

"ASTRA" TALKS WITH GIRLS.

[Correspondents seeking information in this department should address their queries to "ASTRA," Progress, St. John.]

FOUR LEAFED CLOVER, St. John.—If there is any thing at all in a name you should be a very lucky girl since four leaved clovers are supposed to be the luckiest things in the world. You need not be afraid of my giving you any such answer; anyone would not know the answer to your question as these little matters of social etiquette are often difficult to decide in one's own mind. It would be better to call, but as such calls are really very trying, most people dread making them and resort to the convenient substitute of a letter. If you feel the same reluctance and have a facility for expressing yourself on paper, write the note, as it will be perfectly correct to do so. I hope you will not consider this what the priest called "an evasive answer," as I have given you such a very free choice. I am glad you enjoy your corner so much, and I hope now you have broken the ice, that you will come to it often. I must agree with you that they are sometimes rather ridiculous, but the interesting ones are so largely in the majority that I scarcely take the others into account.

THREE OVERTAXED ONES, St. John.—My dear girls I really feel very sorry for you, and I do think you are overtaxed indeed! Too much is expected of school girls in these days I know, but surely your case must be an exceptional one? One hour in which to learn your English lessons is simply preposterous. I should think three hours rather sufficient, especially if they are difficult. I consider it a great injustice to the girls, who are prevented from doing credit either to themselves or their teacher, all for each of a little more time in which to prepare their lessons. There is but one remedy I can suggest and that is for you to write to your parents explaining the circumstances and asking them to interfere in your behalf. This, I think, would be the fairest course to pursue and would probably have the best results. Yes, I remember her very well, and how pleased I was with her pleasant letter; I am glad to know she is one of you. I must confess that I never even heard the expression you ask about, so I am quite unable to give you any information concerning it, but I think it must be rather obscure, as I thought I had at least heard of most of the proverbs and quotations in general use. No one could call your letter either silly or troublesome, and I enjoyed it very much—how could I help doing so—since it was so flattering? I am glad that you and your schoolmates take such an interest in me and my doings, and I hope you will come to me whenever you think I can be of service to you. A critic in the matter of handwriting could probably pronounce yours rather unformed, but I think it very pretty and legible, though I have no doubt it will be much better in two years' time.

MICHEL, St. John.—You are very good to say you consider it so interesting. I wonder what you and the rest of my girls would say if I told you we were thinking of giving up this department altogether? Would you be sorry? When I tell you that I bit my own nails terribly until I was nearly ten years old, you will understand how I can sympathize with you. None but the unfortunate victim can understand what a slave one becomes to such a habit and how difficult it is to throw off the chains which seem to be forged stronger and stronger each day. I will remember the difficulty I had in curing myself of that most unpleasant habit, and also that long after I had broken myself of it in my waking hours, I still practised it in my sleep. It is hard to suggest a remedy, but I have heard of excellent results from dipping the fingers either in extract of bitter aloes or quinine: the wonderfully penetrating bitterness of both these drugs is so distasteful that the habit is conquered in time. I once knew a young lady of twenty who had bitten her nails all her life but who finally cured herself by stern resolution, just because her lover objected so strongly to her unsightly fingers and mangled square nails. Try what vanity will do, my dear child; look at the hands of some friend who possesses pretty ones, and then look at your own, and resolve that they shall look as well as year hence. They are both very good, the writing is rather odd but original. No trouble at all, but a pleasure. Thank you for the love; all friends are valuable, even "unknown" ones, and I am always glad to make a new one.

GIRLS FOR THE FOUR SEASONS.

Hints About Costumes and When They Become the Wearers.

I wonder who invented the blouse—not the Russian blouse by any means—but the dainty, delightful garment which is equally charming in silk, chali, white muslin, or plain cambric? Surely it is not the mighty Worth, it must have been a woman to whom we are indebted for that most valuable addition to woman's armory, and I think it a flagrant injustice that her name has not been given to us so we women should be permitted to honor her as she deserves for the benefit she has conferred upon us. What girl is not more irresistible in a blouse than in the most perfect tailor made bodice ever made, except of course the very fat girl, who should shun the seductive but delusive idea that a blouse is becoming to her, as we are all erroneously supposed to shun evil doing. It is sure to be a pitfall, and an occasion of stumbling to her, since what is beautiful on her more slender sister is ludicrous on her, adding to her apparent bulk, and causing her to look short waisted, and apologetic. But on the girl of ordinary good figure it seems a sort of illustration of the eternal fitness of things, its soft fullness and delightfully indefinite outlines, making the plain seem pretty, and the pretty girl seem more adorable than ever. In short it transforms the summer girl into a sort of wingless angel too huggable to be quite seraphic, and yet almost, but not quite, too angelic for mere mortal man to presume to hug.

By the way, talking of summer girls reminds me that I have often wondered why we hear so much about that peculiar variety of the genus girl. Who ever heard of a spring girl? And who, in all his varied experiences, remembers to have met a real live specimen of the autumn girl, while

even the winter girl is a rarity second only in value to a black pearl, or a blue rose? And yet the spring maiden is an epitome of all that is sweetest and freshest in nature, as she passes before our dazzled eyes in the glory of her dainty "suit" with spring flowers in her hat, and all the beauty of the springtime both of life and of the year in her bright face and gay attire. The autumn girl has a charm of her own, too, and even if her nose is just a trifle red at the tip, from the rough caresses of the equinoctial winds, why so are her red cheeks and her saucy little chin, while he sombre dress of dark brown with little dashes of scarlet woven in the cloth, and the touch of vivid scarlet in her hat make us think of a robin so forcibly that we feel like giving the autumn girl as warm a welcome, as we never fail to lavish on the "gentleman in brown with a scarlet vest" when he makes his first appearance in the spring. And then who can look upon the winter girl in her bravery of furs and thick warm fabrics without singing her praises? Look at her sparkling eyes which seem to have caught the brightness of the stars on a frosty night, at her crimson lips and glowing cheeks; note her firm step, her erect figure, her look of exuberant health and then fall down at the feet of the winter girl and acknowledge her supremacy; crown her the queen of maidens. God bless the girls one and all! And as long as I could not be born an angel, I am humbly thankful that I was born a woman.

I intended to talk about dress when I began, but somehow I digressed. I think I was speaking about blouses, and I wanted to describe one I saw recently, or rather an entire costume, which I thought a perfect form in grey and pink. The skirt was of grey cashmere, real grey, like a dove's wing, and was trimmed at the foot with a single fold of grey corded silk, which went all around the skirt, the bodice consisted of a very full flounce of the loveliest shade of pink pongee silk made very full, and with very large full sleeves with deep cuffs, and had no "skirts," while over it was laced a short pointed bodice of the grey cashmere, bordered with steel gimp. It was a lovely gown, and one very easily initiated, in any colors most becoming to its future wearer. Dark brown and lemon yellow would be very effective, and the silk blouse is a convenient variety to wear at a quiet evening, or tea party, as one could have a basque the same as the skirt, for ordinary wear.

I never could understand why the most pious and well educated people are always so ready and willing to laugh in church! Or why an occurrence which would fail to provoke the faintest smile on ordinary occasions should move one to uproarious and unseemly merriment in church. I think it will be generally admitted that there is nothing especially amusing about the average dog one meets and passes every day on the streets, especially if he happens to be the property of a near neighbor, and we are well acquainted with him; in fact we pass him without smiling a dozen times a day. But let that same canine stroler into church during service and sit decorously down on his haunches in the middle aisle with an air of being much more deeply impressed by the sermon than any other member of the congregation and he is at once the cause of delicious mirth, and only after the senior deacon has dragged him sternly down the aisle and forcibly ejected him, is quiet restored. What a strange world it is, and how often it happens that the most inoffensive people, and those who pay the most attention to the sermons poured forth for uninterested listeners are roughly handled, while those in the reserved seats go unscathed.

SHALL THE HONEYMOON GO.

The Opinion of a Woman Who Says "Yes"—Her Reasons For Her Opinion.

A discussion recently arose as to the wisdom of abolishing the honeymoon custom and a young married woman contributed here experience as follows: When about to be married, of course the honeymoon question arose, and my single friends were, as is usual, eloquent on the subject, but my married friends advised no such thing. They said it was an utter waste of money, and that we should enjoy ourselves far better in our own home. As that home was at an entirely strange place, what was the use in gadding off to some other place equally strange? My lover now my husband, left it in my hands to decide, as he had no definite wish on the subject; so I decided to do without a honeymoon, and go straight home after the wedding. I have never regretted the step I then took. There are always so many things to do when first furnishing, that I found my husband's help very useful, and I do not know how we should have managed it if we had just come home, say, the day before he had to go back to business.

Then the money side of the question certainly tells in its favor. I can't understand how people with moderate incomes can waste as much money in a fortnight as would keep them for some weeks, and then when settling down have to scrimp and pinch to make ends meet. I daresay many engaged couples will think this a stingy and mean way of beginning married life; but I am certain that many couples had to begin married life over again they would do without a honeymoon. For my own part, I believe in looking at the question in a practical light, and certainly for no honeymoon.

Feathered Victims of Fashion.

M. Raspail, a French naturalist, affirms that last summer fifteen thousand five hundred little birds—nightingales, red-throats, flycatchers, warblers, and so on—were caught for fashion purposes in two forests alone, in a small part of the Department of Meurthe and Moselle. Throughout the whole province, it appears that a like extermination goes on, so that at least considerably over a million of little birds must be annually destroyed. Various means are employed for the destruction of the feathered victims, electricity even being called in aid. Wires are stretched, we read, as inviting perches for tired birds, which have crossed the Mediterranean and land in the South of France, those who perch being killed by the thousand by means of electric shock.

Sovereign money, said Horace, procures a wife with a large fortune, gets a man credit, creates friends, stands in place of pedigree and, oftentimes, even of beauty.

SEASONABLE RECEIPTS.

Specially Prepared from Practical Tests for the Lady Readers of "Progress."

[Correspondents seeking information in this department should address their queries to "Editor Seasonable Receipts, Progress, St. John.]

If there is one thing more than another in the catering line that we ought to be thankful for, it is for the change of food that comes with the ever changing seasons. We who have to provide for others, look for and welcome the "first of the season" whatever it may be with a pleasure akin to that with which we welcome the first flowers that bloom in the spring, and yet, by a strange inconsistency, most of us are inclined to overlook the fact that there is a constant change in the market supply; and grumble about it, much in the same manner as some of those to whom we cater, grumble about the "sameness" of their daily fare—without any good reason. The following are some of the

Seasonable Foods.

FISH—Oysters, clams, cod, haddock, herring, smelts, halibut, mackerel.

MEATS—Beef, mutton, lamb, pork.

POULTRY AND GAME—Chickens, young turkeys, ducks, black duck, teal, woodcock, snipe, venison, moose, caribou, partridge, rabbits.

VEGETABLES—Potatoes, carrots, turnips, parsnips, cauliflower, cabbage, brussels sprouts, onions, tomatoes, celery, lettuce, parsley, salsify, beets, sweet herbs of all sorts, egg plant, sweet corn.

FRUITS—Apples, bananas, pears, plums, grapes, damsons, nuts.

Especially in Season in October.

Oysters, smelts, pork, partridges, black duck, venison, moose, caribou, rabbits, tomatoes, woodcock, turkey, poultry, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, parsnips, celery, eggplant, apples, grapes, damsons, nuts.

Oysters with Macaroni au Gratin.

Put six ounces of macaroni into a stewpan with three pints of boiling water. Season with a pinch of salt and two of pepper. Simmer for twenty minutes. Drain the macaroni and put it back in the stewpan with half a pint of good gravy or soup stock, and let it stew until the macaroni is tender and the gravy absorbed. Turn it out, chop it small, and put it again into the stewpan with a dozen or more of oysters cut into pieces, two ounces of parmesan cheese, one ounce of butter, a pinch of cayenne, and as much milk or gravy as will moisten it. Shake the saucepan over the fire until the cheese is melted, then pile the macaroni and oysters high in a baking dish, sprinkle over it an ounce of grated cheese and a few browned bread crumbs. Pour over half an ounce of clarified butter, and brown the mixture in a brisk oven. Time altogether, one hour, cost probably less than 30 cents. Sufficient for five or six persons.

Fried Smelts.

When smelts are fresh the gills are red and the eyes bright and full; the body is of a silvery hue, and they possess an odor that somewhat resembles freshly cut cucumbers. Like all delicate fish, they should be handled as gently and as little as possible; they should not be washed, but wiped with a soft cloth, and in drawing them the gills should be pulled gently out and the inside with them, as the fish must not be opened. The roe, which is exceedingly delicate, should be left inside. Draw and wipe the smelts, soak them in milk for a minute or two and dredge them in flour, or if preferred, flour them and dip them in beaten egg and then in browned bread-crumbs. Fry in hot fat until they are crisp and brown. Take them up carefully and fold them in a clean, hot napkin to drain the fat off. Sprinkle a little salt over them and serve on a napkin in a dish with quartered lemon. Both tomato and tartar sauce goes well with fried smelts.

Broiled Smelts.

Select the largest smelts, split them down the back and broil with an oyster broiler over a gentle fire. Sprinkle with salt and serve immediately.

Rabbit.

Young rabbit compares favorably with chicken and is made to do duty for chicken sometimes, particularly in the way of canned chicken, patted chicken and in soups. The meat is rather dry and bacon is generally served with it. Care should be taken to choose young rabbits for the table; old ones answer very well for soup. To tell when they are young, break the jaw bone between the thumb and finger; if they are old they will resist the pressure; also by feeling in the joint of the paw for a little nut; if it is gone, the rabbit is old and not fit for fine cookery. If rabbits were not so plentiful and cheap, they would be thought more of. That is one reason why they are not found on the menus of the dearer class of restaurants, and never in the game course of any high-class dinner, although it may occasionally be found in some more elaborate shape amongst the entrees, and one reason why they are not more popular in the home is, I fancy, because they are usually sold with the skins on, and most domestic cooks object to skinning them. The dealers, however, will have them skinned without extra charge if you refuse to take them otherwise.

Roast Rabbit.

Take a plump young rabbit, wash it, line the inside with slices of fat bacon, and fill it with veal forcemeat, or what is more convenient for domestic use—pork sausage meat which can be bought ready made at the butchers. Sew it up securely, and truss it, by drawing the fore-legs backwards, and the hind legs forwards at the side in an upright position, and fasten it there with a skewer run through it and the body. Press the legs close to the sides of the body and fasten them with skewers also. Lay a slice of fat bacon over the back, put the rabbit in a deep baking pan, and then lay three or four lumps of butter or dripping upon it, and place it in a moderate oven and bake for about fifty to sixty minutes or less if the rabbit is small and the oven very hot. Just before it is done dredge a little flour over it, baste it again and then let it brown. Lift it upon a hot dish, remove the skewers, pour a spoonful or two of good brown gravy over it, and send some more to table in a tureen, and some red currant jelly. Sufficient for five or six persons. Probable cost of the rabbit 15 to 20 cents, sausage meat 12 cents per pound.

Stewed Rabbit.

Cut a plump young rabbit into pieces the size of an egg. Divide half a pound of streaky bacon into little square pieces, and fry them with an ounce of butter until they turn yellow. Take them up and put in their place the pieces of rabbit and two

Just Opened.

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small onions sliced, and fry these until they are lightly browned. Take them up and mix an ounce of butter with the fat, and rub it over the fire with the back of a wooden spoon for a few minutes. Moisten the paste gradually with three quarters of a pint of stock or water, and add a bunch of savory herbs, a little pepper and salt, the rabbit, the bacon, and the onions, and simmer all gently together in a closely covered saucepan for twenty minutes. Take out the herbs, pile the pieces of rabbit on a dish, pour the sauce over them and serve very hot. If liked a glassful of claret may be added to the sauce. It will be much improved also, if a dozen mushrooms are stewed with the sauce for the last 10 minutes. Failing these a tablespoonful of mushroom ketchup may be served with it.

White Rabbit Soup.

A small quantity of good rabbit soup may be made with the inferior parts of the rabbit, that is the head, neck, and shoulders, leaving the best parts, that is the legs and the back to be stewed and served as an entree. Divide the rabbit and soak the part that is to be used for soup in lukewarm water for half an hour. Cut it into small pieces and put these into a stew pan with as much stock made from bones and water as will barely cover them. Let them simmer gently until the meat is tender. Take it up and pick it from the bones and put these back into the liquor with a carrot, a turnip, an onion, a bunch of parsley, a sprig of thyme, a pepper and salt, and ground mace; add a pint and a half of additional stock, and simmer all gently together for two hours. Strain the soup and leave it to cool. Mince the meat and pound it quite smooth, add to it a slice of stale crumb of bread which has been soaked in milk until soft and afterwards squeezed dry. Moisten this paste gradually with the strained, cold stock, and let it boil for a quarter of an hour, add a small cupful of cream that has been mixed with a teaspoonful of ground rice or corn starch, let it boil up once more, and serve. Time altogether, three or four hours, sufficient for five or six persons.

Fatigue from Brain Work.

Fatigue caused by brain work acts as a poison which effects all the organs, especially the muscular system. The blood of dogs fatigued by long racing also acts as a poison, and when injected into other dogs makes them exhibit all the symptoms of fatigue. Sense of fatigue seems to be due to the products of the nerve-cells rather than to deficiency of proper substance.

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Typing, Typewriter and Typists.
The following new words with their meanings have been coined by the New York Herald:
Typist—A typewriter machine. The accent falls upon the last syllable—type-
Typist—A male operator on the typewriter.
Typist—A female operator on the typewriter.
To type—To write on the typewriter.
Typewriter—Typewritten, or typewritten manuscript.
It may aid the memory to state that the first word, "typist," is formed by taking the first and last syllables of the expression "typewriting machine," and that it means the same as the complete expression. Also that the last one, "typist," is formed by taking the first one and the last two syllables of the expression, "typewritten manuscript," and changing, for the sake of euphony, the "u" of the syllable into an "o."

CURED

"About seven or eight months ago I was attacked by a cough, and at once began to take a medicine much advertised as an expectorant, and continued using it until I had taken about six bottles. Instead of giving me relief, it only made me worse. I tried several other remedies, but all in vain, and I don't think I had three whole nights' rest during my illness. I began to think that

Consumption

had laid hold of me, and my hopes of recovery were all gone. I was a mere skeleton, but a friend of mine, who had been some time away, called to see me. He recommended me to try Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, and kindly sending me a bottle, I took it, but with little hopes of recovery. I am thankful, however, to say that it cured me, and I am to-day enjoying the best of health."—J. Wilmot Payne, Monrovia, Liberia.

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