

The Country Homemakers

Conducted by Francis Marion Beynon.

THE ROAD TO LAUGHTERTOWN

Would ye learn the road to Laughtertown,
O ye who have lost the way?
Would ye have young hearts, though
your hair be gray?
Go learn from a little child each day.
Go serve his wants and play his play,
And catch the lilt of his laughter gay,
And follow his dancing feet as they stray;
For he knows the road to Laughtertown,
O ye who have lost the way!
—Katherine D. Blake.

TRAINING BAIKINS

Please don't laugh at the unfitness of this sermon, coming from an unmarried woman, to mothers. I taught school for several years, but I wouldn't even presume on this fact were it not that several women with children under their care have asked my advice in the solution of their difficulties. I don't suppose it will be very valuable advice, but it is the best I have to give, and if you don't like it I wish you would write and say so.

One young girl, who is placed in the peculiar position of having two small children to raise, asks whether I believe in whipping. For ninety-nine children out of a hundred, I most decidedly do—that is practically. Theoretically I believe in nothing but moral suasion, but when it comes right down to the proposition of making a year-old child do what it is told, when it is told, nothing seems quite so efficacious as a slapping.

Last summer, I was visiting at a home where there was one of the best trained children I ever saw, the reason of which was made very evident to us one afternoon. Her mother and I were lying down on the bed, trying to go to sleep, and the small girl was in her cot nearby, supposed to be similarly occupied, but instead she was ruminating on life as she found it. "Daddy whistles," she said softly to herself, and again "Daddy whistles," and then, passing on to her maternal parent, she said with sudden emphasis, "Momma panks—um—ha." But it was evident that Momma had "panked" to some purpose and needless to say she was very fond of her mother. This mother says—and here I am quoting practical experience—that there is no use of trying to reason out ethical problems with a year-old baby and that if you don't begin at that age or younger to discipline a child, you are going to have a very bad time of it later.

One of the first lessons a small person has to learn is the property rights of others. This is too abstruse a matter to explain to the infant mind. You can't go to the small prodigy of twelve months and say to him, "Son, that is Jim's Sunday-best hat, for which he paid a fancy sum in dollars and cents, and it would not be right for you to sit upon it and destroy it," but a slap or two upon the tiny hand impresses upon him the fact that there are some things he must not touch. Perhaps it seems cruel to punish a child for the things he does not understand, but if we don't do it while they are small, the school and the business world will do it later at a cost of much greater suffering to the victim.

When they are older there are some children whom it is really better not to whip and whenever it can be managed a punishment related to the misdemeanor is more rational. For example, when a child pleads sickness as an excuse for not going to school, and starts off with a whoop to play as soon as it is too late, a good way to punish him is to send him to bed until school is over. If he were sick—and I would insist on believing that he had told the truth—bed would be the best place for him, and if not he ought to be at school.

But I think the hardest thing a mother must have to do is not to make her punishments a mere outbreak of her own ill-temper and sorely tried nerves. It is hard not to let things pass unreproved when they are feeling particularly joyful and still harder to bear patiently with the kiddies when things are all at sixes and sevens. A few beans and peas and toothpicks, from which to make toy furniture and other kindergarten supplies will help in this direction.

Another trouble that evidently weighs upon the mothers who read our page



CEILING OF ARTIST'S DEN FINISHED WITH WALL BOARD

A new finish, considerably less expensive than plaster, which is being used extensively for the walls of attic rooms

is that after children start to school they become hoydenish. I believe all children, who are worth worrying about, go through this stage. One might think at the time that they were heading straight for the penitentiary, but generally they right-about-face and make splendid citizens. All that remains for the parents to do is to keep a cautious eye on their associates and guide them as best they know how.

Now, if what I have said is all wrong, I won't mind a bit if you write and tell me so, or if you think of any of the scores of things that I have left unsaid and would like to voice your opinion on them, come along. There is room enough for all—that is if you give me time, for our space is limited from week to week.

CARE OF THE MOTHER

Dear Miss Beynon:—It has sometimes occurred to me that though I have often, in the Homemakers page, seen articles and letters on the "care of babies," I have never seen any particular reference to the care of the mother before baby arrives.

With some women this is a very trying time—more from a feeling of depression than from any physical cause. With others again, it may be a case of "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." In any case, surely a little more consideration than usual should be accorded them. A woman—on a farm, anyway, if not in town—is, as a rule, expected to go on with her usual routine of work as if there were nothing the matter. Now, speaking from my own personal experience, and also observation, I think it is far better that it should be so. But there are so many little ways in which her husband could show his sympathy with, and consideration for her, if he would only think of them.

To pick out the most comfortable easy chair for her, when the day's work being over, she gets a little rest; to see she has the paper or book she needs and has not to rise and look for them; to go to one of the children, should that frequent child's request be heard, "Can I have a drink, Mummy?"; to read to or talk to her, should she seem to wish it; and most of all, not to take notice should she seem irritable, but instead, to express a little more outward affection than usual. A woman, at such a time, often yearns for an extra smile or kiss from her husband, and surely, seeing what she is bearing for him, she is entitled to it. There are other ways a husband can spare his wife too, such as helping with the washing (when his work will permit him); lifting pails of water, etc.

I think the majority of husbands are very considerate. But it is in the little things that a reminder would not do them any harm. I do not think there are many men, who, under like conditions (were such a thing possible), would show the courage and patience of the average woman. This I have heard

men themselves admit, and the very knowledge that such is the case should make them extra kind, loving and thoughtful to the woman who has left home, friends and oftentimes country for their sakes.

Wishing the Homemakers and yourself a happy and prosperous New Year, I will sign myself

A GRAIN GROWER'S WIFE.

Surely, special consideration is due to the women under the circumstances you mention, and it has often caused me considerable surprise to see how well many of them rose to the occasion. But forgive me if I disagree with your second last paragraph. I don't think women give up home and friends and country for the man's sake. They give it up usually either because they want a home or because they become very much attached to a man and it adds to their own happiness to be with him. Is this being brutally honest, I wonder?

F. M. B.

A NORTH-WEST WOMAN IN SELF-DEFENCE

Dear Miss Beynon:—Having started the ball I find I will have to keep it rolling. I would say just here, I think, myself, I am to blame to a certain extent for the way I have been treated, but in the first place it was unknowingly. I was born and raised in a Christian home where the father's first thought was for his wife and her's the same, for her husband. We children were taught to always think of others first, and to always be ready to oblige or help one another and I can say it was a pleasure to be able to do any little kindness for any one we could. We never thought it any hardship, when our tasks were done, to help either brother or sister with their work. All worked together as long as there was work to do, and not one ever thought of leaving any duty undone or for anyone else to do. So, when I married, I had my dream of just such a home of my own. But I married the wrong man for that, though I often try to excuse him for many things, considering he was raised with different influences around him. I remember when a girl at home I never had to ask for anything; my parents saw anything we needed in the line of dress and it was provided for us, the best they could afford, and we were always satisfied with what we got. Father used to let us do some piece of work and teach us how to do it, and do it just right, then he would pay us the highest price for our labor, so we always had a little money of our own for "pin money" it was called in those days.

When I married we had to begin at the bottom step; he had nothing but a homestead, and a poor one at that, and I thought to help him get along. I did without everything it was possible to do without, to try and keep out of debt, and for years, with poor management and inexperience, poor crops and many

ups and downs, there was not much money to spare, but I never thought then that if he had it to spare he'd give it to me if I asked it. But don't you see, those years were the ones that did the deed. He always had enough to take a good time on, and at first he would ask me to go with him, but, as I thought it was wrong to spend money for pleasure that was needed to clothe my children, I would rather stay at home and save it to get something that was needed. Pretty soon he quit asking me to go, but he never thought to stay at home with me. Then I did not see my mistakes, but now I look back I see I should not have let him put himself first and me last; but I did not want to fight for my rights. I wanted him to grant them of his own free will, but he never has yet.

As for educating my boys to be like their father, Contented is wrong there. I have one married now, and I can say with pride he is an ideal husband. His first thought is for little wife (as it always was for mother). I thank God for such a son, and now that he is out in the world he is respected and pointed out by many wives as a model man, one that will see that his wife has the best he can afford and will help to take care of his children.

Now, when I wrote my letter in the November number I was only giving you a peep at the skeleton in my closet; most people would think ours a happily wedded life, and it would be if I could be like some women I know. Perhaps I expected too much of a man, I have seen quite a few and there are lots of them selfish to the core, while there are other men kind and thoughtful for their wives. Some women can stand up and demand what is right, but I want what is right given willingly and freely or not at all. It takes all the good out of anything that is given because I have to ask. In the first place a man proffers his attentions to a girl, asks for her love in return, and when he gets her she has to do the asking and the wooing after to keep him. Now I have always tried to do my part the very best I knew how and always tried to have a nice clean comfortable home for him to come to, a good meal always ready on time, any time he wants it, his clothes always taken care of and ready for him to put on, and I want to be able to know I have done my part as best I know how, as it is my part that I'll have to give an account of at the last. I don't often air my troubles for the benefit of the public, but as this is a question that concerns a good many farmers' wives I could not resist the temptation to write about it and see what others thought.

A NORTH-WEST WOMAN.

I am so glad you wrote us this letter. I do feel just as you do that all the fun is taken out of anything by having to ask for it, and I think we understand things better. Do you think it is too late to mend—at least a little bit? I believe I would try, anyway.

F. M. B.

HOW SOME WOMEN EARN MONEY

Covers for Furniture

A friend earns money making covers for worn-out furniture. She makes the covers out of pretty designs of denim to match the paper on the wall.

Making Over Sleeves

One can earn money making oversleeves for business office wear. One pair can be made out of a yard of goods. The goods costs 3 or 4 cents a yard. They sell for 15 cents a pair.

Cloth Bags for Banks

A woman for many years has been earning money making cloth bags for several savings banks of Chicago. They are easy to make. Though made of strong material they soon show wear and have to be replaced.

Glove Washing Profitable

A young girl earns \$3 to \$5 a week washing silk and chamois gloves for the ladies in her neighborhood. She does the work carefully so that the chamois gloves are soft and the light silk ones do not fade or turn yellow.