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When Common Sense Rules.

Nothing can excel common sense as a lubricant for the household machinery.

"I do my work by rule," boasts a woman who falls far short of producing comfort in her home-making. "I never let anything interfere unless my strength gives out." No wonder she fails in making things move smoothly.

Another uses this common sense rule: "I always think over my day's work carefully beforehand, and select the most necessary tasks for first attention; the others have to wait if I have interruptions." It is not surprising that she is a success as a home-maker.

What things are the most conducive to the comfort of our families? Which task will entail an actual loss if neglected too long? The exercise of common sense would really bring order out of chaos in many homes.

Another busy housewife, who is noted for the smooth running of her household machinery, said: "I think the reason so many housekeepers have a sense of discouraging failure at the end of the day's work when it seems she has accomplished very little, of what was planned, is because some duty or occupation is planned for every minute, and the interruptions are not taken into consideration."

She spoke truly. Making out a program of just the duties which should occupy the different hours of the day, looks feasible enough of performance on paper, but it is well-nigh impossible to carry out such a systematizing of work, because of the interruptions, and time consumed by them, has not been taken into consideration.

Any housekeeper can be perfectly sure that she will have many interruptions during the day—the door bell—the telephone—the unexpected caller, as well as the little emergencies which arise from time to time. You will be surprised to find how much time these consume when taken as a whole.

So, when making out your program for the day, allow one hour, at least, for interruptions. You will find your work will run much more smoothly. Try it, busy housewives, if you are striving to run your work on clock-like schedule, if your day is filled with

duties which somehow fail so discouragingly in the performance.

We are sure to have interruptions every day of our lives, so let us take a common sense view of it, and accept them with as good grace as we can, and allow them to interfere as little as possible with our life work. Let common sense rule, and plan your work accordingly—and don't forget to make allowance for interruptions.

Homely Wrinkles.

Paint can be removed from the hands by rubbing the hands with kerosene.

Kitchen walls should be painted or calcimined, rather than papered; a cheerful buff is a good color. Another plan is to shellac the walls, giving a good washable surface.

Instead of using starch for curtains or other sheer material, add a teaspoonful of borax to each gallon of rinsing water. The curtains will be easy to iron and will not have the cloudy appearance given by starch.

Riveted buttons on overalls will pull out; they can be replaced by cutting buttons from an old pair, leaving attached a piece of the cloth an inch and a half square. Slip the button through the hole where the other one pulled out, leaving the patch on the wrong side. Stitch twice around the patch, either on the machine or by hand.

Liberal use of green stuff, such as lettuce, celery, onions, cabbage, and of the fresh fruits available, is the best single preventive of that tired-out feeling that we call "spring fever." Some fresh fruits and vegetables should have a place in the meal plans of every day. The winter diet has meant curtailed use of dairy products and eggs, and of bulky fruits and vegetables. Adequate use of these foods keeps the blood as it ought to be and the whole body in good condition. Take your spring tonic through your diet.

The cellar should be the first part of the house to be cleaned in the spring, as the dust from it is likely to go up through the flues. Remove all rubbish and vegetables which have been stored through the winter, for by this time the vegetables are likely to make the air unwholesome. A good coat of whitewash freshens the cellar. If the lime for whitewashing is slaked in the cellar its fumes will help to purify the air. It is well to set saucers of chloride of lime in damp corners. After scrubbing shelves and closets, rinse with clear lime-water to destroy mold and to sweeten them. All loose shelves and boards should be taken out-of-doors, scrubbed, and dried in the sun. After the cellar is cleaned, go to the attic, where chests and drawers will need cleaning before the winter garments are stored in them. If clothes are well brushed, all soiled spots cleaned, and they are well wrapped in fresh newspapers, they will be safe from moths without the addition of camphor balls, provided moths have not already attacked the clothes. Each package should be marked with a list of its contents placed on the top of the contents of the drawer.

Dry Cake and Cornbread.

If you did not burn that pan of corn bread, never mind how hard it is, do not throw it to the chickens. By using a little imagination and common sense, every scrap of any kind of bread can be used in puddings.

Remembering that milk, sweetening, eggs and butter, are common to nearly all good puddings, just let us look around and see what we can use. Soak the cornbread in milk—skim or fresh. Add bits of hard cake, a left-over macaroon or two, crackers, hardened muffins or baking powder biscuit and any plain bread. Do not use enough milk to make it sloppy. Use your judgment.

Add one, two or three eggs according to size of pudding. Add sweetening. Squeeze in the juice of that half lemon or grind up the peel of the orange Johnny ate after breakfast. Spices are always good. Add odds and ends you may have of jelly or jams—an apricot, cut up, or a few cranberries or a peach. These should be dropped in while you are filling your baking dish with the mixture. Grease this dish very thoroughly. Mix a little melted butter in the pudding. Bake very slowly. Serve with sugar, syrup or hard sauce, plain or whipped cream or fruit syrup.

Minard's Liniment used by Physicians.

Swanson's Home Sweet Home

By CONRAD RICHTER.

CHAPTER I.

She was a slender, blue-eyed girl. With her cheeks wet she wandered into the dim light beyond the splintered platform of the Redding station and dropped her bag. Then she leaned quietly against the semaphore pole and cried.

Swanson was crouching on his 500 freight engine on the second track, hardly ten feet away. At the sight of a woman in tears he wrinkled his eyebrows perplexedly. The girl cried quietly on. Swanson stopped poking the crosshead oil from the nose of his spring can and crossed the ties to the semaphore pole, the long neck of the can nodding gravely to his legs as he came.

"Something wrong, lady?" he asked uncomfortably, stopping beside her.

Perhaps it was the word "lady." It might have been something in Swanson's gray-blue eyes. At any rate, the girl tried hard to conceal that she had been crying.

"It isn't much," she protested hastily. Her brace-up was so sudden that Swanson misunderstood and thought he was being told to mind his own business.

"Excuse me," he offered awkwardly. "I thought maybe I could help you or something." He started away, but turned at the sound of a muffled sob. "If you wanted to help me why didn't you ask me?" choked the girl, winking hard to keep back the tears.

"Because I'm a boob," answered Swanson. Perplexedly he studied the platform. When he looked up, instead of a tear-drawn face he found clear, pale skin, the softest of black hair and eyes with the purest look in them that he had ever seen. He waited ten seconds more. "Can I help you now?" he asked humbly. "If I can, remember I can't unless you tell me what's the matter."

"I lost the last section of my ticket," confessed the girl. "And I haven't any money. I spent all I had left for something to eat at Fort Wayne."

"Fort Wayne?" echoed Swanson. "Nothing to eat since Fort Wayne?"

No wonder you look so white. I thought at first you powdered your complexion. Where are you going? Wait here. I'll be back in a jiffy." Swanson swung aggressively on to the coaches of Ninety-two, which he was waiting to follow up to Penn City.

He found Ninety-two's important little conductor in the vestibule of his smoker.

"We'll be out of your way in a minute," snapped the uniformed individual before Swanson could speak. "Can't go too soon for me. Hang these women that expect you to carry them for nothing. The way they dog a conductor is a crime."

"Plenty," began Swanson determinedly. "A girl, mind you!" went on the conductor, unheeding. "She said she lost her ticket on the Pennsylv—"

One of her kind caught me once. A respectable looking old woman, she was. With her promising to mail the money in the morning and to remember me in her will, I took her up. Never heard a word from her."

The little conductor looked at his watch, then reached for his whistle. "Never let a woman promise you anything, Home. She'll never keep it."

"Ex—it's getting damper," said Swanson. "Feel like rain." He waited thoughtfully while Ninety-two's lighted coaches swung by him. Then he followed and cut across behind her red tail lights to his engine.

"Bill," he mentioned to his fireman, who was "cocked up" on the left side. "I might carry somebody to-night far as Queenston. She's stuck here without any money. I sort-of know her. How about putting her on your side?"

"Sure. Go ahead," assented Bill, getting to his feet. Swanson hurried out. He found the girl quietly waiting for him by the semaphore pole.

"Couldn't do much with that conductor," he explained apologetically. "He's an old crab. About the only thing I can do now is to take you along in the rear. Maybe you won't mind. It's dirty, but it won't be so dirty since you don't have anything white on."

"I'd be glad to get in a coal car—just so it went to Queenston," declared the girl. She followed Swanson across the track to his steam-heated engine and was just putting her foot on the steps of the tender when a young voice called imperiously from the platform.

"Just a minute, engineer! Who's O.K.?" your taking a woman on your cab?"

The girl stood at once still as if rooted to the cinders. Swanson turned and saw the road foreman of engines, young Keen, who in the last two months had been jumping about from assistant trainmaster to assistant chief of draftsmen of the locomotive shops, to traveling car-tracer, to his present important position. It was not wholly a coincidence that his father was vice-president of the road.

"Giving a little lift," explained Swanson. "Missed Ninety-two. Got to get to Queenston to-night. Friends expect her."

"You ought to know it's against the rules."

"I got a book of rules," said Swanson placidly. "I've had them for nearly half as many years as you are old. This doesn't come under rules at all. She doesn't know anybody here in Redding and she has no money to go anywhere."

"I give you no authority to take her on," Swanson turned reassuringly to the frightened girl. "Don't mind him," he said, kindly. "Nobody on the road does."

"He'll make trouble for you," protested the girl. "Please go on without me. I'll be very grateful just the same."

Swanson's only reply was to pick her up, bag and all, as if she were a kitten and stand her on the tender apron. He swung up after her and showed her the fireman's seat, where, a moment later, he presented her with an enormous rectangular bucket with a brass handle.

"Pitch in," he invited, boyishly, jerking off the lid. "There's jelly bread and bologna and a pie. The things that are whole I didn't touch. It's time now for us to be moving. Don't be scared. If you never rode in a cab before you'll notice we rock pretty bad sometimes, but to-night, as far as Queenston, I'll take double good care."

When Swanson went to his place he found Keen still on the platform. "Can't blame me if a bull-headed engineer makes a fool out of himself and has to be shorn of a certain special privilege he has," observed the road foreman meaningly.

Swanson's only answer was the call to his flagman, four shrieking blasts that must have troubled young Keen's ears. A few minutes later the Redding platform was left behind, and with an ever faster shup-shup-shup they were howling up through the Redding yards.

To Swanson's eye there were few things prettier than a railroad at night. He never tired of it. Dark-ness now hid the unsightly backyards of Nicholas alley. Ahead, on the Oley street bridge, hung, in pairs, a constellation of red, green and white lights, most of them red. Far beyond the dim outline of the bridge were the two white side lights that mark an extra. Here and there, low on the ground, gleamed a dozen red switch lights and blended red and blue dwarf lights. Dead ahead, fresh as minted silver, whether it be wool, silk, linen, cotton or mixed goods, — dresses, blouses, stockings, skirts, children's coats, feathers, draperies, coverings, everything!

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Shifting Plants.

The efficient shifting of plants depends upon the strict observance of a few general but exacting rules. First, the roots must be fully protected against drying while out of the ground which necessitates the exercise of oversight during this period. Protection from sun and air to the entire plant, when of a succulent nature, and to the roots of bush fruits and other nursery stock, is required. Then, too, under certain conditions of air when evaporation is exceptionally great, it is advisable to dip or sprinkle the plants with water as they are taken from the ground, to assist in maintaining the desired degree of succulency in plant tissue.

The second point to consider is that of pruning, the purpose of which is to conserve plant vitality by reducing the proportion of surface tissue, and to promote plant vigor by securing equality between root and branch.

With plant bed seedlings this purpose is best attained by cutting away the top with shears or sharp knife, and the same is true of bush fruits and nursery stock in general. With strawberry plants the end is best attained by stripping a portion of the leaves. In all cases a certain amount of root pruning is also desirable.

Because of the respiratory processes going forward during active plant growth, assisted by the agencies of sun and air, evaporation from the surface of this succulent growth is very rapid; and even though it be true that respiratory action may largely cease when plant or tree is removed from the soil, the influence of sun and air still obtains, hence the urgent need of providing immediate protection from these agencies, that succulency in plant tissue may be conserved so far as possible, till the roots are re-established in new feeding grounds.

A gardening comfort: When fixing up the flower bed, cut a board about one and one-half feet long and a foot wide. Under one side nail strips of wood to make the board slant slightly forward. Pad the top with carpet, with cotton or pieces of an old quilt underneath to make it still softer for your knees while kneeling. Tack a strip of strong material on each end to carry it by and use the board when weeding the flower beds.

When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization.

Fishing For Bank-Notes.

An ingenious attempt to steal money at a bank was fortunately discovered by the cashier recently.

In this particular bank it was the custom to stack packets of notes on little platforms at the back of the counter, and well out of reach of the customers. Whenever the cashier required one of these bundles, he had merely to turn his back to the counter and take them. By being placed within easy reach in this manner, he was able quickly and expeditiously to attend to a rush of work.

When turning round for this purpose on one occasion, he was startled to see something shoot past his arm and attach itself to a bundle of the notes, which were instantaneously whisked out of his sight. This caused him to turn round smartly just in time to see a stranger making for the door. On the instant he picked up a heavy weight of the counter, and with a well-directed shot caught the man on the head.

On being captured, it was found that a sort of extending fishing-rod was concealed up the man's sleeve, the end being tipped with a pair of tongs. By means of this cunning instrument the man had been able to seize a bundle of the notes, and would have got away with his spoils but for the quickness of the cashier.

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GARDENER'S FRIEND, THE TOAD

The toad has always been an object of aversion; yet it is one of the most useful of the lesser servants of man.

Many persons suppose that it emits venom and that handling it causes warts. The "venom" is only a milky, acid fluid that the toad ejects through its smooth skin when it is frightened or disturbed. The fluid irritates mucous membrane, and for that reason a dog that attempts to bite a toad will often show distress. But owls and hawks, birds that habitually eat toads, are apparently undisturbed by the secretion, and certainly it is not strong enough to affect the hands.

Apart from that means of defense, the toad is an absolutely unprotected creature; consequently, thousands of toads are cruelly and needlessly destroyed every year.

If you dislike toads, study their eyes, which are almost as brilliant as jewels. The feeling of aversion will disappear, and instead of seeming an ugly little beast the toad will grow interesting and even attractive in its inimitable low-comedy way.

Toads are greedy, but although their appetites seem insatiable, they will touch nothing that is not alive. Moving insects they snap up as soon as they creep or fly within range of their long tongues, which are hinged at the front instead of the back.

In twenty-four hours a toad eats an amount of food equal to four times the capacity of its stomach. Of that comparatively immense quantity of food, at least three-fifths is made up of insects that are harmful to vegetation. Outworms, egg-eaters, tent caterpillars, army worms, brown-tailed moths, house flies, and even chafers are some of the pests on which the toad feeds. One toad under observation consumed twenty-four medium-sized egg-eater caterpillars in one morning; another ate thirty full-grown celery caterpillars in less than three hours; still another devoured eighty-six house flies in ten minutes; and a fourth ate ninety rose bugs as fast as he could and at the end of the meal was still hungry.

Gardeners are gradually learning that it is worth while to keep colonies of toads in their gardens but no one in this country has yet reached the degree of appreciation that prompts many English gardeners to buy toads by the hundred. The toad, however, has so strong a homing instinct that unless he is brought from a great distance he will promptly hop back when he is released. No carrier pigeon or freddie cat ever turned more unerringly homeward than a toad will turn. But by raising them from the tadpoles the difficulty of keeping them is overcome, for the place where they leave the water as toads is always home to them.

It is said that full-grown toads always return to the pond where they were hatched to mate and to lay their eggs; and they return a year after year to the same little den or shelter, and to the same feeding ground. Several instances are on record of a toad living in one dooryard or garden for twenty or thirty years; and one toad lived thirty-six years in an English garden.

If you wish to raise toads, make use of any shallow pool for a breeding place; or have an aquarium indoors, with a pair of toads or a mass of toad's eggs, a few fresh-water clams to keep the water circulating and a supply of water plants. Dog biscuit broken into small quantities, with a very little chopped meat added occasionally when the tadpoles are half grown, should be dropped into the water. Be very careful not to give the toads more of the meat than they will eat or it will foul the water.

In about two weeks the eggs hatch into funny little tadpoles that in four months are ready to leave the water as small toads. Artificial shelters should be provided for them in the garden, for they cannot stand sunlight or heat; shallow holes or depressions partly covered by a stone or a board will be immediately occupied. Provide, also, a shallow dish of water, and then take care not to run down the little garden soldiers with the lawn mower. They come out at dusk, feed all night and retire to cover usually by the middle of the forenoon. The mowing should be timed so as to avoid them.

In the winter the toads seek the shelter of stones, rubbish, boards, leaves or litter, and sometimes they burrow a considerable distance into the ground before they settle into their winter sleep. Freezing solid does not harm them, once their nap has begun, and sometimes they are found in that condition by a person who is digging in cold weather.

The names "toad" and "frog" are used almost interchangeably by ignorant people, but they mean quite different creatures. Frogs live most of their life in the water, whereas toads go to the breeding ponds only at the mating season, which varies from early March to May, according to latitude. Waking up at that time from their winter sleep, they journey forth to the music of the soft, jubilant thrilling of the spring that has been called the sweetest sound in nature. Each toad makes directly for the pond that it claims for its own. The number that congregate on the shores of even the smallest pond is remarkable. One writer has counted three hundred and fifty-six on the banks of a body of water that covered only half an acre.

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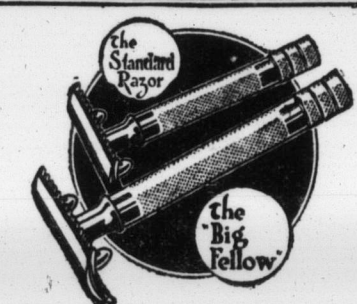
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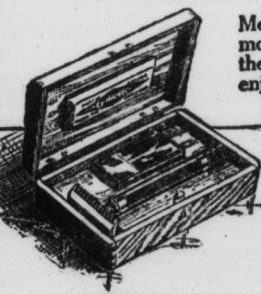
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