

# WOMAN and HER WORK.

By the time you read this week's instalment of "Woman and her Work," girls, Lent will be almost over, and you will all be thinking about Easter, with special reference, I fear to the new hat, or gown with which you intend to dazzle all beholders on Easter Sunday. The feeling that it is due to one's own self respect, and a sort of duty to society to wear something new in the shape of raiment on Easter Sunday morning seems to be inherent in the female breast and yet I suppose few of us are aware that the custom had its origin in a very old superstition, according to which it was very unlucky not to wear some new article of attire, however small on Easter morning. The tradition is so old that its beginning seems to be lost in the mists of antiquity, but its prestige remains and every right thinking girl, or woman makes it almost part of her religion to wear at least a new necktie or a new pair of gloves at Easter; something to celebrate the day and so contribute in a small way to the festivity of the church's great feast. I don't know whether it is imagination or not, but I have always fancied that there was a different feeling in the air on Easter Monday from any other day in the year, a feeling that seems to come with the day, moveable festival as it is; and I have an idea that I should recognize that feeling, and know when Easter Monday came, even if I were rusticated on a desert island, and had lost the run of the days. It is different from the Christmas feeling, the peculiar calm and peace which seem to belong to Christmastide, but yet it is quite as distinct, and, I think, a much happier feeling.

Many of the pretty old Easter customs seems to be dying out lately, and a great pity it is! Why ten years ago we used to be busy for a whole week before Easter dyeing eggs in wonderful shades of blue, yellow, and pink, in painting faces, on them, in outlining tiny etching of kittens rolling miniature eggs about, of wee chickens contemplating the broken egg shells from which they had recently emerged; and in the more delicate and difficult task of writing a short text appropriate for Easter on one side of the egg, and the name of the friend for whom it was intended, on the other, both of which were made to stand out in bold relief, by using a pen dipped in melted tallow, and then immersing the egg in strong vinegar for a night when a deep layer would have been eaten off the shell except where the letters were protected from the action of the acid, by their covering of tallow so that they stood out very distinctly above the surrounding landscape. But although we no longer dally with the deceptive, but alluring aniline dye, and daub our fingers, and frequently our face, with pigment which proved indelible on our flesh, and too evanescent on the egg shells, we can still make delightful little Easter gifts for our friends out of egg shells, from which some skillful person has "blown" the entire interior economy. These shells can then be covered with glue, or mucilage, rolled in rice, and when quite dry gilded, or else rolled in some of the bright colored tinsel powder sold for the purpose and which comes in red, green, blue, pink, gold and silver. They can then be either filled with some of the tiny bon-bons sold for filling bonbonieres, closed at each end with a little star, or heart, cut out of gold or silver paper, and given as Easter favors; or they can be strung on baby ribbon, grouped into a sort of brilliant bouquet with all the ends of the ribbon tied together, and used as an ornament to pin on the curtains, or hang over a picture. Another very pretty Easter souvenir, which is also emblematic of the season, is a butterfly lamp shade, one of those pretty dainty things so easily made at home, out of crepe tissue paper, wire, a touch of gold paint, and a reasonable amount of artistic taste. The butterfly is the emblem of resurrection and therefore especially suitable for an Easter gift. The small ones for candles are quite as pretty as the larger ones, and a pair would make a very pretty Easter offering from one friend to another. Remember, any of these little gifts are appropriate during the whole of Easter week so I am not by any means too late with my suggestions.

I do not think many of us will indulge in a new outfit for Easter this year as the great festival falls so early that anything gay and frivolous in the shape of attire would savor of forcing the season, and even a spring hat would look very chilly during these cold days when the sun and the east wind seem to be having a perpetual struggle for supremacy and spend all the day in trying to decide which is the better, leaving the argument still unfinished when the sun's setting comes, and he is forced to leave his enemy in possession of the field. No one wants to look singular, and comfort is so much more to be desired than style that I fancy we shall stick contentedly to our winter garments and only smarten ourselves up a bit in the way of gloves, and huge bright ties in butterfly bows. March is really too early to have a spring dress made, as all the new goods are scarcely unpacked yet, and the April fashion books are really the ones to be depended upon for the spring styles. It is just as well,

however, to make up our minds what we intend to have, and to select our materials in good time before all the prettiest patterns are gone. I am really afraid that those amongst us who wish to be fashionable will have to begin our arrangements by deciding what kind of cape we will have with our spring suit, for cape it must be unless it is a garment which is called a coat and looks like a very negligee lounging robe. It is made of cloth, either fawn or dark green is most fashionable, and is made with yoke and sides of velvet, in a darker shade, and back and front breadths of cloth! It absolutely falls perfectly straight and smooth from the yoke to the foot to the foot of the dress, and has sleeves which are pretty full, gathered slightly at the shoulders and drawn in at the wrists in a sort of frill. It sounds hideous, I know, but the coat itself is said to be very stylish.

Coats of all descriptions are only side issues, though merely put in the fashion books, I verily believe, for the sake of variety; it is the cape which is the real ruler in fashion's world, and it bids fair to be such a despot that we shall soon grow tired of its rule. It was all very well as long as the cape remained an expensive and exclusive garment, but it will very soon become common, and once it appears in common materials and inferior cut its popularity amongst the ultra fashionable, the gilded upper classes, will be at an end, and the classes referred to will have to fall back on some other garment, probably the long cloak before mentioned, since I feel sure it can never become popular, it is too unbecoming, and too indefinite in its lines to give the least advantage to the most shapely figure over the clumsiest one in the world, and of course we all like to think we belong to the first mentioned class.

The capes worn by fashionable matrons and maids in New York are so very costly and so very elegant that they are out of reach for all who have not long purses, and therein lies one of their charms. Here is a beauty which is to be worn after Easter. It is of velvet, in the startling bright shade of green which is so fashionable now, and it is much shorter than the winter capes, but of a fullness which almost takes one's breath away; it is attached to the yoke in pleats, and a double satin ruffle, the outside green, the lining cream color, outlines the yoke. The collar first stands up and then rolls over like the petals of a flower; the fronts turn back in a sort of revers, and they and the collar are covered with rich lace of a creamy white. The lining is of cream colored satin.

Another New York cape was of delicate fawn brown cloth, falling slightly full, just below the hips. The neck was finished with a very high collar, of brown velvet in a much deeper tint than the garment itself; the collar lengthened into a sort of collar-ette plaited very full over the shoulders, and around the edge of the standing collar was a broad band of fine jet from which fell all around loose pendants of jet, reaching nearly half way down the cape, and finished in narrow points and fringes; the effect was very odd and pretty. Some of the new materials show very odd designs, and one of the most popular is, a curious combination of navy lines, for all the world like the crimped hair people wore ten years ago. In gray and black, this design is called "sea and shore" but somehow it always contains a vague suggestion of thunder and lightning to me. Emerald green is a favorite color with those who can wear it, and in many of the new spring fabrics threads of this bright color are to be found, almost invisible at first, but there all the same. Indeed in almost all the newest goods threads of a foreign color may be detected, so universal is the inclination towards shot effects. Green is so popular especially green velvet that it is used for the trimming of dresses which seem utterly out of harmony with it. Imagine a dress of gray and black in the many lines I have described, trimmed with bands of emerald green velvet, and huge sleeve puffs of the velvet adorning the sleeves! It sounds almost too bizarre for anyone to venture upon, and yet such a costume is actually worn. To give an idea of the extraordinary variety of shades into which one color can be divided, I will conclude with a list of a few of the new greens. Bistache, cactus, springtime, velesquez, artichoke, prairie, chicory, emerald and serpolet. All green, but oh how different.

One of the girls asked me some time ago for a new recipe for chocolate caramels, and also for the reason that she had failed with the recipe I gave before, as the caramels had failed to harden. The only reason I could give for the failure is, that they were not boiled enough; they should be boiled until they are as thick as cold porridge. Here is another recipe which I have never tried, but which sounds well:

## Chocolate Caramels.

Two cups of sugar, one cup of warm water, one-half cup of Mott's chocolate grated, three-quarters of a cup of butter; let about stirring until it snaps in water; pour on buttered tins and mark in squares.

I have still another caramel recipe which comes very highly recommended, and should be almost perfection, though I find it very hard to reconcile myself to the idea of caramels without a liberal allowance of butter.

For caramels, light, clean, brown sugar that has no woody or strong taste and the best Porto Rico molasses are necessary. Take one cup of molasses and one heaping cup of brown sugar. Put the mixture to boil on the back of the stove, where it will not burn, and boil briskly till it is stringy as it falls from the spoon. From fifteen to twenty minutes of boiling brings it to the right point for adding the chocolate. For the quantity named, two ounce squares of plain chocolate should be grated or scraped, none giving the bitter flavor sometimes noticed in confections and blanc manges. After stirring in the dry chocolate, simmer for five minutes, but do not boil briskly,

than take off the fire and add one tablespoonful of very thick cream, which gives the softness of flavor to fine caramels. No milk if you want anything worth eating. If cream is not to be had use a dessert spoonful of sweet butter, no more. The reason why caramels run and fail to harden is because the usual recipes add half a cupful of milk, which is certain to burn or dilute the syrup too much for candying. Cream or butter and flavoring must always be added after the candy is taken off the fire and ceases to bubble, else the richness is partially lost. Vanilla is the favorite Viennese, Paris and American flavor for chocolate, but to have this fine the bean must invariably be used instead of flavoring extract, no matter how high priced or of what maker.

Try it girls and then let me know how you succeed.

Should any of you wish to celebrate Easter by making a fruit cake—I don't thank goodness, as we have a whole uncut cake left over from Christmas—I can give you a choice of two recipes which it would be hard to excel. One is a celebrated southern plantation recipe and I think we have all heard what noted cooks the black "mamies" were; while the other is the one used by a chef of Delmonico's.

## Delmonico Fruit Cake.

One pound of butter, two pound of dark brown sugar, three quarters of a pound of flour, one cup of dark molasses, ten eggs, three pounds of raisins, two pounds of currants, one pound of citron one pound of almonds after they are blanched, one pound of figs, four tablespoons cinnamon, three tablespoons ground mace, three tablespoons ground cloves, one gill of brandy, one gill of sherry wine. Stone the raisins, wash and dry thoroughly the currants, shred the citron, cut up the figs in small pieces and put all together in a wooden bowl and chop fine, chop and add the almonds, then sprinkle and rub thoroughly with an extra half pound of flour which has been browned. The cake is lightly put together in the usual way and the fruit put in last. Line the pans with thick buttered paper and bake slowly in a moderate oven.

We always steam ours for four hours and then bake one hour. ASTRA.

## HOW TO PICK FISH.

Essentials That Should be Understood by Good Housekeepers.

In selecting fish be sure that it is fresh and sweet. After some experience one can tell a good deal by the smell, but to the novice the peculiar odor that belongs to the fish is often mistaken for an indication of staleness.

Nothing but experience can teach the distinction between the two. The eye must be trained to note the different appearances of the flesh under varying conditions. When but recently killed the flesh will be firm though not rigid, but as soon as rigor mortis sets in the flesh will become rigid. After a while this passes off; the muscles relax, and the flesh becomes flabby and deteriorates rapidly. It will be seen, then, that firmness and a pleasant odor are two things that the housekeeper should look for in buying fresh fish. Full bright eyes and bright scales indicate freshness. Never take a fish whose eyes are dull and sunken.

In the case of large fish, such as halibut and salmon, that are sold by the piece, the color of the flesh and its odor and firmness must guide the purchaser. Halibut should be a pearly white, of firm texture and pleasant odor. Salmon should have a bright color and a pleasant smell. In fish that have large heads and bones, such as cod and haddock, the waste is much greater than in the case of those with small heads and bones; therefore, they are not so much cheaper than some of the higher priced kinds, as many folks suppose.

Although water is its natural element, fish should not be kept in it any longer than necessary after being killed. Handle it as little as possible and keep it cool. The sauces and seasoning for fish should be light and delicate, the effect being to bring out the flavor, not disguise it. A little lemon juice is a great addition to nearly all kinds of fish.

## Ladies in the Club.

One of the principal clubs of St Louis includes in its constitution a by-law which provides: "that the members' wives, daughters, and lady friends shall have the right to enjoy the privileges of the club," and by this provision is the organization distinctive among its kind. So generous is the sentiment that one readily forgives the "lady friends" of its wording. The plan to admit women to the club was at first ridiculed, then bitterly opposed, and finally accepted with the proviso that it found detrimental to the interests of the club the women would meet the fate of the Chinese. But the results have shown that what was considered to be a doubtful experiment has been the means of building up an institution the like of which is not to be found in the country, so the members claim. It is the boast of the officers that no woman dwells in the city so pious that she would not wish to be known as a friend of the club, nor one of the boys that does not consider it an honor to be connected with the club. They have a membership of 750, a club house valued at \$300,000, a fine library, and accommodations for 1,000 guests, and the name is the Mercantile Club. There is a fine flavor of Utopia in this chivalrous arrangement, a murmur of the coming millennium, when man and woman shall sit side by side, "full secured in all their powers," for ninety-nine women out of a hundred would rather be a member in good and regular standing of a man's club than to be a Governor of her State or have a seat in the Cabinet.

## Choosing a Husband.

But what rubbish is all this talk of "best possible husbands!" A girl takes the man who offers, if he appears to be upright, honorable and in earnest. If she does not, she runs a risk of going to seed, with a red nose, a canary bird and a lap dog. The chief trouble with her is not to know whether she has got the best article in the market, but whether the man, who says he loves her, means what he says. It is easy for a man to acquire the art of lovemaking, and, with a little practice, some men can do it quite skillfully. How to know when they are acting, and when they are obeying an irresistible and ungovernable impulse is the thing a girl wants to be able to determine. Better learn that than make herself a connoisseur in men. A woman's happiness is to a large degree dependent on the quality of him to whom she has given herself, body, soul and heart: but if he really loves her, she can mould him to her will. Then—considering that all women believe

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## The Gain in Women's Rights.

Mrs. Lucy Stone, in enumerating at a woman's club the gains she had herself seen accomplished, mentioned the right to free speech, the right to education, the right to all occupations and professions, and a very great amelioration in the laws. She contrasted the old time, when an irate man at a Massachusetts town meeting had said, "The public money to educate shes! Never!" with the present, when the great universities of Chicago, Yale, and Johns Hopkins are opened to women, besides their own schools and colleges.

## Convenient Safe.

A convenient safe now made consists of a series of shelves held together by boards at the sides. The front and back are of wire similar to that used for window screens, the on the front being tacked to a frame and swung on hinges, with a button to keep it closed. Here meat, vegetables, pies, cheese and left overs of all kinds may be kept absolutely secure from flies, mice, cats and other troublesome tasters. It may stand in any convenient place, and soon become an article of daily use and almost indispensable.

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