

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

HOME AGAIN

Home again, after a sojourn of nearly six weeks at one of the largest universities in the city of New York. "Poor thing," says some kindly disposed reader, "to have been spending this terrible summer in a place like New York." The sympathy is really wasted for, from all accounts, New York had nothing hotter to offer in the way of weather than had Manitoba.

'Tis true there was one unspeakable day, July 31, when the temperature was ninety-three and the humidity eighty-five. Technically I don't know exactly what it means when one says that the humidity is eighty-five, but practically it is awful. Several invalids got discouraged and pitched themselves out of upstairs windows and died, and one really couldn't blame them. But for the most part the very hot and humid days came only in groups of three or two and alternated with cool spells which made life quite bearable. Being on the sea coast there quite often sprang up a very cool, pleasant breeze. So taking it all in all the summer in New York might have been much worse.

It is only fair to say, however, that Columbia University is situated in one of the highest parts of the city and has wide open spaces, so that perhaps those living in the more congested portions might have another tale to tell.

The guards on the subway trains, for example, must have felt it to be a tolerably hot summer. None of you, I am sure, have ever tasted in the country such heavy, dead, sticky air as filled those trains, and the heating up of it by huge electric fans just served to make it livable and no more.

While from the standpoint of health one must regard it as an invention of the evil one, I confess to being filled with admiration for the wonderful organization of this underground transportation system, which is so complete that it serves a large portion of the population of a great city and so simple that the most inexperienced could hardly go astray.

When I have shaken off the dust of travel and put my office to rights again I shall have more to tell you about my experiences in the great American metropolis.

In the meantime it's pleasant to be home and to resume my very congenial work on *The Guide*.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Dear Miss Beynon:—I am going, if you will let me, to draw your, and the homemakers', attention to a very delicate subject. I expect to be bitterly called down for it, and maybe I shall deserve it, and may thus be brought to a different way of thinking. It is the much abused, to my mind, hospitality of the West. I have lived in the three prairie provinces now, in rural districts, and I have always seen it abused. The hospitality which is always extended to travellers, to the storm-stayed, to new arrivals, to those smitten by fire or misfortune is admirable, and I hope that it will always remain as unrestrained as it has ever been in the West.

But where hospitality is abused is in this Sunday visiting in hosts and hordes of uninvited crowds. It is a menace to the comfort and privacy of family life. The little formalities and niceties are best observed as much as possible, I think. For instance, a home mother does her baking and cleaning on Saturday, and, if not near a church, at least can rest and read on Sunday, but she has hardly settled down Sunday forenoon until a democrat load of Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So "and the children"—which may mean anything from two to nine—with perhaps the hired man and another straggler or two, come to spend the day. The greeting will probably be, "You never returned my last visit, but I'm not proud, I just made up my mind if you wouldn't come to see me, I'd come to see you." Think of the stewing and the clatter all day long, until they have been fed twice and have departed. Result, a tired woman and an empty larder. She can postpone her washing on Monday and cook some more. The stay-at-homes are the worst victims of these professional visitors, as they can be relied upon to be on the premises. I first began to get wise to these visitations when I was in Manitoba. A woman with her host had come a couple of times and I said, one Sunday, "The So-and-So's will be offended at us for not calling on them. Shall we walk

over for a little while?" I had hardly got the words out of my mouth when they drove up, and the woman rushed in: "I know I'm not half dressed, and John didn't take time to shave, we we're so afraid someone would come before we could get away." I never went there at any time. I concluded that they were the visiting, not the visited, class.

So I say that the sooner this free and easy sort of thing is done away with the better. The good old rules, "Never accept general invitations," and "Never make a prolonged visit unless previously invited" make for harmony. People are entitled to a little privacy in their homes, and the mere fact that such invaders are not actually insulted is no guarantee that they are always welcome. One must always make an exception of the lonely bachelor, and one or two of them on a Sunday are always welcome. Nearly every family lives near a few bachelors and have friendly intercourse with them. They come because they are lonely, and really appreciate the visit and are nearly always ready to lend a helping hand and be agreeable.

But the sooner that people settle down to the little niceties of life and teach their children the



DISTINGUISHED POETS

Left to right—Lawrence Housman, Willam Sykes, Percy MacKaye, Edwin Markham, Cole Young Rice, Amy Lowell, Josephine Daskam Bates.

same, the better. Many of the children are nothing short of savages. Lace curtains and books they look on as made to destroy, while their parents beam approval, and the distracted hostess has anything but Sabbath feelings in her heart.

Now, have I assailed the foundations of good feelings, the hospitality of the West, and what is to be done with me? Perhaps I am getting cross and soured, but "them's my sentiments."

Yours truly,

WOLF WILLOW.

SASKATCHEWAN DOWER LAW

Dear Miss Beynon:—I was reading in this week's *Guide* a piece about "A defective law." Is the dower law in force in Saskatchewan and what does it consist of? If I noticed it before, I have forgotten about it. It would oblige me very much if you could give me an outline of it in your headings. According to this piece, as long as the wife stays on the homestead the husband cannot sell it without her consent. Is that correct?

A SUBSCRIBER.

Subscriber:—The act in Saskatchewan provides that no man can sell the homestead without the consent of his wife. The act defines the "homestead" as the place on which the family are living.

In the case mentioned, the man had bought a place, on which he had paid very little, and moved his family onto it. Then he sold the other place and the law allowed him to do it without his wife's consent because she was not living on it. The wife has a claim only on the place where she is living.

CHAMPION HOUSE PLANNERS

Manitoba has sixty-three wide awake women house planners. Of course the province really has a far greater number even than that, but it has sixty-three that formally entered the contest conducted this summer by the Farm Engineering Department of Manitoba Agricultural College. The winners in that contest are now announced as follows: Mrs. T. T. Baird, Crystal City; Mrs. F. E. Garsin, Bird's Hill; Miss Christine Guild, Kemnay; Mrs. R. Robbins, Glenella; Mrs. G. S. Gudmanson, Framnes.

The judges were Mrs. McBeath, Headingley; Miss Kennedy, professor of household art, Agricultural College, and L. J. Smith, professor of agricultural engineering, Agricultural College. Prof. Smith says: "It was found quite difficult to decide as to the best five plans. We did not attempt to decide which of the five prize winners had the best plan, since the prize money was the same for the best five plans. I am very sorry that we had no more prizes, for there were a great many splendid plans besides the ones chosen. I am sure, however, that those competing derived a good deal of benefit from the contest. We expect to publish ten or a dozen plans in bulletin form early in the winter."

This bulletin, when it appears, should be most practical, because it will represent the best thought of Manitoba farm women as to how Manitoba farm homes should be planned. Prof. Smith has already filed a large number of applications for the bulletin and will add the names of others who write their request to him.

REMOVING VARNISH

Many women have their floors varnished, and the varnish is chipping and there is nothing apparently to do but put on another coat and renew the operation every time the varnish is so much chipped that it makes the floors unsightly. There are many things recommended for removing varnish, each warranted to take it off with but little trouble. Personally, I think from much experience that it is impossible to take the hard floor varnish off without considerable trouble, but it can be done. The best remover I have tried is plain, simple lye. Get a can of lye and put it in an old pail or kettle and pour on warm water. Do not put it in any vessel that you wish to use for anything again. Also, if the water is hot, be careful where you have it, for it is likely to boil over and destroy everything in sight, and burn your hands if you touch it.

It would be a good plan to put the pail in the middle of the floor you wish to clean and put the lye in dry and then add the water, and be careful not to inhale the fumes. When the lye is melted, take a long handled brush and rub the lye water over the floor. Let stand for a while and rub on again. To remove, mix with great quantities of water and wash out with a broom, or if it is not possible to wash it out, it may be wiped up with safety if enough water is mixed with it.

In finishing a floor I would strongly advise anyone who wants a floor that will not require refinishing often to refrain from using varnish. I have used plain varnish and varnish stain and both were unsatisfactory. They invariably chip when a heavy piece of furniture is moved over them or someone with nails in their boots walks on them. A stain and wax finish is not so bright as the varnish, but it is hard and will wear regardless of what goes on over it.

AN HONORED GUEST

Mr. Goodfellow had dined out six nights in succession. On the seventh he turned up at home for the evening meal. When he was seated, Mrs. Goodfellow rose in her seat and, addressing the other occupants of the table, said:

"Children, we have with us tonight a guest of whom you have all heard, even if you do not personally know him. He is a man who has a reputation for conviviality and cheer in every club and cafe in the city, and this evening we are to have the honor and pleasure of being numbered among the admirers of his brilliant and entertaining qualities. Therefore, it is with the greatest pleasure that I present to you—your papa!"