

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY FRANCIS MARION BEYNON

LEADER WRITERS UNIMPORTANT

The Manchester Guardian does not know whether to laugh or be indignant over the attitude of the military authorities towards the press in Great Britain. The usefulness of newspapers in the daily life of the people is so far recognized that the production of them has been made a certified industry, but obviously with some misgivings on the part of the officials, which has led to wholesale exceptions.

One of the things that has left a sting in the minds of those at the head of these enterprises is the casual statement that in times like these leader writers can easily be replaced.

Rather a shock, after having fancied oneself to be a great force in moulding public opinion, to be so lightly disposed of by a prosaic officialdom.

THE REAL BATTLEFIELD

There are three distinct opinions about the war held by prominent military critics. One section is convinced that victory must be with him who keeps control of the sea; a second is assured that the final issue will be decided upon the west front, while still a third party sees in the extreme east the key to the whole situation. And all the time the real issue of this war is being fought out over your dinner table and your neighbor's, yes, and behind the counter, and behind the plow, and in the kitchen, and in the public school.

The real issue of this war is whether militarism shall grow and prosper or whether it shall decline and fall; whether the poor people of the different countries of the world shall go on living just above the bread-line in order to support an organization the object of which is to slaughter other poor people with whom they have no quarrel or whether civilization shall cast out this terrible monster of cruelty and brutality.

This issue will not be decided by the soldier, but by the civilian and the laurels may conceivably be bestowed upon the vanquished.

Being a spiritual question it will not be decided in the open upon the battlefield, but in the hearts and minds of men. It is indeed being decided there today. The question is, shall we permit Germany to be victorious in this inner and most important field of battle. There are some militarists in England and Canada who are trying very hard to make her so, some who come out openly and say that England must have compulsory military service and a big standing army after the war, and in so doing accept Germany's military standards. Others again, having seen that for a country which intends to go to war, Germany's plan of making the interests of the individual subservient to those of the state is an excellent one, are beginning in a round-about way to recommend more of this spirit for England.

If these militarists are in the majority and are permitted to decide the conduct of our public life after the war it is an indifferent matter how the battle goes in France or Asia-Minor for Germany will have conquered us. Better to have let her come in without resistance and take over our government, for, having had fifty years of practice, she would have put this military ideal into force more economically and efficiently than our own statesmen are capable of doing.

FRANCIS MARION BEYNON.

CHIEFLY ABOUT PICTURES

I would like your opinion on the finishing of my stair-steps. The bannister and post are stained and varnished in dark finish and the steps are painted grey with a cream or salmon cream back, but they don't look to me as they should. What would you advise me to do? I don't care for either carpet or oilcloth on a stair.

And what pictures do you think nice for a parlor, just moderately priced ones I mean. If you will kindly advise me in these few things I shall be very grateful.

I am just waiting for spring to get at my house. I think it's a fever most housewives take in the spring. Thanking you for former suggestions and wishing you success in your page.

RAE.

Answer

I understand perfectly the most important of the twenty reasons referred to in the first part of your letter, and of course you are wise to leave the point as it is in the circumstances.

Concerning the steps, there is a dust colored floor paint, really a soft brownish green shade, which I think would be ideal for use on your stairs as it ought not to show the dust up too plainly and it is a very pleasant color. I will be glad to send you a sample

if you will send me a self-addressed and stamped envelope.

Not being quite sure what you would consider a moderately priced picture it is difficult to answer your second query. For from four to twenty dollars you can procure some very nicely framed copies of good prints of great pictures. Usually it is possible to purchase colored prints from a certain book store at fifteen or twenty cents each. To have them properly framed would cost another dollar and a half or two dollars, the even at that the cost of them would not be very great.

Finally, supposing all of these to be out of reach of your purse, you might buy some of the prints referred to above and frame them yourself with the new picture binding. It comes in different colors and gold. I made an experiment with this material the other day, as I try to make a practice of doing with everything I recommend to the readers of this page. I took two richly colored pictures from a magazine, one in shades of dark green and flame and the other in dark rich brown, cream and pure red. I carefully measured off and penciled a line around each print exactly three-quarters of an inch from the picture and trimmed all of the white paper off but this border. Then I took them to a store and had glass and cardboard cut the full size of each. After inserting rings in the cardboard for hangers I laid the picture on it and the glass over it. Around the outside edge of the glass I pasted strips of cardboard three-quarters of an inch wide. I took a roll of the gold binding and cutting it down the middle pasted a strip of it over the inside edge of



Illustrating the Beauty of planting done along the borders of walks.

the cardboard so that it came just a shade over on the glass. Then I cut strips from a brown binding and finished the picture. I found it more satisfactory to use four strips of binding the right length than to try to turn the corners.

The result was two quite pretty pictures neatly framed, one ten by ten and a half inches in size and the other nine and three-quarters by eleven and a half. The gold binding cost twenty-five cents for a roll of six yards and the brown binding fifteen cents. The cardboard, glass and rings brought the cost of materials up to ninety cents, but there is enough of the binding left to frame several more pictures.

While this method of picture framing is not suggested as a substitute for good pictures properly framed, it may prove a help to you or to some other woman, if you do not need it, who positively has not the money to spend on costly pictures or even moderately priced ones.

The question of the subject is a matter for each householder to decide for herself. Choose the kind of pictures you enjoy. In your room, the dark rich pictures I have described, with the frame right up to the print, would be effective, and have all the pictures in the one room of the same type.

F. M. B.

HOMESTEADS FOR WOMEN

Dear Miss Beynon:—Now that we women have the franchise one cannot help wondering what would be the best use to make of it. The woman's vote should be used to the advancement and for the benefit of woman in general, and, may I be permitted to say, the prairie woman in particular.

This Canada of ours would never have made the enormous strides it has if it had not been for the women who came with their men-folk and cheerfully shared the privations and hardships unavoidable during pioneer life. Those grey-haired, hard-featured, insignificant looking women. It is to them, quite as much as to their husbands and sons, that Canada owes

a debt she can never fully repay. Forty miles from town was common enough in those days, often nothing but a yoke of oxen to get around with.

Generally, after the little seeding was done, the husband and older boys would hire out, leaving the mother and younger children alone all summer, the nearest neighbor several miles away, and very little to live on except the produce of a cow or two (if they were fortunate enough to own them), the eggs from a few hungry fowls and what vegetables they could raise on the newly broken, wind-swept prairie. Small wonder so many pioneer mothers fill our lunatic asylums.

And now we are on the eve of better things, our land almost all in crop, the mortgage lifted, machinery paid for, the nearest town only six or eight miles away, even a horse to be spared if we want to visit a neighbor, what do we women actually own in return for our years of labor? Nothing, I believe, except the clothes we stand upright in. Now, I ask you, is that fair?

We worked so willingly, so cheerfully, training the little ones as well as we could, school was almost an impossibility in many cases, as was also the doctor when the new little stranger arrived. All we had in those days was the friendly whisper over the tea-cups, "Yes, you come and help me in January and I'll be sure and come to your place and help you in March," and the loyally kept promise.

Then there was the ever present struggle to keep the store bill straight, with the pitifully few pounds of butter, and thru it all the loving determination that John, dear old John, must have his tobacco anyway, even while we tried to make ourselves believe we liked our coffee without sugar.

And now, you men, the struggle is over, we have stood shoulder to shoulder with you and helped you in every possible way and we want you to give us something for our very own, and what we want is one hundred and sixty acres of government land, just like yours was before we helped you to get it into the high state of cultivation it is now.

Wow, hear the howl go up. "What? Want more land? Isn't one hundred and sixty or three hundred and forty (or whatever acreage the farm consists of) enough for you? Isn't it?"

No, my friend, what we want is the pleasure of owning one hundred and sixty acres of land right now, instead of a tiny plot six by three which you will have to provide us with presently whether you will or no. No, we would not have to suffer one tithe of the hardships we had to endure while proving up your land, and we would have the joy of possession to give us a new interest in life and the pleasure of knowing we were helping develop the country that has already done so much for us.

What do you say? No good homesteads left? Well, sometimes you men make me tired. When neighbor's sons grow up and want homesteads they just nose around and find one, or cancel, or something like that. You never hear that cry when a man wants a homestead, and we can read too and happen to know just how little land there is, comparatively speaking, under cultivation in Saskatchewan.

And now, women Grain Growers, it is up to you. You know the old saying, "If you want a thing done, do it yourself." And now that we have the franchise, let this be one of the first things we use our vote for. Let us choose the best woman we have amongst us for our leader, one who understands the subject well and will carry the matter thru. Our hands were tied before. We could do nothing. They are free now. Only, let it be done quickly.

F. E. SHEPHERD.

Stalwart, Sask.

WHAT DID HE MEAN?

It was one of the sultriest Sundays that summer, a day when even a New England conscience would have granted you absolution for laying aside all ordinary duties and just resting.

With what my family call my usual fate, I had previously promised to go to the farthest end of the city, two or three miles from home, and address a Christian Endeavor Society. I was expected to speak twenty or thirty minutes.

As I shook hands with the president at the close of the meeting, I was surprised to find that he had contrived to leave a dime in my hand. It was in accordance with a custom originated in the interest of out-of-town speakers, but I assured him that I did not wish car fare. "Yes," he insisted, "you must take it"—adding gravely, "The laborer is worthy of his hire."

It was some time before my family ceased to remind me of that estimate of the financial value of my oratorical efforts, tho the comment of a friend was, "None but the brave deserve the fare."—By K. L. Hamilton in *The Housewife*.