

Of Interest to Women.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES:

This is to be an interlude. If anyone takes the trouble to follow up these articles, she will doubtless remember that we are engaged in the pursuit of "health, wealth and happiness," and the next of these will be happiness. But this week I mean to break off the sequence in favour of two items that came under my notice during the week. One is that in Wellington a guild or institute has been formed of "household orderlies" working under a board consisting of representative employers and employees. This board is to secure for the employee regular hours, good wages, and the various other things that employees in all other branches of industry demand as a matter of course. For the employer, its aim will be to secure good service, since it will issue certificates of competency to such as are of good character and approved capability and training.

The war bequeathed us many things, and amongst them some new names.

"What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

Perhaps, but a "household orderly" is something rather different from a "good general." The word takes its flavour from its associations and the "good general" or "maid" smacked of cap and apron, snobbishness and regrets for the time when the article now almost unprocurable, could be had for 10/- a week.

"Orderly," on the other hand, has the air of coming from the army where though all have the varying ranks and discipline is strict, each is doing his part and each is a fellow-worker, even though he may seem at times more like a fellow-cog in the machine.

In the nursing profession there are ranks and there is an etiquette and a discipline as strict as that of the army; but somehow it escapes the peculiar snobbishness that has been the bane of domestic service; perhaps because those to whom respect is to be paid and obedience yielded are those who are older and more skilled in their profession, not merely the possessors of more money and sometimes less brains. When differences of rank follow even approximately along the lines of real differences in merit, they are not apt to be galling.

There have been other attempts to invent a new name for the domestic servant. One was the "lady help"; but somehow she didn't—no puns intended—she smacked too much of an affected gentility and too little of efficiency. She was really an inverted form of the snobbishness that she was supposed to counteract; and as she was sometimes neither a lady nor a help, she quickly got the go-by.

The development of the "household orderly" is a step in the right direction. It is a long time since John Ruskin wrote the following passage, and for its application to our domestic service problem, you need only change the genders:—"Men are enlisted for the labour that kills—the labour of war. They are counted, trained, fed, dressed and praised for that. Let them be enlisted also for the labour that feeds; let them be counted, trained, fed, dressed and praised for that. Teach the exercise as carefully as you do the sword exercise, and let the officers of troops of life be held as much gentlemen as the officers of troops of death; and all is done. But neither this nor any other right thing can be accomplished—you can't even see your way to it—unless first of all both servant and master are resolved that, come what will of it, they will do each other justice."

Secondly, there has reached Invercargill from the other centres, the agitation to form a women's guild or league to endeavour to reduce the cost of living. The movement is a good movement; it shows for one thing that the women are alive to their own possibilities in the economic crisis of our history and anxious too to do the right thing. It soon appears, however, that to reduce the cost of living is a knotty problem not to be solved merely by promising to pay not more than 10s 6d a pair for your stockings. What if your husband happens to be in the drapery line and you want to persuade your friends to join in? And then, there are many things in a draper's shop that one can do without, but what about the grocer and the baker (who often bakes such very bad bread too), and the butcher? Well, one can economise there too; and one can get fruit straight from the grower, and raise one's own vegetables. But one can't catch one's own fish, or kill one's own pig—not always. Much may be done by care and economy on the part of those who really have money to spend, especially money to spend on luxuries, to bring down the cost not only of living, but of the amenities and small gratifications of

life, so that those with less means will be able to have a share in these; but over and above all that, I do think that this treasured bogey of the economists, the "law of supply and demand," is a bad bogey and ought to be exorcised. It is a part of the old creed of "might is right" and "they should take who can." There was a shortage of butter, and if the retail price had not been fixed at 1/8, it would have been soaring up to 3/6 or 4/6, and the wealthy who do not need butter any more than the poor, would have bought all there was and the tradespeople would have profited—particularly the ones who were already "big"—and the poor would have gone butterless. For the necessities of life—and they include butter and tea—the law of "supply and demand" ought to be ruled right out. The thing should be sold for what it costs to produce and handle; and when there is a scarcity the people should be rationed. We have come to these conclusions in practice already as regards certain articles, but they need to be extended and systematically applied.

A league of women in Invercargill might do much in more ways than in reducing the cost of living. It might make an attempt to raise the standard of living. The trouble would be to find what to do and how to do it. In these days it seems that opportunities of learning are many, but the desire to learn is small and rare. No doubt people have little time to attend classes and meetings. They seem, the young men and lads at any rate, to have plenty of time to lounge about on the streets. The old proverb tells us "When there's a will there's a way" and how are we to create in others the will to learn? It is too large a problem to tackle at this time of night. Let us keep it over and think about it.

Children's Column.

MATER'S LETTER BOX.

Mater invites children to send in stories for this column, or correspondence which will be replied to through these columns. All matter to be clearly written in ink and on one side of the paper only. Name, age, and address must always be given, and correspondence directed to "Mater," care of Editor, "The Digger," Box 310, Invercargill.

THE ROSE GARDEN.

(By "Ethel," Tisbury.)

Pearl was a good little girl but she did not believe in fairies. She had been a good girl for two weeks and her mother said to her, "Pearl," I wish you would believe in the fairies." Pearl said she would try to do so. She loved flowers and was always wanting to be rich. When she was asleep she dreamed that she saw a beautiful fairy standing by her bed. The fairy said to her, "Hurry up, Pearl, and we will see the garden." So Pearl hurried up and the fairy touched her with her wand and Pearl's clothes were turned into a beautiful silk dress with rubies and diamonds all over it. Then the fairy touched her hair and it fell all round her shoulders, and in the middle of her hair shone a beautiful ruby. Now Pearl hurried with the fairy to the Rose Garden. The fairy opened a big gate and let Pearl in. When she got inside there before her eyes shone the most beautiful roses. She ran along them and the fairy told her to pick a bunch of them. Pearl ran along to see what others she would pick. Then came to a beautiful rosebush and picked some beautiful roses, then she ran along to see what others she should pick. Then the fairy told her it was nearly morning, so she went home and hopped into bed again. In the morning when she woke, her mother was leaning over her telling her what the fairies had brought. Pearl jumped up at once and her mother showed her what the fairies had brought. Pearl told her mother what had happened during the night. Her mother took her outside and showed her the garden. When Pearl saw it she told her mother it was the same as what she saw in the night. Pearl ever afterwards believed in fairies.

HOW DICKIE SAVED CHRISTMAS.

Dickie Dean was a doctor's son, and he was like his father in every way. He had made up his mind to be a doctor, too, when he was a man, and except that he was seven years old he was nearly a doctor already. He had a splendid little motor car, with pedals, which his grandmother had given him, he had a small bag full of bandages, plaster, and a bottle of "Ponds," and a book, too, about how to save people if they fell into water too deep, and how to bind up cut fingers, and every day when he went out with his nurse he put his little bag in the car, just in case he met somebody who had had an accident.

His only real bother was that nurse would never let him go as fast in his car

as he wanted to go. She was sure he would turn over going round corners, and he was quite sure he would not, and it spoiled the realness to have someone running behind at all.

One winter's day when they were passing a field they heard a little cry as if someone was in pain, and stepping smartly out of his car Dickie found a poor little dog that had hurt his leg, and was holding up one paw in a most pitiful manner. It was extremely lucky that Dickie and his bag had happened to be passing just at that moment, for everything was ready, and nurse held the poor foot while Dickie cut off a little piece of boracic lint, damped it with some "Ponds," and bandaged it up. The little dog licked his hand, and then nurse carried it to the car, for the name on the collar was one they knew quite well, and Dickie could drive the little dog home.

Just as he was putting his things back into the bag he noticed a queer-looking little lady had been standing by and watching. She was certainly not an ordinary little lady, for she wore a red cloak all made of holly berries, and a green skirt, too, not so big as Dickie, and when she saw that he noticed her she hurried away, and disappeared straight into a big hedge of holly which grew along the road. Dickie thought this rather funny, but he was far too busy with the little dog, to think much more about it, besides this was Christmas Eve, and there were so many other things to be done and thought about.

They gave the little dog to his mistress, who was so pleased to see him, and then nurse had a quick run home, for Dickie was in a hurry.

He got his mummy's present ready, and put it under her pillow, also his daddy's which he was rather afraid might be uncomfortable, as it was a high inkstand, with ink already in it. Then he went to bed himself, and hung his stocking up on the bed-post.

He did not seem to have been asleep very long before he was awakened by a little tapping at his window. Dickie sat bolt upright in bed. The moon was shining in, and on the window-sill outside stood the holly-berried lady! She looked terribly upset, and Dickie sprang out of bed in a moment, and opened the window. There was a high ridge of snow on the sill, and the holly-berried lady cannot have been very heavy, for she stood on the top and did not seem to sink in.

"Yes!" said Dickie, "what's the matter?"

"Oh! dear, oh! dear," said the little lady, "the world is in great trouble to-night, and I thought that as you are a doctor you might be able to help us. There has been a terrible accident. Father Christmas was on his way in his chariot, bringing all the presents for the stockings—one of his reindeer has fallen down; he is lying face downwards in the snow. Can you come quickly?"

Dickie had already begun to dress himself, and in five minutes he was ready to start. He crept downstairs very quietly so as not to wake anybody, and he was soon pushing his car out of the stable into the road. His bag was under the seat, and he had not forgotten to put on a big coat. The holly-berried lady sprang in beside him, and away they went.

(To be Continued.)

The Home.

PRESERVING FRUIT WITHOUT SYRUP.

Three different methods of preserving fruit in bottles without using syrup are practised at Battersea. The first is the simple method of the bottling machine with a thermometer attached; the second the oven process; and the third the use of a fish kettle. Fruit food bottling should be as far as possible of the same size, a little under ripe, free from stalks, and not punctured (if cherry stalks are taken out roughly, the fruit breaks in the bottles), and then lightly packed, a wooden stick being used to press it down. If the oven is used the glass jar is filled, being slightly heated first. The fruit is then put in and left until it turns colour; if the oven is too hot the fruit will burst at once. Boiling water should be poured on immediately; the jar is taken out of the oven, and then filled up with a layer of mutton-fat. The bottles should not be moved or the fat will run down. Lard should not be used.

TO STONE RAISINS.

Simple machines for stoning raisins are to be bought, but, if done by hand, the process is less tedious if the penknife used be occasionally dipped in boiling water and the fingers floured. The slight dust of flour adhering to the fruit is an advantage, separating it more easily when mixing it with other ingredients.

POULTRY, TO MAKE TENDER.

If obliged to dress poultry immediately after killing—says the author of a col-

lection of French recipes—"To make it tender, do as follows: Steep it in boiling water, and feather it in the water as hot as the hands can bear; or, before you kill turkey or goose make it swallow a spoonful of vinegar. These methods will make poultry as tender as if killed some days previously to being dressed." I do not know if anyone has proved that statement. If true, it is valuable information.

Rice Rissoles.—The rissoles may be made with the remains of any joint, ham, etc. Allow two ounces of cooked rice, mix with this the same quantity in bulk of minced cold meat. Break into this an unbeaten egg, flavour with pepper, salt, and parsley. Take about a tablespoonful of the mixture, flour it well, dip it in milk, and cover it with breadcrumbs. Let it stand for a while to set, then fry in hot fat. These rissoles are delicious served like this, but a little bacon served with them is a great improvement.

Fish au Gratin.—Cold boiled fish about 1 lb, a dessertspoonful of flour, pepper and salt, 2oz of dry cheese scraps, a teacupful of milk, 1oz of butter. Flake the fish, and see that it is free from skin and bone. Mix the flour with a little of the milk, add a little salt and pepper. Boil the remainder, and pour it while boiling upon the floor, etc. Return it to the saucepan, and stir while it boils for three minutes. Pour this hot sauce on to the fish, and mix in half the cheese finely grated. Turn into a fireproof or enameled dish, put the remainder of the grated cheese on top, and bake for ten minutes in a hot oven. Grease the dish with the butter before putting in the fish.

Sardine Cakes.—A small tin of sardines, three tablespoonfuls of mashed potato, one tablespoonful of melted margarine, salt and pepper to taste, about a tablespoonful of flour. Remove the tails and backbones from the fish, but there is no need to skin them. Mix the sardines well with the smoothly mashed potato, add the melted margarine and seasoning. Two important points to remember here: First, be careful to merely melt, not heat, the margarine or whatever fat you are using; second, it is well to work in the oil from the sardines before adding the margarine, as some tins contain so much oil that no margarine is needed. Your common sense is needed here. When the mixture is well blended, shape it into even-sized little round cakes, flat on top like fish cakes, and not too large, as small ones are easily handled. Give them a light roll in the flour, shaking off any that will not stick on. Put the cakes on a greased baking sheet and bake in a quick oven until lightly browned. Serve very hot, with a small sprig or two of parsley. If you wish to make the dish look a little more elaborate, brush the cakes over with beaten egg, roll them in crumbs, and fry them in smoking-hot fat.

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