

About the House

THE SECRET OF TRUE MOTHER-LOVE.

"My dear," said one woman to another, "I hear your son is going to be married. Your poor heart must be broken."

The mother laughed. "I am not an object of pity," she said; "I am a subject for congratulation."

"What!" cried the first woman. "Do you mean to tell me that you are willing to give up your only child to another woman?"

"Willing and glad," replied the mother, "for I want my son to be happy."

"Children are ungrateful creatures," said the first woman, bitterly. "We spend our lives toiling and sacrificing for them, and as soon as they are big enough they leave us. I remember when your husband died, we wondered how you would get along. Well, you did, by working your fingers to the bone."

"You went without everything yourself, but your boy was always fed and clothed, and by hook or crook you put him through school. Now he forsakes you for a pretty girl. I say his duty is to you. He has no right to marry as long as you live."

"Nonsense," replied the mother. "I did my duty to my child, but am I a female Shylock to exact a pound of flesh in payment for having taken care of him while he was young and helpless?"

"I know there are mothers who think that their children belong to them body and soul, and that they have a perfect right to exact any sacrifice of them. I have known talented women who have been balked in their ambitions by tyrannical and exacting mothers, and I have seen pretty girls grow into faded old maids nursing neurotic mothers who would not employ an attendant."

"And I've known more than one whining old woman who kept a bachelor son dancing attendance upon her, and who told you how it would have killed her for her son to marry; how she made him promise he would never leave her; how she broke off a love affair that he had in his youth, and how she knew he was so much happier with her than he would have been with a wife, because no wife would have been as particular about cooking him the things he wanted as she was."

"Personally, I feel that I could do no more wicked thing than keep my son from marrying. He is, to begin with, a born family man, the sort of man who could never be happy living in clubs, playing cards, and listening to men's gossip for a lifetime. He must have his own home, his own wife and children, and I would be worse than a fiend if I kept him from the sweetness of a wife's love and companionship, and the joy of feeling his baby's arms about his neck."

"My son loves me. We are unusually companionable. I am an old and experienced housekeeper. Doubtless I make him far more comfortable than his young wife will. But I am not foolish enough to think that my home is really home for him, or that a mother's love takes the place of a wife's love."

"And so, while he is young and capable of loving and inspiring love, I desire to see him marry. Nothing brings out all that is best and strongest in a man as does having a wife and children dependent on him. Nothing spurs on a man's ambition so much as desiring to get the best for those he loves. I want my son to marry because I love my sex, and I want to present to some girl the best gift on earth—a good husband."

WINTER BOUQUETS.

Even though Mrs. Farmer neglected to plant her everlastings, or straw flowers, last spring, she need not have to go without her winter bouquet if she is willing to go to a little trouble.

Whereas the city sister must go out and buy hers, the country woman may find material to make as attractive ones in the woods and hedgerows.

One of the prettiest I ever saw was made of the common milkweed. After the pod has shed its seed, or is about to do so, the plant should be cut, taking most of the stalk, which afterward may be discarded if found too long. The plants should then be hung, heads downward, in a cool dark place to dry. When "the last rose of summer is faded and gone" bring them out to the light, and with water colors paint the inside of the open pod. A delicate rose-pink blends beautifully with the soft gray of the pod, but other colors may be used to carry out any particular color scheme. Combined with evergreen or, if that is not to be had, with artificial green, they make a bouquet fit to grace any part of the home.

In many localities a plant known as everlasting grows wild. This may be dried in the same manner as milkweed and, when the time comes to

make the bouquet, may be dipped in a solution of good dye to make it any desired shade. Dry again and combine with green. The blossoms are small, borne in clusters, and if dyed blue resemble the fringed gentian or wild aster of summer time.

The cat-tail, which grows profusely in marshy places, is another good one. It must be cut before fully ripe to insure against its shedding, and dried according to the rule for the others. A coat of clear varnish or shellac is further guarantee against shedding and detracts nothing from its attractiveness.

Do not neglect to gather an armful of pussy willows or catkins next spring. Dried before they become too ripe, they will keep several seasons, if a new supply is not to be had.

A NEAT AND SERVICEABLE APRON.



4030. Percale with facings of linen is here depicted. Black sateen with cretonne would be attractive, as would also crepe with trimming of a contrasting color or with rick rack for a finish.

The Pattern is cut in 4 Sizes: Small, 34-36; Medium, 38-40; Large, 42-44; Extra Large, 46-48 inches bust measure. A Medium size requires 4½ yards of 36-inch material.

Pattern mailed to any address on receipt of 15c in silver or stamps, by the Wilson Publishing Co., 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto. Allow two weeks for receipt of patterns.

"THERE IS NO WORSE TEA."

When Mary Antin was a little girl in Russia she was sent by her mother who kept a shop to deliver a package of tea to a customer. It was her first important errand—so we learn from her autobiography, which the Atlantic Monthly prints—and, like most children in such circumstances, she was filled with a sense of her dignity and

importance. As it proved she was more dignified than diplomatic.

It was, she writes, a good-sized expedition for me to make alone, and I was not a little pleased with myself when I delivered my package of tea safe and intact into the hands of my customer.

But the customer was not pleased at all. She sniffed and sniffed; she pinched the tea; she shook it all out on a table. "Na, take it back," she said in disgust; "this is not the tea I always buy. It's a poorer quality."

I knew that the woman was mistaken. So I spoke up manfully. "Oh, no," I said; "this is the tea my mother always sends you. There is no worse tea."

Nothing in my life ever hurt me more than the woman's answer to my argument. She laughed; she simply laughed. But even before she had controlled herself sufficiently to talk I understood that I had spoken like a fool and had lost for my mother a customer.

HOLDERS FOR BIRTHDAY CANDLES.

I am anxious to tell the readers of my recent discovery. Perhaps some of you have made a similar one. Last Thursday was my little son, Jerry's, seventh birthday. To hold the family custom, he must have a birthday cake with candles. When I came to make the cake I found I had the candles but no candle holders.

As the candles had to be lighted, the wax would run down and mingle with the frosting, and this would not do at all. Having some marshmallows in the house, I used these for holders, and they answered the purpose very well. With cake coloring I marked the face on each marshmallow, placing the candle in the mouth, much to the amusement of my little son.—Mrs. F. W.

Poets at Their Worst.

It is said that even Homer descended occasionally to plain prose in the middle of great poetry, and there is not a poet who has not followed his example. Tennyson came a cropper when he began a poem with the immortal line:—

"I stood on a tower in the wet."

Wordsworth, although one of the greatest of English poets, wrote a lot of prosy stuff. He was responsible for many lines like the following:

"The taller followed with his hat in hand."

But probably the prize for a bad line would have been awarded to Sir Walter Scott, who wrote:

"When a rough voice cried, 'Shoot not, hoy!'"

Ho, shoot not, Edward, 'tis a boy!"

Thomas Campbell, who wrote such fine things as "Ye Mariners of England" and "The Battle of the Baltic," perpetrated an awful line on one occasion. Here is the full verse. The first two lines will pass:

"One moment may with bliss repay

Unnumbered years of pain;

Such was the throb and the mutual sob

Of the knight embracing Jane."

This is almost as bad as James Thompson's historic line: "O Sophonisba! Sophonisba, O!" or Browning's dreadful line: "Irks care the croful bird."

Building Up.

At the time of the armistice 100,000 Belgian houses had been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. Of these, 71,383 have now been rebuilt and restored and made serviceable.

—AND THE WORST IS YET TO COME



Mineral That Works Miracles

One of the results of the new campaign against cancer will be that we shall learn much more of the nature and possibilities of radium, the mysterious mineral discovered twenty-five years ago by M. and Mme. Curie.

Comparatively few people have seen radium, and possibly fewer still would recognize it at sight. Radium is usually kept in a special kind of glass tube, in which are fixed a tiny screen, a piece of talc, and a minute magnifying glass. The radium rests on the talc, and looks like a tiny yellow smear no bigger than an ordinary full-stop. A speck of radium this size may be worth anything up to \$75,000.

Seen in the dark a speck of radium glows fiercely enough to be visible yards away, and it glows for years at the same intensity. Radium has been tested in liquid air, far below freezing point, and in super-heated furnaces, without in any way being affected by these extremes of temperature. Another little-known fact is that it throws off enough heat to bring its own weight of water to boiling-point every hour for two or three thousand years!

One of the strangest chapters in the history of the miracle mineral, as radium has been called, is the story of how it came to play its great part in the treatment of disease.

The action of the mineral on the human tissues was quite unknown and unsuspected until one day Professor Becquerel, a famous French scientist, incautiously put a tube of radium in his waistcoat pocket.

Fourteen days afterwards he noticed on his skin a sort of rash, which quickly developed into inflammation of the affected part. Experiments were carried out, with the result that radium

rays, of which there are several varieties, opened up a new era in medical practice.

Many striking cures have been effected. Ulcerous growths disappear before the rays, while such diseases as gout, rheumatism, neurasthenia, and affections of the joints are dispersed with equal certainty. Radium rays transform weak body cells into strong, vigorous ones, which not only resist disease, but help the whole constitution to resist it.

One question that is exercising the minds of scientists just now is whether there will be a radium famine.

Some of the most promising deposits of radium-bearing ores have lately given out, leading to a search, so far not very encouraging, in other parts of the world. Canada and South America, as well as Russia, Portugal, and Cuba, have been scoured for supplies, with a success far short of expectations.

Up to the time of M. and Mme. Curie's discovery, pitch-blende, the jet black mineral in which radium is found, was regarded as being almost valueless. One mining company in the United Kingdom actually paid large sums to have the residue of its pitch-blende supplies, from which another mineral has been extracted, carted away to the destructor. It was estimated that the firm in question lost nearly \$100,000 in radium.

In conversation with the writer, Sir William Bragg, of London University, stated that there are reasons for believing that large deposits of radium-bearing ore exist deep in the earth in hitherto unexplored parts of the world, and that these supplies may soon be tapped. At present the price of radium is roughly \$1,000,000 an ounce.

The World's Book-Shop.

Have you ever wondered how many books there are in existence? On the average, two hundred thousand volumes are published each year throughout the world, and, as eight and a half million books appeared last century, one can obtain a fairly good idea of the size of the world's book-shop.

Adding together the number of volumes published in each century since printing was invented, the astonishing total of sixty millions is reached. The amount of energy, time, paper, and printer's ink which have gone to produce all these books is incalculable.

A great many of these publications are each worth more than five thousand pounds, and the total value of the world's book stocks must run into many millions. Stacked together, they would form a fair-sized mountain, the ascent of which would take several hours.

The three largest libraries in the world are the British Museum Library, which has four million volumes; the Bibliotheque Nationale, at Paris, which has three millions; and the Library of Congress, Washington, with just half a million less. Thus, between them alone, these three great institutions possess nine and a half million books of all kinds.



"Do you keep a scrapbook?"
"No, my husband and I try to get along without fighting."

Progress in Alaska.

In twenty years the Alaskan Eskimos have made great strides in the ways of civilization. They have churches and schools, many of them read and write, and owing to the reindeer herds that the United States government started for them most of them are prosperous. Deer meat in the north sells at the rate of seven dollars for one hundred and sixty pounds, which is the weight of the ordinary carcass. The natives now own at least two thousand reindeer, which are under government supervision.