

TUMBLE-DOWN FARM



CHAPTER I.

Nestling half way down the slope of one of our low Hampton hills stands a small farm house, which in my memory lay vacant for many years. The situation was bleak or pleasant according to the weather and season. Cold and dreary it must have been in a driving winter storm, with the snow whirling round the hills, the night wind rattling at the casement. Spring time, however, was not long in paying back winter's debt of dreariness. Thereabout the earlier primrose blew, and the sunshine had more light in it than the air a sweeter smell around that spot than anywhere in the neighborhood. Even now I, John Book, who have kept the chemist's shop in Hampton these many years, crawl up there sometimes, and taste the breath of spring, which runs into my blood like wine, and I feel something of the young man tingling in my crazy limbs. Garden and house, windows and ceilings, were all going to the bad together, and at last we called the place Tumbledown Farm; and we used to say that even the rats know better than to live in Tumbledown Farm.

One day, however, my boy, who was up to his eyes in gossip, came rushing in, basket in hand, and called out, "The farm's taken!"

"Tumbledown Farm?" I said. "Never!" "I've seen the people," cries he; "an old fellow in a nightcap and spectacles and a young lady."

"Heard the name, Bob?"

"Hardware."

Mysterious tenants these newcomers turned out. As for the old man, he scarcely ever went outside his little garden. He was tall, decrepit, with a long white beard and heavy spectacles, and seemed in wretched health. But his daughter came into the village almost every day, and soon became a well-known character.

She was a striking young woman, her age hardly more than twenty-two, but she looked six years older. Her figure was that of one in the fullness of womanhood, her neck and head wonderfully graceful. She was mindful of the beauty of her figure, and wore her shawl cleverly so as to set herself off; and she knew that she had a pretty pair of feet, and let other people know it too. Her step was quick, and her carriage lively and alert. She had the whitest skin possible, a handsome face boldly cut, and two dark eyes easier noticed than forgotten.

I admired this young woman's appearance, yet something in her manner gave me a turn against her. There was wickedness in her eyes—I express myself awkwardly, but my way of putting it is this: her eyes seemed such that, when you looked into them, your own were fastened for a moment, and in withdrawing your glance you seemed to draw the wicked eyes after you.

Our rector, who made a point of calling on every new parishioner, poor or rich, very soon found his way to Tumbledown Farm. I asked him one morning who they were, and all he could tell me was the name, which I knew already.

"The young woman is his daughter, I suppose?" I said.

"She is; he calls her Vanity," replied the rector.

"Stranger name for a Christian I ever heard," I remarked. "Miss Vanity Hardware—sounds odd enough. Well, Vanity is that Vanity does."

That name "Vanity Hardware" kept ringing in my ears, and made me more curious than ever to know something of the young woman who bore it. "Bide your time, John Book," said I to myself. "Everything will come to light if you wait long enough." And I was right.

Once or twice Mr. Hardware was seen in the village. He was very infirm, and used to drive in Jupp's fly. Hardware was tall, and looked venerable. He wore a brown cap with lappets over the ears and a long blue cloak with a cape. His hair you could scarcely see, but his beard was long and white; and his shoes were large, with knobs on the toes, which caught my eye as I watched him lumbering out of the village.

"Bunions," said I.

He could hardly rise from his seat, falling back twice, and helped out at last by his daughter and the flyman.

"Lumbago," said I again.

Then he was seized with a coughing fit that nearly shook him to pieces.

"Asthma," cried I the third time.

Almost immediately after, the father and daughter crossed over the street and entered my shop, he supporting himself on her arm, and leaning heavily on his stick besides. He fell into a chair with a great sigh of relief, and Miss Vanity came to the counter and made one or two purchases, the old man wheezing and stumbling to himself all the time.

In my little garden there was a blossomy sweet-smelling rose, which grew close beside a gnarled withered elder bush. Do you know, Miss Vanity, dainty and handsome and young, standing beside this grumbling Antiquity, made me think of the rose and the elder!

Now begins the story proper. Just as I was thinking of the rose and the elder, a young fellow, whom I dearly loved, named Willie Snow, stepped into my shop. He was in haste; so, with one of his easy, pleasant nods, he asked Miss Vanity to allow him to be served before her, upon which she drew aside. I marked her watching him while he stood leaning carelessly against the counter, as taking a young fellow as one would meet in a day's walk. There came over her face a look as if she would try to snare him, when she got a chance. She got the chance soon; for as Willie put the vial in his pocket he turned to thank her. She smiled and, having fixed her dark eyes upon him just for an instant, withdrew her gaze with an air of tender modesty that might melt any man's heart!

"Well done, Miss Vanity," thinks I. "Next to being beautiful, the prettiest thing in a pretty woman is to seem so."

But Willie, being not half my age, could not be expected to take the thing in this cool way. A light flashed in his soft gray eyes, and pleasure mingling their rays, and the color deepened on his cheek. He hesitated.

"Good—good—morning," said he, with stammering lips. "Thank you!" "You are very welcome."

Only four words, mark you. But how charming she looked! A thousand soft and winning beams played over her face, her voice had a melancholy ring, and her eyes drooped to the ground again. Accretion—actress, from her pretty cheek to her heart's core!

Willie seemed struck and dazed; he passed out silently, and she turned to me again. I filled her orders. Then the old man hobbled out to the fly, dragging at his daughter's arm. I must say she seemed kind to him. He managed to get seated, and the carriage door was fastened. The vehicle and the crazy old gentleman went off together, creaking and groaning, jolting and ejaculating. And I here declare to you that though I disliked that young woman and despised her artful ways, yet when she was gone out of the shop I felt as if the sunlight had gone with her.

CHAPTER II.

Willie Snow, taking him all round, was one of the finest young men I ever knew. When he was only fifteen his father, a bank clerk, died suddenly, leaving behind him a widow, one son and seventy pounds a year. Mrs. Snow lived decently on her income and gave her son a good education; and in due time he got a situation at an iron works in the city, where he rapidly rose in the esteem of his employers. Willie had been a good son, and when, a year before this time, his mother died, he showed remarkable sorrow. He was now in an excellent position. In addition to all this, he was good-looking. His eyes were clear gray; his hair dark and thrown across his left temple in becoming irregularity; he was tall, and a particular melancholy in his expression made his kind, frank smile very pleasant to see. I loved the lad—every one loved the lad, the girls especially. A more heart-breaking fellow you could not find in all the West of England; and he broke hearts for one reason, just because he never tried. He won the girls' affections everywhere—he who never troubled his head about love.

Have I said he did not trouble his head about love? I ought to qualify that statement; for just now he was on the point of being engaged to a thrifty managing girl, who had a small fortune of her own. This Miss Nancy Steele, of her own free will, fell desperately in love with Willie, and let him know it—cleverly, for she was clever in all things. I was not quite sure that he loved her back again, but the upshot was that affairs between the two were plainly nearing that point where the measure of the young woman's finger is taken. Only the final word had not been spoken. "The fish had nibbled, was hooked, and Miss Nancy was just gathering her wrist to swish him on to the land."

The evening of the day upon which Willie met Miss Vanity Hardware in my shop he looked in to see me. Something was on that young man's mind, and at last the secret came out.

"Singular old man I saw in your shop this morning."

"You thought so?" I replied.

"That young woman is his daughter, I suppose?"

"So I understand."

"Pretty sort of girl," he said, with make-believe indifference. "A very tolerable girl indeed."

"I call her a woman—full grown," said I, emphatically. "Knows more than nine men out of ten, I'll be bound."

A few days after Willie met Miss Vanity walking at her usual active pace, and looking as handsome as ever. The young man brushed like a girl fallen in love for the first time; the young woman preserved her easy air. Willie would have given a ten-pound note for any decent pretext under which he might have spoken to her. As a matter of fact, he stole only one sly glance in passing.

It was by no means easy to climb the fence of mystery that shut the Hardwares from public view. A gossip named Miss Axford was especially anxious to discover everything about them. Though nearly eighty years of age, she was still sharp and active. Morning by morning she went the round of the village, hearing all she could, telling all she could. Miss Axford, as I have said, ran crazy about the Hardwares. One day she looked in, fluttering with excitement.

"I have heard some news at last," she cried.

"What may it be, ma'am?"

"He drinks!"

"Old man?"

"Yes. Two dozen bottles of gin went up there last week—cordial gin. He is an old sot—a brute beast!" cried Miss Axford. "Strange old lady! But I have not inserted her bit of news merely to fill up the page. That would be bad story telling. No, long enough after, on one awful day, I remembered Miss Axford and her discovery about the quarts of cordial gin."

CHAPTER III.

Meanwhile Willie Snow worked as hard as any man to get at the secret. Still he found out nothing. His evening walk, however, was always uphill now. I dare say the sharp eyes of Vanity Hardware soon noticed him strolling past the farm evening after evening, for after a time she grew more marked in her signs of kindness. She met him occasionally on the unfrequented road; and how those dark staring eyes set his honest young heart beating none but himself knew.

On a particular evening in June, Willie pursued his upward way, coming to a turn of the road where on either side ran tall hedges, pink and white with flowers,

that made the sunset air sweet like honey from their thousand breathing blossoms. Who should he see here but Miss Hardware. Of course she did not know he was near, innocent girl! She was trying might and main to catch at a spray of wild rose that hung temptingly out just beyond her reach. What an opening for Willie! He plucked up courage.

"Can I—can I—do that for you?" She turned round, her face bright with surprise and pleasure.

"Thank you. I do so wish for that particular rose."

If the spray had been twenty-five feet above his head, mark you, Willie would have secured it. In a moment he held the rose out to her, neatly trimmed by his ready pocket knife. She took it gracefully. Looping the spray round her rustic hat with silver fingers, she stood before him, one arm raised over her head statue-like, while love and laughter played over her face.

"Beautiful, isn't it?"

"Wonderfully beautiful," replied Willie, in a low earnest voice, and with such a sigh!

Then he walked on, intoxicated. Golden was the June that year. Long sunlit days passed into warm, cloudless evenings and breathless brilliant starry nights. Willie became more regular than ever in his uphill walks. Nor did Vanity give him any rebuff. Somehow she managed to meet him constantly at one particular spot where tall trees shaded the road, and from which the distant landscape could be seen in perfect beauty.

So Vanity and Willie met frequently; he talking about weather, scenery, news, any trifle, while his heart was full of love; she, all glance and smile, letting off flights of arrowy pleasantries barbed with mock tenderness, little suggestive sayings, laughs tipped with a sigh—all meant to insinuate "I am dying for you!" but quite capable, you observe, of being explained as meaning nothing at all.

What was Miss Nancy Steele doing all this time? Biting her finger nails, I suspect; tightening her lips, tossing her haughty head, clenching her fist, but not giving up the game for lost, not if her name was Nancy Steele. That Willie was cooling toward her she could not but discover. But Nancy was a long-headed girl. Other girls would have flown into a passion. Not Nancy! She may have fumed and sobbed, but this was in secret. She got scent of Willie's evening walks, and thought she might take a walk herself now and then.

By this artful conduct on the part of Miss Nancy, Willie was put in a fix. When they met she smiled and chatted as usual, never reproving his coldness even by a glance.

"Doctor," said Willie to me one evening, "I feel like a schemer. I have been rather sweet upon Nancy Steele for a long time. What must I do?"

"Marry her," I replied. "Take her to have and to hold from this day forward."

"But I don't love her," he answered, "and I do love Miss Hardware—passionately."

"Then let Miss Nancy know," I said, gravely. "Honor bright, Will."

"I will let her know," cried Willie—"this very night."

"Steady, my lad, steady," said I; "you have not asked the other girl yet. Wait and see, Will; wait and see. Steady does it."

(To be continued.)

Trying to Top the Crowd.

He entered the car on which I was seated on the Sixth avenue elevated, and after a bit he leaned over and whispered in my ear:

"I'll be hanged if they haven't done it!"

"Done what?" I asked.

"Got my watch?"

"Who?"

"Dunno. Some feller picket it out of my pocket!"

"Well, that's too bad. You ought to have been more careful. Are you a stranger in the city?"

"Yes, perfect stranger. Got here only two hours ago. Say, it's immense, ain't it?"

"I don't exactly understand."

"Don't you? Well, I do. Do you know what'll happen when I get back home?"

"The folks will laugh at you for losing your watch."

"Will they? Not as I know of. You jest let me get down alongside the stove in White's grocery and tell the crowd that some feller down here in New York picked that watch off in me and I never felt a touch and I'll be the biggest man in town fur the next two weeks!"

"And if you lost your wallet you'd be a bigger man yet?"

"You bet I would! Here she is, sticking right out my pocket, and there's nine dollars in her, and if somebody'll sneak her out and not let me feel 'em I kin go home and knock the socks off'n the feller who was clubbed by a policeman and run over by a cable car down here!"—Detroit Free Press.

A Sham Battle.

In the show window of a Greenwich street saloon called the Defender, a very interesting performance takes place every day. The performers are a big black cat and a fat white rat.

The performance consists of a series of graceful gambols, in which the cat pats the rat with its soft paw, chases it about the window, catches it gently in its mouth, and otherwise disports itself. The rat, being unable to defend itself, is obliged to submit, though with a very bad grace. It is plain that it suffers more from terror than from physical pain, for the cat works with sheathed claws and is very gentle.

At times, when tormented to the very limit of desperation, the rat does the only thing that a defenseless creature can do under the circumstances. It turns sullenly at bay, sits up on its hind legs and makes a show of fighting. There are some who say they have seen the rat chase the cat around the window, but this is not very likely, unless, indeed, the cat permitted it in a spirit of fun.

It is said that a cat will never harm a white (or albino) rat, and will never go further than to play with it. Two different cats have been placed in the window on Greenwich street, and neither of them has done the rat any injury.—New York Times.

ALL ABOUT THE FARM

SUBJECTS INTERESTING TO RURAL READERS.

Potato Planting with Modern Machinery—Good Fences Are Important—Many Pleasures in Farm Work—How to Guard Against Hog Cholera.

Planting Potatoes.

In planting potatoes, either for home or for market, the first essential, says the American Agriculturist, is a well-drained, rich plot of land. A field which has been two years in clover is usually the best. To this apply a heavy dressing of well-rotted barnyard manure. Break the sod in the fall or the winter three or four inches deep, then in spring turn it over to a depth of eight or nine inches, and cut up thoroughly with a disk harrow, continuing the operation until the seed bed is well fined and in the best condition. Use a smoothing harrow to compact it sufficiently, so that it will not be dried out unduly. The ground is now ready for planting. The old method of hand planting will probably continue for the

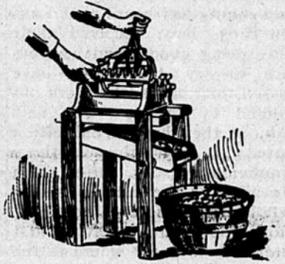


FIG. 1. HAND CUTTER.

general farmer who cultivates but a small patch for his own use. The potatoes are cut by hand to two eyes, dropped in rows three feet apart, with the hills eighteen inches apart in the row if they are to be plowed one way, and two and one-half to three feet apart if they are to be cultivated crosswise. Checking, however, is hardly ever necessary except where the land is very foul. For commercial planting, hand processes are entirely too slow, consequently inventors have constructed machines both for cutting the potatoes into suitable sized pieces and for planting them. There is also on the market a machine which cuts the seed and at the same time does the planting. Figs 1 and 2 represent a hand potato cutter which will do the work of eight or ten persons. The potato is dropped into the hopper, the handle brought over and pressed down, and the potato is cut into pieces of a uniform size. Fig 1 represents the bottom of the hopper, crossed by six knives, with one running lengthwise. The number of knives can be decreased so as to make larger pieces of it, or can be increased and smaller pieces obtained. This machine can also be used for cutting beets, turnips, carrots, and other roots for stock feed.

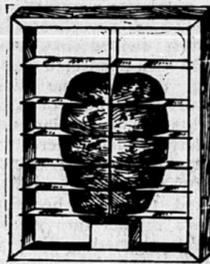


FIG. 2. KNIFE OF HAND CUTTER.

Machines for planting potatoes at the rate of four to eight acres per day are no longer an experiment. One man only is needed to operate the machine that plants cut seed, while the automatic cutter and planter requires a man and boy. These implements open the furrow, drop the seed, and any desired amount and kind of fertilizer, and cover evenly with soil to a uniform depth, bringing an even stand. A marker indicates the next row and keeps the rows straight. One of these machines soon saves its cost on a farm where potatoes are grown to any extent.

Pleasures of Farm Work.

Many people despise their work, when they ought to be thankful that they have something to do. A man or woman who goes through life loafing his daily work is a miserable mortal, who makes this world full of hell, and prepares the way for plenty of it in the next, says Rural Life. A child that has not been taught to work has not been half raised. An education that does not develop habits of industry is a curse to its recipient, and the recipient is a curse to the State. In this new country of ours there is abundant opportunity for everybody who loves to work to get rich. Industrious people are the happiest, most virtuous, and companionable of all society. Industry begets all the cardinal virtues, while indolence begets misery, want, vice and crime, and these things follow the rich as well as the poor. I met a farmer not long ago who had learned to hate his lot upon the farm. He had determined to sell out and go to a certain little village and open a restaurant. The village has already twice as many restaurants as the customer needs. The farmer has never had any experience in running a restaurant or walking in town life. It is, therefore, safe to predict that he will utterly fail and learn to hate the restaurant tenfold worse than the farm.

Seeding to Grass.

A Connecticut farmer, who gives no clew as to the character of the soil, nor the kind of farming he is engaged in,

asks advice about seeding clover to grass field that has been in hoed crops for two years, but for which he has no manure or fertilizer unless he buys on credit, says Storrs' Agricultural Standard. If he has use for the fodder, a crop of oats and peas, and clover grown therewith, for plowing under in the fall, would be a good order to follow before seeding down. If this plan is adopted, I would advise the use of 500 pounds of bone and 200 pounds of muriate of potash per acre when the oats and peas are sown. Sow one and one-half bushel each of oats and of peas as early as the ground can be worked, plow the peas under and sow the oats and fifteen pounds of common red cloverseed after plowing and harrow lightly. Unless the ground is quite dry the cloverseed should only be bushed in.

Different Kinds of Bone Meal.

Bone meal is not confined to one name, but is known also as ground bone, bone flour, bonedust, etc. We find in the market raw bone meal and steamed bone meal. Raw bone meal contains the fat naturally present in bone. The presence of the fat is objectionable, because it makes the grinding more difficult and retards the decomposition of the bone in the soil, while fat itself has no value as plant food. When bones are steamed, the fat is removed and the bone is more easily ground. Moreover, the chemical nature of the nitrogen compounds appears to be changed in such a manner that the meal undergoes decomposition in the soil more rapidly than in case of raw bone. The presence of easily decaying nitrogen compounds in bones hastens, in the process of decomposition, to dissolve more or less of the insoluble phosphate. Bone meal should contain from 3 to 5 per cent. of nitrogen, and from 20 to 25 per cent. of phosphoric acid. About one-third to one-fourth of the latter appears to be in readily available condition. Raw bone meal generally contains somewhat more nitrogen (1 or 2 per cent.) and rather less phosphoric acid than steamed bone meal. The fineness of the meal affects its value; the finer the meal the more readily available is it as plant food.—Bulletin New York Station.

Draining in Place of Grading.

It is often said by farmers that low, wet places need to be filled in so that the water that now settles in them can run off over the surface, says the American Cultivator. But anyone who tries to grade up even a small hollow knows how ineffective this method proves. A tile drain dug through the center of the wet place, if a small one, and with two or three branches if larger, will do the work much more cheaply and effect a permanent improvement. Where a large quantity of water runs into the low place from adjoining uplands the drain may not at once be able to remove it. But water standing over a field even for two or three days, while an under-drain beneath it is carrying off the surplus water, does no harm to any crop. There are, in fact, no crops on the land in spring excepting winter grain. We have had winter wheat covered on a flat piece of land several inches deep with water, which froze over the surface, but without any injury to the wheat. The water sank away under the ice. By the time a thaw came the surface was dry and the crop had simply been saved by the ice from exposure to the freezing and thawing of surface soil it would otherwise have received.

Small Litters Are Best.

I believe that a sow that produces six or eight pigs at a litter will bring a better income generally than one that produces twelve or fifteen pigs, says a writer in an exchange. The reason why I think so is this: A sow in farrowing twelve or fifteen is almost sure to have a lot of them small, very runty and no account whatever. Almost sure to be all sizes, and what is more disgusting than to have a large litter of pigs of all sizes. A litter of this kind seldom grows and does as much good according to the food consumed as a smaller litter. The unevenness of the litter seems to be the worst feature of the situation, for the reason that the larger ones fight off the smaller ones, and thereby, after a while, the smaller ones begin to dwindle and die, and after all, you have nothing left of your large litter but a few of the larger ones, where, if you had eight goods pigs to start with, you would not be bothered with the trouble I have spoken of.

Drinking Water.

Speaking of drinking water for the hens is a subject too often left out of consideration, says Home and Farm. They don't want or need a great deal, but they want it with a vehemence that makes up for any lack in quantity. And in cold weather they ought to have it with the chill taken off. Cold water may not hurt the hen's teeth, but it does the rest of their organism, and it isn't good for them. A good plan is to give the flock water three times a day, and to empty the vessel from which they have drunk afterward, so as to prevent the water freezing in it.

Guard Against Hog Cholera.

On farms where cholera appeared last summer and fall new hog lots ought to be provided this spring, and the animals should not be allowed to run in pastures which were frequented by diseased stock. If necessary, sow a patch of clover, which will take the place of a regular pasture field. Lots can usually be moved at comparatively small expense. Unless precautions of this kind are taken, another outbreak may occur at any time. Proper sanitation, food and good care may ward it off.

Good Fences on the Farm.

Good fences are an important thing on every farm, and they need to be kept in good repair. Keep weeds and brush well culled out of the corners.



HOUSEHOLD DEPARTMENT

Some Winter Puddings. A cottage pudding baked with apples is delicious. Pare, quarter and core tart apples enough to make two quarts. Put the apples in a deep buttered dish with a half cup of water and two tablespoonfuls of sugar. Bake in a moderate oven twenty minutes. Take one pint of flour, a pinch of salt, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder and a tablespoonful of sugar. Rub through a sieve and mix in the flour with the fingers three tablespoonfuls of butter; add one cup of milk and one egg, well beaten and stir with a spoon until it is a smooth paste. Take the dish from the oven and put this batter over the apples; return to the oven and bake twenty-five minutes. Serve with a sauce. Canned berries or cherries, with very little of the liquid, may be used in place of the apples. Pour the batter over the fruit and bake. Use the fruit to flavor the sauce.

For raisin puff mix two tablespoonfuls of sugar with a half cup of butter and add two eggs well beaten, one cup of sweet milk and two cups of flour, into which two teaspoonfuls of baking powder have been sifted. Add one and one-half cups of raisins that have been seeded and cut in half. When thoroughly mixed pour into a buttered pudding dish and steam two hours without lifting the cover. Serve with a hot sauce.

A delicate and delicious sponge pudding is made thus: Place over the fire in a double boiler one pint of milk, a half cup of sugar and a pinch of salt. Mix together a half cup each of flour and butter and add to the boiling milk to make stiff batter. Remove from the fire, and when partly cool add to the batter the beaten yolks of five eggs and last beat the whites of the eggs to a froth and add them. Pour the mixture into buttered pudding dish and place the dish in a pan half filled with boiling water. Set in a brisk oven and bake from thirty to forty-five minutes. Test it with a splint. Serve as quickly as possible with the following sauce: Place over the fire to boil one half cup of milk; stir to a cream a half cup of butter and one cup of powdered sugar and add one egg well beaten and one teaspoonful of vanilla. When ready to serve stir this mixture into the boiling milk.

Fricassee.

Cut a fowl and put into three quarts of water; season to the family taste. When cooked remove the bones, while the meat is out add to the water, probably boiled down to a quart now, the following: Beat two tablespoonfuls of well-browned flour into a half cupful of cold water, or better, sweet milk, if convenient, when beaten smooth stir quickly into the boiling broth and let it cook ten minutes. If celery is liked, chopped celery may be boiled with the fowl. Fowls are better than chickens and only require longer cooking. Drop the meat back into the gravy or broth; in five minutes serve on the hot bread. Pour over all a moderate amount of gravy, serving up the remainder in a gravy boat to be passed to those preferring an unusual amount of it. Mutton fricassee needs only a cheap piece of good mutton, bones taken out and prepared as fowl.

Jelly Diamonds.

One pound of butter and lard; rub with one and one-half pounds of sugar, one pint of eggs, one and one-fourth pints of milk, egg coloring, two pounds of flour and one ounce of baking powder; flavor with vanilla. Bake hot in flat sheet and cut in two; set together with jelly. Frost on top with vanilla icing and ornament with jelly.

Fancy Cup Cakes.

Cream together one and one-fourth pounds of sugar, nine ounces of butter and lard, seven eggs, and egg coloring; add one pint of milk with one-half of an ounce of ammonia, then two and one-fourth pounds of flour; grease little scalloped molds, very lightly, half fill, sprinkle with currants and bake hot, at 400 degrees.

Hints to Housekeepers.

To decorate a grate that is not required for use place in it some small pots containing ferns. Collect small fir cones, varnish them, and throw around in the grates, so the pots shall be hidden.

If you possess a cosy corner with a shelf at the top have a zinc trough made to fit it, and fill this with some hardy foliage and flower plants. They will last a long time and add greatly to the beauty of the room.

Furs will look much improved if they are cleaned with bran heated in the oven. Rub the hot bran well into the fur with a piece of flannel, then shake the fur to remove all particles, and brush thoroughly. Fur collars that have become soiled from rubbing against the hair may be made to look like new by using hot bran on them. Apply the bran a second time if the fur is badly soiled.

Ment and poultry, to be served cold, may be very much improved in appearance by being glazed. The process is very simple. An excellent glaze may be made of half an ounce of gelatine dissolved in a pint of water, and flavored as well as colored with extract of beef. To be successful the meat must be perfectly cold before the glaze is put on, and the first coating should be allowed to dry before the second is applied. The glaze must be well melted and warm and applied with a brush.