

The Country Homemakers

Conducted by Francis Marion Beynon.

BETWEEN THE EDITOR AND READERS

Country Home Makers—I hope you will like the new name of your page, its new location nearer the front of the paper and its brand new heading free from all the fussy little curly wories with which it is commonly deemed necessary to ornament the heading of a woman's page.

It seems to me a nice cosy sort of a name and brings up before the mind's eye a whole army of staunch home makers I have known in this prairie land of ours who are veritable seers in the knowledge of ways and means and in knowledge of other kinds acquired only through an intimate acquaintance with Nature and Necessity.

While we are in the way of making changes I would like to have you write and tell us what you would like to see on this page every week. The Editor tells us there is at least this page of which we can be absolutely sure in the new order of things so let us make the best of it.

Mothers' notes, of some kind, we mean to have, and household hints, and just here we want your help. With all due respect to the makers of cook books there is no receipt like that which has been tested by some country housekeeper without too much time and labor and found to be good. But there is no necessity for confining your helpfulness to receipts. If you know of any way of making soap or preserving berries or saving time in your house-work that is unusual tell us about it.

I know this is a busy time of the year because I have lived on a western farm myself and when I was a tiny girl rode the calves home from pasture and chased the wild geese off the wheat-field back of the granary. It seems to me, looking back to it, that there were millions of geese and that we chased them every day for months but that is certainly a childish distortion of the real facts. I know something about the hardships too, for I have slept in houses where it was so cold that one ached from the weight of quilts on the bed and the hair felt as if it were freezing to the scalp.

And yet I love the prairies and every blade of grass and wild flower that grows thereon. Each year when the Spring comes and the few disconsolate city frogs begin to croak mournfully in the odd damp spots which escape our sewer systems I am seized with a hunger for the country which almost constrains me to turn my back on my visible means of support and flee to the land.

So in spite of your busyness you would be doing a real deed of kindness if you would sit down and write me a little note with a breath of fresh air right from the country and tell what you would like done with this page, and perhaps extend a hand of welcome to the editor whom you will have observed by the signature is a new one.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON.

EFFECTIVE HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

Pressing Toward the Mark

No efficient work is purposeless, a mere aimless doing, day after day, of routine, which after a time becomes absolutely mechanical. The man in the shoe factory who shapes heels all his working life fulfils some purpose, but he is not an accomplished mechanic. When the shaping of heels fails he is useless for any other sort of work.

But good housekeeping must aim at a definite end, the primary essentials of life for the members of the household, the maintenance of a definite standard of comfort and the economical administration of the financial resources of the family. Otherwise, domestic life is a muddle culminating in a deficit.

The essentials of life are food, shelter and clothing, and every one above the class of the submerged tenth gets them in a greater or less degree. As for comfort, it may be questioned whether the average American family of the middle classes knows a great deal about it, involving, as it does, a high standard and an eternal keeping up to the mark. Moreover the requirements of individuals vary so greatly that it is difficult to judge. The essentials of comfort seem to be comprehended in the union of a good fire, a good light and dainty food, yet life may be efficiently maintained in their absence. As for the matter of economical administration it is

the keystone of the arch, the thing which is absolutely essential to self respect, to nine hundred and ninety-nine families in a thousand.

As for the economical administration of the financial resources of the family, the practice of what is generally known as economy, the constant habit of saving on every expenditure is not the be-all and end-all of the matter. Economical expenditure is balanced expenditure, and expenditure nicely adjusted to the essential needs of the family. It is quite possible to pinch on essentials, while squandering on non-essentials. The sort of catering which supplies some of the elements of nutrition lavishly and stint on others is false economy, even if it is cheap.

Too few housekeepers understand the sort of provision which is expressed by the term, "a balanced ration." Still fewer know how to balance the various items of family expenditure so as to get the most for the money expended.

In getting the idea of balancing expenditures, it is a substantial help to keep a book of household accounts, specifying the items purchased, and occasionally adding up the sums expended for each article. In this way one learns to note the preponderance of any one item, as butter, sugar, or eggs, also is able to check the leaks which sometimes occur when servants are given control of the food supplies.

What constitutes a Balanced Ration?

Careful analysis of food values made some years ago, in connection with an institution for the insane in Illinois, resulted in the following computation as to the amount of the different elements of nutrition required to produce the muscular activity required for persons engaged in physical labor:

4½ oz. of proteid.
4 oz. fat.
15½ oz. carbo-hydrates.

In the average diet of the temperate zone, the proteid is principally supplied by some form of animal muscular fibre, the fat by animal fats, including butter and milk. Among people whose diet is principally vegetable, proteid is supplied by eggs, cheese, beans, and various cereals. Cocoa and chocolate also contain a large proportion of proteid.

The average table supplies an ample sufficiency of proteid, too little fat and an excess of carbo-hydrates. To correct the deficiency in fat is not a difficult matter, while small self-denials in the way of sugar will rectify the carbo-hydrate excess. It is when the occasion arises for an exceptional diet that trouble comes. To give an example: a man known to the writer, engaged in mental work of a very exhausting sort, getting almost no exercise, suffered from chronic indigestion and lived for more than a year upon the white meat of chicken, custards and baked apples. Practically all proteid was eliminated from his diet. An extreme case of anemia was the result. When, for any reason, the red meats are eliminated, the necessary proteid must be supplied in some other way, preferably in their vegetable form, as the person who cannot digest red meats will hardly be able to digest cheese, which is the other most available form, or the highly concentrated type contained in eggs.

The Hygiene of Rest

The mother of a large family, who lived to a great age, attributed her powers of endurance to the fact that she always rested half an hour in the middle of every day. One would like to know whether she was a person of extraordinary strength, or whether she chose the psychologic moment for her siesta.

The time to mend a weak article is before it breaks. The time to rest is before you are dead tired. When the day's work has brought you to a point of exhaustion, nothing but a night's rest will do you any good. It seems to be inbred in most women that it is a merit to keep on working until you are ready to drop. Never was a greater mistake. Work strenuously if you will, for a few hours, then make a break. Drop down flat on your back and relax all your muscles for ten minutes or so, rise up and go on.

Another help in easing one's daily work is to vary it as much as possible. Try not to have long stretches of doing one thing. It is horrible drudgery to stand all day long at the ironing table. But a

couple of hours' ironing, sandwiched in between sweeping a room and baking a cake, is not at all arduous. There are seven days in the week and it is not necessary to clean all the rooms in one day. Outside the necessary routine of the meals for each day the household programme ought to be elastic, subject to revision as occasion arises. The definite order is valuable in the house with servants, a bondage to the woman who does her own work.

THE GHOSTS OF NIGHT

Note—This poem was recited to the Canadian Women's Press club by the author, Jean Blawett. As she stood there, herself the very embodiment of cheerfulness, and spoke with her peculiarly mellow voice I think we all faced our own ghosts which range themselves along the wall more bravely and with stouter hearts. I hope that it will give our readers, who have troubles little or big, renewed confidence that the sun will shine to-morrow more gloriously than ever.

When we were children, long ago,
And crept to bed at close of day,
With backward glance and footstep slow,
Though all weary with our play.
Do you remember how the room—
The little room with window deep—
Would fill with shadows and with gloom
And fright us so we could not sleep?

For Oh! the things we see at night—
The dragons grim, the goblins tall,
And worst of all, the ghosts in white
That range themselves along the wall!

We could but cover up our head,
And listen to our heart's wild beat—
Such dreadful things about our bed,
And no protection save a sheet.
Then slept, and woke, quite unafraid,
The sun was shining and we found
Our shadows and our ghosts all laid,
Our world a glorious playing ground.

For Oh! the things we see at night—
The dragons grim, the goblins tall,
And worst of all, the ghosts in white
That range themselves along the wall!

We are but children still, the years
Have never taught us to be bold,
For mark our trembling and our fears
When sometimes as in the days of old,
We in the darkness lie awake,
And see come stealing to our side
A ghostly throng—the grave mistake,
The failure big, the broken pride.

For Oh! the things we see at night—
The dragons grim, the goblins tall,
And worst of all, the ghosts in white
That range themselves along the wall!

How close they creep; how big they loom!
The task which waits, the cares which creep;
A child frightened in the gloom,
We fain would hide our head and weep.

When lo! the coward fear is gone—
The golden sunshine fills the air,
And God has sent us with the dawn
The strength and will to do and dare.

WHAT THE OLD COUNTRY IS DOING FOR WOMEN

The difference in the position of educated working women of today and those of fifty years ago was emphasized at the fifty-third annual meeting of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, which was held in the offices of the society, 23, Berners-street, W., London, on Friday afternoon, May 10. The President, Lord Leigh, said that there was no doubt that women were far more handicapped in getting employment than men. An interesting speech was made by the Hon. Sir John Cockburn, K.C.M.G., who spoke of the accession to importance in woman's position which the last fifty years had witnessed. He thought the present movement was only the beginning of a great awakening, and that all such societies as this were only signs of the times. Women were meant to be the helpmeets of men in every department of life, and from his personal experience he had found that when women were on a public board they brought practical commonsense to bear on their work. He was very glad to see the lines upon which the society was run—they were philanthropic and not charitable. The

special point about it was that it gave assistance at the time of crisis in a woman's life when help was a necessity, and was therefore priceless.

Mr. W. Turing Mackenzie said he thought that the multiplicity of young societies, all much for the same purpose, sometimes did more harm than good. This was the oldest society and deserved all support. He was sorry to know that women often met with serious opposition from trades' unions, but, on the other hand, a bill was being introduced into Parliament by which women would be allowed to qualify as solicitors and barristers. So far nothing had been done by any Government to give training in those higher branches of education by which women could earn their livelihood. Fifty years ago this society realized that training was necessary for every walk in life, and it had stepped into the breach, and must commend itself to all who looked into future social conditions. He hoped one day to hear that Government had given the society a grant.

In the report, read by the secretary, of the year's work, it was pointed out that the society's earliest efforts had been directed to making education more practical and useful, to finding out what professions and industries were suitable to women, and what training was needed to secure proficiency in each. A most important part of the work is the loan fund, from which a girl may borrow not more than £30, the first instalment of which she is required to repay within three months after her training is complete. The Hon. Victoria Grosvenor, in a brief speech, said that it was most unusual for the society to make a bad debt, which proves how much good is done by these loans. The object of the society is to prevent distress and poverty, not to relieve it. During the past year forty-three loans have been granted. Not only are subscriptions pleaded for in order to carry on the work, but vacant situations are gladly put on the society's books to be filled from candidates.

ADVICE TO WOMEN ABOUT WORK-TABLES

The following good advice about worktables is given to housekeepers in the current issue of *Farm and Fireside*:

"Study to get your worktables and sinks just the right height. They will, of course, differ according to the height of the worker.

"Too high a table causes a constant strain upon the arms and shoulders. Too low a one causes a stooping and a tired back.

"Being a medium tall person, my favorite table is thirty-two and one-half inches high. On this I can roll out pastry and do similar work without stooping, and in consequence get much less tired than when my work is lower down.

"About an inch lower is my favorite height for an ironing-board.

"A low stove is wearing if it must be used much every day. And a washing can be done much easier if a higher bench than common is used for the rubbing tub.

"The easiest way to discover the exact height best suited to yourself is to place blocks of wood on your ordinary table to support a board until you have found which is less fatiguing.

"Any woman who neglects to rectify this matter is extremely foolish if she values her own health, for many a woman is nervous and unhappy after a day in her kitchen without knowing the cause.

"And the causes are, too frequently, the table, ironing-stand and cook-stove of her daily tasks."

A DRESSMAKER'S WRINKLE

The amateur dressmaker is often puzzled how to find the exact part of the armhole, where to place the underseam of the sleeve preparatory to sewing it in. First ascertain that the armhole is the exact size required; then measure one inch from the shoulder-seam at the back, and put a pin to mark the place. Lay the two sides of the armhole together with the pin for the exact middle at the top, and put a pin at the middle at the bottom, or part under the arm. Fold

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