

The Mental Aspect of House Keeping.
Freide E. Marty.

Some one has said, "Keep house in order to live comfortably, don't live in order to keep house". The advance of society rests on the personal health, sanity and happiness of its members, whose best growth requires quiet, comfortable homes; with peace and health order and beauty. Upon the house keeper lays the responsibility of providing such conditions together with good wholesome nourishing food.

Innumerable theories have been advanced as regards methods and management of household duties but there are none of us that can select one particular plan and execute our tasks according to its specific guidance. Each house-keeper is compelled to outline a system of work according to her own environments.

There can be however, a course prescribed that will meet the needs of the majority and give the housekeeper something of an idea how to obtain the best results from the least expenditure of time, money, and energy.

Occasionally our minds are impressed with the primitive housekeeper of colonial days. When not busily engaged otherwise she sat contented at her spinning wheel or with some fine needlework in hand, always diligently performing the duties of both mistress and maid. Her conveniences were totally lacking as compared with the modern twentieth century home; her thought of future existence so dependent upon their their failure and success must

have caused her life to be a strenuous one. However through all of their hardships she remained hearty, noble, cheerful and persevering instead of being as the fragile, easily fatigued and languid woman of later years.

The mental aspect of domestic affairs at the present time should certainly be a bright one. The woman of today has her home a modern one, well equipped with all of the necessary conveniences that shorten and make lighter the duties of every day life. Her college education is also one of the greatest factors in securing for herself as well as others ease, enjoyment, and comfort in the home. The latter is one of the great things to

be considered in house keeping. Comfort of all who live in the house goes before every other thing; to ensure it order, punctuality and cleanliness are necessary, but if the order or cleanliness are obtrusive, comfort is impossible.

The ideal house keeper is the one who without seeming to give heed to the wheels of household machinery, has it in such perfect running order that it seems to go of itself. She plans her work with fore thought contrivance, system and arrangement and thus condenses it until she can make few steps count for many.

No doubt such a house keeper is forming a habit, the practical

effects of which she little realizes. James says "habit simplifies our movements makes them accurate, diminishes fatigue and diminishes the conscious attention with which our acts are performed."

The occupations that form the foundation of every house keeper's tasks are cooking, cleaning and sewing. It is quite true that unless tact and skill are used in managing such needful operations, life will hardly be worth living. Each day will present the ever perplexing question "when will I ever accomplish all there is to be done." To obviate this frequent difficulty she should so arrange her work that each day will have

its regular work and also a share of the extras. Of course no one can invent cast iron rules and declare that they must be obeyed; at the same time the regular order of work should not be capriciously changed. If this suggestion of system is observed the mind naturally will become more buoyant and care free, and in turn the body whose condition is so necessitous of a strong mind will be better able to promote the welfare of the home.

In this connection we may speak of the effects of a good disposition in the house keeper. There is nothing which has a more abiding influence on the happiness of a family than the

preservation of equable and cheerful temper and tones. A woman who is habitually gentle sympathizing and cheerful, carries an atmosphere about with her which is soothing and inspiring to all around her.

She must expect to meet with difficulties, to have her plans interfered with but the truly successful one will meet such collisions with a cheerful and quiet spirit, remembering that quite often the habits of various members differ so widely that it is impossible for one to avoid disturbing another's plans. Occasionally when one's arrangements are seriously interfered with it is almost impossible not to

feel some irritation, but it is possible for us to refrain from unpleasant tones. We will find that perfect silence for the time being will undoubtedly bring the greatest success.

Household economy should be one of the vital considerations for the housekeeper. How many instances we can recall where the lack of Thrift and prosperity can be traced back to the woman of the home who has an utter disregard for economy.

In the kitchen alone there can be wasted a small fortune in case proper discretion is not exercised. Provisions are so often purchased with no idea of quantity needed

or quality; no account is kept and after lavishly providing, articles are used and wasted as the occasion demands.

The house keeper should make a decided effort to provide substantial fare in the kitchen and then to see that food is economically handled, and that everything is utilized if possible, instead of being carelessly discarded.

She will be able to economize greatly if she will pay some attention to the dietetic value of food provided. Besides being more economical, the quantity of food will give more nourishment, and put the individual in an all round better condition for work, health and hence prosperity.

depends upon the dietetic value of food. By such economy the home surroundings are made far more pleasant in many respects. The woman of the home will feel that she alone is responsible for a share in promoting a comfortable situation. Her husband in return will enjoy the confidence and respect her has for her when he realizes her untiring interest and economy in financial affairs. Both will have a greater influence over those in their care. Habits, whose impressions will last throughout life will be formed in younger lives and children will grow up with a greater appreciation of the necessities of life. Too many

Children are ignorant as to how money is obtained, hence they develop dispositions of dissatisfaction, luxury and conceit while at the same time their parents are probably in moderate circumstances.

House keeping to-day is as a rule considered as a more respectable kind of labor than it was some years ago. Then it was looked upon as an irksome, never ending task full of drudgery and somewhat degrading for a woman in good society. Since our schools have been established with their well equipped departments for Domestic Science the old idea of house-keeping has been gradually dying out.

The woman of to-day takes a brighter view; with her educated mind she knows how to use and save the body, to work it, and spare it, as an uneducated mind can not. She has actually learned to do and enjoy her work until it has become a cheerful task, and one which she prefers to do herself, if her health permits, instead of shifting it to a servant's care.

The servants in the home providing there are any, should feel in their treatment by their employer, and in the atmosphere of the family that their position is held to be a respectable one. They are laboring for others in the same way as do

milliners and dress makers, consequently their position is not and should not be considered degrading, as it so often is. Their work rooms should be made convenient and comfortable, and their private apartments bear some reasonable comparison, as far as being agreeable, to those of other members of the family.

In the home should be found simple and genuine hospitality, and the woman of the home is the one who is supposed to observe and maintain this necessary quality. Great many people advise the custom of having a "day at home," when all visitors are expected to call on that certain day or not at all. It seems to me this is

too much of a mechanical position to take. If true friends are really valued as they should be there will be a freedom to meet and mingle, now more, now less, in which as character develops we will find our own lives enriched and strengthened by free and frequent companionship.

Frequent recreation and rest from household cares means a great deal to the house keeper both mentally and physically. Her mind is in more or less of a constant strain during the time she is occupied about the house. While she may not feel particularly fatigued she should realize the importance of what rest means

to her, and let nothing of small consequence interfere with this necessity. The strain on her nervous system, will as we say, "keep her up" for a time but sooner or later she will realize what a few leisure hours meant to her.

During such recreation she should eliminate from her mind all cares concerning her work and spend the time doing something which she thoroughly enjoys. When her tasks are again resumed she will accomplish more, gain better results and life will be brighter and better, both for herself and her associates.