

**"ASTRA'S" TALKS WITH GIRLS.**

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

One of my most constant and valued correspondents has sent me a poem by James Whitcomb Riley, which the poet inscribed upon the fly leaf of a book, for the fortunate possessor. I have seen the poem, "In the Spring," of which it is the first verse, in print before; but as my correspondent has expressed a wish to see it published in *PROGRESS*, I am quite willing to give it a corner in my column, especially as it expresses my own sentiments so thoroughly, and it seems very much in accord with Geoffrey's, also since I have been vainly endeavoring to wake up his enthusiasm to the gardening point for some weeks. He says it is too cold to sow seeds yet, and there is no use in getting the garden ready ahead of the season. Wise Geoff! He is a perfect philosopher where work is concerned.

**A SENTIMENT.**

(Written on the Fly-leaf of a Book.)

In Spring, when the green gets back in the trees,  
And the sun comes out and stays,  
And yer boots pull on with good tight squeeze,  
And you think of yer barefoot days;  
When you get to work and you want to not,  
And you and yer wife agree  
Its time to spade up the garden lot—  
When the green gets back in the trees—  
Well, work is the least of my ideas,  
When the green, you know, gets back in the trees!

—Jas. Whitcomb Riley.

ROBIN, St. John.—Well, little bird, the sight of your familiar writing gave me a very pleasant surprise! I hope you have come home to stay now. I daresay you see my pathetic lament for you, the week before last, and realize that I had not forgotten you? Suppose you call him Fairy? Nothing has ever seemed to me so like our childish idea of a fairy, as a canary bird, they are such "tricky" sprites, and so pretty, and dainty. I never heard of one being called Fairy, they are nearly always "Dicks" or "Bovats" so yours will be raised quite above the common herd, by an uncommon name. "Sprite" would be equally pretty I think, and it will give you a choice. I heard another robin whistling away this morning, but I did not see him, I have only seen one this year. Don't let such a long time pass without writing again, you know I like to hear from you, and I want to know all that you did while you were away.

FLORA MACFLIMSY, St. John.—You are very welcome to our column, and I am glad you like it so much. (1) A street or visiting costume is the only correct one, any other would be out of place, but, of course, you can make it as handsome as you like and can afford. (2) Yes, the gentlemen are not supposed to know anything about the expenses, they are strictly the guests of the evening, and nothing more. (3) You do not mention the color of the silk. If it is black, try ammonia and water, or benzine; but if of a light color, lay the spotted part between two pieces of thick blotting paper, and lay a hot iron over it, that should remove the grease if you change the blotting paper two or three times, as it becomes soiled. What a bold, pretty hand you write.

CRANK, St. John.—I have very frequently to remind my correspondents that there is not the slightest use in writing to me on Monday or Tuesday, and then expecting to see their answer in Saturday's *PROGRESS*. Unless a letter is in the office by Friday night, there is no chance of the answer appearing the next week. I am sorry if you were disappointed, but it could not be helped. I do not quite understand your letter. What and whom were you supposed to "watch"? I think you took the only proper course, in going direct to the fountain head, for information, and I can only suppose that the person who told you was misinformed. I would tell him that I had asked one of the principals, and found he had made a mistake. I do not see what else you can do; such mistakes are very common.

KITTY—N. B.—I think that the girl who allows a "boy" to kiss her, not only does a very silly thing, but I think that she lowers herself immeasurably in the esteem of any man whose opinion is worth having. "No matter how much he has begged her to let him," I think you were quite right to say what you did to him. I would think a man who talked such nonsense, not only very foolish, but also, that he had a very poor opinion of my intelligence, and I think, I should tell him so. It is far from being a compliment to you to talk as if he imagined that you would be pleased with such silly remarks. In my opinion a girl should be at least 20 before she is engaged. It is far better to be "old maidish, and old-fashioned" than to be "fast." The former are the girls whom men ask to marry them, I notice; the latter, the ones they flit with, and leave. Your writing is not very good now, but a little practice will improve it wonderfully. It is far better for a girl to be anxious to know, and to do, what is right, than to be indifferent on such a point, and I shall always be glad to help you in any way that lies in my power.

R. S., St. John.—I think my answer, to you last week contained nearly all the information you asked for. I wonder if you will mind my telling you, since you have asked my advice, that your spelling is a little off? I would not presume to speak of it otherwise, but when you aspire to even a small place in literature you cannot be too careful about such matters. I know well that there are plenty of cultivated people in this world who are incapable of spelling correctly. It seems to be a peculiarity which nothing can overcome, but it stands terribly in the way of literary success. Do you know that you spell disappointed "disappointed," expense "expen," and forgotten "forgoten"? I daresay these mistakes were slips of the pen, but still they would go quite a long way towards condemning an article of yours in the eyes of an editor. I should certainly try again, and be more careful of punctuation, composition and spelling than ever before. I trust I have not offended you

by plain speaking. It would not make any difference whether you sent it as a letter or not; it may not have been quite suitable, or there may not have been space for it at the time, but I think you have a very decided "turn," as the saying is, for writing, and I would persevere. I shall be very glad to help you in any way in my power.

GRINNON BARRETT.—You are mistaken this time my friend, I have had plenty of "cold chills" this spring—by the way, I wonder if anybody ever experienced a hot chill?—but they have all been caused by the weather and not by the sight of your typewriting; your bright, witty, letters are a pleasure to me. Housecleaning is the most necessary of evils, and if you are not ashamed of yourself for talking about it, as "one of woman's many whims" you ought to be, that is all I can say. The fact of the matter is, that we do all the work in that connection, while you do all the grumbling. Did you ever exercise your common sense sufficiently to stand at a safe distance, for I am sure you would never come near enough to be of any assistance, and watch a carpet that had been down all winter being beaten? Because if you did, the sense I have mentioned would merely have taught you that to leave so much dust and dirt in any one room would be dangerous to health, and yet you stolidly hammer out on your typewriter that "It seems to be such a fendish delight to them to rip and tear, and scrub and haul, just so they can say they have 'house-cleaned.'" Remember, that it you like to live in dirt we don't, so we do the work, and you bluster about it just because it causes you a little discomfort. I wonder how you would like to have your hands red and blistered for a month at a time, and your arms stiff and your back aching from hard work, and then have some stupid person of the opposite sex remark jeeringly that you did it just for amusement. I really gave you credit for more sense. I wish that bureau had weighed ten tons and you had been obliged to carry it alone, up to the topmost story of a Chicago dwelling which was unprovided with an elevator. I will send that poem in to the editor with pleasure, but I fully expect that the fact of my having done so will cost me my position; he is a long-suffering and even-tempered man, but yet there is a point, you know, beyond which forbearance ceases to be a virtue. I really think *The Century* would have opened a wider field to you, though, and proved more remunerative. Seriously, though, the rhyme adopted is original; it has the effect of destroying the smoothness, I think; but we will leave that to the editor, whose opinion is of far more weight than mine.

APRIL SHOWERS.—You say this is the first time you have written to me, and yet I had an "April Showers" before, some time last year, I think. You are very welcome to my especial corner of *PROGRESS*, and I only wish I could give you the information you require, but the only hair dye I really know of, is the cold tea, and I thought it was warranted not to stain the skin. As you are so young, why not leave your hair as it is? Nothing is so common of late years as prematurely grey hair. I know three young matrons myself, whose hair is rapidly growing white, and I knew of one girl whose hair was quite white at eighteen. It seems such a pity to begin using dye so early. My own hair bids fair to retain its color until I am quite old, so I scarcely know what I should do under the circumstances, but I really think I should avoid dye. Why not try Ayer's hair vigor which is supposed to restore the color, and which I have heard very highly spoken of. I know from experience that all Ayer's preparations are very good, but I have never tried the hair vigor, so I cannot speak positively. I am glad to know you like *PROGRESS*, and our "talks" so much. Let me know how the hair vigor succeeds if you decide to try it.

TUDOR JENKS, Mount Allison, Sackville.—I am sorry you wasted your stamps and also sacrificed so valuable a possession as that lock of hair, because I cannot undertake to return samples of that or any other kind which are sent to me. I neither ask, nor wish, to be sent locks of hair, or specimens of hand writing to deliberate upon, and if the people send them without consulting me, I will not be responsible for their return, even if a stamp is enclosed. If you value the "specimen" so highly, why did you not keep half and submit the rest for analysis? I cannot honestly say that I admire it, but then the perfume with which it was so liberally showered, prevented me from being able to examine it at very close quarters, and also made me feel quite ill. You ought to know that red hair attached to the head of the owner, and set off by the complexion and eyes which usually accompany it is one thing, while a lock lying all by itself on white paper and tied with a piece of hideous terra cotta ribbon is quite another, and less attractive object. I am sorry my verdict is not more favorable, but you know there are various shades of red, and I think your sample must have been one of the wrong shades.

**Posy Rings and Their History.**

The old fashioned posy ring, which was once so much in vogue, has recently been made the subject of a learned discourse before an audience of scientific men and women. It is an extremely interesting bit of jewelry. It has a history, of course. Posy originally meant verses presented with a nosegay, then came to be applied to the flowers themselves, and finally became the brief poetical sentiment, motto, or legend inscribed upon a ring for the finger. The words marked upon these love tokens were generally of a stereotyped kind, such as "You never knew a heart more true." One which was presented by the bridegroom bore the suggestive couplet, "Love him who gives this ring of gold, 'tis he must kiss thee when thou'rt old." A Lady Cathcart, when about to take unto herself a fourth husband, inscribed upon her ring the hopeful aspiration, "If I survive I will have five."—Chicago Truth.

**SEASONABLE RECEIPTS.**

Specialty 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."]

**Food in Season.**

FISH.—Flounder, Haddock, Cod, Gaspereaux, Halibut, Pinner, Haddock, Salmon.  
MEAT.—Beef, Mutton, Veal, Spring Lamb, Pork Kidneys, Sweetbreads, Brains, Calf's Head, Calf's Liver, Bacon, Ham.  
POULTRY.—Fowls, Turkey.  
GAME.—Black Duck.  
VEGETABLES.—Artichokes, Parsnips, Carrots, Turnips, Onions, Spinach, Beets.  
FRUIT.—Blood Oranges, Pine Apple, Bananas, Prunes, Rhubarb.  
SALADS.—Lettuce, Radishes, Dandelion.

C. M. L.—The best method of making Veal Pie is perhaps the following.

**Veal Pie, Superlative.**

Butter a dish, and fill it with alternate layers of lean veal cut into neat pieces and seasoned with pepper, salt and pounded mace, thin ham sliced, sweetbreads, and truffles. Place little pieces of butter here and there in the pie, cover the dish with a rich pastry, and bake till done enough. After the pie is taken from the oven, pour into it through the hole in the centre some gravy made of some strong, highly-seasoned veal stock mixed with a glassful of champagne.

The following is very much more economical and at the same time very good:

**Veal Pie—Good.**

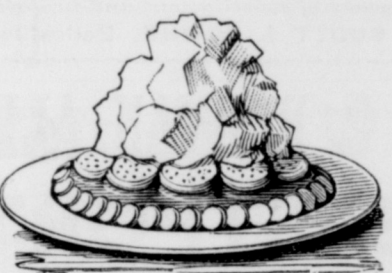
Any part of lean veal free from fat and bone may be used. The loin and best end of the neck are excellent for this purpose. When the bone and greater part of the fat are removed, divide the meat into neat pieces an inch or so square, put layers into a buttered dish with half the quantity of ham mixed with it and seasoned with salt, pepper, nutmeg-grated lemon-peel, and powdered mace. If the ham be very salt, a very little table salt will be required. Intersperse amongst the pieces of veal and ham, three or four hard boiled eggs cut into quarters. Pour over it half a cup of cold water. Line the edge of the dish with good pastry, cover with the same, make a hole in the centre that the steam may escape, and bake in a moderate oven about two hours. Lay greased paper over it to prevent browning too much. Make a nicely-seasoned gravy by stewing the bones and scraps of veal, and pour into the pie after it is baked.

**Lobster Salad**

with dressing made without oil was given a week or two ago. If you cannot find it write again.

**Floating Island.**

Into  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a pint of cream put sugar to make it very sweet, and the juice and rind of lemon grated. Beat it in a bowl set in ice water for ten minutes. Take round milk biscuits and lay them on top of the cream, on a round flat dish. On these put a layer of apricot jam, then another layer



of biscuits. Pile up on this, very high, a whip made of damson jam, and the white of four eggs. It should be rough to imitate a rock. Garnish with fruit or sweetmeats. A pretty dish for a reception or wedding breakfast and a pleasing change from the time-honored trifle.

**More About Rhubarb.**

When preparing rhubarb, particularly for pies, see what metamorphosis takes place by the judicious addition of a little candied lemon-peel, a little fresh lemon-peel, a squeeze of lemon juice, and a few salted raisins. You will be surprised.

**Rhubarb Pies.**

Rhubarb will take the flavor of other fruits very readily, and will also impart its own flavor slightly. It is, therefore, very useful, and enables the cook to vary tarts, etc., sent to table; for instance, a little lemon-peel one day, a few blanched and chopped almonds another, a spoonful of strawberry jam a third day, plain rhubarb pie the next and so on.

**Rhubarb Meringue.**

Fill a deep pie-dish with alternate layers of rhubarb, prepared as for compote given in last week's letter, with the addition of a little nutmeg, grated, and slices of stale sponge cake. Bake 20 minutes. Whisk the whites of 3 eggs thoroughly, add 3 tablespoonsful of white sugar; spread this evenly over the top, and return to the oven for 15 minutes to brown.

**Rhubarb Fritters.**

Prepare as for compote, only cut the pieces twice as long, and do not stew with the sugar more than five minutes, in order that it may not get too soft, dip each piece into butter and try in boiling lard until a nice golden brown. Serve very hot with powdered sugar over.

**Rhubarb and Batter Pudding.**

Fill a buttered pie-dish with the compote of rhubarb. Make a rich batter with two or three eggs, allowing a tablespoonful of flour to each egg, and sufficient milk to form the mixture into a thick cream. Pour it over the rhubarb, bake and serve with fine white sugar, and melted butter.

**Rhubarb Charlotte.**

Dish lined with slices of bread dipped in butter and sugar, filled with compote, covered with bread dipped in melted butter and baked.

**Rhubarb Fool.**

The compote rubbed through a sieve with the back of a wooden spoon, or pulp mixed with as much cream, milk, or thin cold custard, as will make it the consistency of gruel. Taste it, and if not sufficiently sweet, add a little more sugar, serve cold in a glass dish; nice for tea. The plain compote is good at any time, but especially at breakfast. After a while when it gets cheaper I intend giving recipes for rhubarb jam, and rhubarb wine, equal to some champagne.

**A New Way of Preparing Pancakes.**

Cut into thin slices a well made omelet lengthwise. Dip each piece into a batter

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made with cream, and fry quickly in a pan of melted butter. Drain, dish them on ornamental paper in one layer, edge upon edge, and throw over them some finely grated coconut. Serve with lemon-juice and caster sugar; or dispense with coconut and serve very hot with pepper, salt, and some good beef gravy. The above is one of "cousin Madge's," and although I have not tried it, I give it because it is certainly new, and, I should judge, would be good, done either way.

**Saffron Cakes.**

Saffron is, as far as I can learn, not much used in this country in cooking. In the west of England it is largely used to color cakes and puddings. The medicinal quality of saffron is stimulant, and its tendency is to help digestion. It is said to kill or drive out intestinal worms. It is both wholesome and palatable and gives a rich appearance to cakes and puddings. Therefore, I think, it ought to have a place in our storehouses. Here is an English receipt for saffron cake. Take a  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of flour and a pound and a half of butter, three ounces of caraway seeds, six eggs well beaten, a quarter of an ounce of ground cloves and mace, a little pounded cinnamon, one pound of sugar, a little rose water and saffron, a pint and a half of yeast and a quart of milk. Mix thus:—First boil the milk and the butter, then skim off the butter, and mix it with the flour and a little of the milk. Stir the yeast into the rest, and strain it. Mix it with the flour; put in the eggs and spice, rose-water tincture of saffron, sugar and eggs. Beat it all well up and bake in a well buttered pan in a quick oven. Time to bake, an hour and a half. To make the saffron-water, infuse a small quantity in a little water for a few minutes, strain and add a spoonful or two to the above or any ordinary cake or buns.

**Saffron Pudding.**

Boil a tablespoonful of real saffron in half a tea cupful of water, until the decided taste and smell peculiar to the flower has been extracted and the liquor has acquired a clear light yellow tinge. Mince finely  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound of suet, and mix with it a pinch of salt, half a pound of flour, half a pound of grated bread-crumbs, and a teaspoonful of powdered ginger. When thoroughly mixed stir in the saffron water, three well-beaten eggs, and as much milk or cream as is required to make a light, smooth dough. Turn this into a flannel cloth, tie securely, allowing room for the pudding to swell, plunge it into boiling water, and boil about three hours.

**Corn Soup à la Canadienne.**

One small beef bone, two quarts of water,  $\frac{1}{2}$  a can of tomatoes, one can of "Little Chief" corn, one quart of milk, salt, pepper and a little butter. Let the bone boil in the water until all the strength is extracted; then put in the corn and tomatoes, and let it boil half an hour. Just before serving add the milk, which bring to a boil first, and the seasonings.

**PRETTY GOWNS AND COATS.**

What They Are Wearing in London This Spring.

The delightfulest of the summer tea-gowns—one must be very young and pretty to wear them—are of white muslin trimmed with soft lace ruffles, lace flounces, lace stripes, and sashes of colored ribbon, with perhaps a bow at the neck to match, says the *Full Mail Budget*. Some of them are made in the middle of the back and the sashes are tied in the middle of the back instead of at the waist. Very pretty and inexpensive gowns are made of cotton crepe and organdi muslin and de laine, with flower patterns. They have a double lace frill down the front, and a flounce round the skirt. Some of the daintiest

of the white gowns were trimmed with pink and blue bebe ribbon. Rows of the ribbon were run through the lace at the neck and wrists and tied in small rosettes. A pretty tea-jacket was of rose-pink surah trimmed with insertion-stripes of black lace run with pink ribbons and a rather deep lace flounce. It had a deep lace band shaped to the figure, with tiny pink rosettes in front and at the neck and edge of the sleeves.

Some of the coats were worth cataloguing. A very handsome one was of emerald velvet, beautifully embroidered in delicate shades all down the back, on the cuffs—these were of the gauntlet shape—pocket flaps, and collar. It had a waistcoat, which was also embroidered, and was adorned with large buttons of gold and paste. A smart little mantelet of deep violet velvet, with a pleat at the back and a close-fitting waistcoat-front of black gauze richly fitted. This deep violet shade seems to be one of the chosen colours for elaborate outdoor garments. One of the pretty short capes that are just coming into fashion was of black velvet, turned back in front with lapels of yellow silk, to show a full front of soft black lace fastened at the neck with ribbons. The rolled-over collar was yellow, to match the lapels, and the interior of the cape too. A graceful long cloak, with the Watteau back, was of light drab cloth with long green ribbons hanging down the back, and a little of the same color introduced among the trimmings at the neck. The long capes are not extinct. I saw several in soft shades of grey and drab cloth, trimmed with lace and jet.



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