

# WOMAN and HER WORK.

I heard someone say not long ago, that Christmas was a dreary and sad time for everyone except children. That it's merriest was forced, and even its laughter had a hollow ring; but that the New Year was really a season of jollity for grown people, and they could enjoy themselves honestly.

Now to me it is just the reverse. I think at Christmas as one forgets cares and troubles even if it be for the one day only, and the Christmas season comes as a blessed rest from the sordid grind of everyday existence. Its very bustle and business, and the fact that nearly everyone has more to do than can possibly be accomplished in the time before them, is in itself part of the charm of the season. It is an unselfish rush that we are in, the work is nearly always for others, and anything which takes us out of our tiresome old selves is delightful, and does us more good than anything else in the world. It is the blessed unselfishness of Christmas that I love, if there ever was a time when it seemed as if—"love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords with might, smote the chord of self, that trembling passed in music out of sight." in the interests of all humanity, it is just at this time. I believe if Christmas came oftener, we should all be better men and women; but the trouble is that the feeling lasts such a short time, it does not seem to do us very much good; sometimes it wears off most too soon to have much effect on the New Year's resolutions so it cannot go deep.

The more I see of Christmas and Christmas planning, the better opinion I have of human nature; the very children who begin saving their pennies for Christmas presents for their father and mother, early in November, are learning unselfishness early, and the lesson cannot help having a good effect on their characters. Amongst grown people this self-denial is even more marked because in most families amongst the middle classes of society it requires a good deal of planning to make the income respond to all the different calls upon it, and the margin for extra expenses is none too large. Therefore the holiday season is a strain; and in order to celebrate it as they wish, most people have to make sacrifices. The wife does without a new autumn dress and in order that the omission shall not be too apparent, she gets a new blouse, has it made up as prettily as possible, and wears it for best with any of the skirts she happens to possess. Then she takes money she would have paid for her new suit, "all unbeknownst" and gets her husband that expensive arm chair he has been admiring for so long, and which she knows will be such a haven of rest for his tired body, after his long day of work in the office.

Perhaps the husband felt that he could afford to buy that chair well enough, but as he could really get along without it he preferred to put some more money to what it would have cost, and buy his wife the fur jacket he knows she longs for secretly, and which will be such a boon to her delicate chilly frame.

So the husband denies himself for the wife's sake, the mother sacrifices some need of her own for the daughter's, the sister gives up some luxury or necessity for the brother's and the daughter for the father's sake; and all the time I think the recording angel must be very busy, and very happy, and often drop a tear of joy over his work because we know how it delights our celestial guardians to note any angelic traits of character in poor humanity.

With the New Year it is different; and I think most of us dread to face it, if the truth were told. The very young look forward to what it will bring them, and have a blind confidence that pleasant as today is, tomorrow must have something much better in store for them. But after we have passed our first youth we are afraid of the New Year and are more likely to dread what it may take from us, than to anticipate anything very wonderful which it may bring us. We have had some experience and we know that wonderful things do not often happen in this world, but that plain hum-drum existence we are used to is not to be despised, and we are thankful enough if we may be permitted to go on in the old way too thankful in fact to ask much of fate. They are satisfied to keep what they have, however humble it may be, without looking for more, and they know the terrible possibilities with which the coming year may be charged. However, I do not want to depress the youthful enthusiasts who may read these columns, so I will bring my discourse to a close by wishing them one and all—A very happy New Year, "and many of them."

The trimming of skirts seems to be gaining ground, and a Paris fashion is to trim cloth skirts with bands of velvet matching the blouse bodice, but I do not think this fancy will become generally popular as the bands would give a clumsy look to the full skirt, and destroy the outline, which is so large a part of the plain

skirt's distinction. Moire is more fashionable than ever, and is chiefly used for skirts which are worn with fancy blouses of silk, velvet, or chiffon—because it is known that in spite of all that was said to the contrary in the autumn the fancy waist, with the black silk or satin skirt has blossomed out afresh, and promises to be more fashionable than ever. It is seen in the most elaborate and expensive materials; chiffon, embroidered, spangled and plain is seen made up into blouses which are worn with cloth skirts. Black and white silk in even stripes is another favorite material for blouses, especially when worn with a black velvet skirt.

Black moire is more fashionable for skirts than satin, and some very new and striking costumes are made of moire silk in the bright colors used for evening wear, made with tablier fronts of frilled chiffon to match either the bodice or the large chiffon fichu which almost conceals the moire bodice, and forms its only decoration. Violet and purple, which used to be considered quite middle aged colors, are now the proper things for the youngest maidens and matrons, and cloth gowns of either shade, braided with gold braid, are very fashionable for young ladies. The latest extravagance in sleeves consists of tucks, and it is quite a common sight in the fashionable circles of New York, to see sleeves decorated by rows of inch-wide tucks which meet each other, running around the puffs. Sometimes these tucks are arranged in groups and sometimes they are continuous. I do not know that they add anything to the appearance of the sleeve, but they certainly add almost double expense to the garment, as they require twice the material that the ordinary sleeve calls for, and goodness knows that is enough! The newest bodices are cut as long in the waist as they can possibly be worn, and are quite plain in the back, and guileless of fullness at the bottom. Yokes of velvet or silk, laid in deep tucks are very fashionable, and in many instances sleeves and yoke are made of the same material. Tucks are decidedly coming in, and I expect we shall yet be wearing dresses tucked to the waist, as our mother's did.

Some of the newest skirts have three flat plaits arranged on each side of the front which widen down to flutes at the foot.

It is authoritatively announced that the tendency of the present fashion is decidedly towards hoops and bustles in the near future! But so many things have been authoritatively announced and never come to pass, that I don't think we need disquiet ourselves much. The heavy skirt of horse-hair, with its long flounce reaching from belt to foot in the back, and which nearly every fashionable woman wears, is pointed to, in proof of this tendency, despite the fact that skirts are no longer lined with haircloth. The authority already quoted draws attention to the significance of the stiffening being worn separately instead of in the dress, and she certainly has probability on her side.

When women first realized the folly of carrying about a skirt which often weighed nine or ten pounds, the most sensible of them rebelled, and of course their weaker sisters followed them, so the horsehair lining had to go, but full skirts, and skirts which stood out from the figure were still fashionable, so something had to be done, and a clever Frenchman did it. He made a skirt entirely of haircloth which was designed to fill the want. It is of different colors, and comes in different styles but the one generally seen is made reasonably full, and has a six inch ruffle all the way round the foot, and three ruffles up the back breadth. The top one serves for a small bustle, and the others make the skirt stand out at the back, and fire in the requisite godet plaits. The usual colors are pure white, black, and all the shades of gray. These skirts have many advantages; in the first place, when a woman wants to lift her dress out of the mud she can do so in comfort, instead of making futile grabs at it and missing it every time as she used to do when it was lined with haircloth; and in the second the wearer has the comfortable consciousness that she can slip it off whenever she likes, instead of being bound to wear it at all times, as she was the haircloth lined dress. I need scarcely say that all those imported skirts are made of genuine haircloth of the very best quality, and they should be very good, as their prices vary from seven, to twelve dollars.

Another skirt which is of American manufacture and is preferred by many on account of its lightness, is made of saten, and has four rows of very fine wire, set in bands about six inches apart. Such skirts sell for three dollars when made without ruffles, ruffled for four, and in silk or satin from ten dollars up.

Still another skirt is made of imported haircloth. The pipings up the back are of haircloth and the front of the skirt up to the knees is of the same material while the top is made of saten of the same color.

All of which looks as if we were really hurrying on towards genuine hoopskirts!

Violets are still the favorite flowers, and the proper place to wear them is pinned midway between the waist and neck, or tucked in the belt. A little later we shall doubtless see them pinned into the big fur boa, or fastened on the muff, just as they were last year.

ST. JOHN—I am glad to hear from you again, and to know you have not forgotten me. Thank you, I have quite recovered from my illness, at least as far as one ever recovers from grippe; it seems to me that the victim merely continues to get slowly better until it is time to catch it again, and then is worse than ever. Your friend is suffering from poverty of blood, lack of blood, or both, and should consult her family physician. There is no cure for biting the nails, but resolution. How can I possibly tell you what to give him when I don't know the "gentleman" friend nor any of his tastes, or customs? But almost anything from a silk handkerchief to a card case would be acceptable, I should think. I cannot give any opinion about the fashions, they are too uncertain. Many thanks for your kind wishes.

## A Welsh Rarebit.

An excellent dish and one very much liked for late suppers is made thus: Place in a small double boiler six ounces of grated cheese, one tablespoonful of butter, a salt spoon of salt, a pinch of cayenne pepper, half a teaspoonful of mustard a half cup of milk or red wine, and one beaten egg. Stir over the fire until it is a creamy mass. Meanwhile cut pieces of bread two inches wide and three long and toast them. Cover them with a thick layer of the cheese mixture, and lay on each piece a slice of hot, crisp bacon. Place in the oven for a moment, and the dish is ready to serve.

## Cheese Straws.

Mix one cup of flour with one of grated cheese and two ounces of butter. Add half a salt spoon of salt, a dash of cayenne pepper, stir into this the yolk of an egg, and it the mixture is not moist enough to make into paste use part of the white of an egg. Roll the paste out very thin and cut into narrow strips five inches long. Place the straws in a baking pan and grate cheese over them and bake in a moderate oven. Serve them cold with salad. Straws may be made from puff paste by rolling in grated cheese and cutting the paste into strips and sprinkling some of the cheese over them.

## Dainty Dishes Made of Cheese.

Few persons appreciate how many dainty and palatable dishes may be made with cheese. It is authoritatively stated that cheese taken after a hearty meal or rich dessert acts as a digestive. Those who are fond of cheese will find the following recipes worthy of a trial, and those who do not know how appetizing cheese may be made will have many a dainty dish in store for them.

## Cheese Puffs.

Place over the fire in a saucepan one cup of water and two tablespoonfuls of butter. Mix together four tablespoonfuls of flour, the same quantity of grated cheese, a salt spoonful of salt, and half as much paprika. When the water is boiling add the flour mixture, and cook for three minutes, beating all the time; remove from the fire and set away until cold. Then add two unbeaten eggs, stirring in one at a time, and beat thoroughly for fifteen minutes. Slightly butter a baking pan and drop separately heaping teaspoonfuls of the mixture, leaving a space for them to spread. Bake in a moderate oven for twenty minutes and serve hot.

## Cheese Balls.

are delicious and should be served hot with a salad. To one cup of grated cheese add a half cup of grated bread crumbs, one egg well beaten, and five drops of Worcestershire sauce. Mix thoroughly and roll the paste into small balls with the hand. Place them in a wire basket and fry in very hot lard.

## Roast Cheese.

For roast cheese to serve at the end of a dinner. Grate four ounces of Cheshire or any kind of rich cheese and mix it with the yolks of two eggs, four ounces of grated bread, and three ounces of butter. Beat the whole well together with a dessert spoonful of dry mustard and a little salt and pepper. Toast some bread lightly and cut it into small round or square pieces, spread the paste thick upon them, and place them in a hot oven and cover with a dish until heated. Then remove the dish and let the cheese mixture brown a little, and serve as soon as possible.

## Welsh Rarebits.

A very simple and delicious Welsh rarebit may be made with one pound of cheese broken into pieces and put into a saucepan with half a cup of sweet cream, one teaspoonful of French mustard, a dash of paprika, a little salt, and one teaspoonful of Worcestershire sauce. Place over the fire and stir until the cheese becomes melted. Have ready squares of toast and pour the cheese mixture over them and serve immediately.

To make a highly seasoned rarebit place over the fire in a saucepan a teaspoonful of butter, and when it becomes melted, put in two cups of cheese broken into small pieces,

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# R I P A N S

## ONE GIVES RELIEF

a saltspoonful of salt, and half as much red pepper. Stir all the while, and when it becomes a soft mass gradually stir into it one cup of ale. Meanwhile, take the yolks of two eggs and add to them three teaspoonfuls of dry mustard, the same quantity of Worcestershire sauce, and half a dozen drops of tobacco, and add this to the cheese mixture. If too thick add a little more ale. Pour over square pieces of toast and serve at once.

## Cheese Biscuit.

At a dinner given recently to men cheese biscuit was one of the courses, and was prepared thus—Mix six tablespoonfuls of Parmesan cheese with three of grated Stilton, or any good English cheese, a half pint of liquid aspic jelly, and a pinch of cayenne pepper. Then add one pint of whipped cream well drained, and stir it lightly into the cheese mixture. Fill small paper cases with the mixture, and sprinkle a few browned crumbs over the top of them. Pack an ice cream freezer, using more salt than for ice cream, and place a layer of the filled cases in the bottom of the freezer, cover them with stiff paper and put in another layer of the cases, and alternate until the freezer is filled. Cover closely and pack with the ice and salt, and let it remain in a cold place four hours before serving.

## French Ramequin.

French ramequin makes a delightful luncheon dish. To prepare, crumb two ounces of bread (without the crust) and cook it soft in a gill of milk. Add two ounces of butter, one-third of a teaspoonful of dried mustard, half a teaspoonful of salt, a pinch of cayenne pepper, four ounces of grated cheese, and the yolks of two eggs. Beat thoroughly and then stir in the whites of the eggs beaten to a stiff froth. Pour in a buttered porcelain plate and bake fifteen minutes, or take small squares of stiff white paper, folded and pinched at the corners to form a box, and bake the mixture in them.

## Cheese Souffle.

Place over the fire in a saucepan two tablespoonfuls of butter, and when it is hot add a heaping tablespoonful of flour and stir until smooth. Then add a half cup of cream or milk, and salt and paprika to taste. Beat light the yolks of three eggs, and add them with a cupful of grated cheese. Remove from the fire and put in a cool place. When cold add the whites of the eggs beaten to a stiff froth. Pour in a buttered dish and bake about twenty minutes. This, like all souffles, must be taken immediately from the oven to the table.

## Cheese Sandwiches.

Hot cheese sandwiches always meet with a hearty welcome, particularly from men, for a Sunday night luncheon. To prepare them slice the bread very thin and cut round with a large-sized biscuit cutter. Put a thick layer of grated cheese between two pieces of bread, press them together, and fry them in equal parts of hot lard and butter. Brown them on each side and serve very hot.

Delicious sandwiches may be made with one cup of English walnut meats chopped very fine and mixed with enough fresh Philadelphia cream cheese to make a paste: add a little salt and spread on thin pieces of bread that have been cut into triangular, round, or diamond shape or pieces large enough to roll. To cut thin and roll nicely, bread should be one day old.

## Cheese Muffs.

Cheese muffs make a variety. Place four ounces of grated cheese in a saucepan with one and one-half ounces of butter. Put over the fire and when the ingredients begin to melt add four eggs beaten light, a salt spoon of salt, and half as much paprika. Stir and cook until you can roll it up into a soft muff shaped form, when serve at once.

A dainty bite to accompany a bedtime bottle of ale is cheese crackers. Spread Newports or salted crackers with a little butter and sprinkle them generously with grated cheese and place them in the oven long enough to brown lightly.

ASTRA.

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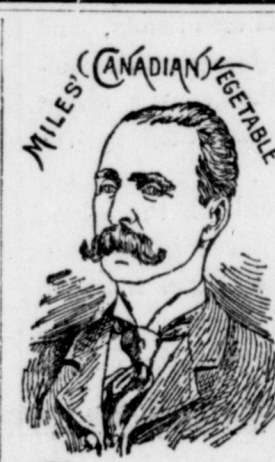
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