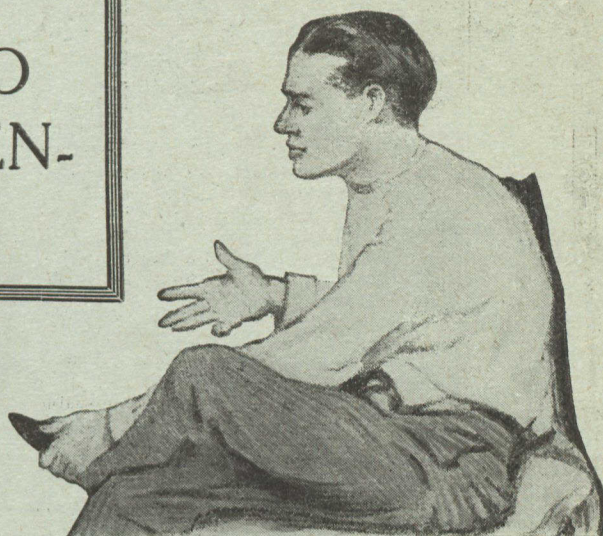


## MORE ABOUT THE WOMAN WHO MENDEED SEVENTEEN- CENT SOCKS

THE Editor considers, since the discussion on the wisdom of mending seventeen-cent socks has reached such proportions, that it would not be fair to close the subject without hearing from the practical woman—the woman who actually does the work of darning her husband's socks.

Therefore we publish letters from a number of practical housewives, in which they give their actual experience, thus adding weight to their opinions.



### Time, and a Cash Value

I THINK if 'A Troubled Husband' ever needs a housekeeper and will pay fifty cents an hour for her time, he will not need to look very far, as he will be simply swamped with applications; but I think he has made a mistake in the value of a woman's time. All time is of value, but not always of cash value, and no paid housekeeper ever receives so much as that.

Then again, which hours are worth fifty cents—the hours in which she prepares the meals, or the hours spent on the verandah or calling on friends? There are at least seventeen hours in a day, and surely he would not value them all the same, for every one must have some leisure, and sometimes it is a rest to sit and darn a few socks. One is not always in the humour for music or reading, and little boys are not always hanging round waiting for instruction, so if a wife can rest and at the same time save a few cents by darning seventeen-cent socks and making them last another three or four times, she is helping her husband that much; for even thirty dollars a week has an end if not carefully spent.

Next time your correspondent sallies forth to buy socks, I would advise him to buy something more durable than 17c. socks. There are socks sold for a few cents more a pair which are guaranteed to last at least one month without darning; then he will show his own good business sense and also save his wife's time.

In another article in the July issue a woman tells how she and her sister succeeded in paying for a home of their own, not in economising in food, but by making over hats, dresses and coats, and by making underwear out of anything that was worn; they mended and darned and renovated old stockings, made trousers for the boy out of men's discarded ones, and so on. This woman thought it no waste of time to do these things, and she was a practical woman; and I myself think it part of a wife's duties to make everything go as far as it will, for what a wife can save is what she earns."—Mrs. J. J., R. R. 2, Abohaqui, N.B.

### 17c. Socks are False Economy

'A Troubled Husband,' in his letter seems to subject his wife's people to some unmerited criticism for having trained her for the responsible and worthy position of wife and mother, and, incidentally, housewife. What could be more commendable? Surely they do not deserve the slur which is cast upon them for so doing, and is it not lamentable that under the circumstances he has used the expression 'She has been brought up to mend socks', as though that were something criminal, rather than something which should be taught in every public school.

If 'Troubled Husband' is so considerate of his wife, why does he pay only 17c. for socks? With about half the wage that 'Troubled Husband' earns, I manage to pay 50c. a pair and find them far more economical than the cheaper sort. Is it a husband's business to say what work a wife shall or shall not do when she has a spare hour to sit down? I consider that 'Troubled Husband' should be thankful that his wife does not spend her time in reading, music, etc., to the exclusion of such duties as making her husband's socks comfortable to wear. If he has ever lived in any of the larger cities in the West, he will probably have seen dozens of wives spending their time in the big departmental stores, till within a few minutes of noon, then rushing to the grocery department to buy ready cooked ham, canned goods and other expensive foodstuffs, rather than stay at home long enough to cook nourishing, appetising meals.

The modern housewife is all too ready to neglect domestic duties, which, after all, are what the competent wife or mother takes a delight in doing. I am pained to find any man holding his wife up to criticism for so commendable an action as quietly sitting down in her own home to darn socks, planning, maybe, the routine for the next day or week's work. Too few of us, men or women, sit down quietly to face our own thoughts, as this good woman apparently does. Is it not the present day tendency to rush from one amusement to another—from one job to another—to drown our thoughts? The pin money suggestion, commendable as it may be, will never justify any right-minded woman in neglecting her more irksome duties, even at the suggestion of her husband. 'Troubled Husband' should thank Heaven that there are still women who are not given to wasteful methods, which are unworthy of such a woman as he and I are blessed with.

"As to the capacity of the average woman to

earn 50c. an hour, I would like to ask 'Troubled Husband' what form of labour will return half this sum and at the same time let the wife rest herself and leave her free to talk or think. If 'Troubled Husband's' wife cannot see the false economy which he has tried to point out, I think I may say that there are thousands more who cannot see it either, and my wife and I are among the number. Does she not do many things every day which are wholly and solely for his comfort, which, reckoned in dollars and cents, would not be worth a five cent piece?

"I feel I shall not have done justice to the subject without telling you that I am acting as spokesman for my wife and several other women who feel exactly as I do on this subject."—F. B. P., Battleford, Sask.

### Larger Things of Life More Important

"The easiest way to get people to do things they are not inclined to do is to show them plainly the necessity for it, and then leave them alone to choose of their own sweet will. There is a streak in human nature that very much resembles the mule. To be constantly told to correct our weaknesses and failings is to bias us against doing so, while to be placed in circumstances where our own shortcomings show up against the strong characteristics of others is to arouse our mettle, and we put forth every talent we possess to measure up to the standard of those with whom we are associated.

Now, in the instance cited, Mary's environment is going to have a great deal to do with her seeing the necessity for self-improvement. If her daily associates are those who pride themselves in having every old sock darned, to the detriment of the higher and more important things of life, then Mary, if her disposition is at all inclined to follow that trend, will be sure to fall in line; but place her in surroundings where her associates find real and lasting pleasure in the important, vital things of life, and she will get a vision undreamed of before. Cut off her supply of entertainment from her old associates and she will lose interest in the little things of life, simply because there will be no person to appreciate or applaud her efforts, while her energies, seeking for an outlet, will imbibe the ideas of her new associates. Much can be done to encourage and stimulate her efforts by honest appreciation of the little she accomplishes in the right direction and by simply ignoring the time and energy wasted on useless things.

socks after three or four wearings, and in my opinion she is right. Imagine the moral effect on the children were they to see their father's socks consigned to the rag bag without even one darning. Would they not grow up with the idea that sock-darning is an unnecessary accomplishment?

"I imagine that Mary's home is sweet and clean, her cooking dainty and nourishing, and that she never wastes anything. In the generally accepted sense of the term, she is a thrifty housewife.

"But, notwithstanding her many excellent qualities, Mary may not be as much of a companion to her husband as she should be. From the tone of his letter I fear she is forgetting that we are expected to cater to our husband's mental, as well as material, needs. Surely an all-round thrifty woman should keep herself mentally fit. She should be able to discuss current events, new books, magazine articles, or business problems. She should be his companion, not merely his housekeeper.

"But to return to the socks. How can Mary darn and still have time for music and mental improvement? It would be more conducive to real thrift if 'Troubled Husband' were to buy socks of better quality—socks that will not need darning so soon and that will be more worth it when the time comes.

"But leaving out this particular instance and speaking of housekeeping in its broadest sense, could we not simplify our work? Could we not eliminate from our homes many articles that are neither useful nor beautiful, and by having simple furnishings, simple meals, and simple clothing, make time for the things that are most worth while? Do we not sacrifice too much time on non-essentials?

"I should like to pass on to the readers of your excellent magazine a sentence bearing on this point which I read not long ago: 'When there are so many interesting places to visit, so many charming people to meet, so many constructive things to do, and so much inspiring literature to read, it is a pity that women burden themselves with the care of costly bric-a-brac.'

"Let us banish some of the bric-a-brac from our lives, no matter in what form it may exist, and learn to put first things first. Simple living would surely tend to both mental and material thrift, and also leave time to darn socks for the best man in the world."—M. A., R.R. 3, Oshawa, Ont.

## This is the Letter About Which Our Readers are Writing

"I am a fairly contented married man, having taken to wife the daughter of a fairly well off Alberta family, who had brought up the girl to think of nothing else but future marriage. I thought at that time that this was excellent, but since then I have been thinking a little differently. I earn thirty dollars a week, which manages to keep us both quite comfortably. I love my wife. She is a good housekeeper so far as I can see, but in the light of certain things she is somewhat a little unbusinesslike in conducting her home.

"About three months ago I went to town and brought home a dozen pairs of half silk and lisle socks, which cost me 17c. a pair, which is a very reasonable price as socks go. But after I had worn them three or four times the feet developed pretty big holes, and my wife will persist in darning these 17c. socks. The last pair she spent a whole hour over, yet I keep telling her, 'Mary, surely your time is worth at least 50c. an hour. Why spend 50c. to save 17c.?' And I tell her that if she has an hour or two on her hands, instead of darning 17c. socks why doesn't she use that hour to improve her mind by reading some good book or studying her music, or devoting it to teaching our eldest kid, who is seven this coming August, or devising ways of making pin money for herself in accordance with the suggestions in your valuable magazine. Still, she can't seem to see the economy of that kind of thing. She can only see that she has been brought up to mend socks and so she is going to save those 17c. socks even if it takes 50c. worth of her time."

"We cannot compel any person to our way of thinking—we must draw them—and the strongest personality will win in every case; so 'Troubled Husband' will need to keep busy developing himself, if he is going to be big enough to pull his wife to his way of thinking."—Mrs. W. H., Edmonton, Alta.

### Simplify Housekeeping

"I confess to a feeling of admiration for Mary. With her, thrift is innate, instinctive. Her conscience would not allow her to discard

### Buy Socks of Better Quality

"If 'Troubled Husband' exercises as little thought in all his purchasing as he did in buying those socks, it was certainly a blessing that he provided himself with a careful housekeeper. If he had any idea of the usual price of socks or their wearing qualities, he would scarcely be so proud of his bargain, nor would he have indulged in twelve pairs of such rubbish. If any one has any doubts about the bargain, his next words will dispel them. 'After I had

worn them three or four times, they were beyond mending.' Had he bought six pairs of a thirty-five or fifty-cent quality, they would, with careful laundering, have lasted through the entire season.

"I do not wonder that the busy, economical wife tried to make his foolish purchase last as long as possible. If there is to be an expenditure of \$2.00 a month for socks, and other articles proportionately, she will need to consume much personal energy to make the wheels move smoothly and comfortably on thirty dollars a week.

"This brings me to the real gist of the matter. We should give more thought to our purchases, both food and clothing. The rash expenditures in so-called bargains, and careless buying in every way have more to do with the highest cost of living and the hurry and friction in our homes than any other six subjects you could mention.

"If the heads of families would become familiar with prices and general qualities of food and clothing, and instruct their children in the secret of detecting a good bargain from a cheap imposition, there would be more time for pleasure for Mother—and Father, too—and less friction than at the present high pressure of making both ends meet."—A Mother.

"Why did the man bring home such cheap socks? I don't know the circumstances of that home, but this I do know—and I'm just as careful as any woman—that I'd be darned if I would darn seventeen-cent socks for any man. He is a cheap guy, anyway. Doesn't he know yet that it pays to get the best at any time? Perhaps he is a newlywed, but you might tell him for me that it is hardly worth while talking about it. I'm sorry, too, for the woman, if she has to be put in the papers for being careful enough to darn seventeen-cent socks. I would like to live with that seventeen-cent man just one week! I think he would change some. I wonder what his next subject will be!"—Mrs. W. E. H., Box 487, Truro, N.S.

### Old Ideas of Economy

"The woman you represent as spending a valuable hour of her time trying to mend a pair of seventeen-cent socks is only typical of hundreds of our women to-day, who have been so thoroughly schooled in the old-fashioned ideas of household economy that they are rapidly losing the larger vision of life, and are missing a great deal of the intellectual expansion and uplift which come from social intercourse with their fellow beings and sympathetic interest in the world at large.

"I do not think the fault in the case of the socks lies entirely with the wife. I do not believe that the man who invested in a dozen pairs of seventeen-cent socks, which needed mending the first week of wearing, displayed very much business ability or sagacity. If he had purchased six pairs of really good socks at thirty-five cents, he would have received much better value for his money and saved his wife several hours of drudgery. No thrifty housewife likes to see a pair of socks discarded after the first week of wear, and her natural and commendable instinct is to save them if possible. But, on the other hand, most modern housekeepers spend far too great a percentage of their time within the confines of their houses, forgetting that the making of a home involves something a great deal broader and more significant than can be acquired in any four-walled structure.

"The call of the age is to woman. Never have possibilities for her development and achievement been so great; and the outcome of the present world-struggle is infinitely more vital to woman than to man. A great responsibility is resting on woman to-day; and the call is not for expert housekeepers, laundresses, or needle-women—these are but minor accessories. What the world demands is sane, broadminded, liberally educated, capable, reasoning wives, mothers and sisters, willing and able to shoulder their burden of responsibilities and ready to take their part in the development and maintenance of a pure and upright humanity.

"To-day children are receiving an education so much broader, and entering upon life with ideas so different from those of their forefathers, that every mother who wishes to retain the confidence and guidance of her children must strive hard to keep up with them in their mental and social development. The problem of efficient motherhood is not easy. The modern woman must not only be a systematic and capable housekeeper, but she must be a sympathetic

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