

Furniture Paste

Ingredients

3 oz. of common beeswax, 1 oz. of white wax, 1 oz. of curd soap, 1 pint of turpentine, 1 pint of boiled water.

[Illustration: FURNITURE BRUSH.]

Method

Mix the ingredients together, adding the water when cold; shake the mixture frequently in the bottle, and do not use it for 48 hours after it is made. It should be applied with a piece of flannel, the furniture polished with a duster, and then with an old silk rubber. 2311. The chambers are finished, the chamber candlesticks brought down and cleaned, the parlour lamps trimmed;--and here the housemaid's utmost care is required. In cleaning candlesticks, as in every other cleaning, she should have cloths and brushes kept for that purpose alone; the knife used to scrape them should be applied to no other purpose; the tallow-grease should be thrown into a box kept for the purpose; the same with everything connected with the lamp-trimming; the best mode of doing which she will do well to learn from the tradesman who supplies the oil; always bearing in mind, however, that without perfect cleanliness, which involves occasional scalding, no lamp can be kept in order. 2312. The drawing and dining-room, inasmuch as everything there is more costly and valuable, require even more care. When the carpets are of the kind known as velvet-pile, they require to be swept firmly by a hard whisk brush, made of cocoanut fibre. 2313. The furniture must be carefully gone over in every corner with a soft cloth, that it may be left perfectly free from dust; or where that is beyond reach, with a brush made of long feathers, or a goose's wing. The sofas are swept in the same manner, slightly beaten, the cushions shaken and smoothed, the picture-frames swept, and everything arranged in its proper place. This, of course, applies to dining as well as drawing-room and morning-room. And now the housemaid may dress herself for the day, and prepare for the family dinner, at which she must attend. 2314. We need not repeat the long instructions already given for laying the dinner-table. At the family dinner, even where no footman waits, the routine will be the same. In most families the cloth is laid with the slips on each side, with napkins, knives, forks, spoons, and wine and finger glasses on all occasions. [Illustration: BUTLER'S TRAY AND STAND.] 2315. She should ascertain that her plate is in order, glasses free from smears, water-bottles and decanters the same, and everything ready on her tray, that she may be able to lay her cloth properly. Few things add more to the neat and comfortable appearance of a dinner-table than well-polished plate; indeed, the state of the plate is a certain indication of a well-managed or ill-managed household. Nothing is easier than to keep plate in good order, and yet many servants, from stupidity and ignorance, make it the greatest trouble of all things under their care. It should be remembered, that it is utterly impossible to make greasy silver take a polish; and that as spoons and forks in daily use are continually in contact with grease, they must require good washing in soap-and-water to remove it. Silver should be washed with a soapy flannel in one water, rinsed in another, and then wiped dry with a dry cloth. The plate so washed may be polished with the plate-rags, as in the following directions:--Once a week all the plate should receive a thorough cleaning with the hartshorn powder, as directed in the first recipe for cleaning plate; and where the housemaid can find time, rubbed every day with the plate-rags. 2316. Hartshorn, we may observe, is one of the best possible ingredients for plate-powder in daily use. It leaves on the silver a deep, dark polish, and at the same time does less injury than anything else. It has also the advantage of being very cheap; almost all the ordinary powders sold in boxes containing more or less of quicksilver, in some form or another; and this in process of time is sure to make the plate brittle. If any one wishes to be convinced of the effect of quicksilver on plate, he has only to rub a little of it on one place for some time,--on the handle of a silver teaspoon for instance, and

he will find it break in that spot with very little pressure. To Clean Plate. _A very excellent method._ [Illustration: PLATE-BRUSH.] 2317. Wash the plate well to remove all grease, in a strong lather of common yellow soap and boiling water, and wipe it quite dry; then mix as much hartshorn powder as will be required, into a thick paste, with cold water or spirits of wine; smear this lightly over the plate with a piece of soft rag, and leave it for some little time to dry. When perfectly dry, brush it off quite clean with a soft plate-brush, and polish the plate with a dry leather. If the plate be very dirty, or much tarnished, spirits of wine will be found to answer better than the water for mixing the paste. Plate-rags for daily use. 2318. Boil soft rags (nothing is better for the purpose than the tops of old cotton stockings) in a mixture of new milk and hartshorn powder, in the proportion of 1 oz. of powder to a pint of milk; boil them for 5 minutes; wring them as soon as they are taken out, for a moment, in cold water, and dry them before the fire. With these rags rub the plate briskly as soon as it has been well washed and dried after daily use. A most beautiful deep polish will be produced, and the plate will require nothing more than merely to be dusted with a leather or a dry soft cloth, before it is again put on the table. 2319. For waiting at table, the housemaid should be neatly and cleanly dressed, and, if possible, her dress made with closed sleeves, the large open ones dipping and falling into everything on the table, and being very much in the way. She should not wear creaking boots, and should move about the room as noiselessly as possible, anticipating people's wants by handing them things without being asked for them, and altogether be as quiet as possible. It will be needless here to repeat what we have already said respecting waiting at table, in the duties of the butler and footman: rules that are good to be observed by them, are equally good for the parlour-maid or housemaid. 2320. The housemaid having announced that dinner is on the table, will hand the soup, fish, meat, or side-dishes to the different members of the family; but in families who do not spend much of the day together, they will probably prefer being alone at dinner and breakfast; the housemaid will be required, after all are helped, if her master does not wish her to stay in the room, to go on with her work of cleaning up in the pantry, and answer the bell when rung. In this case she will place a pile of plates on the table or a dumbwaiter, within reach of her master and mistress, and leave the room. [Illustration: CRUMB-BRUSH]. 2321. Dinner over, the housemaid removes the plates and dishes on the tray, places the dirty knives and forks in the basket prepared for them, folds up the napkins in the ring which indicates by which member of the family it has been used, brushes off the crumbs on the hand-tray kept for the purpose, folds up the table-cloth in the folds already made, and places it in the linen-press to be smoothed out. After every meal the table should be rubbed, all marks from hot plates removed, and the table-cover thrown over, and the room restored to its usual order. If the family retire to the drawing-room, or any other room, it is a good practice to throw up the sash to admit fresh air and ventilate the room. 2322. The housemaid's evening service consists in washing up the dinner-things, the plate, plated articles, and glasses, restoring everything to its place; cleaning up her pantry, and putting away everything for use when next required; lastly, preparing for tea, as the time approaches, by setting the things out on the tray, getting the urn or kettle ready, with cream and other things usually partaken of at that meal. 2323. In summer-time the windows of all the bedrooms, which have been closed during the heat of the day, should be thrown open for an hour or so after sunset, in order to air them. Before dark they should be closed, the bedclothes turned down, and the night-clothes laid in order for use when required. During winter, where fires are required in the dressing-rooms, they should be lighted an hour before the usual time of retiring, placing a fire-guard before each fire. At the same time, the night-things on the horse should be placed before it to be aired, with a tin can of hot water, if the mistress is in the habit of washing before going to bed. We may add, that there is no greater preservative of beauty than washing the face every night in hot water. The housemaid will probably be required to assist her mistress to undress and put her dress in order for the morrow; in which case her duties are very much those of the lady's-maid. 2324. And now the fire is made up for the night, the

fireguard replaced, and everything in the room in order for the night, the housemaid taking care to leave the night-candle and matches together in a convenient place, should they be required. It is usual in summer to remove all highly fragrant flowers from sleeping-rooms, the impression being that their scent is injurious in a close chamber. 2325. On leisure days, the housemaid should be able to do some needlework for her mistress,--such as turning and mending sheets and darning the house linen, or assist her in anything she may think fit to give her to do. For this reason it is almost essential that a housemaid, in a small family, should be an expert needlewoman; as, if she be a good manager and an active girl, she will have time on her hands to get through plenty of work. 2326. Periodical Cleanings.--Besides the daily routine which we have described, there are portions of every house which can only be thoroughly cleaned occasionally; at which time the whole house usually undergoes a more thorough cleaning than is permitted in the general way. On these occasions it is usual to begin at the top of the house and clean downwards; moving everything out of the room; washing the wainscoting or paint with soft soap and water; pulling down the beds and thoroughly cleansing all the joints; "scrubbing" the floor; beating feather beds, mattress, and paillasse, and thoroughly purifying every article of furniture before it is put back in its place. 2327. This general cleaning usually takes place in the spring or early summer, when the warm curtains of winter are replaced by the light and cheerful muslin curtains. Carpets are at the same time taken up and beaten, except where the mistress of the house has been worried into an experiment by the often-reiterated question, "Why beat your carpets?" In this case she will probably have made up her mind to try the cleaning process, and arranged with the company to send for them on the morning when cleaning commenced. It is hardly necessary to repeat, that on this occasion every article is to be gone over, the French-polished furniture well rubbed and polished. The same thorough system of cleaning should be done throughout the house; the walls cleaned where painted, and swept down with a soft broom or feather brush where papered; the window and bed curtains, which have been replaced with muslin ones, carefully brushed, or, if they require it, cleaned; lamps not likely to be required, washed out with hot water, dried, and cleaned. The several grates are now to be furnished with their summer ornaments; and we know none prettier than the following, which the housemaid may provide at a small expense to her mistress:--Purchase two yards and a half of crinoline muslin, and tear it into small strips, the selvage way of the material, about an inch wide; strip this thread by thread on each side, leaving the four centre threads; this gives about six-and-thirty pieces, fringed on each side, which are tied together at one end, and fastened to the trap of the register, while the threads, unravelled, are spread gracefully about the grate, the lower part of which is filled with paper shavings. This makes a very elegant and very cheap ornament, which is much stronger, besides, than those usually purchased. [Illustration: CORNICE-BRUSH.] [Illustration: HOUSE-PAIL.] [Illustration: DUSTING-BRUSH.] 2328. As winter approaches, this house-cleaning will have to be repeated, and the warm bed and window curtains replaced. The process of scouring and cleaning is again necessary, and must be gone through, beginning at the top, and going through the house, down to the kitchens. 2329. Independently of these daily and periodical cleanings, other occupations will present themselves from time to time, which the housemaid will have to perform. When spots show on polished furniture, they can generally be restored by soap-and-water and a sponge, the polish being brought out by using a little polish, and then well rubbing it. Again, drawers which draw out stiffly may be made to move more easily if the spot where they press is rubbed over with a little soap. 2330. Chips broken off any of the furniture should be collected and replaced, by means of a little glue applied to it. Liquid glue, which is sold prepared in bottles, is very useful to have in the house, as it requires no melting; and anything broken can be so quickly repaired. 2331. Breaking glass and china is about the most disagreeable thing that can happen in a family, and it is, probably, a greater annoyance to a right-minded servant than to the mistress. A neat-handed housemaid may sometimes repair

these breakages, where they are not broken in very conspicuous places, by joining the pieces very neatly together with a cement made as follows:--Dissolve an ounce of gum mastic in a quantity of highly-rectified spirits of wine; then soften an ounce of isinglass in warm water, and, finally, dissolve it in rum or brandy, till it forms a thick jelly. Mix the isinglass and gum mastic together, adding a quarter of an ounce of finely-powdered gum ammoniac; put the whole into an earthen pipkin, and in a warm place, till they are thoroughly incorporated together; pour it into a small phial, and cork it down for use. 2332. In using it, dissolve a small piece of the cement in a silver teaspoon over a lighted candle. The broken pieces of glass or china being warmed, and touched with the now liquid cement, join the parts neatly together, and hold in their places till the cement has set; then wipe away the cement adhering to the edge of the joint, and leave it for twelve hours without touching it: the joint will be as strong as the china itself, and if neatly done, it will show no joining. It is essential that neither of the pieces be wetted either with hot or cold water. USEFUL RECIPES FOR HOUSEMAIDS. To clean Marble. 2333. Mix with 1/4 pint of soap lees, 1/2 gill of turpentine, sufficient pipe-clay and bullock's gall to make the whole into rather a thick paste. Apply it to the marble with a soft brush, and after a day or two, when quite dry, rub it off with a soft rag. Apply this a second or third time till the marble is quite clean. Another method. 2334. Take two parts of soda, one of pumice-stone, and one of finely-powdered chalk. Sift these through a fine sieve, and mix them into a paste with water. Rub this well all over the marble, and the stains will be removed; then wash it with soap-and-water, and a beautiful bright polish will be produced. To clean Floorcloth. 2335. After having washed the floorcloth in the usual manner with a damp flannel, wet it all over with milk and rub it well with a dry cloth, when a most beautiful polish will be brought out. Some persons use for rubbing a well-waxed flannel; but this in general produces an unpleasant slipperiness, which is not the case with the milk. To clean Decanters. 2336. Roll up in small pieces some soft brown or blotting paper; wet them, and soap them well. Put them into the decanters about one quarter full of warm water; shake them well for a few minutes, then rinse with clear cold water; wipe the outsides with a nice dry cloth, put the decanters to drain, and when dry they will be almost as bright as new ones. To brighten Gilt Frames. 2337. Take sufficient flour of sulphur to give a golden tinge to about 1-1/2 pint of water, and in this boil 4 or 5 bruised onions, or garlic, which will answer the same purpose. Strain off the liquid, and with it, when cold, wash, with a soft brush, any gilding which requires restoring, and when dry it will come out as bright as new work. To preserve bright Grates or Fire-irons from Rust. 2338. Make a strong paste of fresh lime and water, and with a fine brush smear it as thickly as possible over all the polished surface requiring preservation. By this simple means, all the grates and fire-irons in an empty house may be kept for months free from harm, without further care or attention. German Furniture-Gloss.

Source: Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management (1861)

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