

"ASTRA'S" TALKS WITH GIRLS.

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

L. VIDA, St. John.—I am very sorry that I shall not be able to answer your questions in time to be of much service to you. Two of the quotations are very familiar to me, but the names of the authors have escaped me. I will look them all up as soon as possible and let you know in a future issue. Thank you for the kind words about PROGRESS, and my column in particular. You did not ask too many questions at all. I am here to answer them. I spent a very pleasant lazy day on the 24th, and I really believe that is my idea of happiness now-a-days.

BLANCHE, St. John.—I am glad you asked me those questions, because I shall not only be able to get your mind completely at rest on the subject, and give you a great deal of encouragement, but also to say a friendly word I have long wished to speak to those girls who, like so many of us, are obliged to earn their own living. You know the rather hackneyed saying that "There is always room at the top?" My dear girl, it is so true! There is always a demand for good work. So far from its being a fact that lady stenographers and type-writers cannot find employment in the city, I could name over at least half a dozen firms in St. John, who are in want of a good stenographer and type-writer at the present moment; the school cannot turn them out fast enough to supply the demand, but the trouble is, that as soon as the average girl has learned enough short hand to transcribe her own notes—sometimes with difficulty—and enough type writing to satisfy herself, she considers her education complete, and answers the first advertisement she sees, for "a competent stenographer and type-writer." A short trial proves her to be very incompetent, and she comes to the conclusion that there is no chance for typewriters in St. John, whereas the truth is that a regular famine of first-class workers exists. A good stenographer and typewriter can earn from five to ten dollars a week easily, and the salary of a good telegrapher ranges from \$30 to \$50 dollars a month. Of course she would have to be very good indeed at her profession to earn the latter sum. Now these are figures you can rely upon, and if you make up your mind to study hard, work patiently and be one of the best, in your chosen profession, you need have no apprehensions about the future, you can always obtain and keep a good situation. I almost think I should recommend telegraphy, as the pay is better, but still short hand is in itself a profession, and once learned is never forgotten. If I have been of any use to you, I am very glad indeed, and will always be happy to give you any information in my power.

ROLLING STONE, St. John.—You are a very sensible girl, to take what I said in such good part, but you know how I meant it. I have read what you sent me very carefully, and I have no hesitation in saying that the idea is a very good one. I have often thought over that same subject myself, and I agree with you perfectly; not only that, but the subject is one that has wide scope for speculation. The only trouble with your work was this; you made it too sketchy, it was little more than outline, and you did not make as much of it as you might have done. It was more like a short composition or essay at school, than an article for the press, and therefore, it had not that workmanlike touch which only comes with practice. If I can ever get the time I will touch it up and send it to you, so as to give you an idea of what I mean; and until then I will take care of it. Do as I recommended and persevere. Nothing will improve you so much as practice. I shall be glad to hear from you whenever you write.

GRINNON BARRETT.—I have not repeated that rash remark so far. In fact I believe I should be quite lonely now without that type written effusion, which smiles up at me from my table once in every two or three weeks. I did rather descend upon you last time, did I not? And I began to think I had frightened you away forever. I have been housecleaning myself you know, for the last few weeks, so I have strong opinions on the subject; and when Geoffrey solemnly delivered himself of the opinion the other night at tea, that it was all a mistake to suppose housecleaning was in reality harder than any other work, it was merely a matter of being used to it or not, I simply rose up and smote him with my scarred and reddened hands, and richly he deserved it. As to babies! Well, that is another question, and also, perhaps, another necessary evil, which can scarcely be avoided. As long as the world wags the great majority of its inhabitants will indulge in the pernicious practice of getting married. Some of these days you will do so yourself no doubt, and then you will be better qualified to give an opinion on the subject. I think I shall wrap up the subject of babies some time, and then we can compare notes, and experiences, only, I alas! have not even a small niece whose perfection I can enlarge upon. You are right, however, about babies being made monarchs of all they survey in a much too large degree; I do believe other people have some rights which should be respected, and when my dearest friend's infant wishes to scoop one of my eyes out, merely for the pleasure of inspecting that organ after it has been divorced from the parent stem, and howls with rage, when his attempt is frustrated, I am largely in favor of the rights of the individual being protected against the all encroaching tide of "the rising generation." It is too bad about that poem of yours. I am really afraid the editor of PROGRESS has no poesy in his soul. How generous you are, but no! I could not accept such a sacrifice at your hands, besides, if you were to implicate me as you suggest in the authorship of that poem my literary reputation would be blasted forever, and the fair flower blighted ere yet it had reached fruition. I don't think the refrain of Ta-ra-ra, etc., was catchy at all. I never liked it. I should not think the miniature

niece would appreciate your kisses very highly as long as you smoke. If I mistake not you have never had much difficulty in getting your poems into the pages of PROGRESS. I think I have seen them there very frequently.

DORATHEA, York Co.—How in the world could I do as you ask? What influence do you imagine I could bring to bear upon anyone to "send them down?" I would do anything in my power for you through this column, but if I wrote privately to one there is no reason why I should do it to others. I will think over what you suggest and see what I can do.

MOONEY-EYE.—Do you know you chose a very ugly name? Could you not think of anything prettier, or more suggestive? You are very good to say, or rather to imply, that to write to me frequently would be a liberal education, but still I do not think I would leave school just yet and depend on such an uncertain source of education. (1) I am afraid the plumb tree will never amount to anything unless it is grafted, the fruit would be apt to be small and sour. (2) The rose should bloom the next year, but there should be no hope of its blossoming any sooner. I never noticed the peculiarity you speak of about the girl with the new dress. It is just as well you don't want to be a girl, since such promotion is quite beyond your reach, and crying for the moon is dreary work. I managed to read your writing very easily, though it is certainly very small, you should try to write a larger and more manly hand. You should not be too hard on that poor young man, perhaps he did not happen to have the requisite coin. You are a very bad boy, I am afraid, to laugh at the misfortunes of others, just wait till you are trying to "raise" a mustache yourself, and then you will sympathize with the trials of other youths. Perhaps you will be "The Duke of the family" yourself some day. No wonder they laughed! he should have said "monarch of all I survey." You can write again if you like, and I will pat the pup with pleasure for you.

C. B. C.—You were quite right to come back again. I meant what I said when I told you to write whenever you felt like it; you know I like my old correspondents to remember me. I am glad to hear you were so pleased with your former answer. Well, no, I have not exactly got a dog of my own, in fact I never possessed a dog but once, and that was when I was a small child; but the dog referred to lines in the house with me and is almost the same as mine. He is a great pet and a very clever fellow. I can tell you of a simple and certain cure for warts. Put a quantity of washing soda in a bottle with some water and shake it until you have what is called a saturated solution; that is, until the water will not take up any more soda, and the lumps remain in the bottom; touch the warts with the solution whenever you think of it, four or five times a day, or even oftener, and they will gradually disappear. Never mind the freckles. All boys who go out in the sun much have them, and by the time you are quite grown up they also will probably disappear. It is too bad, but the plain boy often makes the handsome man, so don't worry. No, I don't think you were wicked at all, and it is very hard to keep one's temper sometimes. Don't you know that housecleaning is hard on everybody? and hardest of all on those who do the work? But still it cannot last forever, and in the summer boys can almost live out of doors. Don't be hasty, my dear boy, you are too young to think of such a thing, wait till your education is completed, and you are a man. We all think we have a hard time of it when we are young, and perhaps we have, in one sense, but it is only in after years that we learn what hard times really are. Thank you for the card, and write whenever you feel like it to your friend. ASTRA.

The Feminine Chin. The modern British artist, caught by the specialization craze, seems to be concentrating his attention on ladies' chins. This is especially the case with the fashion-plate artist. Human chins may be divided into four classes. First, the retreating chin, which falls away behind the frontal line of the face. This is the pet abomination of modern chin-fanciers. Secondly, the normal chin, which is a chin of moderate size, definite outline, and flush with the frontal line of the face; this ought to be the chin approved by painters. Thirdly, there is the long, prominent chin, which is pushed forward somewhat in advance of the frontal line of the face; this is ugly, though not always markedly so. Fourthly, there is the very long, very large and decidedly protruding chin; this in scientific language is the prognathous chin—the chin, in fact, of the monkey tribe. It is the chin, slightly modified, which the highly cultured artists of the fashion-plates have chosen as the type of the beautiful in female chins. Darwin had something to say on the point. In the "Descent of Man" he wrote: "The early male forefathers of man were probably furnished with great canine teeth, but as they gradually acquired the habit of using stones, clubs or other weapons for fighting with their enemies or rivals, they would use their jaws and teeth less and less. In this case the jaws, together with the teeth, would become reduced in size." What strikes one here is that large jaws and a prominent chin in man appear to have been needed, at a low stage of development, for fighting with the mouth and teeth as monkeys and dogs fight. If the fashion-plate artists of today are showing us real and not imaginary types of female beauty, it would seem that women are beginning to revert to a condition of low development similar to that occupied by man in his transition from the simian to the bimaneous stage. If this be so, we may anticipate, since nature seldom does anything without a purpose, that the quarrels of women, more especially of fashionable women, will soon begin to be fought out in the law courts or by polite letter-writing and the social "cut," but by the good old method of "tooth and nail." We commend these developmental facts to the consideration of the admirers of huge and hideous chins.—London Hospital.

SEASONABLE RECIPES.

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.]

Kidney Irish Stew. Take the hard core out of the middle of an ox kidney, and cut it into pieces about one inch and a half square. Season with salt and pepper, and put into a saucepan with an onion finely minced, and a quarter of a pint of stock, or water. Let the liquid boil and remove the scum carefully; then put half a dozen large peeled potatoes into the pan, and simmer gently until they are sufficiently cooked—about one hour to simmer. Put the kidney in the middle of a dish and arrange the potatoes around it, pour the gravy over all and serve as hot as possible. Probable cost 12c., sufficient for three or four persons.

Kidney Soup. Cut an ox kidney into thin slices. Season these with salt and pepper, dredge a little flour over them, and fry them in butter until they are nicely browned. Pour over them as much boiling water as will just cover them, and simmer them gently for an hour. Take out the kidney and cut it into small pieces and return it to the saucepan, together with two quarts of stock, two turnips, two carrots, one onion, three sticks of celery, all cut small, and a small bunch of savory herbs. Simmer slowly for an hour and a half, then take out the herbs; add a tablespoonful of mushroom ketchup, and a little salt and pepper, if required, and thicken the soup with a small lump of butter rolled in flour.

Kidney in Bacon. An appetizing breakfast dish may be prepared as follows: Cut six thin slices of bacon about six or eight inches long. Mix up a teaspoonful each of chopped onion and parsley with an ounce of breadcrumbs; add a pinch of nutmeg, pepper, and grated lemon rind. Sprinkle the bacon with it, put a kidney on each slice and roll it round them, tie with a piece of string, and bake in a hot oven, or heat in a frying pan for a few minutes. Serve either hot or cold.

Veal Olive Pie. Cut the remains of a dressed fillet of veal into thin slices. Cover these with pieces of bacon, spread foremeat upon them, and roll them firmly. Place in a pie dish, piled high in the middle, and intersperse among them about a dozen foremeat balls the size of marbles, the yolks of four hard boiled eggs cut into halves, and a few steamed mushrooms. Pour over them a good, highly-seasoned gravy, thickened with brown thickening and flavored with lemon juice. Line the edges of the dish with pastry, cover the same, and bake the pie in a well-heated oven for an hour or an hour and a half.

Tomato Chutney. The following is a capital Australian recipe for making the above:—Slice 10 lbs. of green tomatoes into an earthenware dish. Sprinkle each layer of slices with salt, and let them remain all night. The next day put into a preserving pan 2 quarts of vinegar, 2 lbs. of brown sugar, 1 lb. of sliced onions, quarter ounce of cloves, half teaspoonful of cayenne pepper, quarter ounce cinnamon, quarter ounce peppercorns. Drain the tomatoes from the salt, and simmer them with the vinegar, sugar, onions, &c., until tender. Put into small jam or pickle bottles and cork well. The tomatoes must be pickled just before tarring red.

Prawn Curry is excellent, and is nearly as good when made from the tinned prawns (Barataria for choice) as from the fresh, and at a much less cost. Empty a tin of good prawns into half a pint of white stock, adding a pinch of powdered mace and four tablespoonful of cream or milk. Mix one teaspoonful of Indian curry powder with the same quantity of flour, and 1 oz. of fresh butter. Stew these very slowly all together for an hour. Squeeze in the juice of half a lemon; add salt if necessary, and a quarter of a teaspoonful of brown sugar, and serve in the centre of a ring of rice. The rice must be arranged round the dish like a wall; then take a small sized egg cup, fill it with rice, press it in, and turn out on the top of the wall. Put one of these at regular distances all round, and pour the curry into the middle of the ring.

Boiled Tongue and Tomatoes. Select a fresh tongue; wash, trim and scrape it, and cook it for three-quarters of an hour in cold water; put it in a pot, cover with hot water and cook until it is tender, then take it out of the water, peel off the skin, lay in on a hot platter and pour over it some tomatoes prepared as follows:—Peel some tomatoes and slice them thin and put with them some fine dry crumbs—enough to thicken them when done; put them in a stewpan and cook gently, stirring frequently; add to them half a small onion and five or six cloves, and when done take out the onions and cloves and add a large spoonful of butter, pepper and salt. Heat this ready when the tongue is done; pour it around the latter on the dish, and serve very hot.

Sauvories. Nice little sauvories are always more or less appreciated, and among them rank Gruyere sandwiches, composed of thin slices of fairly fresh bread with shavings of Gruyere, on which is a small modicum of French mustard and a sprinkling of salt laid in between. The sandwiches may be cut into the shape of tiny cutlets and laid against a bank of cream. "Laitance sur canape" is a very usual sauvorie, but for its making soft roes are required. As unfortunately, some blasters have had roes, it is well to occasionally make use of them, and the following is an excellent way. Cut some rounds of stale bread, and fry them a good color in boiling butter; rub over the hard roes with butter and grill them gently, cut them in inch pieces, place one on each round of toast, and on each piece of roe put a mushroom that has been fried in butter, squeeze in it a drop of lemon juice, add a suspicion of cayenne, and serve very hot. Cheese fritters are very nice if the dinner has not been too substantial. They are made by

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grating a couple of ounces of Parmesan or any not moist cheese, mixing with it an ounce of grated bread, a little pepper, and sufficient beaten egg to form a light consistency. The mixture is dropped from a dessert-spoon in small cakes into boiling fat or oil. When fried on both sides drain and serve piled on a hot dish, garnished with cress or parsley. By those who like a very hotly-flavored savoury, egg cutlets will be relished: boil an egg till quite hard, then shell and chop it up, mix with about a tablespoonful of grated stale bread, one of grated Parmesan, a little nutmeg, a short teaspoonful of curry powder and the beaten yolk of an egg, shape like small cutlets, dip each one into the white of the egg, then into breadcrumbs, and fry a pale brown in boiling butter. Serve very hot. Dried haddock makes a particularly good savoury. Boil it first in a frying pan of boiling water for a few minutes; then remove all skin and bone; pound it in a mortar; mix with it a little grated Parmesan, some minced parsley, pepper, and beaten eggs; roll into small balls; fry in butter or oil, and serve on rounds of toast or fried bread. An easier way is to pound the haddock (after boiling, of course) and mix with it a little butter, and spread it on strips of buttered toast. Dust with cayenne, and serve very hot.

After-Dinner Sauvories are now so much the rage that it is interesting to hear what such an experienced diner-out and gourmet as Mr. G. A. Sala has to say in their disparage. Thus the great "G. A. S.": I fail, and have always failed, to see the gastronomic use of a savoury after a sweet. The raison d'etre of a relish or zest is that it should serve as a provocative to appetite, and this is why I recommend oysters and hors d'oeuvres before the soup; but surely you are not going to eat another dinner after you have partaken of tipsy cake, chocolate, and such like. I have but slender hopes of converting many persons to my way of thinking in this regard; but, for goodness sake, do abstain from such horrors as the soft roes of herrings, or caviare, served up on hot toast, at the conclusion of a repast. These things are neither more nor less than sheer barbarism; and, indeed, all savories at the end of a dinner are stupid survivals of the old gross days, when gentlemen sat long over their wine, and when they had drunk quite enough, sent for broiled bones and devilled biscuits to stimulate them to drink more. The only savories of which I approve are cheese-straws, and even in the making of those the cook should be told to be chary of the cayenne pepper. Do you want a cayenne-peppered tongue to acquire a greater gust for the pine-apple, the peaches, and the grapes of the dessert?

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