

do not take a servant who has lived years in a place; be assured she will be mentally making disagreeable comparisons between yours and the family she has left, and he so filled into their ways that she will not change to yours. Besides, depend upon it, she has been tolerated in many abnormalities, for which her plea of long service has been sufficient, or she would not have been discharged.

There is always a certain number of good servants to be found, but they rarely fall to the lot of middle-class people, and when discovered are cherished beyond price, so that where limited incomes cannot be stretched they are to the majority unobtainable.

Be careful to say but little in giving your orders to domestics; that little must be said in all kindness, but with firmness.

Encourage in them no tattling about others' affairs, but in every other respect act as a parent to the family. Listen to the details of their families, and—in young girls especially—use every particular respecting their lovers; guide them, attend to the feelings, constantly and practically advise them, and, when necessary, divine their minds. Do as you would be done by; if they waste, say, "Would you have done this if you had to purchase these things?" If they tell untruths, endeavor to reason with them, do not utter the impolicy, the uselessness of their conduct, that confidence cannot be given where such a tendency exists; and though there is no chance that even this care and interest will make them one whit better, still your duty must be performed, whatever they leave undone.

In giving orders care must be taken that they are practicable, and that they are mentally defiant, and soon show it openly. To overlook a girl is cruel, whether it arises from thoughtlessness or design. Housekeeping really becomes a science when every nerve and thought are exerted in adapting means to the end. There are many ways in which a mistress may quietly assist her domestic, without the latter really observing it. It is a bad plan to commence with calling a girl's attention to the fact that you are helping her; she will then neglect her work, and, upon being rebuked, perhaps, when it may be inconvenient. Every day should have its portion of work performed, so that at the end of the week the whole house will have been cleaned through. I know you have the habit of giving your help, it should be a good plan to call a servant; she will then depend upon you, and you will become her slave. The habit of early rising will grow, and she will soon fall into it.

As you treat your children, yourself, and do not neglect Bridget in this matter, I have nothing to say about it, excepting that if you did not you would be compelled to keep another girl, as Bridget's plan is mine also, of cleaning the knives, ten sitting-rooms, six passages before eight o'clock. This is your little feather brush and silken duster are requisite in both rooms; but this work, I am sure, does not redden your wraps or require you to put on an especial ugly head for the occasion. I have advised you to this, and you will find that your dishes may be few in number, and very simple, and Bridget certainly always recollects; but the time may come when it will be Bridget no longer, and in the worry of change and a new face, you will be sadly prepared to recollect even what you intended for dinner. Just write your bill of fare for every day thus. Suppose we begin with Sunday—dinner for this day, of course, being arranged on the previous:

CHAPTER IV. THE MESSAGES OF BERTHA'S STEP-SON—A VISIT AND THE CONSEQUENCES—HOW TO KEEP BUTTER AND WATER COOL.

Bertha Chapman's "rules" suddenly came to an end, for in a few lines she informed me that anything further must be delayed to a future time, her step-son Robert having met with an accident which had caused concussion of the brain. My heart beat for the tortured father, for this only son was the crowning blessing of his life. It need scarcely be told how my heart sympathized with Bertha and her husband in their deep grief.

words of her letter. After this I daily looked for tidings of Robert, but no one came.

A lady, her husband, and children had come to reside near us. She called one morning, and I found her extremely pleasant and agreeable. "Do not return her call till one evening, Fred and I, in going her house, were greeted with a friendly nod as she and her husband were just entering their door. She came towards us, and insisted upon our taking them. My husband and I, naturally, thought it best at once to comply. An hour soon passed in pleasant conversation, for both Mr. and Mrs. Gray were well informed. Everything in the furnishing of the rooms appeared neat, soot-proof, elegant, and all bore traces of refinement much above the style of house they were inhabiting. Presently the folding-doors of the two small rooms were thrown open, and a charmingly laid-out supper table appeared. There was a well-laid table with the remains of a cold joint, bread, butter, and cheese; and on the centre of the table stood a small spreading basket of freshly gathered roses and myrtle, perfuming the whole atmosphere with their fragrance. We were overpowered with the hospitality of our kind friends, and consented to share what they termed their usual evening meal.

I looked with more of curiosity than of appetite upon the tempting repast thus so pleasantly doled up. There were some articles of food; lobsters and lettuces were at their cheapest. But what was it that made the whole affair look as if it had been spread for royalty? A second glance was sufficient. The tablecloth, although not spotless, looked nearly so. The silver was of the damask, and had been sent from the laundress, had been carefully kept; no roughness appeared on its surface, and it was only upon near examination one could discover that it had done duty for perhaps a week or more. The glasses were sparkling in their brightness; the knives were clear and thin, and the knives shone with undimmed lustre. All this, with the fragrant myrtle and many tuted roses, gave an indescribable charm to the simple but elegant supper-table. In these apparently trifling but really important matters rose up as accents, and I determined to have no more carelessness in this respect. Soon after we commenced supper wine was introduced, and the conversation, which I well understood. It was sherry, of a very indifferent quality, but served in an exquisitely cut decanter. Without entering into further particulars, I need only say we spent a very pleasant evening, and mutual civilities having passed, we returned home. During our walk I said:

The evening has been a pleasant one; but I fear we must give up visiting Mrs. Gray. You know we cannot afford wine; besides, I am too tired to place her in the company of her guests. I hate them, and this is one of them; but how shall we manage about the return visit?

"It is just this which is perplexing me," replied my husband. "So it happens that I know Bertha Adams who divides the situation with Mr. Gray. I know her, and I know that she has had a hundred a year. Possibly these people may have other means. However, be that as it might, we cannot give lobster salads and sherry for supper; so I suppose we must fight shy."

"That is not do, at all," replied I. "I have invited them back. If Bertha were here, I know what she would say and do, and I feel as if I had gained some courage from thinking of her. She hates all subservience—so do I, and I will be better to commence our intercourse in the same way we should be compelled to continue it. We dine late, and do not take supper. If they come to us, it must be to our tea, and this meal must be the extent of our hospitality."

"Well, little one, I don't see how it can be done, but I will do my best. I will send seven shillings a week to go for tea in refreshments for visitors, and ourselves to live out of it. Perhaps we had better give it up."

"I do not quite like to do this," I replied. "Mrs. Gray is a clever and a good woman, and had been accustomed to something more than her present means. I wonder how she manages?"

"Never mind how she manages, so that we keep straight," replied my husband, somewhat pettishly.

Mr. Gray at first appeared astonished, while his wife looked apparently as if he coincided with all she had heard, and when Fred ceased to speak, she hastily said:

"Mr. Allison, you are right. We can no more afford wine than you can; indeed, I question if our income is as large as yours, and I know that this matter of wine in our expenditure makes no small item in our accounts, but on the contrary is somewhat heavy to meet. Both Mr. Gray and myself came from a home where good wine was always one of the necessities of our family; and, unfortunately, if we did not think it one of our own necessities, we imagined it indispensable to set it before our guests; but we have never been able to compass the wine of our home, and we have always thought it best to act before people that kind which our not plethoric purse compelled us to do, and I thank you very, very much for the lesson you have given me."

Mr. Gray held out his hand. "Very well, old fellow; I thank you heartily. Do not fancy you have got rid of us."

"Nor do I wish that; indeed, I shall be very grateful to both of you if you will accept the hospitality we can afford to give you, which could not otherwise be accorded, and give us in return your pleasant society."

"But you don't mean to say you won't come to our house at all?"

"Yes, we will; but my meaning is, we will come as often as you want us, but not always to eat and drink."

And thus we secured two of the most valuable friends we ever had. The Grays admired my husband, and I, in turn, I liked them very much; my opinion thus formed was indelible service to us on one eventful occasion, the details of which I need not enter into here. Spent more time upon the subject of wine, which he had done duty for perhaps a week or more. The glasses were sparkling in their brightness; the knives were clear and thin, and the knives shone with undimmed lustre. All this, with the fragrant myrtle and many tuted roses, gave an indescribable charm to the simple but elegant supper-table.

"No, because the filter is somewhat thicker than this table-napkin, and the coldness of water is not sufficient, so you see it is not a matter of salt and a table-spoonful of salt-spruce in a quart of water, place it in this shallow pan, then stand the filter in it; dip a wet cloth in water, then place it over the filter so that the edges of the cloth shall lie in the mixture, and all I have to do for a month, or, if necessary, for a longer time, is to change the water in the pan every day, when you know the water which is daily put into the filter is as cool as ice."

"But why do you have the filter put in a draught?"

board which fitted nicely on the top. The one we brought in was put in a quart of boiling water, and then the child went in of his own accord, for the doctor would throw in some bits of toys like rattle, and so the child wanted to get to see them.

"The child used to be kept in for five minutes, the doctor splashing him about as playing with him; he would never let the child be still a minute. Then we took him up and wiped him with very soft cloths, put on his little flannel gown, and then the doctor rubbed his ankles very gently, and the great lump in his neck, and I put him to bed as he slept all night. An' shure, a most agreeable daylight, the doctor called out, 'Bridget, put the child out in the sun and take off the cover'; so that I went out of doors with the child, and he bled me, and so my moving about woke up the little one (for he slept in a crib by my side), and when I came back I gave him a bit of bread and butter, and a cup of sweet milk, which I always gave him when he was in bed. I always would sleep on till eight o'clock, when we brought in the other bath and done just the same as we did the night before. An' instead of his flannel gown, we put on his other clothes, he had a good hearty wash, and the bottom of the jug there was always a little bit of roll brimstone. After while this brimstone was cracked with a hammer, and a maister said all the virtues come out of it again."

"Did he do some quack notions the maister had for cook had to boil down some skin of beef to make strong clear beef jelly, so that you could cut it with a spoon, and the child ate two table-spoonful every day, mixed it with his milk, and the bottom of the jug there was always a little bit of roll brimstone. After while this brimstone was cracked with a hammer, and a maister said all the virtues come out of it again."

"What is the next thing you wish to know?"

"If you please, m'm, I'm going to be build enough to tell you a bit of a secret. Patrick, m'm, asked me last Sunday to have our names called in church."

"I have often thought you had a wonderful way with children, Bridget; you would make a capital nurse."

"I will tell you, if you will observe, Bridget."

"I do observe you every day, m'm, but I'm none the wiser."

"Allow me to look," said I.

"Well, then, tell me to the meat; how can you tell how much will be eaten of this?"

"I don't usually calculate so closely respecting meat unless there are six or nine people to partake of it. In the latter case, I should always have my servant to wash and dry up any one would eat a pound, or half a pound, but you must consider that before the meat comes to the table, in addition to the bones of the joint, there are always superfluous fat, superfluous bits, and what is not eaten, and all this must be taken into consideration. For instance, take a sirloin of beef weighing ten pounds, just such as the butcher usually sends; take from this the suet, the thin portion of the joint, and what is not eaten, and you will find the joint not too much to look before eight persons, although you may have a second dish of poultry, or cutlet, or mince, or chop, I am now speaking of homely family dinners, not company dinners; these are quite different affairs."

"I don't want to know about company dinners," said I.

"What is the next thing you wish to know?"

"I don't know that before, and like Captain Cuttle, I'll 'make a note of it.' And you are going to tell me how to make a good stewed rasher. Why, I was asked an extravagant price for a pound before I left home."

"These were foreign cherries, and not fit for baking. Our own, as you perceive, are not nearly ripe; but these are brought here from the village; we buy them now at eight pence a pound, and these mixed with rhubarb, cut very small, make a tart not to be distinguished from one made of all cherries."

"You have wiped out the pan, Elizabeth?"

barb, or measure it in a half pint glass; to every pound of juice put a pound of loaf sugar; let it boil till it is like a thick syrup, but very clear; if it be thick, strain it through coarse muslin or a sieve. Let the syrup boil, then have ready some pieces of fresh rhubarb a half finger in length when the syrup is boiling drop in the rhubarb piece by piece, let it boil tender, then pour it into a large basin or dish, strain it occasionally till nearly cold, then stir in the ginger extract. Place the rhubarb in layers in jars or wide-mouthed bottles, putting layers of muslin or ginger between each layer of rhubarb, then tie it down securely, and when sending a portion to table be careful that the ginger is kept back."

"Bertha, how kind you are to enter into all these particulars; but I shall ever have with respect upon rhubarb, which I have hitherto despised as being a mere substitute for fruit."

"That comes from forming a prejudice against anything you don't understand. But come with me into the kitchen, or eleven o'clock will be here before I know where you are."

"But your time is your own—what does it signify an hour earlier or later?"

"No, it is not my own, dear Milly, only certain portions of it. We have been one hour at breakfast, I cannot call that time my own; otherwise, if I did, I should be entitled to do anything I liked—read, work, or go out. No, this hour belongs to the breakfast-table; the next hour to the housekeeper; the next to the curtains, or arranging the draperies of a toilet-table, or doing the thousand and one things that a household does not see even necessary. Besides, my eyes, in this time do more work than they would in any other part of the dining-room to receive visitors; my time certainly is theirs. I am obliged to do this every day in the country. If I were in London and had many acquaintances, I certainly should be able to spare some of my time to my own use; but here it is different, our friends are not numerous, live a long way off, and generally manage to get here before two o'clock. Besides, they are all old friends—not acquaintances—of long standing; to play the fool of them would do no good. When no visitors are here, my husband and myself, with poor Robert, walk or drive. The evenings, as you well know, are spent in home amusements. So that you see, dear Milly, the only time that I can really call mine is before breakfast, while my husband and I are in the grounds among the labors; and that is the leisure when I and Martin, the gardener, have long conversations about my pets—the two horses, the cat, my letters, and perform other little matters pertaining to myself alone. Even when the girls are at home they do not intrude upon me; so that these quiet two hours before breakfast are really all my own."

"You speak of needle-work; do you sew at the needle-work of the house?"

"Needle-work I put out, by my husband's desire. There are dependants upon his estate whom it is better to employ than to permit them to live on charity. At the lodge there is an English school-keeper, a French school-keeper, and while blasting a portion of the rock over which you see in the distance. The news of his death struck the nervous system of the mother, so that when this child was born it was dead and had to be resuscitated. I had the child under the care of the lodge nurse, who was a very intelligent, beyond being a most industrious worker. Now, not another word, Milly; Elizabeth's patience will be exhausted; I sit, it's getting near the servants' dinner hour; so into the kitchen I must go, and make up the table on the table all the spare cold meat, a handsome piece of bacon, butter, eggs, and cheese, soap-sack, with a cake of fat on the top; in another dish a small quantity of jelly, and another another soup; on one side the table on a chair a bread-pan was placed. I was very curious to know what all this was for, though I did not speak, Bertha took the baker's book with pen and ink and said:

"You have wiped out the pan, Elizabeth?"

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