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South Branch Farm.

By Rebecca Harding Davis.

The Taneys had lived on South Branch farm since colony times, and no Taney had ever cheated a man of a dollar. They lent no money, and they borrowed none; they never sat at any man's table, or asked a guest to theirs.

The Taney pew—a front one—was filled every Sunday, come rain or shine. Mrs. Taney, a middle-aged woman, with her gray hair in a tight little knot behind, and wearing the same rusty black gown and bonnet for a dozen years, was always, like the others, present. But sometimes she was asleep. For this was the one hour of the whole week when she could sit down on a cushion and fold her hands. The air was warm, the music soft and sweet; no wonder she slept. Sometimes the words that were read stirred her soul; it seemed as if her childhood woke, as if the tears must come to her long dry eyes. But they never did. By the time that she had walked home with her son William, the strange story of Bethlehem, or of the heavenly glory to come, had faded in a doubtful dream, and all that was real was the South Branch farm, the price of pork, or the fall in potatoes. After church dinner must be ready (piping hot, too, on account of the boarder) in half an hour; then she had the sheep to look after, and the poultry to feed; then supper; then milking. The Taneys never had any "help." Mrs. Taney had brought up six children, been sole cook, seamstress, tailor and dairymaid; yet her husband, old Ben, always had said, "Sarah's not a capable woman. No Taney blood in her."

Ben had been dead five years, but his wife went on, carrying a growing load on the back which lacked bone. William was a harder task-master than his father had been; the very oxen felt the lash oftener, and their corn fell off one-half. He sat in the kitchen now, with a book before him, while his mother and youngest sister, Letty, were cooking the supper.

"Take that butter off the table," he said, suddenly. "Molasses will do. What are you cooking meat for? It's not necessary. Put it back in the cellar."

"Yes, William," replied his mother, submissively. "Only I thought the boarder—"

"We can't afford to feed him like a lord. You'll have to exercise economy, mother. I can't be always here to look after things. How am I ever to pay for the meadow lots, if money is flung about in this way?"

"In what way, William?" Mrs. Taney's scared eyes wandered over the bare kitchen, the smoldering coals in a corner of the grate, the half-starved face of her little girl. "I try to save, I'm sure. What way do you mean?"

"Oh, every way!" closing his book with a slam. "There's a leak at every corner. Why, I toil and slave the year round. But with such a lot of mouths to feed—"

Mrs. Taney forgot to eat her dry bread, or drink her milk. The meadow lots! It was to buy these lots her husband had made their lives bare and hard and wretched from their wedding day. The good, wholesome produce of the farm, which should have fed the children, had gone to market, while they ate the refuse; the money, which should have educated them, had been put in the bank to buy these lots. When her baby was ill, no doctor was brought, and the child died; the money saved went to the lots. The mother had begged for a headstone for the child, but the money was needed for the lots. There was Letty, growing to be a woman, half-clothed and half-starved, without a sparkle of fun or pleasure to lighten her young life, while poorer girls dressed and went out and had company, and enjoyed, as the young should, days filled with comfort and happiness. Every penny thus saved William laid by for "the lots." Yes! those twelve acres had come to be the absolute God for these people. Not a happy life, nor God, nor heaven.

After supper his mother followed him out.

"William," she said, desperately, "how many years will it be before you can buy the lots?"

"Years! The lots!" in unfeigned amazement. "I—how on earth can you understand business?"

It was the first time she had ever spoken in this way.

"I don't know. But I am afraid I will not live to see it. It is so long—"

She went back to the kitchen. The dishes stood untouched upon the table, and little Letty was seated upon the steps, a basket of red peaches beside her, which the boarder had brought down from his room.

He was a young man, a teacher in a Virginia country school, who had come up to these hills, geologizing in his summer vacation.

"I brought them from the McBride farm, Mrs. Taney," he said. "They are a very common kind in the Shenandoah Valley," handing them to her.

Mrs. Taney's thin features grew warm.

"I remember a tree just like these at home," she said, "by the old mill. My old nurse used to hold me up to pull them for myself."

"Your little girl tells me you came from Fauquier County. It is a fine county."

"It is the most beautiful in the world!" said Mrs. Taney.

She stopped and went in hastily. She felt the tears choking her. She could hear Mr. Burke tell the child that his school was in Fauquier, and that he had often passed her grandfather's house. It was for sale now, with a dozen acres about it; would sell very cheaply, no doubt. Land had depreciated since the war.

"A quiet, comfortable little homestead, too," he said, "as any in the State."

Mrs. Taney paused in her work.

"Oh, if I could only show it to Letty!" she said to herself. "The dear old farm! The sunny porches and the Bourbon roses, and the great oaks, centuries old!" She never had spoken of her old home to her other children; but to Letty she had talked of it very often, when they were alone. Letty was like herself—the others were all Taneys.

She came to the door.

"Do you know, Mr. Burke, if there is an old negro on the place—a gardener?"

"Uncle Tod? Oh, everybody knows the old man! And his stories about the Clevelands, 'de fambly,' as he calls them."

"We were the Clevelands And old Tod is really living yet?" She laughed for the first time in a year.

When Letty had gone in, Mr. Burke paced up and down the porch. He was a manly, large-natured young fellow, and his heart ached with pity for the poor, pinched lives of this child and her mother. All he could do to show them kindness was to lend books to Letty, which she devoured eagerly, for she was fond of reading; in fact, she had obstinately persisted in staying at the free school until she had educated herself.

William Taney waited until the young man had gone, and then went into the pantry, where his mother was straining the last crock of milk. Something in his manner made her set it down, trembling.

"You have bad news to tell?" she said.

"No," with an uneasy, strident laugh. "Most folks count it good. Fact is, mother, I've made up my mind to marry—"

"Oh, William!" her old cheeks coloring.

"I made up my mind three months ago. And the girl's courted, and the wedding's to be to-morrow. There now! No need for you to look in that way. I'm generally pretty close-mouthed about my own business; you might know that. And I didn't choose to have the matter cackled over at home. The girl's Miss Sophy Crawford."

His mother came toward him. He was her son, after all, and this was the turning-point of his life. She put her arms about him and kissed him. "God bless you, my boy!" she said.

He stood immovable as a log.

"Don't let's have any fuss," he said. "You'd better sit down. You're shaking all over. There'll be no wedding hubbub here. I don't hold to spending money in feeding a lot of guzzling fools. The Crawfords are to have a regular blow-out in the morning. But you don't want to go, I reckon?" uneasily.

"I should like to see you married," timidly.

"Oh, nonsense! There's no sickly sentiment about me. I'll have Sophy home by supper-time. You'll have to see to things here."

He lighted his candle and turned to go. "By the way, she was here a month ago."

"Yes." Mrs. Taney remembered distinctly the gross-featured, black-eyed young woman who had swaggered through the farm-house in her cheap silk and gilt jewelry.

"She came just to look at her new home, and—well—she rather took a fancy to the south chamber. You'd better fix it up for her."

"My room, William?"

"Yes. It's all the same to you. Of course you can go up to Letty."

Letty, who had been at work inside, came out and threw her arms, sobbing, about her mother. She knew that this had been her mother's room for thirty years. All Mrs. Taney's children were born in it; the baby died there.

William stopped and came back, saying: "Now, look here! It's just as well to speak plainly at once. I'll have no opposition to my wife from you, Letty, nor from—from any other woman. I'm the head of this house. My wife shall be mistress in it. She brings me a snug bit of money, and I'll not have her nor her family insulted in it."

"My son!"

But he stalked off to bed.

There was no time next day for Mrs. Taney or Letty to even think of the coming trouble. They were up, as usual, two or three hours before day, kindling fires, milking, and cooking breakfast for the six harvest hands. Then came washing, a dinner at noon, all the work of a farm, in short, which falls on the women, in addition to which was the cleaning and preparation of the room which the bride had chosen for her own. Mrs. Taney moved sluggishly through the latter part of the work.

"What is the matter, mother?" said Letty.

Mrs. Taney laughed feebly.

"I don't know. I feel like a clock that is nearly run down."

Letty made no reply. The child had lately been absent, almost indifferent, while her mother talked, apparently wrapped in her own thoughts. Could it be, the mother thought, that Letty also was forsaking her? Mrs. Taney had only had one other daughter—the baby who died. The other children were sons, all of whom except William had gone to the West and married there. She often had wished they would ask her to visit them, that she might see their children. But they never did it.

While they were hanging out the clothes that afternoon, Mrs. Taney heard a tap three times repeated on the orchard fence. Letty's face colored. She dropped the clothes and ran down behind the apple trees. As she came back, her mother saw her thrust a note into her pocket. Mrs. Taney grew sick at heart. Letty with a secret! Letty carrying on a clandestine love affair!

While Mrs. Taney stood doubting whether to ask the child for her confidence, Letty had disappeared. A few minutes later the girl went down the road in her clean dress and sunbonnet. It was but a trifle, yet it stunned the jaded woman as a sharp blow would have done. The other farmers' daughters kept up a perpetual, vulgar flirting and secret courtships. But Letty was her own one ewe-lamb, delicate and pure.

Mr. Burke, coming over the fields that afternoon with his hatchet and bag of specimens, was amazed to see Letty standing on the road in eager conversation with a man. "A coarse, red-jawed, beery fellow," was his angry verdict. The "fellow" talked long and earnestly, then took Letty's hand and pressed it fervently. Burke turned his back on them and struck across the fields. The girl's mother should hear of this at once, he said to himself, decidedly. Then he slackened his pace. What was it to him? Why should he vex himself about this girl, or meddle in her love affairs? He went slowly back to the hills. But the blood rushed with a strange beat through his veins.

In an hour Letty was back and at work with redoubled vigor, to make up for lost time. Her mother scanned her innocent, meek face, with a breathless terror.

Surely there was no guilt there! She would not doubt her; she would not ask a question.

"I have dressed the table with flowers," the mother said, "and made a cake—a real bride's cake. I hope William won't be angry. But this is so different from weddings in Virginia. Oh, Letty, if you and I could only go to the old house and sleep for one night in the room which was mine when I was a child! I think just that little thing would give me years of life."

"There they come!" cried Letty, as the big Crawford carriage was seen dashing up the road. She grew very pale, and shrank back. The girl had always been afraid of her brother William; and his wife, she suspected, would be as hard a ruler, and a more vulgar one.

But Mrs. Taney led her to the porch.

"You must welcome them, Letty," she said.

The bride watched them from the carriage window with keen, jealous eyes. Her father had given her a hint as to her future course.

"You've made a good match, Sophy," he said. "Bill Taney's got as long a purse as any man in the country, and the farm's comfortable. But the old woman an' her da'ater 'ill be a drawback. They'll try to ride over you rough-shod, likely. Just take your stand at once. Let 'em see you'll be mistress in your own house."

"Trust me for that, pappy," said Miss Sophy.

The whole Crawford family had accompanied her to see how she would hold her ground.

When poor Mrs. Taney stepped forward, therefore, her thin face reddening and her hands held out, the bride received her welcome with a careless nod.

"I hope you will be happy in your new home, my dear," said the gentle lady.

"Oh, no doubt, ma'am! I generally hold my own pretty well. Come in, pappy. Come, Sue; I want you to see my house before it is dark. Here's the living room. Bill must fit that up into a parlor—double-quick, too. D'ye hear, Mr. Taney?" laughing loudly. "You needn't trouble yourself, ma'am, to show the way. Come along, all of you."

William stopped and looked with sudden pity at his mother, and then followed his wife, who went, talking loudly, up the stairs.

Mrs. Taney and Letty placed the supper on the table. The bride came in, the noisiest of the noisy party. She went hastily to the head of the table, saying, "This is my place, I believe."

William gravely motioned his mother to a seat among the strangers. His wife bore herself as though she had been mistress for years, and found fault freely when the humor suited her. The bread was dry as chaff, the ham was bitter with salt, she said.

"That's your idea of cooking, Mother Taney, eh? I'll give you a hint or two to-morrow. We young people have progressed, you know. Not that I mean to take the work out of their hands," she said to her sister aside. "No, no! If we feed 'em, they've got to earn their bread."

Letty overheard the whisper, and her scared face grew a shade paler.

"Very nice old silver, William!" said the bride, directly, weighing the spoons on her finger, and then reading the mark. "'Cleveland,' eh? You must have that altered, please, to our initials. I can't use spoons with strange names on 'em."

William glanced uneasily at his mother. But the latter did not speak. "Very well, my dear, it shall be as you please," he said.

As the days lengthened into weeks, the bride found her sway becoming more absolute. It occurred to William that she might share in the work. But, like most farmers of his class, he was used to see his mother drudge from morning until night, and vaguely supposed it was her natural condition of life. Sophy carried the keys, and dealt out the provisions. Her ruddy, animal beauty pleased him; it was a pity, he thought to mar it with hard work.

Meanwhile, Mr. Burke had taken lodgings with a neighboring farmer. He kept a close scrutiny on Letty, solely for her mother's sake, he told himself. She met the "beery fellow" twice, and took long walks with him; she received letters from him by mail. The geologist found that this matter interested him more than his fossils, even.

One morning Letty came into the room when William stood joking with his wife before going to the field. They looked at her with astonishment, for the girl was always silent and shy.

"Brother, I want to speak to you," she said, catching her breath.

"Well, go on," said Sophy, impatiently. "What are you afraid of?"

Letty spoke directly to William, ignoring her. "The potatoes and apples must be picked over, and the cellars are damp. Could one of the hands do it?"

"Good gracious! Do you want the harvesting to stop?" cried Sophy. "You and Mother Taney can do it at your leisure. Do you suppose your brother pays men such ruinous wages to wait on a lot of women?"

"You have always done it," said William.

"Mother is not well, William."

"Well, manage it as you like. I can't be bothered with the kitchen work," he burst out.

Letty left the room hastily.

"That's right, William. The truth is, you're too open-handed. You can't afford to keep a parcel of able-bodied women in idleness, if you ever mean to buy the meadow lots."

"That's a fact!" The mention of the lots keyed his courage.

When he came back that afternoon he found Sophy resplendent in a pink-flowered muslin entertaining half a dozen girls in the parlor. He stopped to joke and romp with them. The next moment the door opened, and Letty stood like a ghost on the threshold.

"Come to mother!" she said.

"What is the matter?"

"You have killed her, I think," quietly.

The poor old woman had sunk down on the floor of the cellar, and lay as if dead.

William trembled as he lifted her. The doctor of the village happened to pass at that moment.

"No, she is not dead," he said, after examining her. "Great exhaustion. It will be a long illness. She must have rest and careful nursing."

Letty stepped forward. "She will have both. Mr. Burke, will you carry her to Mrs. Wright's—across the road? She has promised to give me a room."

The crowd about her were so stunned at the child's action that they did nothing to oppose it.

Mr. Burke promptly lifted the thin figure in his arms, and had laid her in the bed in Mrs. Wright's shaded spare room before William recovered his senses.

"Don't you see how disgraceful this looks?" Sophy cried, shaking him. "Your mother turned out! What will folks say?"

He hurried after Letty, scolding and ordering them back. But Letty did not answer him.

"Mrs. Wright will charge boarding. D'ye hear?"

"I shall pay her," said Letty, quietly.

Mrs. Taney's illness lasted for weeks. William's wife smoothed the matter over to the community as best she could. "The Wright house was quieter than hers. She was willing to pay the boarding to insure comfort to dear Mother Taney, etc., etc." Secretly she rejoiced to escape the trouble of the sick woman.

When Mrs. Taney was able to come down to the porch of the cool farmhouse for the first time, she sent for William and his wife. The doctor was there, and Mr. Burke and Judge Wright and little Letty, and a man whom Mr. Burke at once recognized as "the fellow," and so turned his back on him contemptuously.

"You've got quite a color, Mother Taney," said Sophy. "You'll soon be ready to come over. Help with the canning, eh?"

"Mrs. Taney," said the doctor, gravely, "needs a long season of rest before her health is restored. I have recommended a change of air; a journey—"

William exchanged alarmed glances with his wife.

"Why, you must take us for millionaires, doc!" she cried. "Change of air? Journey? That sort of prescription suits fine city ladies. But farmers' wives, who have to earn their living, can't take time for such fol-de-rols."

The doctor would have answered, but Letty put her hand on his arm. There was a faint pink on her cheek, and her blue eyes sparkled like steel.

"Fortunately, my mother," she said, gently, "is not in such a strait. I have made arrangements for her to take the journey. We are going to-morrow to Virginia. I have bought her old home, and we shall live there. She will have a long change of air."

William turned ghastly pale.

"Bought? What money had you?"

"Her own share of the estate," said Judge Wright, calmly. "Letitia is of age. She seems to have always been under the impression that she and her mother were dependent on you. She came to ask me only two months ago; and I, as her guardian and executor, had nothing more to do than to hand her over her share, which was, you know, in bonds. She has chosen to invest it in Virginia land. Mr. Hipps made the purchase for her," nodding to the beery young lawyer, who nodded gravely back again.

Mr. Burke moved suddenly over to his side, with a beaming recognition.

"How do you propose to live on this farm?" said William.

"My mother will withdraw her portion of the estate," said Letty. "She is entitled to a third, you know."

"Withdraw? Thirds? Why, I've use for it! If she does that, I have done with the meadow lots."

His voice was like the bark of an enraged dog.

"You seem, William," said Judge Wright, "strangely to have forgotten the true position of your mother and sister. You have drawn the interest of your mother's money. It must all, of course, be refunded. Little Letty has a clear head. She will manage very well. By the way, she has suggested to me that your wife should send over the Cleveland silver, and all other household property belonging to your mother before marriage."

When William and his wife went out of the gate, he seemed to have shrunk into a smaller and an older man. The last words heard from him were: "Lots. It's all your fault!" in a fierce bitterness.

When they were all gone, Letty put her head down on her mother's lap.

"Now, mother," she said, "for the roses and old oaks, and rest and home! We shall find poor old black Tod there, waiting; and all your old friends—"

There was an uneasy cough behind them. It was Mr. Burke, waiting to say good-bye.

"I shall be a neighbor, too, Miss Letty."

"Yes, I remember," blushing very much.

He held her hand a moment. "You—you are not sorry that I shall be there, too?"

But Letty only blushed more absurdly, and could not answer.—Good Literature.

Timely Fashion Hints

New York City.—Such a pretty coat as this one cannot fail to find its welcome. It is jaunty and chic yet absolutely simple withal, and involves no difficulties in the making. It is cut with sleeves and coat portions in one, but in the later manner, which means snug fit under the arms.

It can be finished with ornamental laps at the darts or with genuine pockets as liked and is adapted to all suiting materials, while also it makes an excellent model for the light weight separate wrap. In the illustration light brown serge is trimmed with foulard and bands of taffeta, such combinations being greatly in vogue just now, but almost any contrasting material can be used for collar and cuffs, and braid and banding of the material are equally correct as a finish. Two big buttons at the front make a feature and are exceedingly handsome.

The coat is made with fronts, back, side-backs and under-arm gores. The under-arm gores are extended to form the under portions of the sleeves, so allowing graceful lines and doing away with fulness at that point. Roll-over cuffs finish the sleeve edges and a roll-over collar completes the neck.

The quantity of material required for the medium size is four yards twenty-seven, two yards forty-four or one and seven-eighth yards fifty-two inches wide, with one-half yard twenty-seven inches wide for collar and cuffs, seven and one-half yards of banding.

Sashes.

Sashes are used effectively on the new gowns. They serve the purpose of girdles, hip yokes and shoulderettes. A wide, handsomely embroidered scarf of old pink chiffon ribbon was worn one day around the shoulders in directoire fashion; the next time it made its appearance it was a hip scarf, knotted a little at one side to fall in long and limp lines to the very hem of the gown, while on another occasion it was worn around the waist as a high and much folded girdle, with two loops and ends falling in the back.

Lorgnette Chains.

The new fan or lorgnette chains are exceedingly pretty, and one design in French gilt, set with groups of stones, or mock jewels, such as coral, jade, topaz and lapis lazuli is particularly effective. At the same price there are long, slender chains of gilt and gun metal ornamented with rhinestones set so that they look like a string of dewdrops.

Embroidery For Lingerie.

The dainty colored embroideries are being used for lingerie hats to accompany frocks in which the same embroideries appear.

Hats That Are Becoming.

The hat to get is straw of a becoming shape. The big natural rough straw sailors rolled up at one side are the best, although black and white chip are both chosen.

Wee Carriage Shade.

Memories of long past days surround the tiny parasols that are carried in the automobile and horse carriage alike, edged with fringe that flutters in the breeze. Men who were young dandies in the fifties of last century will recollect them, and the airs and graces they enabled a pretty woman to reveal, for in truth they are as useful as a fan in the hands of a coquette.

Bolero Will Not Down.

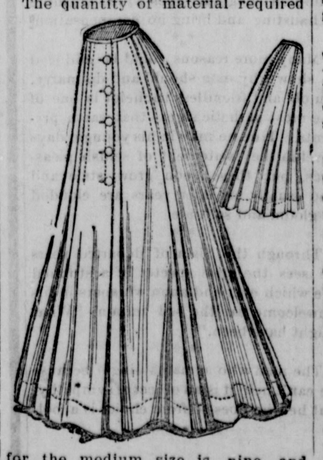
For morning wear we see the short, pleated skirt and a short coat, all in tussore, with perhaps a piping in striped or spotted fabrics. These are smart and neat, and will be seen later on abroad, invariably accompanied by a hat trimmed with wide wings, which still continues the rage in the world of millinery. We note, too, that some of the short corselet skirts show the bolero.

Seven Gored Skirt.

The seven gored skirt is always a graceful and attractive one, and this model has the advantage of including the very latest features of the season. It is laid in two pleats at each seam, which provide just sufficient fulness for grace, and it can be closed either at the left of the front with ornamental buttons or invisibly at the back as liked. It is adapted to linen, to serge, to mohair, to all skirting and to all suiting materials, but as illustrated is made of Panama cloth finished with tailor stitching.

The skirt is cut in seven gores. The pleats effectually conceal the seams and are stitched flat well below the hips. It can be made either in walking length, adapted to the street, or in the graceful round one that is so well liked for indoor wear.

The quantity of material required



for the medium size is nine and three-quarter yards twenty-four, or twenty-seven, five and one-half yards forty-four or fifty-two inches wide.

Girdles.

Hand embroidered linen girdles, with the work all done in soft pale colors, are seen. They are fastened invisibly with hooks and eyes, making the girdle appear as though it had no opening. This gives the waist a round and youthful effect.

Household Matters.

Polish New Furniture.

Always polish new furniture if you want it to look and keep really nice. The polish helps to keep smoke and grime from getting into the varnish.

New furniture that is not well rubbed over with furniture polish while it is new is apt to get cloudy looking and be very difficult, indeed, to polish when one at last tries to do so.—Home Chat.

Barbecue on a Small Scale.

A barbecue on a small scale is a good camp dish. Lay the ribs of a sheep on a grill, brush over, using a swab of clean cloth tied on the end of a stick, with a mixture of melted butter and vinegar, whipping a half cup softened butter with a quarter cup vinegar until frothy like salad dressing. Season well with salt, pepper and mustard. As the meat broils on the gridiron or grill keep saturating with the dressing. When done it will be deliciously seasoned. — New York Telegram.

Wild Duck.

All wild duck of whatsoever kind should be served rare, so that the blood will follow the knife. Few of them require stuffing or much seasoning. The redhead is best stuffed with celery to bring out its flavor; the mallard also needs celery and just a suspicion of onions, while any duck having a strong, fishy odor should be parboiled before roasting, then have an onion or two roasted in it to help in removing the odor. Canvas backs should neither be washed nor stuffed. Wipe with a damp cloth, dust lightly with salt and pepper, inside and out, and spread thickly outside with olive oil or melted butter. Dust the surface lightly with flour, and put into an intensely hot oven. Eighteen or twenty minutes at the most suffices for their roasting. Smaller duck, like teal, pigeon, etc., will be sufficiently cooked in fifteen minutes. Toasted hominy and black currant jelly are the proper concomitants of wild duck. — Washington Star.

Sunday Night Salad.

A tasty Sunday night salad was improvised the other day when unexpected guests dropped in and the larder was not exactly bare, but somewhat depleted. The knuckle end of a boiled ham served as a foundation. After the meat was cut into dice, an equal quantity of cold boiled potatoes was sliced and added, together with three deviled eggs left from Saturday's supper. A suspicion of onion was scraped and added to the contents of the salad bowl, together with a sprinkling of salt, pepper and lemon juice. Mayonnaise dressing was hastily whisked together and incorporated with the salad by lightly tossing with a silver fork. The salad bowl was lined with curly leaves of celery that had been saved from dinner for use in the stock pot. The salad was lightly piled in the centre and a row of overlapping sliced pickled beets made a veritable poem in leftovers. The salad was voted a great success and notes for its making were taken by every housekeeper present. — Washington Star.

Household Hints

Salt on the fingers when cleaning fowl or meat will prevent slipping.

Plums, peaches and fruit of small kind keep better done up in papers.

To "fluff" a pillow catch it by one corner and drop it down hard upon the other.

Never throw away pea pods; they give a delicious flavor to the puree for the next day.

To bring the white of an egg up quickly to a froth add two or three drops of lemon juice.

White paint, when dirty, if washed with skim milk will be easily cleaned; use cold tea for colored paint.

Wipe off screens with a duster each morning and beat with a soft brush. This beating should be done lightly or the wire may be bulged.

To remove grass stains from children's clothes rub the spots thoroughly with a little fresh lard a short time before washing and the spots will come out.

When cleaning stained knives take a piece of new potato, dip it into brick dust and scour the knives; in this way the most obstinate stains will be removed.

To try if eggs are fresh place them in a basin of water; if fresh they will sink, but if not so fresh they become more or less sunken; if stale they will float upon the top.

The soiling of walls caused by persons leaning their heads against the wall may be almost entirely removed by laying a sheet of blotting paper on the spot and ironing over it with a hot iron.

If kerosene is spilled on carpets, books or manuscripts, try removing it by sprinkling cornmeal thickly over the article immediately. Renew frequently until the oil has been completely absorbed.

To remove fruit stains put two ounces of alcohol into a bottle with two tablespoonfuls of gum camphor. Shake well before using. Apply freely to the stained part. Hartshorn will also remove fruit stains.

A creamy coffee custard can be made by stirring a pint of hot, strong black coffee into a quart of custard while still warm. Beat hard and serve in glasses with or without whipped cream on top. Cool the custards on ice.

Green vegetables should be put in a cool place as soon as they come from the market. Lettuce, celery, radishes, tomatoes and cucumbers should be put immediately into the refrigerator. Cucumbers, however, must be placed in a separate compartment from the one in which milk and butter are kept. Some housekeepers first wrap lettuce and celery in a damp cloth.