

The Country Homemakers

Conducted by Francis Marion Beynon

OLD MAIDS

The country's full of them, married and unmarried, young and old. The quaint conception of an old maid as an unmarried member of the female sex is absurd. Old maidishness is a matter of temperament—a state of mind—and is common to the sexes.

An old maid is a person who is in a rut, and who is prepared to raise a disturbance when anyone volunteers to shake him out of it. Other things being equal, people with families are less apt to be old maids than others, since a company of youngsters can be depended upon to provoke a few earthquakes for the unsettlement of domestic routine. For that very reason the man or woman who has persevered in being an old maid after having raised a family is simply awful. They have iron-bound opinions upon every subject they have ever considered and their habits are as inelastic as an oak slab.

The person with a methodical tendency of mind is much more susceptible to this disease than the happy-go-lucky, and the energetic than the indolent.

The symptoms are many and clearly defined. When a woman finds herself impelled to lay forcible hands on the guest who sits down on the white coverlid of the bed, she may be sure she has the disease. When a man's evening is spoiled by having his tobacco moved from the top to the third shelf of the cupboard his symptoms are well developed. Other infallible indications are a rooted repugnance to undertaking new enterprises or new methods of work and a clinging affection for preconceived ideas.

One way to avoid old maidishness is to force the mind to keep pace with the times and if this is not sufficient, to deliberately shock one's own sense of propriety. The woman who is unduly fussy about the white coverlid should practise sitting upon it every day herself until she can bear it with fortitude.

Another avenue of escape from this terrible fate is to take up some new sport or physical exercise requiring a complete abandon of oneself mentally and physically. By stirring up the stagnant tissues and muscles of the body the mind seems to take on a new lease of life.

The remedy is not the important thing, however, but the cure and this is a case where the patient is the best possible physician. If he is wise he will enter upon a strenuous course of treatment at the first appearance of the disease, for neglect of it means a fussy, tedious and crabbed old age. It means that the victim will be one of those old people over whom others will sigh and say, "He is such a trial. One can't please him," and secretly they will wish that his creator could see fit to take him home soon. Don't be an old maid, my friend.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON.

WANTS TO JOIN HOMEMAKERS

Dear Miss Beynon:—I am an interested reader of The Grain Growers' Guide and I also like to read the Farm Women's page. There is a pattern of a French corset cover I would like to have. It doesn't say on the page the price of pattern or where to send, so I will enclose ten cents in this letter, hoping I am right in sending to you.

I would like to become a member of the Country Homemakers Club as I live on the farm. We settled in this part eleven years ago. We were among the first settlers.

Wishing great success to The Guide and to all the farmers and also hoping to see the women get the vote.

MRS. JESSIE KERR.

I am just a little bit in doubt whether you mean that you want to join our circle of readers or whether you have in mind the Homemakers Clubs of Saskatchewan. If it was our circle you were thinking of your letter was sufficient introduction and your name has been entered in our membership book. The

Homemakers Clubs of Saskatchewan exist for that province only—the corresponding institution in your province being the Women's Institute.

All patterns cost 10 cents and the orders for them should be addressed to The Pattern Dept., Grain Growers' Guide. F. M. B.

TOO MUCH KITCHEN

Dear Miss Beynon:—I hope you'll publish this letter, written with tears. One of the ladies here gave me "The Farmers' Magazine," published in Toronto. I found in this paper an article, "New Brunswick's Farm Women," by W. Marchand. He solemnly begins: "In June, 1911, two lady speakers were sent out to organize, for the first time in the history of New Brunswick, what is known as Women's Institutes." After this introduction the author continues to describe all the great deeds of these institutes. Then he states:

"The following is a program mapped

"March—Rug and carpet making.

"April—Suggestions from all for systematizing housework. Discussion of labor-saving appliances.

"May—Paper on 'The Fly Peril.' The kitchen garden. Discussion by members, preparing of dainty side-dishes and salads.

"June—Paper on noted women of New Brunswick and what they are doing.

"July—Talk on social settlement work in New York. Election of officers.

"August—Annual meeting. Tea, concert and sale of work for organ fund."

What do you think about this program? Is it not merely a program for very young schoolgirls? Does this program speak to your heart and intellect? Does this program give us a larger field than the usual "women's yard?" Always suggestions about housework, knitting, and the main woman's destination: "preparing of dainty

people eat to live, but don't live to eat. We have to cook well but not give our soul for the "dainty side dishes." The best and most wholesome meals can be made easily, without trouble, and don't take so much time, that a housekeeper is always busy with her housework, and gets tired before she can make any use of her brains, to think about things which are the only ones deserving to be called human.

Each animal works for getting food, for cleaning the nest, for making its "house-work," for giving life to its little ones, for nursing them with highest devotion, and only one of all living creatures—the human creature—has some more aspirations, some other ambition, some higher conception of the word "life." What does it mean to live? To use all our capacities, to enjoy all our possibilities, to aspire towards the great change of social conditions, and to contribute to the reaching of this ideal, which is the love and brotherhood of mankind.

MARY NICOLAEFF.

My good friend, and I am sure you are all of that, while I sympathize with your desire to have women extend their interests and sympathies to the great questions of the day, I think you are too impatient. All these great changes require much time and instead of being peeved about the domestic character of the program of the New Brunswick Women's Institutes, I think you might find cause for thanksgiving in the fact that in the very first year of their existence they are studying parliamentary procedure, the history of their great women, and social settlement work in "great cities."

On the other hand I think you are just a little bit inclined, in your austere outlook on life, to undervalue the importance of beauty and comfort and sociability in the home. These things, in reason, have their place in the upward reaching of the race, only less important than the unfolding of the mind.

Be patient with these women's clubs my friend, and you will see them grow into something better than either you or I could foretell. —F.M.B.

MOTHER'S SAVING WAYS

By Mary Starbuck

A "saving way" that many mothers have, is keeping their pretty clothes in the clothespress until they are old-fashioned and have to be remodeled, or, in their antiquated condition, grudgingly worn at home for the family. If only the mother could realize how much her children enjoy seeing her well-dressed! Even the daughters for whom she denies herself so much would be only too glad to forego some pleasure or some desired bit of finery if the money might be spent in something pretty for the mother's wear at home. There is a well-known saying that "In being well dressed there is a comfort which religion cannot give." However that may be, clothes certainly have a moral effect, and manners are apt to improve in the ratio of improvement in dress.

For those who stay at home there is almost as much benefit in the custom of dressing for dinner as in the often recommended "change of scene." One seems to put away with the day's apparel, its occupations and cares, and to enter upon a new phase of existence with the putting on of the pretty gown.

In this sometimes wearisome life the wearisomeness is frequently in ourselves, and anything that rests and refreshes us has the reflex effect of making the whole world more attractive to us. That we are more attractive to the world goes without saying. Surely this is worth a little effort. One way in which the young girl can help to make the home attractive is by coaxing the mother to let the family have the pleasure of seeing her in her good clothes in their freshness, rather than to let the freshness wane in the seclusion of the clothespress.



"THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE"

—Carter, in N. Y. Sun.

out by the Clifton Branch of the New Brunswick W. I. It will give one an idea of the range of subjects dealt with:

"September—Lecture on interior decoration of homes.

"October—Suggestions for knitting; best wool to use. How to can fruit and vegetables. Recipes for pickles, jams and jelly.

"November—Ladies from head-quarters.

"December—Suggestions from all for Xmas gifts, decorations, cooking and candy.

"January—Talk on parliamentary law and usage. The correct way to conduct a business meeting.

"February—Open meeting and entertainment. Silver collection for benefit of organ fund.

ty side-dishes and salads." Kitchen, kitchen, and again kitchen! Pickles, jams, jelly, pies, cakes, etc., etc. It seems that the people are of an abnormal constitution—a big, big, large, greedy, active, inexhaustible, unlimited stomach; very strong and active legs and hands; and a very small, poor head! Oh, the disgrace of womankind, to be the priestesses of the great, idolized stomach!

Yes, we have to study the science to feed our folk with wholesome, harmless, nutritious food, but science denies the complicated, spicy, piquant meals, greatly recommended by the old fashioned "great cooks." The people, and children especially, need simple, properly combined meals, for healthy, normal exchange of stuffs in the body. The