

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

CONFLICTING IDEALS

Two opposite conceptions of education are struggling for the right of way in the great republic to the south of us, and both had representatives at Columbia University this summer demonstrating their superiority. The split between the two parties seems to be over the soundness of the old proverb, "There is no royal road to learning."

To one of these groups the child's mind is full of a healthy curiosity which, if fed when thirsty and with just as much information as is asked for, will lead to the perfect education of the child without any cramming on the part of the teacher and any uphill struggle on the part of the pupil. In this method of education the class leads and the teacher follows.

The other group of educators lean to the theory that man is prone to indolence, and that if it is left to the child to start something, nothing much is likely to happen. They hold, moreover, that inasmuch as the hard things of life are not smoothed over for the adult with honey, the child educated by the so-called "natural method" will grow up without the strength of character to face life's difficulties.

The advocate of the "natural method" brought two teachers along to demonstrate the working out of this system. One of the lessons taught was on transportation, and the greater part of the morning was spent upon a discussion of the interior of a railway train. To the casual observer this seems a great waste of time. Even at best, granting that the children asked every intelligent question which could be asked, in order to draw the desired information from the teacher, they would still have only a second-hand knowledge of the inside of a railway coach, whereas they can get an indelible first-hand impression of it with their first journey, and no extra charge for the education. Also, at that rate, the modern child will have nothing left to be surprised at when he goes out in the world. He will be as blasé as the most finished traveller. If this lesson is to be taken as a fair sample of the new type of education, it would seem that the old-fashioned concentration on the three R's was more to the point.

It is probable that, as usually happens, the ideal method lies somewhere between the two extremes, of cramming irrelevant facts down the throats of reluctant pupils and this new type in which the teacher tags along in the wake of the immature and irresponsible child mind.

CHURCH SPIRES

It isn't often that *The Ladies' Home Journal* and I agree on any matter of public conduct, so it gives me pleasure to find in the last number of that magazine an editorial on church spires which has my entire approbation. (The editor would doubtless be greatly elated if he should happen across this editorial.)

The *Journal* is protesting against the tendency to build bungalow and other types of churches in which the spire has given way to horizontal lines, on the ground that the sky-line of many villages will lose thereby. Which reminded me of our trip across from Niagara Falls to Toronto the other day, and the beauty of a church spire that came into view against the background of blue sky as we approached the latter city. Every group of buildings needs the break in the monotony of height which is afforded by church spires, and the general effect of our towns and villages will unquestionably suffer if the new tendency in church building becomes general.

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PAINLESS CHILDBIRTH

A woman in Manitoba wrote in a few days ago to know where she could go to have twilight sleep at the time of childbirth. So far there is no place in Manitoba where mothers can have this relief from the intense suffering of childbirth. In New York the club women put up a twilight sleep hospital, and thousands of mothers from all over the country go there to have their children. The cost is too high for the average mother.

This summer an English woman was visiting me, and she said that her father and brother, both con-

servative doctors in the old country, have used twilight sleep and are delighted with it. Just a few weeks ago a woman in Saskatchewan sent in some clippings from an old country paper about painless childbirth.

Hanna Rion has been writing a series of articles for the *Weekly Dispatch*, on what is being done in England to make childbirth easy. In one article she gives the following views expressed by interested people:

An officer writes from the front:

"I write on behalf of my dear wife. She is again facing the fearful ordeal of childbirth—trying to face it bravely for my sake. I have no courage to bring to bear on the event—yet I wish to God I could go thru the operation for her—for I know what she endured last time. If you can help me spare her a repetition of the past torture I shall be forever grateful, for I love my wife."

This letter really thrilled me with its pathos and splendid devotion. It made me realize the double burden of dread which many of our brave men are now carrying in the firing line.

I could go on endlessly quoting letters—all telling of a most terrible attitude towards

have on the before-birth health of a woman. This woman—a Shakespearean and comedy actress—knew from the moment she found she was to become a mother that she was to have the eventual protection of twilight sleep. The effect of this comforting certainty on her general health was amazing. She suffered none of the usual physical discomforts of the first months, and remained in a state of perfect well-being thruout the nine months. A fortnight before the birth of the child she told me she had not known one moment's discomfort, mental or physical, thruout her long months of waiting, and this she herself attributed to the confidence bred of a knowledge of twilight sleep.

The Man's Point of View

The husband of one of my twilight sleep mothers recently said: "When you write your next article I want you to put in a word from the man's point of view."

"All right," said I, "what is it?" "This," said he, "and I can't put it too strongly—the relief to a husband's mind when he realizes what his wife is to be spared by twilight sleep. In my case I was spared months of mental horror. I had never one moment's alarm, one moment's worry, about my wife. Thanks to twilight sleep my own work could be continued with no harassing dread of what she would have to endure when our child was born. My mind reflected my wife's perpetual peace, and happiness. My debt to twilight sleep is as great as that of my wife and child, and I want to put in my little word of acknowledgment."

The mother, once spared torture in childbirth, has no fear of babies to come; she is therefore a more valuable asset to the nation. Give our women the assurance of relief at birth and they will provide the babies—willingly, generously. Withhold this assurance and the birth-rate will continue to fall.

A COMMUNITY LAUNDRY

Are there any community laundries on the prairie? I have not heard of them, but there are such laundries, organized by clubs of women and run successfully, in country districts. In the first place a community laundry is a laundry run without profit to anyone but the women who establish it. If a club of women start it, then only the club members profit by it, but other women may send their washing.

The advantage of having the washing and part of the ironing done away from home appeals to both men and women, and it could be managed. In the first place, choose a place for the laundry that will cost as little as possible. If you have a creamery, it would be advisable to run the laundry in connection with it. If not, perhaps you have a basement in your club house that could be utilized. If not, perhaps there is some other place that could be fitted up at a small cost. The equipment is the next problem. A committee of women should be appointed to investigate this matter and report on the cost, laid down, of the tubs, the wringers, the drain pipes put in, the mangle, the engine and the stove, as well as the wages of the man or woman who would run it.

In one district the woman who had gone around from house to house washing was chosen to do the work, and did it well. The washing was collected by the wagons that called for the children to take them to the consolidated school. The laundry was near the school and the parcels were again delivered by the same means. Other ways could be found if necessary.

The payment for equipment was made in ten equal payments, and by charging a reasonable amount for the laundry work done for outsiders there was enough money made by the laundry to pay for the equipment. The members of the club paid only half as much for their laundry as the women not members, and in the case mentioned there were enough non-members patronized the laundry to make it pay for itself. This would not always be the case. The mangle ironed all the sheets and table cloths and towels, in fact, all the flat things were returned home beautifully washed and ironed and folded, at much less than half the cost of having them washed at a regular laundry.



THE WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION CAUGHT THIS DOG FAMILY UNAWARES