

Homely Talks with Poor Mothers.

HEALTHY HOUSES.

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In considering the arrangements for the sanitary conveniences and water supply in any house, much will depend on whether it is in the town or in the country, and on what the system of drainage for the neighbourhood is. But whatever sort of sanitary conveniences are provided, great care and cleanliness are necessary if they are not to become unpleasant and unhealthy, and children especially should be taught when they are quite young to be careful and nice in their behaviour in these places. If the house is supplied with a water-closet, the matter is very simple, and the only care needed is to see that it is thoroughly flushed each time that it is used, that no rubbish of any sort is thrown down it, and that once a week at least it is cleaned with a brush kept for the purpose. In some districts, instead of having a separate water supply to the w.c., the waste water from the house is used for flushing. This is very seldom entirely satisfactory, as often there is not enough water to flush sufficiently, and the arrangements are rather liable to get out of order. Perhaps the most usual system in poor districts is that of having tubs or pails, which are taken away by the scavengers, and replaced by clean tubs. There should always be a separate closet for each house, as then only the one family is responsible for the condition in which it is kept; and for two or more families to have to share the same, as is sometimes the case in poor districts, is a most unpleasant arrangement in every way. Unless there is a water supply, the closet should always be outside the house, and it should have a window kept constantly open, and also a ventilator over the door. If it is a pail closet, it is a good plan to have a shovel and a box containing dry earth or ashes, some of which should be thrown on every time that the place is used. The old-fashioned ashpits are very unhealthy, and in towns are being done away with and replaced by water-closets, and it would be well always to try and get such an alteration made before taking a house. In country places where no men are employed to do the scavenging, the best plan is to have a trench dug at the far end of the garden, then the contents of the pail can be emptied and covered over with earth, and so on, until the trench is filled. The closet should always be kept

very clean, and the walls and ceiling lime-washed three or four times a year.

For the dry refuse, it is best to have a dustbin with a tightly-fitting lid, and to see that nothing except really dry refuse is put into it. Potato parings and other vegetable refuse, floor sweepings, and all other rubbish that can be burnt should be got rid of in that way, and if thrown on a bright fire and covered over with cinders will not cause any smell or be in the least unpleasant. The lid of the dustbin should always be kept on, both because it is very unpleasant to have the contents blowing about, and also because they become much more offensive if they get wet.

It is also necessary to be careful that the drain from the sink, and any other drains there may be in the house, do not get stopped up by having rubbish of any sort (especially hair) thrown down them. The grating over the sink pipe should *always* be kept on, or it is almost sure to get blocked, and when the sink is cleaned it is a good plan to pour a kettle of boiling water down, so as to keep the pipe quite sweet and clean.

When people are moving into another house, they should always have it thoroughly cleaned from top to bottom, and all the chimneys swept. If any papering is to be done, all the old paper should be stripped off the walls first, as to have one paper on the top of another is very unhealthy. In choosing a new paper, it is best to have one with as smooth a surface as possible, as anything like the old-fashioned "flock" paper holds the dust and dirt much more. Papers should be light in colour rather than dark, especially in rooms that do not get much sun. In any rooms that are not having fresh paper the ceilings and walls should be well swept down with a soft brush, and this should always be done about twice a year, whether the walls *look* dirty or not. The larder, and any cupboards or places that are not papered, should be lime-washed, and the larder especially ought to be freshly lime-washed two or three times a year, so that it may always be quite fresh and sweet. Every nook and corner should be cleaned and scrubbed, and many people put some disinfectant into the water used for scrubbing; but it must always be remembered that fresh air and sunshine are two of the best disinfectants, and so it is well to have all the windows wide open, both top and bottom, all the time this cleaning is going on. A great deal is heard in these days about the use of disinfectants, but people do not always understand that in order to destroy the germs of disease a *strong* disinfectant is needed, and

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