

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

THE FARMER'S HUMILIATION

The Agricultural Commission, which was recently investigating the condition of agriculture in this country, can add one more significant fact to its collection of data, namely that city men and city councils are having to help the farmers to pay their hired men, and that at a time when grain is selling at exceptional prices.

There is only one conclusion to be drawn from this humiliating circumstance, that the men in the cities are making so much more out of what the farmer produces than he is making, that they can afford to pay for labor that they don't get, while he cannot afford to pay for what he does get.

And it may be safely assumed that the farmer cannot afford to pay the current wages for agricultural laborers or he would be left to do so, for business men and city councils are not philanthropists. It is a terrible indictment of the management of a country when its great basic natural industry has to go begging for charity from those who have grown rich out of exotic industries fostered by a high protective tariff. Moreover, it bodes ill for the future of this country, if after two full years, when grain prices have touched the sky-line, the agricultural industry is still unable to stand on its own feet. How is the farmer to make ends meet when the end of the war comes, and with it a slump in the price of grain?

Charity Not Justice Followed

It is all of a piece with our characteristic incompetence that it is proposed, instead of re-adjusting conditions so that the business of the farmer will be placed on a paying basis, to appeal to the amiable disposition of some prosperous business houses to make him a little gift. Never by any chance is the principle of justice followed in this country where charity can be substituted for it. And the reason for that is that in order to do justice it is always necessary to face some disagreeable fact and to hurt the feelings and the pocket books of some influential people.

The naked truth is that the industry of farming has been so consistently bled in the interests of the big manufacturer in the East that the margin of profit is so narrow that he has no reserve fund with which to meet any unusual condition such as the present high price of labor. To do the farmer any real and lasting service it would be necessary for the government to remove the high protective tariff from his implements and from those things which he consumes, and to open the markets of the world to Canadian grain, so that the farmer will not always be buying in the dearest and selling in the cheapest market. This is the very last thing the government is willing to do, and rather than see it come to pass many business houses will cheerfully save over the present emergency with a few dollars from their own pockets.

But surely this last indignity, heaped upon the many that the farmer in this country has been made to suffer, will arouse him to demand an immediate amelioration of his condition, and if it does not he deserves to become the protégé of the successful manufacturer and business man.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON.

WHAT KIND OF PAPER?

Dear Miss Beynon:—In a short time we will have a paperhanger do over the walls of our parlor with paper. Please lend us your excellent taste as to color and style. Room has two windows, one large one facing west and south. The floor is brown and polished. Room has folding doors to diningroom. The diningroom is green burlap, then brown paper on the walls. All woodwork of the two rooms is light colored grained. Diningroom not to be papered now. Would you answer in next Guide, please. Curtain cream voile with curtains for windows are plow lace edge.—B.R.

Answer

Among the plain papers there are a number of good designs, but the best standard paper at a reasonable price is tan oatmeal, in rather a dark shade. The prices range from 25c to 45c a roll.

This would harmonize perfectly with your green and brown dining room, and your ecru voile curtains.—F.M.B.

A WOMAN'S LEGAL RIGHTS

One of our Saskatchewan readers wants to know what claim the wife has on the property of her husband and upon the children. If the wife wishes to leave her husband what will she get? Can she take her share in the property, and if the children wish to go with her can they take theirs?

If a man enlists, and has some property, can he make a will leaving it to his parents or relatives without giving anything to his wife and children?

Answer

Save as to property which she may have acquired as her own, the wife has no interest in any of the husband's property except his homestead (which in the case of a farmer would mean the quarter section on which he lives and makes his home, whether obtained as a homestead under the Dominion Homestead Act or otherwise). This the husband cannot sell without the concurrence of the wife, but beyond the fact that the husband cannot deal in any way with the homestead without the wife's concurrence, the act does not in any way define the wife's interest in the land.

The children have no interest in the property and the father has the right to the custody of the children unless it can be shown that he is not a fit person to have such custody.

If the husband has been guilty of cruelty to his wife to such an extent as to put her life or health in danger, or if he has been guilty of adultery the wife may leave him and claim alimony, but she has no legal right to take with her any of the property. The amount of alimony would be decided by the

but we must meet conditions and inform ourselves along these lines.

Besides this matter of tariff does concern us in a very vital manner. The average woman in the home does the buying of food and clothing for the family, the quality and quantity being governed by the family income. The ordinary family will expend at least four hundred dollars a year in this way. R. McKenzie, secretary, Canadian Council of Agriculture, places the average tariff tax at 30 per cent., altho on many household articles it runs as high as 42½ per cent. So on every four hundred dollars she expends in buying for her household, the homemaker pays one hundred and twenty dollars, or nearly one-third in taxes.

There has been a great cry about the decline in the birthrate of late years, but surely a tax like that on the necessities of life makes the man and woman who raise a family carry a very large share of the burden.

The children of the man whose wage is \$600 a year require nourishing food, proper clothing and housing for their best development equally with those of the man whose salary is \$6,000. Yet this heavy tariff tax must be paid by both (30c on the dollar) shoving the poor man down below the line of proper sustenance for his family.

Governments must be sustained and the nation's business carried on, but surely there is some more sane method of raising the necessary funds.—CITIZEN.

OFFENSIVE ADVERTISING

Dear Miss Beynon:—For a long time I have read with much interest your page discussing topics of vital interest to us western women. Here is one subject that we must act upon, and endeavor to correct and if possible blot it out entirely, and I believe every woman will agree with me.

It is perfectly shameful how these mail order catalogs picture womanly forms in their semi-nakedness. This monster new catalog that came into our home tonight, and other catalogs are nearly as bad, is a disgrace to a people who are fighting the white slave traffic. I need say no more. We all know of the nasty remarks we have overheard about these pictures, and I believe that if we women sent in a resolution to the heads of these mail order establishments they would change their advertising somewhat.

What can we do about this matter, dear Miss Beynon?

A REFORMER.

A GOOD FREE TRADER

Dear Miss Beynon:—I note your request in your issue of Jan. 17 for hints on making over clothes, etc., and I wonder if you altogether realize how opportune such a request is. But I believe you do, because, fellow Homemakers, we must "hand it to" our editor that she knows what she is doing, because no other woman's page in any paper can get up such fierce discussions and still we can shake hands all around afterwards, the same as can political opponents at Ottawa, who respect each other.

I believe economical hints will be acceptable in Alberta, anyway, this year in a good many quarters. People who had good grain got a fair price and are all right, but a next door neighbor's may have been frozen, hauled, or rusted, and there he is, his ruthless creditors pushing him to the wall, and with everything to buy at a tremendous price. Never did banks and machine agents squeeze so mercilessly. Down and out goes many a farmer; but, of course, he has the privilege of going and fighting for the glorious rights and liberties which he enjoys, if he wishes, and is physically fit or young enough.

And here is where I enlist under the banner of Free Trade. I am a Free Trader, right from the word "go." I believe that this "Buy in Canada" talk is a fraud, and for this reason. If an article of Canadian make is a certain price, and an American article is, plus duty, the same, why not buy the American article and put the duty in the hands of the government, instead of that of private individuals who are robbing us? Of course, if Canadian manufacturers repaid the protection they get by making a reasonably priced article, saving each individual that much money, it would distribute the prosperity a little, and we would not be wanting free trade, but they don't.

I know a poor woman, who, this very Christmas time past, sent away to the David C. Cook Company, of Elgin, Ill., for two dollars' worth of little notions to send away to far-off friends and

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YOU CANNA' BEAT IT

court. If the husband by his will leaves the wife less property than she would have received had he died without a will, and leaving a wife and children, she may apply to a judge for relief, and if the evidence shows sufficient merits, the judge may order that the wife shall have the same amount that she would have received had the husband died intestate and leaving a wife and children. The application must be made within six months after the husband's death.

There is no law requiring a father to will any of his property to his children.

BEAVER BOARD OR PLASTER?

Dear Miss Beynon:—Would you give me some information, thru The Guide, about finishing a house inside, whether this beaver board or lath and plaster is the best to use. How can I put on beaver board so that the cracks won't show at joints, without stripping it?

What do you know about 1x4 inch grooved lath? I see there is some if it used in the States. Is plaster more apt to crack on it than it does on this bunch lath that is so common here?

The trouble with lath and plaster here is it is so apt to crack or fall off.—J. L., Dilke.

Answer

Our architect says that there is no way of putting on beaver board satisfactorily, except by using the stripping, but that it is merely a matter of preference as to whether it or lath and plaster is the best to use.

As to the grooved lath, he is inclined to think that there might be some additional risk of cracking in using this material.

POOR MAN'S BURDEN TOO GREAT

Dear Miss Beynon:—Some time ago, I believe, you invited your readers to send in their ideas on Free Trade. Some women even yet seem to think that these are matters that do not concern them,