

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

THE PARASITIC WOMAN

There crosses our trail once every so often the woman parasite who is a dead weight about her husband's neck and a nuisance to society. Two came by this week.

The first was the ambitious wife of a young business man who was doing well enough, one would say, but not fast enough to keep up the style of life to which his wife aspired. She was one of those tiresome women who feels herself to be completely thrown away upon the small town in which her husband's business is situated, so she drove him from town to city and from country to country. It should have been said at the outset that it was the sequel that was chanced upon this week, and it is the old, old story. The man is serving time in a penitentiary thru having tried to catch up to his debts by forgery, and the woman is suing for a divorce in order to marry another man who can provide for her properly.

The second is a less extreme and more common example of wifely selfishness. The second woman laughingly assures one that she is no housekeeper, and has no shame about acknowledging that when she married her husband, some years ago, she took on a job for which she had no training and for which she had no intention of fitting herself. She doesn't pretend to keep house, and the maid, having a free and easy mistress, doesn't pretend to keep house either, and the children, who are quite a good size, having a happy-go-lucky mother, don't pretend to keep house, and so the dust is left undisturbed and the clothes are not hung up and things are allowed to spoil on the pantry shelves. More food comes into the house than would feed a family twice the size, and fully half of it goes out into the garbage can.

With the tightening up of money conditions resulting from the war, the father is rather put to it to keep the pot boiling, but yet her ladyship will neither move into a smaller house nor do without help nor make any sacrifice to lift her share of the burden.

Her plan of life is to get everything she can from the man and give as little as possible in return. We all know this sort of a human leech, for the many varieties of her are well distributed over the country, and these are the cases in which the man gets the worst of it in the marriage lottery.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

MUCH MISGUIDED HELP

Dear Madam:—May I ask for your assistance in connection with supplies for the soldiers.

As secretary of the Red Cross Society and also of the National Service Committee, I am in a position to speak of supplies for the sick and prisoners who are relieved by the Red Cross Society, and also for the fighting men whose needs are looked after by the Canadian War Contingent Association in England, for which the National Service Committee is the collecting agency in Canada. A short time ago the supplies were coming in made and packed according to instructions with hardly an exception—supplies to be proud of. For the last five or six weeks a change for the worse has appeared, due, I believe, to the fact that there has been a number of new workers who are not profiting by the experience of older and more experienced helpers.

While we welcome warmly all who desire to help, we must insist that certain rules must be observed both in making, tying up and packing, if the goods are to leave Canada in a useful condition.

Full and clear directions as to Red Cross supplies are to be found in "Suggestions for Work" in the monthly bulletins, which are supplied free of charge from provincial and local branches or from the Canadian headquarters at 77 King Street, East, Toronto. Yet we frequently receive cases of slackly rolled bandages which are absolutely useless until re-rolled. Some-

times these are made of old cotton or linen, and are entirely unserviceable. Sometimes the ends are tightly sewn up instead of being fastened with safety pin as directed.

We also receive parcels containing what are called surgical dressings, but which have been made by persons who do not understand the work. The result is simply a waste of most valuable material. No one should attempt to make surgical supplies for Red Cross work who has not read "Suggestions for Work" and secured, as therein directed, the assistance of a trained nurse as supervisor.

As regards "Comforts for Fighting Men," the head of the ladies' committee of the Canadian War Contingent Association begs me to use every influence to stop the stream of colored mitts and tiny Balaclava helmets, fit only for small children.

For weeks past, notices have appeared asking women to stop all knitting except that of socks. Of these there cannot be too many. But they

above, and should follow out the instructions.

Those who want to send articles to the fighting men should send no clothes other than socks, colored handkerchiefs, candy, tobacco, gum, or money to buy. These are most acceptable, but must be packed in boxes not to exceed 56 pounds in weight, and should not be enclosed in the socks.

We all want to help, but those help most who will work according to instructions issued by those who are in touch with the recipients of the supplies.

One more caution. Mr. T. G. Colmer, secretary of the Canadian War Contingent Association, states most definitely that the British War Office is providing all the sand-bags and respirators necessary, and begs that none be sent from Canada.

Relying on your kindness to spread this information as widely as possible, I remain,

ADELAIDE M. PLUMPTRE,
Corresponding Secretary, Canadian Red

living for that long and toilsome year in heat and zero will have to be paid for in another year of the same, or perhaps worse. The farmer who puts in from ten to fourteen hours of hard work for a season many times reaps no harvest for his pay.

The minister rarely misses a dollar of a large salary, and has very little expense. If the farmer could depend upon a certain income for his work he could make it a point to manage to save out of it a little for his bank account.

Many a good honest farmer who has met with misfortunes of many different kinds, has to keep his shoulder at the wheel when his back is bent and his hair is grey simply because he has not himself been able to save for these days.

We have in our country today many houses of poverty, but of what little they have they are sharing it to keep the ministers in plenty. For these people to feel it their duty to afterwards support these ministers, it looks to me quite unnecessary. I am,

Yours truly,

ANON

ENJOYS "SERMONS FOR THE UNSATISFIED"

Dear Miss Beynon:—I am always interested in the Homemakers page, there is so much freedom of expression. One can tell what the people are thinking of and just how far some have departed from the dark ages.

My husband and I enjoy the "Sermons for the Unsatisfied," by J. S. Woodsworth. I wish there were men in every community preaching sermons like those. The dawn of a real brotherhood would begin. Few church people I meet think that the church has any duty to perform in an economic way, two having told me that lately. I think it is time the light was shown to the people by scholars who do know that the other world affairs caused Jesus very little thought. He was concerned with this world. Co-operation is in the right direction, Socialism is the stepping stone to the co-operative commonwealth. Let us forward march.

Thanks to Miss Beynon for the help she gives us. Some of your correspondents ask for a cure for ants. Wormwood tied up or laid where they frequent will drive them away very quickly, if you can get it in the west.

SOCIALIST

The pen name you chose had already been taken so I gave you another.

—F. M. B.

MARRIED LIFE NOT EASY

Dear Miss Beynon:—After reading "Discouraged's" letter, asking for someone to write to her thru the page, I will try and send her a line. She is not the only one with a husband of that sort. Mine is just the same, and, my dear, the sooner you come to some understanding with him the better for you both. Such a heartless man as that is bound to get worse and more selfish, and should you have half a dozen children, what on earth would you do? Women are tied down far too much. It will be a happy thing if we can get the vote, as some men do not know how to treat a woman. It seems as if my husband wanted a hired man and not a wife, so he could get his work done cheap. Married life is no snap, and homesteading, too, with no money or stock, also poor crops, besides other troubles, it is hard to keep up courage sometimes. This letter is for "Discouraged," not for those with good husbands. Glad to say there are not many men as selfish as her husband and mine. I have done my part, and am sure "Discouraged" has done the same. Write again to the page, "Discouraged," and let us know how you get on.

Can anyone tell me how to remove fly spots from sewing machine and oak sideboard without injury to the wood? —Z.Y.X.



A desk fitted in cleverly under a sloping roof

must be tightly sewn together in pairs and tied in bundles of six pairs; not thrown, helter-skelter, into a box to be sorted out on arrival in England. Nor must they contain parcels of tobacco, cigarettes, candy or gum, as these are all dutiable and must go in separate boxes, while the socks may go in bales, protected by waterproof paper and not weighing over 56 pounds per bale.

Not infrequently we receive huge bundles, "Not to be opened." As these are generally not fit to stand the journey to England, the injunction has to be disregarded, and the reason for the injunction is discovered in the breaking of all packing rules. These bales sometimes weigh over 200 pounds, and the socks contain bundles of cigarettes or gum so tightly sewn into the toe as almost to require a surgical operation to get them out.

Now, dear madam, will you help us to get this put right?

The rules laid down are not mere whims. They are based on explicit instructions from those who have to distribute the goods and who know what is really wanted.

Anybody working for the Red Cross should get a copy of "Suggestions" as

Cross Society and Secretary National Service Committee, 77 King Street, East, Toronto.

WHY SUPERANNUATE MINISTERS?

Dear Miss Beynon:—The letter in the issue of June 23, entitled, "Preachers' Life Not Easy," appears to me an article of much difference among us, and may I put in my opinion?

In regard to saving money for old age, it appears that nearly everyone but our ministers has to toil and sweat with that anxiety in mind. Men of many occupations which we all need in our country, such as miners, carpenters, farmers, railroadmen, and others too numerous to mention, toil with much earnestness, and many times with very little profit, but they and they alone must try for years, and many times deprive themselves of comforts and even what look like necessities of life, so that when too stiff and weak to work they will not have to lift the latch of the poor house gate.

Many of our good and honest laborers are disappointed with their year's work and nothing saved, and even their