect, and the garden lovely, with flowers and fruit and vegetables and hens, and all. And the surrounding country matched it for prettiness.

"However did you get such a fine house?" asked the friend after the host had proudly shown him around.

"It was this way," said the host, casting a cautious look round to where his lady was inspecting and condemning the gardener's work. "The property was for sale, so I brought my wife to see it. When she had looked round the house and the gardens, and admired the views from the windows, I asked her what she thought of it. 'Henry,' she replied, 'it is so pretty it leaves me speechless!' "

The Ex-Kaiser's Peculiarities

The ex-Kaiser will be brought to trial by the Allies for his public actions during the war, but Mr. Poultney Bigelow, the well-known American author, brings against him accusations of petty meanness almost incredible in a monarch of his pretensions. They were personal friends and companions in their younger days, but Mr. Bigelow, in his recent book, "Prussianism and Pacifism," makes the German Emperor practically a kleptomaniac. He was the owner of a valuable miniature of the famous Queen Louise, which was a gift to him from the present Queen of Hanover, whose husband was dethroned by William I. in 1866. William II. manifested such an intense interest in this miniature that Mr. Bigelow let him have it to look at, mentioning how much he valued it on account of the circumstances under which he acquired it. "Never was that miniature handed back to me," says Mr. Bigelow, "although I spoke of it earnestly to the Emperor's principal Aide-de-camp, the late Gen. von Zitzewitz. Not only did William rob me of that precious portrait, but his courtiers looked at one another with stupefaction when I made so strange a claim upon one who was evidently not accustomed to restoring what had once come under his all-coveting hand."

Mr. Bigelow achieved some fame as a canoeist and made a 1,500-mile voyage down the Danube, being the first to pass through the Iron Gates in a canoe. The Emperor borrowed this canoe, the "Caribee," on the excuse that he wanted his sons to learn to be expert canoeists. "While I have lost my matchless "Caribee," says Mr. Bigelow, "the Kaiser has broken his word, for when I visited her in 1913 she was hidden away amid other dust-covered nautical curios in an obscure corner of his boathouse at Potsdam. The old guardian did not know who I was, and I stayed but long enough to learn that my canoe had never been used and that I had been the victim of a Prussian promise."

UNIQUE TAXES OF OLD DAYS.

Great Britain's Exchequer Was Enriched by Many Original Methods.

One of Parliament's hardest tasks is the preparation of the Budget. Taxes must be imposed, but, as no one likes paying them, they must be framed so as not to place too great a burden upon any particular class.

For originality of schemes to replenish the Exchequer few have rivalled William Pitt. It was he who devised the dog tax, an institution which still thrives. He also originated the income tax, which, during his administration, was fixed at 10 cents in the dollar on all incomes exceeding $1,000.

It was the fashion of his time to wear the hair in a powdered queue, and hair powdered appealed to Pitt as a vanity for which every man would be willing to pay five dollars a year. He expected the Treasury to benefit to the extent of over $1,000,000 annually, but everyone had his queue cut off.

A tax on shopkeepers, though only a small impost arranged on a sliding scale based on the amount of rental paid, was stoutly resisted and eventually defeated. A tax on female servants, amounting to 60 cents for one, $1.25 for two, and $2.50 for three or more, was more successful. Births, marriages and deaths were all made to contribute to the national purse. A duke's bride cost him a trifle over $250; the arrival of an heir meant a contribution of $150, and subsequent male additions to the family each called for $125. The death of the wife necessitated the payment to the Government of $250, and smaller sums were payable on the death of other members of the family.

These life and death taxes were assessed on every subject in the kingdom who had anything to pay, the smallest sum collected being for marriage, some 60 cents, paid by the man whose income was less than $250 a year. This man paid 50 cents each time he became a father and $1 approximately upon the death of his wife or son.

Bachelors of every rank were taxed from 1695 to 1706, the payments varying with the rank of the individual, and ranging from $1.25 to $60 a year. A man over twenty-five and unmarried was a bachelor under the law.

Two of the most short-sighted taxes ever levied were those on paper and on windows. William III. originated the paper tax, which at one time was as high as $140 a ton. On the paper used by Charles Knight to print his Penny Cyclopaedia the tax amounted to $100,000. Later there was imposed a tax of eight cents a sheet on newspapers, with an additional tax of 85 cents on every advertisement.

Our Boys in France.

Over the wave, our children brave
Have gone at humanity's call;
Ready to give that the right may live,
Ready to give their all.

In La Belle France where the foe's advance
Had blighted the joys of life,
They turned their guns on the cruel Huns,
And joined in the awful strife.

Land of the West, your Gallant breast,
Has nourished a race of men,
Whose eager feet will scorn retreat,
And dash to the fray again.

Rod by rod, o'er the bloody sod,
The invader's host recedes.
While the shell-torn earth attests the worth
Of desperate valor's deeds.

By the trenches deep, shall widows weep,
Or mothers kneel to pray,
For the distant ones, whose dauntless sons
Have helped to save the day.

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MEN'S MILLINERY IN INDIA.

Oriental Turban is Composed of Ninety Square Feet of Cloth.

Modern women haven't a thing on a man from India, when it comes to wearing expensive hats. And they'll have to get busy to crowd as much on their heads as do the men from Bombay, Calcutta and Punjaub, for those red, yellow and white turbans are as long as three tablecloths put end to end.

Each turban is made up of ninety square feet of cloth, thirty feet long by three feet wide.

The average person wonders why men in these burning countries wear a hat which covers the head as completely as the hood of an Eskimo. Both do it for the same reason. One seeks protection from heat and the other from cold. The heat of one's own body is far more endurable than the burning rays of India's sun.

A man wears a turban thirty feet long, while a small boy wears one from ten to fifteen feet long. But Indian youngsters have found that the cap of the Canadian boy takes far less time to put on than his turban, and they are generally discarding the headgear of their fathers for that worn in America.

Minard's Liniment Cures Diphtheria.

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