

AT HOME WITH THE LADY EDITOR.

Under this heading I am very pleased to reply to all queries that are genuine and helpful to the querist and others. Kindly write on one side of the paper only, and address to the Lady Editor.

WHAT A man wants to say :

DEAR LADY EDITOR,—May I crave your indulgence for a few words on an important point. I gather from various hints in this column that you are a sensible individual. Now I appeal to you as such. I am a business man, knocking about the city all day in and out of my office. All this time I am compelled to wear a well fitting, warm coat, boots which suit the fashion rather than my feet, and, for a good part of the time, a most uncomfortable hard hat. I cannot indulge in an easy chair or a prolonged pipe. I must talk, whether I will or not—on business, of course—I must put up with people who will talk extraneous rubbish when I am trying to write an important letter for the last departing mail, or who buttonhole me when I am hurrying off to catch the whistling train, or the bus which has just started, and whose driver, not having eyes in the back of his head, professes to be unable to see my pursuing figure. Hot and tired I reach home. "Be quick, dear," says my wife. "I have put out your dress clothes and a clean shirt, ready for the opera. Dinner will be served in five minutes." I long in vain for my loose coat, easy chair, soft slippers, pipe, and paper. I dress, dine, and rush off to catch another bus back to town, and sit, warm and weary, through a performance which I should thoroughly enjoy if I might only go to it in my loose coat and slippers. Can you not use your influence to allow us poor men to escort our ladies in unconventional and comfortable attire?—I am, dear madam, yours faithfully,

A SOCIETY MARTYR.

I am really sorry for you, but surely in this free country, men may dress as they please. Why should you not wear a loose coat in business hours, a soft felt hat, and easy boots? Dame Fashion may growl, but she cannot enforce compliance with her senseless mandates. I must own that the dress-circle does look better filled with what is considered appropriate evening costume for ladies and gentlemen. Still, those who live at some distance from the Opera House have certainly a very good excuse to offer for appearing in morning dress. *Chacun a son gout*, say I. Let not him that is bound by society's trammels condemn him that putteth comfort before fashion.

MAGGIE E.—I do not approve of cosmetics at all. Washing the face in warm water morning and evening, abstaining from pastry and sweets, eating plenty of ripe, good fruit, and taking sufficient exercise in the open air are all excellent for the complexion. But as there are many who cannot follow this prescription and perhaps you are one of these—I will give you the recipe for a pure cosmetic, which is called 'Milk of Roses':—Valencia almonds, one pound, two ounces; bitter almonds, two ounces. Blanch and beat well with white castile soap, finely scraped. Then make a cream of roses of oil of almonds two ounces; white wax, two drams, and spermaceti, one-half ounce. Dissolve and add rose-water in sufficient quantity. Pour off the water and add to the mixture of almonds and soap. Beat all together and add gradually rose water, five quarts, strain through cloth and add rectified spirit, one quart; and otto of roses, one dram. Mix all thoroughly together.

BERTHA.—I am glad you read this column with interest. Do not worry about your dimples. Some people think them fascinating; they certainly give a delightful roguishness to the face. You cannot fill them in. Why, indeed, should you?

MRS B.—I am afraid there is no redress for you unless you can prove that your husband has been guilty of actual personal violence. Many a wife has to submit to sneers and insolent remarks, and keep her grievances to herself. Can you not try to seem not to care for his rudeness, and by gentle answers or by silence, blunt the edge of his wrath? On the other hand, a meek wife is sometimes bullied, when if she once made a bold stand and refused to submit to rude orders, and would not listen to any remarks unless politely addressed, she would astonish her husband, and compel politeness from him. But without knowing more of the circumstances I cannot suggest anything, except that you possess your soul in patience.

RED GOLD.—Pray accept my sincere congratulations. You say your betrothal ring is a ruby, and want to know if it is a good one. First I must tell you that it rests very much with you whether it is so or not. Be true, loving, and faithful, and the stone in your ring will matter little. But the ruby has always been a favourite love-token, and is found in many old betrothal-rings. It is supposed to have the power of driving away bad dreams, to make the wearer forget all evil, expel sadness and evil spirits, and keep you in good health. Then, it is said to bring a blessing from heaven to the young wife and never make her forgetful of her husband's devotion. When he is in trouble the ruby will grow dark, its brilliancy returning after the danger has passed. The virtue of charity is attributed to the ruby; it belongs to the month of December; and an old, old tradition tells us that a very large ruby hung in the ark, and gave light to Noah and his family while they remained there.

A correspondent writes asking me how to pronounce the name of Lord Onslow's youngest son, Huia. I will make an attempt to spell it for you phonetically. I think if you follow this exactly, laying the emphasis on the first syllable, you will attain a correct native pronunciation. Who-e-er. I am always very pleased to be of service to my correspondents.

How calm the mind, how composed the affections, how serene the countenance, how melodious the voice, how sweet the sleep, how contented the whole life is of him that neither deviseth evil mischief against others nor suspects any to be contrived against himself! And, contrariwise, how ungrateful and loathsome a thing it is to abide in a state of enmity, wrath, dissension, having the thoughts distracted with solicitous care, anxious suspicion, and envious regret!

THE WORK CORNER.

BABY'S KNITTED BOOT.

MATERIALS: A 1/4 ounce skein of white Shetland wool, 2 steel needles No. 14, and 1 1/2 yards of narrow ribbon. Cast on 50 stitches and knit a plain row. 2nd row—Knit 3 plain stitches and *1 rib, 2 plain and 2 purl to end, 3 last stitches being plain. 3rd row and 4th row—The same as 2nd row. 5th row—Plain. 6th row—Purl. 7th row—Slip 1, then knit 2 stitches together* to the end, the last stitch plain. 8th row—Slip 1, * make 1, knit 1* to the end, then there will again be 50 stitches on the needle. 9th row—Plain. 10th row—Purl. 11th row—Same as 7th row. 12th row—Same as 8th row. 13th row—Plain. 14th row—Purl. 15th row—Plain. 16th to 24th rows—3 plain* rib, 2 plain and 2 purl,* and end with 3 plain as at commencement of sock. 25th row—Plain. 26th row—Purl. Now for the four pattern rows of holes—Repeat 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th rows, then do two rows of decreasing separated by a plain row as follows—(Slip 1, knit 2 together, 10 plain, 2 together, 20 plain, 2 together, 10 plain, 2 together, 1 plain; plain row; slip 1, 2 together, knit plain to the 16th centre stitches, which *knit 2 together*; complete the row plain, and finish with 2 together, 1 plain. Next row: Purl back, and work the lacey instep backwards and forwards in pattern rows of holes like 7, 8, 9, and 10, each row being only 16 stitches, which cast off. With the right-hand needle pick up 8



stitches, along the lacey instep, and cast on 11 extra ones and *knit 14 rows plain*. Then begin to decrease for shaping the boot thus: Slip 1, knit 2 together to the end, *knit 1. Next row: plain; slip 1, knit 2 together twice, plain to the three last, which knit 2 together and 1 plain. Next row: plain; slip 1, knit 2 together twice, remainder plain till the last 5 stitches, which knit 2 together twice, last plain. Plain row; slip 1, 2 together twice, plain to end, 2 together, 1 plain. Plain row; slip 1, 2 together; remainder all plain; cast off loosely. Pick up the 11 extra stitches you cast on for the toe, and knit them plain, adding an extra stitch at the toe end till you have 18 stitches on your needle. Three plain rows, then decrease every other row till you have 11 again. Raise all the remaining stitches and knit backwards and forwards *14 rows plain, and repeat all the following rows till the second side of the boot corresponds with the first. Sew it up neatly on the wrong side, and finish off with the ribbon runner and bows. This makes a good size for a first sock. Use No. 12 needles and coarser wool for a larger size sock.

SHOPS AND SHOPPING.

(BY MADAME MILLENT.)



HAVE been wandering about seeking for novelties for an after-Easter dinner-party. It is so dreadfully difficult to find anything new now a days. Sometimes one has a brilliant idea, and one hugs it with enthusiasm, dreams of it, then carries it out. Hurrah! It is successful. How charmed one is! Then enter one's special friend. "What do you think of that, my dear?" "That? Why, I saw something just like it at the Citron's last week!" Utter collapse of one's happiness.

But really here is a new style of menu card. They must be of paper, and must resemble exactly a leaf. An ivy leaf is pretty; a laurel leaf affords a nice space for the menu. The paper is, of course, a delicate green. It is so much handier, even for a small dinner-party, to have the names of the guests written on cards in their plates, that almost every one adopts this plan now. To match the leaf menus, the cards should also be leaves—much smaller ones, of course, or simply slips of pale green paper. Tie these to a little bouquet of appropriate flowers, with pale pink ribbon or pale yellow. Some other rather pretty styles of menus were just painted flowers—a lily is a good one—with the menu written in the centre. An aquatic luncheon should have a couple of oars crossed, or even a single oar, with the menu written on it. Horse shoe-shaped cards are appropriate to a hunt supper, or a dinner to frequenters of the turf. A pretty notion for this sort of thing is a white horseshoe with scarlet ruffled paper around it. The names could be written on pretty little cards cut in the shape of a jockey's cap.

The worst of shopping is that it makes one so fearfully thirsty, and I welcomed the sight of Bertha slowly sauntering up the street, knowing full well that the hospitable little soul would speedily discover my lamentable condition, and somehow or other provide me with some alleviation of my sufferings. And I was quite right. She insisted on

dragging me off—a most willing captive—to her hotel, fo they are not yet in their new house. Here in a private sitting-room she produced the most charming little tea-kettle, spirit-lamp, caddy, and cups and saucers. "I always make my own tea," she explained. We rang for milk, and presently were enjoying a most delightful and refreshing cup of tea. "How delicious this is!" I exclaimed. "Where did you get the tea, and what is the name of the blend?"

Bertha laughed. "I got it from Messrs John Earle and Co., Queen street, Auckland. He won five prizes at the Dueden Exhibition, you know. It is only 2s a pound, and is called Indian Pekoe. It is so strong and nicely flavoured, that one teaspoonful will make four of these small cups of afternoon tea. He has a splendid choice of teas to suit all palates. The Golden Pekoe at 2s 6d is excellent. He blends them himself, and they are genuine and delicious. Drop in as you go home and get a list from him." This I was anxious to do, and the talk drifted away to Bertha's husband. It appeared that the next day was his *jour de fete*, and Bertha had invested in a new scarf-pin for him, so that it holds the tie well in place, and can be put on without so much crushing and crumpling as frequently takes place. Bertha was also in hopes that it might save some of the strong adjectives frequently lavished on the un-offending pin or scarf. I did not like to damp her enthusiasm over her purchase, but long experience has taught me that men are awfully funny in their likes and dislikes, and what a woman thinks a very bright idea, and a most useful article, they will frequently turn up their moustaches at.

Appropos of men's attire, there is a rumour of a novelty for next spring. This colony—as Bertha and I frequently lament—is terribly slow in adopting new ideas, though I must say we are not half as behind the times as some London journals would have their readers believe. This time it is not a neck scarf, but something very dainty in shirts. The fashion comes from London, of course, and will be very popular here for a time. Blue, lavender, and pink of the most delicate tints have been made into shirts, and when the early spring days come every swell about town will have to wear one or confess he is not in the fashion. The price of these adjuncts of a man's wardrobe puts them out of the reach of many. Until the price is greatly reduced only the wealthy can enjoy such luxuries. I think I shall save up and buy Tom some for his birthday in October. That's the sort of wife a man likes!

NOT BUTTER.

A BRIGHT woman, who makes it a point to find out in what subject the person to whom she is introduced is interested, and to lead the conversation speedily to it, had an amusing experience, which she relates with great glee. A dinner was given by an intimate friend, and she whispered hurriedly to her hostess, who had introduced to her a pre-ternaturally grave man who was to take her in to dinner, "What does he like to talk about best?"

"Butter!" said the hostess's lips, with a meaning smile. It seemed a strange subject, but the tactful guest brooded the conversation around to it, and as she afterward said, "talked as if to know good butter when one saw and tasted it was one of the most important things in the world!" Her conversation did not seem interested, and the conversation first dragged and then came to a stop. Another effort, and then the lady gave up the task, and devoted herself to her neighbour on the other side.

The "butter" man was obliged to leave, pleading another engagement, the moment dinner was over, much to the evident regret of his hostess. "It's too bad he could not stay longer, and talk to us," lamented the hostess to her friend. "He's such a charming man. I knew you'd be just the one to get him in a good mood for talking, and then I thought we could all reap the benefit."

"Charming! That man!" repeated the guest. "Why he scarcely opened his mouth, though I racked my brains to make the "butter" question attractive."

"Butter!" ejaculated her hostess, in dismay. "I said 'Buddha!' I supposed of course you knew he was a high authority on the subject! What must he have thought?"

"I fancy," replied her friend, drily, "that he thought he had hold of an advance agent for some agricultural show."

THE HONEYMOONERS.

They heeded not the wintry skies,
For, sunned in one another's eyes,
They deemed it summer weather.
No storm obscured their radiant glee;
Nor would they, if they could, be free;
They felt that all felicity
Dwelt in one word—"Together."
That witching word—"Together."

And so, the lovers, newly wed,
Through groves Arcadian swiftly sped
With spirits like a feather:
So danced on down the hours away—
The rosy hours of Love's sweet day,
And all of joyous bright and gay,
Was in that word—"Together."
That witching word—"Together."

Ah, me! What change fruition brings!
Time flew on disenchanting wings,
And wrought an awful wonder!
The Honeymooners now agree
Alone in longing to be free;
They deem that all felicity
Dwells in one word—"Asunder."
That witching word—"Asunder."

When bright the summer sunbeams dart,
They still have winter in the heart,
Or only summer's thunder.
What words can picture their distress?
What metaphor their grief express?
They feel there is no happiness
But in one word—"Asunder."
That witching word—"Asunder."

C. J. DUNPHIE.