

TODAY.

By Emma C. Dowd. We cannot change yesterday—that is clear. Or begin on tomorrow until it is here; So all that is left for you and for me is to make today as sweet as can be. —Youth's Companion.

THE LITTLE FOUR COMBINE.

By Victor Gage Kimbert.

It was the last Saturday in May. Little Mrs. Fletcher stood half irresolutely before her front door, from which she had emerged after sweeping the piazzas, and then called to a child in the next yard.

"Kathie, Kathie Raynor, tell your mamma and Mrs. Brown and Mrs. James to come over here right away, will you please?" And then going into the clean, sweet smelling sitting room she sat down in the nearest rocking chair to await their coming.

Within five minutes three curious women stood before her—only curious, for their anxiety at her sudden summons was dispelled at her easy, comfortable attitude. Whirling their chair toward them for their acceptance, she said laughingly—

"Did you think the house was afire? No," and she glanced at the women, one with a dusting cap still on her head, another with a dusting cloth in her hand, and the third with sleeves pinned to the shoulders and tell-tale bits of flour on her arms. It was almost too bad to take you from your work, but I just had an idea that I thought would be better shared, and I wanted to lay it before you at once. You see, it is like this: the hot weather is just coming on, and I believe the thing we dread the most is the everlasting Sunday dinner that has to be planned for, and which keeps us sweating instead of resting; and I have been thinking it would be nice to only get one Sunday dinner a month and have a good time the other three Sundays. What do you think?"

A look of blank astonishment, then a ripple of laughter, from the three was her reply, and then Mrs. Raynor spoke—

"Theoretically, it is probably very nice, but practically, I fancy my husband would decidedly object to fasting, not only as a matter of principle, but of health as well."

"Oh, I have no intention of fasting, or requiring the rest of you to lose your dinner. My idea is this: here are four families of about the same size, whose Sunday dinners are the one dinner of the week because then the Johns are home, and where each family pays about the same for the dinner. Mrs. James perhaps pays more for beefsteak, or chicken, while another pays more for fruit, but taken on the whole the general bills bear a strong resemblance, though the items vary. We are all friendly, enjoy being together, and so my plan is that we take turns in preparing Sunday dinners, and spend the intervening Sundays at the homes of the others, with no care nor worry. It will be worth a small fortune to me to dress for church in the morning and have no changing till night. What do you think?" And again she looked at her visitors.

"I think it would be fine," said Mrs. Brown, "and then I could keep my Sunday school class. I have had to give it up through the summer months on account of the heat, and Sunday dinner, but I could get a substitute for three Sundays. Just think, only three Sunday dinners in three months. Count me in on this arrangement, with many thanks."

"You may count me, too," said Mrs. Raynor.

But Mrs. James hesitated. "I really do not know what to say. I would be delighted to make some arrangement to have the Sundays more enjoyable and less fatiguing, and really it is not so very much more work to prepare a dinner for a dozen than for half that number, but I am afraid that Dick would not like to go away for dinner, he counts on Sunday dinner."

"That's all right, my dear," said Mrs. Fletcher, laughing; "but Dick James likes to go visiting as well as anybody I know, and on the surface that is all that need appear; you will simply be invited to take dinner with one or the other of us, and when it comes your turn, nobody need be any the wiser. In the afternoon we can go out to the park, across the lake, or anywhere our sweet wills incline, and have a pleasant and profitable day."

"But," said Mrs. James, tentatively, "how about the hostess, who will have the dishes to do, or cater? Will it not look suspicious for the rest to leave her and go off together?"

"Well, you will not leave me, for I have arranged with Granny Wisner to come and help me and wash up the dishes on the Sunday I entertain. Poor soul, she would have been delighted to have come for the sake of a really good dinner, but I told her I would give her a quarter, and she half cried as she said it would keep her the next week. I expect that was an exaggeration, but I know every extra cent counts with her, and it is almost an act of charity to help her get something to do. Of course no one else need be influenced by my action, but I think it is well worth the cost."

"I will get her surely if she will come," said one and another.

"How have you arranged, supposing there should be extra company? You seem to have this thing thoroughly adjusted without our taking any trouble to think over the matter."

"Well, my plans are very flexible, I assure you, and can be altered, modified, amended, or what you please, as conditions arise requiring it, but so far as unexpected company is concerned, we could pay the hostess of the day whatever she deemed a fair pro rata amount for the extra guests. And for undesirable company, these dear relatives who do not care how much we bake and broil so that they are comfortable, what easier than to say, 'We are going out to dinner next Sunday' long enough before hand to nip their project in the bud. I know we all enjoy having our friends visit us, but there are limits to everything, and when a certain few make it a point to always be on hand for Sunday dinner, I think a mild lesson is in order."

Mrs. Brown flushed a little. "You have noticed it, too, have you? Well, I do get pretty tired sometimes; of course I know to whom you are referring, and though I do care for them in a way, still when those distant cousins come and bring their friends, utterly unexpected, though I can look for them most any time, and and keep home from church, and make it the hardest day in the week, I do wish they would be more considerate."

"Well, there is a new rule in order now, and I shall expect you all to dinner one week from tomorrow. We will decide in the meantime who can best entertain us the next time, and the invitation can be given in an off-hand manner at dinner, and no male biped will suppose for a moment that he is being managed," said clever Mrs. Fletcher, clever, because she knew she was the one woman of the group whose pocket book never was empty, and who could furnish the first dinner and give the others a chance to save up in the meantime for the day when they should serve.

She knew perfectly well that she should talk the matter over with Ned, and was sure of his co-operation in anything she wished, for he was one of the husbands who did not need managing, and if the other men could have known the blessing of such comradeship as existed between him and his wife, sane, loving, considerate, they would have wished for it in their own home. But training and disposition was against it, and so perfect confidence was an unknown quantity in their homes. Only in little things, but the fineness of the gold was dimmed, the beauty of the home-life impaired, to the extent that mutual confidence was imperfect.

Was the combine successful? Most emphatically so, as any one of them would tell you, could you see her personally. The minister congratulated himself because three of his teachers, who had been wont to take a vacation through the warm weather, alleging that they simply could not care for the classes and Sunday dinners, did not even suggest a substitute, and the very infrequent Sabbaths they were absent he secured Mrs. Fletcher, who had no regular class, to fill the vacancy.

Rested, cheerful women ready for the next week's work, instead of dreading it, was a partial result, and four well satisfied households throughout the summer spoke much for the combination.

One day Mrs. Raynor asked Mrs. Fletcher how she came to think of such a delightful arrangement.

"Well, I did not exactly think of it, it evolved as most things do. When my sister and I both lived in the same city, it was an understood thing that every other Sunday only one should get dinner. One day I thought how nice it would be to enter into some such plan with a neighbor; gradually, as I thought it over, I decided that four would be the right number, neither too many nor too few, and selected you three to help me, as first choice. If for any reason either of you had thought it impossible, I should have selected some one else, for I was determined to try it, and equally determined you should enjoy it if I could persuade you."

"Well, I can say right now that I never enjoyed a summer more. Some way, that free coming in made me feel as if I was free from responsibility for a time, and gave me strength to rest, for it takes strength to do that," and she laughed a little constrainedly.

"It certainly does, and it takes sense as well. So many of us take our cares with us continually, instead of just considering them when it is necessary, that we get wrinkled and old long before we need," was the reply.

Ned Fletcher, who was in the secret, helped it on with all his might, many a time with his genuine good humor and sound sense, and also planned afternoon outings during the week when the men would do all the work and the women have a half-day's pleasure. Fish and chickens cooked in mud in a great camp fire, with plenty of plain bread and butter, made a supper fit for a king, he asserted, and they were fain to agree with him, though when some "one suggested pickles and cheese as an appetizer, he profited by it."

The last Sunday in September he rose at the end of the dinner and toasted the "Little Four Combine," as he had dubbed them all summer, and then he had to explain, and a merry laugh and a hearty vote of thanks to the originator followed.

INTERESTING TREE LORE.

Talk With Man Who Knows All About Woodland Growths.

"How many leaves do you think a tree has?" asked the man who had read it all up, stopping his friend in the park, relates the New York Sun. "Of course, you don't know. Some birches have 200,000, and each leaf has 100,000 mouths. I know of a 60-year-old birch that had 25,000 leaves and a 35-year-old one that had only 3,000."

"These 35,000 leaves, dried, weighed only ten pounds and the 3,000 dried, only three-quarters of a pound. But they do tremendous work in a season. During a spring and summer, birches and lindens have been found to exhale 600 or 700 pounds of water per pound of dry leaves; the ash tree about 500; beeches, 400; maples, 400, and oaks, 250. The conifers give out about 100 pounds a tree. To stagger you still more, an acre of beech forest of, say, 500 trees, would exhale about 2,000,000 pounds."

"And the funniest part of it all to me is that the water in a tree, or the moisture, really amounts to more than half the weight of the tree, or from 55 to 60 per cent., while the wood weighs but 40 to 45 per cent. In a big forest what you don't see weighs more than what you do see. Funny, isn't it?"

"As to forests and water," continued the tree man, "I learned that a partial cutting down of the Volga river valley forests had the tremendous effect of lessening so great an area of water as the Caspian Sea. I figured the comparison and found that pro rata six feet of water would be taken off Lake Superior, eight off Lake Michigan, 18 off Lake Erie and 27 off Lake Ontario. I was staggered."

"Then I found that deforestation, as we call it, has robbed the Vistula River of 26 inches of water, the magnificent Rhine of 28 inches and the beautiful blue Danube of 55 inches. Let me hit you nearer home. The Hudson has been called a drowned river because the sea encroaches upon it. But you're drowning it more now by your deforestation and you'd better hurry up with these Adirondack lands. The salt water now, they say, goes up to Hastings."

"The Schuylkill is less in volume than ever. So is the Mohawk and so is the Connecticut. Even the fish lew the lower part of the Savannah River, but they're trying to do something with that water now."

"Another queer thing is that Christopher Columbus' son Fernando, who crossed the ocean with him, was the first man to start the question of forests causing rainfall, by his observations of the wealth of vegetation on the island of Jamaica."

COTTON FROM THE FIR TREE.

The Fibres, After Pulverization, Are Passed Through Special Machines. Writing from Rouen, France, Thornwell Haynes, United States Consul, sends the following to the Department of Commerce and Labor:

The French Chamber of Commerce of Milan says that an artificial cotton is now made from the cellulose of the fir tree freed from bark and knots. The fibres, after being pulverized by a special machine, are placed in a horizontal brass, leadlined cylinder of some 3,500 cubic feet capacity and steamed for ten hours, after which 2,000 cubic feet of a bisulphate of soda wash is added and the whole is heated for thirty-six hours under a pressure of three atmospheres.

Then the wood or fibre which has become very white, is washed and ground by a series of strong metallic meshes, after which it is again washed and given an electro-chemical bleaching by means of chloride of lime. Passage between two powerful rollers then dries the matter, producing a pure cellulose, which when heated in a tight metal boiler containing a mixture of chloride of zinc and hydrochloric and nitric acids, to which is added a little castor oil, casein, and gelatin to give a resistance to the fibre, gives a very consistent paste.

Threads are then produced by passing this paste through a kind of draw plate. These threads, after being passed over a gummed cloth, are immersed in a weak solution of carbonate of soda and passed between two slowly turning drying cylinders. Finally, to give the necessary solidity, the thread is treated to an ammoniacal bath and rinsed in cold water, after which the product is pliable and works well.

In Bavaria experiments have recently been made to produce cotton from pine wood, and it is claimed that the trials have been very successful.

Among the Mortalities.

When the average announcement of six deaths from heat is analyzed it "pans" about as follows: Item 1—Three babies died, which would have died anyway, not from heat, but really from lack of heat, say at the ages of 1, 2 and 3 months respectively. Item 2—One small boy was drowned; it is probably true that if he hadn't been hot he wouldn't have gone near water, but at the same time he was hot, but because he couldn't swim. Item 3—An old lady died of pneumonia. Item 4—An old gentleman, who had long suffered from a complication of diseases, including diabetes and dropsy, but who is thought to have died from heat because when found he had a fan in his hand. One morning paper, determined to roll up an imposing total, actually enumerated horses among the mortalities. Isn't the humility enough without this sort of thing?—Pittsburgh Press



WHEN YOU BUY A HAT.

A milliner's advice to her patrons is to observe the effect of a hat sitting well as well as standing. Sometimes a hat is too large for a seated figure when it does very well while the wearer is standing. No one wants to lose in effect by a change of posture, any more than she wants to wear a hat that is becoming in front and hideous in the back.

PATENT LEATHER GOING OUT OF STYLE.

"Patent leather shoes for women will be out of style next spring," said Charles Torrey, who represents a Boston shoe house. "Tans will replace them to a large extent. I am now out with our line for the spring of 1905. Just why styles should change I do not know. There really is no accounting for them. The mere fact remains that tans will predominate in next year's market, and that low cut footwear will remain in vogue. The patent leather article, however, which never has been a comfortable shoe for summer wear because its pores are clogged airtight, will be a thing of the past."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

A GOOD WOMAN'S CLUB.

The practical good which it is possible for a wideawake and earnest woman's club to do in a community has been strikingly shown by an organization of that kind in Utica, N. Y. The New Century Club of that city, whose members are leaders in the most exclusive social set, has undertaken the solution to some degree of the problem of increasing the number of skilled housekeepers, and therefore the number of happy homes. It has established a "kitchen garden," and a committee of the club devotes itself to giving instruction on every Saturday afternoon to some two hundred girls, ranging in age from four to sixteen years, in all the principal branches of housekeeping. The little women are trained in the arts of cooking, sewing and laundering, in waiting at table, and in chambermaid work.—Leslie's Weekly.

WHY SHE YELLED.

Prolonged shrieks of agony, unquestionably those of a woman, emanating from the local office of the Bell Telephone Company, just before midnight, caused night policemen and various citizens to rush to the place, fearful that an attack by some evil disposed persons had been made upon the young woman night operator employed there. Policeman Henry Rief, first to arrive, found the young woman perched upon her operating table, calling for help, while a huge muskrat ran about the room in vain effort to escape. Fearing to use his revolver, the policeman took a club, and, after several ineffectual efforts, at length slaughtered the rodent. It is supposed it came up from the wharf and ran into the first open doorway when frightened in the street.—Cincinnati Commercial-Tribune.

JAPANESE FACTORY GIRLS.

One admirer of Japan would be glad if the Mikado could manage to secure to the working classes a regular Sunday holiday. It would be especially welcome to the poor little dots who work as apprentices in factories and through the winter far into the night. They prefer this to retiring early into their cold dormitories. Fortunately for them, they do not need many hours' sleep. The factory girls and all women workers, whether in rice swamps, about the Osaka collieries, as shrimp and cockle gatherers, feeders of silkworms or winders of silk from cocoons receive only starvation wages. In the paddy fields and at the collieries they seem unsexed so long as they are at work. The moment they leave off they wash themselves, change their clothes, stick a flower in the corsage or girdle, or a bow of colored paper serving as a ribbon in the hair, and if the sun is not down, walk home under the shade of bright paper parasols, looking almost elegant.—London Truth.

AN AMUSING PARTY.

A most amusing party was held the other evening not far from the park. There were about twelve in the party and it was too warm to even think, so the hostess declared that they would hold a Quaker meeting, and the first person that talked should go down to Schultz's for sodas. For a long while no one spoke, only little snatches of popular songs, or a lifeless whistle broke the silence, until an agonized voice from the end of the perch cried out: "Nellie, please get that infernal June bug out of my collar, he bites like an alligator." It is needless to say that he went for sodas. It is not the elaborate plan for keeping the guests amused that appeals to most of us these days; we like to sit still and be comfortable and an easy chair, a few pleasant companions, and a reasonable bit of food or fruit or a glass of cold beverage is all that the average man needs to make him eternally grateful.—Scranton (Pa.) Truth.

PUBLISHING THE BANNS.

The custom of publishing the banns of marriage dates back to the primitive church, for Tertullian, who died A. D. 240, states that warning of intended marriages was given among the early Christians.

It appears that the publication of banns was habitual in many places long before there was any general law on the subject, since Gregory IV. (1198-1216) speaks of the banns (from Latin bannum, a proclamation; Anglo-Saxon, ban) being given out in church, according to custom. The practice was introduced into France about the ninth century and in 1176 was enforced in the diocese of Paris.

The earliest enactment on the subject in England was an order made by the synod of Westminster in 1200 to the effect that no marriage should be celebrated till the banns had been published in the church on three several Sundays or feast days. This rule was made obligatory throughout the church by the fourth Lateran council held in Rome in 1215. By act of Parliament banns must now be given out in England on three Sundays.—London Answers.

EAT BEFORE DINING OUT.

To take a snack, either liquid or solid, or both, before dining out, is a wise precaution, on many accounts. In the first place, without it one may get very hungry before one is confronted by one's oysters or soup, and no woman is at her best when she feels half famished. Hunger will drive one to the performance of many unheard of stunts, but it does not make a woman more brilliant or graceful socially. In the second place, clever and popular girls seldom eat much at dinner. They peck at this and take a taste of that, but hardly more. There are people who can eat steadily and talk brightly at the same time, but they are generally elderly persons, and bon vivants, to whom the dinner is a material joy. In fact, formal dinners are seldom a lively hunger, so it is safest to take at least the edge off before going to dinner. Lastly, good looks are intimately connected with what one eats. The girl who indulges freely in sweets, made dishes and the nice, indigestible things that hostesses reserve for such occasions, is in a fair way to find her pretty complexion fading and her eyes getting tired looking. To pass some dishes, merely to taste others and to make one's dinner off a few simple, substantial dishes, is the part of wisdom for the would-be beauty.

FASHION NOTES.

A hat that is red and a veil that is brown savor of Paris when traveling together.

One style of the much flouted white coat is made exactly like a man's Prince Albert.

Even the simplest dressers are this season arrayed like lilies of the field—mostly tiger lilies.

New sailor hats have a large overhanging crown and a brim sloping sharply down in the back.

When the yoke is of deep lace arrange the scalloped edge around the throat and omit all collar.

There's no denying that a woman never looks so angelic as when clad in white from top to toe.

Victoria laws in beige and browns make up into useful petticoats trimmed with wash bandings.

It looks as if the short full sack, reaching barely to the waist, will triumph over the fallen bolero.

This is a good year to observe the striking difference between wearing clothes and being well gowned.

Surprisingly nice effects are produced by an odd white blouse and one of the ready made white skirts.

If you are of the world worldly you must wear hung from a chain a tiny mirror hidden in a jeweled flower.

Star is Far Away.

"In July I always look for this fellow."

The astronomer fixed his great telescope on a star that looked no bigger than a pin point—a small, bright star, shining with a white and steady light.

"That little star," he said, "is so far away that it takes its light 3,500,000 years to reach us. The beam from it that you now see was given forth 3,500,000 years ago. What, I wonder, was the world like then?"

"And do you know how fast these star beams travel? They travel at the rate of 12,000,000 miles a minute. Think of it—12,000,000 miles multiplied by 3,500,000 years reduced to minutes—that is the distance from the star to us."

"Here is a strange fact. The star may have been annihilated 2,500,000 years ago, but we, in that case, would know nothing of its annihilation till 1,000,000 years from now, for whatever should happen on this star would take 3,500,000 years to reach us."

"Imagine a Russo-Japanese war on the star. The war news would come to us a little stale, eh?"—Port Oregonian.

Of the 90,000 Catholics in Japan, 10,000 live in Tokio.



SOME USEFUL HINTS.

A plaster cast can often be thoroughly cleaned by a mixture of starch and water. Make a stiff paste of ordinary starch and cold water, rub it well over the cast and place the latter in an out-of-the-way corner. Let it stand for about a day, and then remove the starch with a tiny brush.

Lamp wicks soaked in a little vinegar and then allowed to dry before putting them in the lamps will make the light much clearer.

Equal parts of listerine, lemon juice and glycerine make an excellent mouth wash. It should be used as a gargle in the morning upon arising. Salt, though not agreeable, will heal any small cuts rapidly. It is an excellent disinfectant.

Bits of soap which are too small to be used, should be carefully laid aside for laundry days, when they can be melted and added to the wash boiler.

BED COVERINGS.

The main use of the coverings at night is to give the body the warmth that is lost by the reduced circulation of the blood. When the body lies down it is the intention of Nature that it should rest, and that the heart especially should be relieved temporarily of its regular work. So that organ makes ten strokes per minute less than when the body is in an upright position. This means six hundred strokes in sixty minutes. Therefore, in the eight hours that a man usually spends in taking a night's rest, the heart is saved nearly five thousand strokes. As it pumps six ounces of blood with each stroke, it lifts thirty thousand ounces less of blood in the night's session than it would during the day, when a man is usually in an upright position. Now the body is dependent on its warmth for the vigor of the circulation, and as the blood flows so much more slowly through the veins when one is lying down, the warmth lost in the reduced circulation must be supplied by extra coverings.—American Cultivator.

RECIPES.

Pearl Pudding—One-half cup of boiled rice, one pint of milk, three tablespoons of sugar, one of cornstarch, yolks of three eggs. Beat together and cook as a custard. Put in a dish to cool, then flavor with vanilla. Beat the whites of three eggs to a stiff froth, add six tablespoons of sugar; flavor with vanilla and pour over the pudding.

Pineapple Foam—Pare and grate a small pineapple. Beat stiff one cup cream. Beat whites of two eggs till dry, then gradually beat into them a half cup powdered sugar. Continue beating till very stiff. Now fold in the cream, which has been chilled, and the grated pineapple. The juice of a half-lemon may be added to bring out the pineapple flavor. Serve very cold in sherbert glasses.

Pineapple Custard—Cut sponge cake into cubes suitable for serving. Remove centres, leaving a case. Fill with grated pineapple and pour over a boiled custard flavored with pineapple juice. One pineapple will serve five or six persons. A pint of custard will suffice.

Preserved Pineapple—Select large, ripe pineapples, cut them in finger thick slices, peel, remove the eyes and cut the slices in small square pieces, rejecting the core. Then weigh the fruit; for six pounds cut pineapple, place four pounds sugar and one quart water in the preserving kettle and boil to a syrup, removing all black scum that rises; put in the pineapple and cook forty-five minutes; put in jar, close at once and set aside.

Soup Maigre—Put in steppan six cold boiled potatoes, half a can of tomatoes, one thick slice of onion, one stalk of celery, one sprig of parsley, three pints of water, one teaspoon of sugar; salt and pepper to season; let boil fifteen minutes; rub through a fine strainer; return to the fire; melt two tablespoonsful of butter; add two tablespoonsful of flour; when smooth add it to the boiling soup; serve hot.

Meringue Shells—Beat the whites of four eggs very stiff; then fold carefully half a pound of sifted powdered sugar; put one tablespoonful of the mixture on greased brown paper and bake in a very slow oven half an hour, or until thoroughly dried through; remove and press the underside through toward the top of the shell; when cold and ready to serve fill two shells with ice cream and press together.

Beef Heart Potted—Wash and remove the tough membrane from a beef heart; sprinkle with salt and pepper; put a quarter pound of larding pork in a saucepan over the fire; fry it until brown; dredge the heart with flour, and put it in the hot fat, turning it several times; add one cup of boiling water, one sliced onion, a sprig of parsley, two cloves and one carrot sliced; cover the pan and let cook slowly three hours; when tender remove to a hot platter; skim off the fat in the pan; add flour, and stir until brown; add boiling water, salt and pepper to season; strain into a bowl.

Smallest Island.

The smallest inhabited island in the world is that on which the Eddy-stone lighthouse stands, for at low water it is only thirty feet in diameter. At high water the base of the lighthouse, which has a diameter of only a little over twenty feet, is completely covered by water.