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I thought. I tried to remember who was near her."

"Well?" I demanded excitedly, when she didn't go on.

"Some one in dark blue."

"Mrs. Hancock," I said.

"And the very fat one?"

"Mrs. Higginson."

"And—really, I don't remember. She

was standing near a window, I think—"

"Jo, where was the Duke?"

"At the piano, all the way across the room." She regarded me questioningly. "I'd really like to know if she—she lost anything."

"I know a way to find out," I said. "Ask her."

To be continued next Sunday

CONFESSIONS OF A COOK LADY

Continued from page 10

letter or in person, ready to defend herself with an ax.

Once when on the editorial force of a woman's magazine I mentioned an incident about a household, which noticed that every Monday the potatoes tasted of soap. The mistress discovered that her Swedish maid boiled the potatoes in a kettle with clothes that required starching. She explained in her broken English that it was a custom followed at home; for it saved starch. The magazine had not been out a week when I was told that a bunch of women wanted to see me.

"They're some foreign kind," explained the office boy. "They speak broken an' they're rippin' mad."

"About what?" I asked.

"You can search me."

"Who are they mad at?"

"You, I reckon."

I sent an invitation for them to come up stairs; but not until I had begged a brawny lad from the composing room to hang about. My visitors were a delegation from the Swedish employment agency. The Scandinavian population of our city is no unit. They were redhot mad. Their rage and contempt for me was vouchsafed in every grade of broken English. No Swedish woman had ever been known to boil potatoes with the clothes and then—put them on a table. After such a calumny no Swedish maid could find a place. We talked the matter over. Nothing smoothed things down except my confession that it could not possibly affect the employment situation. Help was so scarce that a woman was ready to invite any strong armed girl into her kitchen, no matter whether she was a Zulu or an Armenian.

I have had unwary moments when I hinted that I had cornered some specially desirable nationality for housework. Then came an appeal that I distribute Scots, Welsh, Germans, or whatever the people I extolled. When returning from Europe one fall I made the acquaintance of a bright Finnish girl and took her home with me. After she had mastered our language and begun to get the hang of an American house, she proved a treasure. I was deluged with pleas for Finn help, till I finally turned the problem over to the Department of Commerce and Labor. I once told how Indian schools were educating girls from the reservations for housework. There came a quick call from every State in the Union for first pick from the next bunch of aborigines.

Editing Out Sherry and Rum

UNLESS you have seen actual service at the editorial desk on a woman's magazine, you have not the vaguest idea of how carefully every mention of strong drink is cut out. It is not always personal strait-lacedness on the part of an editor that stands for such policy. It is a ruling from the business office. Heaven knows how it happened, but once into a receipt that had been carefully scanned by more than one of us crept half a cup of sherry. We heard of it first from a W. C. T. U. circle in Indiana. "Among our members," wrote the secretary, "are forty-five subscribers to your magazine. Not one of them will renew." Not one of them did. So—we continue advising cooks to preserve mincemeat with boiled cider, to flavor pudding sauces with vanilla, and we give receipts for punches that Lillian Stevens herself could sip. Personally, some of us would prefer the snappy touch given to certain concoctions by a smack of brandy or a dash of rum. In a magazine the "cook lady" has to be a White Ribboner.

Once, when editing a cookbook, I faced a curious situation. Leading women of the country, from the President's wife down, had been asked to give their favorite receipts. From the First Lady in the Land came directions for a sort of tipsy

jelly with considerable sherry and brandy in its make up. When I read it I trembled for the political consequences that might attend its publication. I remembered how a certain sideboard figured in political strife, and a cocktail made a heap of trouble for one man. So I referred the question to the publishers.

"Don't fuss about the receipt," they advised. "The President's wife might not care to have her judgment questioned. If she called this one in, we should probably not get another."

I debated the question with myself till the night before the presses began to rumble off the book. Then I wrote a letter to the secretary at the White House. Next morning came a telegram, "Kill receipt. Am sending another." I learned afterward that, owing to the troublous situation in politics, the tipsy jelly might have added one more thorn to prick the side of an administration.

Helping Out Hymen

OVER a department I conducted for years the art editor put the picture of a dainty young creature rolling out pastry. No mirror could delude me into a fancy that I looked like her. Readers, however, took it to be a speaking likeness, and in scores of letters I read mushy comments on "your sweet smile and lovely face." One woman said I looked like a Madonna. I am certain she never saw a Madonna, because this girl who masqueraded for the "Cook Lady" is certainly coquettish, and I never saw a coquettish Madonna. Men wrote me letters that were maudlin in sentiment or touching in their simplicity. Each one had a home waiting for a mistress. I was offered a partnership in an Oklahoma ranch and a Montana sheep farm. I do not remember many appeals coming from cities. The cry for a helpmate came from the great wilds where pioneers were hewing the trees and planting crops.

I never meddled with Heaven's prerogative of matchmaking, except once. A letter came which I read and reread. It was a man's confession, a man who was pioneering alone in a remote wilderness. He had a little money, thousands of acres, some masculine help, a sort of home; but with none of the comforts of home. He needed a wife. His mother wished to go and live with him. He said it was no place for an elderly woman. He sent me a few of her letters and her portrait as well as his own; simply for good faith, so he said. Hers was a sweet old face. He showed rough-hewn features, with clear, honest eyes, and there was a strange reserve in the face which appealed to me. The man could not have laid his hopes and ambitions before a near friend so frankly as he did to a woman he had never seen. The letter lay unanswered for days—meddling with matters matrimonial was a crime I had never committed.

Then I sent for a girl I had known since childhood. She was exactly the sort of woman to make a devoted mother and a loving, helpful, faithful wife. Yet a narrow-minded, selfish mother had tried all her life to crush out of the girl every longing, every womanly ambition, every natural impulse. I showed her all that had come to me in the envelop from the West. She shrank from the suggestion; still she did not say no. That evening I wrote a letter to the man, the sort of letter I might have written to a son if I had had one. I told him everything there was to tell about the girl, and I sent a picture of her.

I was in a shiver of fright when he came. Taking the destiny of two human beings in one's hands is a mighty risky job. As I shook hands with him, the terror went. He was the ideal of splendid, strong, clean, gentle manhood. The short courtship took place under our roof; so did



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