

The First Shower of Spring.

BY MRS. D. HARRY PRIME.

DAY, with its bright reign, is over,
And Night wraps the earth in deep gloom;
Thick clouds, dark as Erebus, hover,
Concealing the stars and the moon.

A drop on the window pane falling
Breathes the first low note of the rain,
And we know its lute tone is calling
For others to join it again.

Another! aye, now it is coming!—
The first gentle shower of glad Spring.
Weird lays on the pavement 't is thrumming—
Pure crystals, what pleasures ye bring!

Each bird fondly chirps thee a greeting;
Each grasslet now drinks in her fill;
Each rook, the pearly bath meeting,
First tastes, then inrevels at will.

The breeze shall grow pure in thy presence,
And buds into being will start;
All earth shall imbibe the pure essence;
Dearth, foulness, and death must depart.

And we, as we list to the rain harp,
Will study the mystical air,
For it whispers of science and art,
Of each justly claiming a share.

It frowns on all drugs and cosmetics,
And, sweeping them ever from earth,
Of loveiiness tells, that ascetics
Would woo and be charmed with its worth.

It banishes fever's hot flushes,
That Beauty no graces may miss;
Fair Health found her pretty rose blushes
While laving in baths such as this.

Then ye who in pain lonely languish,
Unmindful of this soothing power,
Bethink ye! perhaps, for your anguish
There 's a balm in this first priceless shower.

Ignore Esculapian blunders,
And taste not base compounds again;
But learn ye the wealth and the wonders
That are hid in these pearls of rain.

Keeping House.

BY MRS. ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

TO be a good housekeeper involves very much more than being able to sweep rooms and cook the food of a family, and no woman should marry till she is able not only to do this, but to preside over a household with good economy, with forecast and dignity. She must understand the requirements of a family, the prices and quantities of expenditure, and she must be willing to keep a rigid account thereof.

Every housekeeper should have an account-book, in which should be carefully noted down every article purchased, with date and price. In doing this a woman will be surprised to learn how much it costs to live, and she will learn also to husband her resources, and avoid unnecessary expense. She will remember that while all the time and energies of the heads of a family are required to meet its daily animal necessities, they are no better than slaves; and hence it seems the fitting province of a woman to see that there is no waste; that what is brought into the house is carefully looked after, made to go as far as possible, made to look as well as possible, and made to afford the fullest possible comfort to the family.

For this purpose she must be orderly in her habits, and be capable of planning with judgment. She should know the quantities required, and how to preserve from waste what is over and above the daily needs of the household. She may be pardoned a good deal of girlish vanity in dressing herself, and arranging her surroundings becomingly, in order to set off all to the best advantage; for this is to keep a fresh, cheery house, the delight and comfort of its inmates, but let her never for one moment consider what this or that neighbor will think about his or her little republic of home. If they praise her, very well; if they criticize and sneer at her, very well, also—she must be above minding it.

I think both husband and wife ought to understand thoroughly the theory, at least, of good, wholesome cooking; and, in cases of emergency, the former should be willing to *lend a hand* to an over-worked wife. It will be no disparagement to his manhood to *take hold* now and then, if nothing more than to show his entire sympathy with her, and tenderness for her; but a *good wife*, and a good housekeeper, will not tax the good man in these petty household matters; on the contrary, she will so skillfully work the machinery of the house, that all will

be done, and be hardly known how and when; she will not belittle him and herself by too much talk about annoying details.

It requires great skill and judgment to cook well. A young housekeeper must do nothing without exact rule, weight, or measurement, otherwise she will make innumerable mistakes, and create much disappointment and discomfort. *It is very important that a family should feed well.* Health, and cheerfulness, and good morals are all more or less involved in the way our tables are managed. A bright, happy wife feels delight in serving up delicate dishes for the man of her choice, and a gratified look or appreciative word should not be withheld by him. It seems utterly *piggish* to see a man sit down and devour what has cost care, and skill, and taste to prepare, and never one word of approval or gratification. It is the *way* of some men, and a most boorish, disagreeable *way* it is.

While traveling, a few years since, I was detained some days in one of our Western cities. My room overlooked a lane or alley-way, in which were several houses occupied by the better class of artizans, and I became much interested in one of these, so much, that no sooner did I hear a glad shout from a little voice, than I knew it was meal time, and "Daddy was coming," and I took up my point of observation in harmless and admiring scrutiny of the well-governed house. On the way in, the father raised the rejoicing child in his arms, and gave it two or three resounding smacks; another one had crept to the door-sill, and this was lifted also, and its little cheek laid tenderly upon the shoulder, which was hunched up to bring it close to that of the father's. By this time, the wife had brought a bowl of water, and a white, coarse towel; then she took the children down, applying also sundry pats, now on the shoulders of the little ones, and now on the broad, fatherly ones; and now the chairs were placed at the table, and while the husband gave a last rub of the hard, rough hands, he stretched out his neck and kissed the pretty, girlish wife, who would be hovering near him. They said grace, they dined at the plain, wholesome board, and more than once I found myself waiting them a benediction with the tears in my eyes. It is so brutish to pass without a word of recognition of the Great Giver.

The husband was a grave man, and the wife a lively, cheery one, neat as a new pin, and very chatty. I thought them wonderfully well matched, for there was no moroseness in the man nor levity in the woman, and when Sunday came, and the little household, dressed in all

their finery, baby and all, went out to church, it was a sight to behold. There was quite a model keeping house as far as it went.

I wish my readers would read more than once the story of Ruth Pinch, as given in Martin Chuzzlewit—it is enough to make one in love with cooking and keeping house; the pretty girl does every thing with such a grace and alertness; her whole soul is so bent upon infusing comfort into every thing; she is so unselfish, so loving, so wise, and so unconscious of her wisdom; so good, and knows so little about her goodness, that she is one of the sweetest of Dickens's many lovely, thoroughly human women. And here let me remark, that Dickens, like Shakespeare, portrays men and women, not monsters of perfection, and he is a safer guide, if guide be needed, than the great mass of fiction writers. If women form their opinions of the other sex by what they find in these books, they will be greatly shocked when they come to the reality, and learn that men act and think very much as they themselves do in ordinary life, only a *little more so*; the conventional man to whom "it is agony to weep"—who is "the very soul of honor; who is "bravo as a lion," and, "oh, so tender!" who is very taking, and a cross between a saint and devil, like Jane Eyre's hero—is a myth; men are nobler and better, because more human than all this, and if women would cast all this nonsense aside, and judge them by what they are and were meant to be, they would find themselves happier, and they themselves would impart more happiness to others.

I think men are more naturally inclined to system and order than women are; they dislike to "see things out of place;" perhaps the nature of their studies, and the great exactitude required in all and every species of handiwork produces this effect, and hence it often happens that matrimonial bickerings are produced by this cause alone, and thence they go on, till, like the accumulating drift of the maelstrom, petty vexations increase and are swallowed up in one vast circle of never ending, always beginning discords.

"A place for every thing, and every thing in its place," is the law of good housekeeping. A bag for twine and strings; a basket (or cheap vase, which is prettier) for loose papers; a box for bundles, neatly assorted and strongly tied; jars of all the delicious fruits labeled; loops to dusters; pegs for all needful purposes; and over and above all, the pleasant, watchful eye of the mistress. Every week, from attic to cellar, every department is inspected by the good

careful wife; and every morning the daily work should be so planned that cheerfulness and good order will prevail, and no flutter, no fluster nor hurry mar the sweetness of her handsome, winsome face.

I do not say "avoid the first quarrel," as most of writers do, for what chance is there for quarrelling between a truly mated pair? They may have now and then a little breeze, but there will be no bitterness in it, and the one that first says "forgive me, darling," and puts up the lip for a kiss, is, for the time being, the loveliest and noblest of the two. If the pair are candid, genial, and unselfish, they will each so generously magnify the excellences of the other, that nothing can be better than the way which the other thinks and does; and there will be a sort of good-natured strife to exalt and please each other.

"Oh there is no place like home," to such a pair; and it is little short of heaven to pure hearts, where no rancor is, nor selfishness, nor envy, nor malice, nor evil speaking, nor malevolence of any kind.

"There is, of course, blame on both sides," is the plausible remark of lookers on when difficulties arise in the marriage relation. It would be wiser, kinder, and better, to say "They are unsuited to each other," and where such is the case, the relation is a scourge and a mockery, deadening and destructive to soul and body; rooting out all that is genial, noble, and lovable in character. It is the great life mistake, and God help such!

Then again we shall hear of "change." "Love has died out between the two." Love never dies! "It was not love that went." It was something altogether unlike, lower, coarser, and allied to what is infernal, rather than divine. Love is older than creation; stronger than the eternities. Jacob Belmen has said, "I know not but love is greater than God;" he is glorious in the grandeur of the thought, however paradoxical it may sound. Those who love once, love eternally.

In adjusting the household, I would have the pair mutually helpful; but there are certain matters that look handsomer in the hands of a woman than in a man. I think he, as a gentleman, who should be independent of all others, ought to be able to broil a steak, mend a rent, or "sew on a button;" but it is more suitably the province of a woman to do these things, the husband being supposed more profitably employed elsewhere.

Every woman should be able to cut and make household linen and garments with economy,

neatness, and dispatch. She should cut her work, and always have a piece ready for the needle to husband her time, and avoid hurry and confusion, and lastly, my lovely married pair must so manage the needful work of the household, that one hour at least in the twenty-four be devoted to reading and study—good solid, substantial books to be read with care, for mutual advancement of thought and solidity of character; poetry and romance also, to elevate and enliven, not forgetting the great storehouse of our spiritual ideas, the Bible.

Human beings have not yet reached any very high degree of perfection; even my handsome pair may fall into error, and then the interference of *outsiders* is very apt to increase the evil, but let them settle the case between themselves, remembering that the greater the fall the greater the need of a dear loving hand to lift us up, and the worse we may become the more shall we need friends; no true wife will turn from the man of her choice in the day of his adversity, nor in the day of his moral darkness, rather will she love him with a deeper, because of a sorrowing tenderness, and she will lead him on, step by step, till he more than recovers the ground he may have lost.

A CURIOUS story is told of an eccentric old minister who was annoyed by a habit his people had acquired (and which prevails, by the way, in all other churches, even now and hereabouts, to some extent), of twisting their heads around every time any body entered the door and passed up the aisle of the church, to see what style of person it might be. Wearied with the annoyance, the old man exclaimed one Sunday, "Brethren, if you will only cease turning your heads round whenever the door opens, and you will keep your attention on me, I will promise to tell you, as I preach, who it is that comes in." Accordingly he went on with the services, and presently made a stop as one of the deacons entered, saying, "That is Deacon —, who keeps the grocery opposite." And then he announced, in turn, the advent of each individual, proceeding the while with his sermon as composedly as the circumstances would admit, when, at last a stranger came in, and he cried out: "A little old man with green spectacles and a drab overcoat—don't know him—you can all look for yourselves." It is hardly necessary to add, that the good man carried his point, and there was but little neck-twisting seen in his congregation after that day.

"MEN WHO HAVE RISEN"—Aeronauts.