COMMON SENSE in the HOME

EDITED by MARION HARLAND

"WHAT SHALL OUR DAUGHTER DO?"

"She has been graduated and has come home."

SHE has completed her college course, or has been graduated from a fashionable "finishing school." She has come back to the home, swept and garnished for her return—in other words, repapered and redecorated to suit the fancy and educated taste of the daughter of the family. What is she going to do with her time? One thing is certain—she must have something specific to occupy hands and brains. During her scholastic career she has had regular routine work, has trained herself to stated hours for study, for exercise, for recreation. To settle down to doing nothing will mean discontent and mental as well as physical deterioration. Nature abhors a vacuum, and the brain accustomed to work along clearly defined lines will, when deprived of systematic duties, lose the power of concentration and have to be forced to labor that it once took as a matter of course.

Therefore, for her own sake, our girl must have some occupation.

I would call her attention to the fact that, first of all, she owes a duty to her parents. They have educated her, it may be at the sacrifice of personal comfort and ease. The daughter should, therefore, in planning her work, decide upon something that will not interfere with her duties toward her father and mother. If there are several other daughters in the home, who mean to remain there until they marry—or die—our girl may contemplate the possibility of going to another city or town to learn her profession. But she should do this as a last resort, and when she is sure she is not needed in the home nest.

Before she looks for any profession or "calling," there is something she must learn in her mother's house. She should make a practical study of all branches of housekeeping and housework, from dusting and making beds, down — or up — to cooking, ordering meals and marketing wisely and economically. Until she has done this, she has not been thoroughly educated.

To the thoughtful observer it is evident that we need trained cooks and housekeepers. Even if a woman has the wealth to enable her to engage competent domestics, she will be much more capable of directing these servants if she knows herself how to perform the services which she exacts of them. Bridget and Norah soon discover if their employer knows little or nothing about cooking, and trade upon this fact. When a cook is aware that her mistress could, if she wished, prepare a better meal than she, the hireling, can prepare, she is put upon her mettle to do her best. The overseer must know how the work should be done in order to demand skilled labor from his underlings.

So, first of all, let our girl determine to acquire a practical knowledge of housework in all its branches. It is her duty to her sex, to her possible husband and to future generations.

In a recent statement made by Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley, chief chemist of the United States, he utters such trenchant truths that I take the liberty of quoting him for the benefit of the girl to whom this talk of mine is especially directed. He says:

"Making a bed."

"Poor cooking is a characteristic of our national life, apparently, and many of our ills are due to it. Many of the evil effects which often are ascribed to overeating might more accurately be ascribed to unskilled or careless cooking. The average wife of the American working man knows less about the proper preparation of his food than does the wife of any other working man in any of the world's advanced, progressive nations. We are a nation of bad cooks."

This is a severe and honest arraignment of the women of the working classes, which applies also to the wives and daughters of the rich men in our country. Doctor Wiley hits the nail so squarely on the head that I take the liberty of quoting at length another pregnant paragraph:

"In the terrible intemperance of bad cooking we easily lead the world. The rich man who establishes a fund and finds a way of properly administering it to teach good cooking to the women of this country will do a greater good than any man has ever done, or ever will do, by leaving millions to our universities. To found the greatest college that the nation ever dreamed of would be a work of little usefulness compared to that. I shall now say something which the women will not like: We have too many pianos in this country and too few cook stoves, too much Latin and too little really intelligent leavening of bread, too much high school French and far too little knowledge of the simplest rules of dietetics. There is no fault in the imperfect educational system by means of which young men in the United

"Cooking."

States are fitted to begin their battle with the world so glaring as this fault of the omission from the education of our girls of the very simplest preparation for their work as housewives."

All of this is so true that I wish every American girl could read it. I know that there are cooking schools and that some of our young women attend them; but while I approve of these thoroughly, the facts learned there should be put into practice in the home if the woman would perfect herself in the science of cookery. In her mother's kitchen let her take a course in practical cooking. In this country, in which fortunes are made and lost in a day, one never knows when she may be called upon to do her own work. And, as has been said, the woman who would be the mistress, not the slave, of her servants, must have personal experience along these lines.

But when our girl has learned all these necessities thoroughly, what next?

If, when she is not at home, the mother must do all the housework, it is, to my old-fashioned and compassionate way of thinking, the place of the daughter to stay with and help the mother. And if she manages her time and work properly she will, even then, have leisure in which to take up some particular line of study or occupation.

I believe and insist that every girl should have some way of supporting

"Marketing."

"Ironing."

herself, even if there does not seem at the present time any likelihood that she will be called upon to do it. Not long ago some one remarked drastically that every woman ought to have some profession or means of earning money, so that she can support the husband she may perhaps take unto herself. While this was said in irony, it is a fact that numbers of women in this broad land of ours are supporting the men they married, and through no fault of the men. Illness, business disaster, accident may check the earning capacity of the legitimate bread-winner, and it is then that the brave little wife steps into the breach and, with her nimble fingers or quick brains, supplies the family living. Or the man who lives right up to his income dies in the harness and the widow finds herself the sole support of herself and little children. Then it is that the profession or trade that she learned while yet in her father's home is her mainstay and the support of her dear ones.

Our girl must, therefore, take up some line of work in which she may perfect herself. Stenography, typewriting, bookkeeping, teaching, embroidery, millinery, dressmaking—any one of a number of occupations is open to her. But to the girl who desires none of these I would call attention to the fact that there are many openings for women who are skilled in the care and duties of a well-kept home. We all know of women caterers who excel in their business. An expert cook who will go out to prepare "company dinners" demands and receives high prices.

"Sweeping."

One kind of work that offers itself to the girl who is an experienced housekeeper is that of training servants. The busy woman who has engaged a new maid and wishes her taught the ways of a properly conducted home hears with delight that there is in her city a young woman who makes a point of performing this service. She comes to the house when the new maid, who is to be chambermaid and waitress, arrives, and shows her just what her duties are to be and how to perform them properly. She tells her how to make the beds, dust the rooms, care for the toilet articles, dust the parlors, wait on the door, take the visitor's card and announce the caller, set the table for the various meals, announce these meals, wait on the table for breakfast, luncheon and dinner; how to care for the silver, glass and china; how to prepare the rooms for the night, opening the beds, laying out bathrobes and slippers, closing the blinds, etc. Many of us housekeepers, busy from morning to night with our various avocations, social demands, charitable work, etc., would gladly pay $5 for the services of such a teacher for a single day. To have some one to "show the new maid how" would be, indeed, a boon. And such clean, nice, sheltered kind of work as this should have many refined girls ready to undertake it.

"Packing blankets in chest."

What shall our girl do? Surely there are numbers of things which she may undertake. But, before going afar for art, literature and music, let her be certain that the work the All-Father means for her to do is not close at home, waiting for her willing hand to find it, that she may "do it with her might."

Marion Harland

THE HOUSEMOTHERS' EXCHANGE

IMPORTANT NOTICE

BECAUSE of the enormous number of letters sent to the Exchange, I must ask contributors to limit their communications to 100 words, except in cases of formulas or recipes which require greater space. I want all my correspondents to have a showing in the Corner, and if my request in this respect is complied with it will be possible to print many more letters.

Attention is called to the fact that Marion Harland cannot receive money for patterns, as she has no connection with any department that sells them.

Tomato Pilau

FRY thin strips of bacon or of salt pork until crisp. Add to these a can of tomatoes, a little salt and a cupful of rice which has been washed and picked over.

Boil hard for ten minutes. Then set the saucepan upon an asbestos mat and turn the gas very low. Cover the saucepan closely to keep in the steam. Cook slowly for three-quarters of an hour without stirring.

An iron saucepan lined with porcelain is used "down south."

The contents should be very dry when ready to serve. As cans are of various sizes and some brands of tomatoes are more juicy than others, it may be well to use less rice, as judgment dictates, or to add a little water to the juice.

Southerners serve meat gravy with pilau. Fresh sausage or shrimps may be used instead of bacon and tomato.

Chicken Pilau

is made by using the water in which a fowl has been boiled in place of tomatoes. Add to this a cupful or more of cold chicken cut into small bits (not ground or chopped). Add the rice and proceed as with tomato pilau.

"Hopping John"

Boil cowpeas or "crowders" until tender. Add a piece of salt pork and a little salt. Pour into this a handful of washed and soaked rice.

Boil hard for ten minutes. Set the saucepan upon an asbestos mat and turn the gas very low. Steam slowly for an hour in a tightly covered saucepan.

I have bought cowpeas dried in the New York markets. I do not recollect what they are called there.

The dried peas must be soaked in cold water for some hours before they are boiled. The quantity of rice should be about 1 cupful to double the quantity of peas. There must be enough water to cover the peas well when the rice is added.

As I have cooked neither pilau nor hopping John in several years I can only give these general directions for preparing the dishes. Cooking rice in true southern style is, like bread-making, largely a matter of experience. K. L. S. (South Carolina).

Not one cook in ten knows how to cook rice properly. The sticky, starchy mass served up under the name of the maltreated cereal upon many tables, even at the south, is wretched stuff, displeasing to the eye and to the taste. It always reminds me of Charlotte Bronte's description of Yorkshire "Tabby's" boiling the potatoes in a "sort of vegetable glue." The rice thus murdered may do duty as library paste; it is not fit for table use. There is but one right way of cooking it as a vegetable to be served alone.

To Cook Rice

Wash a cupful of rice in two waters; then drop it slowly into two quarts of salted boiling water. Keep up the hard boil for twenty minutes. Never stir rice while it is in cooking. In twenty minutes bite into a grain to determine if it is done. If it be really tender, turn the rice lightly into a hot colander as you would boiled potatoes, shake to dislodge every drop of water and set the colander in the open oven for five minutes to dry the rice off. Each grain should stand apart from the rest.

The water in which rice has been boiled should go into the stockpot. It is very nourishing.

Our South Carolinian has our thanks for her pleasant letter and the excellent recipes contributed in response to two inquiries.

A Chemist to the Rescue

In response to the queries anent the expediency of letting dough raised with baking powder stand several hours before baking, a practical chemist honors the Exchange with a professional opinion.

Should Baking Powder Dough Stand Long Before Baking It?

Although, a priori, one would reason with the editor of the Exchange that baking powder dough should go into the oven soon after mixing it, the contrary experience of several correspondents may be rationally explained. The result, presumably, depends largely upon the relative consistency of the dough, whether it be relatively a soft, moist dough, a thin batter or a comparatively dry and firm mass intended for bread. Another factor, and an important one, may be the kind of baking powder used, whether the acid constituent be cream of tartar, tartaric acid, acid calcium (phosphate) or alum.

If the facts are as represented (they are often erroneously interpreted), then we may suppose that the solution of the baking powder is retarded, and hence the action of the ingredients is slackened. This will be true in the case of a dryish, firm and fatty dough. The moisture does not readily dissolve the soda and the acid. In water the effervescence is immediate and vehement. Then again cream of tartar and the phosphate are less readily soluble than tartaric acid and alum. That would make a difference in the result. Put baking powder into thick molasses and see how slowly it works.

But the slow evolution of gas will favor a more thorough aeration and more minute porification, and so a finer sponge.

And yet again, heat favors the chemical action and a low temperature retards it. I doubt if a tartaric acid powder in a thin batter could be profitably allowed to stand long before baking.

A. G. V., Chemist (Chicago).

Table Decorations

In common with many other housemothers who delight in dainty table appointments, I have one shaded electric light above my dinner table and supply the rest of the needed illumination with candles. I have four very pretty cut-glass candlesticks, which were one of my wedding gifts, and take pleasure in using them. But, although I buy hard candles, they will drip, especially in the room unusually warm. Last night they dripped down upon the tablecloth. How shall I hinder this nuisance? I just can't bear the idea of giving up my soft light and pretty candlesticks.

AMY S. (Buffalo, N. Y.).

Buy the short candles called "hotel candles" (adamantine), and lay them upon the ice for some hours before dinner. If you have room in the refrigerator, keep the candles on the ice all summer long. They will not drip if thus chilled. Do not take them off until a few minutes before they are to be lighted.

Substitutes for Butter

We have had a lively discussion on both sides as to the expediency of using lard and other substitutes for butter in cake-making. The keynote has not been struck by any of the writers. I use one of the pure white compounds (of which there are several on the market) instead of hog lard. The secret is this: Take but three-quarters as much as you would allow of butter. Cream the compound with a pinch of salt and the flavoring. Having beaten it to a light cream, add sugar and cream again, as in other recipes, and so on. I never fail and use this shortening even when butter is cheap and abundant.

Few housemothers make eggless waffles and griddle cakes. Mix as though eggs were to be used, and for a quart of sour milk stir in soda and the butter as the last thing, and a tablespoonful of melted lard. A small quantity of meal is added by some cooks. The milk must not be musty. No one would detect the absence of eggs.

Do housemothers know that if, in scrambling eggs, a tablespoonful of water be added, for each egg, the quantity of the "scramble" will be doubled, the eggs much lighter and more digestible? It must be served immediately, as it soon falls.

Again, if in whipping cream the white of an egg be beaten into the cream, the quantity will be increased without injuring the quality of the "whip."

Kindly publish a request for "salt-water taffy." It appeared in a magazine thirteen or fourteen years ago. I recall that gum arabic was one of the ingredients, and that the product was perfectly delicious.

GENEVIEVE (Dawson, Ga.).

Your request is passed along the line to be stopped when the holder of the recipe for salt-water taffy raises her hand.

You have prepaid us for any service we may be able to render.

Candied Violets and Roses

Will you or somebody in the Corner let me have a recipe for candying violets and rose petals? J. F. L. (El Cajon, Cal.).

The request is referred to those familiar with the dainty confections of which you speak.

Selling Homemades

I make good, light bread—or so I am assured by my friends. They would like to buy it of me regularly. What would be the weight of a 5-cent loaf—the same as the bakers sell—and how much dough will I use for a one-pound loaf?

2. Please give recipe for making German cream puffs, like those sold in the bakeshops.

3. There are a lot of boarding houses about us where railroad men get their meals. I am anxious to make a little pin money for myself. What should I charge per day for meals? And must I have a license in order to sell food?

4. What should I charge per dozen for doughnuts?

5. Is there any disgrace in selling the eatables I have named?

A SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSEMOTHER.

Your letter was written in pencil and narrowly escaped the wastebasket on that account. I cannot engage to read, much less to answer, pencilled notes. When they are written on both sides of the sheet, and perhaps signed with initials alone, there is no chance of a reading.

You give name and address in full and write upon one side of the paper. Moreover, you are in earnest in wishing to turn an honest penny or two by employing your one talent.

3. When I read your letter through I got out my scales and weighed a loaf the baker delivered this morning. It cost 5 cents and it weighs just three-quarters of a pound. Since 4 even cups (half pints) weigh 1 pound, and the milk or water, yeast, etc., which go to make up the loaf would probably weigh about a quarter of a pound, you may calculate for yourself how much flour went into that loaf. Measure carefully the ingredients used in baking one of your loaves and compute the cost.

2 This is the best recipe I know of for making

"Sewing."

Cream Puffs

Stir half a pound of butter into a pint of water, a little more than blood warm; set over the fire and bring slowly to the boil. This reached, stir in gradually ¾ of a pound of sifted flour, keeping the spoon going all the time until you have a smooth, bubbling paste.

Turn into a buttered platter and let it get perfectly cold. Beat 8 eggs very light and whip into the paste when it is cold. Whip in the beaten yolks first, then fold in the stiffened whites.

Drop the batter when ready in great spoonfuls upon buttered paper lining your baking pans, taking care not to let them touch one another.

Bake ten minutes in a quick oven. They should be very puffy when done and of a golden brown.

Filling

Wet up 4 tablespoonfuls of cornstarch with enough milk to make it into a smooth paste. Heat a scant quart of milk in a double boiler, adding a pinch of soda to prevent curdling. Beat 2 eggs very light; stir into them 2 scant cupfuls of sugar, and into this the cornstarch paste. As soon as the milk boils, pour it very slowly from the saucepan directly upon the mixture you have just made, beating all the time to prevent lumping. Finally, stir in a heaping teaspoonful of butter; beat all together hard for a minute and set aside to cool. Season with vanilla or lemon. When you wish to fill the puffs, run a sharp knife lightly around the outside of each; split them and fill with the mixture.

When you have made these once successfully, as you cannot fail to do, you will pronounce them superior to any you ever bought from a shop.

Now for your third query: Prices of provisions vary so much in different sections of our country that I cannot undertake to name terms for the men who are to profit by your home cookery. Inquire from others who have taken day boarders, and regulate your prices accordingly. Such cream puffs as I have described bring 5 cents apiece in the city. And they are worth it. If materials are cheaper with you, grade the price to suit them.

4. Good doughnuts are sold in northern women's exchanges for 3 cents apiece. You should get out a license to avoid the possibility of trouble and to dignify your business.

5. None whatever! On the other hand, hundreds of highly respectable women, all over the United States, are turning their culinary talents to advantage in just this way. Some are making fortunes by acting as caterers and tearoom keepers. Others make their "charity money" by making and selling certain dainty specialties for the table.

There is no disgrace in honest labor anywhere or of any kind.

Pests in Old Furniture

I married last winter an only son of southern gentlefolk. They are not in a position to keep servants, but they have "lots" of beautiful, rare old furniture.

In strictest confidence, I want to tell you my trouble. We are about to remove into a smaller house, and the mother will give us some of the family heirlooms in the form of the furniture I spoke of. I find all the beds, sofas and even oil paintings full of bugs.

I cry, and clean, and sicken, until appetite and courage are gone. Each room swarms with the pests. The mother is old. She is not to live with us in our new home. Some time ago I read in the Exchange of something that would rid a house of roaches and B. B. I put the paper away so safely that I cannot find it.

The beds are of the great, heavy kind; the wardrobes and, indeed, all the articles are very beautiful. There are pretty chairs, tables, stands and bureaus to match. All are marble topped that have tops.

Won't you, out of the goodness of your heart, help me in my dire extremity? I would work my fingers sore to get things into a decent condition so that I can live clean. I cannot keep a servant, and the mother says she has tried everything in the drug stores recommended for this purpose. I am well nigh in despair.

I shall ponder the paper daily until I read of something hopeful.

Mrs. NEWLYWED (Norfolk, Va.).

A heart-breaking story this! I wish I could encourage you to believe in the practicability of speedy relief from your affliction. It is more than a worry or annoyance.

To begin with, and to be honest with you, you must be on the lookout for a return of the abominations for months after you consider that you have routed them. Deliverance will come to you in time, as it has to others, but the price of eternal vigilance must be paid "on the installment plan" for weary months.

First of all, have every piece of that rare old furniture taken out of doors and taken apart. Do it on a fine day, and sweep out every joint and crevice with a sharp-pointed whisk broom. If you can get access to a barn floor and have this swept, then covered with newspapers, you will gain much at the outset. As the creatures and the eggs tumble out upon the papers kill and slay without exception. The sweeping and burrowing done, burn the papers and spread a fresh supply. Have at hand a pot of spirits of turpentine into which you have stirred a few ounces of corrosive sublimate. Provide yourself with a syringe, and with it squirt the deadly mixture into every crack and joining, and into the pores of unvarnished wood, where the demons have laid their eggs. Be lavish in the use of the liquid. Saturate all the unvarnished wood. Then cover the furniture with tarred paper and leave it for two days.

Can you not borrow a vacant room somewhere, in which to practice the next stage of the treatment? Group all the dismembered furniture into one room. The marble tops may be left alone all the way through. Even a B. B. of the most robust breed has never been able to burrow or bite his way into marble. Have the syringe ready again. Fill it now with a mixture of three parts gasoline, one part formaldehyde, and saturate the wood with this. Do it quickly but thoroughly and, having closed door and windows, flee for your life. Let the potent death-dealing gases work for two days before daring to open the door. Air well, then, lastly, have the furniture revarnished by a practiced hand.

If you follow these instructions faithfully, and then be on the watch for a month thereafter, you will be as safe as the owner of heavy wooden furniture can ever be from the most detestable of all known vermin—with perhaps one exception, from which decent civilians never suffer.

FAMILY MEALS FOR A WEEK

A CORRESPONDENT offers a menu for one day's meals, which we accept for the first day of the week.

SUNDAY

BREAKFAST

Riced bananas, mounds with pineapple juice, fairy omelet; hominy cakes, fried; "third edition" biscuits, coffee.

LUNCHEON

Oyster rice cups, celery sandwiches, stuffed dates, peanut wafers, tea.

DINNER

Halibut scallop, potato snow, carrot and pea drops, lettuce with French dressing, evaporated apricot custard pie, cheese balls, coffee.

(Apricot custard pie: Two cupfuls of strained stewed evaporated apricots, 2 tablespoonfuls of butter, 1 cup of sugar, the beaten white of one egg and the yolks of two. Bake with one crust. Frost with the remaining white of egg and 3 spoonfuls of sugar. Serve hot or cold.)

NANNIE K. VAN K. (Oak Park, Ill.).

MONDAY

BREAKFAST

Berries, cereal and cream, fishcakes, whole-wheat rolls, toast, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON

Lambs' tongues, thin bread and butter, endive and cheese ball salad, heated Swedish wafers, Saratoga potatoes, cherry tartlets, tea.

DINNER

Cream of lettuce soup, stuffed breast of veal, spinach, scalloped potatoes, baked Indian pudding, black coffee.

TUESDAY

BREAKFAST

Grapefruit, cereal with cream, picked-up halibut (a left-over from Sunday), corn cake, toast, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON

Yesterday's soup in cups, cold veal (a left-over), spinach souffle (a left-over), lettuce salad with French dressing, crackers and cheese, boiled rice, cooked with milk and egg, tea.

DINNER

Tomato soup, lamb chops en casserole, green peas, macaroni a l'italienne, strawberries and cream, cake, black coffee.

WEDNESDAY

BREAKFAST

Stewed dates, cereal and cream, bacon and fried eggs, popovers, toast, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON

Mince of veal and tomato (a left-over), fried polenta (mush), baked rice (a left-over), cream puffs, tea.

DINNER

Yesterday's soup with green peas (left-overs), stuffed and baked shad, mashed potatoes, fried young carrots, floating island, black coffee.

THURSDAY

BREAKFAST

Oranges, cereal and cream, shad roe croquettes (a left-over), hominy muffins, toast, coffee and tea.

LUNCHEON

Green peppers stuffed with macaroni (a left-over), with tomato sauce; baked potatoes, celery and romaine salad with mayonnaise, graham bread cut thin and buttered, cookies and cocoa.

DINNER

Gravy soup, boiled fowl; rice boiled plain, garnishing the fowl; egg sauce, young beets, string beans; bread and milk pudding, with hard sauce; black coffee.

FRIDAY

BREAKFAST

Berries, cereal and cream, fried panfish, muffins, toast, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON

Baked eggs, stewed potatoes, bean and beet salad upon lettuce with French dressing (a left-over), crackers and toasted cheese, Jersey pancakes, tea.

DINNER

Okra soup (based upon liquor in which the fowl was boiled), pilau of chicken (a left-over), young onions, salsify fritters, pineapple and strawberries (whole pineapple, dug out and refilled with the fruits), sponge cakes, black coffee.

SATURDAY

BREAKFAST

Berries, cereal and cream, grandma's shortcake, toast, tea and coffee.

LUNCHEON

Baked Welsh rarebit, French fried potatoes, pulled bread, fruit salad, graham crackers and anchovy paste, berries and cream, ladyfingers, tea.

DINNER

"Scrap" vegetable soup, rolled beefsteak with onion sauce, sea kale, stuffed potatoes, baked custard, black coffee.