



The American Frugal Housewife

The true economy of housekeeping is simply the art of gathering up all the fragments, so that nothing be lost. I mean fragments of time, as well as materials. 'Time is money.' For this reason, cheap as stockings are, it is good economy to knit them. Cotton and woollen yarn are both cheap; stockings that are knit wear twice as long as woven ones; and they can be done at odd minutes of time, which would not be otherwise employed. Where there are children, or aged people, it is sufficient to recommend knitting, that it is an employment. Nothing should be thrown away so long as it is possible to make any use of it, however trifling that use may be; and whatever be the size of a family, every member should be employed either in earning or saving money. Buy merely enough to get along with at first. It is only by experience that you can tell what will be the wants of your family. If you spend all your money, you will find you have purchased many things you do not want, and have no means left to get many things which you do want. Have all the good bits of vegetables and meat collected after dinner, and minced before they are set away; that they may be in readiness to make a little savoury mince meat for supper or breakfast. Take the skins off your potatoes before they grow cold. Economy is generally despised as a low virtue, tending to make people ungenerous and selfish. This is true of avarice; but it is not so of economy. The man who is economical, is laying up for himself the permanent power of being useful and generous. He who thoughtlessly gives away ten dollars, when he owes a hundred more than he can pay, deserves no praise, – he obeys a sudden impulse, more like instinct than reason: it would be real charity to check this feeling; because the good he does maybe doubtful, while the injury he does his family and creditors is certain. It would be better to ensure that no opportunity for economy is overlooked. Use the shopping list for a family for a week to make sure nothing – food nor money – is wasted.

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Weekly shopping list	Cost
Meat for Sunday, etc. (3 lbs of salt beef at 2½ cents per lb.)	7½ cents
Tea, sugar and milk	15 cents
Vegetables	6 cents
Oil	6 cents
Coals	2 cents
Bread	22 cents
Meat, vegetables, etc. for a stew (six persons)	9½ cents
Soap, soda, and other sundries	6 cents
Potatoes and lard (a "baked dinner")	4 cents
Total expenditure for the week	78 cents

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