

#### SOME PRESS OPINIONS OF

# THE VERSE-BOOK OF A HOMELY WOMAN

#### By FAY INCHFAWN

- "A book for Martha written in the spirit of Mary."

  —The Lady.
- "Even the simplest themes are made to glow with beauty."—The Life of Faith.
- "Throughout these verses there is a haunting beauty that only an artist and a cultured heart could impart."

  —The Primitive Methodist Leader.
- "The manner in which the writer, in a semihumorous style, describes domestic troubles is at times extremely diverting."—The Edinburgh Evening News.
- "Mrs. Fay Inchfawn manages to produce a delicious flavour of George Herbert. She has given at least one reader some pleasant and profitable food for reflection."

   The Dublin Express.
- "A new poet of rare quality, quaint, simple fancies and a message of hope and comfort for such as she represents herself to be."—The Christian Endeavour Times.

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- "If this dainty little volume were known it would sell by scores of thousands, and find its way into innumerable Christian homes, I would not part with my copy for much fine gold, were there no other copy to be had."—Great Thoughts.
- "These are poems of a simplicity and tenderness which often achieves a real beauty. We find something worth the knowing in a woman who can think of God amid her groceries and praise Him in her scullery."—The Times.
- "It is hard to decide whether the woman's work in the home or the woman's joy in the fields is the most pleasingly described."—The Expository Times.
- "The poems are very good, they strike a sweet and simple note that even unpoetical people will appreciate. Homeliness is their chief characteristic and their homeliness is their beauty."—The Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.

# **VERSES**

OF A

# HOUSE-MOTHER

BY

### FAY INCHFAWN

AUTHOR OF "THE VERSE-BOOK OF A HOMELY WOMAN"

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# Dedicated

TO

MY FATHER

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# Part I IN THE HOUSE

"As a Woman thinketh in her heart, so is she."

OH! What a sight, and what a place! The table groaned with dirty crocks.

The ground was strewn with shirts and socks.

The tap dripped, and with snake-like grace

A stream of water ran a race

Right gaily over lino-ed floor.

Great greasy saucepans filled the sink,

A sticky tray the dresser bore,

With uncleaned knives . . . and oh, to think

That daily Jane should choose this day To have the sulks and stay away.

The Woman sighed. Her copper fire Was tiresome, and refused to "go." And one small tricksy zephyr blew The smoke down, and the black smuts flew.

Life seemed a hopeless thing . . . a lyre With faulty strings, that mocked the player.

What use to harbour visions higher
Than pies and puddings? (She wiped up

The stream of water; washed each cup,
And tackled next the greasy pans.)
Yes, Hope was ever a betrayer;
'Twas passing strange, how high desires
Were quenched in kindling copper fires;
And maddening, quite, to fashion plans
Of fair soul-culture; thoughts above
The daily routine of a house;
The capture of marauding mouse.
'Twas hard to have to spend one's hours
With cabbages, instead of flowers,
And meet monotonous demands
On time, and strength, and brains, and
hands.

So thought the Woman. And, the while, She journeyed many a weary mile From sink to stove. (Jane had a knack Of moving fixtures from their places; And added this to airs and graces, She very seldom put them back!)

At last, with puckered fretful brow,
She oiled the household gear, and put
The "whites" to soak. She washed each
woolly;

And Aspiration, like a pulley,
Kept drawing her, and lifting high
The very soul of her. But how
The thing took place, she never knew.
A sudden glimpse of azure sky
Seen through the window? Or a breeze
That moved the distant mulberry trees?
Maybe. What use to reason why?
A Voice called . . . sweet . . . compelling . . . nigh.

Come out of the kitchen . . . You! What! Have you been so long The serf of pot and frying-pan,

That now you think blacklead and rice?

Truce to your war on hapless mice.

Vassal of dinner-gong,

Slave to the flue,

Come out to-day and let your soul run

rife

Above the bare utilities of life!

Yes, yes (the Woman frowned), but what Of her whom circumstance has chained? How is her freedom to be gained Whose adversary is a pot Which clamours to be cleaned? A tear Found in some garment unaware; A mishap with the tablecloth Which must be washed at once; a moth, Who finds snug spot for Winter rest; Advent of unexpected guest . . . All such things hold her down, and chain

Would-be excursions of the brain,
Till spiritual desire is spent;
Yet would it be expedient
If any mother, any wife,
Ignored utilities of life?

No, never so. But, think above the worry.
Rise up, O Fair. Nor vex your seeking soul,

By brooding over house-flannels; by hurry; By saving odds and ends of soap and coal.

The Woman thought . . . She rinsed and blued.

At length she turned her face about,
And went to hang the washing out,
When, yet once more that calm Voice
sued,

And begged a hearing, sang in fine, As she pegged garments on the line.

O puckered brow! Smooth out! Love could have set you,

For testimony, in some distant star;

Could have expressed himself—through you —in shining;

Or told His heart in music—your divining—

Or in some poem—made by you—have let you

Blaze forth His perfect loveliness afar.

Instead, He placed you in a home, and gave you

Just ordinary kitchen work to do.

Rise queenly. Never let the task enslave you.

In lowliest serving, grace can filter through.

The Woman smiled. She fetched the prop, And hoisted up the line in place.
Then, wedded to her friendly mop,
She washed the kitchen for a space.
She donned her daintiest frock with care,
And put a ribbon in her hair,
(Brave triumphing for all to see!)
And softly singing, set the tea.
For all the while her kettle simmered,
A gleam of radiant glory glimmered,
Until her spirit over-bore
Her tired body more and more.

"Chained? Not a bit of it! I'm free! It is my attitude to things
Which makes them bearable, or not.
We are so earthy, yet maybe
We every one of us have wings.