A woman with red hair, wearing a blue dress with a white collar and a white bow in her hair, sits on a grassy hillside. She is holding a small white dog. The background shows a landscape with rolling hills and mountains. The entire scene is framed by a decorative border of yellow and white flowers and green leaves. The title 'The Riches and Treasures of Home' is written in a large, elegant, cursive font across the top. In the bottom right corner, there is a small illustration of a book with a floral design on its cover, and the text 'A Keepsake Book' and 'Kari Wisdom' is written below it.

*The Riches
and Treasures
of Home*

A Keepsake Book

Kari Wisdom



Contents

- 1 The Old Time Kitchen*
- 2 The Old Fashioned Parlor*
- 3 Letter Writing & Correspondence*
- 4 The Dining Room*
- 5 The Linen Cupboard*
- 6 The Powder Room*
- 7 The Stitching Room*
- 8 The Laundry Room*
- 9 The Bed Chamber*
- 10 The Old Fashioned Nursery*
- 11 A Little Grace and Charm*
- 12 The Old Fashioned Garden*



*A Place Where
Love Resides
Home Sweet
Home*

*I knew by the smoke that so gracefully curl'd, above the green elms that a cottage was near...
—Thomas Moore*

The little thatched cottage, with clapboard siding and filigree woodwork that resembled fine old lace, was a glorious place, one in which peace seemed to take up its residence and where joy and tranquility found a sweet and restful abode. The cottage lie at the end of a long and winding lane, bordered by tall stately oak trees mingled with flowering apple blossoms and surrounded by hazy green meadows on all sides. As one approached the cottage, the tall chimneys entwined with trailing sprigs of variegated ivy came clearly into view with the fragrance of hickory smoke emanating from within their majestic chambers. The emerald lawn, dappled with peonies and primroses growing in sweet and elegant perfection, lay between the kitchen garden on one side of the cottage and a well appointed cutting garden on the other, bordered by a fine old orchard with limbs hanging heavy and laden with fruit. A garland of fragrant roses, blossoming in beauty and splendor with drifts of petals in verdant hues, climbed a lovely arch pediment, which hung over the entrance of the cottage, perfuming the air with a lovely springtime fragrance and serving as a hospitable welcome to the cozy and charming abode.

As with all well kept cottages, the kitchen garden filled with fine herbs, savory delights and “vegetables indispensable to the kitchen” was enclosed by a lovely old stonewall, overgrown with briars and thickets and dense tangles of climbing vines. Nestled deep in the woods, the cottage was surrounded by fine old timber and misty paddocks with a gentle milk cow grazing on lush pasture grasses, perennial herbs, clover, and wild flowers, imparting a sweet essence to fresh milk and rich heavy cream. Situated near the cottage, a large rain barrel used to catch and store fresh rainwater, was carefully tended and valued for washing delicate babies skin, laundering fine old linens, and to water “small, precious things in the garden.

In keeping with the gentle character of a charming and gracious old home, the interior overflowed with treasured family heirlooms and cherished keepsakes that carried a message of love and legacy and displayed a pride in the family's heritage and a reverence for things of old. In a home whose beauty was most evident in its simplicity and grace, every belonging to make one warm and comfortable could be found, from the richly paneled walls and gleaming wood floors with the fragrance of old wood still lingering upon them, to the heavy curtains drawn at dusk and twinkling candles at afternoon tea, every amenity served to lend a familiar and cozy air to the gracious and genial surroundings and offered the sweet companionableness of peacefulness and pleasure to all who gathered there. Filled with such pleasant enchantments and comfortable charms, the inviting old cottage produced a delightful yielding of simple joys, country comforts, and homebound pleasures and was a place whose memory would forever accompany every glad thought and happy remembrance as though the two were eternally entwined, unsevered by any measure of distance or time.

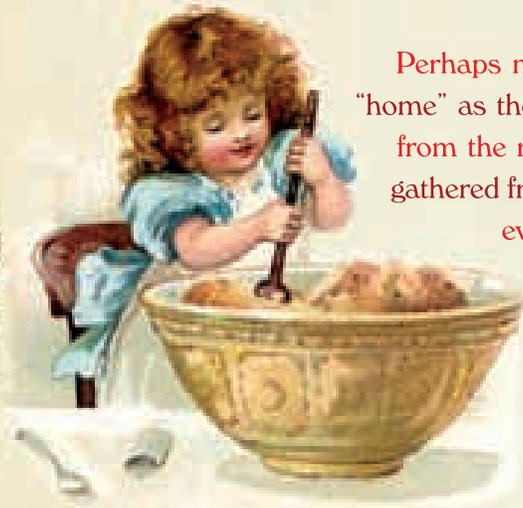


*Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble...
There's no place like home.*

The Heart of The Home

The front door stood hospitably open in expectation of company, and an orderly vine grew at each side; but our path led to the kitchen door at the house-end, and there grew a mass of gay flowers and greenery, as if they had been swept together by some broom into a tangled heap; there were portulacas all along the lower step and straggling off into the grass, and clustering mallows that crept as near as they dared, like poor relations. I saw the bright eyes and brainless little heads of two half-grown chickens who were snuggled down among the mallows as if they had been chased away from the door more than once, and expected to be again.

--The Country of The Pointed Firs



Perhaps no other room in the house so perfectly captures the essence of "home" as the old-time kitchen. From the herbs gathered in bundles, hanging from the rafters, to the braids of garlic and baskets of shallots and onions gathered from the garden, the kitchen overflows with goodness, spilling from every corner the sweet fruits of mother's labor. Plentiful cupboard shelves and pantries, lined with mason jars carefully labeled, are filled with home-canned peaches and pears, while antique crocks of sweet pickles fill the air with the delicious scents of cinnamon, allspice and clove. A collection of hand woven baskets with a simple old fashioned elegance about them are hung on wooden pegs for fetching vegetables from the garden, while larger, sturdier baskets set about the room, overflow with apples and squash

ready to be taken to the root cellar for winter store.

Everything within the old-time kitchen speaks of home and the warmth and comforts found within it. From the fragrant scents of mulled spices simmering on the stove to the crackling of a fire in the hearth, the kitchen is a cozy haven filled with all things delightful and delicious, and where homespun goodness is always found in plentiful supply. In this room, so full of character and charm and brimming with old fashioned treasures and antique wares, joy can be found in every nook and cranny, and time worn furnishings extend warm hospitality and a cordial welcome to all.

All throughout the year, the kitchen is astir with homebound pleasures and bustling with pleasant activities and old fashioned cooking is always at its delicious and flavorful best. With a wealth of country abundance and a full and overflowing larder, meals are prepared using such things as freshly churned butter made from the richest cream, farm fresh eggs gathered from the henhouse, and fragrant herbs picked fresh from the garden, all blending together in delicious harmony, and serving as a source of pleasure and pride to the homemaker who delights in cooking the old fashioned way.

The Pleasures of Home

The Old Time

Baking Cupboard



From the old-time baking cupboard, tender love and affection flowed through mother's skillful hands in the form of apple strudels made from fruit gathered from the apple orchard she lovingly tended, to pumpkin pies made from sugar pie pumpkins grown in her own garden. Goodness in every delicious form could be found within the little nooks and crannies of the baking cupboard, and included such tasty things as old fashioned rolled oats, brown sugar, plump golden raisins, sweet coconut, English walnuts and toasted pecans. Concealed within the deep bins were generous supplies of freshly milled graham flour and stone ground cornmeal for baking into something wholesome and delicious, and little glass jars with pretty old fashioned labels on them were filled with baking powder, baking soda, and cocoa. Bottles of homemade vanilla brought out after months of steeping in the buttery were customarily found there, along with jars of ruby-red maraschino cherries, dried cranberries, pearls of tapioca, and various other cooking and baking sundries.

Pride in a well stocked baking cupboard and a full and overflowing buttery was a hallmark of the old fashioned homemaker, representing a season of plenty and a blessed and bountiful harvest. For centuries, the baking cupboard served as a symbol of the industry and dedication of a faithful homemaker, reflecting her skills in housewifery and an expertise and proficiency in the home arts. Old fashioned ladies always held firm ideas about the proper management of the baking cupboard and believed it should be neat and orderly, and above all else, well filled.

Occasionally, the baking cupboard served as the "buttery" in smaller homes, which lacked a separate room devoted to a larder, with cupboard shelves trimmed in edgings of crocheted lace and remnants of pretty wallpaper, which lent a lovely backdrop to china dishes painted with peonies and primroses and other family heirlooms displayed upon its shelves. Within the many drawers and cubbies were places to hold kitchen linens, embroidered and edged in tatted lace, along with favored cooking utensils such as pie crimpers, pudding molds, egg beaters, and ivory-handled nut picks. There was even a special place for the much loved and cherished collection of old copper cookie cutters and room for a plentiful supply of mixing bowls, breadboards, hand carved spoons and hand turned rolling pins.



The Recipe Box

Near the baking cupboard, upon a shelf, stands a sturdy box made of old oak and hand rubbed and polished to a shine, which contains within it a treasury of old family heirlooms, handed down through many generations and considered some of a woman's most cherished possessions. These priceless treasures, written in faded ink, on pretty cardstock yellowed by the passing of time, are the old family recipes, and include such things as great grandmother's old fashioned raised doughnuts, customarily made on cold winter nights and served with steaming cups of hot cocoa, along with grandfathers favorite eggnog recipe, and everyone's favorite Italian cream cake.

Early American Cookbooks

In the early years of the republic, the few cookbooks published in America were editions of those originally printed in England, such as *The Complete Housewife* by Eliza Smith in 1742 and *The Frugal Housewife* by Susannah Carter in 1772. Within these beloved volumes, English cooking was at its finest, and included favored collections of old English dishes with which the new settlers were so accustomed to. But in 1796, Miss Amelia Simmons of Hartford, Connecticut wrote what is considered to be the first truly American cookbook, appropriately entitled *American Cookery*. And though it was a small book consisting of only forty-eight pages, it contained within it a collection of favored regional dishes using fresh provender commonly found within the New England states, distinguishing it from those of her early predecessors, and reflecting the abundant wealth of the newfound land. And while the *American Cookery* is filled with somewhat unusual cooking terminology and antiquated expressions and vocabulary, this delightful book serves as an interesting and noteworthy historical document, allowing one the opportunity to explore the intriguing world of the mid-19th century homemaker, and without question, lends its own distinct imprint upon the nation and its history.

An Heirloom 'Receipt' Book

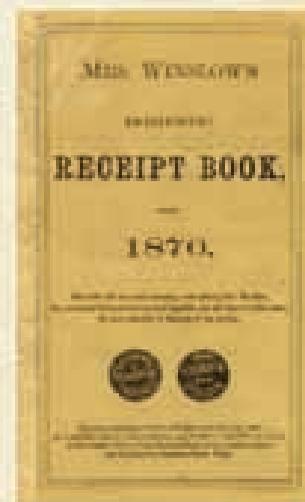
In earlier days, favored recipes were often recorded in a cooking journal, commonly known as a 'Book of Receipts', written in Mother's best penmanship and heralded as some of her finest and most delicious offerings. Bound together with kitchen twine, these recipe books were often handed down through the generations and regarded as an important and endearing part of the family's heritage. One of the oldest American "receipt books" still preserved today was written by a New England woman by the name of Mrs. Anne Gibbons Gardiner, dated 1763, which includes favored family recipes, lovingly recorded for posterity, and serving as one of the few surviving "receipt books" of days gone by.

For those who wish to assemble an "Heirloom Receipt Book," favored recipes should be gathered from members of the family, particularly those which have been passed down through the generations. Personal memoirs and fond remembrances may be included, along with copies of treasured photographs, which bring to mind joyous occasions of family reunions, holiday meals, and times spent with treasured friends and loved ones.

Old Time 'Receipts'

Old fashioned recipes, either handed down through the generations or found while browsing through antique cookbooks, are often charming but frequently include measurements unfamiliar to even the seasoned homemaker. Such measurements often include as a "cup of yeast," "butter the size of an egg" or a "thimble full of sugar." These references through a little trial and error have been deciphered, and old fashioned recipes may now be enjoyed once again and serve as delicious reminders of days gone by.

A thimble full	equals	1 teaspoon
A pinch	equals	$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon
A dash	equals	$\frac{1}{16}$ teaspoon
A teacup	equals	$\frac{1}{2}$ Cup
A wineglass	equals	$\frac{1}{4}$ Cup
A cup	equals	eight-ounces less $\frac{1}{5}$
A hen's egg of butter	equals	3-4 Tablespoons
Butter the size of a walnut	equals	2 Tablespoons
A tumbler	equals	1 Cup
A teaspoon	equals	4 teaspoons
A teacup of yeast	equals	1 Cup of sourdough starter





The Old Time Spice Chest

The attic was a lovely place to play, the large, round, coloured pumpkins made beautiful chairs and tables. The red peppers and onions dangled overhead. The hams and the venison hung in their paper wrappings, and all the bunches of dried herbs, the spicy herbs for cooking and the bitter herbs for medicine, gave the place a dusty-spicy smell. Often the wind howled outside . . . But in the attic Laura and Mary played house with the squashes and the pumpkins, and everything was snug and cozy.

—Little House In The Big Woods

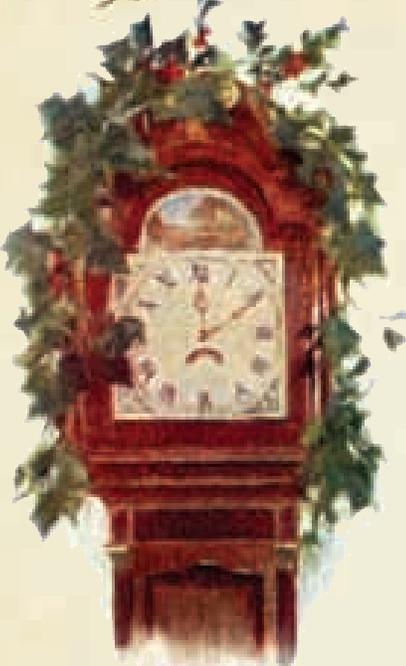
Among the many family heirlooms, the old-time spice chest served as a treasure trove of fragrant goodness, spilling from within its tiny chambers a delicious assortment of aromatic herbs and spices, which lent a unique essence and aroma to sweet and savory dishes and a lovely scent to ointments, salves and potpourris.

In earlier days, spices were commonly purchased from the local mercantile, who in turn purchased them from the East India Trading Company. Once considered exotic, spices such as cinnamon bark, nutmeg, allspice, cloves and peppercorns were purchased whole and freshly ground using a mortar and pestle or an old-time hand cranked spice mill prior to using to ensure the purest essence and most aromatic flavor.

To supply the need for herbs, a host of interesting and deliciously flavored aromatic botanicals were often grown in the kitchen garden or tucked decorously in well-tended flowerbeds for culinary and medicinal purposes. And though fresh herbs, which were milder in taste and fresher in flavor were preferred during the warm months of summer, a good quantity of herbs were always gathered at their peak of freshness and flavor to be dried and hand rubbed for winter store.



*And they that know
thy name will put their
trust in thee: for thou,
Lord, hast not forsaken
them that seek thee.
Psalm 9:10*



The Pleasures of An Old Fashioned Parlor

*Home's not merely four square walls, though with pictures hung and gilded;
Home is where affection calls—Filled with shrines the hearth had builded!*

—Charles Swain

Like the warmth found beside a wintry fireside, the old fashioned parlor draws all who enter into its welcoming embrace, leaving a lasting impression of comfort and peace. A sweet feeling of serenity perfumes the air, while plump chairs and pillowed divans offer homey comforts, extending warm hospitality to all. Everything within the parlor speaks of timeless pleasures and of fond remembrances of happy days gone by. From the collection of cherished novelties gathered over time, of trinkets and treasures found while traveling the countryside, or of gently aged photographs in vintage frames, the parlor overflows with favored collectibles that speak of home and the comforts and joys found within it.

To add to the inviting ambiance, the parlor is made all the more cozy with layers of antiques, warm hearthrugs, and collections of needlepoint cushions, antique clocks, and shadow boxes filled with joyful little assemblages. Grandmother's handmade quilts and crocheted blankets sit among the treasures to soften and warm the surroundings, while delicate lace doilies adorn the tops of sofas and overstuffed chairs, adding a touch of beauty and splendor to the elegant and tasteful fittings.

In the center of the room, a round table overlaid with antique lace and embellished with decorative what-nots, displays the family photo album, containing photographs of family members from days gone by, with demure ladies in lovely silk dresses with hand made laces and gentlemen in waist coats and top hats looking notable and distinguished. Treasured photographs, often sepia toned and a bit faded from the passing of time are hung upon parlor walls, serving as some of the family's dearest possessions and as tender reminders of the family's heritage and the loving ties that bind them one to another.

On a lovely walnut scrollwork shelf resides the old family Bible, with pages tattered and frayed, and serving as the most cherished of family heirlooms. Tucked between the leaves of the Old and New Testaments is an ornately printed lithograph, containing those special dates so fondly recorded and remembered, and include such occasions as the birth of a new baby, a son or daughter's wedding day, and the passing of

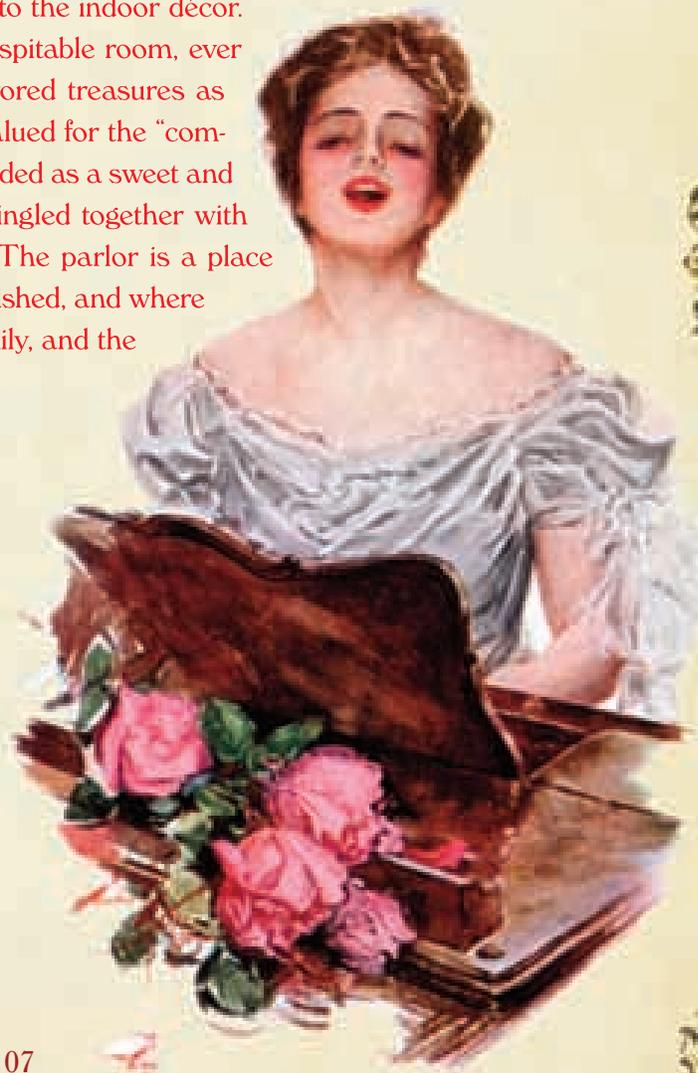
a loved one or cherished friend. The Holy Bible serves not only as the most important and lovingly esteemed family possession, but also as a treasured anthology of the family's life, recording those valuable bits of history too precious to be forgotten.

Through the billowing lace curtains, one can see the graceful sweeping of the trees, and the flower garden that lies just beyond, filled with delightful old heirloom roses, climbing and rambling about, and collections of creeping phlox and morning glories in well tended flower beds. Dappled sunlight trickles through lavender glass windowpanes, softening the furnishings and blending them in elegant harmony, while scented geraniums in lovely stoneware crocks fill the air with an intoxicating and glorious springtime fragrance. A lovely old rocking chair with hand carved spindles, polished smooth from the passing of time and covered with a lovely ruffled cushion, is situated conveniently near the window, with a pretty sewing basket nearby, holding a favored quilt in the making, and various fancy work amenities. On a small parlor table, a collection of old books and a bundle of handwritten letters from distant friends and loved ones are kept close at hand to be lovingly read and savored, and parlor greenery grows lush and flourishes, adding a touch of nature to the indoor décor.

By all accounts, the parlor is a gracious and hospitable room, ever increasing in pleasantries and overflowing with favored treasures as rich in memory as they are in sentiment. Though valued for the "comfortable air" of its belongings, the parlor is most regarded as a sweet and blessed haven, where memory and tradition are mingled together with happy recollections and joy filled remembrances. The parlor is a place where friends are welcomed and loved ones are cherished, and where exceeding joy may be found within the wealth of family, and the inexhaustible riches and treasures of home.

*There, there is nothing else but grace and measure,
Richness, quietness and pleasure.*

—Charles Baudelaire



The Warm Companionship of A Well Loved Book

Good books, like good friends, are few and chosen, the more select, the more enjoyable!

—Louisa May Alcott

On a cold winter's eve, nothing could be more pleasant than to nestle by a warm fire and to immerse oneself in the pages of a well-loved book, enjoying the sweet companionship found within the leaves. Occasions which allow for such leisurely indulgence and pleasant pursuits are particularly enchanting when accompanied by a cup of hot tea and the warm amber glow of twinkling candlelight that gilds the pages in richness, brilliance and splendor.

At one time, the reading of a book aloud was a pleasing occupation enjoyed by ladies of refined persuasions, particularly by those who shared similar penchants and literary preferences. Back in the 19th century, book clubs provided ladies an opportunity with which to gather friends, old and dear, and to share in rich conversation about books and novels, as many interesting and lively discussions were sure to follow when a favored chapter was read aloud.

For young ladies budding into gracious gentlewomen with a desire for self-improvement, groups referred to as a "Lyceum" provided an afternoon of reading favored poetry and essay collections, either found in a favorite gift book or written by one of the young ladies themselves. These favored passages were so treasured, that oftentimes they were written in one's finest penmanship and assembled into handmade volumes, with the leaves being carefully sewn, and enclosed in an elaborate cover, lined with silk and embellished with jewel toned ribbons and lace.

So generally beloved were these gatherings of friends and fond acquaintances, that a member of "The Book Class" named Ms. Harriet Aldrich once wrote to her friends regarding a quote from St. Augustine, stating, "It is about as good a description of The Book Class as you could find."

To talk and laugh with mutual concessions, to read pleasant books; to jest and to be solemn, to dissent from each other without offence; to reach one another somewhat, or somewhat learn.





Properly Caring for Favored Books

Those who really care for books are seldom content to restrict them to the library, for nothing adds more to the charm of a drawing-room than a well-designed bookcase: an expanse of beautiful bindings is as decorative as a fine tapestry.

—Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, 1897

Although many believe the library to be the most suitable quarters for one's collection of favored books and leather bound treasures, others subscribe to the notion that book collections are most pleasing when placed throughout the home, grouped companionably together with favored objects of beauty and sentiment, believing it is the loveliness of little things that imparts substance and life to the home. In the 19th century, books were highly esteemed possessions, particularly by those of literary persuasions, with one writer describing the era as:

An age of supreme elegance when no personal belonging was considered trivial, every object—no matter how modest—was treasured.

—Susan Benjamin

For those possessing a sizeable book collection, whether they were new or old and leather bound, the well-appointed library contained a vast array of stately bookshelves with which to keep them tidy and in order. Oftentimes the volumes were categorized by subject matter, while others were placed in alphabetical order or simply grouped together by a common author.

To care for these treasured volumes, certain methods of handling were always observed to preserve their integrity and to keep them in excellent repair. One such method to ensure leather bindings remained intact, was to always retrieve a book by firmly grasping with the whole hand, rather than pulling on its spine. Books were faithfully kept from areas of excessive heat, which tended to make the pages brittle, as well as excessive humidity, which could cause mold and mildew to form. To inhibit dust from gathering, shelf guards were often employed, made from wood, tapestry or other suitable material, and allowed to extend three to four inches from the shelf above to keep dust from collecting on the books below.



A Preserving Nature Old Fashioned Waxed Roses

Waxed blooms "have a notable place in the pantheon of flowers because they endure, retaining the essence of a fresh flower yet having a unique identity.

—Georgianne Brennan

With a look of quaint gentility, a lovely cut glass bowl charmingly displays a collection of carefully preserved heirloom roses, gingerly nestled among emerald green fern fronds, velvety lambs ear, eucalyptus berries and trailing sprigs of variegated ivy. During the 19th century, ladies were taught that the "contemplation of the beautiful was always interesting and instructive," and that a love for home and a pride in things made beautiful were the hallmarks of a fine and elegant lady. So regarded was this love for "beautiful things," flowers and various garden sundries were often dipped into wax and then fashioned into everlasting arrangements and compositions to decorate the home for holidays and other joyous occasions. Later, when the arrangements were dismantled, the waxed blossoms were tucked in little nooks and crannies among treasured mementos or placed upon shelves between china teacups and other fine and delicate ware.

To preserve roses and other favored botanicals, three blocks of paraffin wax (found at the locale mercantile) were placed in a large coffee can or other suitable container. The can was then placed in a kettle of water and simmered gently on low heat until all of the wax had melted. Holding the blossoms by their stems, perfectly unblemished flowers, (which had been thoroughly chilled) were carefully dipped into the hot melted wax and gently turned to coat on all sides. Using a small toothpick or broom straw, any petals, which may have adhered to one another, were gently separated, and wax was carefully poured between them, to fully coat the flower. A length of string or kitchen twine was tied to the stems, and the flowers were carefully hung to dry over a sheet of waxed paper. After the wax began to harden, the stems were carefully dipped into the paraffin wax and allowed to dry. After several hours, when the wax had thoroughly hardened, any drips or excessive wax was cut away using a sharp paring knife and the flowers arranged into lovely compositions and pleasing arrangements.

She walks among the loveliness she made, between the apple-blossoms and the water—She walks among the patterned pied brocade, each flower her son, and every tree her daughter.

—Vita Sackville-West



*Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way
unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

—Psalm 37:4-5



Letter Writing And Correspondence

The thoughts contained in a letter, the kind, unselfish, pretty thoughts of friendship, remain forever in the heart and mind of the person for whom it was intended.

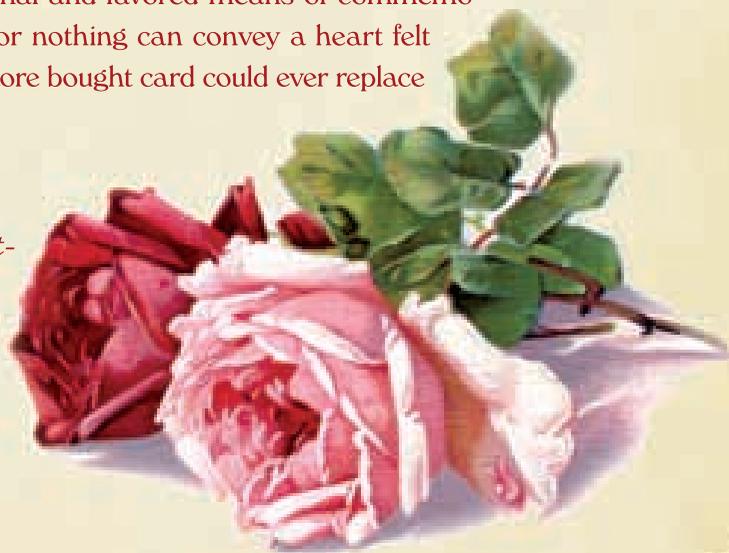
—*Book of Etiquette, 1922*

During the 19th century, ladies often presided over the affairs of the home, performing the many duties of a social administrator and penning beautifully written letters of correspondence to dear friends and loved ones. In those days, it was considered the mark of a well-bred young lady if she possessed the ability to compose a well-written letter, as the quality of her “hand” revealed much about her social status, education, and upbringing. Many friendships were cultivated through hand written letters, and oftentimes these dear epistles were considered a suitable and proper method of courtship as well. Because letters were, for the most part, the only means of communication between distant friends and would-be suitors, they were fondly cherished, with each and every word being savored, and read again and again. Oftentimes, handwritten letters enabled one to express thoughts and feelings that one may not express in person, as well as afforded the author time for quiet reflection and creative expression. Because quill pens were used in that day, great care was taken when writing a letter of correspondence as an inkblot on a letter indicated carelessness and negligence on the part of the writer. Therefore, much time was spent on cultivating one’s penmanship and of using a quill pen.

As in days of old, the handwritten letter is still the most revered and time-honored method of communication, and is without exception, the most personal and favored means of commemorating birthdays, holidays and special occasions; for nothing can convey a heart felt sentiment better than a handwritten letter, and no store bought card could ever replace true words spoken from the heart.

When you write to your friends, make your letters so beautiful in form and text that they will be read, re-read, and cherished a long time after as a fond memory.

—*Book of Etiquette, 1922*



The Properly Furnished Writing Desk



Among the many delightful furnishings found within the old fashioned home, the writing desk was an elegant and tasteful fitting, valued for keeping the ladies writing accessories tidy and in order. And though some were content with a common library table, with a flat tabletop and drawers beneath for holding writing accessories and various miscellany, many preferred a more elaborate piece commonly known as a "secretary," with which to place in their thoughtfully appointed drawing rooms. These lovely pieces, which also doubled as a writing desk, book case and display case for one's most treasured collectables, were often decorated with hand carvings, pediments, and detailed wood work. When a desk was needed, a small surface folded down revealing many and varied cubbyholes and compartments for storing letters, writing utensils, and nick knacks commonly used in that day. When not in use, the writing surface folded up to conceal the secretary's contents and stood as a graceful and much favored furnishing in the old fashioned home.

Because ladies often possessed an impressive mastery of elegant script and prose, they frequently collected beautiful writing instruments to create fanciful letters of correspondence and to tend to the affairs of the home. In their properly furnished writing desk, ladies often kept writing essentials such as fine glass dipping pens, a generous supply of brass nibs, fine inks in assorted colors such as turquoise, tobacco, and indigo, along with a lovely ink well to keep them safely stored in. Found there also were collections of fine stationary, pretty note cards for quick correspondence, decorative letter openers, envelopes, postal stamps, and calendars as well.

Her plants, her books . . . her writing desk . . . were all within her reach . . . she could scarcely see an object in that room which had not an interesting remembrance connected with it.

—Jane Austen

The Art of Composing A Well Written Letter

*I love to write to you—it gives my heart a holiday and sets the bells to ringing.
—Emily Dickinson to Minnie Holland*

In earlier years, ladies held very particular ideas about the propriety of their letter writing and correspondence, and often observed the standards prescribed by favored etiquette manuals and lady's periodicals of their day. Still considered the height of good manners, the following suggestions are as timely today as they were a century ago.

Letter writing... is a very different affair. Its beauty consists in its simplicity, ease, and freedom from formality. The best rule that can be given for letter writing is, to imagine the person present who you are addressing, and write just what you would say in conversation. All attempts at effort, in letter writing, are out of place. The detail of particulars, such as your correspondent would be interested to know, and the expression of your own feelings, are the great excellences of this kind of writing.

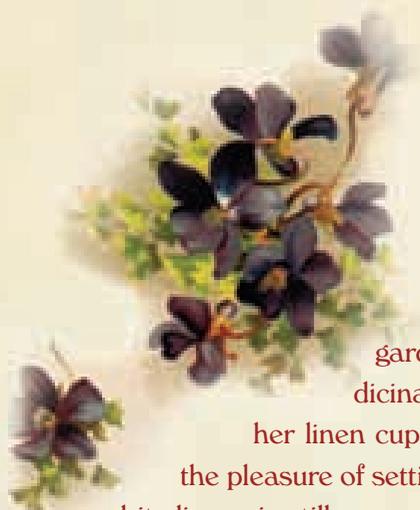
—How To Be A Lady, 1850

When composing a handwritten letter, ladies often slipped away to a quiet location, either seated at their writing desk or an amiable cushioned chair pulled close to a cozy fire, allowing them peace and solitude with which to gather their thoughts and to translate them onto the pages of their writing papers. A balanced and comfortable writing utensil was always chosen, allowing them to inscribe in their loveliest penmanship, and a cup of hot tea was kept close at hand to refresh them between "pretty thoughts and friendly salutations."

Thank you for my dear letter, for the love it bore me, and for its golden thoughts, and feelings so like gems.

*—Emily Dickinson to Susan Gilbert
Dickinson, February 1852*





The Scented Linen Cupboard

For centuries, the old fashioned woman has lovingly tended to her herb gardens, not simply for the delicious flavor they impart or for the healing medicinal properties they possess, but for the delicious fragrance herbs lend to her linen cupboards and clothes closets. In old homes where romance still lingers, the pleasure of setting glorious bouquets of fragrant herbs and scented florals among lovely white linens is still a revered and beloved tradition, and is favored by those who take pride in deliciously feminine touches so redolent of days gone by.

In the linen cupboard, cinnamon sticks and dried vanilla beans are carefully tucked between the folds of favored linens and blankets, while sachets and little bowls of scented potpourris are nestled in cupboard drawers and placed upon cupboard shelves to impart a delightful fresh scent. Made from a host of intoxicating herbs, dried flowers, whole spices and cedar chips, sweet smelling potpourri's are particularly favored for chasing moths away and for imparting a delicious fragrance to the linen cupboard and its delicate contents.

Lavender and Rose Potpourri Blend

½ Cup lavender buds

½ Cup dried mint

½ Cup dried rose buds

3 three inch sticks of cinnamon, crushed

¼ Cup cedar chips

1 Tablespoon orris root or sea salt

Lavender Essential Oil

Cinnamon and Cedar Potpourri Blend

2 Cups of cedar tips

2 Cups of small mixed pinecones

1 Cup of whole cloves

1 Cup of cinnamon sticks

1 Cup rose hips

1 Tablespoon orris root or sea salt

Bayberry or Vanilla Essential Oil

Old Fashioned Scented Sachet Blends

Rose Scented Sachet Blend

- 4 ounces rose petals
- 2 ounces whole rose buds
- 1 ounce orris root powder or sea salt
- 2-3 drops damask rose oil
- 1 ounce whole cloves

Lovely Lavender Sachet Blend

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 4 ounces lavender buds | 1 ounce orris root or sea salt |
| 1 ounce peppermint leaves | 3-4 drops lavender oil |

Mixed Herbal Blend

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 ounce rosemary | 1 ounce chamomile flowers |
| 1 ounce thyme | 1 drop lemon balm oil |
| 1 ounce lemon verbena | 1 ounce orris root or sea salt |
| 1 ounce sweet woodruff | 4-5 drops lavender oil |
| 1 ounce peppermint leaves | |





A Return to Elegance

The Ladies Dressing Table

There were treasures on Mother's dressing table ... a Wedgwood pin dish, a little porcelain Mary and her lamb, the pale green, flowered top of a rose bowl that had broken, and Mother's silver-backed comb and brush and mirror. All these things held meaning for me. Each was ... capable of evoking a rush of memories.

—Blackberry Winter

In earlier days, the powder room was as delightful and fine a place as any room in the home, filled with feminine furnishings, charming appointments and quiet and peaceful splendors. Among the delicate fittings, a dainty dressing table rendered in graceful curves and form served as a lovely repository of elegant enchantments and sweet necessities, and stood as an enduring emblem of feminine grace and old fashioned charm. To accompany the dressing table, a satin slipper chair with a lovely ruffled cushion offered a place for "quiet contemplation and leisurely indulgence" and allowed the lady to be seated comfortably at her meticulously appointed table. To cast a soft reflection, a lovely old Venetian glass mirror was situated among the dainty treasures, along with a glorious assemblage of crystal candlesticks, valued for lending a warm glow to the gracious and genial surroundings and to a room rich with the opulence of rare gems in shades of scarlet, crimson, mahogany and gold.

In this place of peacefulness and pleasure, a collection of precious perfumes in crystal flacons were displayed upon the ladies dressing table, along with elegant etched glass bottles and other glistening repositories, filled with fragrant smelling salts, floral scented waters, luxurious lotions and delicate skin creams with which to keep the lady's complexion soft and supple. Hand painted porcelain boxes, filled with lightly scented powders and patters could often be found, along with decorative talk shakers, hatpin holders, ornate hair receivers and dainty pin trays for holding delicate miscellany.

To keep the ladies hair perfectly groomed and luxuriously radiant, a filigree comb and brush set, along with a lovely hand held mirror, frequently monogrammed with the ladies initials, could be found upon the dressing table, as well as decorative hairpins, tortoise shell combs and other delightful hair dressing amenities, neatly displayed in lovely china, porcelain or crystal receptacles.

Precious Perfumes

Mother always smelled beautiful. I remember burrowing into her neck just for the soft loveliness of scented skin.

—The Summer of the Great-Grandmother

Serving as the crown jewels of the ladies toilette, luxurious perfumes and sweetly scented floral waters, made from intriguing blends of rare and precious flowers, aromatic spices and fragrant essential oils were carefully blended to perfection, creating delicate scents evocative of a rose garden and displaying the subtle artistry of a skilled apothecary. To preserve the integrity of these precious perfumes, scent bottles made from heavy crystal in lovely jewel tone shades were topped with intricate reticulated filigree stoppers with a lovely glass dauber for applying one's favorite perfume in the old French fashion, "on the wrists and behind the ear."

Enchanted Embrace Perfume

10 Drops oil of lavender
30 Drops oil of rose
40 Drops oil of geranium
20 Drops oil of nutmeg

30 Drops oil of rosewood
40 Drops oil of vanilla
20 Drops oil of sandalwood
1-ounce almond oil

In a small glass bottle, combine the essential oils with the almond oil and shake gently to thoroughly combine.

On her pattern, her daughters model themselves; by her counsels they are directed; through her virtues all are honored.

—Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management



Old Fashioned Ironing Techniques

To begin ironing, the ironing board should be set to the proper height to avoid sore muscles and fatigue, making certain it is neither too high nor too low.

The ironing board should have a properly fitted cover with sufficient padding to provide the best ironing surface. The pad and the cover should be regularly removed and laundered, as spray starch can accumulate over time, and may transfer to other linens when ironed upon.

For ease in removing wrinkles, the iron should be filled with water to produce sufficient steam and a solution of spray starch used, as both aid in smoothing wrinkles and serve to protect the item from stains by applying a thin coating to the surface of the fabric.

For the most efficient method of ironing, one should use slow unhurried movements, working with the thread of the goods to alleviate any puckering or warping.

When ironing linens, the items should always be ironed on the right side of the fabric unless the item is embroidered, in which case, it should be ironed on the wrong side, using a thick pad for cushion.

Lavender Linen Water

In earlier days, a sprig of fragrant lavender was often placed in a bowl of fresh water to sprinkle upon fine linens while ironing, to impart a lovely fresh scent and to give the fabric a crisp and beautiful finish. In keeping with the fine old custom, lavender linen water may be sprayed upon linens when ironing, and to impart a lovely scent to bed sheets and covers as well.

20 ounces distilled water

1½ ounces of 100 proof alcohol

100 drops of lavender essential oil

In a bottle with a fine mist sprayer, combine ingredients and shake gently to combine.



An Old Fashioned Clothes Line

In earlier days, ladies would often hang their precious linens and delicate sundries on an old fashioned clothes line, allowing them to dry in the warm air and sunshine and to impart a lovely springtime fragrance. Valued for preserving the lady's hand and needlework and for gently whitening treasured linens, the outdoor clothesline often showcased such lovely items as snowy white bed linens and pillowslips embroidered with charming old flower baskets, delicate

lace handkerchiefs, ruffled gingham aprons, and a host of other dainty and elegant wares. And though the lovely ritual of hanging laundry outdoors has long been considered one of life's most simple pleasures, many believe there is an art to hanging one's "delicate sundries and miscellany" properly.

When hanging laundry on a clothesline, the items should always be pulled taught to avoid drooping and to keep wrinkles from setting. To save time and conserve space, items may be hung on the line with their edges slightly overlapping, and fastened with one clothespin.

When drying whites, the items should be hung in the hot sun for a gentle whitening, while Sunday dresses and dark colored items should be hung in the shade of a tree to keep them from fading.

When hanging garments such as skirts, dresses and aprons, the items should be pulled taught and pinned to keep the hems from rolling or curling up while drying.

When hanging men's slacks and work britches, the items should always be hung by their cuffs, as the weight of the garment will allow them to dry without wrinkles.

When drying sheets and linens, the items should be brought in while they are still slightly damp, and ironed on a table covered with a heavy blanket.

Clothes Maiden

Though the old fashioned clothesline is preferred for hanging one's laundry in the beautiful outdoors, a wooden drying rack, commonly known as a clothes maiden, is a sensible alternative during the cold months of winter and particularly favored for drying items which are frequently laundered or delicate in nature. Because drying racks fold up easily, they are convenient to store and may be placed almost anywhere in the home and can even be taken outdoors when a clothesline is not available.



An Old Fashioned Tea Party



In serving tea, the table should be arranged before any visitors arrive. Its cover may be a linen tea cloth embroidered or trimmed with lace, while the cups and saucers, with the spoon resting in each saucer, the thin slices of lemon, the small wafers, cakes or sandwiches on plates or pretty doilies, should be artistically arranged upon it. The teakettle should be in its place, the teapot just in front of it. The cream pitcher and sugar bowl should be within convenient reach. If the hostess pours the tea, she allows the guest to put in the sugar and cream for themselves. If she expects many visitors, then there will be wisdom in asking a friend to pour the tea for her.

—Ladies Home Journal, 1897

The custom of taking afternoon tea is one of England's most charming rituals, and has long been regarded as a lovely gesture of gracious hospitality, and as one of life's most elegant and enduring pleasures. And though the four o'clock hour is considered by many to be a "graceful time for gathering," tea is a sweet indulgence which may be savored at any hour of the day, serving as a lovely occasion to gather friends, old and dear, and to bask in the sweet fellowship and the cozy warmth of friendly conversation.

During the reign of Queen Victoria, afternoon tea was so highly regarded, it was often the subject of many old time ladies manuals and household guides, which provided detailed instructions on the correct methods and accoutrements needed to host a proper tea party, enabling women of every social background to share in the graceful world of taking tea. In those days, such things as "daintiness of service" and "congeniality of guests" were important hallmarks of an afternoon tea party, with every proper and hospitable hostess endeavoring to make her gathering a notable and sweet success. Afternoon tea was so esteemed by Queen Victoria that an old journal entry, written by one of her closest servants once stated:

*Her Majesty has a strong weakness for afternoon tea ...
she always brews the tea in the urn herself.*

Tea In The Parlor

To prepare for an afternoon tea party, an heirloom linen, edged in fine old filigree lace, was laid neatly upon the tea table and a bouquet of fragrant tea roses were gathered from the garden and nestled in a lovely antique vase. For special occasions, fanciful tea menus would include sumptuous savories, delicate pastries, and steaming pots of deliciously fragrant tea served in precious china teacups, with sliced lemons and cinnamon sticks added for a fine flavor. In the olden days, no tea party or ladies luncheon was considered complete without a delightful array of "sweets" of the most "varied and delicious kinds", and were always properly served with silver tongs for daintiness of service and to keep from soiling one's prettiest gloves. Made from old family recipes, confections such as pastel colored divinity flavored with tiny bits of fruit, hand dipped chocolates, sugar coated pansies and candied orange peel were the highlight of the afternoon tea party, and were always highly loved and favored by all. To add to the beauty and elegance of the table, dainty silver teaspoons, heirloom tea napkins and hand painted dishes were standard accompaniments, allowing all to revel in the enchantments of an afternoon tea party, and to bask in the prim formalities that made it such a joyous affair.

For less ceremonial, but equally joyous occasions, a traditional "cream tea" was favored by many a gracious hostess, and often consisted of deliciously simple fare such as old fashioned scones, served with clotted cream and lemon curd, along with a pot of cinnamon spiced friendship tea for a much loved afternoon treat. The night before the festivities, a batch of clotted cream was made fresh, the old fashioned way, using a combination of rich Jersey whole milk, with a bit of fresh heavy cream added for richness and flavor. The mixture was placed in a shallow dish and set on the cook stove over the lowest heat for four to five hours, and then cooled in the 'buttery' overnight. The next morning, the cream was skimmed with the aid of a cream skimmer and served at afternoon tea.

When planning an afternoon tea party, the hostess had an infinite variety of tea's with which to choose from to compliment her tastefully chosen menu, and included a wide assortment of flavors, ranging from the full-bodied black teas of India, to the lightly fragrant green teas and oolongs of the orient. For a delightful and unique blend, tea was often flavored with a variety of herbs and spices, including lemon verbena, rose hips, lemon balm, rosemary, dried orange peel and rose geranium leaves for a refreshing and distinctive flavor. For the true tea enthusiast, the traditional lemon slices with cloves, along with a bowl of sugar cubes and a little pitcher of milk were always included on the tea tray as well.

