The Woman's Page of The Times-Dispatch

Book Agents

Book agents! My goodness, what wealth of meaning is in those two words! They are really people, human beings like ourselves, and move and have their being chiefly in congested districts, just at the busiest hour of the day, whatever time that is. He is the first to greet you on your doorstep in the morning, and late in the evening, when you are just getting through with everything, his step is heard on the porch outside, and it all has to be gone over again—all the things that you told him hours ago about having plenty of books and dozens of encyclopedias and five illustrated lightweight copies of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." But he doesn't believe you, dear me, no, and all the time you are gently shoving him off the front steps he is rattling away the advantages of owning the greatest literary offer of the twentieth century—or any other century, for that matter.

Just a little peep at the other side of the story. They walk miles and miles, from sunup to sundown every day, and they never can be quite relaxed and like other people. To be very slangy, the book agent may never be "off his job" a single minute; somebody else might sell you his book. Nearly every house they go to the people are merely affronted at their solicitation, and so many doors are banged in their faces. You know just how you feel when you see one and hear the phrase: "Are you the lady of the house? Well, we are offering—" Of what use to go further? You know all that they are going to say, and more. A great deal of it is their own fault. They put on the most ingratiating and charming manner that does not sit well on many of the profession, and are so terribly aggressive about getting into your house, whether you are entertaining London friends or burying your second cousin's wife, that something just rises up in you to put them down. Generally you succeed.

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there was a pretty bride hanging the curtains and pictures in her new house. She was as busy as she was happy, and there was scarcely a minute to think of the new husband, when the bell rang and in came the inevitable—a book agent. The pretty bride's mouth was full of curtain pins, and she surveyed her caller from the top of a very high ladder; but she smiled the sweetest, most magnetic smile in the world.

"I don't want any books," she said. "My husband has more than I have room for, but do sit down and rest; you look so tired."

And down the poor woman did sit to rest, and warmed her poor, bitter heart at the sunshine and happiness that she found there. I can't tell you how many years ago that was, but only the other day the pretty bride, whose hair is now turning gray, received a letter from the book agent who once for a little time had sat and rested in her sitting-room. Now she is a bedridden old woman, and her life has been far from a pleasant and easy road to travel; but she sent her blessing for the loving kindness and the memory of that wonderful smile and voice that came into her life just when bitterness had swamped her soul. So many days had passed when no one had even said, "The day is long, the road a weary one; turn aside, my friend, and rest awhile."

There are so many of them—those tired, worn ones, with the shipwreck of years in their hearts and the burdens of dead loves for a remembrance. Sometimes they wouldn't mind not selling the book.

BRENT WITT.

Salt as a Tonic.

If food is tasteless without salt, it is ruined with too much. Unappetizing cooking is often due to guesswork. A level teaspoonful of salt is sufficient for a quart of soup, sauce or vegetables.

Salt used once a day is an excellent dentifrice, tending to keep off tartar. It is said to retard receding gums.

A half teaspoonful of salt added to a cup of hot water—which many persons take each morning—will make it palatable.

Do not gargle with salt water. Throat specialists consider it injurious to the tender mucous membrane of the nose.

Salt water rots the hair, so never fail to rinse with fresh water after sea bathing.

To set color in wash materials and embroidery cottons, soak them in strong salt water.

An excellent tonic for nervous people is to take salt rubs twice a day. As sea salt dissolves slowly, some of it can be kept in solution in a glass jar, to be ready when needed. The entire salt bath is also good.

Where a child is inclined to bowlegs or to have a weak back, rub it night and morning with strong salt water.

A faded carpet is freshened if wiped off with a wet cloth wrung from strong salt water. Sprinkle the floor with dampened salt and sweep well.

Bad dyspepsia can be helped by dissolving pinches of salt on the tongue after eating or when there is a sense of oppression.

London Functions.

When London society writers speak of Hyde Park house, where Lady Naylor-Leyland will give her "royal ball," they do not describe it as a "house," nor even as a "mansion," but as a "private palace," and this phrase is no exaggeration. It is a huge and impressive pile, which stands one door west of the Albert Gate entrance to Hyde Park, the French embassy being on the other. Hyde Park house was built in 1840 by the grandfather of the late baronet, an officer in the Second Life Guards.

It is expected that the King and Queen will dine with Lady Naylor-Leyland on the evening of her great ball, when her service of magnificent gold plate, which is only equaled by the one at Windsor Castle, is to be used. Lady Naylor-Leyland is fond of decorating her dinner table with orchids, and this regal flower looks truly superb in combination with the priceless dinner service. Lady Naylor-Leyland's jewels are famous, and she was declared by King Edward to be one of the most delightful of hostesses. She will be supported as hostess on the evening of the ball by her eldest son, the present bearer of the title, who came of age last year.—Exchange.

Picturesque Are the Wedding Gowns

The June ride should have an easy time this year in planning her wedding gown and her trousseau, unless indeed she is hampered by the embarrassment of riches.

The picturesqueness of the new season's modes is quite in line with bridesmaid requirements, and whether the wedding is to be elaborate or simple and the attendants many or few, it should not be a difficult thing to secure an unusually happy effectiveness in the costuming of the bridal party. Moreover, even the most picturesque of bridesmaids' frocks will be white, in order for general wear after the great event is over, and to the aveage bridesmaid that is a matter for consideration, though a bride often fails to be sufficiently thoughtful in that regard.

The bride's own toilette is, of course, more important than that of her attendants, but in it there is not the same latitude for choice, though more than the usual number of departures from the traditional in bridal gowns have been seen this spring.

Some of the most notable brides of the season have worn bridal gowns almost entirely veiled in lace, the lace lying over chiffon and satin being relegated to the role of foundation. There have been some charming chiffon bridal gowns, too, and a sheer material is often used for bodice and skirt; or merely for petticoat with a train in satin or supple brocade.

This train may be part of a tunic draped in clinging lines, but is more often hung from a slightly high waist line, or even from the shoulders, like a court train. The back view of a train of the latter type, with the bridal veil falling over it, is somewhat bulky, and the same is true of the pannier effects which have been introduced into some of the spring wedding gowns.

Pretty enough in themselves, these pannier frocks leave much to be desired when one regards them as part of a bridal silhouette, and one may make the same criticism upon almost all of the experiments in altering the conventional wedding gown. Its principles were laid down upon laws of artistic harmony, and the simply draped clinging gown, giving a slender outline, veiled by cloudlike floating tulle or lace, remains the ideal bridal toilette in point of effective silhouette.

This type of gown works out better in the very supple satins than in any other material, but this year the satin is often combined with very considerable quantities of fine lace or chiffon, the supplementary material showing in a petticoat glimpsed between clinging tunic draperies of satin, in bodice drapery, etc. The fichu in its fluffier form or drooping low over the shoulders is not a happy note in the bridal silhouette, though an occasional smart wedding reveals a bride's gown with this detail.

Where draperies are exploited in the gown the veil used is less large than usual, falling straight down the back instead of falling down the shoulders. Indeed this is the tendency of all modish bridal veils and this change may have much to do with a general change in silhouette.

It would, however, be hard to find fault with the wedding veil of the day, even if it does upset some cherished traditions, for never were veils so becomingly arranged in respect to the face as now. Cap forms are almost universal. The old-time coronet and soaring puffs—too often stiffly unbecoming—have given place to softly draped folds following the shape of the head and framing the face in the most becoming fashion imaginable. A border of fine lace caught into whatever cap frill or coif arrangement is most becoming is in high favor, and naturally this note has led to increased popularity for the veil entirely of lace or lace borders.

Where very beautiful lace is a possibility the all-lace veil is delightful, and some fortunate brides have such veils as heirlooms in their families or can afford to buy them; but unless exquisite lace can be used the simple tulle veil is by long odds the wisest choice.

Orange flowers remain the brides' flower par excellence and may be used in a tiny garland heading the cap frill or in little sprays catching the drapery over the ears, just behind the ears or wherever the shaping of the cap calls for such touches.

Gathered in Passing

Machine oil may be removed by washing with soap and cold water. If the stain does not respond to the above treatment, use turpentine the same as for paint stains.

Vaseline stains may be removed by washing with turpentine, but previous boiling sets this stain.

Tar and lamp black spots should be saturated with kerosene and then washed in naptha soap and water. Stove polish if washed while fresh is easy to remove, but if the stain is old it must be treated the same as for tar and lamp black.

Wash ordinary grease spots thoroughly with naphtha soap and water. Turpentine, oil or lard are often used to soften old grease spots before washing. Grease is soluble in benzine, alcohol, chloroform, ether, carbonol and benzole. For delicate fabrics chloroform and ether are the best solvents. Chloroform and carbonol are useful, because they are noninflammable Fuller's earth or chalk may be applied as a paste to absorb grease befre washing. Soften wagon grease with lard or oil and wash in soap and water.

Meat juice stains should be first washed in cold water and then with soap and water.

To remove blood stains, first wash in cold water until the stains turn brown, then rub with naphtha soap and soak in warm water. Rub with common soap and add a teaspoonful of turpentine to the water and soak again. If the goods is thick, apply a paste of raw starch, renewing the paste from time to time until the stain disappears. Soak mucus stains in ammonia water or in salt and water, and then wash with cold water and soap.

Milk and cream stains may be removed by washing in cold water, followed with soap and water, and tea and chocolate stains should be sprinkled with borax and soaked in cold water. Glycerine will aid in removing tea stains. Soak the spots in glycerine and then wash. A stain of coffee or indigo on white cloth should be spread over a bowl or tub and boiling water poured through it from a height, so as to strike the stained part with force.

A Fly-Catching Contest

In the May Woman's Home Companion appears an interesting account of a great fly-catching contest held early last summer in Worcester, Mass. It contains a number of good suggestions which various communities might well put into operation this year. Following is an extract from the description:

"Tuesday morning, June 20, 1911, the city of Worcester awoke to the fact that a campaign against flies was on, for the Worcester Telegram had published this offer: 'The Telegram herewith offers 153 prizes, amounting to $650 in total, to those living in the city of Worcester, and less than twenty-one years of age, who bring to the Telegram office, in accordance with the dates and hours given, the largest number of quarts or barrels of house-flies, dry and unmixed with other insects, and unmixed with any other foreign matter, as follows:' Then the details of the contest were given. There were 232 contestants, and 16,000,000 flies were caught. The winner of the first prize, a boy of twelve, got 1,219,065 flies between the evening of June 22 and 8 o'clock Thursday night, July 13, when the contest closed.

"It was owing, probably, to Dr. Clifton F. Hodge, of Clark University, that such a war was waged just at this time. He has made a special study of flies, and is an authority on methods for their extermination. His maxim is, 'Don't chase the fly; let it catch itself.' He advocates the use of traps attached to the garbage can of the home, this being the headquarters of the fly. A hole about three inches in diameter should be made in the can cover, and, at equal distances on the edge of this hole, three small holes should be bored in which the wires of the trap are put to hold it in place over the large hole. Leave the cover raised, and the flies enter the can, and, after gorging themselves, they seek the light coming through the screen of the fly trap on the top of the cover and so are caught.

"Other methods are to place the trap on the outside of screen doors or on the edge of the box containing the garbage can, but Doctor Hodge says to keep to the garbage can system, and all the flies in the neighborhood of the home will be taken, as it has been found that the insects as a rule travel no farther than 500 yards. Those having no garbage can should use some scented bait, such as banana peels, milk, bread, fish, etc., to attract the flies."

The Skirt of the Moment.

The skirt of the moment displays some stylish and practical changes in line and trimming.

The lines are still straight from the hips, but the skirts hang more from the figure, and the fit is not so close at the waistline.

Many of the models show the three-piece style with box plait at the back; others have only two pieces and the plait.

With the inverted plait at back, which is being much used this season, the skirt is cut on three-piece pattern.

Hip yokes are being revived, this fashion being used with two fabric effects and with bordered materials. With semitransparent fabrics the yoke effects are achieved with clusters of pin tucks. The formation of the yoke made in this way starts at front of skirt with the tucks long, shortening toward the back.

Yokes on heavier skirts lap in front to form tab-like effects at the side; others lap with the tab-like extensions continued down the side front in revers fashion.

Short peplum effects predict basques for next fall. Apron tunics are back and front, leaving the sides of the skirts plain. Many pretty effects are gained by cutting materials with changeable sheen, by cutting the skirt proper lengthwise, and the flounces crosswise.

The waistline of tailored tub dresses is normal, but dressy house or evening costumes still follow the becoming empire lines.

How to Cook Eggs

The cookery occupies an important place in household economy. If properly cooked, nothing can be more nourishing and appetizing, but if leathery and grease-soaked, eggs are a menace to health and perfect digestion.

The egg is one of the most valuable of muscle-making foods, and, when properly cooked, is easily digested. As the shell of the egg is porous, the water evaporates and the egg will, in time, spoil. To test the freshness of an egg, fill a bowl with cold water, drop in the egg, and if it rests on the bottom of the bowl, it is fresh; if a little old, the larger end will be raised higher than the smaller, and when quite old, the egg will be suspended in the water. When spoiled, it will float. This is because the water of the egg becomes evaporated and the empty space is filled with a gas, which eventually causes it to float.

Eggs that are slightly beaten are not separated, and are beaten until a spoonful can be taken up.

Egg yolks are well beaten when they become thick and lemon-colored.

Egg whites are beaten dry when they are stiff enough to remain in the dish when it is turned upside down. They will then be dead white in color like newly fallen snow.

In boiling, poaching and baking eggs, the temperature of the water should not be above 185 degrees, or simmering point, as high heat makes eggs tough. In soft cooking eggs, the following method gives the most satisfactory results: Fill a saucepan with boiling water. Drop in the eggs, cover and set on the back of the range to keep hot, six minutes for soft cooking, eight minutes for a firm result. The egg will be cooked throughout and will be a translucent jelly. This method is known by its Scotch name, "coddling."

To poach eggs, select a frying pan and rub over the bottom with a bit of butter. Fill it three-fourths with boiling water, add a little salt, and break each egg carefully into a saucer. Slip gently into the water and draw saucepan to back of range so water does not boil. When set on bottom loosen egg with a spatula or griddle cake turner, and let cook until firm throughout; while eggs are cooking prepare a slice of toast for each person. Dip the edges quickly in boiling water, dot toast with bits of butter, set on serving dish, and carefully lift eggs from water to the toast by means of a perforated griddle cake turner. Dash a bit of black pepper on yolk, if liked, and serve immediately. A few drops of vinegar, added to the cooking water, will aid in hardening the eggs, so that they can be more easily removed. The poached egg is capable of many adaptations and combinations.

A baked egg is really a poached egg cooked in the oven. Butter ramekin dishes or saucers and break in the egg—one to each dish. Season lightly with salt and pepper, add one-half teaspoonful butter, and set dishes in a shallow pan containing enough hot water to half cover. Put in moderate oven and cook until eggs are "set" or firm throughout. Do not allow the water in the pan to boil during the process.

There is only one instance in intelligent egg cookery when an egg should be really boiled. That is in "hard cooking." To do this, plunge the eggs into cold water, cover and bring slowly to the boiling point; then boil rapidly for ten minutes. Immerse at once in cold water and let stand until egg is cold. Longer boiling or prolonged cookery below the boiling point will make the egg leathery.

Embroidered Taffetas.

Displays of taffeta dresses and costumes contain many trimming effects worked out in cut-out embroidery patterns. For instance, those with mostly English eyelet designs. Worked out in skirt yokes, waist trimmings or even in the sleeves, this cut-out embroidery gives a touch of individuality to a simple dress which does not materially add to the expense. Smart taffeta jumpers are worked out with these embroidery the opening on the left side showing the neck finish a few inches below the collar line, and finished off with a peplum below the waist with slashes over each hip, have a simple elaboration of English eyelet embroidery worked out in colorings to match the garment.

These smart taffeta suits have velvet collars and cuffs. One of the prettiest of these collars is of puckered velvet. It is slightly shirred in the back and reaches only to the shoulders. Red is often employed on a navy suit, as blue and red is a fashionable color combination.

Ideas in Skirt Adornment.

At present the pannier skirt is the most talked of model, and its success depends upon keeping its fullness at and below the knees, gathering it to one side, to both, draping irregularly, etc. Some of the fullness comes from the waist line, more from the length, but there are no set rules to follow. Sometimes there are three side plaits at the waist line on each side, and these drop to the lower edge of the tunic, about one yard, affording material to drape to each side.

Another model has the plaits in the centre, front and back, and the fullness drawn to the left side low down. Such plaits are slightly diagonal, so that the fullness will apparently fall toward the back. It plainly shows that all of these variations of panniers must be of soft fabrics, though not always transparent.

The most difficult part of fitting an overdrapery is in keeping the sides straight and slim in outline. The slit skirt is now accomplished with an over-effect that conceals the real slit. At the centre front, where the supposed foreshortening takes place, a plait is folded in the skirt only to reach the tunic that hangs over the slit, yet the latter affords relief from a tight skirt. At the back the slit is longer, being eight inches deep, with a box plaited panel stitched five inches below the belt, hanging loosely over the slit. Even with skirts measuring two yards the slit relieves one when stepping up.

Scalloped edges on white linen and pique skirts and coats are very popular. Scallops can be bought as a trimming in embroidery and stitched on if the owner is unequal to buttonholing them. Straight buttonholed edges will form a trimming wherever they may be used. Silk fabrics are bound with a bias strip of the same, or on the lower edge of a tunic they are finished with fringe.