



Fool Things in Economies

PERHAPS no subject lends itself more successfully to the exploitation of the ubiquitous "penny-a-liner" than that overdone subject of household economy. No modern magazine or woman's page can properly appear without at least one column of such hints, mostly impracticable and often nonsensical; and the army of inexperienced young housekeepers who have been led astray in the fruitless endeavor to follow the vagaries of "economical" recipes, that more often than not ended in the rankest failures and disappointments, to say nothing of actual loss, would count up into the thousands.

A few years ago the particular phase of economies was "home-made" furniture. Papers and magazines fairly teemed with instructions and suggestions and beautifully executed illustrations of bureaus and washstands, bedsteads and bookcases, toilet tables and taborettes, in various stages of completion. You were gently urged and warmly invited to go to your merchant and buy from him the requisite number of boxes of varied or uniform sizes as seemed good to you. And when his supply failed there was the boot and shoe man who kept the very size and shape for drawers, all ready made—nearly; then on to the hardware for the hammer, pencils, rule, sand-paper, oils, varnish, knobs, screws, nails, planes, saws, chisels, gimlets, auger; in short, a sample of everything he had.

Home Made Furniture.

Then gentle woman was to fall upon these boxes and tools (though she couldn't drive a nail in the barn door to save her life) and make a "very good indeed" bedroom suite and, so on. She was to become at once an expert cabinet-maker; be able to figure out exact proportions of drawer and frame, though there was more difficulty in it than in figuring for a bridge across the St. Lawrence or a building for a city hall, and a single page in her grocers' bill defied her every effort to balance.

Another idea, second in favor, but equally iniquitous, was the visionary scheme of evolving a comfortable arm-chair from the ever-present, but otherwise useless, empty apple barrel. This was dead easy, you thought, for you always had the barrel, and the head was already out, and none of the woodwork was to show, therefore you could leave it "in the rough"; but you had to get padding from some source to fill out all the angles (and there promised to be many) and then of course "some pretty cretonne" for a cover and valance to hide "the rough" below, which it sometimes actually did when firmly nailed at the lower edge. Fortunately the head is always out of an empty barrel, so you could begin at once by cutting off a few staves about half-way down, or well enough to admit you when you backed into it, allowing for the padding.

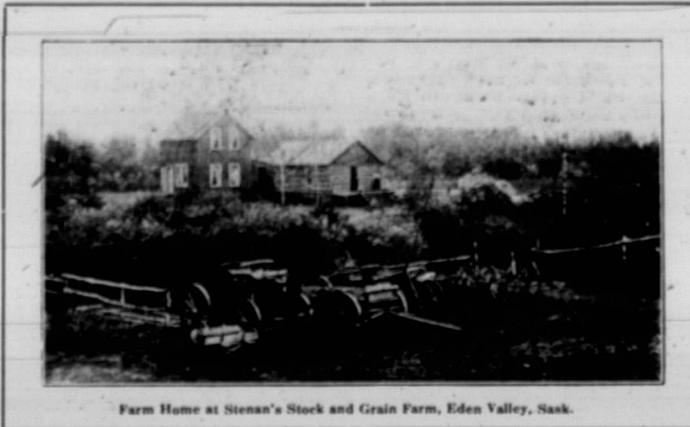
This done, you looked about for a board from which to cut a circular seat large enough to occupy the space—a seat to rest upon the sawed-off ends of the staves in front and to fit perfectly against the side and back staves, to which you intend to nail it—when you find it. But you don't find it. It isn't in the universe, so you proceed to construct one; but you can't do that either. The lid won't do, it's too small, and nothing else will submit to construction, and if it did you couldn't nail it solidly to the staves because the staves are so thin, but of course, having gone so far you try, and you cut up good quilts for padding and good cretonne for a cover and the first greedy man who sees it, scents ease, and instead of lowering himself decently into the results of your two weeks hard labor, he plunks himself not only into your barrel chair but through it and never stops till he

hits the floor and you hear the skirl of tearing cretonne.

Your bed does likewise at the lightest touch. Your bureau drawers will go neither in or out. This is the inevitable fate of the home-made furniture. How could it be otherwise? An expert wood-worker could not make furniture from apple barrels and he wouldn't try. If you cannot buy what furniture you need in the usual way, it would be wiser to save your expenditures in tools and boxes, sell your time spent in the cabinet work to some one whose work you can do; bake bread for the lonely bachelor, herd somebody's stock, pull cockle out of the wheat, cook for your neighbor's threshers, and with these united receipts buy your furniture ready made. Failing this, instead of packing case bureaus and apple barrel chairs, wrap your wearing apparel in a newspaper and hide it behind the wood box and then sit on the floor. Let no woman be inveigled in attempting anything beyond a milking stool or a bench for the wash-tub. These are necessities; all else is folly. The home-made furniture craze is dying a natural and well merited death, but the agitation of the craze is still with us and busy in another direction. This time it is kitchen economies.

Kitchen Economies.

In a recent issue of a popular journal under the enticing caption of "The con-



Farm Home at Stenan's Stock and Grain Farm, Eden Valley, Sask.

servation of the family resources" are seen some envious suggestions for "Worth-while economies."

Conspicuous among them is an illustrated description of a lantern made from a gallon syrup can. You are to simply "cut out one of the narrower tin sides, fit in a square of inch board in the bottom, and drive in four shingle nails to hold a candle upright," and there you are. No glass and one side quite open to the wind. How long would a candle stay lighted in such a lantern? Where would one get the candle, and what sane man would carry an open lantern to his stable where a chance straw might start a blaze that would burn up building and stock? If for economy's sake the can must be used, it would be less risk to fill with clean water and allowed to stand till the rust burned holes into it and then the economist (?) could conscientiously throw it away. There is a home in this country that is all but wrecked because the wife cannot find a use for the old syrup tin. The husband is fond of maple syrup. Every year he buys a great quantity and the tins accumulate from year to year. She dare not give them or throw them away, but must harbor and care for them indefinitely.

The inventor of the syrup can lantern also invented "a light and convenient camp stove from a five gallon oil-can. Cut out one end—lay on the ground—cut out two holes on top, one large for cooking on, one small for a stove-pipe-hole; to be used in the back yard during warm weather; will minimize labor in canning." Now, fancy yourself in the back yard, carrying fruit over a five gallon oil can, one end cut out—"to minimize labor"! Of course the dust, the hot sun, the flies, the impromptu tin stove without an end, lying on the ground don't count. The main and indeed only consideration was evidently to find a use or misuse for the old can. And they call these fantastic notions "Worthwhile economies."

The same woman tells us "A quart bottle makes a good rolling-pin." It would almost seem justifiable to organize an expedition to one of the poles that this genius might have sufficient scope to work out her ideas, otherwise they will surely go to waste.

Flour Sack Fiends.

After her comes the flour sack fiend. She wants to know if the readers on the earth's surface are familiar with the uses to which an empty flour-sack can be put. If not she is prepared to enlighten them and proceeds forthwith.

"First of all one sack for a small dish towel, two seamed together for a large one. Two sacks stitched together on all four sides make a magic bread cover. Three sacks, two for the lower and one for the upper part and sleeves make a neat, economical night gown for boy or girl; if for girl put lace on neck and sleeves." (Lace on a flour sack). "Of course they must be washed repeatedly and bleached to make them white and soft. Twelve sacks make a splendid-mattress-pad or cover. A dozen or more may be successfully used to cover an old blanket and convert it into a comfortable quilt. One sack makes two child's underwaists; two sacks make a good sized pillow slip." And so the interminable tale goes on till it seems quite clear that this fanatical flour-sacker must surely run several

pan left with dough sticking to it; tea leaves saved and kept moist to sprinkle on carpets before sweeping, sour milk thrown away." These are a few of the warnings selected haphazard from the thirty-six. Are they worth the ink and paper used to print them?

Why the Foolishness?

Why should a mop be hung up? Why save wrapping paper wholesale? A housekeeper uses it but seldom. Drying orange peel for kindling is too silly to dwell upon, and marmalade, you must make out of the kindling to save it, whether you want it or not. Who ever



The performance is now about to begin. On the Homestead near Luckwood, Sask.

heard of cooking rice in more water than it will soak up, or egg shells to settle coffee? How barbarous! Why not use a tablespoon of cold water? That will settle it. In order to stop up these "little wastes" (?) one would have to purchase another set of kitchen furniture to hold the useless truck, and camp in the alley herself to make room for it inside for she couldn't put it outside for the health officer wouldn't allow it. Just imagine the watchful care needed to prevent all this worse than useless rubbish moulding and being a source of real dagger to the household.

The wise woman is she who condenses her supplies to the lowest limit. Above all does she burn at once string and wrapping paper that germ infected clerks have handled; the sour milk goes out instantly unless she has an immediate real use for it, not something made up to just save the milk and thereby waste ten times its value in something else. "A penny wise and a pound foolish," is a thought to dwell upon in an ocean of twaddle about economy. And this brings us to an incident that occurred not long since in a family where economy was the watchword. Economy tempted the lady to serve the contents of a fruit jar that wasn't standard quality. Husband and son refused to be victimized. "They did not like blueberries anyway." She boiled them over again adding a pound of granulated sugar and some nice fresh cranberries, and served again. After the first taste both men got mad and threatened dire revenge should the berry mixture re-appear. It came back again alright, disguised in a pie crust with plenty of lemon. Again it was detected and left on the plates. Once again it returned, this time in a fruit pudding. "That dod-gasted poison again," and both men fled to the street and dined down town. The lady then, was "At home" and a few friends came to tea when her men were away and so the end of it came at last. The lady spent perhaps five dollars in cash and stacks of nervous energy in an effort to utilize ten cents worth of poor fruit.

It is well to know where economy ends and wastefulness begins.



THEY WAIT FOR YOU

Look not, O friend, with unavailing tears Into the Past—look to the brave young years!
Look to the Future. All is there in wait, All that you fought for by the broken gate—
The faith that faltered and the fire that fell;
The song that died into a lonely knell.

It is all there—the love that went astray, With bittered cries on that remembered day;
The joys that were so needed by the heart, And all the tender dreams you saw depart, Nothing is lost forever that the soul Cried out for. All is waiting at the goal—
—Edwin Markham.