COMMON SENSE

FOR

HOUSEMAIDS.

BY

A LADY.

Second Edition.

LONDON:
T. HATCHARD, 187, PICCADILLY.
1853.
Price 1s. 6d.

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LONDON:
THOMAS HATCHARD, 187, PICCADILLY.
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LONDON:
G. J. PALMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

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EXTRACTS FROM A LADY'S JOURNAL, SHOWING THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR WRITING THIS BOOK.

Arrived yesterday in Cavendish Square at half-past five o'clock, for a visit of a few days. Much fatigued, but wonderfully sustained in spirits during the journey, by the prospect of seeing a dear friend, the ten thousand comforts of her well-regulated establishment, and the bright visions of the appearance of my accustomed bed-room. Again and again, had it risen before my mind's eye, in all its glory. The inviting appearance of the smooth, flat, well-made bed, with the light night quilt of snowy whiteness (and the heavy creature folded aside); the easy chair, and footstool (with their bright crimson covers), turned towards the clear glowing fire; the dear little kettle of silvery brightness, on the hob, singing its accustomed song to its grateful mistress. A chair before the toilet, with its pink and pure white drapery. The bright looking-glass reflecting crystal candlesticks, wax-lights, and essence-bottles, with all the perfumes of Arabia. The washhand-stand, a perfect picture, surrounded by a hundred towels. The rose soap giving out sweet odours. The additional large tumbler for the saline draft, the cup and spoon, for less pleasant powders. Alas, alas! how are all those glories buried in the dust, and dust is now indeed the order of the day; my friend is the same in heart and soul, but she has sprained her ancle, and changed her *housemaid*.

Hurried to my room to dress, as the dinner was to be at six o'clock; went straight to the accustomed corner, where my trunk, resting upon a stand, uncovered and uncorded, used to be placed in readiness to be opened. The stand was empty, the trunk upon the carpet, the ropes and cover still on and covered with dust. Rang the bell; no one answered, rang a second time; the housemaid entered, undid the ropes, removed the dusty

cover, and left the room. Turned to unlock my trunk, found it had been placed with the lock turned towards the wall; tried to re-turn it—found it impossible—rang again for the housemaid, and with our united efforts turned the trunk—stooped to unlock it, and found too late that the dust of weeks was on the carpet—shook it in disgust from my silk dress, and advanced in haste to the washhand-stand, to wash the remembrance from my hands at least,—found no soap, no warm water; fortunately had soap in my dressing-box, and, unwilling to apply a third time to a bell-rope of most frail and suspicious appearance, washed with ice-cold water, and having performed my toilet with inconvenient haste, descended to the drawing-room, and found that the dinner had been on the table some minutes. Forgot my discomforts in most agreeable conversation—but much fatigued, was thankful to retire at night, though with secret misgivings as to the discomforts I might perceive on re-entering my room. Opened the door and perceived nothing, the smoke impenetrable, and the fire out; rushed towards the window, threw it open, a rush also of wind and sleet, and the candle became extinguished; groped my way to the bell, pulled it vigorously, heard no sound, felt only a blow upon my cheek, and the bell-rope in my hand—wished it around the neck of a fellow-creature, advanced a few steps, got entangled in the ropes and cover of my trunk (still left upon the ground), stumbled and fell—found the door at last, and rushing out upon the landing-place, with the bell-rope in one hand, and all that remained of the crystal candlestick in the other, called franticly, *Housemaid, housemaid!* Mr. B—— sprang from his dressing-room en robe de chambre. “What is the matter, is it fire?” he exclaimed. “Alas, it is neither fire nor candle,” was my melancholy answer, and my dark history was given. The housemaid, half undressed and sulky was brought into the room. The thick crust of small coal, through which no air could penetrate was removed, sufficient wood to light a dozen fires, thrust into the grate, pieces of small coal added, and all was soon in a blaze; the window was shut down, and the water on the washhand-stand, having once been warm, I resolved to be thankful for small mercies, and, pretending not to feel the smoke which lurked in every corner of the room, as well as in my throat, undressed and went to bed—“*To bed*, but not to

sleep." O the variety of *mountain heights*, and the scarcity of *pleasant plains*! fell asleep at last holding fast by the side of the bed, dreamt I was a swift rolling *snow-ball*, and awoke upon the floor.

Two more nights have passed—No, I will not detail them. What is friendship but a name?

I will leave the house——

I WILL WRITE A BOOK!

COMMON SENSE FOR HOUSEMAIDS.

This little book is intended to convey instruction with regard to a housemaid's duties to the most ignorant in the simplest possible language. Many will throw it aside in indignation, and exclaim, "Does it require a book to be written to tell us that the drawing-room grate should be the first thing cleaned and polished, and not left till a room is swept and dusted, or that if the apartment has not been used for some time, and the carpet carefully covered up, it is better to leave it covered till the walls have been swept down, and the window-curtains brushed?" Strange as it may appear, such advice we have more than once found necessary; we therefore address ourselves to those who for want of regular training, and from not bringing common sense into practice, have fallen into similar errors to those here alluded to, and to a still more numerous race, who are every day leaving their father's cottage with the desire to obtain a housemaid's place, and would therefore willingly learn something of a housemaid's duties.

A housemaid's duties are various, and by no means easy of attainment; for she has to contend against a host of enemies—dust, soot, smoke, rust, insects of various kinds, and bad smells innumerable; let her, however, not be discouraged; all difficulties will give way before early rising, habits of activity, an acute nose, frequent open windows, and a teachable spirit; let us therefore proceed without further preface to give our best advice as to cleaning a house thoroughly after the six winter months of smoke and dust.

Let all the dusters and brushes which will be required, be carefully washed the day before you begin the work of cleaning. To sweep with a dirty brush will do more harm to a carpet than to leave it unswept; and a chair-cover, rubbed with a soiled duster, is injured in a way which no after-dusting can remove.

Let the stair-carpet be first taken up and folded to be beaten with the other carpets. If the family are absent, it is better that all the carpets which require to be beaten should be taken up at the same time and sent away, and all the chimneys swept before the cleaning begins. But if the family are at home, this should not be done, as the cleaning should then only begin in one room at a time, so as to occasion as little discomfort and inconvenience as possible.

Let the stairs be first swept down after the carpet has been removed, taking care that all the bed-room doors be previously shut. If the chimneys in the attics are to be swept, place a mat on the upper landing-place, and if the rooms have carpets, let the carpets be taken up in as many of the rooms as can be cleaned in one day: as the carpets in the upper rooms are, generally small, they are in most families beaten in the court below; the window and bed-curtains should also be taken down and well shaken and brushed below stairs, and the beds carefully covered up with a covering-sheet, well tucked in all round, that no soot may penetrate; then remove the tables and chairs into the landing-place, if there is space sufficient, turning the bottom of one chair down upon the bottom of another; if the landing-place is too small, remove them into one of the attics, and let this room be the last swept and scoured. As soon as the chimney is swept, let the soot be carefully collected, and the housemaid follow the sweep down stairs, taking care that he previously has rubbed his feet upon the mat, and also that he does not allow the bag of soot which he carries to touch the walls as he passes down,—this should be still more attended to, when some one chimney in a house may require to be swept at a time when the stair-carpet is not taken up; to have a handsome brussels carpet stained with soot is no light misfortune to a feeling heart, to trace the creature at every step is no pleasant journey.

The grate is next to be cleansed, and if polished with black lead, two brushes are to be used, one for putting on the lead, and the other for polishing. The fire-irons and fender to be scoured with emery cloth, and then rubbed quickly with a woollen cloth. All the articles required for the grates should be kept in a box for the purpose, and a coarse sheet should also be

kept in the housemaid's closet to be laid down whenever a grate is to be scoured: this may seem unnecessary in an attic room where the carpet may be shabby, or perhaps where there may be no carpet,—but the habit acquired is everything; where no sheet is laid down above-stairs, pokers, tongs, even dust-pans, are often put down on the drawing-room carpet, without a feeling of remorse; a well-trained housemaid would shudder at such a spectacle. The sweeping down of the cornices and walls should now be attended to. Let a pair of steps be brought into the room, and (taking care that they are stretched out to their full extent, so as to stand quite steady on the floor), let the housemaid, mounted on them with a long broom, sweep away the cobwebs and dust from the ceiling and cornices, sweeping also behind each window-shutter, and round the ceilings and shelves of the different presses in the room. The long broom should then be covered with a bag of coarse flannel, and the walls thoroughly swept down. After this has been done, spread a large sheet on the floor, and let the bedding be removed upon it and covered up, the frame of the bed thoroughly well brushed, and also all the edges and corners of the sacking bottom, where dust can lodge, and let the bed-posts and stock be well rubbed till no soil remains on the duster. Then with a feather or small hair-brush, anoint every joint and crevice with the following mixture:—

Put one ounce of corrosive sublimate into a pint of spirits of wine—shake the phial well, and keep it closely corked except when in use. Poison should be written in large letters on the phial, and great care taken to keep it in a safe place out of the reach of children.

Should the housemaid be called away, even for a moment, while she is using this mixture, let her not leave the room till she has put this phial out of the reach of every one. If the beds are kept free from dust, and every spring anointed with this mixture, there will be no risk of their becoming infested by those creatures which it is impossible to name, but which are very dreadful. Clothes-baskets from the laundress for this reason should never be brought into the bed-rooms. The clean linen should be carefully looked over below, and hung upon a screen before the fire, to be made thoroughly dry before it is

put into the drawers or wardrobes. The dusting and anointing of the bed-frames being completed, proceed next to switch and brush the bedding—an old riding whip is an excellent thing for switching bedding or the cushions of chairs, as anything heavy and unyielding is apt to cut them; as soon as you have made the bedding free from dust, replace it on the bed, and cover all up with a sheet, well tucked in, leaving the bed-curtains to be put up, and the bed-linen put on after the cleaning of the room has been completed.

We come next to sweeping the floor previous to having it scoured. There are various modes of sweeping, and of non-sweeping; the non-sweepers follow the principle of letting *the wee pickle stour lie* (as they say in Scotland)—they wash on the top of the dust, and the inky appearance of the boards brings no feeling of shame to their darkened minds; other young housemaids, again, sweep with an air, giving a slight toss up with the broom, at every motion of the hand, so as to make the dust mount up and settle on all that has been previously cleaned; a tidy young woman, on the contrary, sprinkles the floor first with tea-leaves, she then lays the broom close to the boards as she moves along, sweeping gently, but thoroughly, and leaving no spot unswept. If there are closets in the room, let them be first swept, and the doors shut, then sweep under the beds and chests of drawers, &c., before sweeping the other parts of the room. The scouring should then commence: the first thing to be washed is the paint of the window shutters, doors, chimney-piece, and wainscots all round, and this should be done with the following mixture. To every quart of soft boiling water, add half an ounce of soft soap, and half an ounce of pearlash. Soda is too strong, and injures the paint. Let this mixture dissolve before using it. If the room is to be in immediate use, boiled yellow soap may be used with the pearlash, as the smell of the soft soap is disagreeable at first. Scour the paint (a small portion at a time) with a coarse flannel and this mixture; rub straight up and down, then wash with a clean flannel and plenty of water a little warm (cold water makes paint look clouded), and dry with a linen cloth, rubbing briskly: where there is carving above doors or mouldings, use a painter's brush, with the soap and pearlash instead of the flannel, as it gets better into the

carved wood, and then wash with a flannel and water. The floor is next to be scoured, with a little soda mixed in soft warm water—wet a small portion of the floor with your washing-cloth of coarse flannel, rub yellow soap upon your scrubbing-brush, and scrub hard up and down the boards, but never across, then wash well off with clean cold water, and dry with a coarse cloth. In Yorkshire a wisp of straw, tightly rolled up and doubled, is used in scrubbing floors instead of a scouring-brush, and sand instead of soap, and the floors are beautifully clean and white; but this method is not understood in London; the sand there is generally of a dull grey colour, and the dust and smoke of a large city require soap and hard scrubbing. Except in country-houses, the German method of sweeping and washing at the same time would not answer either; there the sleeping apartments are generally without carpets, and a broom is seldom used in sweeping them; a coarse cloth is passed through water, and being wrung out, is drawn across the floor in every direction, and by this method no dust is raised upon the furniture.

The windows and doors should be left open that the floor may dry quickly, and while it is drying, the furniture outside the room should be dusted and rubbed. The furniture in the attics being generally painted wood, will require to be washed twice a-year with the same mixture as the other paint in the room, taking care to do it lightly, and to wash it quickly off with water. The carpet having been well beaten, should then be put down, straight and tight, upon the clean floor; a few small nails are requisite for this; but as the carpets in the attics are generally small, they require to be but slightly nailed down, and should be frequently raised: the furniture should now be restored to its proper place, and the door of the room shut; and after each of the attics has been cleaned in a similar manner the housemaid will proceed to the bed-room story. There all will be done as before; the furniture removed, the window-curtains and bed-curtains taken down to be switched and brushed, the beds covered up, and the carpet lifted, the chimney having been previously swept and the soot removed. The grate and fire-irons will next be scoured, the beds switched and brushed, and the mixture used for the bed-stock; the cornices will be swept, and the paint of the doors, window-

shutters, &c., &c., taking care that in sweeping the paper on the walls the long broom be covered with a clean flannel bag, which should be frequently shaken and turned during the operation; for if the flannel is not clean the paper will look worse than it did before. Paper on walls can be made to look almost new by being cleaned with stale bread; this is a more tedious process; when it is to be done, however, after sweeping the walls with the broom covered with flannel, take a quartern loaf of stale bread three days old, cut it into four pieces, and holding the crust in your hand, rub lightly downwards, taking about half a yard at each stroke; the next time of going round the room begin a little above where the last stroke ended, and take care not to rub across the paper or to go up again. The floor having been sprinkled with tea-leaves, should be swept before the bread is used for the walls, and it will require to be swept a second time before washing the paint of the window-shutters, doors, chimney-piece, and scouring the floor commences. If the carpet does not entirely cover the room, attention should be observed in scouring thoroughly those places not covered, as nothing gives a greater look of cleanliness to a room than nicely cleaned boards: scrub hard straight up and down with the scrubbing-brush and soap, and then wash well off with clean cold water; it is a mistake to think that warm water is necessary for the washing off; cold water does quite as well, and is better, as it is more easily changed: to change the water often is most necessary in scouring floors: many housemaids scour the floor constantly, and yet they have always a black soiled look, from the water not being sufficiently clean. The bed-room furniture is next to be attended to: where the mahogany is French-polished, rubbing lightly with a dry soft cloth is generally all that is necessary; but if the furniture is soiled in any way, then wash it over with a sponge and water (a little warm), and rub lightly with the cloth till quite dry and clear. Where there is no French polish, dust the mahogany well, and with cold drawn linseed oil, mixed with a little turpentine, wash it over with a sponge, and rub briskly and well with a soft woollen or linen cloth; the rubbing does more, in polishing the wood, than any mixture you can use. Many people mix bees'-wax with the oil, and this makes the furniture look well at the moment, but it gives a

fictitious brightness, which every finger-touch or drop of water will dim; the polish produced by rubbing is superior to French polish or any other. The oil should not often be put on, and never while the slightest dampness remains on the mahogany. Some servants use a great deal of oil and very little rubbing, the consequence of which is, that little or no lasting polish is acquired; the dust sticks to the furniture, and gives it a dull soiled look. Nothing gives one a greater idea of care and cleanliness than to see all the mahogany looking bright and clear; the legs and rims of tables, and all that is below as well as above, should be attended to; amongst other bright things the looking-glass must not be omitted: after the mahogany frame has been well rubbed up, the glass should be washed with pure cold water, dried with a clean soft cloth, and polished with a silk handkerchief: if the bed-room chairs have loose chintz covers, they should be taken off and well shaken before the mahogany of the chairs is rubbed up, then put on again as tightly as possible, and rubbed lightly with a clean cloth; all this having been done, before the furniture is brought into the room, the carpet, having been beaten, should be put down perfectly straight, drawn as tight as possible, and slightly nailed; there is nothing looks worse in a room than to see a carpet all pulled awry, and the stripes and seams running across instead of straight up and down. The furniture should now be replaced, the bed-curtains put on, the bed made up for use,[1] and the blinds let down, so as to keep the room cool and preserve the carpet.

All the bed-rooms having been thoroughly cleaned in the same manner, the drawing-room should be next attended to. If there are two drawing-rooms, the chairs and lighter furniture should be removed into the one while the other is being cleaned; if there is but one room, and there is not space on the landing-place, the chairs should be placed, one turned down upon another, in the most convenient corner of the room that can be found for them; the carpet and rug should be taken up to be beaten, and the window-curtains taken down to be well shaken in the court below, then spread upon a table and thoroughly brushed, and if winter curtains, folded up and laid aside, or, if summer muslin curtains, washed. In putting aside

winter-curtains, coverlids, &c., when not in use, a sheet should be spread in the bottom of a drawer, the curtains folded to the size of the drawer, laid perfectly smooth, and the sheet brought over them, so that no dust can get in at the sides. Curtains or any other things, put into a drawer uncovered, get marked at the edges if they lie any length of time. Next, the pictures, if easily removed, should be taken down, and china and chimney ornaments, books, &c., &c., put into some closet or safe place, and dusting sheets thrown over the sofas, mirrors, &c., &c.: all this, if it can be managed, should be done at night, that the room may be ready for the sweeps in the morning. The chimneys of sitting-rooms, where there is constant fire, should be swept at least twice a year; a third time, in the middle of winter, may be necessary for some chimneys; in this case it will be necessary to pin up the curtains, and enclose them in bags similar to pillow-cases, and to cover the carpet and furniture completely with sheets, as, even with the most careful sweeps, a great deal of soot finds its way into the room. As soon as the soot has been removed the scouring of the grate should commence; if a bright polished steel grate, it should be rubbed with fine emery cloth, or with a paste of fine emery powder, No. 3, mixed with boiled soap; after rubbing well with a piece of woollen cloth and this paste, polish with glass-paper (not sand-paper), and finish off with soft dry chamois leather, rubbing quickly and lightly till quite bright. The marble chimney-piece should then be first dusted carefully and thoroughly with the small dusting-brush, and afterwards washed, rubbing soap on a soft brush or sponge, so as to get the dust and smoke out of all the ornaments; if they are deeply carved, so that the brush does not get into the crevices, use a little bit of wood bluntly pointed, for nothing gives a marble chimney-piece a worse appearance than dust lodging in the ornaments; whether flowers or figures, let the roses, if roses there be, be pure and white, and Cupid's face particularly clean. All this having been done, cover the whole up with a covering sheet, putting one end of the sheet on the marble chimney-piece, with a weight to keep it down, and letting the rest hang like a curtain before the grate, to preserve it also free from dust; sweep the room then for the first time, sprinkling the floor first with tea-leaves, to keep down the dust as much

as possible; after this let the long steps be brought into the room: place them alongside the wall at such a distance as to give the full use of the broom; before getting upon the steps, see that the feet are put out as far as they can stretch, so that they stand quite firm; then fearlessly mount upon them, and with the long broom covered with a clean flannel bag sweep the cornice and walls straight down, leaving no spot untouched; shake the dust frequently from the bag, and turn it during the operation. The small dusting-brush should next be used, for dusting the paint of the doors, window-shutters, and wainscoting all round the room, and the floor should be swept a second time: proceed then to wash the paint which you have dusted with the mixture of boiled soap and pearlash, and scour the floor with yellow soap and soda, in the same manner as directed in the bed-rooms.

While the floor and the paint are drying the furniture should be cleaned; if either the rose-wood or mahogany furniture is French polished, dusting and rubbing it, as has already been mentioned, with a soft dry cloth, is all that is necessary, or, if spotted or stained in any way, let it be first washed over with a sponge and warm water (but not too hot), as warm water is better than cold for French polish; then rub briskly but lightly with a soft cloth till the brightness is restored. A mixture is now sold for reviving French polish, which has considerable effect for a short time, but requires to be frequently repeated, and is by no means sufficient to give lustre to any article which has not been previously polished; in this case the cold drawn linseed oil, for unpolished articles, with a little turpentine, is the best mixture to be used, and will, in time, with a great deal of rubbing, produce a lustre equal to French polish, and much more durable, as not liable to be worn off or easily scratched, but on the contrary, increasing with years, and kept bright with very little labour after the polish has once been obtained.

As directions have been given with regard to cleaning mahogany in the bed-rooms, it is needless so particularly to repeat them here; the rubbing is at first the great matter, and cannot be done too often; very little oil and a great deal of rubbing is the root of the business; it is not enough to rub the

furniture of a room with a view to polish it on the great cleaning days, a little every day makes, in time, a great impression; a really good housemaid should never be able to be alone in a room with a table or a chair without giving it a good rub, or, if the room is occupied, without *wishing* to do so. Tables and chairs should be to her objects of deep interest; after her own family and the family of her mistress, they should claim the next place in her affections; she should steadily contemplate them between her and the light, and in all various points of view, and if they present themselves to her sight without spot or blemish, shedding a bright lustre over her past labours, she may rejoice in the work of her hands.

All the brass in the room comes next to be polished; the plates and handles of the doors and of the bells, the castors, &c., &c., should be cleaned with rotten-stone and oil, and rubbed with leather till quite bright; care should be taken not to soil the paint in doing this; there is nothing so ugly as a black rim round the handle, or to see the mark of dirty fingers on the door itself, giving evidence that the housemaid's mode of shutting the door is not by turning the handle, but by pulling the door itself. This strange dislike to touching the handle of a door, this constant habit of putting the hand either above the handle or below it, anywhere, in short, but on the handle itself, seems a prevailing disease amongst housemaids; the consequence is, that one often sees the paint, either above or below the handle, entirely rubbed off, and the wood shining through from the necessity of frequent scouring, or, if there are brass plates to prevent this, they have constantly a dull and smeared appearance: in scouring either the handle or brass plate all marks of the rotten-stone may be prevented by having a duster in one hand to cover the paint, while the other hand is employed in scouring the brass.

Where there is a balcony, and the drawing-room windows can be cleaned in safety, this should next be done; the footman generally assists in this work. The window, both outside and in, should be first dusted with a light dusting-brush, and the footman being outside, and the housemaid mounted on the steps within, each should clean the same pane at the same time, that it may be more easily cleaned, and not left in streaks,

which is apt to be the case where only one side is cleaned at a time: a little Spanish whiting, mixed with very little water, should be rubbed over each pane and washed off with a woollen cloth or sponge (but sponge, unless after long use, is liable to have particles of sand in it, which may scratch the glass, and injure its appearance); each pane should be finished and rubbed bright with a clean dry linen cloth, and particular attention paid to cleaning well at the edges and corners, as dim corners will entirely spoil the look of the most newly-cleaned window; the sun should not strike on the window when it is being cleaned, nor should this work ever be attempted during frost, as the glass will then be much more apt to crack. The frequency with which windows should be thus thoroughly cleaned on both sides will depend much on the situation of the house; in the country three or four times during the year may be sufficient, while in London, in many situations, once a month may not suffice: the inside of each window should be rubbed at least once a week, when the room is regularly done out, but a cleanly housemaid will give many a rub between times; nothing improved the look of everything within the room so much as transparent windows. The windows being all cleaned, and the bannisters brushed outside, the balcony should be washed over with soap and water, and the work within the room again proceeded with.

The frames of the pictures and mirrors must next be attended to. The frames should be lightly dusted, for the flowers or other projecting parts, being generally made of plaster, are easily broken, and even when in carved wood the edges and corners may be chipped off and disfigured; a feather-brush should therefore be used for this purpose; the glass of both mirrors and pictures should be washed over with a woollen cloth and pure cold water, dried with a soft clean linen cloth, and polished with a silk handkerchief, which should be kept for the purpose; but if the glass be either dimmed by fly marks or smoke, it may be necessary to wash it over with spirits, then dust it over with powder-blue in a small muslin bag, rub it up with a soft linen cloth, and finally polish it with a silk handkerchief. If there are portraits in the room not glazed, which appear to require cleaning, they might be gently washed over with cold water without being injured, but on no

account touched with soap; it is however safer merely to dust them, and even this should be with a feather-brush, and very lightly done; it is impossible to take too great care of such precious possessions; an injury given to a valuable portrait or painting no money can repair.

Should much dust have fallen from the pictures and mirrors, &c., &c., it may be necessary to sprinkle with tea-leaves and sweep round the sides of the room very lightly before laying down the carpet, or else remove the dust by drawing a coarse damp cloth round the room as they do in Germany; this method of sweeping answers extremely well when there is not a great deal of dust to be removed, and is much in favour of keeping the furniture clean.[2] If the carpet is made so that it can be turned each time that it is laid down, then care should be taken that the same part does not always lie before the door, so as to be worn out before the rest, for a shabby piece of carpet, on entering a room, immediately strikes the eye; but if the carpet is cut to fit into recesses, this cannot be avoided. As soon as the carpet has been put down quite even on the floor, and tightly stretched and nailed (which is generally done by the man who has the charge of beating it), the housemaid, with a clean coarse cloth, should rub down each breadth, taking care to turn to different parts of the cloth as they get soiled. Many people approve of rubbing it over in this way with a damp flannel, but the practice is not a good one; it has the effect of brightening for the moment, but gives it afterwards a duller and more soiled look; a greater degree of dampness than that produced by the use of tea-leaves when brushing the carpet is injurious. When a carpet is much soiled, by having been used for years, it may be made to look perfectly clean, and even the colours greatly restored again, by being washed with a mixture of boiled soap and ox-gall, but in a very short time it will look worse than before; even if clean cold water is spilt upon the carpet, though no stain is left at first, that part will very soon have a soiled appearance.[3]

The room being now ready to receive the furniture, the chairs having been previously dusted, washed over, and rubbed bright, as directed, and the cushions taken off, switched, and wiped with a clean cloth, they should be restored to their

proper places in the room; the window-curtains having been properly switched and brushed below, should be put up, the fire-irons and coal-scuttle brought back, having been scoured, and all the china ornaments, after being carefully washed in cold water, should be arranged as before, together with books, writing-desks, and work-boxes, and behold the room complete. The housemaid may now look round with modest triumph, and exclaim, *Sublime*. A drawing-room in perfect order, *how lovely is it!*

The dining-room, breakfast-parlour, and study, should each be cleaned in the same perfect manner, but as the mode of proceeding is in no way different, it is unnecessary here to enter into any further detail; a few words, however, may be necessary with regard to arranging a gentleman's study; those days of thorough cleaning are days of horror to the literary man; he would rather have a lion let loose upon him than a cleanly housemaid; and certainly, with regard to dusting either books or papers, too much attention cannot be shown, as much mischief may be done by even shifting their places; books upon a table should be taken up only one at a time, dusted, and replaced in exactly the same spot, or, if the table requires to be rubbed up, the books should be placed on the floor in the same position in which they stood on the table, then taken up one by one, dusted and replaced on the table as at first. A housemaid should never exercise her own taste in arranging books in a gentleman's study; however her contempt of 1st, 2nd, or 3rd volume may be overlooked in a drawing-room, it is a serious annoyance to the literary man to be obliged to hunt for the 2nd or 3rd volume of a work of which he has finished the first, through, perhaps, fifty others; but it is a still greater grievance to have a written paper misplaced, torn, or destroyed; the smallest scrap of writing, though found on the floor, or in any odd corner, should be considered sacred, and placed on the table in such a position as to be easily discovered; a weight should be put on any parcel of papers so as to prevent the draught blowing them away when the windows are opened, and the housemaid had better be content with carefully dusting round them rather than run the risk of misplacing them in any way; let it be remembered, however, that this is perhaps the only case in which it is better to dust round a moveable article

than to dust under it, for this dusting round is a slovenly practice too often indulged in. A lazy servant will dust round a writing-desk or work-box, for a week together, without once taking the trouble to remove it, till, when taken up by some one, her negligence is discovered by the line of dust which surrounds each article. Where books in a book-case require dusting, one shelf only should be emptied at a time, and the books placed on the floor (after the carpet has been lifted) in exactly the same order as they stood in the book-case; the shelf should then be washed, and the books taken up, one by one, dusted, and restored to their former places, as soon as the shelf is thoroughly dry; care should be taken not to replace them while the slightest dampness remains.

The rooms having been all cleaned, and the doors carefully shut, the stairs must now be swept down, beginning from the attic story. The long brush called the Turk's head, should be used first, to sweep away the cobwebs from the ceiling and corners, and to dust down the walls; the bannisters must be brushed between all the rails with a bannister-brush, and the hand-rail washed over and well rubbed up. The hand-rail should always be polished with French polish that oil may not be required, as almost every person who goes up stairs lays a hand upon the rail of the bannisters, and it is difficult to rub the oil off sufficiently to prevent its being unpleasant to the touch: wherever oil is used too great care cannot be taken to rub it completely off.

A lady was heard to complain, that a set of books which had recently been sent home, beautifully bound, were all found, soon after, to be spotted with oil; on inquiry being made, it was discovered that the housemaid, wishing to make everything look particularly bright in the drawing-room, for expected company, had washed the table over with oil, and, after very slight rubbing, had exercised her taste by putting all the best bound books round in a circle upon it, with a bullfinch in its gilt cage in the middle. This setting out of drawing-room tables with all the best-bound books had better be avoided; a small stand of books on a table, or a few scattered up and down, together with writing-desks and work-boxes, give a look of freedom and comfort to a room which it is very agreeable to

see; but to find a table set out with a couple of books, splendidly bound, at each corner, the bible and prayer-book, in velvet, with their gold clasps, very probably opposite to a couple of volumes of Shakspeare and Lord Byron, and sacred poetry at the alternate corners: to see these books put out in January, 1850, to remain till January, 1851 (unless the family should remove for a time into the country), is a melancholy picture of the general literature of the inmates.

But to leave this literary discussion, and return again to the uncarpeted staircase. The next thing to be done, after rubbing well the hand-rail, is to wash down the stairs, and then, with a painter's brush and pipeclay, go over the sides of each step where the carpet does not cover it: the pipeclay used for this purpose is generally mixed with glue, or what painters call size; but this size is often not quite fresh, which produces a bad air on the staircase; to boil the pipeclay with equal parts of water and milk, or with water and beer, is a very good substitute for size; it will rub off a little, but not nearly so easily as when water alone is used in mixing it.

If there are any spots of grease on the stairs, before using the pipeclay, scrape them off; then on each spot put a little of a mixture of strong soap lees and unslaked lime, let it lie for a few minutes, then rub hard and wash it off. A bottle of this mixture, well corked, should be kept always at hand, to take spots of candle grease or oil, either out of floors or stone passages; when used for floors it should be washed more quickly off, or it may be necessary also to lower it with cold water, as this mixture will discolour the boards if left on for any time. The stairs being finished with the pipeclay, sheets of very coarse brown paper should be laid down under each carpet, and each sheet turned in, so as to make it lie double at the edge of each step; this prevents the carpet wearing so fast as it is apt to do at the edges. Care also should be taken that the same part of the carpet is not always brought to the edge of the step, so as to cause that part to be worn shabby while the rest looks fresh: a little arrangement in shifting, sometimes higher, sometimes lower, will, in a great measure, prevent this. A stair-carpet should be cut at least half-a-yard longer than required for covering the stairs, and turned in at top and bottom, which

will allow for this shifting. Attention also is necessary to stretch the carpet as tight as possible in laying it down, so that there should be no creases to be worn by passing feet; and also to see that the rods, after being well scoured with rotten stone and oil, and rubbed bright, should be so driven through the rings as not to get loose. By attending to these particulars, a stair carpet will look well as long again as when it is ill kept and neglected, and allowed to lie so long without being taken up, as to wear a mark at the edge of each step, which it is impossible afterwards to efface.

The floorcloth in the lobby should next be swept, then washed over with soap and water, with a sponge or flannel (but never with a scouring-brush, which some housemaids use), and rubbed up with a dry cloth; a little bees'-wax may be rubbed in, which improves the appearance, and also preserves the surface, but brisk light rubbing will be particularly required when the wax is used, both to give it a bright look, and to prevent the dust from sticking to it. Floorcloths should not be much washed with soap, as it injures the paint. When not very dirty, washing them first with cold water, and then with milk, will be sufficient; the milk gives them a very pretty gloss, and they are more easily rubbed up than when the bees'-wax is used.

As the steps from the outer door, the door itself, and all in the under-story belongs in general to the cook's work, the housemaid may now be considered as having fulfilled her task, with regard to a thorough cleaning. We proceed, now, to mention the routine of daily work she has to go through in keeping all clean, and will also combine this with the parlour work, which, in families where there is no footman, frequently falls to the housemaid's portion.

With early rising and active habits much may be done before breakfast, and much should be done, or confusion will ensue for the rest of the day. The housemaid's work should be begun both in winter and summer by six o'clock, for as in winter a good deal must be done by candle light, it is less difficult to accustom oneself to awake always by a little after five o'clock, than to leave off the habit in winter, and have to begin it again; half an hour, or even a whole hour, of longer

sleep will make very little difference in the feeling of comfort at the moment, and will greatly add to the difficulties of the day. As the sitting-rooms will require to be done out thoroughly, each in turn once a week, this will require three mornings from six o'clock, and even the time this will give may not be sufficient; some things may have to be left undone, which a considerate mistress will give the opportunity of being completed after breakfast. In some houses where the cook has assistance, the dining-room is under her care, this will give more time to the housemaid for the drawing-rooms and study; but still as the stair carpet will require to be brushed down oftener than once a week, and should always be done if possible before breakfast, the necessity of early rising at all seasons is very apparent.

The housemaid, before leaving her room in the morning, should throw open the window, draw off the bed-clothes and hang them over a couple of chairs, at the foot of the bed, and then carefully shut the door on leaving the room. Wherever there is a window to open to air the bed-room, the door should never be left open, as nothing is so untidy as for any one passing by to see the beds unmade, and the washhand-stand in disorder. She should next go round the lower rooms and drawing-rooms to unclose the shutters, and open the windows, that all may be properly aired; let her then proceed to prepare the sitting-room, which will be first wanted, and in which the family are to breakfast. The grate is the first thing to be attended to, as it is a general rule that what is to make most dust in cleaning a room should be done first. Begin by folding up the rug, and carrying it into the court below to be shaken, then spread a covering sheet before the fire-place. If it is the season when no fire is required, all that is necessary is to dust out the grate and sweep the hearth, giving the shavings a shake from dust—if there are shavings in the grate, or if white paper is beyond the bars removing it if necessary, she should then rub the bars and sides of the grate briskly with a soft cloth, which should be previously held before a fire to remove the possibility of any dampness, for the slightest damp will cause polished steel to rust. But in winter the grate will require much more labour: having carefully spread the covering sheet, let her place upon it the coal-scuttle and wood for kindling the

fire, also her box, which should be well stocked with the following articles. Emery paste for polished steel, and black lead for grates which are not polished; soft brushes for putting on the emery paste and lead, blacking and polishing brushes, emery-cloth, now used for cleaning the bars in preference to emery paper, and a soft leather for giving the last polish. It is only now and then that the sides of a grate which is brightly polished will require to be cleaned with emery paste, and then rubbed up, first with a soft cloth, and then with leather; but every day the sides of the grate will require to be rubbed with a soft cloth, which has been previously heated, and the bars rubbed with emery-cloth, the dust and ashes having been taken away in the dust-pan before this is done, and the sides of the vent and the back swept down very gently, that the soot may not fly out into the room, with a brush kept for the purpose. Much smoke and discomfort may be avoided by the housemaid regularly, once a week, when the room is thoroughly done out, sweeping the soot from the vent, as high as the arm can reach; it is not possible to get a brush with a very long handle up the vent, but in the bed-room story, where the vents are shorter, the top almost may be reached by putting up first a short hearth brush, then tying it to a longer handle, and to another and another, as you raise it in the vent. It may appear almost unnecessary to describe how it is to be got down again, but to prevent all distress of mind to the young and inexperienced, it may be mentioned that it is to be untied at the different joints as it is lowered again, and also that when this operation is to be performed, which will be necessary only once, or perhaps twice, during the winter, a fellow servant should assist by holding a sheet before the vent to prevent the soot getting out into the room. Great care must be taken, that after the brush has been raised high in the vent, it be not flourished about in a triumphant manner, but used with the greatest gentleness in removing the soot. As soon as all has been cleared away, carried down stairs, and the grate rubbed up and cleaned, proceed to lay the fire and to light it. If the fire is properly laid, one half of the wood generally used would suffice; a clever housemaid has been known to light even the drawing-room fire (which requires more wood than the bed-rooms), with seven pieces of wood; this however requires the

skilful hand of what would be called, in the language of the day, a *talented* housemaid; with moderate abilities, however, she maybe taught to light four fires with one bundle of wood, but even this will require attention and the exercise of common sense. If part of the ashes are left in a slovenly way in the bottom of the grate, so as to prevent the air from passing up, the wood thrust in without arrangement, a mass of cinders put on the top, and the window and door kept carefully shut, what is to be expected but that, as soon as the paper below the wood is lighted, the room should fill with smoke, and the fire go out before even the wood is burned away? The chief art in lighting a fire is to arrange it so that a stream of flame is carried up amongst the small coals, till they are so warmed and kindled as to burn of themselves: to effect this, the ashes and cinders should be entirely cleared out from the grate; then, having put a piece of paper, crushed together, in the bottom, and a few small pieces of the half-burned coal quite at the back, lay the wood above the paper so as to rest on those pieces of coal and on the front bar, taking care that they do not come out beyond the bar; lay some of the pieces of wood across the others, and, having formed this support for the coals, pile very small pieces, not larger than a nut, and very loosely, upon the wood, so as to leave room for the flame to pass up between them: the grate having been cleaned from the ashes, the air which comes in from the bottom will feed the flame, and drive it up through the spaces amongst the small coals, which, lying loosely together, will soon take a red heat; a sprinkling of the smallest coal should be added, as it flames easily, and is of assistance to the wood.

It is a very general practice with housemaids to pile cinders on the top of the wood, and then throw a quantity of small coal above them, the consequence of which is, that the air, not passing through to carry up the flame, the wood is burned away before the coals are lighted, and the smoke, not being able to penetrate this cake of coal, puffs out through the front bars of the grate, instead of going up the chimney, and soon fills the room, and (as the door is very generally left open, and the window kept shut), we may add the house also; for a careless servant, instead of waiting a few minutes to see how the fire is disposed to kindle, often leaves the room the

moment she has set fire to the paper in the grate, and, having returned to the under story before the smoke begins, it is frequently first discovered by having reached the drawing-room, and, on examination, the bed-room is found to be in such a state from impenetrable smoke, that it is difficult to find one's way to the window to throw open the sash. The paper on the walls, the curtains, and everything in the room, will receive more injury by being even once thoroughly smoked in this way than by six months of careful use. Care also should be taken that the register is opened before lighting a fire; in rooms where there is not fire during the day the register is generally shut, to prevent the back smoke getting down into the room, and the first thing a careful servant should do is to open the register before lighting the fire. Some chimneys vent better when the register is only half screwed back, so as to open only half the vent; some require to be entirely opened. A little attention will soon make the housemaid acquainted with the degree of draught which is necessary to carry up the smoke freely, and in most cases it will be found necessary to shut the door and open the window before lighting the fire; it is not the proper time to open the window after she has set light to the fire, for the chimney, being the only part in the room open to the air, the draught comes down the chimney, and brings out with it into the room the smoke of the new-made fire, so that before she has time to get to the window to open it the room is already half filled with smoke; she should therefore open the window first, which will make the proper draught for carrying up the smoke, and then set light to the fire.

There are very few chimneys that will not vent well if care is taken to make a proper draught, and not to choke the fire up with too much coal; very little should be put on at first, and more added as the fire burns up. The general practice of putting the cinders next the wood, is not favourable to lighting the fire quickly, or, with little wood; a few cinders may be thrown at the back of the fire, and the rest had better be carried down into the kitchen to be burned there, as small sharp-pointed pieces of fresh coal kindle much more easily than cinders. It is astonishing what a difference there will be, even in a very short time, in the appearance of a room where there is carelessness in lighting the fire; the curtains, the books,

everything in the room, gets a soiled appearance, and is unpleasant to the touch. Can there be anything more disagreeable than to find one's bed-room, at night, cold as a cellar, from the necessity of keeping the window open to the last minute to dispel the smoke which inattention at first has produced, and the smell of which still adheres to every article, instead of finding a warm room, a comfortable arm-chair turned towards a bright fire, a shining kettle singing a quiet tune, and a clean-swept hearth? Some housemaids have a habit of constantly turning the arm-chair away from the fire, and placing it against the wall, and though, morning after morning, they find it has been turned towards the fire, yet they never take the hint, unless an express order is given; and even then, such is the force of careless habits, that it is often not attended to, and they continue so long steadily turning the chair from the fire, that it appears as if they had made a secret vow against both warmth and comfort: an attentive servant, on the contrary, will make use of her own common sense, and will not always wait to be told. If the chair has been turned from the wall to the fire, she will continue to place it there; if more than once she finds the bed-quilt taken off and thrown aside, she will understand that it is found too heavy to be an agreeable covering, and will in future fold it off and leave only the light covering sheet on the bed; if a blanket is pushed down, then let her not carry it away altogether, as there may come a sudden change to cold, and much discomfort may be experienced, but let her leave it tucked in at the bottom of the bed, with the rest of the bed-clothes, and folded down in folds, leaving the end uppermost, so that in a moment the blanket can be drawn up again over the bed: it is vexatious when feeling chilly and half asleep, to find that the end of the blanket has been carefully folded in, and that one must be colder still, and broad awake, before there is a chance of finding it. Such observations may be thought trifling and too minute, but the neglect of many such trifles occasions much discomfort, particularly to those who may be only occasional guests in a family; they may be days in the house without seeing the housemaid to explain their wishes, and even if they have the opportunity, they feel a delicacy in giving orders as to how their fire should be lighted, or their bed-room comfortably

arranged, yet much silent annoyance, particularly to the invalid, has been occasioned by a careless housemaid.

A few words may be added here as to carrying fire from room to room in an open pan, and also on leaving the poker in the fire with a view to make it burn up more quickly; both practices are attended with danger; sparks may be blown about by the current of air through which the bearer passes in carrying fire from room to room, and houses have been burned down, and lives lost, by this practice. Leaving the poker in the fire is also attended with much danger, for as the coals which kept it firm at first, burn away, the poker gets loose and falls out, burning the rug through to the floor, and, if not discovered in time, setting fire to the floor itself.

To return, however, to the drawing-room again, after this somewhat long digression. The grate having been cleaned, and the fire lighted, the carpet should now be swept; this does not require to be done every day, except round the table where the family may have been working, and at the door, or in any other corners of the room most in use; and this may be done with a soft hand-brush, making use of the dust-pan to carry away the dust, or any shreds of paper, as you sweep. Using a carpet-brush every day wears the carpet. Every article in the room should now be dusted, the ledges round the walls, the window-frames, the mantelpiece, the backs of the sofas and chairs, shaking the dust, from time to time, over the window while doing it; also the writing-desks, work-boxes, and books, on the different tables, should each be taken up and dusted separately; a duster is preferable to a dusting-brush for all this, as it removes the dust from the article entirely, instead of only scattering it to alight somewhere else; but for the gilt frames of mirrors or pictures, a soft feather-brush should be used. The covers of the sofas and chairs should next be stretched free from creases, and wiped with a perfectly clean duster, not that which has been in use for dusting the furniture. A little management is required in this, as in all other well-regulated arrangements: the duster used for wiping the chair-covers the one day should be laid aside, and kept for dusting the furniture on the next, so that each day a clean duster is made use of for the cushions of the chairs and sofas; from this not being

attended to, they are often more *dirtied* in being *cleaned* than if they had been left with the dust upon them; with careful management the drawing-room chintz will look long well, even in London. The chair-covers should be stretched very tight over the cushions; if put on loosely they will get into creases, and look soiled in half the time; the cushions on the sofas should also be well shaken up. Care also should be taken in arranging neatly the articles on the different tables; if books are left scattered about, arrange them on the table, putting two or three together, above each other, but do not put a large book above a smaller one; arrange them according to sizes, the largest first. A small basket should be kept on one of the tables, into which should be put any small articles found lying about, such as scissors, thimbles, odd gloves, &c., &c.; and before leaving the room give a glance round to see that everything is in perfect order, and draw down the blinds, and shut the door; but in summer leave a little bit of the window open, to keep the room well aired, or if there is wind and dust flying about, keep the window shut and air the room by leaving the door open. If there are cut flowers in the room change the water in which they are frequently, and pick out any withered ones: withered flowers, which have remained long in the same water, not only give a very untidy look to the room, but also produce a very disagreeable air. Too great attention cannot be given to keep the whole house well aired, by frequently opening the windows, both in the rooms and staircase. Some housemaids have a horror of opening the windows, for fear of admitting the dust, but the dust is not always flying about. Opportunities can be seized, for instance, in a quiet summer evening, when the family are walking out; all the windows and doors of the different rooms should be thrown open for some time, and the house receive a thorough airing; and besides this, each room should be aired at some part of each day by leaving the window open.

The daily routine of the drawing-room work has thus been mentioned, but once a-week more will be required, as the carpet, once a-week, should be thoroughly swept with tea-leaves, and the hearth-rug carried down to the court and well beaten. As soon as the rug has been removed, the grate cleaned and rubbed up, the mantelpiece washed with a sponge and

soap and water, and the fire laid, shake the window-curtains, roll them up to the top, and pin them, throw covering-sheets over the sofas and chiffonnieres, remove the chairs to the next room or landing-place, and having sprinkled the carpet over with damp tea-leaves, brush every corner carefully, shifting the sofas and tables, so as to get at every particle of dust that may have gathered under them, and leaving no remote corner untouched in the hope that the eye of the mistress may not penetrate so far. The carpet being swept, carry away the tea-leaves in the dust-pan, either to be thrown out, or, if there is a scarcity, to be put through water, and used a second time in sweeping the floors. The mirrors and picture-frames should be lightly dusted with the feather brush, the mirrors wiped, the furniture, before being carried back to the room, should be dusted and rubbed up in the manner already mentioned, the articles on the different tables dusted and arranged, the inside of the windows wiped, and the china ornaments carefully dusted.[4] All this will require so much time that, even with early rising, it may be necessary to leave some part of the dusting-work to be done after breakfast, as the hour for putting the heater for the tea-urn into the hottest part of the kitchen fire, and taking the breakfast-cloth from the napkin-press will have arrived, and preparations must immediately be made for breakfast.

Before laying the cloth let the housemaid wash her hands, and put on a clean white apron, then, having dusted the table and spread the table-cloth quite smooth upon it, taking care that the fold which marks the middle of the table-cloth should be exactly in the centre of the table, let her bring, on a large tray, the things necessary for breakfast,—the teapot, slop-basin, cups and saucers, plates, knives, silver forks, and tea-spoons, and having arranged them on the table, let the tray be taken down stairs again for the cream, butter, eggs, rolls, and bread; let the butter-dish be filled with the freshest spring-water in summer, the colder the better, and in winter a few drops of warm water should be added, not much, or it will oil the butter, but enough to give the water summer warmth. In arranging all this on the table, attention should be given that all that is necessary has been brought into the room; that each

person has, besides his cup and saucer, a plate, knife, and fork; that there is a large knife for cutting bread, a butter-knife, and a spoon for each egg-cup, the salt-cellars filled with salt, and a couple of small breakfast-knives and of tea-spoons laid upon the table, which last articles may at first appear to be the property of no one, but which are generally of essential service, in making it unnecessary for the servant to be rung for during breakfast; it is a rare thing when more knives and spoons are not called for before breakfast is over, and yet the difficulty of getting a servant to attend to this simple order is very great; and if it should chance that on any one morning the spoons or knives have not been made use of, they are sure to be omitted the next. It is the same, often, with regard to the toast at breakfast or tea; if all is not consumed on any one particular day there is less sent up on the next, and often a gradual diminution takes place daily, till the toast-rack presents itself with one solitary piece, which no one has courage to touch. These are the tricks of lazy servants, who, to save a few moments of trouble, bring much discredit upon themselves.

If a friend steps in at breakfast or tea, the maid, after having announced him, should not leave the room till she has put a seat for the guest, and should immediately return with a cup and saucer, plate, and small knife, and not wait till the mistress of the family has had to desire the bell to be rung to order these things. Should it be while dinner is going on that a guest is announced, then the soup, meat and vegetables should quickly be brought back if still warm, if not, immediately warmed up, and replaced on the table. The maid-servant should exercise her own judgment in all this, and not wait for orders, which may make the visitor feel that he is giving trouble; common sense should tell her that, if a guest comes at that hour he expects to dine, and that a warm dinner is better than a cold one.

To return to the morning work, breakfast having been served, the bed-rooms must now be attended to; the first thing is to open the window in each room, and to strip the bed, which is done by placing two chairs at the foot, hanging the bed-clothes over them, and raising up the mattress (which is generally on the top of the feather-bed) in an arch, so that the

air can pass through between; having done this in each room in succession, proceed to empty the slops in each, rinsing out the basins, bottles, and ewers, with plenty of cold water, that fresh water may be put into the bottles and ewers each day, and carefully wipe the soap-box, tooth-brush-tray, &c.; the pail should never be left a moment in the room after this is done, but carried down into the court to be instantly emptied, well rinsed out with water and left in the air; two pitchers of water should next be carried up, the one with soft water for the ewers, and the other with spring-water for the bottles; but if it is sweeping-day when the room is to be completely done out, a wooden pail should be brought up with warm water, and all the chamber utensils carefully washed with soap and a sponge before the ewers are filled with fresh water, the bed in each room should next be made up, and a fellow-servant is required to assist in this. Few things are more unpleasant than an ill-made bed; it is generally the first thing which strikes guests on being shown their bed-rooms; if the bed looks as if it had been well shaken up, perfectly smooth, and the counterpane nicely put on, folding neatly over at the corners, pleasant anticipations of the night present themselves, and a good opinion of the housemaid is immediately formed; a well-made bed gives promise that other things will also be well attended to; it is, in fact, one of the tests of a well-trained housemaid. In making up the bed, the mattresses should be turned every day, and if there is a feather-bed, it should be turned, shaken up, and beaten, that the feathers may not get into lumps, then smoothed and made perfectly flat, the feathers being spread equally over the whole surface, before the mattress is laid on the top. Some housemaids have a way of shaking the feathers into the middle of the bed, leaving the sides in such a sloping condition, that there is some chance of passing part of the night on the floor, others of shaking the feathers to the top of the bed, forming an inclined plane, so that the constant feeling of sliding down lower and lower leaves people very uncertain as to where they are to find themselves at last. It is impossible to make a bed too flat or smooth, the bolster and pillows being well shaken up also; the binding blanket should next be spread, and tucked in, and in putting on the under sheet, care must be taken to put it on as tightly as possible, so that not a crease

should be seen, and the sheet should be tucked under the lowest mattress, so as to cover the whole bedding; it is very untidy to see the sheet tucked in under the upper mattress and feather-bed, as is frequently the case, leaving the rest of the bedding uncovered, besides exposing it to dust and smoke (the counterpane not being sufficient protection); the blankets being spread, should be tucked in during the day, but at night, if broad enough, should be allowed to fall over at each side, and only tucked in at the foot of the bed. The top sheet is next to be put on, and lastly the counterpane, which last in the evening should be taken off, and folded up, leaving the top sheet only during the night, the curtains, being put neatly into folds, should be turned in on the counterpane at each side of the top and foot of the bed, and if it is the day for the room being thoroughly cleaned, the valences should be turned up all round, and the whole covered up with a large dusting sheet: the washhand-stand should also be covered, the grate having been cleared out, rubbed up, and the fire laid as already directed. If there is room on the landing-place, the chairs should be rubbed up and removed before the sweeping begins; if there is not, let them be collected in the middle of the room, moved up when the top of the room is swept, and rubbed up and dusted afterwards. The carpet being all strewed over with tea-leaves and brushed—a sweeping-broom, with a wet cloth wrapped round it, should be put in under the bed, and gently moved about, so as to collect the dust which gathers there, without raising it so as to settle in the bed, and the same should be done under the chest of drawers, or any other piece of furniture too heavy to be moved. The sweeping being over, and the dust-pan, with the dust and tea-leaves, carried away, that the draught when the windows are opened may not blow the dust about again, the wardrobe, chest of drawers, looking-glass, &c., &c., should then be rubbed up, the window-frames, the chimney-piece, the pannels of the door, and everything in the room carefully dusted, and the chairs brought back to their proper places; the housemaid goes to another room to commence the same work there, leaving the bed and washhand-stand covered for a little while, till the dust which is flying in the air will have settled. As soon as this is the case, she has only to remove the covering sheets, to fill the bottles

and ewers with fresh water, to place the looking-glass in a safe situation, that it may not be blown over by the window being open, and carefully to shut the door, that no dust may fly in from the other rooms; if it is summer and the blinds are let down to keep the room cool, care must be taken not to leave the blind loose, so as to blow about at the risk of breaking the window or looking-glass; the blinds should be only half drawn down, or if more is necessary, the window may be left only a little open.

The brushing the carpet, and removing and rubbing the furniture, are not in general required to be done more than once a week; but as every day cleaning the grate, making the bed, wiping everything on the washhand-stand, and dusting everything in the room, are necessary, most of this work will have to be done in the early part of the forenoon, for probably before one chamber even is finished, the housemaid will be rung for to take away the breakfast-things. The urn is the first thing to be removed, then the plates, put one above another, the cups and saucers, knives, forks, and every other article collected together with the least possible noise, should be carried away on a large tray, taking care not to put more on at one time than it can safely hold, for it is painful to see the way in which some servants load the breakfast-tray so as to clear the table of everything at once, decidedly indicating that they would rather risk the whole being broken, than have the trouble of returning to the room a second time. On removing the cloth, any crumbs which may have fallen on the carpet, should be swept into the dust-pan with a small brush, kept in a corner of the room for that purpose; the carpet should never on any account be touched with the hearth-brush; a most slovenly practice, and all from a miserable saving of trouble, for if no second brush be kept in the room for this purpose, the time which it will take the housemaid to fetch her own carpet-brush, will be short compared to that which she must bestow on brushing the carpet again and again with tea-leaves, to get rid of the dust and soil which it has contracted during a week of improper management. It is not cleaning a room once a week, and giving to it little time and trouble, that will give it a clean, fresh appearance; it is attention in doing a little daily, and in doing that little in a proper manner. A carpet had better not be

brushed at all, than touched with a dirty brush, and the chintz covers are less injured even by the dust lying upon them, than by having it rubbed off with a soiled duster, which may have been used the moment before in rubbing the furniture, or in wiping the fire-irons. The crumbs having been swept away, fresh coal should be put on the fire, and the hearth-brush used in sweeping in the hearth before the maid leaves the room.

Having shaken the breakfast cloth, folded it in exactly the same folds as it had at first, and put it into the napkin press, she will next proceed to have her own breakfast, and that being finished, she will put away the tea-leaves into a jar kept for that purpose, and having put aside the bread, butter, milk, &c., which may remain, into their proper places, she will carefully wash the plates, cups, saucers, &c., &c., in a large wooden bowl, and with warm water—the vessel for washing either china or crystal should always be of wood, as it is much less liable to chip the articles, and the water used should be warm, but by no means at boiling heat, or accidents are sure to happen, particularly in winter, when there is frost in the air, as glass or china are then more easily cracked: many a beautiful crystal butter-dish has been cracked by being hastily plunged into hot water, and even a far less degree of heat will crack either crystal or china, if warm water is poured upon it, while standing on any cold surface. The warm water is required for the butter-dish; crystal in general should always be washed in cold water, as glass is made to look much clearer by being washed in cold water. So if any glasses have been used the night before, let them now be washed in cold water, and well rubbed up with a glass cloth, till they look quite clear. The tea-spoons, cups, saucers, and milk-jug, come next to be washed in warm water, and lastly, the silver forks, plates, and butter-dish; by this arrangement the articles not greasy will not be dimmed by those that are; the knives should be put aside in a knife-box, to be taken away by the person who is to clean them, and the tray, after being washed over, and well rubbed up, should be placed in the butler's pantry, with its face to the wall, and each tea-cup hung up on a nail, with the saucers ranged below on shelves for the purpose; every article should be put in its place, that all may be out of the way of breakage, and ready when again wanted; it is scarcely necessary to add

that the linen cloths, used for drying the cups, glasses, &c., should be perfectly clean.

The work still to be done above stairs should next be attended to and completed, and the chamber candlesticks brought down to be cleaned, and the lamps for the sitting rooms to be trimmed and filled with fresh oil: this should be done in a tidy manner, the drawer for the ends of candles should be lined with coarse brown paper, which will require to be frequently changed, and a large sheet of brown paper spread on a small table for the lamps and candlesticks to stand upon. It is a dirty practice to clean the candlesticks on the kitchen dresser (as is sometimes done), for even if the paper be spread beneath them, particles of tallow may be left on the dresser, which are not perceived, and may be mixed with the food preparing for dinner; it is also an exceedingly bad practice to place the candlesticks on the upper bar of the kitchen-grate to melt the tallow; a most disagreeable smell is raised in the house by the tallow dropping into the fire, and the japan of the candlestick is often injured by the heat. The knife kept for scraping the candles should be wiped with a bit of paper each time it is used, and put back instantly into the candle-drawer, and the oil-can also wiped. Great care should be taken in cleaning the lamp: if all the passages are not quite clear, so that the air can pass through, it cannot burn well. There is now a small instrument sold with the lamps which is of great assistance in freeing them from the coagulated oil and dust, and renders the necessity of washing them less frequent; when they do require to be washed, it must be done with boiling water and soda mixed in it, then all the parts rinsed quite clean in a second water, also very hot, and the lamp put down before the fire for some hours before it is filled with oil, so that all the parts inside may be perfectly dry; if there is the least remains of the soda or of water in the lamp, it will burn dim. Attention also is required in filling it quite full; a lamp often, after some hours, begins to burn quite dim for want of sufficient oil, yet the servant declares it cannot be for this reason, as she filled it completely. An air-bubble often rises in pouring in the oil, which gives the appearance of its being full, and deceives them —they must wait for a moment till this subsides, and then continue gently to pour in the oil till it is quite full. It is not

necessary to pour out any oil which may remain from the night before; it is only required to fill it up; and if in winter, the lamp should be put down near a fire for some time before it is brought into the room, as the oil congeals in cold weather, which also prevents its burning bright. Pay particular attention in cutting the wick quite smooth all round with a pair of lamp-scissors: if it is ragged or cut uneven, the light is flickering and uncertain—the wick should be very little raised when the lamp is first lighted, and turned higher up a few minutes after, and by slow degrees; if it is raised high at first, besides the risk of cracking not only the chimney of the lamp, but the shade itself by a sudden flame; it never burns so bright again when turned down, as when slowly raised to the proper height. The chimney should each day be cleaned and made bright as a mirror—if smoked or dirty, the light can never be clear; the shade should be washed once a week with soap and water, and during the day it is well to have the lamp covered over with a paper cap, or a towel put over it, as the dust flying into the works makes it difficult to clean. It is not easy to convince servants that attending to those little things which they may think trifles, saves a great deal of time in the end. If much dust is allowed to fly in from day to day, washing with soda and boiling water will not be sufficient, the works of the lamp will require to be boiled before it can be made perfectly clean.

When candles are required in the sitting-rooms, in addition to the lamp, let the candlesticks be properly cleaned, and fresh candles set in them, and the shorter pieces made use of for the bed-rooms; where wax-candles are not used, see that the snuffers for the different candlesticks are completely emptied and carefully wiped, and that there is a pair of snuffers for each bed-room candlestick, as well as for each sitting-room. The lights being thus prepared for night, and the work in the different rooms finished, if it is not sweeping-day, the housemaid will still have some time for needlework before laying the cloth for dinner. Before sitting down to work, she will of course wash her face and hands, change her working-dress for a gown with long sleeves, a white apron instead of a coloured one, and a tidy modest-looking bobbin-net cap, coming close to the face, and tied with a ribbon of some quiet colour; nothing is more unbecoming in her station, than a

flying out cap hanging on the back of the head, with gaudy soiled ribbons streaming down in all directions. The style of dress adopted by servants of late years is much to be regretted; it is a loss of their money, of their time, and above all, of their respectability; a maid-servant can never be too scrupulously clean and quiet in her dress.

A few more observations on this subject may be added in another place. In sitting down to work, she will take care to be within hearing of the drawing-room bell, and the knocker of the street door. By proper regulation there will always be some part of each day for needlework, and in the country, where less sweeping and dusting is required, a great deal may be done in this way. It is a pleasant sight to see a young girl neatly and quietly dressed, busily plying her needle, her tidy work-basket beside her well stocked with cotton-reels, rolls of worsted, tapes, needles, pins, scissors, and thimble. It will probably be her business to mend the bed and table-linen, to watch over the state of the carpets, table-covers, &c., and repair them when necessary; a slit or tear in the carpet, even of an attic, is sure to give a bad impression of the housemaid. The bed-linen should be carefully looked over each time before going to the wash, and the slightest fracture or slit repaired; and instead of allowing the middle of the sheet to wear into holes, while the sides are quite good, as soon as the sheet begins to wear, the breadths should be unripped, and the sides turned into the middle and joined again. Care should also be taken that the buttons or strings for each pillow-slip are complete; it is most desirable that the housemaid should be a good darner of table-cloths, and also of stockings, for where there is no ladies'-maid the darning of the ladies' stockings will be part of her work; and even where there is, the charge of the gentleman's stockings generally falls to her care; but anxiety to get on with her work must not lead her to forget when the time for laying the cloth for dinner shall have arrived. Having previously rung a bell precisely half-an-hour before dinner, as a signal for the family to dress, which bell should be punctual as the clock itself, and having at the same time added fresh coal to the fire, swept the hearth, and placed the plate-warmer before the fire, she should enter the dining-room to lay the cloth a quarter of an hour before the dinner-hour strikes. To enable her to be

ready in this time, however, all must have been prepared before sitting down to work; the clean knives and forks put into the tray, the mustard and vinegar replenished, the tops of the cruets carefully wiped, and the salt-cellars filled. To avoid as much as possible having to open and shut the door often when laying the cloth, collect as many of the articles necessary as you can bring in at one time in a large tray, glasses, tumblers, spoons, knife-tray, bread-basket, and beer and water jugs. All being prepared, see that the stand for placing your tray in while you bring in the glasses, &c., is placed in a convenient corner of the room, and that the basket for carrying the plates and the trays for the knives and forks which have been used, are placed near the sideboard, but not in the way to prevent passing easily. Having brought everything into the room which is necessary, shut the door, and having laid the cloth perfectly straight on the table, place a plate for each person, with a napkin neatly folded upon it, and on the right side of the plate, place a knife and spoon, and on the left a silver fork. The soup-plates should be placed before the person who is to help the soup, and a carving-knife and fork, and a gravy-spoon, put at the top and bottom of the table. Place a salt-cellar at each corner of the table, lay a couple of spoons on each side of it, and a crystal caraffe filled with clear spring-water; see that those caraffes, and the tumblers and glasses (which should be placed all round the table for each person) are perfectly clear and bright: a clean glass-cloth should be brought into the room to wipe off any dimness which a finger may have caused. When the different articles on the table are perfectly bright-looking, and the dishes neatly sent up, the plainest dinner has a look of comfort, and even elegance about it. A knife, fork, or spoon, which has not been properly cleaned, cannot be taken into the hand without being discovered, and leaving a disagreeable impression; a visitor may not have the courage to send it away, but the comfort of his dinner is destroyed. Having cut some slices of bread rather thick, cut each slice into four, and with a fork, put a piece all round for each person, leaving the loaf in the room in case more may be required; when more is called for, hand some additional pieces in the bread-basket. Place a chair for each person.

The sideboard should next be laid out with a supply of knives, silver forks, spoons, tumblers, glasses, and silver-waiters. As considerable taste may be shown in the arrangement of those articles, it may be well to take a lesson of laying out a sideboard from the first butler, or experienced man-servant, who may chance to be in waiting on any of the dinner-guests at your master's table. All should be done without noise or bustle, and with a quick hand and light foot; jingling the glasses, making a clashing noise in lifting the knives, knocking the chairs against the legs of the table, and moving about with a heavy foot, (and often with the addition of creaking shoes,) are extremely disagreeable to whoever may be in the room at the moment, and even should no one be present, the servant should accustom herself to do all these with the least possible noise, that the habit of doing things quietly may be acquired; activity is a first-rate quality in a waiter at table, but then it must be quiet activity.

All being prepared, the first dish should be placed on the table as the appointed hour strikes; the cook having brought the dishes as far as the dining-room door, carry in the top and bottom dishes separately, as they are generally large; the side dishes may be brought in at once on the dinner tray, which being placed upon the stand, the dishes can easily be removed to the table. All being neatly arranged, the top and bottom dishes exactly opposite to each other, and the side dishes perfectly straight, and at equal distances from the top and bottom, announce to the family in the drawing-room, that the dinner is on the table. Standing back while they pass through the door, which you have thrown open for them, and having followed the last member of the family down stairs, remain standing behind the chair of your master till grace is said, then remove the covers unless there is soup, in which case the covers should remain on the other dishes while the soup is being served; be careful to go to the left hand of the persons you are serving, when placing any thing before them, or handing them anything; those to be first served are any lady visitors who may be present, the elder ladies first, then the younger, the lady of the house and her daughters, and lastly the gentlemen. In handing round the soup-plates, remove the flat plates put at first on the table; and in the first leisure moment

place them on the plate-warmer before the fire; let each soup-plate be taken away the moment it is empty, having another warm plate in your hand to replace it. The covers on the other dishes should now be removed. In handing round the soup-plates at first, be careful not to spill the soup by placing them hastily before any one; and in changing them for others, make no clatter of plates; attend in going round the table, not to push against any chair, or touch any one as you pass, and take particular care that no one's dress should be injured by spilling gravy or melted butter upon it; in handing the sauce-boats, lower them as near as you can to the left side of the plate, the person requiring sauce can then help himself with the right hand, without any danger of spilling it. If there are any side dishes of meat, such as cutlets, patties, &c., they should be handed round first, while the joint is being carved. The spoons on each side of the salt cellars now come into use in helping the side dishes. Beware of offering a side dish to any one till you have first placed a spoon in it. As soon as each person has been helped to meat, carry round the vegetable-dishes, then offer melted-butter, pickles, &c., &c., as may be required. Have your eye constantly on the table, taking in by a glance all that is necessary for you to do. Those that have been eating cutlets, will require their plates to be changed before being helped to the joint; and those that have commenced with the joint, will now be ready to be helped a second time, and to have another plate given for the second helping. When waiting at table there should be no gazing out of the windows, or amusing one's self with one's own thoughts; neither should the conversation going on at table be attended to: this is difficult, but if one accustoms one's self from the first to watch the numerous wants of the party, and not their words, there will be sufficient employment fully to engross the servant. Vegetables will require to be taken round a second time, and more bread to one, and beer or water to another; in short, there is scarcely a moment in which there will not be something required, and if the servant is attentive and quick-sighted, she will not find that she is standing idle at one moment, and that in the next more of the party will require to be served than she can attend to; if there is a leisure moment, she can employ herself by stirring the fire (if in winter), and if this is not necessary, let her remain

in quiet readiness, with her eye upon the table, and her ear open to the first request for her services. As each finishes with the first course, let her place a plate of smaller size generally used for tart or pudding before him, with a silver fork and spoon: in some families the spoon is not approved of, it is thought that even custard should be eaten with a silver fork; but the practice (or rather the attempt) is more refined than agreeable or convenient. As soon as the last person has finished eating, ring the bell for the tart and pudding; and having gone round the table with a knife-tray, in which you should put the carving knife and fork and gravy spoons from the different dishes, carry away all that is on the table, and bring in the tart and pudding. As soon as each person has finished with the second course, place a cheese-plate and small knife before them, and when the tart and pudding have been carried out into the hall (having rung for the cook to carry them down into the kitchen), clear the table-cloth with a spoon of the broken pieces of bread, before setting down the cheese. Have fresh pieces of bread cut in the bread-basket to be handed to each person the moment they have been helped to cheese. Stand behind your master's chair while he is cutting the cheese, that you may be ready to carry it instantly round: a good waiter will manage to offer the bread immediately after the cheese, or even at the same moment; but this is too little attended to; bread has often to be cut after it is called for, and sometimes there is no bread in the room, and before more can be brought in, the cheese has been eaten alone, and the waiter considered a very intolerable person. The cheese being carried away, any pieces of bread remaining should be removed with a silver fork, the table-cloth folded over at each side, doubled up, and taken out of the room; the table wiped with a nice cloth, and the wine decanters set before the master of the house—having previously, before removing them from the sideboard, wiped them gently with a glass cloth, without shaking the wine. Put a couple of wine glasses to each person —they are generally of two sizes; the dessert-plates should next be set round to each person with a napkin neatly folded upon the plate, with a finger-glass half filled with water, and a small dessert knife and fork upon it. In winter, bring a jug of warm water into the room, and pour a little into each finger-

glass, before placing it on the table. Let the fruit be neatly arranged in the dishes, higher in the middle than at the sides, but no dish so full as to endanger any falling over when helped; neither at dinner nor dessert should the dishes be full. Place the larger kinds of fruit, such as apples, pears, grapes, or oranges at top and bottom, the smaller fruits and sweetmeats at the sides. Place a crystal jug of clear water, with a tumbler on each side of it in the middle of the table, and pounded sugar at top and bottom, which to look well, should be in cut crystal glasses. If cream is required for strawberries or raspberries, that also should be served in crystal. Glance your eye over the table to see that all the dishes are standing straight, and exactly opposite to each other, and all being properly arranged; leave the room, shutting the door behind you.

Having removed everything from the hall, you will next shake and fold the table-cloth, lay it in the napkin press, and carry the plates into the scullery to be washed by the cook. It will then be time to proceed to the drawing-room to put it in order, before the return of the family. You will smooth the sofa, shake up the pillows, dust the table, and arrange any books or newspapers (that may be scattered about) neatly upon it; but beware of removing any book (which some one member of the family may have been reading), and stuffing it into an odd corner, or even carefully replacing it in the book-case; common sense should regulate in such matters, and common sense should tell you, that it is most disagreeable to have to hunt all over the room for a book, in which one is interested, and which had been left on the table half an hour before. Having closed the curtains, put fresh coals on the fire, and swept the hearth, it will now be time to sit down to your own dinner with the rest of the servants (unless the servants' dinner has been at an earlier hour): as soon as you have finished, carry away the dessert things from the dining-room, and having washed the dessert plates, and the spoons, silver forks, tumblers, and glasses, place all in order in the butler's pantry, and before you leave it, arrange the cups and saucers in the tea-tray, so that if the family is small, and you have not a great many articles to wash, you can again sit down to work till within a quarter of an hour of the time for tea, when it will be necessary to get the butter and cream in readiness, and to toast

the bread or cake for tea. Be sure to remember also to put the heater for the urn into the kitchen fire in such time that it may be completely red-hot before putting it into the urn. Be careful also that the water in the tea-kettle boils before it is poured into it; the finest tea which can be used becomes tasteless and bad, if the water in the urn does not boil, and in some families this happens day after day; the servant is either obstinate or careless, and contents herself with assuring you, either that it does boil or has boiled. No such excuses should be listened to; the most effectual cure in such cases is to send the urn from the table each time that the rising of the steam does not prove the water to be at boiling heat.

While the family are at tea, the slops should be emptied in the bed-rooms; the ewers and bottles filled up with fresh water, and the beds folded down. If in summer, the windows are generally left open, and shut before the housemaid retires to bed; and if in winter, the fire should be lighted, taking care to shut the door and open a little bit of the window before setting fire to the paper in the grate, and to return again in a little time to shut the window, and add more coals to the fire, as more particularly mentioned already.

Where there is no lady's-maid, the housemaid will also be required to lay out the combs and brushes on the toilet, to stretch out the curl-papers, or cut fresh ones; to lay out the nightcap, neatly smoothed, and to unfold the nightclothes, and hang them over a screen. Where there is a lady's-maid, the frills and nightcap are generally ironed; but where the housemaid has much to do, there is not time for this. Once a week or fortnight, the hair-brushes will require to be washed; they never should be plunged into warm water, as it warps the back of the brush, and destroys the polish, or discolours the ivory, and softens the hair; a little soda should be mixed in warmish water, and the surface of the brush moved swiftly up and down in it, taking care not to wet the back at all. The soda will sufficiently clean it, and preserve the colour of the hair, if too much soda is not used; if too strong it will burn the hair, or turn it yellow; the brush should be left to dry for some time in the same position, with the face turned down, that the water may run out. When brushes are left to dry with the face up, the

water lodges in all the holes pierced for the hair, and discolours the back. Be careful never to wash the tortoise-shell combs, it makes them brittle and apt to crack over; they should be cleaned with a comb-brush, and rubbed with the palm of the hand to keep up the polish. The cover of the toilet pincushion should be regularly changed, as soon as it gets soiled; though the washing is generally given out, yet there are small articles to be washed from time to time in all families where things are well attended to, such as the tidies, for the backs of sofas and chairs, the pincushion covers, and where there is no lady's-maid, and the family is small, the housemaid may be also required to do up the lady's muslins.

It is the greatest advantage to all housemaids to be able to get up fine linen, and to have a knowledge of clear starching: besides making a servant doubly useful to her mistress, it may be the means at any time when out of a situation, of her gaining a respectable maintenance. One who gets up muslins and laces in a superior manner, is sure to find employment, and it may also lead to her filling one day, the superior situation of lady's-maid. Her excellence in this department, is not only valuable as adding to the elegant appearance of her mistress, but is productive of great saving in expense. A fine worked collar, with expensive lace, may be torn or frayed, the very first time it is done up, by improper management, and it is seldom that fine muslins or lace have the elegant appearance they should have, or last the proper time, from ignorance, or the want of due attention in getting them up. Nothing spoils the appearance of dress more than torn lace, battered and stiff, and fine muslin with the starch clouded upon it or frayed and ironed awry. It will require considerable practice to attain perfection in this department, and the best way to learn is to see others do it: still a few instructions may be useful.

Muslin or lace should never be rubbed in washing. Take white soap, in proportion to the muslins you have to wash, shave it down, and boil it with soft water till it dissolves. When cold, it should be as thick as jelly; mix a part of this jelly with soft tepid water, so as to be strong of the soap; let the muslins lie in this for a night, then add boiling water; move them up and down in the water, repeatedly squeezing them

through the hands, so as to wash them, but do not rub them. Having steeped them well in soap and water before, makes rubbing quite unnecessary; tie them loosely up in a pillow-case, and with soft water, and the rest of the boiled soap, boil them for a couple of hours; if in the country, they should be laid out on the grass to bleach (without the soap being washed out), and watered when necessary, so as to keep them moist. If in town, where no bleaching on the grass can be procured, put them into a washing-tub, and having poured boiling water over them, leave them in the back court in the air for the rest of the day, and during the night in the water; this has a great effect in whitening them; in either case, after being bleached, rinse them twice through cold water, to clear them completely from the soap, and hang them up to dry before being starched. A piece of lace, or any small article can be very well bleached by being put outside the window in the sun, in a crystal bottle of water, having been previously washed, and the soap left in it.

It is a frequent practice not to boil the starch, but to mix it with boiling water, to hang up the muslins or laces the moment they have been put through the starch, and squeezed out, and when dry, and as hard as a piece of board, then they water them down (as it is called), leaving one spot dry, and the rest wet, so that to stretch them out for ironing, without tearing them, is almost impossible. This mode of proceeding may account for the melancholy frequency of torn lace, and the dull heavy appearance of beautiful worked collars, looking as if they had been partially rubbed over with flour and water. To give them that light transparent look which adds so much to their beauty, the treatment must be very different; the starch should be mixed in a little cold soft water, and bruised down with the back of a spoon till quite smooth: more water should be added, till it resembles thin milk, then boiled in a glazed-stone pipkin, till it becomes clear and thick, so as to jelly when cold. The muslins and laces should be put through the starch, while it is still warm; squeezed out first in the hand, then gently in a clean smooth cloth, so as to get as much as possible of the starch out without fraying them in any way. The cloth must not be twisted round in the slightest degree, but gently pressed between the hands, putting but a few of the articles in at one time; each article should then be taken separately, held

lightly by the two ends with the forefinger and thumb of each hand, and beaten between the palms of both hands for a few minutes; next shaken out and drawn, so that each thread in the muslin is perfectly straight, and the shape of the collar is carefully preserved. If after holding it up between you and the light, you find that in some parts it is not sufficiently clear, then a little drawing up and down on those spots will be necessary, so as to free every thread from the starch. It should then be folded up in a damp cloth, and each article put beside it, as soon as it has gone through the same process, so that the whole may have a slight degree of dampness when ironed. When it is not convenient to do up muslins the moment they are starched, it answers well after they have been squeezed in the cloth, to fold up each article, and to leave them wrapped up together in a cloth for some hours, or a night, to clear themselves. When this is done, they generally require only to be drawn a little, and folded up for ironing; but where great clearness is to be obtained, the stiffer the starch, and the more they are beaten, the better.

In getting up fine things well much also depends on the ironing. The ironing-blanket should be thick, so that the work on the collars, &c., &c., should have a raised look after being ironed; where the blanket is thin the hard surface of the table flattens the work, and injures the appearance. The ironing-blanket should be covered with a piece of thin, smooth, long-cloth, kept for the purpose, and washed each time it is used. In spreading out the collar, or whatever you are about to iron, see that it lies perfectly even, and that each thread is straight up and down; also that the iron has been carefully cleaned, first rubbed on a piece of old carpet, and then wiped with a cloth; and also that it is not too hot. Singing is a common fault with the inexperienced, and it is a very bad one; for, even when it is not to such a degree as to burn, which may easily happen with a very thin muslin, still it leaves a yellow shade, which not only destroys the appearance at the time, but is very difficult to get rid of. A little practice in handling the irons will soon accustom one to the degree of heat necessary, and till that is the case, an old pocket-handkerchief, or some such thing, should be at hand to try each iron upon before you venture to iron anything of consequence. Do not pass your iron

frequently over the same place if you wish the muslin to retain the stiffness, and also you should hang the article on a screen before the fire the moment it is ironed; it becomes soft if folded up with the slightest dampness upon it. Lace which, to look well, should not be stiff, is improved and cleared by being put through cold water as soon as it has been starched; it should then be squeezed out held by each hand, very slightly beaten between the palms of the hands, and gently drawn out; in drawing out the edge the nails must never touch it; it should all be done by the ball of the thumb and forefinger, and ironed once or twice over to take out the stiffening. When lace is sewed to a muslin collar, and washed with it, as the collar requires to be stiffer than the lace, it will be necessary, after putting it through the starch, and clearing it by beating and drawing it, to gather the lace together in the hand, and dip it into cold water, so as to take out a good deal of the starch (taking care not to wet the collar); but this is only necessary where the lace is put on with very little fulness, or quite plain; where it is put on full enough to be set up in small pipes with the French irons, or rather, curling tongs (as they may be called), it is not necessary to extract any portion of the starch; the lace is the better for being stiff, and, if rather damp when set up in these small pipes, they will retain a regular and tidy appearance as long as the collar can be worn.

These small French irons are to be got of different sizes, and answer remarkably well for nightcap-borders, or frills of any kind. When making use of them you should be near a stove or fire, where they can be frequently heated, for, as they cannot be used when very hot, for fear of singing the lace, they require to be constantly heated, and must be wiped with a cloth each time before being used.

The care of the silver plate will also be part of the housemaid's occupation in a family where no footman is kept. Every day, what is in daily use will require to be washed perfectly free from grease, in boiling water, then rinsed through cold water, wiped with a clean linen cloth, and rubbed up with soft chamois leather; very little daily rubbing will be required if, once every week, the different articles are washed with a sponge in pretty strong soap lye, well rinsed in warm

water, and rubbed up with the chamois leather; it is the rubbing well that gives polish and brightness, and where plate is cleaned regularly once a week with soap, it has a beautiful pale bright silvery look, very different from that dark lustre which plate, cleaned with rouge, presents. Quicksilver is generally mixed with those plate-powders sold in the shops, and the high lustre which it gives at first is soon effaced, and gives place to a dark, tarnished appearance; besides, if plate-powder of this nature is frequently used, the article becomes so brittle that a silver spoon or fork may be broken by a fall on a stone floor. Once in the three months it may be well to clean all the plate thoroughly by washing it first with soap-lye and hot water, and then rubbing it, either with the finest sifted whiting and spirits of wine, or strong spirits, or with prepared hartshorn and spirits of wine, and, when quite dry, polishing briskly with the soft chamois leather, and also with the palm of the hand—the longer plate is rubbed the brighter it will look. The rouge sold by silversmiths is generally composed of prepared hartshorn mixed with quicksilver, and coloured with a little rose-pink, and an extravagant price is demanded for it: but in many houses, where the plate has been remarked for having a particularly beautiful appearance, it has been ascertained, that washing with soap lye, and polishing with chamois leather and the palm of the hand, had done all, and that only twice during the year had the plate been cleaned with plate-powder; prepared hartshorn, with only so much rouge as to give it a pale pinkish appearance, were then used.

It is painful to see the way in which, sometimes, the silver spoons, forks, &c., are scratched by coarse dry whiting being used. Where the finest whiting and spirits of wine cannot conveniently be made use of, it is well, at the time of the general cleaning of plate, after the soap has been used, to boil whiting in water, then dip the different articles into this mixture, and, when the whiting has dried upon them, polish them with the chamois leather. A soft brush will also be required in cleaning plate, to brush the whiting well out of the carved places.

Plated articles should be cleaned in the same way, and rouge had better be avoided altogether in cleaning them. Nothing

stronger than spirits of wine and whiting should be used, and that as seldom as possible; and they should not be rubbed more than can be avoided to clean them. When not in use they should be kept in flannel, or green baize, or buried in well-dried bran, so as to be kept quite free from damp, and from the air. It has been found from experience, that plated articles, once cleaned with plate powder in which there was some injurious mixture, have never recovered it; they look bright for a short time after being cleaned, but each time they are put aside for a little they become so completely discoloured, and it requires such hard rubbing to clean them, that the silver plating must be very soon entirely effaced. When candlesticks are spotted with wax or tallow, do not scrape them, but pour boiling water upon the spots before cleaning them.

Whether in town or country, it is necessary to fix particular days for such operations as are not of daily occurrence; such as cleaning plate, washing brushes, arranging the butler's pantry, comparing lists, &c., &c. As the linen is generally given out in the beginning of the week, and two days of each week will be required to clean the rooms thoroughly, Friday might be fixed for washing brushes, cleaning plate, and dusting the butler's pantry; and Saturday and Monday for mending the linen, previous to its being given to be washed. In the bustle of a town life particularly, the plate will get tarnished, the pantry dusty, and all will get into confusion in a housemaid's work, unless certain days are appointed, and regularity in observing them enforced; even in the country, without regularity in cleaning, all will soon assume a slovenly appearance; and if a mistress has not given written instructions for the arrangement of the work, it would be well that the housemaid wrote them down for herself, and strictly adhered to them.

In cleaning her pantry her labour will be greatly diminished by attention in placing the trays always with their faces to the wall, turning the wine-glasses, tumblers, &c., up-side-down on the shelves, placing paper covers on the lamps, and keeping the drawers carefully shut; dust will still penetrate, however, in some degree, and make it necessary, from time to time, to wash the pantry itself, and all it contains; but where the things in daily use are put by perfectly clean, and wiped dry, so that

the dust does not adhere to them, a little weekly attention in dusting will keep all as it should be for a considerable time.

The plate, when rubbed up weekly, should be compared with the written list, so that any missing article may be instantly looked for. And the china, glass, &c., should be counted over the same way when the pantry is thoroughly cleaned, and the mistress informed of any breakage or want which may be discovered. In some houses it is a rule that a servant is forgiven if she instantly gives information of having broken any article. With a truly careful, conscientious servant this may answer very well, but it has been found to render others only more careless, as they get over the shame and distress of such confessions, and it may be well that they should be made aware, that in proportion as those accidents (as they are always called) happen, a part of the price of each article will be required.

It is quite wonderful the difference in expense which a careful or a careless servant will make in a family. Some servants will go on for months without cracking or chipping a single article, either of glass or china, while others, both from mismanagement and carelessness, are meeting with a *misfortune* (as they generally call it) every week. It is careless management when a servant seizes upon a vessel of earthenware to wash the china or glass, instead of the wooden bowl which her mistress has appointed for that purpose; the slightest touch against the hard surface of the earthenware may be the means of cracking or chipping a valuable cup or glass; and, even with the wooden bowl, care and management are required. If the cups and saucers are all put into the bowl at once, they may be knocked against each other, and injured in the same way; whereas, if the warm water (not too warm) is poured into the wooden bowl, and only one article dipped in at a time, it is almost impossible that either cup or glass, however fragile, can be injured.

It is also careless management when a servant attempts to cut bread from a loaf lying across a plate much too small for it; in this case the loaf only rests on the edges of the plate, without touching the middle, and the additional pressure, in attempting to cut it, may split the plate in two. The same is

likely to happen where large plates are heaped upon the top of small ones; and, in cleaning lamps, the shade (which is a very expensive article) is frequently broken by being laid on its side, and rolling off the table; it may often be the oily appearance of the rim, and the fear of soiling the table, which leads to this, but a moment's reflection will show, that both a safe and a clean mode of disposing of it would be by turning the shade up, and placing it on its upper rim on the table. Many lamp-shades are also cracked by the lamp, after it has been cleaned, being pushed hastily against the wall when placing it on the shelf in the butler's pantry; it is right and orderly to place it on the shelf, to be out of the way of accidents, but it is wrong to do it in so careless a manner as to produce the very accident it was meant to avoid. The shades are often cracked, also, by the lamp being turned up too hastily when first lighted; the sudden strong flame cracks the glass immediately. And tumblers and wine-glasses are generally cracked by hot water being poured hastily into them.

With a careful servant none of these things will happen. She will put the loaf on end before cutting from it, she will place the largest plates at bottom, and not pile too many on each other, and the lamp will be set carefully on the shelf, and when lit, by turning it slowly up, the flame will be gently raised, so that the glass will be heated by degrees.

But when an accident does happen, from whatever cause, let instant information be given, and reproof borne patiently. Remember that the fault of concealment is infinitely the worse fault of the two; it is not only mean and dishonourable to an earthly master, but it is a sin against God. "*For God will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or whether it be evil*."[5] And servants may break the eighth commandment, "*Thou shalt not steal*," in many ways besides actually taking what does not belong to them. A servant has many things under her care. If therefore she indulges in dirty and careless habits, she injures her master's property, and is in this respect dishonest. All wastefulness is a species of dishonesty, for to waste or destroy her master's property is to deprive him of what is his. Eye-service is also dishonest; by eye-service is

meant, doing well only as long as the eye of a mistress is upon you, forgetting St. Paul's exhortation—

"*Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.*"

"*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men.*"

"*Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.*"[6]

Yes, service is honourable, and vice and virtue belong to no one station in life. The Gospel teaches, that all are servants, and that with God there is no respect of persons, but all alike are called upon to do their duty in that station of life in which heaven has placed them. It is the duty of a master and mistress to watch over the conduct of their servants. In allowing them to continue in error, they become partners in their fault, and it is the duty of servants to bear reproof with patience—"*Not answering again*"—and to render an implicit obedience, and a willing service, daily imploring assistance from a higher power, to withstand the temptations to which they are hourly exposed, and to fulfil the duties of the situation in which they have been placed. A few words have already been said on the propriety of a servant dressing in a quiet and modest manner. Neatness and economy are the points most necessary to be attended to. Nothing gives a more unpleasant idea of a servant, than to see her flaunting about in dirty finery. Muslin dresses, artificial flowers, &c., &c., are all unbecoming in her station in life. In a gown neatly made of cotton-cloth or stuff, a tidy white apron, and a neat little clean cap of bobbin net, with coloured worsted drawn through the cases, she will be genteelly and well dressed, for she will be dressed according to her station. One cannot see a servant dressed in this modest and becoming manner, without feeling respect for her, and forming a good opinion of her general conduct and character; in her daily work there will probably be the same spirit of cleanliness and regulation, and in her mind also. A mistress has been heard to observe, that in looking out for housemaids, her mind always turns to the remembrance of a young girl, who

was with her but for six weeks, during the illness of her own servant. This girl was regularly and cleanly in doing her work, but by no means remarkably clever. It was her quiet, neat, modest appearance, that left so favourable an impression. It was her grey stuff gown, white apron, and pure white muslin cap, with the border plaited close in about her young and blooming face, that was still remembered with interest. No ribbon or lace was ever seen on this young girl, and her mistress learned on inquiry, that during a dangerous illness she had been visited by a worthy clergyman, who had earnestly endeavoured to raise her mind above the vanities of this world. She had made a resolution then, that she never would again dress beyond her station in life, and never spend another farthing on lace, ribbon, or finery of any kind, or even wear them if given to her; and she had at that period kept her resolution for many years. How differently does one feel towards a girl flaunting about in vulgar finery, with bright ribbons, and coarse artificial flowers, mimicking her mistress in manners, and attempting to outshine her in dress! It is impossible not to conceive a bad opinion of that servant, both as to her judgment and heart. It is very evident that more attention is given to dressing up her own person, than to doing her mistress's work, and that she prefers a bright ribbon, or gaudy artificial flower, to the power of occasionally helping an old father and mother, or a sick sister, or relation, or if no such claims are upon her, of putting what she can spare from necessary articles of clothing into the savings' bank, so as to ensure a small fund for times of sickness or for her own old age. Let no one think that a shilling, or even a much smaller sum, is not worth the laying up, and that it may therefore be as well made use of in the indulgence of some piece of dress or amusement, and that those presents of money which a servant may occasionally receive from her mistress's visitors, may lawfully be employed in the purchase of imitation lace, or some such piece of useless finery. There is certainly no moral law against her spending, as she chooses, what is her own, but in so spending it she injures herself materially. It is not meant that in anxiety to save she should be shabby or mean in her appearance, but a gown of cotton, or woollen stuff, will last double the time of one of a thinner texture, and in it she will be

better dressed because made properly; and she would do well to remember, that even a few half-pence saved at a time, will soon amount to a shilling, and even a single shilling will be received in a savings' bank; and that if the half-crowns given to her from time to time were added to those lesser savings, and such a wise habit were begun on a girl first going to service, and continued as her wages increase, the money thus placed will have doubled itself again and again before old age comes on, and the feeling of independence will not only increase the enjoyment of the present moment, but greatly brighten the future, for even the most unthinking servants must sometimes look forward with dread to that day, when their services will be rejected, and when old age will come upon them, before either friends or money have been provided. A silly flaunting girl, who spends all upon her person, and is for ever changing her situation, from the hope of higher wages, or getting into a gayer family, cannot expect, in poverty or old age, to be assisted by those who probably were only too happy to get rid of her imperfect services. Whereas, a girl whose heart is in her work, and in the wish to save her mistress trouble in every possible way, and who never enters her presence but with an appearance so neat and modest, as constantly to ensure her respect and approbation, may one day come to be looked upon more as a friend than a servant, and to assist her endeavours at independence in the time of sickness or old age, will be considered as a real pleasure. A good mistress will esteem the possession of a perfectly faithful and attached servant as a blessing which no money can either purchase or repay; in times of sickness, particularly (for sickness will come in all families), what comfort and alleviation have been experienced from the unwearied, watchful care of an attached servant; and though the care of the sick does not usually fall to the housemaid's duty, yet a few words on this subject may one day or other be found useful.

In a good nurse, a light foot and very gentle movements are indispensable requisites; the most watchful care cannot atone for the absence of such qualities; it is only those who have suffered from illness themselves that can tell all the misery of a heavy foot, or quick or hasty movements in a sick room: all bustle or noise should be carefully avoided; the rustling sound

of folding or unfolding a newspaper, or even turning hastily the leaves of a book, is painful to a sick person; loud speaking is generally refrained from, but whispering is often indulged in, and, to the sick ear, nothing is more fatiguing than the indistinct buzzing sound of words which cannot be understood. By attention and forethought almost every noise which is hurtful in a sick-room can be avoided. If you have creaking shoes let them immediately be changed for light slippers. If the door has a rusty lock, or creaking hinges, let them be oiled. Avoid the noise of throwing small coal upon the fire (which often rattles down upon the hearth), by lifting small pieces of coal with the tongs; or, have an old glove to hand, and lift them with your hand; and, when the fire requires to be poked, use a bit of wood, so as to avoid all clatter of poker and tongs against the grate. Keep in mind, that at all times the absence of noise and bustle is desirable, but to the sick, whose nerves are in a proportionally weak state with the rest of the body, it is of the very greatest importance. Have a table covered with a nicely clean napkin, so that no noise is made in putting down a glass or spoon, and to avoid as much as possible going out and in of the room, have a tray covered in the same way, and filled with all you are likely to require, such as a few cups, glasses, spoons, &c., &c. A pitcher of fresh water should also be in the room, and, if in cold weather, it is better to have a small kettle by the fire than to have to send to the kitchen every time warm water is required. The cups, glasses, &c., should not be sent from the room to be washed, but a wooden bowl, and a supply of clean towels, kept on a table in a corner in which they can be washed up the moment they are used. The greatest possible cleanliness should be observed in a sick-room: a nauseous draught may be made infinitely more so to the patient by being presented in a smeared, sticky glass. When it is necessary to taste anything before giving it to a sick person, take a clean spoon, which you should immediately put aside to be washed, but never put your lips to the cup or glass. In giving anything to the sick, spread a napkin, for the moment, on the upper sheet, that no drop, should it fall, may give an untidy look to the bed. The washing and arranging the necessary things should not be done in the patient's sight, but in some quiet corner of the room; to witness

continued movement, or even occupation of any kind, is often most fatiguing to a sick person. Never leave the room without thinking of all you can take away and bring back at the same time, that your opening and shutting the door may be as little frequent as possible.

If the patient is too weak to be able to leave her bed, the linen may be changed by rolling the under sheet up at both sides, towards the middle, and putting the clean one, with one half rolled up, in its place; the patient can then gently be lifted up over those rolls to where the clean half of the sheet has been spread; the two rolls of the original sheet should be removed, and the other half of the clean one unrolled on the opposite side of the bed to where the patient has been placed. To change the upper sheet, a person should stand on each side of the bed, and holding each a corner of the top of the sheet, let them insert it at the bottom of the bed, and then pull it gently up; the other sheet can be removed by being pulled down in the same manner. The bed-linen should be hung before a fire for some hours, and thoroughly aired, before it is put upon the bed; and when it is necessary that, in changing the linen of the patient, it should be put on warm, hold the collar of the nightgown to the fire; when thoroughly warmed turn that part in, warm the next part, and fold it in, in the same manner, and continue warming and folding till the whole is one close roll, which should be instantly carried to the bed of the patient. It is not sufficient to hold a nightgown before the fire, and then carry it unfolded across the room, to be cooled by the outer air before it reaches the sick-bed. Body linen should be changed even oftener in sickness than in health, and no clothing worn during the day should be continued to be worn during the night; every article should be hung up, so as to be completely aired before morning; in the same manner, what has been used during the night should be left off in the day. When the patient is able to sit up long enough to have it done, the bed-clothes should be regularly carried out, and aired before an open window in another room, and the bed left uncovered, and the mattress turned; where the patient is so weak as generally to be confined to bed, considerable relief may be experienced by being raised in bed by means of a bed-chair, for much support is required by the back when in an upright position. Where

there is no bed-chair, a small footstool, put behind the bolster, doubled, and the pillows, is a tolerably good substitute; it adds greatly to the comfort of this position to have something for the feet to rest against, something solid, which will not change its place when pushed against. Where there is a foot-board it is easy to place some such article on the bed; and even where this is not the case, it can be managed by a strong brace of linen being first fastened across the foot of the bed. By attention to this manner of raising the patient, the stress is taken off the spine, without which there can be no relief in the change of position. A light shawl or mantle should be at hand, to be thrown over the shoulders of the sick person when sitting up in bed, and while lying down; the air of the sick-room may be often changed, by throwing a shawl over the bed, or even drawing it over the face if necessary, while the window is opened for a few minutes. It is often refreshing to a sick person to have a few drops of vinegar sprinkled about the room, and to have their temples and hands spunged with vinegar and lukewarm water; even such small changes as these are generally an expressible relief to the sick, if administered gently, without haste or bustle.

Preparations should be begun in good time for laying a patient quiet for the night, as they may be made feverish by not having perfect quietness in the room at an early hour. A small table should be set by the bed-side, on which fresh toast and water, and any medicine to be taken during the night, should be placed within reach of the patient; or, if they are so ill as to require any one to watch by them, let the person seat herself, not too near the bed, but still within reach of perceiving the slightest sign, or hearing the gentlest whisper; and let her be careful so to shade the light, which it is necessary to have in the sick-room, so that no ray, either from candle or rushlight, may fall upon the eyes of the patient, or on any part of the bed.

The necessary medicine, or toast and water, when required, should be given to the sick without entering into anything like conversation, or asking needless questions, which, by awakening them completely, may break their rest for the remainder of the night. Young nurses in particular, often err from over anxiety to make themselves useful, and the idea that

they must for ever be doing something for the patient: they are constantly urging them to take a little nourishment, or to change their position, or to allow their pillow to be beat up, while they are only anxious to be left in peace, and to rest their weary head in the position in which they themselves have placed it.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Loose white wrappers kept for that purpose, should be thrown over the working dress, while the beds are being made.

[2] To cover the floor with brown paper before the carpet is put down is a great preservative.

[3] Spots of grease on the carpet should not be washed out. Fullers' earth, in fine powder should be rubbed in *dry* and left for some days before it is brushed off.

[4] Attention should be given to the manner in which the China ornaments are placed before they are taken up to be dusted, so as to replace them exactly in the same position.

[5] Eccles. xii. 14.

[6] Colossians iii. 22, 23. Titus ii. 9.

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COMMON SENSE FOR HOUSEMAIDS ***

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