

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

OUR GARDENS

As I look back upon them from the distance of years I realize that all the gardens in those early days were vegetable gardens. But what gardens they were, unless memory greatly magnifies the results! Cabbages, big, hard white heads, firm and crisp to the core; cauliflower, snowy and large; tomatoes, some early and some late; cucumbers, squash, pumpkin, citron and even musk melon and water melon one year; beans and peas, lettuce, carrots, turnips and onions.

Always, too, we planted celery seed and always it was a failure. It seems to have been the one "hoo-doo" of my parents in gardening, and yet each fresh failure apparently only spurred them on to greater efforts. So that while one of my most vivid recollections of childhood is a box of celery in the window, I cannot ever remember having seen it on the table, tho it must surely have been a partial success sometimes. Outside of this one limitation, however, those were wonderful gardens, full of resources for the practical housewife when company arrived unexpectedly.

From February, when the tomato, cabbage, cauliflower and celery were sown in the house until the last potato was gathered in the fall, the spare time of the family was lavished upon the garden.

Handicapped with a cold house, as are so many early settlers, what care we took in covering up those first early seedlings and how gently they were transplanted from the first box to more roomy quarters.

Then came the preparation of the hot bed. First there was the base of well rotted manure and straw, about two feet deep, which after it had been turned and exposed and turned again for several days, was laid out in the shape of the hot bed, a small layer at a time, and well tramped down. On top of this stood the old weather-beaten wooden frame, higher on the north side and sloping towards the south, and covered with some old windows kept for the purpose. When six or eight inches of rich earth had been spread inside this frame it was ready for use, except that it was usually left to cool for a week or so. Into this hot bed were transplanted the finest specimens from the house, and when they eventually moved on into the garden the tomatoes were almost in flower and the cabbages and cauliflower ready to begin heading up.

Experiments were made to find the earliest and tastiest varieties of vegetables and those best suited to the soil in our particular garden. I remember that we discarded a certain variety of bean because it had a tendency to stringiness and found another which was much finer in texture, and that we found a variety of corn which could almost be depended upon to escape the early frosts. What those varieties were I have forgotten, but it is immaterial, since with the rapid development of plant life they have probably been improved upon long since.

What heaping dishes of vegetables we used to put upon the table, and always more in the pot. Looking back, it seems to me that it was almost a morning's work to prepare those great dishes of beans and peas in quantities to satisfy country appetites, but perhaps that is because in the holidays that was one of the tasks assigned to us children before we went out to play.

At any rate those were wonderful gardens, varying slightly, as the season was favorable or unfavorable, but never failing, and it is a never-ending source of wonder to me what other pioneer families do who have not this source of food supply to fall back upon.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

EDUCATING THE CHILD

A summary of a number of simple home means of education for children:

- Hearing good stories at home.
- Telling stories.
- Dramatizing stories.
- Keeping a diary.
- Conducting a correspondence with a child friend or a loved member of the family.
- Keeping a grocery, market and laundry list.
- Labeling garden plots, seeds and home food supplies, such as jams, jellies and preserves.
- Playing such games as "Anagrams," "Spelling match," "Quotations," "Authors" and "Word Building."
- Keeping a card file of picture post cards, noting interesting facts about each.
- Reading the classics under home supervision.
- Using the children's room of the local library intelligently.

Physiology and Hygiene Experiences

Caring for the body hygienically, bathing, brushing the teeth, manicuring the nails, and disinfecting eyes, ears, nose and throat.

Learning to escape contagion thru avoiding common drinking cups, handling car straps or stair railings of public buildings, indiscriminate kissing and touching the soiled clothing or hands of playmates.

Learning to like simple foods because of their nutrition.

Taking part in the cleaning of the home thru keeping the playroom and playthings as far as possible, sanitary.

Helping to bathe and dress a baby brother or sister.

Caring for pets of all kinds.

Science Experiences

Making and studying collections of stones, rocks, ores, deserted birds' nests, flowers, textiles, woods and shells.

Modeling physical maps in damp sand or plasticine.

Putting together cut-out geographical maps.



A PIONEER COTTAGE

Playing card games of illustrated birds, flowers and trees.

Keeping a weather record or making an illustrated weather chart.

Studying the chemical reactions involved in simple home cooking.

Making toys that illustrate scientific facts; weather vanes, barometers, electric toys, water wheels and kites.

From the Mother's Magazine.

THE COTTAGE ON THIS PAGE

Dear Miss Bynon:—This is the picture of our pioneer cottage near Lanigan, built of native timber grown on the farm. I thought this would be a nice picture for the Homemakers department, in which I am very much interested. Would love to tell the sisters how I built this little porch out of my own financing from a single cow. Any sister of ordinary intelligence could do the same.

Yours truly,

MRS. MERTENA CAMERON.

Box 118, Lanigan, Sask.

I am sure we would all be very glad to hear the story of the porch, and hope we shall not have to wait long for it.

F. M. B.

GENERAL MAXWELL

The Manchester Guardian relates the following interesting incidents connected with the work of General Maxwell in Egypt:

As is well known, General Maxwell is retiring from his command, being succeeded by Sir Archibald Murray, who takes over without assistance the undivided district of Egypt and the Canal. The inevitable difficulties of a dual control are thus avoided, but many who are acquainted with General Maxwell's long service in Egypt will regret the decision on personal grounds. He had attained a peculiar influence over the native Egyptian population, and his tact and understanding of their nature are illustrated by the following examples of recent happenings.

In February of last year when the abortive attack made by the Turks on the Canal was at its crisis, an important personage in Cairo went about spreading the news that the enemy had occupied Ismailia. He was arrested, but instead of condemning him to severe penalties General Maxwell ordered him to go under escort to Ismailia and see

the truth for himself. The only condition was that if he found the report untrue he should pay the return fare for himself and his escort. He went; he saw; he paid. On another occasion, during a great review of British and Australian troops in Cairo, General Maxwell, while taking the salute on the march past, observed a poor man's funeral approaching across the lines, followed by the usual Egyptian little crowd of mourners and wailers. He at once ordered the review to be stopped, waited for the funeral to pass, and saluted as it went by. Such an incident, reported in all the Arabic papers and passed from mouth to mouth, did as much as any possible material improvement to establish our position in the minds and hearts of the people.

Major General Maxwell is at present in charge of the situation in Ireland, and has been given complete disciplinary powers for the suppression of the rebellion.

ASSISTANT COOKS

In a place where domestic help was hard to get, and where the children of the family disliked to assist with the chores, a mother evolved the clever plan of giving the boys and girls tasks in disguise. She told them that so many times each month they might have guests, provided they helped buy the food out of their allowances and assisted with the cooking and table setting. Of course the youngsters were delighted and immediately learned some valuable lessons in economy by figuring out the cheapest foods they could find for their money, as well as the very least they would be allowed to do in the way of work to keep the letter of the law. They started out by furnishing desserts of sliced oranges, bakers' cakes and such food, but in a very short time they learned that appetizing and satisfying things made at home were cheaper than those bought in the stores, and that the whole work could be done in a short time.

From that moment the mother's task was easy. The boys and girls learned to make such things as creamed potatoes, egg dishes, easy hot breads, simple salads and all the good things that children like. There were no elaborate cakes and desserts, but the twelve-year-old daughter mastered the art of making plain ice cream and ices, with the assistance of her brother to help with the work of turning the freezer, and all summer the family feasted on the delicious frozen sweets. The money that usually went for the doubtful ices down town was carefully saved for a large freezer at home, and the children learned valuable lessons in economical buying and making. Informal little backyard feasts, hasty picnics and other good times cost the mother no extra work, because the children, in gratifying their instinct for hospitality, learned to help themselves.

And in the dining-room work the effect of the mother's wise plan was still more remarkable, for everyone was anxious to have fresh flowers on the table, keep the cloth clean and the silver bright and to use dainty dishes every day so that guests might always be welcome.

By HILDA RICHMOND

A DREADFUL MISTAKE

Two young women went to the theatre. They could not get seats together, but were told at the box office that each could have an end seat, in adjoining rows, and most likely somebody who came alone and had a seat next to one of them would obligingly exchange seats. Near the close of the first act one of the young women timidly whispered to a heavy, middle-aged man at her side, and who had been sitting stiffly and looking straight ahead: "Are you alone, sir?"

The man buried one side of his face in his programme and breathed: "No—wife!"

Jean longed for a kitten with all her heart but her mother was not fond of cats so she was not allowed to have one in spite of her eager pleadings. At length it became necessary for Jean to go to the hospital for an operation. "I will make a bargain with you, Jean," said her mother. "If you will be a brave little girl about having your operation, you shall have the very nicest kitten I can find."

Jean climbed upon the operating-table and took the ether without a struggle. As she came out from under the influence of the anesthetic and began to realize how sick and wretched she felt, the nurse leaned over her to catch her first spoken word, "What a hum way to get a cat."

—From the Delineator.