

Father as a Quitter

Written for the Western Home Monthly, by Frances

It is a growing belief—with many people—that the fathers of today shirk their part in the bringing-up of their children. If this is so, it is a very unwise and selfish thing for fathers to do. The plea of excuse, that father is tired with the work of the day; that he has done his share in providing the bread and butter and “wherewithal” for his family, is really no excuse at all.

Beyond doubt—he is tired! Whether his employment be of hand or brain, he is unquestionably tired; but what of the mother?

The mother of a household, maintained, on ordinary daily, monthly, or “at any old time” wage, has no enviable position.

Imagine a man in her place, with “a half dozen irons in the fire” at one time, as a woman often has. Say—a pot of jam to be kept from burning; a batch of bread in its various processes of making; something to be mended; a creeping baby to keep out of the stove and coal-hod; three or four active “babies” out in the yard, requiring oversight, lest they destroy themselves or each other; or carry off the surroundings entirely; and a dinner to prepare and serve at a given hour; why—a man of just common man-intellect, would go stark, raving crazy! Yet, a woman wins through in some fashion, but at an enormous sacrifice of temper and vitality. Father comes in to a hard-earned supper—after that, he will cast off care, with his working shoes, and putting on his hat at a becoming angle, will travel forth to recuperate, from his nerve and body-racking day. What of the mother? All day long her nerves have been filed to breaking point, and bed time often finds her, still upon her aching feet. She has to adjust quarrels; bind up cuts and bathe bruises; and try to enforce obedience to her wishes. What wonder if she loses authority sometimes, and children regard mother as an irritable being, formed of “Don’ts”; and divers querulous admonitions. Many a woman

gains the reputation of “Shrew”! who is simply a victim of “nerve-frazzle.” What would happen if mother arose from a disordered tea-table, and swaggered away on her own pursuits intent? her hat on rakishly at one side, and hands thrust deep into the pockets of her coat; why, an uprising would take place! Father would have several fits! and what an outcry would go up from the children! Why, father is almost a stranger to them! Nine fathers out of ten would not recognize their own, if they met them unexpectedly a mile or more from home.

Seriously speaking—fathers should devote a portion of time to their children. A “word in season” from father often carries more weight than a whole chapter of “Don’ts” from a busy, worried mother. If every father won the confidence of, and established comradeship with his daughters, perhaps there would not be so many girls going as-

tray, or designated as “Street-Walkers”—ere they come to long dresses. If he asserted firmer authority over, and kept closer to his sons, there might not be so many useless, spineless, aimless young men in the world today. Fathers! you cannot shirk your obligations without being punished.

Dear Mothers! we cannot pick up a “periodical,” but what is filled with “Do’s,” and “Don’t Do’s”—for our “doing” or “undoing.” Hints on economy; recipes; “sewing wrinkles,” until the brain fairly reels with the well-meaning, and conflicting things, hurled at our devoted heads. Why is there no “Magazine Advice” for fathers? Here lies a field, yet untrodden, waiting for the enterprising man or woman, who will launch upon its career. “The Father’s Magazine”! Father’s spare time will be well employed then, in reading—“How to make a pair of rompers for ‘Baby Lou’ out of his own worn-out jeans” “How to re-seat Jimmy’s trousers and re-hand his mittens.” “To retail Bobby’s shirt and re-foot and re-knee his stockings.” He will be told—“How to make a delectable, economical pie, out of a potato and a handful of apples,” and he will be instructed “to

make two elegant napkins out of the ends of a worn-out dish towel,” and his holidays can be profitably spent in following the good advice measured out in Father’s Magazine.

Why are there no holidays for Mothers? To most mothers, a holiday looms up like an ogre! the very busiest days of the year! I have a dim idea of having heard of “A Mother’s Day” but I am in the dark as regards any well-defined knowledge of its purpose or meaning.

But—after all, mothers take unto themselves burdens, that there is really no need of doing. Children can be taught to “help” at an early age; boys should learn to cook and dry dishes. I have in mind as I write, a boy who used to mend his smaller brothers’ stockings, in the morning as he helped them to dress.

A girl has no real education, unless she knows how to keep house, and has some knowledge of sewing. Let there be a division of labor in every well-ordered home. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

Excessive Eating.

“Anything in excess is inimical to nature,” said Hippocrates. When you put more food into your stomach than is actually required to sustain the body in health, you shorten your life a little. A writer in the British Medical Journal has collected some of the proverbs accumulated through the ages containing warnings against excess in eating and drinking:—

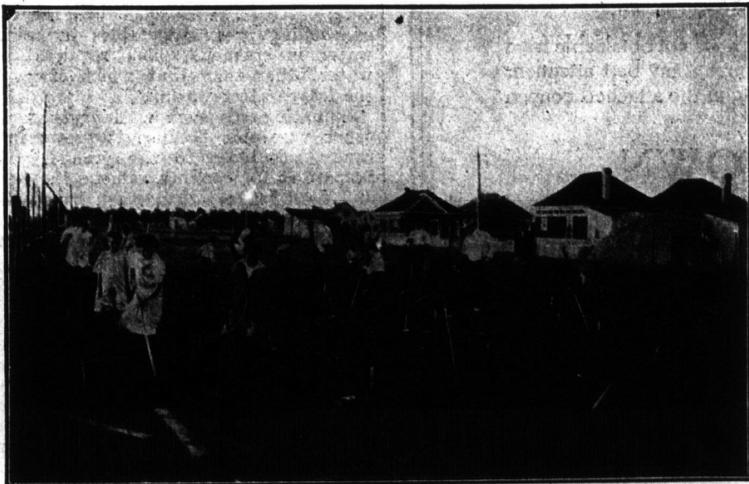
More people are killed by supper than by the sword.

Much meat, many maladies. Quick to the feast; quick to the grave.

The glutton digs his grave with his teeth.

Feastings are physicians’ harvests.

We haven’t much use for the quitter, The most of us hate him like sin; But another chap makes us more bitter— The chap who’s afraid to begin.

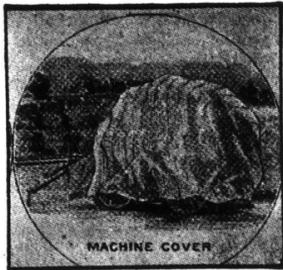


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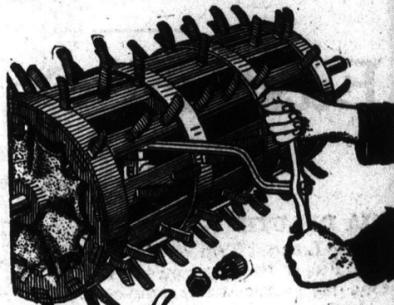


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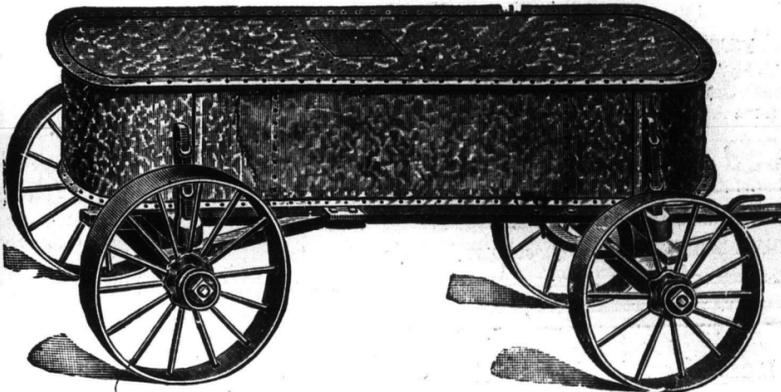
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