

## QUERIES.

Any queries, domestic or otherwise, will be inserted free of charge. Correspondents replying to queries are requested to give the date of the question they are kind enough to answer, and address their reply to 'The Lady Editor, NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC, Auckland, and on the top left-hand corner of the envelope "Answer" or "Query," as the case may be. The rules for correspondents are few and simple, but readers of the NEW ZEALAND GRAPHIC are requested to comply with them.

Queries and Answers to Queries are always inserted as soon as possible after they are received, though owing to pressure on this column, it may be a week or two before they appear.—ED.

### RULES.

No. 1.—All communications must be written on one side of the paper only.

No. 2.—All letters (not left by hand) must be prepaid, or they will receive no attention.

No. 3.—The editor cannot undertake to reply except through the columns of this paper.

## QUERIES.

HINTS ON DRIPPING.—I am a young housekeeper, and want to be economical. Will you kindly give me some ideas on using up or preparing dripping?—SILLY LITTLE ONE.

## ANSWERS TO QUERIES.

LITTLE SPRING DINNER ('Madame B.').—Ménù:

Cousommé à la Kursesl.	Soufflé de merlan.
Côtelettes à la Soubise.	Tournedos aux olives.
Rhubarb fool.	Mousseline à l'orange.
	Croûtes à l'Italienne.

Cousommé à la Kursesl is clear soup, garnished with blanched spring vegetables cut into shapes, small peas, asparagus sprigs, and lettuce cut into dice. Côtelettes à la Soubise are nicely trimmed and broiled cutlets from the best end of the neck of mutton, brushed over with hot butter just before serving, dished on a border of mashed potato with saubise—i.e., delicately made onion sauce poured round. Tournedos aux olives consist of fillets cut from the undercut of the sirloin (across, not with the grain of the meat), sautéed in a buttered pan, with a buttered paper over it, and sprinkled with pepper, salt, and lemon juice, and served round a ragout of olives (stone the olives and toss them in a little butter with some minced parsley and a very little shallot, then let it all cook in some good Espagnole sauce, thickened with a little brown roux and flavoured with a few drops of anchovy sauce, lemon juice, and a spoonful of sherry), with nicely flavoured Espagnole sauce round it. The fowl is stuffed with the liver, some bacon, minced tarragon and parsley, onion, and lemon juice, then braised for three quarters of an hour, and served with velouté sauce, flavoured with finely-minced tarragon. For the rhubarb fool, wash some rhubarb, cut it in inch length, and simmer it till tender, with sugar to taste. Now press it all through a sieve, and let it cool. Boil a pint of milk (a tablespoonful of condensed milk stirred into this is a great addition), with a strip of lemon peel, a bay leaf, and sugar to taste; mix with this (off the fire) four eggs lightly beaten, the stir over the fire, or in the bain-marie, till it thickens. It is very apt, unless watched, to catch, and if it boils it is spoilt. When quite cold, stir this into the fruit, adding a little more sugar if necessary. The custard should be thicker than usual, to make up for the wateriness of the rhubarb. Pour it into a glass bowl, and when about to serve it pile on it some stiffly whipped cream, flavoured with very finely grated lemon peel.—Mousseline à l'Orange: Melt together 4oz. of fresh butter, 4oz. of sugar, the juice of two oranges (strained), and the yolks of six eggs; stir it over the fire till thoroughly blended, being careful that it does not boil; let it cool, and then stir into it the whites of the eggs, whipped to a stiff froth, pour it into a well buttered mould, and steam it for half an hour. Serve with a sweet sauce strongly flavoured with orange or a hot mousseline sauce. For the croûtes à l'Italienne prepare some little square croûtes of fried bread, lay on each a round slice of beefroot, on this a smaller slice of hard-boiled egg cut through yolk and white, and on the top a turned olive stuffed with a washed fillet of anchovy. (The stuffed anchovies in oil, to be bought in bottles, do admirably for this.) Sardine toast and anchovy eggs are both very pretty savouries.

## RECIPES.

THE DECORATIONS OF CAKES.—'No, I never send to the confectioner's for a decorator to finish my cakes,' said an ambitious young woman. 'I have kept my eyes open, and I find that with a little care, and pains I can do quite as good work as the average confectioner. I rather pride myself on my cakes and have for some years taken a little trouble to perfect myself in the finishing and trimming of them. It is easy enough—indeed, it takes less time than to send them away or employ an expert, costs but a trifle, and in addition I find that my cakes have an individuality that the baker never seems to get. I have invented a series of little appliances that answer my purpose admirably, and as they are within reach of everybody I don't see why it should be necessary to send out of the house for such work. My first bit of machinery is some glass tubing about the size of the chimney of a student-lamp. Of this I have half a dozen pieces each about six inches long. To one end of each of these pieces of tubing is attached a bit of folded oiled paper. This paper is very thick and strong, and was gummed into funnel shape before being oiled. An ordinary spool of suitable size with a piece of soft linen tied around it has a handle made of a piece of pine whittled out to fit the hole in the spool. This makes a sort of pusher or plunger. The frosting is put into these tubes, the spool is gently pressed over it, and as it fits the tube tightly, a tiny thread of the prepared icing comes out through the point in the paper funnel. These funnels have openings varying in size from a lead pencil to number eight cotton. With these I can from any decoration that it is possible to make with such

appliances. I have moulds for leaves and flowers, also a set of stencils which I prepared myself. For icing I take the whites of three eggs, add an equal amount of cold water, and stir in six confectioner's sugar until of the right consistency. I spread this over the cakes, and when the first coating is nearly dry, fill one of the tubes, usually the larger one, and holding it above the cake press gently through the plunger, allowing the stream to flow out in any pattern I may desire. I like a heavy edge around the cake; therefore, usually make an interlaced scallop pattern with one of the larger sizes; then, with the smaller ones, I form all sorts of fanciful figures, letters, names, dates, leaf and flower outlines and the like. If I want a bit of colour, I drop a coloured confection into each scallop while the frosting is still soft. For coloured icings, which I always prepare when there are youngsters or children, birthdays, holidays and visiting occasions, I put a drop or two of cochineal in a little water, allow it to boil a moment, then strain and set away to cool. By the use of this, one may obtain all shades, from the palest pink to a colour as bright as is desirable. This is not at all objectionable, and adds greatly to the attractiveness of the cake.'

THE EMPRESS TEA CAKE.—Three quarters of a pound of flour, two ounces of white sugar, a good sized pinch of salt, a gill and a half of milk, two ounces of fresh butter, half an ounce of yeast, and one well-beaten egg. The flour, sugar, and salt are mixed together in a bowl, and the milk, which should be warmed, added afterwards with the yeast, egg and butter. All the ingredients are mixed together until they assume the consistency of a stiff dough. Two ounces of candied cherries chopped, are put in, and the mixture is left to rise for an hour and a half. It is then put into a buttered baking-tin and popped at once into a very hot oven, which is allowed to get cooler as the cake progresses towards perfection.—HOME LOVERS.

## WHY WOMEN FADE.

PRACTICAL HINTS TO ENABLE THEM TO RETAIN THEIR BEAUTY.

THE EVIL BEGINS AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE, IS CONTINUED AT SCHOOL, AND WORRIMENT BRINGS THE REST.

The life of any ordinary woman from fifteen to thirty has no possible chance for the storing of strength, which is the essential for liveliness and attraction. It is a paying out of vitality as fast as it can be made, a taxing and taxing of ill-fed nerves, stinted of air, sunshine, rest, and healthy stimulus.

A schoolgirl rises to an eight o'clock breakfast or later. She is never sleeping three hours and the air is at its freshest, but she has no thought for a run out of doors, which would tone her for the day. She was up till eleven the night before, as most girls of fourteen are, at some trifling entertainment or merely sitting round, chatting with chance comers. A mother who wished to insure her health and good looks would insist that the child should be in bed as soon after nine each night as possible, allowing only one night out a week until she was eighteen. I may as well stop here and close my suggestions, for the outcry of mothers and daughters against early sleep is general and overpowering. There is little use to talk about women's fading, for few of them have freshness any longer, but are weazened and thin at thirteen, what with too many school-books, and grown-up hours and habits generally. (Of course they fade.

### FOOD.

Oatmeal, especially of the finer sorts in which the housekeeper delights, often passes digestion in a crude shape as masses of starch, which clog the body without nourishing it. Dry, crisp oatcake is much better than boiled oatmeal, and is far more palatable, its oil and starch being changed in baking. Clean, cracked wheat is the food for nervous, studious, or housekeeping women and children, containing as it does the phosphates needed and the coarse character which aids the organs in their work. The fine flours and foods of the day are one great cause of the early deterioration of the race. If we wished artfully to eliminate every particle of nutrition from food, it would only be necessary to carry the process of grinding, bolting and refining a little further.

### WOMEN HALF STARVED.

In my own experience and that of the most intelligent literary people met it is not possible to change from sound, coarse food containing all the wheat for one day without loss of strength and nervous tone, while the difference in complexion in a single month challenge admiration from all the women about. The men don't say anything, but they notice it all the same. I know that ordinary women scout and cavil at this doctrine. They will have it that their mothers were strong and good looking on white bread and fried potatoes and steak, and it is all nonsense to fuss so much about cracked wheat and coarse bread when they are just as well without it. They send to the bakers for bread five days in seven and put their oatmeal to cook for the breakfast opening course, to be swallowed down—there is no other word—with milk and sugar just before the breakfast or the ham and eggs. Oatmeal paste, half cooked, city milk and sugar! Why not serve ice cream before the meats? Let the wheat, carefully cooked the night before, be served with the juicy steak. The general habit of flooding the stomach with milk and sweets arrests digestion at once and impairs the value of the food taken after. All these things tend to early drooping and decay of the human flower. Our women are half starved, to tell the truth.

### SMALL TROUBLES EXAGGERATED.

Minds make their own opportunities. Where one woman means that she has no time for mental culture another, equally burdened, makes her chance, cuts a slip from a newspaper and pins it where she can read while ironing or washing dishes, and repeats poetry or proverbs to herself while going about the house, counting it no injury to her family if she takes ten minutes a day in this manner to keep her soul alive and growing. For the best and deepest cultivation and education is gained in this way, little by little, wrought into the memory and worked over in thought till it is part of the lonely student's being.

'I am too grieved and worried to think or read when I have time to sit down with baby,' says one woman.

'I never could have borne what I had to if I had not read and thought of other things when I rocked the baby or pared the apples,' says another; and it simply shows the difference in the souls of people. Women of a fine quality

of intellect will live through troubles and distresses which send ordinary women insane, and come out looking younger than their sisters who have been petted and sheltered all their lives.

But certain women follow closely the example of the old lady on her death-bed, who, reminded that she had led an easy life, whined out that 'she had always made the most of her small troubles.' Few women overlook a chance to be worried, and as for ignoring a slight or offence, or failing to be worked up and wounded by it to the highest degree, it would seem flying in the face of Providence, according to their ideas.

## HOW TO PREPARE A FLOOR FOR A PRIVATE DANCE.

The first thing to ascertain is whether the boards are smooth (if not, they must be planed where the irregularities occur), and, above all, no old nails should be left in. If the gaps are at all obtrusive between the planks, these can be filled in either with strips of wood or putty, as the case may be. These points having been remedied, the floor will do over and over again for dancing, and each time of using will facilitate the labour of the next preparation. There are many ways of attaining the same object. One is to paint the floor with beer (the cheaper the better), using a white wash brush; let it dry thoroughly, after which a finely powdered chalk must be sprinkled all over the boards, very regularly, through a fine sieve. The finishing touch of this, as of most of these amateur processes, which quite equal more scientific methods, consists in sliding about the room, if the *frottoir* is not handy. Another excellent way is to rub the boards with common wax-candle ends, and then to use the *frottoir*, or sliding. This is perhaps rather more tedious than the former plan, but it answers equally well, and, if two or three enthusiastic young people set about the task, it does not take as long as might be imagined. Of course, I am assuming that the query relates to common boards; if the room is stained and varnished, an extra polishing with beeswax and turpentine should be all that is necessary. Again, if the dances are to be at all frequent, it would be almost better to stain and polish it; it is not an expensive nor a very tedious process nowadays, and it would greatly enhance the general effect. Polishing with beeswax, where the *frottoir* is not available, can be accelerated if a rubber be improvised by tying several thicknesses of coarse felt to an old broom devoid of bristles; if it is weighted down by the insertion of a flat piece of lead, the effect is absolutely the same as the *frottoir*. The beeswax is rubbed on the felt, and the use of the long-handled rubber saves stooping. The advantage of having the floor stained is that the room could then be used for general purposes with rugs, etc., whereas plain boards must be totally covered, which would entail much more labour. It is very difficult to give exact information as to how to arrange a room with no data to go upon. As little furniture as possible should be left; tables, cabinets with glass doors, or anything that could be damaged, should be put away in some spare room, or disposed of according to space in the manner most convenient for the inmates. Naturally one has to put up with some discomfort on such occasions, but it can and should be reduced to a minimum by means of a little judicious contriving. Sofas and easy chairs, provided they do not take up too much room, should be put against the wall, though, if space is a great consideration and the furniture large, it would almost be better to turn everything out, and have row seats instead. These can easily be bired. The piano should be in a corner, with the back turned out towards the room, both to increase the sound and to enable the player to see the dancers.

## WE CAN'T GET EVERYTHING WE WANT.

AWEARY of the city—  
Of staying mid its tangled maze—  
The hero of this ditty  
Sought 'digs,' far from its crowded ways;  
For sad 'nning and madding  
The fretful mob proved to his taste;  
The hustling and bustling  
His nervous system quite laid waste.  
Ere he left home the city's frown  
Was bright—(to us it maybe is)—  
A country lad he came to town,  
As innocent as baby is.

He felt his soul sore chastened;  
He sought the suburbs rural rest;  
To a quiet street he hastened—  
A place he thought would suit him best;  
And gleaming and beaming  
With satisfaction at the core,  
He stalked at, he knocked at,  
With confidence an outer door.  
An accident came at last,  
And answered at his urgent call;  
'Come in,' she said, and he passed  
From vestibule to inner hall.

'I've come to seek for lodgings,  
He said in an attractive tone;  
'These townfolks' ways and dodgings  
I cannot longer stand, I own.'

And winking, and thinking  
His search for 'digs,' was over now,  
He traced through, he paced through  
The rooms, joy 'luming his fair brow;  
He deemed that right there where he staid,  
Dwelt sober peace he'd sought for long;  
That in and out reigned solitude,  
Wakened but by the merle's song.

But just as he was scheming  
'Bout fixing on this silent spot,  
An engine past, swept screaming,  
And upset all his well-laid plot.  
To him from, to fly from,  
The city's roar—a priceless boon—  
Despaired he, declared he—  
As well seek quiet 'digs,' in the moon!  
'Too near the railway, ma'am, I fear—  
That noise would drive me soon insane.'  
'The noise is bad,' she said, 'but here,  
See the grand view you get of folks losing their train!'  
VIVE VALE.