OF INTEREST to WOMEN

To Save the Billopp House

Women of Tottenville Organize to Preserve Picturesque Relic of Revolutionary Days.

For the preservation of one of the most notable historical landmarks in the country, the Billopp House, at Tottenville, Staten Island, the members of the Philemon Literary Society of the town are actively working. Through their efforts, and with the assistance of Assemblyman Bain, the representative of that district, a bill has been introduced into the Legislature asking a state appropriation of $35,000 with which to buy the house and some ten or a dozen acres of ground. The bill, which is now in committee, will, it is expected, soon have a hearing. Senator Allds had promised his support in presenting it to the Senate, but subsequent developments in Albany have prevented. A delegation headed by the president of the Philemon Society is preparing to go to Albany when the hearing is held.

"The Old Stone House," as the place is called locally, is associated with one of the most interesting events of the Revolution, a situation full of grim humor so far as the Americans were concerned, but a source of bitter humiliation to Lord Howe. After the failure of Benjamin Franklin's mission to England as the representative of the colonies Lord Howe was appointed royal pacificator, and early in 1776 he sailed for America with the boast that within ten days of his arrival peace would ensue. He reached New York in July, 1776. On July 8 the Declaration of Independence, signed July 4, was read to the American troops and to the citizens of New York. On the evening of that day a statue of George III, placed at the foot of Broadway, was torn down. Lord Howe and the other British officers saw it would be necessary to defeat the American forces in a decisive battle before an attempt for peace could be made.

On August 27, 1776, the battle of Long Island was fought and won by the British. At once a proposition for a peace conference on neutral ground was proposed. Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge were selected to represent Congress and the Billopp House was decided on as the place of meeting. In the front room, overlooking the Kill van Kull, Lord Howe and the American representatives met.

It was the only peace conference attempted on American soil in connection with the Revolutionary War. Its failure marked the final parting of the ways between Great Britain and her American colonies.

Not only this notable historical event makes the building of peculiar interest. It is picturesque, and many fascinating traditions hang about the stone walls, strong enough yet to last one hundred years more, but the quaint old shelving roof of the veranda, upheld by late of pillars, is practically out of commission, the roof is open to the elements in spots and the plastering is broken in many places. But the deep embrasured windows, the curious cupboards built in the walls, the small paned sashes and queer door fastenings are still intact. In this house, as tradition tells us was the case in those good old days, the latchstring does literally hang out. By the pulling of the knotted cord the wooden latch is raised, but at night a strong oaken beam bars the door effectually against unwelcome guests.

Big fireplaces are a feature of all the rooms. The kitchen in the basement boasts of one the entire width of the house. Here the long crane of hand-wrought iron, holding two kettles of mammoth dimensions, is still to be seen. Logs of tree length could easily have been disposed of within the capacious depths of this fireplace, but it would appear that quite as much cold air must have come in as was driven out by the blazing logs, since it was open to the heavens above, with no obstruction.

Quaintest of all is a really, truly dungeon of masonry built off from the cellar beneath the main entrance of the house. Here persistent tradition has it that Colonial prisoners were confined and cruelly treated, for the Billopps were sympathizers with the crown, and for some time British soldiers were quartered in the house. It has also been whispered that an underground passage led from the dungeon to the water and that through this subterranean passage many Colonial prisoners mysteriously disappeared. Many attempts to discover this underground passage have up to the present time failed, though excavations have from time to time been made. The report that some of Captain Kidd's treasures were buried hereabouts may have occasioned some of the enthusiasm for excavation rather than an effort to verify tradition.

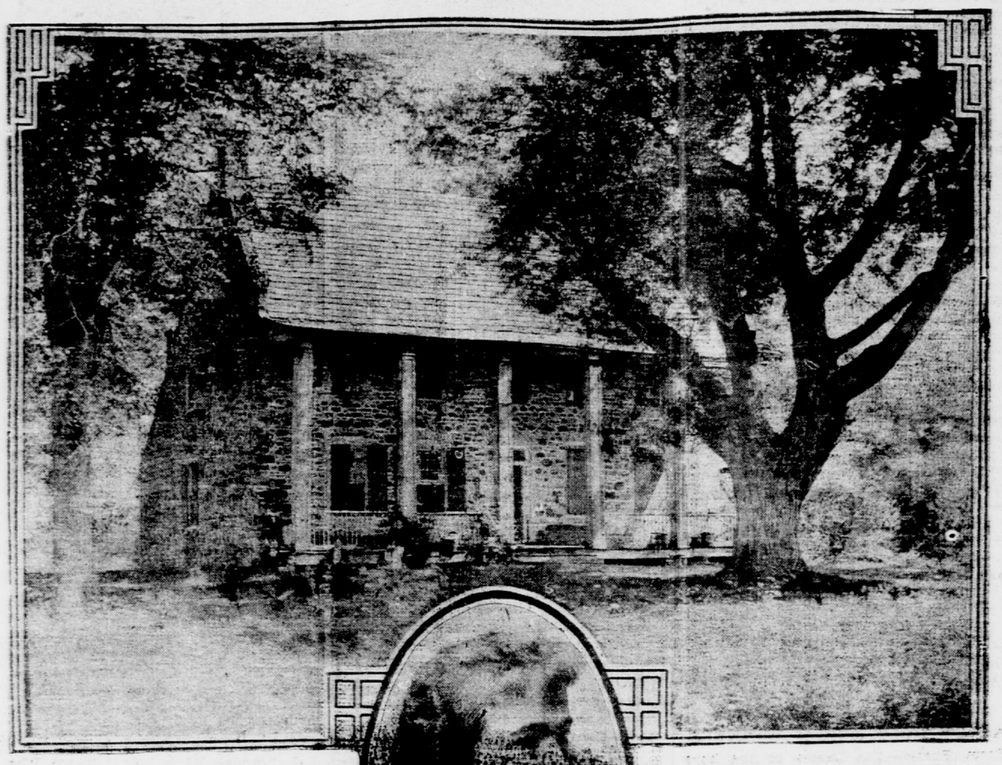
The house, together with nearly three hundred acres of land lying along the shore front, and extending west and north, is the property of Charles Leland, a retired banker, of New York. The house was built by Captain Christopher Billopp, of the British navy, about 1685, and apropos of the ancient Christopher a tradition remains of how he saved Staten Island to New York State by circumnavigating the island in a small sailing vessel within twenty-four hours, thus proving the island was sufficiently small to be considered within the Hudson River.

From an old family burying ground formerly in sight of the house but two relics have been saved—the tombstones of Thomas Billopp and his wife, Eugenia. Of brown sandstone, battered and age worn, the two stones are propped against the side of the house, mute testimonies of those who lived and died there so many generations ago. No Billopps are left in that part of the country, as at the conclusion of the war they were attainted by an act of the Assembly and declared traitors; so that the family moved to Canada, the descendants now living in the vicinity of Montreal.

A caretaker is in charge of the house to-day and a brand new baby has just been born in the very room occupied by Lord Howe and the American Congressmen on the occasion of the famous interview. Presumably, not wishing to saddle so small a morsel of humanity with the historical name of Billopp, the mother failed to take advantage of an evident opportunity. Being Scotch and an admirer of Sir William Wallace, the bairn was named for him, and because he first saw light on St. Valentine's Day the latter name is to be included. In spite of the embarrassment of riches in the matter of names the lad is doing nicely.

The officers of the Philemon Society that is working to this end are: President, Mrs. Benjamin Williams; first vice-president, Mrs. Gould J. Jennings; second vice-president, Mrs. Arthur F. Decker; recording secretary, Mrs. John T. Hopping; corresponding secretary, Miss Anna Van Name, and treasurer, Mrs. Jacob Cole. The members of the committee appointed to look after the interests of the bill are Mrs. Nathan J. Lowe, Mrs. George W. Sleight and Mrs. Charles Higbee.

BILLOPP HOUSE AT TOTTENVILLE, STATEN ISLAND.



MRS. BENJAMIN WILLIAMS.
President of the Philemon Literary Society.

SEASON OF CARDS

Modern Lent Not All Prayer and Meditation.

Whatever women of fashion give up during Lent, they certainly don't give up cards. On the contrary, with the coming of Ash Wednesday they lay fresh plans for bridge parties, whist evenings, euchre afternoons, and during the succeeding weeks they play, play more industriously than ever. Naturally this gives new interest to the question of card party favors, and many and fascinating are the trifles which may be bestowed as consolation prizes upon the guests who aren't lucky enough to win the first prize. They come in so many tints, too, that it is always easy to procure some that fall in with the color scheme of the luncheon table.

For instance, there are fragile china blossoms, such as pinkish-lavender cyclamen, golden jonquil, yellow or mauve iris, purple violets or crimson roses. They come mounted amid artificial leaves and set in tiny decorated pots. Fifteen or twenty of these potted china flowers, grouped on a table around candlesticks, which are decorated with china flowers to match the favors—the tinted candle springing from the heart of the flower—make a charming note of color in the room.

Since blotters are always welcome, a favorite consolation prize is a bunch of twelve blotters, each with the calendar for the month and the month's best known flower pasted on it. A ribbon is tied around the bunch, and the whole, of course, matches the decorations in hue. If the card party includes a luncheon the menu cards are sometimes tucked under the ribbon that ties the blotters.

But the prettiest favors for card party luncheons are the little French chests covered with silk brocade and edged with dull gold gimp. Ingenious hostesses invent all sorts of surprises for the interior of these chests to furnish fun for the guests. At luncheons they may contain ices or bonbons. Of course, the guests take the chests home, where they may be used for jewel cases or to hold hairpins. These Louis XVI chests are made in all sizes. The larger ones, furnished with little trays, are nice for workboxes and may be given as first prizes.

Score cards can be made to play a very important part in the decorations. If pink roses are the basis, let the score cards be adorned with pink hearts, clubs and spades. Add a pink ribbon bow and a pink pencil, tied with a cord of the same color.

Hostesses to whom money is no object often give very handsome favors, such as bunches of rare flowers, tucked into moss-embedded baskets. But less expensive favors, with a little thought put into their making, are just as well liked by most people. One clever hostess provided imitation suitcases, packed with trifles, remembering the idiosyncrasies of the guest for whom each case was intended, and putting in all sorts of things—even newspaper clippings and pictures, when they suited her purpose. The plan worked beautifully and created a great deal of laughter.

Women living far from the shops can, if they choose, make the little Louis XVI chests, the blotters and the score cards. Deft fingers and a few bits of cardboard, crêpe paper and odds and ends of flowered silk are all that is needed.

A bride who doesn't like the regulation black gown worn by the parlor maid has chosen a soft shade of gray for her maids, with charming effect. Purple, if not too bright, is another possible variation from black, and looks very pretty with the white cap and apron.

KIKUCHI THEIR GUEST.

Japanese Visitor to Talk at Women's Municipal League Tea.

A committee composed of men and women prominent in educational lines will receive Baron Kikuchi, the Japanese educator and statesman, at the entertainment for the benefit of the Women's Municipal League, to be given on the afternoon of February 24 in the ballroom of the Hotel Plaza. Baron Kikuchi has promised to speak there upon Japanese women. Among the members of the committee are Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University; James E. Russell, dean of Teachers College; Dr. Elgin R. L. Gould, K. Yamasuki, the Japanese Acting Consul General; William J. Schieffelin, Robert E. Ely, Miss Julia Richmond, Mrs. Vladimir G. Simkhovitch, the Rev. Hugh Birckhead, rector of St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church; Charles Sprague Smith and Dr. William H. Maxwell.

After the addresses tea will be served by the reception committee. There will be music by the Japanese orchestra, under the leadership of Professor Takaori.

JOY OF THE DANCE

Good Times Club Works Very Hard for Its Fun.

"In spite of Miss Isham's absence we had a very good time. The meeting then adjourned." Thus read the secretary of The Good Times Club at the last regular meeting, at the Young Women's Christian Association, No. 7 East 15th street.

Miss C. B. Isham, whose absence seems to have been the event which loomed largest in the eyes of The Good Times Club on this occasion, organized the society for the purpose of giving some pleasure at least once a week to young girls who have very little pleasure in their lives.

The weekly programme is very simple. The girls attend to business first, and then they have elocution, physical training or dancing. Later they are going to give a play to raise funds to send a delegate to the Silver Bay conference, at Lake George.

To those who can have good times whenever they want them all this may not sound very exciting, but some of the members of The Good Times Club come all the way from Brooklyn and Jersey City for these evenings, and that after having worked at least eight hours, and usually longer, in shop or factory.

Those who live nearest arrive early and clear out the dance hall, which isn't a dance hall at all, but an office filled with heavy desks and many chairs and filing cabinets. These have to be moved in and out every time there is to be a dance, but so eager are these children—most of them between fourteen and eighteen years of age—for their modest good times that they uncomplainingly perform these irksome tasks, hoping that the time may come when their clubroom won't have to be in what is an employment bureau by day, for the association has promised, just as soon as it can be managed, to move the employment bureau somewhere else.

At present the girls are absorbed in folk dancing, which Miss Isham is teaching them. They are never too tired for the most strenuous movements, last Thursday one little girl dancing with such enthusiasm the steps of a Russian dance that her hair came tumbling down.

"Oh, I love it!" she exclaimed, as she stopped to gather up her tresses.

"It's no wonder the dance halls are so crowded," commented Miss Isham, "when you see how people love to dance. I believe we are doing a little good in teaching the girls these fancy steps, which they can do by themselves, for that satisfies some of their dancing instincts."

Kindergarten for Mothers

Greenpoint Women Learn Froebel's Songs and Games at Pratt Institute Settlement.

"You can't cultivate the artistic temperament when you have little ones at home," said the president of the Mothers' Kindergarten Club, Mrs. Oscar Vogt, as she tried to settle comfortably on her tiny kindergarten chair. But she belied her words by her actions, as she was busy converting clay balls into flowers and fruits while she talked.

Twice a month this club, composed of mothers of Greenpoint, Brooklyn, meets at the Astral House, a social settlement supported by Pratt Institute, to learn the kindergarten methods, that they may know how to teach and amuse their children.

"Even though the kindergarten is overcrowded," said Miss Grace Parsons, the head of Astral House, "there are thirty or forty children more in the neighborhood who ought to belong. Their mothers are so anxious to have them attend that they are willing to do anything to get them here. When I tried to impress upon one of them the other day that we had no accommodations by showing her that we hadn't even enough chairs, she said, 'Oh, I'll buy you a chair and bring it here myself.' It is for these disappointed mothers principally that we have opened these classes, so that they may amuse their children at home with suitable pastimes. But they are by no means the only ones that come. We have an attendance varying between twenty and forty members each time, including mothers of pupils past, present and future, and even a doting maiden aunt or two."

As the room in which the "club" meets is built like a large corner store, with windows on two sides, a special policeman has to be detailed to keep the curious passers-by from manifesting too keen an interest in the "goin's on" inside. One little girl at school time resented his interference severely. "I can look at my own ma, can't I?" she said. But ma shook her head. "Go home, Lizzie," she said. "This ain't no place for children."

No, kindergarten though it was, it was not for the "kinder."

It might have been funny if the pupils hadn't been so enthusiastic and earnest about their work. There they sat, some fifteen of them, on tiny stools around a table a foot and a half high, each with a huge lump of clay before her and her eyes and ears open to anything which Miss Annie S. Blake, of the Pratt normal department, might do or say. Miss Blake conducts a similar class for the mothers of the little Brooklyn aristocrats at the college, but she says that she wouldn't miss an afternoon at the Astral House for anything.

"The main object of my work," she said to The Tribune reporter, "is to develop these women's ingenuity, that they may work out at home with inexpensive material the ideas they get here. Last week's lesson, on bead stringing, resulted in several ingenious devices. One of the women, who couldn't afford the expensive wooden beads, dyed button moulds in all the pretty shades. It's most effective, isn't it? One has chopped up macaroni and combined it with shoe buttons. And here is one who has strung bells—what a pretty idea!—and another used red kidney beans."

The inventors of these economies laughed and looked conscious when Miss Blake praised them. In fact, they laughed a lot—almost as much as their own children did in the morning classes. Though they were generally absorbed in silence by their interest in the work, they couldn't help revealing their joy over a new invention or twitting each other about incongruous proportions in cups and saucers, rings and things.

When the instructor asked into what other form besides the ball and the flat pie the children were likely to mould their clay, it was a German woman who had the inspiration. "Sausages," she exclaimed, and straightway set about making pretzels out of long, thin rolls she had moulded.

A shy little Jewish woman, working alone and silently, turned out one artistic little article after the other with deft and quick fingers. Next to her sat a young Swedish mother with a tiny two months' old bundle of humanity in her lap. The infant was most angelic and slept serenely on during the entire afternoon, while her mother chatted gayly with her neighbors and exchanged notes on milk diets. In fact, these classes are also bureaus for the exchange of household hints, many of which are contributed by the instructors, who seize whatever opportunities are offered for enlightenment in matters of hygiene, health and sanitation.

The manual work is not the only part of the kindergarten programme which is taken up by the mothers. They learn to sing kindergarten songs, too, and lullabies with which to sing their babies to sleep. And they play games—finger games and ring games, pantomimes, and all the old favorites known to children from time immemorial. If people are never older than they feel, these mothers are younger than their children, if one may judge from their squeals of joy and their giggles of laughter as they play "The Farmer in the Dell," "Here We Go" and "Little Sally Waters."

No meeting of the kindergarten club of Greenpoint is complete, however, without tea, so every month a committee is put in charge to provide the refreshments. With the help of Miss Marjorie Dohrman, who assists Miss Parsons, it is quickly made, and ready to revive the enthusiastic mothers who have just used all their breath and energy in an exciting game of leaping frog.

Tired and happy, they leave hurriedly after the tea things are cleared away, to be home in time to put the dinner on the stove and to tell their families all the new things they have learned. But this latter, of course, is impossible when a woman is blessed with a prosaic helpmate such as Mrs. Schmittberger has.

"I always haf ideas," she said, as she bade Miss Blake good night, "but I don't dast bring dem because my husband says dey're foolish."

PROSPEROUS WELLESLEY.

President Caroline Hazard of Wellesley College assured the alumnæ at their annual luncheon in the Hotel Astor yesterday afternoon that the college is in a fairly prosperous condition, with $1,000,000 on hand and no debts. Ten years ago, she added, the cash on hand amounted to only $300,000 and the debts to $100,000. Since then, however, salaries and other things have gone up, and the college income is barely adequate to its needs, the president said. It has managed, however, to get money enough to enlarge its curriculum by the addition of a course in domestic economy, and the lectures will begin next fall.

The newest thing in neckwear is the Russian collar. It is a flat, yokelike piece of lawn, trimmed with lace, and cut square like a sailor collar, front and back. The cut at the neck is also square and a little lower than the collar line.

Some Ways of the World

It is very strange, but, nevertheless, true, that the woman bereft of her nearest and dearest, her husband or her child, is left quite to herself for the first few days after the funeral. Scores of acquaintances, it is true, leave cards and go on; one or two friends ask particularly for her, but rarely do any dare to beard the butler and send him to find out if Mrs. Blank will see them for a moment. Were this stand taken with these doorkeepers of the house of woe the edge of desolation and utter loneliness might be taken from those awful days when a full realization comes of what the loss means. A sympathetic friend is worth more than all the philosophy in the world.

Foreign travel has now become so general that those who have not the opportunity to see foreign lands cannot hope to hold their own in conversation unless they read exhaustively all the books they can beg, borrow or steal about these countries, for familiarity with the things other people talk about is a sine qua non of conversational success. This fact a handsomely dressed young woman, with beautiful jewels adorning pretty hands and a perfect throat, had vividly impressed upon her the other night at a dinner where the Paris flood was under discussion. "What a blessing," she naïvely remarked, "that the Latin Quarter has been endangered; the houses there can only be rookeries at the most." When told that the houses in the Latin Quarter were not rookeries her astonishment was pathetic and she admitted that her conclusions were drawn from a novel in which the shutters were made to "flap dismally" and all the chimneys smoked. She has now forsworn novels and is devoting her play and lounging hours to solid reading.

The newcomer who moves into an old resident's house, repapers it and moves the furniture about has need of courage, for until she is liked as well as the old resident all these things are resented by the colony, and they are not slow to give expression to their feelings. "Clara"—they always call the predecessor by her Christian name—had some favorite room done in the only way that seemed proper to the old residents, and the newcomer has to try to be polite when they ask, "Why don't you try it that way when you next do it over? Her arrangement of the furniture made the room look so much larger." Although the newcomer never knew "Clara," she soon grows to hate her. A house, although an inanimate thing, speedily takes on an atmosphere and gains an individuality which, of course, reflects the taste of its mistress. With the touch of some women corners seem to vanish, ugly proportions are readjusted and what has seemed a hopeless house in other hands becomes a charming home. So the newcomer must be patient and develop her "atmosphere" until its charm supersedes that of "Clara."

The bachelor girl who tries housekeeping usually has more care than the married woman, besides which she is without protection when the bold, bad burglar comes along. When the furnace man does not appear as usual she has to descend to investigate, and often has to stoke the thing herself on the "days out" granted to the domestics. If she has not had much experience in her mother's house in managing servants and has an amiable disposition she will find that there will be constant requests for extra evenings out, as well as demands for pots and pans of shapes and makes unknown to her, but evidently necessary because the cook "has always used them things and not what you have here." However timid by nature, she will have to cultivate courage, for there will be many evenings when one maid will be absent and the other will ask to go out to mail a letter or for some other purpose, and she will be entirely alone in her glory. For the first year or so she will enjoy her independence, though there may be lonely moments, but after that her domestic responsibilities will begin to weigh upon her and a pall will settle over all her little joys. It is not a wise plan usually to attempt to live alone, and the burdens of housekeeping seem twice as heavy when the housekeeper realizes that she is carrying them for herself alone.

To have the dogs and cats about the house taught to regard the word of command seems a herculean undertaking, but it can be done, and should be done, if any peace for the family or for guests is to be hoped for. In the country house dogs usually are permitted to roam at will, and the house dog almost always sneaks into the dining room during one meal of the three every day. If he is taught when very young that his place is in a certain corner he never will prove annoying, but unless this is done he will stroll from chair to chair, begging a morsel with wistful eyes. That wistful look, too, is pure greediness, as any dog lover will testify, for a dog after it is fed plenteously will roll up its eyes and ask for something more if he thinks he can get it. The owner of a dog has to watch closely how it is fed, for dogs lose their figures from overeating just as mortals do and seldom regain the original slimness and suppleness.

Friendships often terminate as to outward expression purely from lack of time, and when those who have always been very intimate begin to let other things encroach upon the time given to each other it is time to call a halt, for the end of the good comradeship is approaching. Those who part in this way are always at a loss to know when the drifting away first began. Both say it is through no fault of theirs and both will declare they are just as fond of each other as ever.

ARTISTIC NEEDLEWORK.

An exhibition and sale of fine needlework, laces and embroideries, made in the workrooms of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, will be held at the Hotel Plaza from March 7 to 12. The sale is in aid of the Day Nursery, the sewing school and other works conducted by the Sisters at No. 225 East 45th street. The Sisters train the girls of the neighborhood in all sorts of needlework, with the idea of giving them a means of support that will be agreeable and fairly remunerative and which brings them an income while they are learning.

In conjunction with the sale and for the same object a lecture will be given in the hotel on Thursday afternoon, March 10, at 2:15 o'clock, on the "National Music of Spain," by Donald Oliphant, illustrated at the piano. Among the patronesses are Mrs. Thomas Kelly, Mrs. Gerald Borden, Mrs. Wright Clark, Miss Georgina Iselin and Countess Leary.

CANDLE SHADE AND FAVORS FOR LENTEN PARTIES.

THE JAPANESE COIFFURE.

Oldtime Creations Seldom Seen Now, Says "Japanese Mail."

A recent number of the "Japan Weekly Mail" sets forth some popular misconceptions regarding the costume of Japanese women, especially their coiffure. In times past the hirsute creations with which the daughters of the Flowery Kingdom adorned their heads were the wonder of the Western world and the abiding pride not only of the "little maid from school," but of the middle aged and old, as well. Hairdressers spent two hours in combing, oiling and moulding the Japanese tresses into those marvellous butterfly effects, and the coiffure, when completed, was supposed to remain undisturbed for from five to ten days. A block of camphor wood, scooped out to fit the neck, was used as a pillow, and permitted the Japanese women to sleep without disarranging their hair. But these things, says the "Japan Mail," are practically things of the past in the upper circles of Japanese society. It remains true, however, that the Japanese women wearing Japanese costumes carefully eschew hats, feminine taste in that country having resolutely banished hat and kimono, one from the other.

GLEANINGS.

To neutralize any acidity in sour milk when it is used in cooking, it is safe to use a level teaspoonful of bicarbonate of soda to each pint. It should be dissolved in a tablespoonful of water and stirred into the batter before the flour is added.

The housewives who must work alone in the kitchen will find an upturned stool a great help in straining. Fasten a large cheesecloth square to each of the four legs and place the bowl into which the liquid may drop on the upturned seat.

The day of the missing umbrella is over, if only the newly imported models are universally adopted. By means of a leather loop on the long slender handle one becomes inseparably associated with this umbrella and can go about one's business unhampered by consideration for "the thing that gets lost," as Emerson called it.

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