

## **Instructions for a House Keeper (c. 1813?)**

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Transcribed from the papers of Leeds and London banker, William Williams Brown (1788 -1856), who lived at Allerton Hall on Stainbeck Lane, Chapel Allerton. Believed to have been written by his American wife, Margaret Brockden Brown (1794 - 1820), in about 1813 not long after they were married. Reproduced here by kind permission of her Dunn family descendants. Edited slightly, mainly in the formatting.



**Photograph of Allerton Hall, set back off Stainbeck Lane, Chapel Allerton, taken in 2003.**

'First before breakfast, she is to rise early and see the Housemaid has prepared her rooms, cleaned her passage etc., the Cook has fed her poultry, cleaned her kitchen & ready for breakfast, precisely at 8 o'clock, when the Bell is to be regularly rung - the Children's day nursery neat & a good fire before they rise.

After Breakfast, the Milk [is to be] put by, the Cistern filled, & then to look after the Bedrooms which should be entered & windows opened immediately after they are at liberty & when strangers are in the house their beds made, when they leave the rooms.

During breakfast - she must cut all bread for the Children's meals, & when they take it, make their porridge.

Take great care of the Linnen. Always mend such as require it before the washing. Never give a clean napkin, sheet etc., without recovering the dirty one in return.

The Servant's dinner to be ready always about one o'clock, the Bell to be rung ten minutes before. Those that are not there in time are not to be waited for, nor are they to have it put by unless sent (on) an errand. The Nurse's dinners is to be cut for them before any Servant is helped & they are never to be allowed to remain in the Kitchen upon any consideration. Tea is to be ready at 5 o'clock & the Children's milk also.

Bake every Monday & Friday, for the house, rolls, more frequently. Allow no company at any time nor give beer or anything else unless ordered.

Send to the Grocers & Butchers every Friday. See the Servants all remain closely at the washing on those days.

House Keeper to assist as much as possible & iron all the finest of her Mistress cloathes, see them put away, also her Masters.

Never allow any Servant, to have her keys or go into her closets. Be regular herself in her attendance and they will be so in their work.

When the Children's cloathes are washed, see the Cook washes her dirty cloths after, that they may not be so many at the great wash. Look over all the Men Servant's cloaths after washing and mend such as want it.

The back stairs must be scoured down every fortnight, the carpet wisked every other day. The Servants bed rooms to be

scoured once a Month and hot water to be poured on the bedsteads, to be swept twice a week.

To see the Women wash themselves & comb themselves regularly.

When strangers are staying in the house to see the bedrooms, neat, proper number of B(l)anketts, Pillows, & Napkins, Rush lights & hot water Kettels. To offer her Services to all Ladies, & enquire of every body, how they like their bed, upon or under the Mattrass & if it is preferred warmed. To enquire before they get up, if they would like the fire lighted.

Offer Luncheon to all callers, whether her Mistress be at home or not.

After Dinner parties she is to be particular in not allowing any thing to be eaten she thinks may be wanted the next day, & see all taken into the Larder herself. The Desert is never to go into the Pantry taken from the dining room to her own room. The Servants are to have supper at half past eight regularly and all together, except the Nurses. To be cleared up by nine o'clock. See all the Doors & Windows fast at 10 o'clock, the fire safe and raked with sinders, which she will please see well consumed.

No Servant is to be allowed to be out on a Sunday after Church, and at other times to be in at nine o'clock.

The spare beds must be slept in once a week, Sunday and Monday nights.

The children always to have their Dinner in the Dining room and when Mama is from home she must see them eat all their meals. Finally to see all the Servants attend Devine Service in good time on Sundays, both Morning & Evening.'