

## THE MAIL

A PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE.

## HOME TOPICS.

By Faith Rochester in the American Agriculturist.

## FLIES IN THE HOUSE.

Yes, I think I see them—in your house, perhaps, but not in mine. For I write this before the flies have fairly begun to come, and when you read it they will be buzzing about in the most disagreeable and impudent manner in dwellings where no care has been taken to keep them out. I have never taken much pains in this respect, but I have suffered the penalty for former neglect until I have resolved to bear it no longer. I have said that I would rather take the bother of the flies than the worry of keeping them out of the house, but now we are all agreed to make an effort to have comfortable rooms all through the house. We have netting on all of the windows, cellar included, and netting on outside doors, with springs to make these shut themselves. It is worth a great effort to have a decent table and eat without quarreling with the flies, to have a quiet place where baby can take his naps in peace, and to have your own early morning dreams undisturbed by buzzing crawling insects. We are now ready for the flies now, and I do not think more than half a dozen have got into the house as yet. We shall hunt them down, and if necessary I shall set occasional traps to catch them. For this purpose I have never had anything better than a tumbler partly full of soap suds covered with a slice of bread cut fit over the top, with a hole in the center of the bread smeared with molasses, and with molasses on the under side of the slice. The flies crowd together to feed upon the molasses and tumble into the suds and down.

## WHERE DO FLIES COME FROM?

The economy of Nature is very wonderful. They tell us that the mission of flies is to feed upon poisonous matter in the air. They breed in filth and thrive in unclean atmospheres. Then the spiders come to catch the flies. It is hardly a personal matter. Where dwellings are far apart, and the whole neighborhood is cleanly from a sanitary point of view, flies will be scarce, but they will come into your house and annoy you in various ways, however nice your house-keeping, if there are breeding places for flies near by, and if the air that circulates through your house shares the impurity common to the neighborhood. So you can never afford to attend to your own premises and your own family alone. It is minding your own business to keep an eye on the whole neighborhood. You must not be too busy, and meddling with other people's affairs, but after you have made sure of setting a good example, try to have every one around you enlightened somehow in regard to healthful living—the necessity for pure air, pure water, and a careful disposal of all waste matter, so that it may not become a nuisance and a poison. Flies come from in and out of doors. They come from the stables, the compost heaps, the pigpens, and other outhouses. They seem to spend considerable time and pains cleaning their feet, but the more I think of it, the more strongly I object to their presence in my rooms. They breed fast, and each one may become a parent and grandparent of countless hosts in a single season.

## A WORD ABOUT PIES.

I am glad to let "pies 'n things" pretty much alone, but we do like a good wholesome pie now and then. We never use lard for shortening, and seldom have more than one grade of butter, and that the best we can get, though not necessarily the most expensive in the market. For instance, if a neighbor who makes it to sell to one regular customer, who pays her the same price the year round, however the market rate may fluctuate, I do not buy her butter, and she does not use it herself, but she sells me frankly that the butter which her husband buys in the country for her is more than what she gets for her own butter, is every bit as good as hers. I think so myself, having tried both, but her reputation for care and neatness commands the extra price from her wealthy and particular customer. With good butter for shortening, and not too much of it, pie crust is good and not unwholesome, and cream crust is better still. But the common lard pie crust seems to be a sheer abomination as many housekeepers make it. They use too much shortening, and in an unskillful manner, and the taste of the lard spoils the flavor of the pie. It is the same with the children refuse to eat with a wonder how other people can eat it, and why any one ever makes it. They think mamma's pies, even when made with graham flour in the crust, are very much nicer, and certainly no stomach has ever been hurt by them. I use a very little baking powder in the crust mix, and a pinch of salt, but do not knead it, roll it thin, and bake the pie slowly and thoroughly. Several times I have seen complaints about pies running over in the oven, or directions for avoiding this catastrophe. The well baked rhubarb or pie-plant pie just taken from the oven did not run over a particle, and this is the way we do it: Slice the stalks half an inch long, sugar very plentifully (a teaspoonful to a large pie), but do not add a drop of water. Wet the edge of the under crust all around and pinch down the upper crust tight upon it. Then have the heat of the oven very moderate, just sufficient to keep the pie baking and no more. An hour is not too long to bake a rhubarb pie, or a pie filled with berries, but a hot oven would boil over the juice and burn the crust in that time.

## PLAIN SWEET BISCUIT.

A cup of sour cream, with half a teaspoonful of soda, one cup of sugar, one egg, a little nutmeg or cinnamon, and flour enough to make a soft dough. Mix very quickly, beating the egg first and putting the dissolved soda and sour cream together last. Roll out half an inch or a little more in thickness, cut into small biscuits and bake quickly. If your cream is only milk, make up the deficiency by a good tablespoonful of butter. These are good made with graham flour. Thick old-fashioned cookies like these are much better for the children (and for me) than crisp cookies with more butter and eggs.

## HOW MUCH SODA?

I have before this given the proportion as they were taught to me by careful cooks—a level teaspoonful of soda to one even teaspoonful of sour milk or buttermilk. This is a smaller proportion of soda than has been advised by another contributor to these pages. But I have been astonished to hear, and to learn by experiment, that only half as

much, or one-half of a level teaspoonful of soda to a teaspoonful of sour milk, is even better, and now I never use more, as I find that this amount perfectly neutralizes the acid in the milk and makes my biscuits and cakes even lighter than before, it seems to me, I am more than ever convinced that it is best to steer pretty clear of the use of soda, and this can be done, without failing back on baking powder too. But both are handy to have on hand to use occasionally.

## HOUSEHOLD HELPS.

Farmers wives generally have the pity and commiseration of every class of society. Thanks, we don't ask your sympathy, we need not have such woful hard times. Any woman by calculating, and using a good deal of tact may very often diminish her work by half. See each day that things are in order for the getting of an easy breakfast; if it is to be potatoes, have them nicely prepared beforehand—meat and every such thing as possibly the table set, etc., have a nice clean cover for it, and don't be guilty of sweeping just the last thing before covering your table. So many people cook and eat in the same room; if you wish to do yourself great credit with your meals, do have them in a cool room. They will look, taste, and be better than if they must be eaten in a room so warm that if they must be eaten in a room so warm that it almost stifles one to enter. Can you not arrange it some way? Have you not some boards that will do first class to make a summer kitchen large enough for your stove? You will surely find some. If you cannot possibly do better set your table in the sitting room; yes, even if it is newly papered this spring. Have a coarse piece of canvas spread over the carpet before putting out the table, and one can afford to sacrifice something to secure comfort these days when we get so weary under a tropical sun. We seldom cook anything for tea—do all that in the morning—make tea at noon, and have it cold and arrange it so as to have cold meat and even cold vegetables. "Your men folks won't eat such a meal?" Well try it. Perhaps ours have been educated to it, but they really prefer it. I really enjoy your hints, for nothing is more annoying than the tedious buzzing of flies, and how much work they make. Mosquito netting costs but little, though if one has the wire screen it will last long enough to pay the difference. Early in the morning darken all the windows and doors except one sunny door; the flies will soon alight on the screen, and you can brush them out easily. You will find you can get them nearly all out, and it is such tiresome work to fight flies the way some do. If you can take the time to lie down, if only for twenty minutes in the afternoon, it will be time well invested you will find.

ESTHER RAY.

## GENERAL RULES FOR BATHING.

1. No bath should be taken on a full stomach. All full baths, as a tub bath, wash tub, or shower, should be taken within less than three or four hours after a full meal; in other words, not until the food is full digested. Local baths may be given in an hour or two, always being careful to keep the temperature of the patient well balanced. The water may be applied any time when it can be done with comfort.

2. No one should eat within less than an hour after a full bath, or half an hour after a local or partial bath, so that the system may have time to react before it is called upon to digest food.

3. All who are able should take some exercise before bathing, unless the bath is comfortably warm at the time; but if it is necessary to get in a bath when feeling chilly and cool, do not use a hot bath at first; it will excite action too suddenly. Begin with the water comfortable; heat it up as desired, until perfectly warm, then cool quickly, but not too cold or too suddenly, though it should be cool enough to produce a good action to the surface.

No strong shock should ever be made upon the head. Persons who have a well balanced circulation may take the shower bath or full douche with benefit, but should never be let to cool too suddenly upon the head. There is no objection to bathing when the body is warm and perspiring, unless there is great exhaustion. Wetting the head and even the chest is a useful precaution before taking any full bath.

## OLD FURNITURE.

As a nation, we are not a lover of old things, but we run after those that are novel. We set to one side, anything that is old and say it has had its day. This spirit is execrable in many things, such as machinery, where rapid progress is made, but it has been carried into all departments of life, and too often in the American youth, extends to a proverbial disregard for his aged superiors. In this general disrespect for aged persons and things, one of its most painful manifestations is the putting out of sight of all old furniture. It is a sorry thing to go into many of the garrets and sheds of country and other houses, and find piled away there, so many articles that were the care and comfort of the former generations of the family. Commendable as it is to reject chairs with those now in use—they are as substantial and easy, and above all, they should be dear to us in memories—we should love the things that our grandfather made, and our grandmother had in daily use—we should keep the old sofa in its appropriate place, where we may rest our weary limbs, and live over the early days of the past, and should we fall into a reverie, and see in our day dream our good old grandmother, who first folded our little hands to rest on the same old sofa, we should be none the worse for it.

## MARRIAGE BY THE MICROSCOPE.

Dr. Heitzman tells us that marriages should be allowed in doubtful cases only upon the permit of a reliable microscopist. "Last season," he says, "a young physician asked me whether I believed in the marriage among kindred. He had fallen in love with his cousin, and his cousin with him. I examined his blood, and told him that he was a nervous man, passing sleepless nights, and having a moderately good constitution. The similar condition being suspected in the lady, marriage was not advised, for fear of degenerate offspring. So great was his faith in my assertions, that he gave up the idea of marrying his cousin, offering her the last chance—viz., the examination of her blood. This beautiful girl came to my laboratory, and, very much to my surprise, I found, on my examination, her blood of first-class constitution. The next day I told the gentleman, 'You had better marry her.'"

DRESS WASH.—A very nice thing for a lady to keep is a bottle of this on her dressing table always, for little spots on her garments: One quart of boiling water, half an ounce of camphor, one ounce of borax; after cooling, half a pint of alcohol.

## LITTLE PEOPLE.

"Mamma," said a little girl, "when you went to heaven to get me did you pick out the prettiest baby on God's floor?" Of course mamma said yes.

A little boy watching his father ad just a billiard table with a spirit level. After the old man had finished the job he remarked: "Now, pa, see if my head is level."

A mother saw her little daughter draw her sleeve across her mouth, and said: "Tilly, what is your handkerchief for?" "To flirt with, mamma," was the innocent reply.—Oil City Derrick.

The little one made a beautiful answer without knowing it. "What! kiss such a homely man as papa!" said the mother, in fun. "Oh! but papa is real pretty in his heart!" was the reply.

The little child, who had just broken out with the chicken-pox, is asked by its mother: "What do you think papa will say when he sees his darling little girl in such a plight?" "Oh, I suppose he'll say, 'Why, damme! it's too bad.'"

A naughty little girl was playing in a room where her grandma sat, when a heavy shower came up, and a terrible peal of thunder broke upon their ears. "Mamma," said grandma, "God is calling you—do you hear?" "Yes," replied Mattie, the incorrigible; "but you tell Dad I can't come now—I'm too busy."

A well-known liberal clergyman relates that, lately, talking to some youngsters on the necessity of kindness to animals, he incidentally remarked: "Boys, you often cruel to toads and frogs. Remember of a boy wickedly filling a toad with fire-crackers and lighting the slow-match." He was horrified to see this remark received with the liveliest emotion of interest and delight, and was utterly prostrated as he passed, out hearing one urchin say to another, "By jinks! that's a new note. Won't we have fun blowing up the bull-paddies down in the medder?"

A lady was the mother of a bright little boy about three years old. The whooping cough prevailed in their neighborhood, and the mother became very much alarmed lest the boy should catch it. She talked so much about it, and worried over it, that she had infected the child with her fears to such an extent that he would scarcely leave her side. One night after the little fellow had been put to bed and to sleep, a jackass was driven past the house, and when just opposite set up his he-baw. With a shriek the little fellow was out of bed, screaming at the top of his voice: "The whooping cough is coming, mamma; the whooping cough is coming."

## WASHING DISHES.

Little Housekeeper.

Question—What is the first thing little children should learn about house-keeping?

Answer—To wash dishes.

Q—What three things are necessary in order to wash these dishes properly?

A—Well scraped dishes, hot suds, and proper towels.

Q—How do you collect dishes?

A—Collect the silver in a pitcher of hot water, throw the cold water from the glasses, rinse the cups, and scrape each plate separately, and place in a pile.

Q—How do you make hot suds?

A—Put a piece of soap on a fork, and stir it briskly in the water.

Q—What are proper towels?

A—Clean, dry towels. We must use the fine towels for the glasses and silver; the coarse towels for the plates and other dishes.

Q—In what order do you wash dishes?

A—First the glasses, then the silver, the pitchers, cups, saucers, plates, and other dishes.

Q—How should you rinse dishes?

A—In clear, hot water.

## DOMESTIC THUNDER STORMS.

Robert Collyer.

Not many lovers, I suppose, have found that their wedded life answered quite to the dreams of their courtship—not quiet, wine and roses. Yet who would enter a complaint against heaven because May does not quite match with October? If my experience can be of any use, I think a thunder storm, so it was not to do mischief, may sometimes clear the atmosphere under the roof about as well as it does outside. And so were an I of the blessing that when I hear people say they have lived together five and twenty years and never had the least difference, I wonder if they have not had a great deal of indifference. It is the lesson we have to learn, too, through our saddest and most painful bereavements.

## SURE CURE FOR WARTS.

The following receipt taken from the Waterloo Observer ought to be saved: Tie some beans in a little bag, rub the bag on the warts, wipe the warts' back with the bag on top of your head while you wish three times, write the wishes on a fly leaf from last year's dictionary, and wrap the bean bag in the paper, sit on it two hours while mentally repeating the U. S. Constitution, and then hide the bag. By following this simple formula, warts will go off, provide the condition are right.

SICK HEADACHE.—This distressing complaint is generally relieved by soaking the feet in very warm water, in which a spoonful of powdered mustard has been stirred. Soak as long as possible, or till the water gets cool; it draws the blood from the head.

REPELLING MOTHS.—If fine cut tobacco be sprinkled under the edge of carpets, and under those places where bureaus, bookcases and the like make it dark, the moths will be prevented from laying their eggs in them, as it will drive them away.

## Indigestion.

The main cause of nervousness is indigestion, and that is caused by weakness of the stomach. No one can have sound nerves and good health without using Hop Bitters to strengthen the stomach, purify the blood, and keep the liver and kidneys active, to carry off all the poisonous and waste matter of the system. See other column.

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