

The Country Homemakers

Conducted by Mary P. McCallum

SPRING RED CROSS DRIVE

The darkest hours of the war hang heavily over us. Yet in the hearts of all there is the growing assurance that these last weeks mark that darkest darkness which just precedes the dawn. The first few days' despatches were so fraught with the fire and intensity of the great German offensive that the Allied world was plunged into the deepest anxiety. The terrific proportions of the struggle made us lose sight for a time of the spirit of the men who held Verdun. "They shall not pass," and of the spirit of the men who to-day are holding the line from Arras to LaFere. As the days grow into weeks and the great German onslaught is gradually stopped, then does the full force of Allied endurance and steadfastness, burst upon us. Then does a deeper and more prayerful faith in the blue and khaki lines exalt and inspire us.

While it would seem that the great armies entrenched across Europe, with faces turned to the rising sun, are all that stand between autocracy and militarism on the east, and democracy, freedom and justice on the west, there is a bigger and less spectacular army, which reaches to the ends of the earth, and to which you and I belong. Its service has hundreds of branches. All branches stand behind the men behind the guns. If the men who are holding the front line trenches fail it is because those farther back have failed before them. Can anyone fail the magnificent resistance of the front line men? Can ever anyone forego the honor of rendering real and tangible assistance and appreciation to those men? On April 9, 10, 11 and 12 our allegiance to the cause for which they are giving their lives will be tested.

The Canadian Red Cross is calling for \$4,000,000. The spring drive on the Western front makes more imperative our ready response to that call. Manitoba is asked to raise \$600,000, Saskatchewan \$600,000 and Alberta \$250,000. We who are spared the hell of the western line can surely give of our worldly goods, "until it hurts." Even the "hurt" so sustained is nothing in comparison to the hurts over there. All we can do is give, give, give, and even if we gave all we have how inadequate a sacrifice it is. For April 9, 10, 11 and 12 the Red Cross all over Canada is planning a special spring drive to secure the \$4,000,000 needed. Canvassers will probably call on you, but drop the biggest cheque you may write to your provincial headquarters before they get to you. Then give the canvasser another. Let us remember the immortal words of one of our great Canadian soldiers, who himself has made the supreme sacrifice: "To you, from failing hands we throw the torch; be yours to hold it high! If ye break faith with us who die We shall not sleep, though poppies grow In Flanders fields." and let us keep the faith.

WOMEN AS MISSIONARIES

At a recent meeting of the Home Mission Board of the Presbyterian church in Canada several women missionaries were appointed. This is the first time in Canadian history that the Presbyterian mission board has appointed women. A serious shortage of workers for mission fields has this year developed because of conditions created by the war and an appeal was made to the church. To this call there has come an immediate response, with the result that most of the mission fields in Canada for which Presbyteries have asked supplies will receive services.

A total of 250 appointments were made. Among these ten deaconesses from Toronto deaconesses' training school and several lady graduates of Queen's university will be in charge of mission fields during the summer.

CARING FOR RURAL MOTHERS

An investigation of conditions surrounding maternity in country communities discloses an urgent need for improving and extending rural nursing

service, according to a study recently completed by the Children's bureau. Despite good roads and telephones in one typical county studied, two-thirds of the mothers had no medical care before their children were born, and more than one-third had no visit from a physician after the day of birth. In only a few cases was the pre-natal and post-natal care commensurate with accepted standards. Four-fifths of the rural women had to work for large farm crews near the time of confinement when they especially needed to conserve all their strength.

The children's Bureau study indicates that in many country homes, poverty and remoteness, with the attendant evils surrounding childbirth, comprise a potential danger which should claim the attention of all women interested in maternal welfare and public health. The solution, advises the Children's Bureau, lies in the provision of additional nurses and doctors, improved hospitals and conference centres where mothers may obtain advice on both pre-natal and post-natal care.—Mother's Magazine.

SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA

Mr. K. C. Raeton, who conducts a column of quaint humor written in free verse in the New York American, has



Teaching Daughters to Bake
Kitchen Uniforms add interest and dignity to the business of housekeeping, which can best be learned under mother's own direction

been called the "Charlie Chaplin of New York journalism." Here is a sample of his verse taken from the Literary Digest of recent date:

In the smoking room.
Of the Pullman.
There was the minister
Who'd been reading the Bible.
And a shoe salesman.
And a rancher.
And a railroad man.
And the minister's pipe.
Was awful.
The way it smelled.
And he inhaled.
And did everything.
He was a strong man.
And when he left.
We talked about him.
And drifted from him.
To religion.
And in a little while.
We all quit talking.
But the rancher.
And what he said.
Went something like this.
"I have a belief.
That if Christ.
Came back to earth.
We'd know him first.
By his smile.
And his hearty laugh.
And if it happened.
He was on this train.
He would visit with us.
For a little while.
And out in the car.
He'd spend some time.
With that tired little woman.
And her children.
And he'd tell them tales.
And make them laugh.
And the chances are.

That down in his pocket.
He'd find something.
That little kids like.
And he'd leave them.
And just wander on.
Through the train.
And wherever he'd be.
You'd know it.
By the trail of smiles.
That followed.
And when he was gone.
It is more than likely.
That you and I.
Seeing the joy.
That he had wrought.
Would forget ourselves.
For a little while.
And go out.
And do the things.
That he had done.
And that was the Christ.
Of the Rancher.
And after we'd smoked.
I went out again.
Into the car.
And that afternoon.
The railroad man.
And the shoe salesman.
And I.
Played with the children.
Of the tired little mother.
And visited everybody.
And smiled.
And the rancher.
Sat in the smoking room.
With his pipe.
And never moved.
The whole afternoon.
I thank you.

MODERN CONVENIENCES

The dawn of a new light is already breaking about the daily pathway of

"Bella! Bella!" he called, as he stumbled up the steps to the kitchen. "Bella! Great Gehosaphat! What's the matter here?"

The stove was cold and dirty; the floor was un swept, and dirty breakfast dishes lay all around—a state of affairs that had never existed before in his matrimonial life.

"Bella! Bella!" he shouted, as he rushed from room to room, and back to the kitchen.

"What's this?" he gasped, eyeing a letter propped against his tobacco box. "Gone to town to earn money to get some modern conveniences!" he gasped. "Bella prokin' for strangers' and won't be back for a spell. Christopher Columbus! Hah! That's where the money went out of my pocket."

Gloomily Peter got himself some dinner, then sat down to a comfortable smoke. It was the same pipe and the same kitchen, but the warmth and sunshine had gone to town.

"I will! I will! Its a lot for fool contraptions—but I'll send her twenty dollars. This is h—," he growled, his eyes roving around the disorderly kitchen. Confident that twenty dollars would buy all the modern conveniences ever invented to make a woman dissatisfied with her lot in life, Peter duly met the train, but Bella merely sent a letter.

"Thunderation!" he cried. "Twenty dollars not enough! Well gal it's all you'll get," he growled.

No bright light shone for Peter when he got home that night. No fire crackled in the shining range, and the chairs that always stood at attention against the wall seemed to be huddled together in the middle of the room.

"Hang it! Maybe I haven't used Bella just square. I'd give fifty dollars to have her here now."

The next day Bella received a prayerful letter and a fifty dollar cheque. She was a good and conscientious wife, and it had cost her a mighty struggle to take the plunge and leave Peter to the tender mercies of himself, and for a moment she weakened, but closing her lips firmly she wrote him another letter.

"Well I'm blest!" said Peter, as he read the letter.

"Fifty dollars not enough! And she's a gettin on fine. If that aint like Bella—always had gumption, had Bella."

He smiled grimly as he jumped into his car and headed for town. "I'll give her the farm if she wants it—but she's a comin' home with me this night."—Edna Banks, Hazenmore, Sask.

THE FOURSQUARE WOMAN

A young officer, recently writing to his mother, said: "You little realize with what interest our soldiers watch the work that women are doing for the war; and in addressing my men on this subject, I always conclude by saying: 'We must stand foursquare for their sake.'"

There can be but one response from every American woman to such an ideal and such loyalty from our army in the field, and that is:—

As you stand foursquare for your country's sake and ours, so we at home will stand foursquare for our country's sake and yours. As you in your answer to the call of duty leave all to defend our country's honor, so will we stand ready to perform any task demanded of us.

The foursquare woman to-day realizes that the first enthusiasm for unusual tasks of more or less spectacular character is past, and that the time for active, difficult work has come. She realizes that conditions demand a careful survey of our own and our Allies' needs, with clearness of judgment and keenness of vision which reach beyond the present moment; and she enters upon her path of duty with a will to act, a determination to obey, and the inspiration of the dynamic power of an ideal to keep her mind and spirit serene and steadfast.

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