

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

ASK YOUR HUSBAND

"Ask your husband, indeed," the housewife fairly stuttered with indignation as she picked up the hand bill that had been thrown in at the door, and read it thru.

It was a circular concerning a certain household appliance, "Made in Canada," and it concluded with the amazing piece of advice, "Ask your husband."

The firm distributing this literature is fully a generation behind the times. The day has passed when women are going to consult their husbands upon matters on which they themselves are far more competent judges, such as the selection of kitchen equipment.

The "Ask your husband" phrase had reference, of course, to the advisability of purchasing "Made in Canada" goods, but again the suggestion was untimely. The generation of women who took their opinions ready made from their husbands is passing and making way for the new woman who, when she desires to know the rights and wrongs of the "Made in Canada" propaganda, hunts up the best literature on Free Trade and Protection and uses her own God-given brains to decide which is right. As it never occurs to her to go down to her husband's office and demand that he should use "Made in Canada" typewriters, so she does not expect him to decide whether she shall or shall not use home manufactured articles in her business-housekeeping.

It is questionable, however, whether the husband, even if he were consulted in the matter, would be as enthusiastic over the "Made in Canada" article as the advertisement seemed to imply. The enthusiasm of the public for this propaganda has been considerably dampened by the shocking revelations in connection with the purchase of war supplies. People are even beginning to realize that a product which has to be bolstered up by a pitiful appeal to use it because it is made at home, is open to suspicion, if it has sufficient merit in itself and is sold at the lower cost which one has a right to expect on goods made at home, it will commend itself to the thrifty housewife without any appeal to patriotic sentiment. On the other hand, it has been demonstrated that an article which is made up of one half quality and the other half sentiment, does not give the same returns for the investment as that which has to stand on its merits alone.

The Canadian manufacturer will have to address a more intelligent appeal to the women of today if he would touch their hearts and open their purses.

Ask your husband, indeed.

HONOR CONFERRED ON MRS. THOMAS

The announcement was made this week by the new government of the appointment of Mrs. A. V. Thomas, better known thruout the country districts as Lillian Laurie, of the Free Press, to a position on the new advisory board of the Manitoba Agricultural College.

While it seems very obvious that there should be a woman on this board to represent the thousands of women who are interested in this institution, it seems that the government of Manitoba is the first in Canada to make such an appointment.

Mrs. Thomas is to be congratulated upon the splendid opportunity she has been given for serving the women and girls of this province and making their wants known to the governing body of the Agricultural College.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON.

ANOTHER SIDE OF FARM LIFE

Dear Miss Beynon:—I have many times written to you in thought and at last write down an answer to "Helen Maloney." What is there for the farmer's wife to do beyond making her home pretty? "Only a few chickens and a cow." Wherever those thousands of childless homes are, it is not around this way. So few outsiders realize how much the business of farming interferes with the housework and how hard it is to even keep clean and tidy a one or

two-room house, when it is also the man's office and partly tool and implement shed as well.

Any extra help or work in the business means extra work in the home and all household utensils are considered as "part of the farm."

We all know of threshing time, but everyday interferences are not thought of. Perhaps a neighbor comes in one evening to ask your husband to help kill pigs and you think you will have a big wash, as he will be away all day, but hopes are dashed as Mr. Neighbor leaves saying: "Bring the wash-boiler along so we'll have plenty of water." Mrs. Neighbor, meanwhile, knows nothing until she is told there will be one or two extra men to dinner, and two wash boilers on the stove. If anything is said—"My goodness! You women do make a fuss—we are not going to kill pigs in the house and won't interfere

making pretty "interior dwellings." I could mention many more—besides the "screaming chickens," that are merely the lot of the farmer's wife, be the husband good, bad or indifferent.

One hears so much of the "fields of waving grain, and the musical hum of the binder." Those of us amongst it often hear as well the voice of the farmer, relieving his mind on his long-suffering, fly-tortured horses; but should he be an hour late for dinner and his hot, tired and fly-worried wife relieve her mind on him, what a nag she is. No, she must always be cheerful and gentle and as neat and natty as before she became a farmer's wife. Ye Gods! Were we born angels or merely human beings?

But mothers of toddlers take heart, so soon can they save mummy many steps, and improvements come, bit by bit. After all, is it not more the fault

know our modern women with their complicated psychology. You look at the man as the master and, according to your conceptions, the woman is made of "man's rib" and is something inferior, good to obey, to serve, to be the "comfort" of the master. Well, I tell you that you went back two centuries at least. You are living in a dreamland, which cannot be called human life, but just serfdom. Your tactics are not advisable at all, if you want to be respected by the modern man.

A modern, well educated man, wants a wife-comrade, but not a wife-servant. Why to marry if we have to be a servant? And what a servant? According to the custom of Canada, you cannot get a divorce, you have to "serve a merciless master until you die." To improve his humor you have to look in his eyes, as a devoted serf, and kiss him (oh, the horror!), when your heart is crying from its depth. Never shall I kiss a despot, a small undertaker, a greedy master, who is keeping his wife, his comrade, the mother of his children just as the big undertakers their hired slaves—workers: a sweat shop (you call it home!); long hours of work, low wages, good enough to get food and some rags to cover the body. Right to the wealth you have produced with your hard work. All products of your work belong to the master you see! The women are in the same position in regard to the men as the workers to the masters. One difference: no modern master dares to hope that the workers who are toiling to produce wealth for their masters can love them. The big masters are frank; they say—give me your life, I'll give you some food and clothes to keep you alive with the sole purpose of forcing you to work and to raise children—my future workers. Slaves! Such order (disorder?) is called the capitalist system. Under this system, while it lasts, there is not and cannot be any happy marriages, unless you call servility happiness.

The marriage of today does not mean love only. It is a partnership for business in the best case and slavery in the average case. How can a question of sincere affection and the money question, the business question be combined? How can sincere love be combined with the economical, social and political dependence? What is called love in the marriage of today is merely blunder, disguised mutual selfishness. Marrying, she hopes to get a protector and a home. He hopes to get an unpaid help and cheap pleasure in his home, where he is the master.

I am 53. I was married twice. My first husband was a university man. My second husband is a wage-slave, but for me there is very little difference. I do not speak about furniture, surroundings, I mean my personal, intimate spiritual life is just the same now as it was before. Economical dependence makes me suffer badly. I feel I am a "thing," not a human free being." There is enough to be unhappy even when your master is so good as my husband is good. I imagine I would be as obedient and servile to "kiss the oppressor," as the "Mother" advised us. My good man, under present conditions of economical system, would change quick and get despotic, as the servility always spoils the people, demoralizing the masters and their dependents too. I fight. I never obey his will, I obey the rightness only. He respects in my person a self respecting human being and is sure that I will rather die than be a servant of the man who pretends to be my husband.

This is not my own opinion only, but the opinion of all our Russian intellectual women. I guess it should be the maxim of all women, but they have to educate themselves in this line.

My dear "Mother of Eight," to educate, to teach the children to be free, noble people, we have to be not only mothers, but self respecting, high inspired human beings, unless we want to raise wage-slaves and "cannon-fodder," or the meanest kind of people—masters.

Yours in the struggle for better times,
MARY NICOLAEFF.



HARD AT WORK

with you; only see the water boils quickly, we'll carry it out and when one pig is done bring the water back to keep hot." We draw a veil over the return of that boiler, but an unsuspecting agent calling wonders how that woman can live in such a "recking house." Or again—you hope for a day's cleaning while the men go to road work, and with a parting kiss—if there is one—comes: "You won't forget to feed the pigs at noon, and give the cow some hay, and the cow is tethered and will want a drink." How easy at all sounds! The mothers of toddlers will know how easy. They know that rush for the cow when baby goes to sleep, the feverish struggle to disentangle the chain the gentle creature has made a Chinese puzzle of among the bushes, the leading her to water—or her you—with dismal wails from the house where the precious lamb has wakened half an hour too soon in spite of the fact that you have washed, dressed and fed him according to rules laid down by Miss Blank and Miss Dash in last week's "Mother's Corner."

Oh! that only one cow, and possibly the man milks. Only the pail and cans to wash twice a day, only the calf to feed, only the butter to churn and make up, only a few of the many extras beyond

of the work than either the man or his wife? Why not relieve our feelings—on that cow? For—

"There is so much good in the worst of us, And so much bad in the best of us, That it ill becomes any of us To talk about the rest of us."

BY NO MEANS AN ANGEL.

MARRIAGE IS SLAVERY

Dear Miss Beynon:—There are circumstances when "even the stones are crying." I read your last copy, August 25, yesterday, and the letter signed by "Mother of Eight," supposed to be addressed to "Discouraged," made me so sad, if not sick, that I cannot sleep this night, you see.

Where are we? In which age are we living? How can a self respecting woman talk the language of a serf? "Kiss the hand which is beating you"—this maxim the "Mother" suggests to "Discouraged."

My poor lady, before you try the preaching of home-made advice, you have to ask yourself: Am I able to teach? What do I know about the psychology of the woman of the twentieth century? What do I know about her sufferings, struggles and aspirations for life?

I can and dare tell you that you don't