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HOMELY COUNSELS



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HOMELY COUNSELS

TO HELP THE

Wives, Mothers and Daughters of Ireland.

PART I

HINTS ON HOUSEKEEPING.

THERE ARE MANY MANUALS which treat of the care of a household. There are elaborate collections of recipes for dainty dishes. There are cookery books of late and early date. But this booklet merely aims at giving a few "Hints" that can be comprised in the exceedingly limited space at our disposal, in order to put its readers on the track of the safe and wise and heaven-guarded path, which a woman finds when she devotes herself to the task of being the centre of a holy and happy home. Riches are not needed for this nor, of course, are we addressing ourselves to rich people, though many a noble-minded and generous woman who enjoys a full measure of this world's goods willingly learns from any available source how to rule her household economically and prudently, that she may have more to spare for God's Church and His poor, without disappointing her family and friends of any of the pleasures and comforts they claim.

THE FOUNDATION.

"HOUSEKEEPING"—it is said—"is an art, and, like all other arts, has to be learned; but the laying out of the housekeeping money is something quite different, for it is largely influenced by the temperament and character of the spender."

For a girl or woman gifted with a naturally cautious disposition there is little to be feared in the way of debt and difficulty as far as she, herself, is concerned. She will draw up her list of weekly incomings and the weekly out-

Avoid Debt. goings, and will find out many ways of making them tally. She will dread unpaid bills, and will influence her family to feel uncomfortable about running up long accounts. *We strongly counsel every housekeeper to pay ready cash for every article if possible.*

Most women of this sort settle their bills weekly, unless discount is to be got by paying ready cash for the articles, for, though the discount may be small, it is astonishing how quickly a few pence here and there will amount up to shillings and how often pleasures can be purchased by these tiny savings—if they need not be hoarded up for the proverbial “rainy day.”

No one but those who have had to face an unforeseen call on their resources, caused by sickness, death, or a “bad season,” can realise the misery of being unprepared to meet it, the agony of seeing a husband or child, an old father or mother, suffering for want of what could be provided for them had the person who held the purse been thrifty and far-seeing.

The training on this point should be given by the mother, as early as possible, that the habit may be rooted in the children. Some think it a good plan to let each child have the beginning of a little income for his or her self when very young. Several parents make a practice of putting a pound or ten shillings into the Post Office Savings Bank, at stated times, according as their means allow, for each of their children, telling them that it is theirs, and that they may use the interest—usually a very small sum, indeed—at their discretion. This exercise of proprietorship, at an age when it can be wisely directed by the parents, is often a means of drawing out qualities that will be invaluable in after life—i.e., prudence, kindness, charity, good taste, and the selection of such pleasures as will elevate the mind or afford healthful recreation.

A principle that should be earnestly instilled into children’s minds is to *beware of borrowing*. Borrowing small sums easily has wrecked many a young man’s future. It is so convenient sometimes, for the moment, but the

Borrowing. repayment is such a long drag afterwards, when the money has accumulated. The borrower is often exposed to numberless annoyances and has recourse to wretched contrivances to ward off humiliations. True affection will do its utmost to set these worries before young eyes in good time, and thus save the young people sad and bitter hours afterwards.

“The present always levies its premium on the future, but no premium is so heavy and no future so blank as that of

the young couple who start their wedded life by borrowing money.”

The burden of being bread-winner to a growing-up family presses very heavily on a man whose wife won’t help him by being conscientious about money matters, and it is no wonder if his heart sinks when he looks at the helpless crowd gathering round him, and knows that the stress of supplying all their wants must fall on him without corresponding exertion on the mother’s part.

Children should be taught to be *considerate and patient*. The father should call their attention to the trouble and fatigue the mother goes through for them. He should point out the hours she has to spend mending and cleaning the clothes they tear and soil. He should desire and coax them to be thoughtful, and careful to second her anxiety to have them neat and cleanly.

On her side, the mother should impress on the children that true affection should be shown by practically remembering the father’s hard toil. Professional men lead wearing, constantly busy lives. Business men must work from morning till night if they are to make fortunes for their family. And the labourer is often a slave to the endeavour “to keep the home together.” If the children were gently reminded of this, there would be much less waste, much less grumbling at privations. The hearts of the Irish children are usually very loving, and can be worked on by kind pressure.

Therefore, let the foundation of real *housekeeping* be laid by an all-round tender effort to lighten the task; and let economy be mainly dictated by the love that can make self-denial sweet. Nothing is more likely to ensure a happy future for the children than if the parents quickly teach them the grand lesson of unselfishness.

A WORD FROM A WIFE.

“DEAR CLARA,—

“My experience is—do your own shopping, unless it is an absolute impossibility for you to go out. Otherwise you will often get just what it is most profitable for the shopkeeper to send, certainly not a good bargain for yourself. I find, for

instance, that the butcher has a knack of sending a larger joint than has been ordered if I leave the matter to him, so I choose it myself, and have it weighed before my eyes. You can often buy good 'pieces' very cheaply. If you select these carefully they will make a savoury meat pie, and, if you add vegetables, a nice nourishing stew. Take your daughters with you, when you go your rounds in the shops, and train them, by degrees, to represent you.

"I am greatly in favour of an occasional fish dinner. It is a good change of diet for most people, especially for children. But be careful that the fish is fresh. Stale fish is most injurious. I would advise you to give a substantial pudding after a fish dinner. If you save your stale bread, and take the pains to find nice flavourings for a bread pudding, it is a very cheap sweet. A few raisins sprinkled through it will please the children. Currants are not wholesome. A rice pudding is a favourite of mine. I often flavour it with orange peel, and scatter some raisins through it. Sometimes I dissolve a few threads of saffron in warm water, and mix with the rice, but saffron is a dear commodity.

"My children have porridge three times a week, and like it. It is impossible for children to take their plain meals with appetite if they are allowed cakes, biscuits, or sweets at intervals during the day. If you regulate their diet sensibly they will be ready for simple strengthening food, and you will not be troubled with many doctor's bills, as a rule. Give the little ones plenty of milk, in one form or another, and in summer let them have more fruit and vegetables than meat.

"I don't forbid cakes, but I make my own. It is a hobby of mine. I can't afford expensive materials, and still, with care in the mixing and baking, my cakes are enjoyed by grown people.

"I have no trouble in satisfying my husband, as he prefers well-prepared plain dishes to dainties, and these I excel in—the cooking of chops, steak, and rashers and eggs being a speciality of mine. For many a day I was obliged to martyr myself over the kitchen fire, turning the chops, etc., but now, at last, I have succeeded in training a servant who takes pride in doing the plain cooking as well as myself. There is no use in telling me any woman cannot send up a good plain dinner. She *can*, if she will take pains, and certainly, that much is

due to the man who works as hard to provide everything for us as my husband does.

"To turn to another branch. The children seem to be in continual want of some new garment. Buy them the most serviceable, *stoutly woven* clothes you can afford. Flimsy material speedily becomes a rag on the youngsters. I am not 'a born milliner or dressmaker.' However, a young friend of mine, who is quite gifted in these matters, though she does not need to economise, showed me how to cut ordinary dresses and over-alls for children, and I can turn out any number according to her plan.

"I must say here that there is an amount of kindly helpfulness to be met with, if one is not too foolishly proud or shy to seek it. Hardly any woman is without a friend who has not the slightest objection to trim a hat or manufacture a toque, and thus save a good deal for a less *handy* acquaintance.

"But as to children, let them be dressed simply. Don't yield to your fancy for decking them like dolls, except, perhaps, once in a while. They have to be on their best behaviour in fine clothes, and, if not, it will be no small trial to you to find their pretty things completely spoiled after one day's outing.

"Let one of your first investments when setting up house be a *sewing machine*. It is sure to save time, temper, and money. Don't throw away clothes until you are sure they can't be turned to account. More than once my own used-up skirt has been converted into a perfectly presentable dress for one of my little girls; and my friends never seem to think the worse of me for consulting them about such expedients. I should like to add that I cannot bear to think that a woman is indifferent to her husband or brother being shabby, although men's clothes are rather expensive.

"The laundry bill runs away with a handful of money. I have engaged a woman to do the bulk of the washing for me. If I had not lighted on Kate Fisher, I would have made arrangements to have my washing done at home. Collars, cuffs, ties, etc., I generally manage to attend to myself, and I am teaching my little girls to help me.

"Think of five of us to be housed and fed on a small income. I assure you every penny is of importance in cases like ours

HOMELY COUNSELS

And yet we don't rank among the poor. My husband's earnings by extra writing are very precious. Were it not that he is so devoted to us, it would be a struggle almost beyond my powers to make ends meet.—Your old friend,

“SARAH.”

A USEFUL TIME-TABLE FOR COOKING.

BAKING.

Beef.—Sirloin, underdone—Eight to ten minutes per pound.

Beef.—Well-done—Twelve to fifteen minutes per pound.

Beef.—Fillet—Twenty to thirty minutes per pound.

Beef.—Boiled Rib—Twelve to fifteen minutes per pound.

Mutton.—Underdone—Ten minutes per pound.

Mutton.—Well-done—Fifteen minutes per pound.

Pork.—Well-done—Fifteen minutes per pound.

Chicken.—Three to four pounds—One hour to an hour and a-half.

Duck.—Forty to sixty minutes.

Fish.—Six to eight pounds—One hour.

Potatoes.—Thirty to forty-five minutes.

Pudding.—Bread, rice, tapioca—one hour.

Pudding.—Plum—Two to three hours.

Pie-crust.—Thirty to forty minutes.

Custards.—Fifteen to twenty minutes.

BOILING.

Chickens.—Twenty minutes.

Chops.—Eight minutes.

Steak.—Five to eight minutes.

Fish.—Five to fifteen minutes.

FRYING.

Bacon.—Three to five minutes.

Breaded Chops.—Five to six minutes.

Fish Balls.—One minute.

Small Fish.—Two to three minutes.

HOMELY COUNSELS

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

One pint of liquid equals one pound and a quarter.

Two gills of liquid equal one cup or half a pint.

Two round tablespoonfuls of flour equal one ounce.

Four ordinary cups of bread-flour equal about one pound.

One breakfast cup of butter equals about half a pound.

One pintful of butter equals one pound.

One tablespoonful of butter equals one ounce.

Butter size of an egg equals two ounces.

Two and a half cups of powdered sugar equals one pound.

It is suggested that steamed veal is the only digestible way of cooking this meat for young children. A small knuckle of veal, carefully wiped, dusted with pepper and salt, wrapped in a clean cloth, and steamed for four hours in a double saucepan, filled outside with boiling water, is considered a nice dish. Serve with good parsley sauce.

Stewed beef, with carrots, turnips, and celery, is a favourite dish everywhere. Another general favourite is boiled leg of mutton, always, if at all possible, to be accompanied by vegetables. It is well to ascertain the tastes of the elders of a family as to meat being underdone or well-done, and regulate accordingly.

SOUP.

Accustom the children to relish good, plain soup. It will often be found valuable, hereafter, by taking the place of a glass of some heating stimulant, on a cold day. And it will be a substitute especially, in the case of women and girls, for the repeated cups of tea or coffee, which is by no means desirable for nervously-constituted people.

Some prefer mutton broth, which can be made very nutritious by careful cooking.

Take pains to flavour the soup nicely for grown people. Try different sorts of herbs, and ask them which they prefer—thyme, etc.

Be sure to skim the soup, and serve it in perfectly clean vessels—let them be plates, bowls, cups or mugs. Grease, and a clammy bowl or cup, down which the soup has spilled on the outside, has often disgusted a person who would otherwise find the soup a good portion of a meal.

If your soup is liked by the family you will find that you can provide it very economically by watching that no scraps of meat or bones are thrown out, and by using vegetables in it, judiciously. Your soup-pot should be the first thing attended to, after the kitchen is set in order in the morning.

VEGETABLES.

Some women, who, otherwise, are fair cooks, are neglectful as to boiling vegetables properly. They are sent to table either sodden or half raw. This remark chiefly applies to potatoes, cauliflowers, turnips, carrots and parsnips. We have repeatedly seen dishes of these sent away, almost untouched, for want of sufficient boiling. As it is so easy to make sure that they are fit to be eaten, there is no excuse for such waste. Where it is a servant who is in fault she should be spoken to at once, and should have it pointed out to her that one of the truest maxims ever handed down to us is that "wilful waste makes woeful want." The people who are actually wasteful are not always the sufferers; but, even if they themselves escape, it is seldom that their descendants do not feel the effects of the past extravagance.

Be sure to wash vegetables thoroughly. They are so important an article of diet, that the time is not lost in making them appetising. Some people, in every rank of life, are easily disgusted with things which do not much affect others, and intolerable loathing of a very useful vegetable—i.e., cabbage, with all its varieties—has followed the finding of a caterpillar or a snail in a dish at table.

Don't be careless in buying your vegetables. Let the green-grocer see you understand the difference between fresh and stale. It is too common a practice among the poor for a little child to be sent to buy a couple of pence-worth of whatever "green stuff" the dealer likes to get rid of.

Spanish onions and the common onion are among the most wholesome of vegetables. The former vegetable deserves to be more generally used than it is, in Ireland. Celery, also, is excellent for purifying the blood, and is recommended for rheumatic persons.

Some are fond of plain salad, without any dressing, except

such condiments as are in every cruet-stand—mustard and vinegar.

Watercress is often greatly liked at breakfast; it should be well-washed in salt and water. When sandwiches are made with hard-boiled eggs, a layer of watercress is often spread on top.

HUMBLE HOMES.

Even where there are trained servants for various duties, the eye of the mistress is most necessary over each department, for, if she is heedless, many things will go wrong. But costly belongings are not neglected with impunity, and money ensures the cleanliness and brightness, which are the elements of luxury.

Very different are the cases when the whole work is to be done by one servant, or, a step lower, when the wife and mother has the burden entirely on her own shoulders. With all that, when she has health and goodwill, the

Cleanliness. little home can be kept very neat and comfortable. Her first care must be to remember that "Dust is positively dangerous to the health of a family." People may be inclined to smile at that statement, but doctors can tell them it is true.

Children who live in dusty, dirty houses, may appear to thrive, sometimes; but of late years it has been discovered that the mortality among the children of the poor would be amazingly decreased if the homes were kept clean and well aired. Here we do not allude to the germs of delicacy and disease, but to sweeping and dusting, and the admission of fresh air.

If every wife in poor circumstances, would make it her inevitable rule to *sweep* her couple of rooms, or her cottage, thoroughly, every morning, and *dust* them thoroughly also, she would be more than repaid by the feeling of comfort that cleanliness never fails to bring. Sound sleep is induced by cleanliness; it is the best preventive of skin diseases, and the other unwholesome and troublesome signs of neglect—the unpleasant odour of perspiration from the body, etc.; and annoying insects—could not exist among the poor any more than they do among the rich, if the cleanliness *which costs nothing* were attended to.

Over and over again children have been pointed out to us who were pale and puny, and cross-looking, until an experienced visitor coaxed the mother or elder sister to give the little ones a thorough bathing, and combing or brushing. A week later, these same children have been so much improved in healthful appearance as if they had gone through a course of medical treatment. And, in all probability, the habit of cleanliness will be formed in them for life. They will not encounter the discomforts of dirt, without repugnance.

Going a step beyond this, the very humblest home may be beautified in a humble way. There are many kind, charitable hearts which warm to the poor who try to show the best side of their lot. Besides, the goodness of *the poor to the poor* meets us at every turn. A carpenter will rarely refuse to help a friend to make a handy seat out of a box or pieces of wood. A gardener will spare a few cuttings of plants and never miss them. You may say a man or woman has "no spirit" to look after such things in the midst of grinding poverty. If so—and those who are devoted to the poor for God's sake know what truth there is in that observation—would not some who are not so spiritless and so overweighted gently bring a few pleasures or conveniences into the dark, dingy palces.

All the plans and organizations for the bettering of the Irish homes, and their inhabitants, will be more or less failures unless each set of people who are grouped together, in a village or in a street, will use their own heads and hands in cleansing and brightening the little spot they occupy.

TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

One great sorrow attendant on poverty is that it so continually interferes with the proper training of the children, who are to be the future life and strength of the country. Remember that the training, to mould the character for good or evil, begins as soon as the infant can distinguish one person from another. If its awakening to consciousness is guided by the patience, gentleness, and firmness of the parents, a good impression will, with the help of God, be stamped on the child's mind from the start.

Next come the three golden lessons which can be taught

almost in the dawn of childhood—*piety, obedience, and truthfulness*. Let the child be grounded in these, while it is still

Three Golden Lessons.

like soft wax in the parents' hands, and only God and the angels can tell how much has been done to secure its peace and prosperity on earth and its happiness in heaven. Many a father, whose head was bowed with shame

in his old age, through the crimes of his son; many a mother whose beautiful daughter became her heaviest trial, could have averted all this sin and all this sorrow if they had been the first and best instructors of their children.

Before the children are old enough to go to school, they should be prepared for it by being *pious, obedient, and truthful* at home. To be pious is to have a religious reverence for things sacred and for all things worthy of veneration. What sad havoc is wrought in the child's spiritual nature by neglect of early training. It is almost impossible to supply the want afterwards. How readily, too, the little ones take in the first elements of their religious training! Moreover, impressions made upon the sensitive and receptive minds of children are so lasting! The direction given by the good mother to the thoughts and affections of the curly-headed little youngster of seven—so merry and yet so full of wonderment and seriousness—will shape the reflections of the heavy head on which seventy winters have "cast their snows."

Through the practice of obedience, virtue after virtue can be planted in the children's souls—*gentleness, forbearance, industry, honesty*. It is cruel to allow the child to indulge its passions—cruel not to lay a strong hand on bursts of anger, fits of idleness, and small thefts. Try to look forward to the future of the child—the time when these little faults may have grown into the sins which startle us, day by day.

And, thirdly, give the promptest correction for *the first lie*. Paint it, as it deserves to be painted, as not alone offensive to God, but so despicable, so degrading, that men who are indifferent to other accusations, feel the hot

Lying.

blood boiling in their veins when they are suspected of having told a lie. Tell the children, too, that the liar's course is a miserable endeavour to keep himself supplied with lies to escape detection, and that

in the end he never does escape it. Human cleverness is not equal to the task, and the Spirit of Truth above is arrayed against the liar. A disposition which deludes friends for a while is that of the easy-going character, aiming at being generally popular, and slipping into habits of equivocation in order to please or ward off blame. A year or so of acquaintanceship may pass off well, and then, by degrees, the backslidings come to light, and the windings and twistings are found to be the chosen way of "getting out of a scrape," or "getting into favour"—and it is hard, or rather impossible to human nature to repress contempt for the deceitful.

So much for the moral training which the most efficient of teachers cannot accomplish as the parents can. Let that groundwork be solidly laid, and lessons and accomplishments will be successfully attended to, at school.

A special word to the poorer classes. It is not in the power of measures brought forward by Parliament; it is not in the power of a "Compulsory Act"; it is not in the power of multiplied inspectors to carry on the education of your children. It is in your own power; and for your own happiness and theirs, to guide them to take advantage of what good, true-hearted men and women are longing to do for the children of Ireland.

You are free to let their undoubted intelligence, the undoubted talent of the Irish race, be drawn into an honoured place. You are responsible to God, to Ireland, to your children, if through carelessness, selfishness, or any other motive, you do not first bestow on them the invaluable training they can find in a holy, well-guarded home, and afterwards encourage them to profit to the utmost of their abilities by the teaching within their reach in our Irish schools.

Interest them, also, in reading, in gardening, in carpentry, in any pursuit within your means to forward. Let them have their pets, if you possibly can—their cat, dog, bird, etc. Be *one* with them in their tasks and their poor little amusements. and, no matter how sorely poverty, sickness, or death may press on you, there will be a blessing shining over the road to Him Who loved the children so fondly on earth, Who loves them just as tenderly on His Eternal Throne.

PART II.

GOD'S FAVOURITE FLOWERS.

SOME PAGES will be devoted in this part to encouraging girls to try to be "the light of the home, its joy, its comfort, its support . . . constantly learning something new, and using their knowledge, as they acquire it, for the good of all."

"Girls should be like daisies," said Ruskin, "daisies nice and white, with an edge of red, if you look close; making the ground bright wherever they are; knowing simply and gently that they do it, and are meant to do it, and that it would be very wrong if they didn't do it."

You will see at once we are not imagining that girls should all be showy, or distinguished, for the daisies are unpretending little flowers. But look into a daisy attentively, and you will note the perfect, sweet, innocent beauty, that wins a sort of tender love for the fair little blossom. It is the same everywhere, ready to spring up and be bright-faced everywhere. Others flowers are confined to special spheres—gardens or conservatories—but the daisy is at home alike in the royal park or on the bleak common.

So are the many gentle-natured, winning girls springing up all over the wide earth, the same true hearts and thoughtful minds going on their lovely mission through so many different homes. They need guidance, one and all. Of course they do. Because, in addition to being bright and attractive, girls must, in one way or other, be *useful*, or they will never be happy. And seldom, indeed, is there so much of a tendency to usefulness or unbought wisdom in a girl's nature that she can afford to dispense with the careful cultivation of her dispositions by a prudent mother or an equally prudent friend.

In the first place, a girl, with the best intentions, is sometimes disposed to under-value what she can do in a commonplace home. To quote from a writer who longs to dwell on the point of usefulness: "Many a girl dreams of such an ideal as Florence Nightingale, and yet shrieks and runs out of the room if her little brother cuts his hand with a penknife, instead of

being the first to attend to the child. Another imagines herself of a heroic nature, ready to give up "all" for those she loves, but she is too indolent to save her delicate mother a walk upstairs for something that has been forgotten in the bedroom; or she will not overcome herself so far as to lay down a story, and offer to read the money-market article in the paper, so as to spare her father's tired eyes, while he lies back in his chair after a day's bending over his desk."

We might carry out the parallel with which we began so far as to call attention to the sunny opening of the daisies to meet the morning sun, for, in the case of the girls of a household this matter of early rising is important, especially when the father and brothers must leave home early. When the mistress or some substitute among her daughters is not up and about, the servant is seldom conscientious enough to do her part to have the breakfastroom well lighted, and well heated in winter, and the breakfast so carefully cooked as to make the master feel he is going off to work for those whose love will not neglect the least of his wants. Even when trained servants supply everything else, it is an essential difference to have a thoughtful hand and a happy face presiding over the first half hour, which is all that most men can enjoy of their homes until the evening rest.

Occasionally, unless he is a man who dislikes such a question, the father might be asked has he any choice as to the day's dinner. Some mothers prefer to keep the greater part of the housekeeping in their own hands, but when a mother likes to transfer it to her daughter, the latter can hardly believe, at the beginning, what interest she will be able to take in it, if she puts her heart into it at once.

For those who have no practice, "it is a good plan to sketch out, every Saturday, the fare for the coming week, and avoid having the same joint dressed the same way, on successive days."

A FEW SIMPLE DETAILS.

WE SPEND several of the twenty-four hours in bed, and as sleep is positively necessary for all, we cannot say that those who are not able to sleep unless they are "comfortable,"

should neglect the homely art of bedmaking. On rising throw the bed-clothes well over the foot of the bed, and when leaving the room open the window (if it has not been open all night), so as to allow a current of air to pass through the room freely. It would be well to turn the mattress. Insist on the nurse seeing to these directions in the children's presence, that they may grow up with the habit of giving the bed a thorough airing.

In each room, be sure to cover furniture, books, and ornaments with large light cloths, or newspapers, before sweeping. And one custom I would give the mistress and her daughters is—not to leave the dusting of their pretty bric-a-brac, statues, etc., to servants. A light task of this sort is healthful, and much annoyance, in the way of breakages, will be spared you, if you undertake it.

Referring to diligence in looking after all the household belongings, a writer says: "Wife means 'weaver.' You must all be either house-wives or house-moths. In the deep sense you must either weave men's fortunes and embroider them, or feed upon and bring them to decay. A house-moth will she certainly be as a wife who, in her father's house has lain passive as if she were in a chrysalis, and cared nothing for the preservation or renovation of what surrounded her."

The outside of a house often gives a very fair clue to the character of its inmates. We can almost tell what we may expect within if we come on dirty doorsteps, unpolished brasses, soiled, torn blinds or curtains and windows that have not been cleaned for months. It is no uncommon sight to see a finely-built house disfigured by such carelessness, while a trim cottage is a delight to the eye.

We would put in a strong plea for creepers trained over walls, particularly the lovely Virginia creeper, which grows fast, and is so gorgeously tinted in autumn. Ivy and Japonica will also grow in towns, and it is in town that the presence of a "bit of green" is a luxury. Be sure you will learn to love your nurslings dearly if you plant, and train, and watch them yourselves.

Virgin-cork is greatly liked for covering window-boxes for flowers. As to the flowers, no one can understand the fasci-

nation they exercise over those who tend them except the owners of a few pets. Every blossom or

Window-boxes.

fresh shoot becomes a treasure. Try hardy geraniums, musk, and hyacinths. Try crocuses in early spring. These are for the city

girls' windows. And for the fortunate ones who have a small garden to indulge in, in the suburbs, or the country, unless you do as much of the work it requires as you possibly can you will not know what it is to be fond of flowers.

You will make many mistakes in the rearing of them often, so begin with the strongest and commonest kind of plants. You *must* have roses. But have wallflowers, for the sake of their rich tints and their perfume. Have the popular bright narcissus, and the tall mountain daisy. Get some graceful waving grasses, such as "Indian Shot." And you will please most people by cultivating pansies, carnations, single poppies, the dwarf nasturtium, auriculas, and mignonette, also the favourite summer and winter chrysanthemums. A gardener or nurseryman is never out of reach, and no Irishman remains so churlish as to refuse his advice when a woman asks his opinion courteously, and shows herself grateful. You will be sure to find means of returning such kindness—not in coin, perhaps, but in even a fuller measure—without pecuniary cost to yourself; and let us impress on you to bear that acknowledgement in mind until an opportunity turns up; for young people often thoughtlessly avail themselves of the goodness of others, without any anxiety to gratify or benefit those who have obliged them.

Bulbs are planted in the autumn. March and April are the best months for sowing summer seeds. Seeds should not be sown too thickly, and should be carefully thinned after the plants appear, if they are too close. Mignonette *re-sows* itself. Add larkspur and phlox to the hardy annuals already mentioned, and your garden will have its season of brilliant bloom.

Doctors are inclined, now, to prescribe a walk in the open air before, or soon after breakfast. Some of the patients object to an aimless saunter. Will they turn into their garden, and try how the flowers look after the night, free from snails, etc., and take off the dead or dying leaves and blossoms,

which are injurious to the plants? Decided *exercise* is more approved of, but, certainly, this approach to it is better than lolling in bed or in an easy chair, in the morning.

HELPS IN NEED.

FOREMOST AMONG these we may place attention to invalids. No home is always free from illness, and in large families accidents are almost sure to occur. Be able to bandage a

Invalids. cut and manufacture a splint, until the doctor comes. Not long ago a life was saved by the very young mistress of a country house understanding how to stop the bleeding from an

artery in time. The doctor could not arrive for two or three hours, but all that was needful was promptly done by Mrs. N——, who had attended an ambulance class for a while, before her recent marriage.

For a sprain, bathe the injured part in hot water, give the strained muscle complete rest, and apply fomentations (that is cloths wrung out of hot water) at intervals. If it is the ankle that is sprained, raise the foot on a sofa or chair, and insist on the patient reclining until quite cured.

If a person faints, never allow the head to be raised on a cushion, as some one usually volunteers to do. Lay the patient flat on the floor with the head on a level with the feet, fainting being caused by an interruption of the supply of blood to the brain. Smelling salts may be used, and should these simple remedies fail, apply hot flannels or a bag of hot salt to the heart. Open window or door freely to admit fresh air, unfasten the clothes, and send away bystanders, if not of use.

Children often eat berries found in the hedges or on trees. Even the non-poisonous sorts are unwholesome, as a rule, and if there is the slightest fear of poisoning, give an emetic. For this, a teaspoonful of mustard blended in cold water, and stirred into a tumbler of tepid water is easily to be had.

Every grown girl should be told the names and symptoms of the common ailments, and shown how to treat them in members of her own family, by her mother or some experienced friend. It is one of the greatest acts of charity a woman can

perform to teach the poor how to nurse the sick, and to help them to get hospital treatment as soon as possible. Encourage them to take advantage of our splendid hospitals, for, with all the affection that can be lavished on the patient lying dangerously ill in a tenement room or a stifling cottage, the chances of recovery are small, and the recovery will, at least, be slow, in comparison to the cases that are put into the capable hands in the hospitals.

HOME SUNSHINE.

NO ONE who has not had to do with invalids can estimate the value of a sunny-tempered nurse, be she amateur or be she professional. It is a maxim that : " A good laugh is worth a hundred groans in any market." Of course, **Cheerfulness.** this brightness of disposition must be accompanied by extreme gentleness, while the patient is suffering, and the nurse must never make light of the sufferings of her charges, for illness usually makes one peculiarly sensitive.

But when all is well around us, " good humour is rightly reckoned an invaluable aid to happy home life." That girl is a treasure who, instead of moaning over things that are disagreeable, can send a ray of sunshine through a dreary day. She will not succeed in doing this continuously unless she has a higher support than earth can bestow, perpetually beside her.

Unless the sense of that Divine Presence, which is " our only helpful stay," and unless the Child Who laboured with the Virgin Mother of Nazareth are truly and lovingly welcomed into the home and heart, high spirits will droop at the blasts of grief, and the nimble fingers will have their periods of listlessness. Cheerfulness, if not fitful, has an element of holiness about it, for it argues a degree of patience, unselfishness, and resignation in the soul, and where shall these be found except in one who knows the way to the Health-giver and the Comforter above.

Not one of the duties or graces of life need be neglected by a girl on the plea that piety is the most precious gift bestowed on her. Rather, in the name of the Church to which we are

proud to belong, we would beg our young girls to utilise every talent and accomplishment so as to shed the lustre that catches the eyes of the world on their Christian homes.

These homes can be, and should be, centres of good taste and exquisite neatness, in the first place. Riches may not be in them, but something far more honourable and honoured than riches by any discerning observer—

Neatness. that is, refinement. The cheap accessories to the spotlessly-kept furniture can be carefully chosen—and how cheap and pretty these small " beauty spots " are nowadays! We have seen delicately-coloured fireplace screens for ninepence each, and bright stands or fancy tables for a shilling; charming vases for a few pence, and other etceteras within reach of those who with poorly-filled purses are true ladies.

Books! Who can be without the cream of literature now? Sixpence, or rather fourpence-halfpenny, provides you with what called for the expenditure of a guinea or upwards not long ago. Here again, it is only refined feelings that are required to make the bookshelves most attractive. The large bookselling firms supply constantly-renewed lists of second-hand books—numbers of masterpieces—at an astonishing reduction.

Music, too—meaning songs and pieces—is by no means the drain it was on scanty resources. You can have the very best—vocal and instrumental—at low rates. Is there any accomplishment that binds a family together more than music, if nearly all the members can join to form a home-band. We would say, in the case of parents with a limited income—make what efforts can be to have the eldest girl, who has taste for music, carefully taught from the beginning; don't give her an inferior teacher for the sake of economy, and don't deny her instruction in two or more instruments, if she has the ability for them.

But, lead her on then to repay what she owes to her younger brothers and sisters, and help her by supervision, encouragement, and praise, to be *their* teacher, until, perhaps, they get beyond what she can do for them. We have instances before us continually of professors of good standing congratulating pupils who came to them, on having been thoroughly

prepared for high musical classes by an elder sister. Remember, however, that the parents must support her authority as mistress of the younger ones, or her endeavours may be a failure. Instances of this come before us also.

Even more enjoyable to most people than instrumental music is singing—either solo or part singing. The love of singing is so rooted in the Irish heart that a girl must never look on it as lost time to cultivate her voice. Let her have much or let her have little, let her do her best with it, for it is a positive source of joy in an Irish home to possess one or more singers. An old clergyman, now dead, said that when his age gave him the liberty to make an advance he sometimes turned into a house where he heard what he thought was “family singing,” and that he never missed finding a welcome, from a happy united family, when father, mother, and children joined in a family concert. He believed a good work was done by making presents of good songs—not always pious “words,” but “words” that left an elevating sentiment sinking into the mind through the medium of the music.

And this brings forward another suggestion, namely, that girls should be ready to assist, if the clergy appeal to them in behalf of choirs, or ask them to teach hymns to poor children.

THE CHILDREN OF THE FAMILY.

ALREADY WE HAVE alluded to one decided advantage for “the children,” who have an accomplished elder sister. She is not so often required to teach them lessons, for schools abound,

but either mother or elder sister will do what **Homework.** teachers cannot do, if they will warm the children’s interest in tasks that must be dry to the little ones. It is a lonely feeling for a child to pore over book, or sum, or translation, etc., unnoticed, and apart from the elders, who, truly or not, the child believes are enjoying themselves. It creates such a different feeling if the school children are not abandoned when they go to study, and if readiness is shown to explain a difficulty, or hear the part that has been learned, and so to break the monotony of bending down to the work in silence.

The smallest flock claims its own share of attention. “Children love to be read to,” writes one who has studied them, and there is no lack of delightful books for them, some being as diverting to the readers as to the tiny listeners.

But, however entertaining all these may be, it must be in general that those tales are most to be valued which appeal to the religious instincts of the child, and help to elevate and purify its moral nature. Such books for children should be in every home, and should be used as means to raise the child’s affections to the things of the spiritual order. If the wants of the spiritual nature of children are not ministered to, formation in other directions will count for little.

However, little people get woefully tired of sitting still, and then arises the demand for games. Don’t despise it. If you twine their affections round you by pleasing their longings, you will be glad and happy in your influence over them in after years. If you have a safe, roomy spot, and the noise is not objected to, the youngsters always enjoy “Puss in the Corner,” “Blind Man’s Buff,” “Thread the Needle,” and “My Lady’s Toilet.”

Other children will change sometimes to the quieter pastimes of “Proverbs,” “Consequences,” and Riddles. Or, they will vary these with Draughts, Backgammon, or Old Maid.

Don’t forget the box of bricks for building, according to patterns or to taste, for both boys and girls. Try to train future smart needlewomen, by providing dolls and scraps for doll’s clothes, and let the boys have drawing slates, until one among them may be promoted to a drawing book, if his talent runs in that line.

It is no trifling matter, then, this seemingly unimportant item of *amusing the children*. And neither is the incessant exertion required to keep their clothes in nice order. Mothers could supply chronicles of the quiet devotion to duty that is exacted by the superintendents of home, especially if the state of the funds does not allow of a hired seamstress. Is there any modern invention more toil-saving to the mother of the class we treat of than a sewing machine? Let every girl familiarise herself with it in good time, and let her be taught to knit and crochet as soon as she can hold the needles.

SUPERINTENDENCE.

WE HAVE PRESUPPOSED the comparative freedom of the girls in our mind's eye through these pages from the actual weight of domestic labour. But they are not all dispensed from the duty of superintendence if they want to relieve their mother of a portion of it.

They are not seamstresses, but they will see to the repairing of the linen, and the thousand and one little "stitches in time," which make a vital difference in the yearly expenditure. They will trim hats, manufacture blouses, over-alls, and school suits. The more ambitious may extend their work to dresses for their own wear.

They are not housemaids, but their quick eyes and neat hands will impress the stamp of a lady-like household, in bedrooms and parlour, as well as in the drawingroom. They will not overtax the servant, but they will gently let her see what should be attended to, everywhere.

They are not cooks, but they are willing to employ themselves in the extra cookery, which otherwise might turn out a disappointment. They take lessons or take hints, here and there, in the preparation of sweets, and savouries, and cakes, and pastry. They also attend minutely to "invalid cookery," if there is a case of illness in the house. Beef tea, barley water, gruel, custards, and light puddings are safe in their hands, carefully prepared, and served to the invalid with that perfection of cleanliness which is prized beyond everything by the sick, who are fastidious.

And, if some readers call this a fancy picture, let us assure them that in every station there are women and girls of whose daily life this is a faithful portrait. Indeed, they far excel the sketch, rising, in their obscurity, to the queenship of those noble women who by their kindness, their prudence, their courage and their gentleness, reign in all hearts.

For it was not of the renowned ones of Israel—Debora, or Jael, or Judith—that it is written: "Who shall find a *valiant* woman?" It was not these shining glories who were commemorated in the Book of Truth, for we read: "She hath looked well to the ways of her *house*, and she hath not eaten her bread idle."

And then follows the record of her deeds.

"She hath sought wool and flax, and hath wrought by the counsel of her hands. . . . She hath opened her hand to the needy, and stretched out her hand to the poor. . . . She shall not fear for her house in the cold of the snow, for all her domestics are clothed with double garments. . . . She hath considered a field, and bought it; with the fruit of her hands she hath planted a vineyard. . . . She hath tasted and seen that her traffic is good. . . . She hath made for herself clothing of tapestry, fine linen and purple are her covering." Why this costly covering? Because "Her husband sitteth among the senators of the land." Yet she has richer garments, too, for "Strength and beauty are her covering." And sweet and serene she is, for "The law of clemency is on her tongue."

Therefore, concludes the voice of Wisdom: "Let her works praise her in the gates."

May we not say to the wives, mothers, and daughters of Ireland—"Go ye and do likewise."

"In the fitting up of a house, be sure to take pains to select a pretty wall-paper. No need to buy an expensive one, for the prettiest designs and most delicate colouring can be had now at a cheap rate. As some pieces which look uncommonly well in the hand are disappointing when hung up, we would advise that you should see some friend's rooms, with a view to your selection of paper, before you buy your own. And do attend particularly to the paper in your bedrooms, for, should an invalid occupy one of them, you will find a nicely-tinted paper, of no decided pattern, or at least one in which squares and diamonds are not introduced, is a great matter to be considered. Feverish patients are apt to embark on a process of perpetually counting these squares or diamonds, and the result is that the head becomes painfully bewildered."

Another beautifier of the home writes:—

"Above all things let your pictures be such as a judge of art can approve of. With the advances of late years, a few shillings can furnish you with really good copies of good pictures—either engravings or photos. For a modest sum you can get a splendid picture, one to be proud of—and one that you can turn to again and again with pleasure."

HOMELY COUNSELS

Be just as anxious to have in your bedroom devotional pictures—or scrolls containing the sacred words—that will both satisfy the eye and give comfort to the heart, and that will leave a sweet and gentle impression on the soul, giving it light in hours of darkness, and strength in moments of weakness, and comfort in the mournful commonplaces of sickness, sorrow and death, which come to all some day, and which are the inseparable portion of our trial and—if we be valiant—of our crown.

FOR YOUR HOME

Christ, King and Master of this House. A Card, 13in. x 10in., carried out in a beautifully coloured Celtic design, having a picture of the Sacred Heart and a Prayer asking His protection and blessing on the home and family. Price 3d., post free 4½d.

Our Lady of This House. A similar card to the foregoing, same size, asking Our Lady's intercession to ward off illness and trouble from the home and family. Price 3d., post free 4½d. *This Card can also be had printed in Irish.*

The Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart. Another multi-coloured card, 13in. x 10in., having the Twelve Promises of the Sacred Heart set out in bold decorative type. Price 3d., post free 4½d. *Also supplied printed in Irish.*

Family Certificate of the Apostleship of Prayer. Where all the members of the family are enrolled in the Apostleship of Prayer it is an admirable practise to enter all the names on the one Certificate and hang it in a prominent place in the home. This coloured Certificate costs 3d., post free 4½d. Mounted on cardboard and fitted with a ribbon for hanging, 6d., post free 8d.

Family Certificate for Consecrated Families. With the Act of Consecration of the Family and space for names. Price 3d., post free 4½d.

Any of the above when suitably framed cannot fail to beautify your home