

the King of kings, and of this glorious destiny awaiting her she often thought. She frequently pondered over what it would be to see face to face the Saviour whom she so truly loved, and who during all these years in the workhouse had been with her day by day, brightening and cheering with His secret unseen presence the life that otherwise would have been so dull and monotonous.

Thus hers had not been an unhappy or a loveless existence there. She had found that even in the "house" there was a work she could do for her Master; and, though she felt it was only very humble tasks for which she was suited, she was content to take such. It mattered little what the service was, she thought, so that it was rendered to Him, and accepted by Him.

Thus, though of silver and gold she had none, she gave of that which she had—a kindly word, a helpful deed, a sympathising look, a heart full of love and thought for others; and in this life of simple ministry she had found happiness and contentment, and had won much love in return.

She asked for and expected nothing more; and sat down with her usual expression of placid content to listen as John went on to unfold the object of his coming.

"I'm afraid Mary will never again be the woman she has been," he proceeded, after explaining all about her illness, and her being in the hospital; for letters did not often pass between them, none of them being much of scribes; whilst Easton was too far from Oxley to allow of many visits being exchanged.

"No, I'm afraid she won't be a strong woman any more," he continued, "and I feel she mustn't come home, and begin at once to knock herself up with working about the place, as she has been used to do. And you know she is so particular that she can't abide a spot of dirt or a speck of dust. She couldn't sit still nohow, and see the place not properly kept. And my Mary is too precious to me not to be taken good care of. So I want somebody who would help her, and look after a bit whilst I'm away at my work all day. Hannah, I've come to see if you won't be the one; and come and make a home with us."

The usually calm face of the other was lighted up with a sudden gleam of joy which broke all over it, and made it look almost ten years younger.

She had thought she was perfectly content where she was; but the word "home" had a very sweet ring in it. To go and live with John and Mary, not as a burden upon them, but to render help and service, did indeed seem delightful.

"Do you mean you really want me, John?"

"Ay, that is just what I mean. I need somebody, and I shouldn't like a stranger; we couldn't either of us abide that; but it would be a real comfort to Mary and me to have you living with us."

Hannah still looked as if she felt it too good to be true.

"You needn't have no scruples," continued John. "Things are easier with us than they were when you came here, and my arm can still do a good day's work, and manage, I hope, to keep you both."

"I should try and get some needlework to do, or something to help out. But, John, I can scarcely believe it is all true," said Hannah, the tears filling her eyes.

"Well, come and see for yourself. How soon can you be ready?"

"Do you mean you are going to take me right away?"

"Yes, if you are willing to come. Farmer Jones has lent me his little cart, so I can drive you back, with as many bundles as you like to bring; and I shan't have such a chance

again. I can give you an hour, if that will do, to gather your things together, and I'll go and take a saunter roundabouts meantime."

It did not take Hannah a great while to collect her few belongings, but to say good-bye to everyone was a more lengthy process.

Many were the lamentations over her departure, all feeling they would lose a friend in her. Some rejoiced unselfishly with her in the bright prospect opening before her, whilst a few enviously wished the same good fortune had befallen them.

So Hannah went home with John Kent, and set about making everything in apple-pie order, ready for her sister's reception. Her coming home was the chief topic of conversation between the two, and both were longing to see her dear face once more in their midst.

Mary was delighted to hear of the arrangement her husband had made, and said she was longing to be at home again, thankful as she was for all the care and kindness that had been bestowed upon her in the hospital.

"The day after to-morrow, Hannah, we shall have her with us," remarked John, gleefully, as he prepared to set off for Collmer on Saturday evening. "Tis strange how much sunshine she takes with her wherever she goes. When we get her back the place here will seem just twice as bright; and I know they will miss her over yonder at the hospital. The matron has said many a time that it did them good to look at her 'peaceful, happy face,' as she calls it. Ah, she is a treasure, is my Mary!"

With a brisk step he went down the garden path, and soon disappeared from view.

He was later than usual in returning that night, and at last Hannah began to listen anxiously for his step. It had grown quite dark some time ago, and yet he did not come.

"I wonder what is keeping him," she said to herself, and then for the twentieth time she glanced towards the clock. "He is quite an hour-and-a-half behind his usual time."

(To be continued.)

MY "AT HOME," AND HOW I MANAGED IT.



PERHAPS of all the entertainments that are given, there is not one that for success depends so much on the individual efforts of the host and hostess as the "at home" where there is only music. I shall endeavour, in this account of my own evening, to give a few hints to those of my readers who are inexperienced, and I will also give a list of all I had, so that those who hesitate to give an "at home" on the ground of the expense, may, if they choose, easily calculate the whole cost, and before they send out invitations judge *si le jeu vaut la chandelle*. I think myself that in this way one may give pleasure to a great many without spending much money, but a little time and thought must be given.

Having fixed the date of my "at home," my first care was to calculate how many people my drawing-room would hold comfortably, for, though a crush is objectionable, I think a half-filled room is almost worse; it looks cheerless, and people do not talk. I concluded that I could easily accommodate fifty guests, but, to have fifty it is necessary to invite sixty at least. I next purchased

three dozen cards with "at home" engraved on them; had I been anxious to make more show, I should probably have had my cards specially engraved with name, date, and address on them, but as it was I contented myself with filling in the cards I bought. At the top, towards the left hand, the name of the guest was written, on the dotted line my own name (if the hostess is married her name alone is put on the card) below the words "at home," the day of the week and the day of the month on which it would take place; at the bottom, in the left hand corner, the address, and to the right, "Music, 8 o'clock," with, under it, R. S. V. P.; these cards I posted rather more than a fortnight before the date fixed.

In making a list of my friends I had arranged to invite several musicians to make my evening go well. I had fifty-five acceptances, but felt quite certain that at the last, five people at least would be kept away by "the ills that flesh is heir to;" but I trusted that the guests who were really acquisitions would not chance to be the ones attacked by colds or headaches.

I now made a note of those of my friends who would sing, those who would play, and those who would accompany. In fact, I made out a programme for my own guidance, and made a memorandum that I must provide a music stand for my young friend who had promised to bring her violin. Finding that I might count on eleven performers, a gentleman who would give a recitation, and some people who could talk well, I felt quite satisfied, and knew that even if one or two performers disappointed me, I should have enough talent in the room for all to go off well. I then considered whether I should imitate a literary friend of mine who had had a reception just before, and had supplied each guest with a list of the names of those present printed on programme cards. The idea charmed me; but I was obliged to own to myself that my guests' names were so much less interesting, that it would be better for me to give up any thought of doing the same. So far all was arranged, and I had nothing more to do until the day before the party, when I should make out my supper menu, order what was required, and make the jellies. The following is the supper menu:—

- Three dishes of ham sandwiches, and three dishes of tongue sandwiches.
- Twelve veal and ham patties (in two dishes).
- Twenty-four oyster patties (in four dishes).
- One lemon jelly.
- One maraschino jelly.
- One pineapple cream.
- One vanilla cream.
- One trifle.
- Two dishes oranges glacées.
- Twenty-four meringues (four dishes).
- Eighteen fancy pastry (in three dishes).
- Black and white grapes with oranges (two dishes).

I found I should require twenty-four extra seats, so I hired two dozen chairs, not rout seats. People are apt to think chairs are dearer than seats, because the best seats are fourpence a foot, and chairs are sixpence each; but as some people will take twenty-four inches of rout seat, and none less than eighteen inches, they are certainly not more economical, as no one wants more than one chair; besides which rout seats are ugly and most uncomfortable. At nearly all the hiring places pretty black and gold chairs are let out, and they look well in any room, so I hope that rout seats will soon be things of the past.

I subjoin the list I made of the things that would be required for fifty people; I made it so that if I found I had not sufficient, I could hire what more I required:—Tea and coffee

equipage, with twelve cups and saucers; six small dishes for sandwiches, six glass dishes, one trifle dish, two dessert dishes, fourteen odd plates, to be covered with d'oyleys or papers, for pastry, etc., for supper: seven dozen plates, one dozen dessert plates, two dozen lemonade tumblers, four dozen wine glasses (claret and sherry), four dozen forks, one dozen tablespoons, four dozen dessert spoons, one dozen teaspoons. Next are the things that will be used in preparing the supper. I bought my pastry, for I felt that I should not have time to make it, very light pastry takes a long time because of the care required in baking, as well as in making. I bought two nice plants for the table and some cut flowers, and what I required on the following list:—Three-quarters of a pound of Mocha coffee, two ounces of chicory, three ounces of tea, one cake to cut up and some coffee biscuits (half a pound), three compressed Vienna sandwich loaves, two dozen oyster patty cases, one dozen veal patty cases, two dozen meringues cases, eighteen fancy pastry, seven sponge cakes, quarter of a pound of ratafias, two ounces of macaroons, two ounces of candied cherries, one pot of raspberry jam, four pounds of best loaf sugar, small bottle of essence of vanilla, one tin of preserved pineapple, four one-ounce packets of Nelson's gelatine, two quarts of double cream, two quarts of milk, six eggs, one pound of fresh butter, two pounds of thinly cut lean ham, one rolled tongue, half a pound of veal cutlet cut thin, two and a half dozen of large oysters, twelve lemons, fourteen oranges, one pound of black grapes and one pound of white grapes, one good bunch of parsley, one pint of sherry or marsala, one wineglass of maraschino or other liqueurs.

Jellies and trifle must be made the day before they are required. The following are the recipes I used:—Take off the peel of four well-coloured lemons as thin as possible, put it, with two ounces of gelatine, in a pint of cold water; let it stand four hours or more. Put into a saucepan one quart and half-a-pint of hot water, one pound of the best loaf sugar, and the strained juice of four lemons; stir on the side of the stove until the sugar and gelatine are quite melted. Put away from the fire for a few minutes, then stir in the half-whipped whites of four eggs; put the saucepan over the fire, whip until it is just going to boil, remove the whip, let it boil, and then immediately remove it from the fire; let it stand on the side of the stove for ten minutes, when it should be quite clear. Dip the jelly-bag in boiling water, wring the wet out, fix it before the fire, and pour the contents of the saucepan in very gently. Let it take its time to run through. Have ready four quart moulds filled with water. When the jelly has run through, take away enough to fill one mould and add to it one wineglass of maraschino, or other liqueur, and sufficient essence of cochineal to colour it. Empty a mould, put about an inch of jelly in it, and arrange some of the candied cherries in it. When the fruit is firmly set in the jelly, pour in the remainder of the liqueur-flavoured jelly, and put the mould in a cool place.

Into the remainder of the jelly put two glasses of sherry or marsala (no cochineal), and fill the second mould in the same way, using black grapes and cherries alternately. As reputed quart moulds do not generally hold a quart, there should be enough jelly over to put a little into each of the other moulds into which the creams will be put; these can have fruit put into them if wished, but they look very well without.

Trifle.—Put in the trifle-dish a layer of slices of sponge cakes, a layer of raspberry jam, a layer of ratafias and macaroons, then another of jam, until you have used all the jam, sponge cakes, ratafias, and macaroons;

then pour over all the remainder of the pint of wine, and leave to soak until the next day, when it must be covered with custard and have whipped cream heaped on it.

The day of my party I began my preparations early. The very first thing was to put the gelatine in soak for the creams. I then gave orders about the arrangement of the rooms, and, having everything I required in the house, proceeded to make a pineapple cream from the following recipe:—Soak three-quarters of an ounce of gelatine in three-quarters of a pint of milk; when well-soaked put it in a stewpan with six ounces of loaf sugar, on which the rind of a lemon has been grated, and three-quarters of a pint of cream. Stir at the side of the fire until the gelatine and sugar are melted; only let it get hot, not boil; then have ready in a pan the pineapple out of the tin, chopped small; pour the cream over it, whip quickly until it gets thick, then put into one of the prepared moulds.

Vanilla Cream.—Soak half an ounce of gelatine in three-quarters of a pint of milk with a little lemon rind. When quite soaked remove the lemon-peel, and put the gelatine and milk in a jug with three-quarters of a pint of cream and six ounces of loaf sugar; stand the jug in a saucepan of boiling water; stir the mixture until all is dissolved, stand off the fire for a few minutes, then add the well-beaten yolks of three eggs, and sufficient vanilla flavouring. Put back on the fire and stir for a few minutes to cook the eggs, but do not let it boil; then pour into a pan, whip until it is thick, and put into the mould.

I next made the mixture for the patties.

Veal.—Cut half a pound of veal cutlet into very small dice, flour it, place it in a stewpan with two ounces of chopped lean ham, a little milk and water, a pinch of sweet herbs, half a teaspoonful of chopped parsley, a bit of lemon-peel, pepper, and salt; let it simmer very gently; when tender, take it off the fire, remove the lemon-peel, let it cool, and use to fill the patty cases.

Oyster Patties.—Beard the oysters, put the beads on to stew in the oyster liquor with half a teacupful of milk, a blade of mace, a piece of lemon-peel, a little cayenne pepper, and a little salt. Stew gently ten minutes, then strain; put the liquor back in the saucepan, mix two good tablespoonfuls of flour with half a teacupful of cold milk, stir into the saucepan and boil up. Cut the oysters in small pieces, stir them and two tablespoonfuls of cream into the sauce; keep all hot for ten minutes (do not boil it), then put aside to get cold. When cool, fill the patty cases with it, and put the tops on them.

Oranges Glacées.—Have ready prepared, that is to say, divided into quarters and all the white and pith removed, eight oranges. Put a wineglassful of cold water into a brass or copper pan, add three-quarters of a pound of loaf sugar, boil the sugar until it is crisp when dropped in cold water (*cassé* it is called), then put in the pieces of orange and immediately turn the whole on to a slightly oiled slab; separate the quarters. When cold each piece should be enveloped in crisp sugar; this dish cannot be prepared the day before, as the sugar soon gets soft.

While I was preparing other things, I had a kettle of water kept boiling, and made the coffee, little by little, in a small percolator; the three-quarters of a pound of coffee and two ounces of chicory made thirty-six small cups of good coffee; this the cook heated at night in a kettle. I gave her strict injunctions not to let it boil, only make it very hot.

With the six remaining lemons I made two quarts of lemonade thus:—I put the thin rind of the lemons in a jug with the strained juice and the half lemons without the pips; I poured

two quarts of boiling water to them, and sweetened to taste. When cold it was strained through muslin into glass jugs.

I had six dishes of sandwiches, and there were eighteen on each dish. The best way is to make six sandwiches and then trim them all round and cut them in two, not cut the crust off the loaf first. I used one pound of butter for them.

I made sufficient custard for the trifle with three yolks of eggs and half-a-pint of milk, vanilla flavouring, and four lumps of sugar.

For the tea and coffee, I saved half-a-pint of the cream, into which I stirred quickly half-a-pint of milk.

I then whipped the remainder of the cream until it was quite stiff, put sufficient on the trifle, and to the rest added a little pounded sugar and essence of vanilla; with this the meringues were filled.

All so far being prepared, the moulds were now, one at a time, plunged in hot water, and the jellies and creams turned out. I put the pastry on plates with lace papers on them; the grapes on dessert dishes with the remainder of the oranges.

The flowers I had arranged as soon as they came, but I now had to add the maidenhair fern, which had been at the bottom of a pan of water all day, and came out looking wonderfully fresh.

The supper table was laid by six o'clock; on it were four bottles of claret and three of sherry (the latter in six pint decanters), two more bottles of claret were on the sideboard in case they should be wanted.

At eight o'clock, tea, coffee, cake, and biscuits were served on the half floor landing which had been shut off with curtains, and made to look pretty. By nine my guests had all arrived. I had presented a good many of my friends to one another as they came, but in the intervals between the pieces of music people must be moved about a little, and a good deal of tact and discrimination is needed by the host and hostess in selecting those to be introduced.

There is never any difficulty in keeping people quiet during a song, but talking is equally bad taste when anyone is playing. I consider it is the duty of the hostess to maintain silence. I did so, and we had two hours of charming music, with short intervals between each performance for conversation. Supper was served at eleven, and my friends, I am glad to say, did it full justice. Some went immediately after, some stayed for more music, which, somehow, was of a lighter kind than the music before supper. The last guest left at half-past twelve, and I found myself quite tired, after what everyone said was a most successful "at home;" however, not too tired to cover all my vases of flowers with wet muslin, under which I meant to keep some of them until my next reception afternoon, when I should be sure to have many callers.

I should mention that the arrangements were carried out by my cook and housemaid, with the assistance of one hired waiter.

I shall conclude this article by wishing a complete success to any reader of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER who gives an "at home," and by hoping that it may assist some to do so.

