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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, November 23, 1932.

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Subject: "Last-Minute Jobs." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U.S.D.A.

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The day before Thanksgiving, like the night before Christmas, goes by tradition in most well-run homes. No, the day before Thanksgiving isn't the time for hanging up stockings and lighting the Christmas tree, but it is the time for starting preparations for dinner on the morrow. Every little job that you can do today means that the dinner will run that much more smoothly and easily tomorrow.

As every mother who runs her household on a cooperative basis knows, the children can help a lot in these forehanded preparations and get a lot of fun out of doing it. Betty Jane can sit up on the kitchen stool and wash the lettuce and the celery. Then she can put these vegetables in a tightly covered dish in the refrigerator so that it will be all fresh and crisp tomorrow. Young Horace can mold the butter in pats and set them away in the refrigerator. He'll enjoy cracking the nuts for the big bowl on the side table, or even whipping the cream to top the pumpkin pie. I don't mean to suggest that all these jobs will necessarily go on at your house. Your own menu for Thanksgiving dinner is the guide to all the steps in preparation. But these are just samples of the sort of things the children can do to help in the celebration. As for Mother, or an older sister, she'll use this day before to make the tomato juice cocktail, get the ingredients ready for the stuffing for the holiday bird, prepare the pumpkin mixture, and the pastry for the pie, make the cranberry or apple sauce, mix the salad dressing or do any other job that can just as well fit in ahead of time. Everything that is ready the day before means just that much more leisure on Thanksgiving day. And, after all, to enjoy a holiday like this, to make it fun for family and guests, Mother, even if she must be chief cook and bottle washer, needs to be at her best, not worried and tired out with preparations. And she needs time on Thanksgiving morning to look her best. You know how it is with us women. We enjoy entertaining twice as much if we feel well dressed and well groomed.

Marion Lee was in last night. She says it isn't cooking the dinner that worries her when Thanksgiving rolls around and the relatives all come for the day. Her worry is having the house spick and span. It seems that she has several relatives who notice any little bit of dust anywhere. To add to her other day-before jobs she has to dust and clean the house from top to bottom.

"I wish you'd give me some hints on quick and easy ways to clean, Aunt Sammy," she said last night.

So I've gathered a few hints from the specialists. Maybe they'll help you, too, on your last-minute tidying up.

First, about the dust-cloth. A good-sized, generous, roomy, clean dust-cloth does the job much more quickly and better than a skimpy one. You can see that it takes a very small cloth some time to cover the surface of furniture. So, choose a cloth as large as you can handle easily, a cloth of some soft material that won't shed lint. And shake and wash your dustcloths occasionally. Otherwise you may simply move dust around with it. If you oil the cloth a little, you can make a dustless dustcloth for yourself. One of these will save time, effort and elbow grease.

And when you dust a room, plan also to save steps. Dust the room completely as you walk around it once, doing the higher objects first and then the lower ones.

Just little items like this make cleaning an easy job instead of a chore.

The experts suggest that the easiest procedure in cleaning a room will be something like this. First, dust the small objects. Then, cover them or set them in a drawer. Next, dust the floors with a dust mop. Then, with the vacuum, go after the upholstery and rugs. If you haven't a vacuum, take the rugs out where they can be brushed on both sides. A last quick dusting will finish the room. Of course, nobody suggests that you dust everything every day, unless you live in a land of smoke and soot or dust storms.

Table tops look their best when you polish or even dust them always with the grain of the wood. Instead of swishing your cloth this way and that or round and round, let your strokes be straight and full-length, following the grain of the wood.

When you dust the lower parts of furniture, like table legs near the floor or the rungs of chairs, then consider saving your back. Instead of stooping over to dust, bend only at your waist and knees, keeping the upper part of your body erect. Your reward will be less weariness and also a better figure and posture. My neighbor calls this doing her daily dozen while dusting.

As for the light chairs or stands, instead of bending down and accommodating your position to them, lift them up or tilt them when you are dusting.

Tonight you'll want a quick and easy meal for the family--a dinner that won't take more than half an hour to prepare. Here's a menu suggested by the Menu Specialist to serve the purpose. Fried bacon and apple rings; Mashed and buttered rutabaga turnips, Celery; Heated graham rolls; and for dessert, what the Menu Specialist calls "Ambrosia".--sliced oranges and bananas sprinkled with shredded coconut. An easy dessert and a pretty one.

Thursday: "Thanksgiving Games for the Family."

