

# The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

## THE SUBTLE INSULTS OF ART

Germany's most poignant punishment for disturbing the world's peace will be meted out to her, not by the armies of the allied forces, but by the artists of the whole world. Theirs are the poisoned arrows against which the most elaborate system of trenches and the most powerful combination of guns is no defence.

It is said that the kaiser grinds his teeth in rage at the stinging insult of Raemaker's cartoons, and his own impotence to defend himself against this judgment of a representative of a neutral nation.

Many tales are told of the manner in which the clever Belgians have turned the tables on their conquerors, one of which is to the effect that just before an important Belgian national holiday the citizens were warned not to make any patriotic demonstration. The day began very quietly, and it seemed that their orders were going to be obeyed, but at a certain hour gramophones all over one of the great cities began to play the German national anthem—out of tune. The German officers fumed and raged inwardly, but they could do nothing in answer to this artistic expression of contempt.

In Princess Mary's gift book there is a story called "The Ebony Box," by A. E. W. Mason, which is the most refined example of the artistic insult. It is the story of a Prussian officer who served in the Franco-Prussian war. During the siege of Paris he was sent, one night, on a special mission, which necessitated a long ride alone thru a dangerous section of the country. Being uncertain of the direction, he stopped at a little hut and rapped at the door, loudly and imperatively. When the door was not opened immediately, he it was the middle of the night, he smashed in the window with his whip handle. A shuffling footstep was heard and an old woman, bent with rheumatism and with only a shawl thrown over her night clothes, stood shivering in the doorway. The author, with consummate cleverness, has had the Prussian officer tell the story himself.

"I am sorry, monsieur," she said meekly. "But I cannot move as quickly as I could when I was young. How can I serve monsieur?"

"Not a word of reproach about her broken window. You would think that the hardest man must have felt some remorse. I merely broke in upon her apologies with a rough demand for information.

"The road upon your right leads to Chelles, monsieur," she answered. "That upon your left to Raincy."

"I rode off without another word. It is not a pretty description which I am giving to you, but it is a true one. That is my regret—it is a true one."

On the return journey the officer sighted a chateau which he fancied might be the means of sending news to the French in Paris, and he entered ruthlessly and searched it. The inmates were a bed-ridden woman, her daughter, a sister, a visiting wounded soldier and a servant or two.

Having found no evidence to confirm his suspicions elsewhere, he insisted upon searching the young girl's room, and in one of the drawers he came upon an ebony box. The girl tried to throw it over the banister into the hall below, but he stopped her. Then she begged of him to open it, if he must, in her bedroom or in the hall, telling him that her hope of future happiness depended upon it. But no, he took the little box into the living room and not only opened it before the aunt and the soldier guest, but read all the letters it contained aloud to them. They were nearly all from one Armand, apparently a young student in Paris, tho a few were from other friends, but in each of them there was some mention of this Armand.

When he had finished, the wounded soldier got up from the couch and, hobbling across the room, he put his hand upon the girl's arm very gently and asked her to be his wife.

She refused, saying that he had only asked her to spare her this humiliation. Sometime, she said, if things had gone on as they were, he might have come and said this of his own free will, and then she would have been so happy, but now it was impossible, because she would always be suspicious that he was doing it for her sake.

Then, and then only, did it seep into the dull mind of the Prussian officer the contemptible thing he had done in revealing the girl's love to the man who did not love her.

Had the author told the story in the third per-

son and made the man utterly unashamed it would have savored of malignity, but told in the first person, with expressions of regret, always after he had brutally disregarded the rights and feelings of others, it is a superb inditement of the arrogance of the Prussian officer.

Thus it is that the artist wounds the pride of nations more deeply than the soldier can ever hope to do, and it should be borne in mind that this insidious retribution awaits not only Prussia but our own and every other nation whenever they give the rein to pride and arrogance.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

## KEEPING ATTRACTIVE

What is wrong with the Marys? Why does Mary go with neglected hair? What prevents her looking as fresh as she did on the happy eve she answered "Yes"? Why has she let will power slip, lost her grip on her nerves, and had a breakdown? Why does John find more pleasure at the club six



A SCENE AT A CORN HUSKING

nights a week than at home with Mary and the babies?

I am afraid Mary forgets she is the one who either attracts or distracts him, and that he never saw her except as fresh as a new-blown rose until after their wedding day. Perhaps she felt so sure of him on being married that she could neglect her personal appearance and he would still love her, for old time's sake, let us say.

Let her think how easily her hair may be tidily dressed and her dress fresh and clean. Her work can be done after breakfast in the same dress, in these days of cover-all aprons. I don't mean an elaborate dress, or a severely plain one of unattractive colors, but one of some becoming color that will make John want to take her in his arms every time he sees her. They are just as cheap and as easily made as forbidding-looking garments.

You may object that it will take two or three such dresses a week. What if it does? Isn't the effort worth while, if your husband comes home with a remark about your dress, and the smile that doesn't wear off?

What if Mary must attend a baby, I attend three. I am not theorizing, but telling you what I do 365 days in the year, and have done for six years.

There are lots of us happy women who have happy lives, happy children, happy homes and happy husbands. Let us tell the unhappy ones what life means to us.

My husband is not an attendant at clubs, but finds his pleasure at home with his family. He does not care for the babies at night, because our babies sleep all night, and have done so almost since they were born. The eldest is five, the second two and one-half years, and the baby eight months. The first one was so delicate we came near losing her, but she was very little care at night. The second one and the baby never awoke at night after they were three weeks old, because they had proper care, and were properly and systematically managed. I am sure such night bother as we had with the first was due to our lack of experience.

My husband is under considerable mental strain and lacks physical exercise in his business, so we breed poultry to get outdoor work. I help him in this, and he helps me with my work when there is need for it.

We are not perfect. We make mistakes. But we are considerate of each other, we overlook short-

comings, and we appreciate what good there may be in our lives.

Where are the other mothers on my side? Let us hear from them.

MRS. L. T. C.

## A THANKLESS CHILD

I know a mother whose daughter lounges around the house and reads silly love-stories, while the mother does nearly all her work, even making her bed. The daughter has got the lazy habit. She does not want to do anything but just dress up in her new clothes and make a good impression upon her boy friends.

A certain elderly lady told me recently that she was very unhappy because of the ingratitude of her children who had grown up to be so selfish and inconsiderate of her. She said she had made all kinds of sacrifices for them; she had always studied to make them comfortable and happy, and yet they did not seem to appreciate it.

Her daughters married well and are living in fine homes, but she lives in a cheap apartment furnished with odds and ends. The daughters have a great many luxuries, and yet they seldom visit their mother or invite her to their homes.

These instances are sad enough, and yet parents are often responsible for much of it. If children are brought up with the idea that their mother is always ready to give up something for their sakes, they take it for granted that mothers are supposed to make these sacrifices, that this is what mothers are for. Now, if children are reared with this idea, they will inevitably be selfish.

I have in mind a mother who has given her life to her only son and daughter. I have seen her, time and time again, run for her son's slippers the minute he was in the house, and get the paper or a book for him and say, "There, son, sit down and make yourself comfortable." She waits upon him as he should be waiting upon her.

She has been so indulgent with her children, so self-sacrificing in granting their every whim, doing their work for them, that they have both developed ungovernable tempers. They contradict her constantly, are actually so abusive that she is often in tears, and she cannot understand why it is that her children are so ungrateful, why it is that they are so inconsiderate of her and her feelings. But it is the legitimate result of her training. She has never taught them to make sacrifices for her or for anyone else. Her very kindness has not only brought sorrow to her, but it has unfitted her children for their life battles.

Overindulgent parents are responsible for a great deal of the ingratitude and the selfishness and the vicious tempers children develop. Many mothers have the idea that overindulgence is kindness, but the effect is often just the opposite. A good mother is a wise mother and she trains her children with a view to how they can best be taught to meet their own problems later in life. The wise mother knows that a child who does not learn implicit obedience will be placed at a great disadvantage, because no one is fit to command who has not first learned to obey, and no man becomes a good leader who has not first learned to follow. The mother who realizes what is best for her child never allows him to think that he can disobey her. Implicit obedience is imperative in the training of a child. —By Orison Swett Marden, in the Pictorial Review.

## ABOUT THE HOUSE

Strange as it may seem, beef may be kept for months if immersed in sour milk. The lactic acid destroys the germs of putrefaction.

Scraps of toilet soap should be saved, and when half a cupful or so is on hand it is a good plan to make the scraps into a soap jelly.

Cheese may be kept soft and good for a long time if wrapped in a cloth wrung out in vinegar and then wrapped again in a dry cloth.

Stick a pin thru the cork of every bottle that contains poison, and this may save tragic mistakes when seeking medicine in the dark.

A bare broom splinters matting easily. If you have no long-handled soft brush, make a grey cotton flannel covering for the top of the broom.

Potato balls which are sauted in butter after being boiled are delicious. They should be served with a generous sprinkling of minced parsley.