

AROUND THE FIRESIDE

Conducted by "ISOBEL"

Holidaying

To the infallible one, and therefore to the self-righteous individual, the idea of an overburdened mother even dreaming of a holiday, leaving cares and infants behind, to revel in quiet and peace and absolute freedom and complete change of living, away from home, is no more nor less than an invitation to Providence (which is presumably promptly accepted) to swoop down on her defenceless household to do His worst, there in her absence, not only as a prompt retributive measure to insure more faithful service in the future, but also offers a much-merited warning and corrective to other equally faithless mothers contemplating a similar desertion. It is really astonishing how thoroughly the ubiquitous critic understands and approves the motives of Providence as applied to a neighbor's shortcomings.

Erman J. Ridgway says when August comes he always "thinks of the hangman's rope," and restrains his desire to place the noose about the neck of the "man who works his wife to death," or, what is quite as bad, the man who allows his wife to work herself to death. Hence it would appear that opinions differ on this as on other matters, so that each one concerned must consider his or her own problem and come to a decision after mature reflection. But in order to decide any matter intelligently the various phases of the question must be reviewed.

What advantage would accrue to a household through giving the house-mother a complete rest and change annually? The mother's health, patience, endurance, kindness, ambition, strength and good cheer would be greatly stimulated by a good rest (unless, indeed, it came too late); which would affect directly every member of her household, and react in ways so devious as to be beyond description. In no occupation or walk in life are these attributes named, whether mental or physical, more far-reaching in their effects than in the home. If it could be understood by those concerned the loss that every family sustains by overworking the mother, until through sheer weakness she becomes irritable, cross, impa-

tient and exacting, or, perhaps, hope less, in the unequal struggle, some mitigation of this common situation would besought. No woman wearied to frenzy or despair by monotonous and endless labor can do for a family what is best for the family. The family is the loser. So also is she, but that does not so much matter, or so many appear to think, though why the happiness and comfort of one mortal should not be sought as earnestly as that of another is a question that many might ask.

Clifford B. Connelly, dean of applied industries, Pittsburg, Pa., assures us that "environment, in its sociological sense, is the most powerful influence in the shaping of child life." This being true, would it not be important to allow the mother to keep up to a standard in mental and physical equipment in order that youth may profit therefrom? Indeed, the question no longer should be, Shall we allow the mother a holiday? but, rather, shall we allow the mother to neglect her holiday?—not, can we afford to give her a holiday, but, can we afford not to give her a holiday?—A mother needs a holiday and change away from home much more than a father (in the country). The seasons bring change and variety to his work. To her there is little variety except in quantity. The man's work takes him out among his fellows; her's ties her in the home.

Having consent, then, that a holiday for the mother is a necessity to the family, the questions are, Where, and when, and how? Cultivate cheap pleasures is a worth-while precaution; they are much more likely to be realized upon, and may be quite as productive of good as expensive ones. A tent in the shade, by the bank of a stream, is an ideal holiday, provided always, that one has suitable company. Three or four neighbors grouping together, each having her own little tent, would be a good idea. She could then keep to herself or join her neighbors, as fancy dictated.

As "we never miss the water till the well runs dry," so John and the babes would take on an added appreciation were they left long enough to make their presence desired. Even water may become intolerable under circumstances. To the provident and inexperienced mother a holiday will probably seem an inexcusable waste. To the more mature and broader visioned, the mother's holiday is a prime necessity.

A "good, long rest, completely removed from all association with your everyday work," says some one, "as often as once a year, is the best investment man or woman can make in the securities of health, happiness and company. Before wheat harvest and fruit season would be an excellent time to knock off and go holidaying to gain spirits and strength to tide over the busy and heavy fall term."

WHO WILLIAM IS

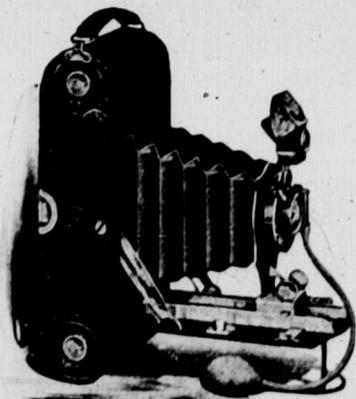
When William clears the table
And carries out each plate,
And piles the cups and saucers,
He says his name is Kate!

And when he dons his overcoat
And mitts and leggings trim,
And sallies forth to carry wood,
Why, then, his name is Jim!

But when he dresses in his best,
With collar stiff and white,
To promenade upon the street,
He's William, Horace Dwight!

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Dear Isobel, I owe you many apologies for not answering your letter earlier, in fact, a chapter of unfortunate occurrences seemed to interfere, not only with my own answer, but with those of others, whom I deputed to act for me under circumstances which prevented me from attending to any correspondence. Our manager, who would have been able to give very exact information for workers, had to prepare most suddenly to take an exhibit over to the Festival of Empire, to be shown in the Canadian building. This extra work, coming as it did when officers, committee and staff were already fully occupied with the coronation gift, and sending out summer exhibitions here in Canada, taxed our resources to the uttermost, especially as at this season most of us on the committee have extra household and private affairs to attend to. For myself, I am now doing what ought to have been done in May, when I was illustrating the catalog of

the collection sent with it to the queen.

You will no doubt, long ere this tardy apology, have received from Mr. Liebich, our secretary, the rules for workers, and other descriptive matter.

One of the most difficult parts of our work is to guide workers to send saleable work, and here is where members and branches can be of such service in selecting, advising, and correcting. Often work sent in will be good in execution but poor in design, or color, or applied to some article quite unsaleable. For example—crocheting is very saleable when firmly worked in good designs for insertions, trimmings, blouse sets, towels, d'oyleys, tray or tea cloths—in Irish crochets for personal use—but if loosely made, of fine thread, on too coarse a needle, giving what some are pleased to consider a "lacey" effect, it is useless. Crochet quilts can be made beautiful and saleable if care is taken not to put so much work as to make the price prohibitive; not to make them