

The Woman's Quiet Hour

By E. Cora Hind

In these strenuous times it is a relief to pick up a book that is an old friend and browse for a few minutes before going to bed or in a brief period of rest between the tasks of the day and the tasks for the evening. Was there ever a time when we quit work at six and did not resume until the following morning? If there was it has sunk into the limbo of forgotten days. When every pair of socks is needed and every surgical shirt, bandage, etc., one hardly feels justified in attempting new reading and yet one cannot go on forever without both mental and physical relaxation and there is both in a few minutes with a familiar book. The other day I picked up a cheap copy of "The Lone Dog's Diary," my own copy I regret to say, had been borrowed and never returned. I dipped into it on the way home in the street car and was so absorbed in the mysteries surrounding the Misses Tracey's party in the new house, that I was carried past my own street. That did not matter and as I trudged back the two blocks I murmured blessings on the head of Sarah Macnaughton for having made me forget the war even for that brief space, and carried me into the wholesome everyday life of that Scottish village. Since that evening I have been indulging in brief bits from Cranford, Lorna Doone the Broad Highway and some others. Of course those who can knit and read do not need to deprive themselves of reading either old or new but even for them I think a brief snatch of an old book, while lounging in an easy chair or when you are tucked up in bed for the night, is a rest and refreshment which will make work go all the faster when you tackle it afresh.

Writing of war supplies reminds me that word has recently come to Winnipeg from the trenches that the field comforts sent out by the St. John's ambulance are arriving promptly and satisfactorily now. There were some hitches, and reports came back of cases on the docks in Liverpool which ought to have been supplying the men and there was too much truth in this news, but the difficulties now seem to have been pretty successfully overcome. It is hard for us, at this distance, to realize the enormous difficulties that exist in the matter of transport to the trenches even after the goods are in England. It has taken months to get things down to a satisfactory working basis and without doubt there have been delays and losses. This should not discourage any worker however, because such delays and losses are only temporary and there is room for every garment and sock that can be made, and then some.

More and more as men come back and news filters back through letters and other channels the evidence is brought home that one thing that every woman, and every man at home too, for that matter, can do to help, is to write letters. Don't confine the letters to relatives or even men you know intimately but write to every man from your district, whom you know ever so slightly. Of course try and get together and know who is writing to who. The better you know a man the better letter you can write, but see that every man and boy out of your district gets a letter from home every month at least and every two weeks is better. Above all put in the little local happenings, the babies that are born, who has married, who is in for reeve and councillors this year, the doings of any local societies, church affairs, the intimate community gossip which will bring home close to them for a brief space and make them forget their miseries for a little while. A personal experience will serve. I wrote and told a friend that we had, in our particular circle, cut out a certain annual festivity, because we did not think

we should spend money on it this year. To my surprise he said in replying, "Perhaps you were right, but you know I thought about you all that night and just fancied I knew what you were all doing and saying, and it was rather a shock to find my picture had no foundation in fact." You catch the idea, the men like to picture the home town and the doings as they have known them and the details of the every day events are the very wine of life to them in the cold and mud and danger of the trenches. Here, too, the individual package by mail is such a solace, the pair of clean socks, the towel and piece of soap, the cake of chocolate, the cigarettes, none of them much in themselves but they bring a sense of warmth and comfort to the receiver far in excess of the value of the gifts or the time and trouble it takes to send them. Since the reduction in postage it is possible to send quite a nice little parcel for 15 to 20 cents.

The other day I read the report of the Principal of the Agricultural College and I could not help wondering when the women of Manitoba have had a say in the running of the STANDARDS OF VALUE country for a couple of years, whether there will not be a change in the appropriations for the various branches of the college work. Here are two that standing side by side in the aforesaid report are significant of the relative values of things in the minds of men. For Animal Husbandry \$13,000, for Domestic Science \$1,500. I might add that the Animal Husbandry department exceeded their appropriation by over \$2,500, making the money spent on teaching boys how to breed and rear good beef steers a thousand dollars for every one hundred dollars expended on teaching the girls how to make good homes and care for and rear healthy children. I discussed the matter with a member of parliament who is a breeder of choice stock, rather I should say I called his attention to the two sets of figures and his sole comment was, "they will have to spend far more than that on animal husbandry if they make that department efficient." If any further arguments were needed on the subject of women taking a hand in the government of the country you have an excellent one right here. I entirely agree with the breeder that the department of Animal Husbandry needs more money and I might add more efficient men to bring it up to what it should be, but I think every woman will agree with me that before another dollar is expended on animal husbandry this province had better get busy and spend at least as much on teaching women to make good homes as it now spends on teaching men to fatten steers.

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