

LESSON 4 DOMESTIC CHORES

Have you ever met a woman who never touched a **broom or a floor-cloth** in her life? Nearly all women but a queen have to put up with the daily routine doing all sorts of **domestic work**. But different women approach the problem differently.

The so-called lady-type women can afford to have a **live-in help** who can do the housework. She is usually an **old hand at doing the cleaning** and **washing, beating carpets** and **polishing the furniture**. She is like a magician who entertains you by **sweeping the floor** in a flash or in no time **making an apple-pie with one hand**. Few are those so lucky as to have such a resident magician to make them free and happy.

Efficient housewives can **do anything about the house**. **Tidying up** is not a problem for such women. An experienced housewife will not spend her afternoon **ironing** or **starching collars**; she **gets everything done** quickly and effortlessly. She **keeps all the rooms clean and neat**, **dusting the furniture**, **scrubbing the floor**, **washing up** and **putting everything in its place**. She is likely to do a **thorough cleaning** every fortnight. She **removes stains**, **does the mending**, **knits** and **sews**. What man doesn't dream of having such a **handy** and thrifty wife?

The third type of woman finds **doing the everyday household chores** rather a boring business. You can often hear her say that she **hates doing the dishes** and **vacuuming**. So you may find a **huge pile of washing** in the bathroom and **the sink is probably piled high with plates**. **A room in a mess** and **a thick layer of dust** everywhere will always tell you what sort of woman **runs the house**. What could save a flat from this kind of **lazy-bones**? Probably a good husband.

Finally, there are housewives who do not belong to any group. They like things in the house to look as nice as one can make them. But they never do it themselves. They'd rather **save time and effort** and they do not feel like **peeling** tons of **potatoes or bleaching**, and **rinsing the linen**. It is simply not worth doing. They persuade their husbands to buy **labour-saving devices** — **a dish-washer**, **a vacuum-cleaner**, **a food processor** or... a robot-housewife. Another way for them to avoid **labour-and-time-consuming house chores** is to send the washing to the **laundry**, **to cook dinner** every other day, or at least make their husbands and children **help them in the home**.

In the end, there exist hundreds of ways to look after the house. You are free to choose one of them. What kind of housewife would you like to be?

1. Four types of a housewife have been described in the text above. The first three types have been given names — the lady-type, the lazy-bones type, the efficient housewife. What would you call the fourth type?

2. Which of the types is preferable, to your mind? Why?

3. Name the activities which you see in the pictures below.

► *Pattern: The lady is working about the house.*



4. Say how you share domestic chores in your family. Who does the major part of the household work? Which of you is good at helping your mother?

○ **TEXT**

Some Practical Experience

(Extract from the book by Monica Dickens "One Pair of Hands". Abridged)

I think Miss Cattermole* refrained from telling the agency what she thought of me, for they rang me up a few days later and offered me another job. This time it was a Mrs. Robertson, who wanted someone twice a week to do washing and ironing and odd jobs. As I had already assured the agency that I was thoroughly domesticated in every way, I didn't feel like admitting that I was the world's worst ironer.

* Miss Cattermole is the name of the lady who was the first to hire Monica through a job agency.

They gave me the address, and I went along there. The porter of the flats let me in, as Mrs. Robertson was out, but she had left a note for me, and a pile of washing on the bathroom floor. I sorted it out, and it was not attractive. It consisted mainly of several grubby and rather ragged pairs of corsets and a great many small pairs of men's socks and stockings in a horrid condition of stickiness.

I made a huge bowl of soap suds, and dropped the more nauseating articles in with my eyes shut. I washed and rinsed and squeezed for about an hour and a half. There was no one but me to answer the telephone, which always rang when I was covered in soap to the elbow. I accepted a bridge party for the owner of the corsets, and a day's golfing for the wearer of the socks, but did not feel in a position to give an opinion on the state of cousin Mary's health.

I had just finished hanging out the clothes, and had wandered into the drawing-room to see what sort of books they had, when I heard a latch key in the door. I flew back to the bathroom, and was discovered diligently tweaking out the fingers of gloves when Mrs. Robertson walked in. She was horrified to see that I had not hung the stockings up by the heels, and told me so with a charming frankness. However, she still wanted me to come back the next day to iron the things I had washed.

I returned the next day and scorched Mrs. Robertson's best camisole. She was more than frank in her annoyance over this trifling mishap and it made me nervous. The climax came when I dropped the electric iron on the floor and it gave off a terrific burst of blue sparks. I supposed it had fused. It ended by her paying me at the rate of a shilling an hour for the time I had put in, and a tacit agreement being formed between us that I should never appear again.

I was still undaunted, however, and I told myself that there are so many people in the world that it doesn't matter if one doesn't hit it off with one or two of them.² I pinned my faith in the woman in the agency,³ and went and had a heart-to-heart talk with her.

'What I want is something where I'll really get a chance to get some practical experience,' I told her.

'Well, we have one or two people asking for cook-generals,' she said. 'You might go and see this Miss Faulkener, at Chelsea. She wants someone to do the work of a very small flat,⁴ and cook dinner at night, and sometimes lunch.'

I went off, full of hope and very excited, to Miss Faulkener's flat. A sharp-featured maid opened the door.

'You come after the job?'⁵

'Yes,' I whispered humbly. I gave her my name and she let me in reluctantly. On a sofa in front of a coal fire, groomed to the last eyebrow,⁶ sat my prospective employer. She looked an amusing woman, and it would be marvellous to have the run of a kitchen to mess in to my heart's content.⁷ It was all fixed up.

I went to bed early, with the cook's alarm clock at my side, but in spite of that I didn't sleep well. Its strident note terrified me right out of bed into the damp chill of a November morning.⁸ I bolted down some coffee and rushed off, clutching my overalls and aprons, and, arriving in good time, let myself in, feeling like an old hand. I took myself off to the kitchen. It was looking rather inhumanely neat, and was distinctly cold. There was no boiler as it was a flat, and a small refrigerator stood in one corner. I hung my coat behind the door, put on the overall, and, rolling up my sleeves, prepared to attack the drawing-room fire. I found the wood and coal, but I couldn't see what Mrs. Baker* had used to collect ash in. However, I found a wooden box which I thought would do, and took the coal along the passage in that. I hadn't laid a fire since my girl-guide days,⁹ but it seemed quite simple, and I took the ashes out to the dustbin, leaving a little trail of cinders behind me from a broken corner of the box. The trouble about housework is that whatever you do seems to lead to another job to do or a mess to clear up. I put my hand against the wall while I was bending down to sweep up the cinders and made a huge grubby mark on the beautiful cream-coloured paint. I rubbed at it gingerly with a soapy cloth and the dirt came off all right, but an even larger stain remained, paler than the rest of the paint, and with a hard, grimy outline. I didn't dare wash it any more, and debated moving the grandfather clock over to hide it. However, it was now a quarter past nine, so I had to leave it to its fate¹⁰ and pray that Miss Faulkener wouldn't notice.

* Mrs. Baker is the name of the former cook-general

I had dusted the living-room, swept all the dirt down the passage and into the kitchen, and gone through the usual tedious business of chasing it about, trying to get it into the dustpan before her bell and back-door bell rang at the same moment. The back door was the nearest, so I opened it on a man who said 'Grosher'.¹¹

'Do you mean orders?'

'Yesh, mish'

He went on up the outside stairs whistling, and I rushed to the bedroom, wiping my hands on my overall before going in.

'Good morning, Monica, I hope you're getting on all right. I just want to talk about food.'

We fixed the courses,¹² and I rushed back to the kitchen.

It didn't occur to me in those days to wash up as I went along, not that I would have had time,¹³ as cooking took me quite twice as long as it should. I kept doing things wrong and having to rush to cookery books for help, and everything I wanted at a moment's notice had always disappeared.

Every saucepan in the place was dirty; the sink was piled high with them. On the floor lay the plates and dishes that couldn't be squeezed on to the table or dresser, already cluttered up with peelings, pudding basins, and dirty little bits of butter.

I started listlessly on the washing-up. At eleven o'clock I was still at it and my back and head were aching in unison. The washing-up was finished, but the stove was in a hideous mess.

Miss Faulkener came in to get some glasses and was horrified to see me still there.

'Goodness, Monica, I thought you'd gone hours ago. Run off now, anyway; you can leave that till tomorrow.'

She wafted back to the drawing-room and I thought: 'If it was you, you'd be thinking of how depressing it will be tomorrow morning to arrive at crack of dawn and find things filthy. People may think that by telling you to leave a thing till the next day it will get done magically, all by itself overnight. But no, that is not so, in fact quite the reverse, in all probability it will become a mess of an even greater magnitude.'⁴

At last I had finished. I arrived home in a sort of coma. My mother helped me to undress and brought me hot milk, and as I burrowed into the yielding familiarity of my own dear bed, my last thought was thankfulness that I was a "Daily" and not a "Liver-in".¹⁵

Comprehension Check

1. What did Monica look for? Did she want to find a job as a "Daily" or a "Liver-in"?
2. Why did she think that Miss Cattermole refrained from telling the agency what she thought of her?
3. Who offered the girl the job at a flat twice a week?
4. What was Monica to do at Mrs. Robertson's?
5. What did Mrs. Robertson leave for the girl at her place?
6. How long did it take her to do the washing?
7. Did she have to combine washing with some other job?
8. What did Monica do after she had hung out the clothes?
9. Did Mrs. Robertson find Monica reading a book in the drawing- room?
10. How did Monica and Mrs. Robertson part?
11. What sort of job was Monica offered by Miss Faulkener?
12. What did Miss Faulkener and her kitchen look like?
13. How did Monica sweep up the cinders?
14. What happened while she was sweeping up the cinders?
15. Did the dirt come off all right?
16. Why did the cooking take her twice as long as it should have?
17. What did the kitchen look like at the end of the day?
18. Did the girl like the idea of leaving everything undone till the next day?
19. How did Monica feel when she arrived home?

EXERCISES

Exercise 1

Find in the passage and translate sentences containing synonyms or synonymous expressions for the following.

experienced worker	servant
to do one's laundry	washing the plates
to wring	tidy
wastebin	casual jobs
to do the cleaning	worn
to smudge	dirty
domestic work	silent

Exercise 2

Pick out from the text 1) verbs denoting different kinds of housework activities; 2) nouns denoting various tools used in housework; 3) adverbs describing the manner of doing housework.

- **Pattern:** 1) *to wash, ...*
2) *a bowl, ...*
3) *diligently, ...*

Exercise 3

Complete the sentences taking the necessary information from the passage.

1. As Miss Cattermole refrained from telling the agency what she thought of Monica they rang her up and ...
2. Monica assured the agency that she was ...
3. Mrs. Robertson wanted Monica twice a week ...
4. The pile of washing left on the bathroom floor didn't look attractive as it consisted of...
5. To do the washing Monica made a huge bowl of ...
6. When she hung out the clothes she flew back to the bath room and was discovered ...
7. Mrs. Robertson wanted Monica to come back the next day ...
8. Mrs. Robertson's best camisole ...
9. The electric iron gave off a terrific burst of blue sparks because ...
10. Monica found her perspective employer quite amusing and she thought it would be marvellous ...
11. Before laying a fire Monica put on ...
12. The trouble about housework is that ...
13. While bending down to sweep up the cinders Monica ...
14. Trying to get the dirt into the dustpan Monica went through ...
15. It didn't occur to Monica to wash up as she cooked ...
16. On the floor lay the plates and dishes and the sink ...
17. When Monica finished doing all the jobs her back ... and she arrived home ...

Exercise 4

I. The author uses analogous words or expressions to denote the same things. Find them in the text and say how otherwise the author puts the following.

dirty —	to collect ash in —
to do washing —	to flow back —
grubby —	cluttered up —
hideous —	to be thoroughly domesticated
a mark —	at a moment's notice —

II. Use your English-English dictionary and explain the difference in meaning between similar looking words or phrases from the text.

washing — washing up
to squeeze something — to squeeze something on to something
to drop something — to drop something in something
to go — to go along to hang —
to hang out — to hang up by the heels

Exercise 5

Provide your own words or phrases similar and opposite in meaning to the following.

► **Pattern:** *neat* < *clean, tidy, ...*
untidy, dirty, ...

Gingerly, horrid, a mess, tacit, ragged, to clear up, to come off, tedious, thankfulness, to disappear.

Exercise 6

Choose the right word or phrase for each of the sentences below. Use each of them only once:

Become a mess of an even greater magnitude, a hideous mess, be piled high with plates and dishes, neat, thoroughly domesticated, "Daily", up by the heels, cookery-books, get some practical experience, get it into the dustpan, a "Liver-in".

1. Monica was happy that she was a ... and not a
2. Doing the work of a flat any young girl can
3. The trouble about housework is that if you leave things till tomorrow it will
4. My brother never makes his bed or tidies his own room so it's always in
5. ... are very helpful if you cannot cook well enough.
6. My elder sister is She can iron and do the washing and she's an excellent cook.
7. Men can do very many things: lay a fire, repair electrical appliances but they hate washing up. When they stay alone a sink may
8. Hanging out the clothes Mum hangs socks and stockings
9. Little Bob was told to sweep up the dirt but he couldn't....
10. If you often do cleaning your flat looks

Exercise 7

Replace the phrases in italics with one of the words or phrases below.

to fix the courses	a pile of washing
a dustbin	to give off a burst of sparks and fuse
to rinse to lay a fire	to come off all right
to do odd jobs	an old hand

1. Mary's husband is so handy that he could even repair the iron when *it sparkled and melted*.
2. If you need *a container for household refuse* you can buy it at any supermarket.
3. When Jack made a grimy mark on the wall playing football Mum rubbed at it with a soapy cloth and *she managed to remove it*.
4. While doing washing you *put clothes through clean water to remove soap*.
5. Mother left *a lot of linen* for me to wash.
6. To heat the house Dad first collects ash in a small box and then *puts wood ready for lighting*.
7. Before giving a party we bought lots of delicious things and *decided what to cook*.
8. My wife is *quite an expert* at cooking.
9. The employer wanted a Daily for *doing casual jobs*.

Exercise 8

Fill in the gaps with prepositions.

1. Monica could guess what Miss Cattermole thought ... her and was grateful that she did not call the agency.
2. The girl had to open the door and answer the telephone covered ... soap to the elbow.
3. The maid in the house did not feel like giving an opinion ... the state of things there.
4. Mrs. Robertson could not hide her annoyance ... the mishap with her best camisole.
5. The two ladies' relations ended ... Mrs. Robertson's paying out the money and saying nothing.
6. The prospective employer was groomed ... the last eyebrow and looked nice.
7. While sweeping up the cinders Monica put her hand ... the wall and made a grubby mark.
8. The stain would not come off and Monica had nothing to do but leave it ... its fate.
9. The Daily had rubbed ... the stain patiently ... a soapy cloth until it came off.
10. Every day the servant had to go ... the tedious business of cleaning, dusting and washing.
11. The most difficult thing about ash is getting it ... the dustpan.
12. Wiping one's hands ... the overall or apron is considered to be a bad habit.
13. An inexperienced cook always rushes to cookery books ... help and wastes a lot of time.
14. At ten Monica started ... the washing-up and at eleven she was still... it though she was enormously tired.

Exercise 9

Fill in the gaps in the following sentences with suitable words or phrases from the text.

1. Nick's grandfather lives alone and has nobody to look after him and do ... of a flat.
2. After... cooking Mrs. Jackson washes up because the sink is piled high with plates and dishes.
3. I couldn't squeeze anything on to the table: it was just ... with peelings, basins, saucepans and spoons.
4. Before sending the linen to the laundry I ... the pile of washing and did the marking.
5. The flat was in a ... condition and it needed decorating.
6. Mary is such a lazy-bones that she always does washing or ironing ... and no wonder it takes her quite twice as long as it should.
7. Mike didn't feel in ... of helping his wife in the home as he was not handy enough.
8. 'There's the phone', — said Grandma. She ... her hands on her apron and rushed to the dining-room to answer the telephone.
9. To keep my room clean and tidy I ... the furniture twice a week using a soapy cloth and also sweep the floor.
10. The agency ... me a job of a Liver-in but I had to refuse.

Exercise 10

Speak about Monica's efforts to carry out her duties as a Daily:

1. in the third person;
2. in the person of Monica;
3. in the person of the woman in the agency;
4. in the person of Mrs. Robertson;
5. in the person of Miss Faulkener.

Exercise 11

Give a character sketch of Monica and describe her attitude towards her duties.

► Use:

to get some experience, one's first experience, one's bad experience, absent-minded, fussy, neat, reliable, handy, an old hand, efficient, good, economical, hard-working, diligently, listlessly, to be domesticated in every way, to leave smth. till tomorrow, ...

Exercise 12

Discussion points.

1. What prevented Monica from becoming thoroughly domesticated: her laziness, her mother's bad example or something else?
2. What is Monica's attitude to her troubles while getting some practical experience?
3. Monica assured the agency that she was thoroughly domesticated in every way. Was she right, in your opinion, or should she have told them the truth?
4. Which of the two employers did Monica like better? Give your reasons.
5. Does anything suggest that Monica can become an experienced housewife?

Exercise 13

Imagine that Monica's employers (Mrs. Robertson and Miss Faulkener), were friends. They discover that they hired the same girl as a Daily. What would they tell each other?

Exercise 14

Imagine what Monica might have done when she worked at Miss Cattermole's as a Daily and why she didn't hit it off with her employer.

Exercise 15

Express your opinion on the following.

'...I told myself that there are so many people in the world that it doesn't matter if one doesn't hit it off with one or two of them.'

'The trouble about housework is that whatever you do seems to lead to another job to do or a mess to clear up.'

'...If it was you, you'd be thinking of how depressing it will be tomorrow morning to arrive at crack of dawn and find things filthy.'

Exercise 16

Give a description of:

- a) an untidy kitchen

► *Use:*

To squeeze something on to something, to be piled high with something, to be cluttered with peelings, basins etc., to be in an awful mess, to spill rice, flour etc., not to manage one's household chores properly, to leak, to drip something all over the floor, to scrub, a stiff brush, ragged;

- b) a room in a mess

► *Use:*

Unattractive, shabby, broken, to give the place a clean-out, to be littered with something, to stain, finger marks, to put things tidy, to do the repairs, to need decorating, to be crammed with something, to find chaos, not to have been decorated for years, to be in a hideous mess, to be in a horrid condition, to smell unaired, can hardly move about, to knock smth. over, to leave the bed unmade, to be not much of a housewife, to do a thorough turn out;

- c) a neat room

► *Use:*

An efficient housewife, to clean the room from top to bottom, a lovely colour scheme, to look neat, spacious, to have a minimum of furniture, newly decorated, vivid colours of upholstery and paintings, in good taste, to be comfortably furnished with something, potted flowers, spick and span, to vacuum the room, to owe much of its charm to something, to give a bright mood;

- d) the most boring house chores

► *Use:*

To get bored with something, to make somebody nervous, to hate doing something, to get through the usual tedious business of doing something, to turn a blind eye to the state of things.

Exercise 17

Translate into Russian.

1. When Mum came in she was horrified to see that I hadn't cleared up the mess in my room.

2. My brother and I do hate washing up. Dad persuaded us to form an agreement between us that we should do it in turn.

3. Every other day I sweep the carpets with the carpet-sweeper, or vacuum them and dust the furniture. It really helps me to keep my room clean and tidy.

4. John's son is rather untidy. He always leaves such a mess in his room. John doesn't like things left around in the room and he makes his son tuck things away and clean the room every day.

5. Once a season we turn out our flat. We usually vacuum the floor, the furniture, beat the carpets and rugs, mop the floor, and dust all the rooms. It's a messy and dull job, I should say.

6. Frank is very good at helping his wife. She is proud of him and says that he is always ready to share household chores with her. And apart from that he's an old hand at repairing all sorts of electrical appliances.

7. My wife left a note for me and asked me to vacuum the living-room as we were giving a party that day. That was a chance for me to try out the new vacuum-cleaner and I got on so well that I cleaned the living-room and the bedroom. It was a real joy cleaning with such a marvellous vacuum. I was amazed at the speed with which time went when I was working.

8. I was pressed for time and had a lot of work to do about the house. So I bolted down some coffee and started washing up. The kitchen was just in a hideous mess but I realised that I couldn't leave all that till tomorrow, otherwise it would become a mess of a greater magnitude.

9. 'Bill, go and empty the dustbin. It's full. And you didn't wipe your feet on the doormat again', said Bill's mother. She was more than frank in her annoyance over the mess she discovered on her coming back home. It really made her upset.

10. Fiona is so fastidious! When she comes home she starts cleaning the flat and she never finishes until she cleans it from top to bottom. It's so depressing, to my mind. Always the same. I would get bored with all these things. I don't like it when people make a fuss about housekeeping.

Exercise 18

I. Arrange the words and word combinations given below in a logical order to show how you usually do the following household chores:

washing:

to wring (squeeze); to rinse; to sort out the lights, darks, and whites; to hang (out) the laundry on the washing-lines; to starch; to take a wash-basin; to dry the linen; to blue; to add detergent (washing powder); to use laundry soap; to pour out warm water; to bring a pile of washing; to bleach; to do a big wash; to choose a wash(ing) day; to pin with clothes-pegs.

ironing:

to press diligently; to scorch; to iron; to get rid of the creases; to use a damp cloth; to set up an ironing board; to switch on an electric iron.

washing up:

to put cups, etc. in the plate rack; to do the dishes; to dry (up) plates and dishes; to pile everything up tidily; to scrape all scraps of solid food from the dishes; to take washing liquid or laundry soap; to rinse the plates; to start with china and cutlery; to do greasy frying pans and large saucepans; to use a bottlebrush.

dusting the furniture:

to keep clean and tidy; to vacuum; to get through the tedious business of doing something; to throw things away; to mop over with a soapy cloth; to air the room; to use a duster; to look spick and span; to prepare for a messy job.

II. Tell your groupmates how you do the washing, the ironing, etc.

Exercise 19

I. Match the names of household objects with the verbals denoting household chores:

► **Pattern:** a) A toaster is used for making toasts.

b) *It's nice to have a toaster as you can easily make a couple of pieces of toast for breakfast.*

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. a vacuum (cleaner) | A. washing up |
| 2. a sewing machine | B. ironing and pressing |
| 3. a dish washer | C. peeling potatoes |
| 4. a washing machine | D. heating a flat |
| 5. an electric iron | E. polishing the floor |
| 6. an electric potato-peeler | F. beating carpets |
| 7. a floor polisher | G. washing clothes |
| 8. a refrigerator (a fridge) | H. mixing all sorts of foodstuffs |
| 9. a boiler | I. making and mending clothes |
| 10. a carpet beater | J. refrigerating food |
| 11. a mixer | K. vacuuming (cleaning) |

Say which of the household objects you need to perform activities mentioned in the left column.

► **Pattern:** a) *Dusting the furniture is done best of all if you have a soapy cloth.*

b) *It's much better to use a soapy cloth for dusting the furniture.*

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Cleaning washbasins, sinks and baths | A. a detergent |
| 2. washing | B. a dustbin |
| 3. mopping the floor | C. a stiff brush |
| 4. drying cups and plates | D. a washbasin |
| 5. scrubbing the floor | E. clothes-lines |
| 6. keeping household refuse | F. a broom |
| 7. sweeping the floor | G. a dustpan |
| 8. hanging (out) one's washing | H. a cleanser |
| 9. washing up | I. a plate rack |
| 10. getting the dirt with a broom | J. a mop |

Exercise 20

Work in groups. Tell your partners about: a) a disappointing experience you had while doing household chores; b) an experience you had that was unexpectedly pleasant. Ask your partners for comment.

Exercise 21

Work in threes. Find out from your partners who they consider to be an efficient housewife. Make notes and summarize the main points.

Exercise 22

Work in pairs. Make up a dialogue: "I hate doing everyday domestic chores", "I enjoy doing everyday domestic chores". Use the vocabulary of the Lesson.

Exercise 23

Problem points.

Read the passages below and say what you think of men sharing house chores with women. Give your reasons. Ask your groupmates 1) if they find it necessary to distinguish between men's and women's domestic chores;

2) if men can manage domestic chores properly; 3) if they have ever met an ideal househusband; 4) what they think of feminists.

A.

Waiting for my wash in one of Virginia Tech's laundries, I watched a young man doing what was obviously his first load of laundry.

After finding a free sorting table, he carefully separated his clothes into three piles — lights, darks and whites. As he did so he smiled to himself, perhaps proud of remembering his mother's instructions. Then, after starting a machine and adding detergent, he confidently loaded the wash tub — with all three piles.

(from «Readers Digest»)

B.

Claudia thinks of herself as a feminist. She is sure that women should have the same rights, power and opportunities as men. A housewife, to her mind, is an unwaged worker and she just cannot put up with it. So she is trying to change her husband's daily routine making him share the house chores with her. Unfortunately, he is not much of a househusband, unlike my husband who is strikingly different and is really handy.

Claudia regards my husband as the perfect model and thinks I am lucky to have such a partner. And it is true. John helps a fair amount with the household work. He is quite helpful when we do a thorough cleaning. Taking down and putting up the curtains, tidying up, vacuuming the rooms — all this is his part, to say nothing of the man's work which he has to do from time to time. If something goes wrong — the plumbing may get clogged or start leaking or the tap may start dripping — I never call a plumber. John can mend it himself. If an electrical appliance — be it a mixer or a washing machine — gets out of order we never call a maintenance worker as my husband can fix anything. If our flat needs decorating it is John who papers the rooms, plasters the walls and the ceiling. Once Bobby broke the window and my husband glazed it in no time. We do not need a TV repairman — John can even fix televisions. All my friends say he has a wonderful pair of hands. Last year he finished building our country house and we have quite a large lot — so my husband's spare time is used in gardening and we can always enjoy fresh vegetables. Isn't it nice? Well, my dear, dear husband — he never keeps track of what he does. We really share everything with him. My son and I, we usually break things while my poor husband sets them right.

And how about Claudia's husband — a victim of feminism? Just fancy! She made a list of the house chores he is supposed to do this week. She wants him to nail the picture. Frankly speaking, I doubt he could pound a nail in let alone hang a picture. Mind you, he can tell a hammer from a spoon, but Claudia wants him to paint the floor in the kitchen, and I am sure if he did the paint would peel in a week. She hopes he will cover the bathroom wall with tiles but he can't stick a thing.

You may think he is not a man. But he is. I think him very, very intelligent and generous and well-mannered. The problem is he is no match for a feminist wife. She may do her best to change him but the most he can do is take their dog for a walk. Even then, watching them it's hard to tell who's taking who.

Exercise 24

Work in pairs. Ask your partner the questions given below and find out how his/her family keeps house.

1. Who runs the house in your family?
2. Do other members share household chores with your mother?
3. What work about the house do you do every day and what is done once a season?
4. What makes your home cosy?
5. What labour-saving devices do you have at home?
6. Do you vacuum the floor or sweep it with a broom? Do you ever use a mop to clean the floor?
7. Is your flat crammed with things or does it have just a minimum of furniture in it?
8. How often is a thorough turn-out done in your family? Are you usually tired after the thorough clean-up?
9. How often do you redecorate the rooms? Do you do your own redecoration and repairing or do you prefer to have it done?

Exercise 25

Give the Russian equivalents to the following English idioms including some words and word combinations used in the Lesson. Try to understand whether they have anything to do with the topic discussed.

wash to wash one's dirty linen in the public it will all come out in the wash

sweep a new broom sweeps clean *iron* to have (put) many (too many) irons in the fire

dust to shake dust from one's feet to dust somebody's coat for him to throw dust into somebody's eyes to give somebody a dusting

dustbin to throw into the dustbin (waste-basket)

soap soft soap

mess to clear up the mess to (be) in a mess

house to keep a good house (table)

to keep the house

to put one's house in order

Exercise 26

Highlight the meanings of the English proverbs and use them in situations of your own.

1. As is the workman so is the work.
2. No pain no gain.
3. Haste makes waste.
4. A stitch in time saves nine.
5. Well begun is half done.

Exercise 27

Translate the quotations and comment upon them.

'A woman's place is in the house ... and the Senate.'

Bumper sticker, Washington, D.C.

'Housekeeping ain't no joke.'

Louise May Alcott

'There was no need to do any housework at all. After the first four years the dirt doesn't get any worse.'

Quentin Crist

'The whole process of homemaking, housekeeping and cooking which ever has been woman's special province should be looked on as an art and a profession.'

Sarah Joseph Hale