

HOUSEHOLD DEPARTMENT.

All communications or inquiry for this department should be addressed to

FLORIDA AGRICULTURIST.

The editor of this department will gladly welcome any hints or articles pertinent to the household. If a reader has any helpful suggestions, please send them along.

The Nursery Windows.

Many of the ills that affect the little lords and ladies of the childish realm can be traced directly to defective ventilation. Indeed, if greater attention were paid to the needs of the nursery in the original construction of houses there would be fewer pale faces to reddens, fewer debilitated bodies to strengthen in the early springtime. Too often this important apartment is merely a convenient room, recognizable as a nursery by nothing more commendable than general confusion, a stuffy atmosphere and the presence of children.

The nursery should face the south, if possible—never the north. The windows should be so large as to admit an abundance of light, and they should not be obstructed by heavy shades or curtains. The children should be encouraged to sit or play in the direct sunshine for one or two hours every day except in warm weather, and then, of course, they should be outdoors most of the time.

It is in the winter time that the nursery windows should receive especial attention, more particularly when they must be used for ventilation as well as for light. There is little danger of admitting too much air, for the atmosphere of the room is never so fresh and pure as that of the exterior. But the windows can not be left open in winter, and the quantity of cold air that is then admitted through them must be governed by the method of heating, the size of the room, the number of its occupants and the other sources of ventilation.

A temperature of sixty-five to seventy-five degrees Fahrenheit should be maintained, but enough fresh air must always be admitted to prevent that in the room from becoming close or stuffy. Economy of fuel must not be permitted to close the sources of fresh air. If much difficulty is experienced in maintaining both temperature and ventilation, it is better to consult an architect.

When the windows must be kept open during very cold weather, window boards should be employed partially or completely to close the lower openings when the lower sashes are raised.

The cold air then enters between the sashes and becomes more uniformly diffused, without producing cold currents near the floor.

The drafts of cold air coming from closed windows do not ventilate the room; they are only currents of air that have been chilled by contact with the window panes. Children should not be permitted to sit in these drafts, for colds are induced by them more certainly than by air from the outside.—*Youth's Companion.*

What Invalids Wrote Me When I Was Sick.

Network of Tape for Lifting an Invalid.—“When the doctors first told me that I must be an invalid, and a very helpless invalid, for life,” she wrote, “I was in despair. Now, strangely enough, I have learned to enjoy my restricted life very keenly.

They have made two networks of heavy tape, woven in and out and strongly fastened at every crossing. The square meshes thus formed are four inches across. Each network is five feet wide and as long as my bed between the head and foot boards. The ends of the tapes are, on one side, fastened permanently to a wooden rod. This hangs down at the side of my bed next to the wall when not in use and is in no one's way. On the other side the tape ends are sewed into loops through which a similar rod can be inserted when I am to be moved. The rods seem clumsy, for they are four inches square and weigh a lot, but their size insures absolute rigidity. We first tried smaller, polished, round rods of hickory, but they bent even with my weight, which is only seventy-nine pounds, and this distressed me.

The good, old, fat fellows can be depended upon.

One of the networks is placed below the under sheet when my bed is made. Then, when it seems that I absolutely must have a change or fly to pieces—every invalid knows that feeling—it is a simple matter for two people, if the ideal four be not at hand, to grasp these side rods, and, without any really very heavy lifting, raise me from my bed. By pulling away from each other as they lift, the network can be kept from sagging, for the tapes, being extra strong, and heavy, stretch little, if any. When I am thus lifted I experience that delightful sense of lightness which I once felt at boarding school when the girls raised me with their fingertips while we all held our breath.

At first, the plan was to transfer me to a couch at my bedside, but this proved to be an awkward task and now, a low foot-board has been substituted for the higher brasswork that used to be at the bed's lower end, so that my sister and the nurse can, with no great effort, raise me slightly and walk at each side of the bed toward the foot, and then at each side of a davenport, which has been placed with its head close to the bed's foot, until I am suspended over this couch.

Then it is easy to lower me, with no painful bending of sore joints, no pumps, no anything that hurts. The davenport has been provided with large casters, and on it I journey to other rooms on the ground floor or to the porch as easily as Cinderella traveled in her coach. The networks of tape with the stiff side bars have worked almost a miracle in my life.

Being lifted in the usual way on the flexible sheet had given me more pain than I could well endure.

When I am taken back to my room after my outing the second tape network is in place under a fresh sheet. They swing me, first network, sheet and all, above my bed and to my place on it. After I am in position, the loose side bar is withdrawn from the loops of the network on which I have just been carried, and that network and the sheet on which I have just been brought in are taken from under me in the way which all good nurses know. I am then ready to pass another twenty hours in bed with something much nearer to patience than I was ever able to manage before this contrivance made possible the short and—best of all—painless change.”

Discoveries.

The making of hard sauce for hot puddings was a bugbear in the midst of other dinner preparations until I learned to add a little boiling water to the half-blended mixture.

I use two tablespoons of butter to a cup of powdered sugar and after half the sugar has been creamed in, soften the whole with about a tablespoon of the hot water. Beat until light, then add the remaining sugar and flavoring. Besides being easier to make, it has less buttery taste than that made by the usual recipe.

A delightful use for fir balsam pillows was told me the other day by a lady who brought many of them from her Vermont home to the city. She lays them on the register for a few minutes and the room is soon filled with the woody scent of the needles.

A German woman tells me that if anything black or colored is boiled in milk before it is worn it will never crack. I tried her advice upon a pair of black stockings, leaving a second pair of the same quality to be worn without the milk bath. It certainly did its duty, and the untouched pair cracked as all medium-priced stockings do.

Last winter it became necessary for me to wash dishes entirely in hard water with what results to my hands it is not difficult to imagine. I set my wits at work to solve the problem of washing my dishes without hands. I had an old dishpan, which had already one or two holes in it. Instead of mending these I held a session with a large nail and a hammer, with the result that the dishpan was soon as porous as a colander. Into this pan I loosely piled the dishes, previously scraped, and set the pan under the faucet, raised from the bottom of the sink by a couple of pieces of brick so placed as not to obstruct the flow of water into the drain. Next I screwed into the faucet an old hose nozzle, which was provided with an old-fashioned sprayer. This spread the water into a circle large enough to reach the entire contents of the pan; this was continued until there could be no doubt of the cleanliness of the dishes. When there were very greasy dishes, these were piled in the open pan which in turn was placed in another containing a hot suds of washing soda and soap, and allowed to soak some time; a few moments' application of the clear hot water would finish them. If occasionally a dish cloth had to be applied to the baking and frying dishes, it was followed by a rinsing under the sprayer, and the process of dish washing was considerably shorter and less disagreeable. Since then I have had my tinner make for me a large pan with perforated bottom, with the added convenience of stout legs by which to lift it from the sink bottom; and don't forget strong handles.

I have discovered that stewed prunes, pitted, spice to taste with vinegar, cinnamon and cloves, sweetened and cooked to the right consistency, make a delicious spiced sauce to serve with chicken, turkey or veal. The flavor of pumpkin is made much more delicate if all the moisture possible is squeezed out through cheesecloth, and the desired consistency obtained by adding milk.—*Good Housekeeping.*

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Bringing the Outer World into the Sick Room.

An ingenious plan was devised for me by one of the nurses at St. Luke's. When Dewey and his fleet sailed up the North river after the Spanish war ended, the imposing spectacle was plainly visible from the hospital, but the windows of my room, which were in an upper story, were too high from the floor to enable me to see the river from my bed. Not long before the vessels were to pass, a nurse asked me if I would like to see them.

It seemed like holding a piece of meat just beyond the nose of a hungry dog in leash, but she continued:

“Because if you really would, I can easily arrange it for you.”

In two minutes she had placed the dresser so that its big mirror reflected the window and then after she had tilted it until I told her it was right, showed to me the whole magnificent river panorama which the window would have commanded for a person standing up. So I saw the naval parade perfectly.

In most sick rooms the beds are so low and the windows are so high that of all the interesting outdoors the prostrate invalids can see only a bit of sky with perhaps, the waving branches of a tree or two. No one but a person who has had experience can guess how much a wider view can relieve the tedium of painful days in bed. By the simple manipulation of a looking glass it can easily be obtained.—*Ladies' Home Journal.*

A woman can not work at dressmaking, tailoring, or any other sedentary employment without enfeebling her constitution, impairing her eyesight and bringing on a complication of complaints; but she can sweep, cook, wash and do the duties of a well-ordered house, with modern arrangements, and grow healthier every year. The times when all women were healthy were the times when all women did housework a part of every day.—*Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

An Old-Fashioned Recipe for a Little Home Comfort.

Take of thought for self one part, two parts of thought for family, equal parts of common sense and broad intelligence, a large modicum of the sense of fitness of things, a heaping measure of living above what your neighbors think of you, twice the quantity of keeping within your income, a sprinkling of what tends to refinement and aesthetic beauty. Stir thick with the true brand of Christian principle, and set it to rise.—*Selected.*

To Obtain Flowers Quickly During the Winter Months.

Put quick-lime into a flower pot till it is rather more than half full, and fill up with good earth. Plant your bulbs in the usual manner, and keep the earth slightly damp. The heat of the lime will rise through the earth (the latter tempering its fierceness), and in ten or twelve days you will have beautiful plants and flowers for your dining room tables.

Oiling Shoes.

The following directions for the care of shoes are taken from *The Farmer's Call*:

Oiling boots and shoes has almost gone out of fashion on the farm. Farmers now wear rubber boots almost altogether. The leather boot has become rare. We remember that twenty-five years ago the farmer that wore shoes was regarded as effeminate and a great deal of fun was poked at him. Now almost every farmer wears shoes during the summer and a good many wear shoes during the winter, except in snowy weather.

It pays to keep leather boots and shoes well oiled. Oiling the leather makes it last long and, what is of really more importance, makes it nearer water-proof and also warmer. Properly oiling leather boots and shoes adds so much to their wear that on this account alone it would be profitable to oil them. But the greater profit comes from having dry feet in sloppy weather. The oil that fills the pores of the leather keeps the water from going through.

A Toast to Farmers.

Harper's Weekly suggests that in these piping days of agricultural prosperity we should not forget the fine old farmer's toast not uncommonly found on English drinking vessels in former times. It goes as follows:

“Let the wealthy and the great
Roll in splendor and state,
I envy them not, I declare it,
I eat my own lamb,
My chickens and ham,
I shear my own fleece and I wear it,
I have lawns, I have bowers,
I have fruits, I have flowers,
The lark is my morning alarmer;
So, my jolly boys, now
Here's God speed the plough,
Long life and success to the farmer.”

The young man on the farm who is tempted to go to the town or city, giving up a substantial certainty for doubtful prospects, would do well to consider the truth expressed in these lines. The farmer's life is the most independent, and is beset with less temptations than any other. It is the nearest to nature and the farthest away from the degenerating artificialities of the modern world.

It is because of this artificiality and its false standards that the ten-dollar-a-week clerk, who may be fired any day and not be able to pay his laundry bill, is led to consider himself the superior of the strong, sun-browned harvester who gathers his own crops on his own land.

There are higher prizes than those that are won by the successful farmer, but those higher prizes are too often secured in part through a moral compromise and a sacrifice of self-respect which the farmer is never called upon to make.

Alcohol from Molasses.

Last week we published an article showing the importance to the agricultural industries of the country, of a law removing the internal revenue tax from denaturalized alcohol, to be used for industrial purposes. This week we find, in the *Louisiana Planter*, an article showing that molasses, a by-product of sugar-making, might be a

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profitable source of fuel alcohol, if the tax was out of the way.

The cane and sugar beet producers of the United States are largely interested in securing adequate markets for the molasses, the by-product of these industries. It is a well-known fact that alcohol can be readily produced from molasses, and some of the European governments are endeavoring to favor the manufacturers of alcohol by granting them very low taxation on such alcohol as shall be so changed in its character as to prevent its use as a beverage. Such alcohol is called denaturalized.

Congress passed a bill years ago granting manufacturers the right to use alcohol in the arts free from any tax. John G. Carlisle, then Secretary of the Treasury, seemed to have a great fear of frauds if the law were put into force and, availing himself of that paragraph of the law which said that the Secretary of the Treasury should determine the regulations by means of which manufacturers could get free alcohol, he would issue no regulations, and the law became a dead letter.

Gasoline has now become an extremely favorite fuel for use in small motors and, to some extent, for use in large motors. The price of gasoline is relatively high and its explosive capacity is limited. Our engineers say that alcohol would be much more effective, and on the Continent in Europe alcohol has already been largely adapted to the uses for which we continue to use gasoline. If all of those interested in the sugar industry would take the matter in hand, it might be very possible to secure free alcohol, for use in the manufacturing arts and also for the development of motive power. As long as the government needs as much money as it now does and secures it by such taxation as now prevails, we can have but little hope for the cessation of the tax on alcohol used in any way as a beverage. The disposition of Congress, however, has generally been to favor the manufacturers of the country with free alcohol, if it can be done without injury to the revenues. Now, that alcohol is so largely superceding gasoline on the Continent of Europe, we have an additional incentive to secure free alcohol for that purpose, and some concerted action on the part of the cane sugar producers and the beet sugar producers might lead to legislation that would give us relief in this direction.

Points Possessed by Good Cake.

1. The exterior should be of a uniform color, neither too light nor too dark.
2. The top of the cake should be nearly level and without cracks.
3. The texture should be fine grained and of uniform lightness.
4. If fruit be used, it should be distributed evenly throughout the cake.