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"The Waste that You need not Waste"

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Hugh S. Eayrs

Some two or three years ago Sir Edmund Walker in his presidential address at the annual meeting of the Bank of Commerce asserted that the greater number of reasons for the high cost of living were purely local. In particular a very powerful reason why living is higher in Canada than any other country was, Sir Edmund said, the abnormal waste which was practised by the average Canadian. If this was a matter for regret in time of peace it is much more so in time of war. If this is a time when business houses feel the necessity for rigid economy the housewife surely needs to look after and conserve the waste matter that she need not waste. There is an old if somewhat hackneyed proverb which reads "Waste not, want not." If it is a wise maxim when our economic wheels are running smoothly it is doubly so when additional tariff duties and paralysis of commerce are clogging up the axles.

A reliable index to the amount of waste of which we are guilty is that familiar object in every household, the Garbage Pail. What is going into our garbage pails every day if sorted, conserved and turned to good account, would be enough to very materially reduce the poverty that necessitates soup kitchens, Sunday breakfasts and the like.



The picture shows the band of the famous Fongorijski Regiment of Moscow leading the men to the fight. This Russian regiment has been in thirty-four battles since the outbreak of the war

What are the facts? The statistics for last year show that every individual in one of Canada's large cities threw away well over two hundred pounds of garbage. The street cleaning commissioner says that a very large percentage of that two hundred pounds is pure waste. You can figure it out for yourself. Take a garbage pail, any garbage pail belonging to an average working man on any street in the city. Examine its contents; first of all there is meat. The amount of perfectly good meat that our women folk throw away every year is as prodigious as it is unreasoning. Quantities of mutton, beef, pork, veal, poultry and fish that are thrown away without any rhyme or reason represent an aggregate amount for the year of tens of thousands of dollars. A percentage of the meat thrown away is discarded because it is high—going bad—but by far the greater percentage is in the nature of roasts of meat that have been used the one day and then, because the remainder would look inconsiderable and meagre, are thrown away. The Street Cleaning Commissioner says that this is the most true of the Canadian and American households than of those of the old countryman. This is probably due to the fact that in Great Britain the margin for luxury and even easy and comfortable living is not so great as it is on this side of the water. But is there any reason why cold roast beef is not as palatable as when it is hot? And are we so fastidious that we cannot take our mutton hashed? Have soups gone out of fashion? The housewife has made the fortune of concerns who put up beef extracts by buying quantities of Bovril and Oxo and Lemco and such. But all the time she is

throwing away the very commodity from which these extracts are made.

Despite the remarkable growth in popularity of vegetarianism the amount of meat consumed every year in Canada is increasing. All that has to be paid for. But isn't it rather foolish to pay your butcher a certain number of dollars a year for the privilege of throwing his good meat into the garbage pail? It isn't being nice to the butcher. Moreover, if the men folk of Canada were consulted they would probably declare against an uninterrupted succession of roasts and steaks, and chops, and so on. Variety is the spice of the dining table. What has become of the stock pot? Is Irish stew no longer fashionable? The housewife might kill more than one bird with one stone if she dished up yesterday's roast in some other way. Not only would she be economizing by using up what she often throws into the garbage pail, but she would be providing a tasty and savory meal as a welcome variation upon a somewhat monotonous theme.

Why does she not? Is it all another sidelight upon the question of the modern woman? Is the sale of that time-honored institution, Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book, decreasing? Are we so busy with reading Omar Khayyam and Mrs.

Pankhurst's speeches that we have no time to study the economy and attractiveness of our own dining table? There must be cookery books enough extent to paper the walls of a house. Yet apparently they don't even cover the dining table.

And you come to vegetables. The Street Cleaning Commissioner says the waste in this regard is colossal. The amount of potatoes which finds its way into the garbage pail because the housewife is either too busy or too careless to peel economically might do a good deal to obviate the high cost of living. Cauliflower, cabbage, celery, tomatoes and a score of other vegetables, all find representation in our garbage pail. If the average restaurant threw out the vegetables it does not use as such to the same extent as hundreds of housewives do it would be bankrupt. But the restaurant proprietor is wise. He makes vegetable soup, and charges ten or fifteen cents a bowl thereof.

Perhaps the greatest waste of all according to our friend the commissioner, is in bread. It is difficult to get actual figures but some enterprising statistician might find an engrossing and enumerating task in figuring out how high or how many miles this bread would reach if made up into loaves and stood on end. Nothing can make excusable the waste of a single bit of bread. You can go into sections of our cities and see people dying for it. You can accompany the garbage man on his rounds and see him collecting enough to stop the dying. The housewife complains that she can't put stale bread on the table. True enough. But what's the matter with bread-and-butter pudding? Or why not toast the bread? Toast is a very delicious thing,

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