

A Letter from a "Farmer-Woman."

To the Editor of the "Home Magazine":

I have wondered for some time why our farmers' wives and daughters are content to live such narrow lives, without an interest outside their households, and if the editors of our invaluable "Advocate" could not suggest a remedy for this state of affairs. Now, of course, we have all read the many excellent articles which have been published in the "Advocate," in which the writers wax eloquent over brilliant advantages of country life. But the real truth is, that the great majority of country people are utterly indifferent to those many advantages.

How many of our young people take any interest whatever in the "flowers of the field and forest, the wonders of the starry sky, or the ever-changing beauty unfolding itself before headless eyes?"

Our young folks are looking for a good time, not for opportunities for cultivating their minds. Listen! In a school composed of fifty pupils, only one had ever seen a cowslip, although, on their way to school, the children passed hundreds of cowslips in bloom, and the teacher in this school (a farmer's son) stated that the maiden-hair fern was very rare, although the woods here abound in this species. One young lady informed me that she had been told the names of the wild flowers, but she "forgot them all." And I have known people to mistake a basswood in bloom for some sort of ornamental flowering tree. Astronomy? I doubt if many women could point out even the polestar, or would be interested if you did. Ornithology? Not one farmer's daughter in twenty can tell the difference between a bobolink and an oriole. As for watching the white mist on the river disappearing before the rising sun, or the golden grain swaying in the summer wind, very few think of such a thing. And the long winter evenings spent with our favorite authors, or forming the acquaintance of new ones? One half of my young friends frankly tell me they "don't like reading," the others "read anything they can get their hands on." Pinned down to a more specific answer, they "can't remember author's names," and ask if I read the story in the "Globe" or "Citizen." This in a district where every little town has a good public library.

Nor is it because they are too busy to study anything, because these girls are not interested in their work. They hate to work in the garden, they hate to sew; Ma bakes the bread, Ma does the knitting; they will not mend, and I don't know what they like to do. I asked one young girl what she and her brothers and sisters did to amuse themselves in the evenings. "Oh, do up the chores, and go to bed;—well, most nights we go somewhere." And that really is the popular amusement. Pa reads the paper or dozes on the lounge; Ma knits or mends; the boys and girls—generally they "go somewhere." They are not musicians; they are "out of practice," or "only took six lessons"; they have no games; they are "going to get some"; they cannot embroider centerpieces or piece fancy quilts; they "don't know how," as for "society small talk," it is a lost art. Most of the girls "just love" dancing, but few are really graceful dancers. In fact, the chief employment of the modern country girl is, like Sister Anne in the Bluebeard story, keeping a sharp lookout from the watchtower for the coming Prince Charming, not, however, on Fatima's, but on her own extremely individual account. The older woman is interested in her children, the latest neighborhood gossip, her little daily round of tasks, and has neither time nor inclination for anything else.

Now, I am tired, tired of women living in a cup-and-saucer, and never attempting to peep outside the rim of the saucer, but I can see no way of bettering things. Can the editor or readers of the "Home Magazine" throw any light on this dark question?

Yours in despair,
DAME SANDHURST.

Household Hints.

An old-fashioned housewife suggests that cupboards and closets can be rid of mice and ants by stopping up the mouse holes with corks dipped in carbolic acid, and the floors and shelves should be scrubbed with diluted carbolic acid as well. A teaspoonful to a bucket of water is required, but the water must not be hot, and the acid must be stirred in with a stick until incorporated with the water, for carbolic acid is a powerful corrosive, and therefore great care is needed in handling it.

A small wringer attached to the side of a mop pail is a valuable aid to quickness, as well as neatness of work, and housekeepers will do well to be supplied with one.

An easy and satisfactory way to remove dust from a painted floor is to wet a flannel bag, wring out as dry as possible; put it on the broom and drag it with even strokes over the floor. All the dirt will in this way be collected in one place and can be easily taken up without leaving streaks of dust on the paint.

Doing Something.

If you're sick with something chronic,
And you think you need a tonic,
Do something.
There is life and health in doing.
There is pleasure in pursuing,
Doing, then, is health accruing,
Do something.

If you're fidgety and nervous,
Think you need the doctor's service,
Do something.
Doing something will relieve you
Of the symptoms that deceive you,
Therefore, if these troubles grieve you,
Do something.

If you do not like the weather,
Don't condemn it altogether—
Do something.
It will make the weather clearer,
Life will sweeter be and dearer,
And the joys of heaven nearer—
Do something.

And if you are seeking pleasure
Or enjoyment in full measure,
Do something.
Idleness! There's nothing in it;
If you're busy, don't begin it.
'Twill not pay you for a minute—
Do something.

—W. S. Whitacre.

A Train Flirtation.

I did not even know her name,
Nor where she lived—nor whence she came—
'Twas sad, and yet
Was I so much to blame
That all my heart should start to flame,
And flare and fret?

She was so sweet, so passing fair,
With such a smile, with such an air—
What could I do?
A glance as shy, as debonaire,
An eye as bright, a smile as rare,
I never knew!

And so I smiled across the aisle,
And met the winsome, merry smile
She sent so bold;
At last she laughed, then after while
She cooed aloud in friendly style,
'I'm free years old!"

—From Western Graphic.

Summer.

Moss at our feet, and overhead all green,
'Gainst tender skies that ever earthward lean,
While feathered songsters lift their lays serene.

Hillsides aglow, and bramble bower'd dells
Where woodland music softly sinks and swells,
Where sway a million pale and fragrant bells.

See the last trace of dreariness give room
To summer's glow of sunshine and perfume,
And the glad times of mingled song and bloom.
—Genesee Richardson, in Outing.

Laundry Lines.

Napkins should always be folded with the selvedge toward the ironer.

The water in which rice has been boiled should be saved for starching muslins.

Rainwater and white castile soap in lukewarm suds is the best mixture in which to wash embroideries.

Never have irons on the stove when cooking, particularly when the article cooking is one that is apt to flow or boil over or while frying.

A teaspoonful of kerosene does as well as a bit of white wax in boiled starch, and mutton suet is as good as either to make a plain gloss.

To retain the colors in any washing materials, soak the articles in alum water. A teaspoonful of alum to every quart of cold water is the proportion.

In hanging blankets after washing them remember to put them lengthwise over the line, otherwise they are likely to split from the weight of water in them.

Wash flatirons occasionally with warm water, to every two quarts of which has been added half a tablespoonful of melted lard. Wipe thoroughly and set in a warm spot till perfectly dry.

Humorous.

A witness called in a case in the King's Bench, says the London Daily Mail, was asked his name. "John 'Awkins," was the prompt reply. "Do you spell your name with or without an 'h'?" queried counsel. "With—J-o-h-n," was the emphatic reply.

A self-appointed instructor in civics, nine years of age, was rehearsing the greatness of Premier Laurier, when he was interrupted by one of his hearers, a little girl, who said gently, but with a certain air of reproach: "God made Canada; he only lets Sir Wilfred run it."

Economy.

"Practice economy as a fine art, make a duty and a pleasure of it; it is the mortar wherein you lay up the walls of a home," one writer says. "Don't be ashamed of economy; study it; consult about it; don't confound it with meanness. Meanness is going in debt for luxury." A friend of mine once tried to practice economy. In the first place, she took her children out of school, hired a poor servant in the place of a good one, discontinued her magazines and newspapers, while her two grown daughters were as idle and dressy as before. She called that economy, but I don't.

Now, don't let pride get a foothold in your home. Franklin says: "Pride is as loud a beggar as want, and twice as saucy." When you purchase one fine article of dress you need more to correspond with it. Better stop before you commence. You will then be likely to keep out of debt; and don't hang a millstone of debt about your husband's neck. It may ruin him, and debts will increase instead of decrease. "Oh dear," you say, "no new clothes! How will it look! Why, that is an open declaration of poverty." No, it is not poverty, but economy and honesty. Then if you have fewer fine clothes, you will care less about going out, and so you will not need to entertain so much. I do not mean by this, not to go out or entertain at all, but you will like privacy more than company that is bringing you into debt. "How mean it makes me feel to see my friends out in fine new clothes," you remark. Perhaps they have gone in debt for them, and then perhaps they can afford it; but if you had such clothes you would certainly have to run in debt for them. One must not measure one's expenses by other people's outlays, but by one's income.

The people of to-day respect and imitate the showy rather than the substantial. Encourage your desires, spend more than you can afford, and you will pass along the road to ruin. On the other hand, by being careful, practising economy, living within one's means, one may enter the road of assured prosperity. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich."

If people would only learn that economy is a thing of littles and individuals and of every day, and not some great thing! Order is everything in practising economy.

I know a lady who is well-to-do, and she says prosperity came by economy. She says: "Economize in little things, and great economies will take care of themselves."

This love of dress and love of display which seems to be in every woman's heart is the one great hindrance to practising economy. Fear of what others will say is another great drawback. "She daren't practice economy," you say. Yes, she dare. There are many women who are economizing in their homes and in their dress. They are also helping their husbands on to the road of prosperity. Let us practice more economy in the home.

MARY VERNE.

Port Royal, Ont.

A Missionary Story.

A missionary returned from Equatorial Africa told this story at a club the other night:

In this man's territory there was a chief who had resisted every appeal to make him a Christian. He was the biggest man in a sort of confederation of savage tribes, and the missionary knew that if the big chief were once converted the effect would be felt by every native within fifty miles. So the missionary kept after him month in and month out, in face of every kind of indifference and rebuff.

At the end of two years the missionary was all but ready to give up, when one day the miracle came to pass—the big chief's heart was touched by the truths of Christianity. The missionary redoubled his efforts, and in two months more the big chief offered himself for baptism.

It looked like a great victory won, until, in examining the new convert, the missionary discovered that according to the chiefly prerogative he had two wives. The missionary expressed his horror, indignation and grief to the chief.

He explained to him how the state of polygamy was a barrier to anyone who wished to become a Christian. Then he prayed with him, and the chief departed, weeping over his unfitness.

But a month later he came again, joyous, devout, and, throwing himself at the missionary's feet, asked for baptism.

"My brother," said the missionary, "I cannot baptize you while you are the husband of two wives."

"No two wives, just one wife now," said the chief.

The missionary raised him to his feet. Here was the true penitent.

"My brother," said the missionary, "you make my heart glad. And what did you do with your second wife?"

"I'm," answered the chief, "She no good; me want be Kistian; me eat her."