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# The Drovers Journal

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## Our Household Editor Retires

After more than 38 years of faithful service, HOPE NEEDHAM is retiring as Household Editor of our papers. Those 38 years have been marked by every conceivable facet of the life and living of the distaff side of farm life. More than 10,000 times, by her own faithful count, HOPE has prepared the copy for her column, but in that preparation she has read and pondered many times that number of letters from readers. She has made their problems hers.

HOPE made the Household column something of an institution, unique among agricultural journalistic circles. She made of it a place where the farm women of several generations could freely unload their burdens, contribute helps, entertainment, counsel and wisdom out of experience, and even on occasion administer a scolding. It had its own set of general rules, administered by HOPE, with no fixed boundaries, no discrimination, and was open to all so long as all played fair. HOPE would have it just that way—fair, just, and above all, helpful.

Outside her editorial duties, HOPE continued over the years to be homemaker and mother on a fine Illinois farm. Three boys and one girl have enriched her life with a total of 15 grandchildren, in whom she takes all the pride to which every grandmother is entitled. Her late husband, JAMES V. STEVENSON, was one of the top farmers of his area and state.

So, we say, "So long, HOPE!" It had to come. You have earned the love and gratitude of a great many farm women in many states, for all of whom we extend greetings, HOPE, and best wishes for the years to come. May you find rest and contentment in your retirement.

We welcome to the editorship of the Household a new hand, SUSAN SAYERS, whose work will speak for itself. We hope all readers will continue to lend the same loyalty and co-operation to the new editor which have so long been enjoyed by HOPE.



AUGUST 17, 1920



### HOPE AT THE HELM

Well, folks, here she is!

We announce today the new Household Editor, not to take the place of Faith, but to take up her work.

It has been a long and arduous search, but we feel certain that we have found, right here in the corn belt, of course, a young woman who has the heart for the work, judgment seasoned by a brief but intense period of experience as head of an ac-



Hope Needham

tive farm household, and unusual facility and charm in expression.

And we call her "Hope"—just because it seemed the natural thing to do.

#### The Applications

But first let us go back. It was on July 17 that Faith Felgar passed away, peacefully, rich in the love of a great throng of devoted readers, in her heart the songs of praise and gratitude that for many years had poured in to her from the four corners of the bread-basket of America. She left a great unfinished work. Somebody must carry it on; somebody must take the vacant place of leadership in a household of willing workers devoted to the common cause of happier and healthier farm homes.

Who?

We didn't have the faintest idea. So we offered the suggestion that there was an opportunity open for some farm mother "endowed with a great love for humanity and a great talent for expression." Even before that announcement appeared many applications had reached us. Afterward they came in a veritable deluge.

And as they piled up before us from day to day, more and more they brought home to us what a wonderful interest there is in this department. No greater tribute to Faith has been paid than these applications. The finest bunch of letters any editor ever read! If there were a dozen misspelled words in the whole lot they escaped our notice. Letters from women widely known; letters from women who had never written a word for publication. Here, we said, is represented the very cream of corn belt womanhood.

But what a problem! How could a choice be made with any assurance that it was the right one? In that we soon found we were not to be without help. Testimonials from all sorts of sources, from members of congress up, poured in. But they could not count for much, except as

to character. Few outside our own editorial staff, we felt, were competent to pass on the qualifications necessary to conducting this Household, which is different from any other, and must be kept so.

#### Our Only Reliance

Thus we carried the problem around with us, almost 24 hours a day, and more and more felt that our reliance must finally rest in our own judgment, faulty as it might be. There was no other way.

There the applications were, more than 400 of them, from twelve different states. Every one received a careful, thoughtful reading. They were read, even between the lines—perhaps too much so! Many sent in clippings of things they had had published; many submitted unpublished samples of their writing, most of which will appear in this department during the next few weeks, unidentified as such, of course.

There were personal interviews with women who came to our office and with others who came in the interest of applicants; there were telegrams, registered letters, special delivery letters, photographs, and so on. One thing we want understood. There was no personal influence of any kind, or of the slightest character, in connection with the consideration of any applicant. So far as they went we were perfectly cold-blooded, and remained so! The best interests of the department alone ruled.

#### Her Application

Among all these splendid letters there was one, to which we found ourselves turning again and again, for further consideration and study. We can't explain what it was there, something intangible, but whatever it was it appealed to us. It might not have appealed to everybody in the same way. We recognize that. But we thought we found there something of Faith's spirit of service for which we were looking. This applicant asked herself



a good many questions, and answered them. For instance:

"Have I the right experience?" Well, I am a real farmer's wife. I have been married nine years and have three children. We have had the average joys and trials that come to such a life. We have had sickness, disappointments, financial burdens, a fire that destroyed our home. We have had, also, much health, happiness, and fun; so that we have ample courage to strive along. As a housekeeper and mother I did not start at the point of perfection, nor have I yet attained it. I have made mistakes enough, Heaven knows, to give me charity and sympathy for all the errors under the sun."

There is more than experience in that—something of humility, humor and sympathy. And again:

"Are my interests broad enough and my sympathies great?" Well, I know I love the country—all its manifold occupations, its busy-ness as well as its leisure, its limitations and its pathos as well as its virility and its beauty. I can see in it both romance and reality. And I love the people of the country—and of the town. I would use my talents, such as they are, in assembling, organizing and disseminating the facts that riper, wiser, more experienced folk among us might contribute, for the aid of the perplexed and the yearning younger ones seeking help."

And she appreciated Faith. "What we must do is continue her optimism,

her tolerance, her humor, her fine response to all beauty, her practical common sense."

#### We Inquired Further

Well, any way, we inquired further. We found that the applicant and her husband were both college graduates, she in domestic science, he in agriculture. And we found that together they were putting into practice the cream of the things taught them, and evidently doing it successfully.

Just at the moment they are living with his father and mother, awaiting the completion of their new house, replacing the structure that burned to the ground a few months ago.

We aren't going to take space to tell about their farming, or the farm organization and community activities of this enterprising family. We just want to say that they are real farm folks who love the life they are leading and have faith in their business, who have the same problems to meet and the same recreational opportunities of farm folks everywhere. They are not rich, and by the same token they are not poor. We would call them simply thrifty and prosperous—typical of the best to be found in American farm life.

#### Her Name

Our new Household Editor will follow the precedent set by Faith in adopting a pen name, and by it will always be known to most of our read-

ers. Outside of following in Faith's footsteps in this matter, there are practical reasons for it which need not be gone into here. So far as that goes, one name is as good as another—it is the character of the work that counts, and the knowledge that there is back of it an honest and urgent desire to be helpful.

It had to be "Hope," of course, following "Faith." Before it ever occurred to us, that suggestion began to come in, and we add to it "Needham," an old family name of the new editor's tribe. So there it is: "Hope Needham."

#### An Appeal

Which leads to the suggestion that she is likely to need more than ham, right at the start, if that very crude pun may be permitted. She will need help, and we take this opportunity to ask it for her. Goodness knows, her task is going to be difficult enough! And it really isn't hers alone. All the readers of the department must share in it if the work is to be as successful as it should be. So send in your suggestions, your comments and your criticisms. Write to Hope about anything under the sun. Inquiries will be answered, by her or somebody else, and confidences will be held sacred by her just as they were by Faith.

Tomorrow Hope Needham will make her initial bow. Be kind to her, be helpful, be tolerant—that the usefulness of the department may continue as it was Faith's wish that it should.



AUGUST 18, 1925



# Household Department

Address Hope Needham, Household Editor, Drovers Journal. Use one side of paper only. Real name and address must be given, but will not be printed if not desired.

### HOPE MAKES HER BOW

Dear Friends: Today opens a new chapter in our Household. I have as many misgivings as any of you as to how successful it will be. I only know that all of the loyal Householders will go valiantly along together, after the sudden loss of our leader, as she would have us do. And I know, too, that while any one of the 400 applicants might have done as well as or better than I as editor, not a one of us, regardless of talent or endeavor, could ever make a success of the column without the continual support of all of you; without your help, your co-operation and your sympathy. For it is your column, not any editor's. That is what makes it different from any others of its class. It has an unequalled spirit of friendliness and intimacy.



Hope Needham

I don't know how I happened to be chosen from among so many. I know I wanted earnestly to have the chance to try. My husband and I began to take this paper when our children were not much more than babes in arms, because we wanted a paper that we could keep on taking after the children learned to read. We could not bear the thought of exposing their innocent minds to a paper where the headlines of crime and scandal overwhelmed all other news. We chose this paper as one that presented all the news in a wholesome manner, properly balanced in importance.

### Came to Know Faith

Of course, it was not long after we began getting the paper before I found Faith's fascinating column, and from then on I did not miss an issue up to the day of her death. Having followed it so regularly, I felt bitterly broken at that abrupt tragedy. Like so many of the rest of you, I offered my services, not because I felt that I could take charge and swing the work

with a grand gesture, but because the work needed to go on. Who ever took hold would need to start with a real desire to serve and grow into it. It was a magnificent tribute to the value of the Household that so many were willing to make the necessary sacrifices to help.

By some fate or other, the choice fell on me. I felt then that it would have been a relief not to have won! The magnitude of the task fairly staggered me. It began to look like an impossible sacrifice of privacy. It was with fear and trembling that I went into the office for an all-day conference with the editor and the staff. But I met there such a cordial, friendly, helpful spirit, and found so many brave and cheerful letters that had come to the Household since Faith's death that it was like coming into the "shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land." I want to tell all of you that our paper is the product of exceptionally fine ideals. We can be proud to have a part in it. I came away from my first conference humble, for the work is vast; proud, because the service is great, and unafraid, because you are with me.

### It Is "Our" Column

Every one needs a means of self-expression. Artists use sculpture, paintings, music, books and poetry; scientists use the laboratory. Some of us build bridges, houses and roads; some raise choice live stock and crops; some of us make homes out of houses and rear families. Every one, I say, needs some means of expression. This column is ours. I am going to pour myself into it, my hopes and ambitions, problems and achievements, even as I want you to do yours. You may write under a real or assumed name, but you can be perfectly free. We can in our column discuss big or little things, commonplace or noble, ridiculous or sublime. I want to get acquainted with you and have you feel acquainted with me. I want to tell you, as the days go by, about my husband and little children, our new house, our garden and poultry, our work and play, so that you may know that I am really one of you, with the same mistakes and struggles and triumphs the rest of you had when you were at my stage in life, or will have when you reach that stage.

If something any of us write strikes an answering chord in your heart,

please tell us while the reaction is warm within you. It is your chance to express yourself. Send in suggestions that have helped you, even though they seem trivial. They may be important to some of the rest of us. Ask for help in any household matter, even though you would be too timid to ask for it anywhere else. Our circle is so big that you can surely find help even for the most unusual needs. Write to me freely and often. It will help and encourage me, and it will show me that, for Faith's sake, you are going to "stand by" until we get under way again. It will be in a way your tribute to Faith.

### If There Are Delays

If any of you have written since her death, or even shortly before that time, and have had no acknowledgment, either through the paper or personal letter, please be patient just a little longer. Some of the material that I found among the Household mail will be a little out of season now, but I believe we will use it all any way, for this time, and, when we get straightened around, we will be more careful to get material printed in a timely order. I will use all material as fast as I can find room for it. If you are at all anxious about your inquiries, feel perfectly free to write again. There is a chance that some of the material will be overlooked when there is so much of it to be sorted at one time.

We must never forget that it was Faith's extraordinary personality that built the department into what it is. Without her scope of interest, her abundance of experience and her generosity of heart, it could not have become so great. Now that she has gone, our loyalty and our gratitude induce us to "carry on," so that the glow of her life, which tinged many lives so richly, may linger and for a long time color our horizon.

A successor to Faith can only hope, in the beginning, to assume the routine office duties of the Household; work over the accumulated mail, sort and arrange the inquiries and helps. But as we gradually grow accustomed to the change, and as I come more and more into contact with all of your lives, I trust that I will be able to make a little place for myself in your hearts, and become, as Faith was, your counselor and friend.



AUGUST 19, 1925

**"SOMETHING ABOUT THE FARM"**

Now is the time to take care of the surplus apples, all the early varieties that make such lovely sauce. As I sat on the screened porch this morning, working on a bushel or so of Duchesse and Early Transparents, I could see barns, yards, garden and chicken house, and the horses and cows beyond, "kneedeep in clover." My mind wandered idly over many, many matters. I got to wondering why we cling to farm life in spite of its hardships and hard times. I wondered why a hired man, for instance, with no ties to hold him any particular place, will stick to farming year in and year out, when he could get higher cash wages at the factory in town. I thought of our different men of whom I had asked the question. The answer often was, "Oh, I don't know; I've tried both; but there's something about the country!" and they never were able to express it any further.



Hope Needham

There is something about the country that gets into the blood. When we are actually there, working all day, sleeping all night, we often are unconscious of the appeal for weeks on end. But leave the country for a while, or suddenly let some beautiful aspect strike you and you thrill from the roots of your hair to your toes. I get that thrill sometimes when I am first one up on a spring morning, when the light is still faintly gray and the only sounds are the almost inaudible twitter of birds and insects and the distant crow of a cock; when the leaves are still so tiny that they only make an impalpable mist among the trees; when the hickory buds are still pink and crumpled like a baby's first.

**In Early Morn**

I get that thrill early on a midsummer morning when I step out to the well and look upon a green and golden world that is breathless at its own beauty; when the grain shocks are tawny hammocks in the stubble that has commenced to show green, and the tassels of the corn are golden crowns; when you feel that the day will be "a scorcher," but for that exquisite hushed moment the world is bathed in the lingering coolness of the night and the last white mist hangs at the horizon.

I got it in the friendly dusk of early autumn, when the family scatters over lawn and porch, quiet and satisfied with a hard day's work well done. Or in husking days, when the men have finished their sausage and hot cakes, I follow them outdoors for a breath of the tangy, crisp air, and find the world still dark except for a strip of light in the east. Or in the winter afternoon, when the leaden sky, low and somber, meets the bare plowed lands and the dreary withered cornfields, and the gaunt trees resist the winter wind, I feel a fierce thrill of loyalty to a land that for all its bleakness can be at times so fair.

I get the thrill (did you ever, too?) when I wake suddenly, for no reason at all, on a full moonlight night. Everything familiar seems mysterious and remote. My heart fairly flops over at the immensity of life. I marvel and

almost cringe with awe; and then the persistent, brooding silence, and the unearthly light finally flood my being with a strange comfort and rest, and soothe me gently back into the arms or rest.

**In the Kitchen, Too**

I get a thrill when I set a row of topaz and ruby jellies on the window sill and revel in the sunlight pouring through. I get it when the bread comes from the oven golden-brown and plump, or when I see a line of white clothes against a blue sky and pink hollyhock background. (I love hollyhocks! They are gracious, satin-soft and delicate, but they stand straight and brave and true. They are symbolic of the country itself; they are beautiful—and brave.)

I get the thrill when I look upon my babies asleep, and think with a tightening of the throat, that if I can raise them right they will live for years and years to thrill to the cycle of the seasons, and their children and children's children will still enjoy the country after I am gone.

Tell me, do you, too, love the country in these ways? Amid all the monotony and labor of the farm, in spite of trouble and worry and sacrifice, do you, sometimes, get the thrills that compensate for every hardship? If you do, you will understand what any one means who says, "There is something about the farm—!"

AUGUST 20, 1925

**"SUNRISE"**

Years ago, before I was born, the little postoffice nearest our place bore the quaint name of Sunrise. In those days the postoffice was the black walnut desk of my grandfather. He came to the open prairie when there was nothing much to be seen except sky and prairie grass. They must have chosen the name as the Indians choose the name of the newborn child. The name it for the first object that meets the view when the Indian mother opens her eyes. The sunrise on the prairie was probably the most prominent, and, indeed the only object, except the sky and land, when grandfather cogitated on a name for his postoffice. The old name is only a memory now, but in this column I shall call our community that still. The country now is well-settled, amply planted, prosperous and beautiful. The years have rolled along and our children are the fourth generation to live on the land. Unless we consolidate, they will attend the same one-room schoolhouse their father and grandfather attended. The family is not unique; in our community, and probably in yours, too, there are a number of the pioneer families clinging to the same communities. This old stock is important to America. Even though it came to America from the Old World only three or four generations ago, it is the realest American stock we have. It is important that our children carry on the traditions.

Just now I don't mean the sober tradition of strenuous labor, either, though that is essential, but I am



Hope Needham

thinking of the spirit that many of us remember nothing about; the spirit that kept those brave pioneers from despairing in the midst of danger and privation—the spirit of play.

**Interests Change**

We are beyond the good old days of the quilting bees and husking bees and square dances in those mammoth living-room kitchens of long ago. The telephone, automobile and radio have changed our interests much. But we farm people ought to stick together for part of our social life, at least. We are gradually learning to work together; let us keep on playing together, too.

Here at Sunrise we have a community club for young and old that meets once a month for a program, and often serves lunch afterward during a social hour. We have a building owned by the club and occasionally give plays and pageants and bazaars in addition to the regular meetings. We have an open-country church, too. It is none too well-supported, to be true, but many town churches are not, either. We have other clubs and meetings that keep us somewhat together in spite of attractions in the towns. In that degree, we are continuing the old-time spirit of our ancestors. But just this summer amusement parks and dance halls have opened up along the hard roads. What these will do eventually to our rural meetings no one can tell.

I wish you would tell us about your communities, your recreations and churches and how you meet the problem of keeping the young people satisfied on the farm.

AUGUST 21, 1925

**THRESHER MEALS**

Such a good discussion of some threshing problems has come in that I am going to share it with you today, even though threshing is over with most of us by now.

Now, ordinarily, I have no objection to threshers. We give no breakfasts or suppers, and usually know what will be expected of us. I like the old-fashioned idea of feeding the men a substantial, well-planned meal, having a lot more women folks fussing around over them than you really need, and making a regular gala day of it. Threshing is hot, dirty work at best, and the men deserve whatever fun they can get out of it. I like to see the table handsomely set out and decorated with flowers, even though the men claim not to notice such things. But if women overwork and strain to outdo others in the elaborateness of the meal, they lose the holiday spirit entirely. I would rather use oil-cloth and cups without saucers and keep the cooks jolly and cheerful and hospitable.

But I feel unusually sympathetic with the points this writer brings out, for I had some of the same problem that she refers to. In the first place, we had less than half a day's threshing, so that I knew it was problematical whether or not I would have dinner to cook. When machine trouble delayed the crew a few minutes,



Hope Needham



AUGUST 24, 1925

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

or when a shower stopped the work the schedule was changed enough from day to day that I really was not sure until Monday morning that I would have them Tuesday noon—provided nothing happened. That meant I must get the washing over bright and early, for with little children I find I can't postpone the washing to a "convenient" time. The regular time is about the only time there is a chance to do it.

In the meantime, I received a letter from the editor of our paper that he had received my application and would be down to interview me. You can imagine just how opportune a time it was for such a momentous occasion—an interview at which I wanted especially to appear calm, capable, poised and untroubled, to be sandwiched between a heavy family wash and the preparations for the annual threshing dinner!

Anyway, I finished the washing, fed the family, bathed and dressed the three children and myself, loaded us into the family flivver, and drove 10 miles to town to meet the train. On the way out I stopped and bought the threshing meat, for I did not see when there would be another chance. Of course, I planned to can it in the pressure cooker if anything happened to prevent the threshers from coming, but I really didn't need canned beef, as I had an ample supply left from last winter's home-killed stuff. But I got it; and by the time I reached home, with the family, the meat, the cream can, and the editor, the sky was banking up in the west and nasty little flickers of lightning were darting out to tantalize and discourage me.

You would have enjoyed the scene of that interview. It was far from being the formal, concise and perfect thing it should have been. The children, having missed their naps, were none too tractable. They brought forth innumerable trophies of various sorts to display to this stranger who wanted to talk to mother but was too fascinating to be let alone. I am obliged to say they even had a few sharp words among themselves as to who was going to show him something first. Only a patience developed by actual experience with boys of his own could have kept that editor with me long enough to ask the necessary questions.

However, he stood it till train time, and after he had left the weather looked so dubious that I did not risk doing any baking or preparing anything at all for threshing dinner except a great lot of applesauce, which I fired I could can if I didn't need it fresh. By that time I hoped it would storm and storm hard. I felt strongly on the matter. I was about fed up with uncertainty, both in the threshing business and editorial matters. But morning dawned serene and fair, as perfect a day as any one could wish. I had threshers, all right, after a strenuous morning, but with no more graciousness, I am afraid, than the law allowed. Of course, it was no one's fault. But wouldn't it have been lovely for me if I could have known, definitely and without question, that I would have them or not have them, or that they would be taken care of efficiently and fairly by some such means as our contributor suggests?

MEMORY GEM

For every evil under the sun,  
There is a remedy or there is none.  
If there be one, try and find it;  
If there be none, never mind it.

—Selected by Mrs. E. B., Vilonia, Ark.

Last Sunday the preacher at our little Sunrise church said in his sermon that some people were so very good, so very anxious to be pious, that they concentrated on the First Commandment and never got any farther. They overlooked the fact that, while the First Commandment specified "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," the Second continues, "And another like unto, it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."



Hope Needham

If you had had the privilege of reading the letters that have come to the Household since Faith's death, you would feel with a great thrill, that here is a place where every one follows the Second Commandment faithfully and well. Ever so many readers of the column have sent in splendid contributions that will help me immensely in these first early days, and will keep you interested, too, for they are meaty articles, cram full of ideas, well expressed. B. H. M. sent in a wealth of helps, and marked them, "Use these if you need them in the lean days to come; if not, no damage done." Pep of Minnesota continues to contribute abundantly. Margaret Cameron, Lillian A. David and others too numerous to list here today, have helped immeasurably. Many letters say, "I want to help," "We must all pull together," "We must keep the good work going," and similar neighborly, generous things, without a single note of selfishness or jealousy. It is wonderful to find such spirit. It is a help and inspiration to all of us. If there were only time, I would write every one of you a personal letter and thank you for your loyalty.

AUGUST 26, 1925

HINTS OF AUTUMN

This morning we woke to see a cold, heavy dew sparkling on yard and roof and tree. There was a chill in the air and a sort of wide, sad hush over everything. The grain fields were bare; the first cosmos were in bloom (that gallant foreteller of coming cold, that stands till the frost strikes again and again); the asparagus row was a luxuriant mass with the berries just beginning to glint red; the melon vines were beginning to wither, feeding their gorgeous



Hope Needham

vitality into their offspring. Truly late August is the middle-age of the year. Every where is the premonition of fall; the ending of one generation's work; the sacrifice of foliage and exuberance for the sake of the fruit; the hint of approaching winter and rest.

So goes the cycle of the seasons and of life. Soon the babies will be school children; then college students; then full grown men and women. And we, like the vines and the trees and the rest of nature, will sink gently into rest, having drawn sustenance from the elements only to give it to these our fruit, so that they might be strong and rich and in their turn grow and sustain life, and having spent their beauty, pass along.

These are the sad thoughts that the first signs of autumn bring to us. But a little later, when we have adjusted ourselves to the new order, we will find invigoration in the tang of fall; we will have more zest when the air is crisp and cold; even, if we make the most of opportunity, grow richer, more colorful and handsome in the autumn season, as the trees do. And as Faith put it, "Grow lovely, growing old."

SEPTEMBER 5, 1925

LITTLE SISTER STARTS TO SCHOOL

Next week little sister starts to school again. She is in the third grade. I will just have brother and sonny to keep me company in the new house then. But 4-year-old and 3-year-olds can be lots of company and lots of help.

I wonder why it is that we mothers always feel sad when the babies start to school? It must be a sort of jealousy. We are so used to being the biggest part of our child's world!

We are jealous of the widening world. We are afraid to compete with the new personalities that are going to loom large in the baby's life, most attractive to us all. We are The new things, the strange things, are afraid that we will lose our place on a pedestal. And very likely we will. It is natural for a growing child to take its mother as a matter of course, as he takes day and night, heat and cold, breakfast, dinner and supper. It will be the outside things that thrill him, and change him and make him grow.

But there is always this consolation: After the busy school years, when our babies settle down to life and have babies of their own, they will turn to us again, with a bigger and deeper appreciation of our love. Especially our daughters will grow nearer and dearer to us through the experience we all must meet. And from that time on, mother will have again her place on the pedestal, and will become more and more the object of devotion. That is when we shall have our reward.

So during these growing years of the babies, let us be "up and doing, with a heart for any fate." We had better be busy and happy in other things while we wait.



Hope Needham



SEPTEMBER 8, 1924

AT HOME WITH THE TELEPHONE

When we moved into the new house, the telephone had not been installed, and it was not put in for a week. We felt much abused at having to send messages back and forth by the men and the children. But being so thoroughly happy at having a home again, and being busy as well, I did not quite get out of temper. Instead, as I scrubbed plaster off of windows and floors and sorted through boxes and chests, I got to thinking of the years when no one had a telephone and managed nicely without. I thought of my father and mother starting out their married life on a "homestead" in Nebraska. Twenty miles from a railroad, no telephone, no car, no fuel but buffalo chips, no buildings but what they made themselves, no trees and not much other vegetation—not much of anything but sand. They had sandstorms and sand hills. "Old Baldy" was a sand mountain in the distance. Sometimes, when my father had to go to town for supplies, my mother would be alone on the prairie for a week at a time. Five children were born out there, with no doctor nearer than twenty miles, and no hospital in fifteen hundred square miles.



Hope Needham

In contrast, we have a house within a mile of a dozen neighbors. We can get to a doctor or one of the best hospitals in the state in half an hour. We can order our groceries in the early morning, when the stock is fresh and have everything ready to bring out whenever we want them. We can telephone or telegraph to any place in the United States in the time it takes to make the connection. Surely there is little to complain of. Yet the telephone man was greeted with a smile, and the brisk, clear bell ringing every few minutes makes the place seem like home!

In Contrast

My Dear Hope: Welcome to your place at the head of our "Household," and if you have misgivings as to your success as our leader, lay them aside, for I am sure there are many among us who will be kind, helpful and tolerant, as our editor has asked us to be. Surely all of us can realize that yours is no light task, and I hope that all the Household members will stand by you until, as you say, you can get the work "under way."

I was not acquainted with Faith. That is, I had never met her, but I lived for eight years just five miles from her home, and knew many people who were her friends. And she had written to me a number of times, so I feel that I knew a great deal about her, even though I had not had the pleasure of meeting her. She was a splendid woman, greatly loved by all who knew her, and when the sad news of her death came I felt as though I had lost a very dear friend.

She was a good friend to all of the Household readers. She gave up many pleasures and worked when she should

have rested, to make and to keep our Household the very best of its class.

Now that you have so willingly taken up Faith's work, I wish you great success, and I am sure I will do anything I can to help you in your efforts to keep our column the very best of its kind.

I have been sort of a "slacker" in the past, I must confess. I neglected to write to our column several times when Faith asked me to contribute something to help other flower lovers.

I was very busy at the time so just left off writing what she asked for. I am both sorry and ashamed now that I neglected to write.

Writing is not easy for me, for I do not have a very good education. I was not allowed to finish the first eight grades at school. My mother thought it was unnecessary to have more education, so I was taken from school and put to work at home. I am in the early 40's, so you see that at the time I was in school a good education was not considered so important as it now is.

I have been careful to see that my children get a good education and would give much to have a better education myself.

I have lived my entire life on farms in the corn belt and, of course, have lived a very busy life, so I have had but little time for study or reading since I felt the schoolroom.

Again I wish you success as "our" Editor, and I hope you may find many true friends in the Household, as Faith did.—Another Marigold, Iowa.

What Is Education?

Dear friend, I want to give you a word of encouragement in regard to what you call your lack of education. It may interest you to know that your letter was written in the best hand and with the clearest and best expression of any I received in the same day's mail. One letter from a college girl carried a half-dozen misspelled words; yours, not one. If you had not told me yourself, I would never suspect that you were short on education. In fact, I would consider you well-educated, for this reason, if for no other, that you have adopted and used every bit of information you have gained.

Some of us go even through college and pick up a smattering of information, but are careless about spelling, punctuation and grammar, and do not apply the things we learn. I think the person is best educated who uses his or her knowledge in daily life.

SEPTEMBER 14, 1925

THE NEW HOUSE AND THE OLD

Wonder if you missed me much last week? I was so dreadfully busy getting settled and feeding silo-fillers and hay-makers that I took a vacation from the pen and made use of your good contributions. Thank you every one for furnishing so much good material.

We are gradually getting to rights in the new house. Much finishing needs to be done, both indoors and out, but I am so delighted at having a home again that I don't see unfinished woodwork and floors at all, or



Hope Needham

heaps of brick and ashes in the yard. I see instead soft shining ivory enamel, and satiny floors, and a mahogany handrail that leads to, a graceful goose neck turn at the landing.

I stand at that landing and look out of the double casement window on the yard and garden, with a heart content. For instead of a pile of lumber and a carpenter's work-bench, I see a row of hollyhocks and a trellised gateway. Instead of sun-baked grass and a heap of radiators waiting to be installed, I see a smooth lawn with some garden seats and a little pool and a bird-house and a sun-dial. Instead of a pile of unturned clay, I see a green velvet terrace with a border of roses and a path leading down to an old-fashioned flower-garden. And I see all around about, hiding every bare and ugly spot, clumps of sumach and blossoming shrubs.

I see a long way into the future, don't I? For it will be a long slow task to build our place into what we want it to be. We must wait for some things till we have time, and for others till we have money. And in the meantime the daily tasks go on.

Sometimes I get discouraged and weepy, remembering our spacious old house, with its generous rooms and its lofty ceilings. I mourn over my lost wedding dress and our treasured letters and college keepsakes and the babies' memory boxes. One of the dearest memories of my childhood is a picture of us children sitting with mother beside her keepsake trunk and looking, big-eyed, at one treasure and another of her girlhood, while she told us the stories of each one. When I think that I shall not have such a trunk to pore over with my babies, I get all twisty in my throat. I shall not be able to go through the old house in after years and say to the children, "Here is where Cousin Grace stood to be married," "Here is the window where great-aunt Emma sat and turned your picture pages for you," "Here is the room where Ruth was born," "Here is the dress in which I was married."

Then I remind myself of what one dear friend wrote us right after the fire: "It is sad to lose the keepsakes, but those things we have with us for only a little while, after all!"

So I remember how I used to struggle to keep those generous rooms and lofty ceilings clean. I remember that our rambling, hospitable old house was lovable, but most awfully inconvenient. And that those keepsakes were lucky to be looked at twice a year, at housecleaning time.

So I cast away gloom, and rejoice in the new home that we never would have had except for the fire—and plan to pile up new treasures for the years to come.

The Same Thrill

Dear Hope: I just know we are going to love you. Here is the responsive chord I strike in answer to the one you sounded yesterday.

I had that thrill last night when I awoke "for no reason at all" and lay silently listening to the quiet breathing of the tired sleeper beside me, the ticking of the clock and a far-off twittering bird. Here it was I decided to stop in the stress of the morrow long enough to tell you that your article yesterday gave me that same thrill.

You are, to me, Hope; I am to you. —"Letitia."



SEPTEMBER 21, 1925

SUNDAY EVENING

Sunday evening, and Daddy and I sit before the flickering fire. The children are snug in bed and all the house is still. A few minutes ago the air was filled with happy talk and laughter, as we had our cocoa and cinnamon toast before the fire. And I sit wondering how many of you Householders are at this hour meditating a good resting, with your children put away and your husband by your side in this same wordless communion.



Hope Needham

It has been a day of excitement and joy. For last night at midnight my own dear family arrived to spend an unexpected few hours with us. We were in bed when two cars turned in the lane with a merry tooting of horns and flashing of spotlights on the house. Some one called, "Any room for tourists?" And Daddy answered back, "No, we have a full house now!" Then the crowd laughed uproariously, and out of the cars piled mother and father and sisters and brother and babies, 10 in all. They had brought camp cots with them. They had started on the spur of the moment, for the baby sister and her husband were only home for a week, and rain threatened until late afternoon. Such hilarity, such hugging and kissing! It was a long time before all the new babies had been inspected and the house settled itself to slumber. There were cots in the alcove and living room, and all the five bedrooms were filled. Two of the men slept in a cot in the car. The six little grandchildren, who had been scattered from South Dakota to Ohio, were under one roof for the first time. They ranged from 8-year-old Ruth to the newest baby, Phyllis, aged one month.

**Proud Family!**

What time the family did not talk about and admire the new house, they talked about and admired the Household department. Of course, they are proud as Punch to have a member of the family in charge. The office was admired and the scrapbook was pored over. Constantly I heard the exclamations, "What a wonderful spirit! What a different sort of Household department!"

Now that the family has gone and we are quiet again, I sit thinking about all of you, realizing what a tremendous responsibility I have in this job—wondering how I can serve you best. The clerical part, the handling of mail, the filing of records, is merely a professional job. There is nothing personal about it. But there is nothing professional in these editorials I write to you. They are my personal contribution to our Household, in return for the gifts I have had from you and Faith. "Freely ye have received; freely give."

**What You Make It**

I want to make the Household just what you want it most to be. From your letters it seems to me that you do not expect me to be a research agent, or a home demonstrator, or an encyclopedia. You do not expect me

to know everything nor to answer all inquiries. You know that I am only one of you. You want me to put you in touch with one another. You want me to tell you about my life, not because it is different from yours, but because it is like yours. You want some one to cheer you when you are in the valley of shadows; you want some one to understand when you are happy. You want me to say the things you think but have no time to say. You want a daily contact with people who lead your sort of life. It is as though I completed the circuit that enables the spark of fellowship to travel from one to another in our circle of mothers and home-makers.

When you write to me, I am glad to have you tell me your children's names and ages, and the things you do. It makes you seem more real to me. There is not space enough to print all these things, but they bring me closer to you, and make it possible for me, to reflect you in the editorials I write for you.

It is Our Paper and Our Household. Write and tell me if this is what you want the Household to be.

SEPTEMBER 23, 1925

DREAM HOUSES AND REAL

We have two good letters today about houses; one about a dream house some time to be built, and one about a real house that has been lived in three years. I want to add a word about our new house. Like "Agatha," I had ideals of the home we would some day build. We were hurried by the fire into building some time before we were ready. And when we came actually to doing the work, I found that I couldn't have everything I wanted. I compromised on many points, but, some way, the place is all the dearer to us because we had to wrestle with reality to get part of our dreams into it.



Hope Needham

You ask if I have a sleeping porch. No, I haven't; nor a sun room, either. Not because I didn't want them or hadn't always planned on having them, but because I found I wanted other things worse. For instance, we will have hot water heat. It cost a lot, but we wanted it badly enough to give up other things for it. I may be able to have the sleeping porch and sun room later, but if we had not put in hot water heat now, we probably would never have had it.

**To Fit Old Basement**

We modified our plans according to the basement we had. The old basement, with its concrete floors, was intact after the fire, except for some straightening needed on the walls. Excavating a new basement would have added about \$1,500 to the cost of the house. We decided we would rather use the old site and the old walls, and put that \$1,500 somewhere else.

We did not put tile floors in kitchen, washroom and bath. There, too, we met the problem of what we wanted contending with what we could have. I feel that I am going to be perfectly

happy without them, now that we have decided on something else. I wanted casement windows, too, for they are so beautiful and so airy. But I gave them up, though they would have cost but little more, on account of the danger of their not being weather-tight, and on account of the problems of draperies and curtains. If they open out, they are weather-tight, but you have to have your screens inside, right against the curtains. If they open in, they are not weather-tight, usually, and they are likely to interfere with any design of draperies.

But here are some of the things I have that make me satisfied to give up some of the extra things I have mentioned: I have a big, open, light, clean basement, with a wide outside door where the men can carry out ashes, or carry in vegetables and heavy things. In the kitchen I have a dumb-waiter, a big broom closet, a roomy pan closet, a built-in ironing board, two flour bins, lots of drawer and cupboard space, plenty of working surfaces of varying heights, so I can sit or stand, a ladder stool, a generous sink, a table on casters that can be pulled out in the middle during working hours or for a pick-up meal for the children and me, and can be pushed back when the room is tidied up. There are three windows in the kitchen, and a space for an ice-box when I get one. As soon as it can be built, I am to have a fuel box with a metal top, just as high as the range. It will do away with unsightly fuel pails and will provide a good place for hot things.

**Handy Wash Rooms**

I have a first-floor toilet and lavatory, and eventually the men will have a bigger wash-room and shower-bath arranged for in the basement. The house is planned so that the men never need to come through the kitchen to get to any part of the house. The kitchen is my "castle," my workshop, not a passage-way. There is a part of the living-room partly partitioned off for Daddy's office. It has an outside door, so that when he brings callers in to look over the records, he does not need to go into any other room. There is a nook in the back hall where the children can put their play coats, caps, mittens and rubbers, and reach them for themselves. There are five bedrooms, with big closets; there is a bathroom, a linen closet, a blanket closet, and a clothes chute. There is a fireplace, and there is a lovely staircase.

The house itself is my ideal; typical Colonial, with a formal center entrance, and a hall straight through from front to back, with the dining room and kitchen on one hand and the living room on the other. There are wide doorways opening from the dining room and living room on the hall. And French doors lead from the living room to a wide porch at the east end of the house, next to the lane.

The house is set among the fine old maple and elm trees, that fortunately were not harmed by the fire.

So in spite of the sacrifice of part of our dreams, we are amply satisfied with our home, remembering always that it will grow and improve as the years go on.

**MEMORY GEM**

God's plans, like the lilies,  
Pure and white unfold,  
We must not tear the close-shut  
leaves apart.  
Time will reveal the chalice of  
gold.

—Selected by J. C. C., Kansas.



BRICKS AND MORTAR

At play-time today the children and I wandered around the yard and garden, planning and planting for next spring and trying to imagine how everything will look when it is done. We stopped for a while to watch the men working with brick and mortar. It occurred to me how much bricks and mortar are like people. There are just two kinds of people in the world, after all—the "reformers" and the "diplomats." The reformers are like the bricks—strong, sturdy, unyielding, clean-cut, confident. They will break, but they will not bend. Bricks in a pile are hard on each other. They chip and break. A group of "reformers," those people who believe firmly that they are right and that they have a mission to teach the world, also hurt and spoil one another.



Hope Needham

Mortar is yielding and pliable—so much so that we can't tell where it will go unless we confine or support it in some way until it hardens. The "diplomatic" people are like that. Anxious always to smooth the path of life and keep people's sharp corners from hitting those with whom they come in contact. "Mortar people" consider the "brick people" very hard and unpleasant to live with. "Brick people" consider the mortar people too soft and yielding in their moral fiber.

Yet how useless a world it would be made up of just one or the other kind of folks! Those with firm convictions would be all at cross-purpose, because each would be trying to reform the world in a different way. The diplomats would never get anywhere at all, because they would be eternally giving up their convictions in order to get on comfortably with everybody.

But, combined in proper proportions, these two sorts of people build a strong, proud wall of citizenship, smooth and united. We need "brick" people for their strength, and "mortar" people for their tolerance. If we are mortar, let us respect the bricks for their rugged staunchness; if we are bricks, let us not despise those who make life more livable by smoothing up our contacts with humanity.

Greetings

Dear Hope: I have been so depressed since Aunt Faith's death I haven't felt like writing. I will not call you "Aunt," for we are about the same age, I believe.

After reading your first writing I thought to myself, "There is a woman who can gradually fill the place of Aunt Faith—a broad-minded young mother, full of pep, and of a wonderful personality."

May God bless and protect you and yours for years to come, so that the love of your home and your great ability may make the pathway of life more smooth for your loyal "Household Workers."

THE IDEAL LIFE

It all depends upon the point of view! Most every one feels that his own life is narrow and restricted, while his neighbor across the way has extra advantages, joy or leisure. The trouble is that we are like the early feminists who shouted, "Equal rights for women!" when they wanted all men's rights added to all the privileges of woman. We each want to keep the happy phases of our lives, eliminate the unpleasantness, and get the other fellow's pleasures, too.



Hope Needham

The other day I had a visit from a friend with whom I had struck up one of those immortal college fellowships through being "in activities" together. That is the beauty of college; one finds such an assortment of friends! Many an hour in undergraduate days Tray and I spent discussing the problems of the world; more cynical and more intensely serious than we ever will be again! The night before May Day, when the campus waited in quivering anxiety to see whose names would grace the honor scroll on the senior bench, was a night more pregnant with emotion, more exhilarating and terrifying than if we had been waiting for the ultimatum from Serbia. Everything in which we were interested seemed momentous then; life was full of crises.

Whenever Tray runs out for a week-end visit it brings back those glamorous days. And, besides, she leads a thrilling life now, so different from mine that it seems like a fairyland. She runs the household for her well-to-do father (by superintending the servants); she has a job in that most fascinating of professions, advertising (except when some emergency, like a trip to Europe or California, causes her to resign from it), and altogether leads such a blithesome life, meeting stimulating people, reading delightful books, seeing the latest plays, that I quite envy her. She is forever running across old college friends when they happen into the city, entertaining and being entertained by them. She always has the latest news of every one; she knows who is successful and who is down on his luck, who has written a book, who is making a name for himself in some unique way.

Just Radiant

Well, on this latest visit, Tray was just as radiant and entertaining as ever. We chattered away for hours, and after the supper dishes were done and the children tucked away and daddy gone out for a meeting, we had a late seance before the fire, alone. There is something moody and melancholy about the unsteady flickering of an open fire at night, when there is no other light, and before long great gaps appeared in the conversation, and I was feeling sad and wistful.

"Whatever became of Marj?" "Oh, she is doing wonderful work in Denver. She was in the city last summer and the Theta Sigs gave a beach party for her." (She sees every one sooner or later! It is as though I am caught in a stagnant little backwater, where I see the same folks day in and day

out, going round and round in our little eddy, while she is in the midst of the turmoil where all the rivers come down to the sea!)

"I ran out to Woodsy Cove to see Susan one week-end, where she is running her quaint little tearoom!" (Imagine me dashing in on some one for a week-end, with my little brood! It would be like the charge of the light brigade! I would be as welcome as the German army trampling Belgium.)

A "Darling Dinner"

"We had the darlinest dinner party when Martha and her brand-new husband came to town. Mary is such a jewel of a cook, too; she never minds how many guests we have!" (My cook is a jewel, too; I never have to issue an order to her! When I want a dinner served, I merely decide what is needed, and do it. If I wanted to give a dinner party, when on earth would I feed the hired man? And where would I park the children?)

I was rapidly falling into that early Christian martyr mood in which a person can feel so noble over nothing. The sort of feeling a woman has who "enjoys poor health."

The talk petered out altogether. There was a long, long pause. A sigh or two from each of us. I thought of all the gayeties and frivolities which might adorn a life which did not adorn ours. I thought of pathetic bits of poetry, such as "the short and simple annals of the poor." How piteous!

And Then—!

And then, out of a clear sky, came this astounding remark from Tray, with the wistfullest tone:

"Your life is just ideal, isn't it?"

I was absolutely bowled over. My amazement must have been evident, for she added in explanation: "Your life is so real and so orderly. You have a home and a husband and babies; there seems to be some purpose in what you do. And it makes you seem so safe, so sheltered, so serene. You don't know how I envy you!"

Do you know—I've stood a little straighter, breathed a little deeper, felt a little prouder ever since!

THE MOTHER

I planned to go to England in the spring,

When hedgerows bloom and all the hills are green;

I longed to travel over all the world,

Nor leave a single beauty-spot unseen.

(I have a tiny garden here at home,

To tease me with its hint of springtime green.)

I kept my hands so supple and so white—

An artist's hands, that they might some time play

Great music! But my hands are scarred

And seamed with kitchen drudgery today.

(And my piano sits in soundless state;

I almost never find the time to play!)

I thought that I should sail through southern seas,

Blue as inverted heaven beneath my eyes.

I longed to pick queer tropic fruits from trees

Brightened by nesting birds of paradise.

(Four walls confine my world today—and yet

All heaven lies always in my baby's eyes!)

—Selected.



DECEMBER 23, 1925



Address Hope Needham, Household Editor, Drivers Journal. Use one side of paper only. Real name and address must be given, but will not be printed if not desired.

## Merry Christmas!

Christmas! The very word warms the heart, for it is the season of joy and happiness. Why is it that there is more real joy at the Christmastide than at any other time of the year? It is not the weather; it comes in wintry December. Christmas day, itself, is one of the shortest of the days, we have less daylight than at any other period, yet it is the season of peace and good will, in spite of darkness and cold. Why? The answer to our question is not hard to find: There is more joy in the souls of men, because we have just a little more of the spirit of Him whose birth we celebrate. Jesus came into our world and taught men, by His life and death, that the way of joy and peace lies along the road of love and service.



Hope Needham

It is that spirit that makes Christmas, and wherever men and women practice the "Jesus way" there is peace and joy.

May He who came to Bethlehem in the long ago be welcomed to our hearts and homes this Christmastide, and not only on that day, but all the days.

O Jesus, ever with us stay,

Make all our moments calm and bright;

Chase the dark night of sin away,

Shed o'er the world Thy holy light.

—P. Ivison, Pastor of Hopewell Church.

This is the Christmas message from our whole community of Sunrise to all of you everywhere. I asked our minister to greet you for us, for Christmas is so much more than a personal matter. It is a world-wide spirit of gentleness, tolerance and love. Once more, Merry Christmas!—Hope.



# 1926

JANUARY 13, 1926

THE SHELTERED CLASS

No question in the Household has brought quite such a flood of discussion as the important one of "Mrs. Don't Love the Farm." So many splendid letters have been contributed that I can only give a selection of the most representative ones. I have tried to choose a variety of attitudes and circumstances, giving sidelights into our sisters' lives, making up a pretty fair cross-section of our rural corn belt life.



Hope Needham

It seems to me quite a tribute to our farmer-husbands that in all this flood of letters not one woman complains of a shiftless or lazy husband, a deserter, or a monster. Every husband under scrutiny is a hard worker and a good provider so far as his means allow. Most of the income goes for taxes, interest and living expenses. Not one husband has adorned himself in the latest Oxford bags and other masculine foibles, while his wife and children wanted for shoes. No; the complaint has been, mostly, that, in addition to the rugged virtues, the man has not been able to provide leisure-class luxuries on a working man's income, or has not been quite so tenderly sympathetic of his wife's ambitions as he might have been. Not a one of us would want to give up the sterling virtues of stability; we only want the gentler virtues added on. It is a little bit like children crying for the moon, isn't it?

The very fact that we women demand so much proves that with all our "equal rights" we have not come to appreciate that we are, taking it by and large, a sheltered class. We are, most of us, relieved from the economic stress of supporting a family. That stress must have been terrific on many farmers during the past years. Most of us help, more or less, to be sure, by caring for house, children, dairy products, poultry and such things. But we do not have the actual responsibility of making things go. We should make an effort to realize that we are sheltered and protected in an economic way, and for that reason we have larger responsibilities in other ways.

Has Definite Task

For one thing, it is largely our job to keep up the morale of the family. The husband and father, in strenuous times, has neither time nor energy left to keep the pace in that respect. It is up to the mother and wife to decide whether the household will be stern, austere, dull, cross, nagging, quarrelsome, bustling, cheerful, wasteful, shiftless, quiet, noisy or gay. She can make it what she will, by the way in which she meets her duties. In cases where there are little children, she is doing a full-size job just to keep the morale near her ideal. Some women have vitality to carry on considerable social life in addition; many of us have not. And we should not feel rebellious because we have to give up a good many pleasures during the few years when the work of establishing a home is confining.

When the children have grown older, our responsibility broadens out, and while we can have more free hours just for personal enjoyment, or even a "career," we have a duty toward community and civic welfare. Many people used to oppose woman suffrage on the ground that it would only double the number of ballots to be counted. They overlooked the fact that they were introducing into politics a new class, a sheltered and protected class, who had time to study community needs and who had ideals of improvement to work toward.

Matthew Arnold once said: "If ever the world sees a time when women shall come together purely and simply for the benefit and good of mankind, it will be a power such as the world has never known."—Hope.

MEMORY GEM

If you would get real joy from living,  
Put "self" away and take to giving.  
Give smiles away and words of cheer,  
A kind word there, a kind word here,  
Will make this world a better place  
And brighten many a troubled face.

Too often we are wont to believe  
That life is just a time to grieve.  
Better, far, to spread good cheer  
And make life brighter while we're here.  
He who gets real joy from living  
Is he who takes delight in giving.  
—Betty.

JANUARY 4, 1926

PORCELAIN TUBS

"The modern large city, with its emotional stress, its social complexity, its hothouse coddling, its hectic jazz life, is destructive of happiness and manhood. . . . I want to get away from the shrieking taxicabs, the jazz bands, the jammed street cars, the mad hurly-burly, the stench and the smoke.



Hope Needham

"Metropolitan civilization hasn't a thing worth possessing, or essential to happiness that I cannot find in the woods and its villages, except a few creature comforts like porcelain tubs, steam heat and the like. Why should a man sell out the only life he has to live on earth, the things that make for happiness—health, strength, clean air and water, a simple home life with his family, wholesome neighbors, a bit of leisure to read good books, to go trout fishing, to ramble in the woods in October, to live with trees and flowers and birds and wild creatures—why sell out all this for a porcelain bath tub and a gilded radiator?"

This is a recent fervent exclamation from one of the young American poets, Lew Saret, author of exquisite woodland and Indian poetry in volumes such as "Many, Many Moons," "The Box of God," and "Slow Smoke." He was a picturesque and appealing figure on the campus at Illinois when daddy and I were in college, and we know him to be sincere and human. He knew hard work, and lonesomeness, and poverty, before he won his fame.

Strikes Answering Chord

What he says strikes an answering chord in many of us who love the country. Even though we do not see with poets' eyes; even though we let the dreary grind of daily life blind us to our blessings, there are many of us who would not think of changing our country lives, austere and cramped and primitive though they be, for the nerve-racking activity of the city—permanently.



JANUARY 18, 1926

SCHOOL PROBLEMS

Just the other day I came across an old fable or folk story to this effect: A spider spun himself a thread and dropped from the branch of a tree to a rose bush, where he spun a magnificent palace and lived in ease and luxury for a long time. One day he noticed that old thread, which ran from the very midst of his palace up into the air as far as he could see. "What's this thing for?" he cried contemptuously, and with an angry tug he broke the thread by which he had come to where he was, and his whole palace collapsed.



Hope Needham

That little story might be applied to our little old one-room rural schools. They have been the thread by which we have reached our present state of civilization, and now some people want to wrench them away from the school system because they are faulty. Before we condemn them entirely we should give them credit for the good they have done and may still do. When the rural school system was established, it met conditions that existed. The schools were designed to supplement with book learning the rugged physical life of the pioneers. There was no call for the school to provide physical exercise nor moral uplift, for the daily life took care of the former and the well established churches took care of the latter. As times changed, town conditions altered considerably, and in order to produce well rounded individuals the city schools need to provide physical activities, as well as some training in ethics and social contacts. Unless a town school provides courses in manual crafts of various sorts, as well as gymnasium facilities, the pupils are in danger of becoming physically lazy, for there is nothing in the normal city life to take the place of the old-fashioned, active country chores.

Is a Tragedy

To be physically lazy is a tragedy to any individual. It is a treacherous weakness in any character, and it can easily lead to complete demoralization. I think it is the trait of physical laziness which was allowed to develop in city youth that has led to the so-called "crime wave" among adolescents. Purposeful work, such as chores or handcraft, is the ideal means of developing physical activity; but strenuous sports and gymnasium work are better than nothing at all to keep the children fit.

I believe in consolidated country schools. I do not believe in them because, as is often argued, "our children deserve whatever city children have." Our children already have some advantages which city children can never know until they are grown and responsible for a life-work and a family; especially, the immediate and absolute relation between work and its rewards. I believe in consolidated country schools, most of all for the social contacts they provide. The main things our children need that they

cannot get from daily farm life are teamwork and friendly rivalry with their equals. Not many farm families or one-room schools can supply this need.

As I said, the one-room school was designed to provide merely the mental stimulus to pupils. In that respect it is still the equal of many village schools. In large cities the pupils are carefully graded and tested by mentality and are given training suited to their physical and mental needs. In village schools, so far, not so much progress has been made. The other day I talked to a teacher in a village suburb of Chicago. There are 385 pupils in the school and 10 teachers. Each teacher has charge of nearly 40 pupils! And there is no more music, drawing or vocational work than in rural schools. It appears that in a case of that kind a child is better off in a small rural school, where at least he will get more individual attention. — (Continued tomorrow). — Hope.

JANUARY 19, 1926

A QUESTION OF INDIVIDUALS

As in all other problems, the matter resolves itself into a question of individuals. Given a conscientious teacher, almost any pupil can make a success of school. But in a class of 40 or thereabouts no teacher can hope to meet individual needs. The best she can do is hold the entire class to an average standard. Both the gifted child and the backward child are handicapped.



Hope Needham

The gifted child is likely to get along well in his school work, no matter where he is placed, rural, village or city school. The trouble is that in a large class he is not likely to be busy "to capacity," and he develops bad habits of loafing and has endless chances of getting into mischief. The famous Leopold and Loeb are examples of superior mentality gone wrong; they were not given enough to do. Unless a gifted child can be in a class of his mental equals, he is better off in a rural school with a good teacher than in a village class of average intelligence where the teacher cannot give him individual attention. In a class to himself in the rural school he can at least travel a mental pace proportionate to his abilities. He will lack most in social contacts, but that is something that can be supplied in other ways.

The backward child suffers most from our present system. All his school life he is treated as an "average" child, and if he could get just the right start he probably would be "average." But so many slow children get a wrong start and all through school life they struggle with their lessons; they have that heart-twisting, hunted, baffled look in their eyes whenever they recite; they are terrified at examination time. They are thwarted in every way, and they grow to hate and dread the very name of school.

Should Be Easy

Poor darlings! Learning should be as easy and delightful as picnicking on the hillside. There should be some

And yet there is something in all of us that cries out for the luxuries and softnesses of life. Comfort—and ease—and beauty! Sometimes we would barter our very souls to move among silks and satins, gilded radiators and porcelain tubs, gay people, and all the other blessings which civilization has brought. It is no wonder that country people grow discouraged, when they are starved for all these delectable things.

We love the country, and we love nature; but we need not despise the man-made comforts of life. And we look forward to the time (not so far away) when every country home shall have not only its abundant natural charms, but softly-glowing lights that come like magic at a touch, many gilded radiators, and at least one porcelain tub!—Hope.

JANUARY 15, 1926

BILL'S WIFE

When we get to taking life too seriously, and philosophizing too strenuously, we need a tonic of cheer and humor. Just such a letter as the following one from "Bill's Wife" touches the spot. In the series of discussions of husbands and farm life this sums up the matter pretty fully. It reads as though there is nothing much to it but fun; but it is a good, sound philosophy of life, after all. "Bill's Wife" sees her own faults as well as her husband's; she sees the shortcomings of farm life as well as its advantages; and she winds up by saying, "After all, I'd rather Bill was my husband than the husband of some one else!"



Hope Needham

It sounds frivolous, but it is really as serious as life itself. We might each make up our minds to be satisfied with our own circumstances and improve them by our own efforts; for we would, none of us, be satisfied with anybody else's. And if we find much that is not to our liking, the best place to begin improvement is with ourselves. According to the old negro spiritual, "It ain't my father nor my mother, my sister nor my brother; it's ME, O Lord! that's standin' in the need of prayer!"

Having this old melody on my mind, I must have been singing it unconsciously about the house; for just now I overheard Sonny singing lustily, while he pounded nails in his board, "It ain't my fathah nor my mothah; it's me, O Lo-o-ord! that'th thandin' in the Needham prayah!"—Hope.

MEMORY GEM

"So many gods, so many creeds,  
So many paths that wind and  
wind;  
When just the art of being kind  
Is all this sad world needs."  
—Selected.



FEBRUARY 22, 1926

POVERTY AND THE GREAT

hard climbing, some rough spots, but there should always be the lure and the joy of "getting on," there should be sunshine and romance and feasts of delight.

When I hear a backward child recite in school, trying so desperately to fit into the "average" scheme, it reminds me of—well, let's use a homely farm example. It is like a Mason jar lid which has started on at a wrong slant, and about the second turn it begins to bind and stick and squeak, and no amount of tugging will make it fit into the grooves. We try and try again, and finally, in most cases, if we start it right, the cap winds easily over the grooved path and slips into place to make a perfect seal. But with our children it is harder to go back and try again, and we find many of them stuck at about the second round; and all our tugging and forcing and pushing and twisting, all through their school lives, is not enough to help them over the road; and when they finally "finish school" there is still an awful gap between childhood and normal, intelligent adult life.

When I see a little child being crowded out of so much happiness because he can't follow the beaten path, I feel like saying: "You blessed thing, I can't stand to see you suffer any more. Let's throw all the books and all the schools to the wind, and we'll go outdoors together and play in the sun and the wind, and somewhere, after a while, some way, we'll find your natural way to learn, and we'll help you get your share of all the sweetness and light which civilization has garnered for you!"—Hope.

JANUARY 20, 1926

SELECTING TEACHERS

Speaking one more of schools, I must pass on to you a quotation I have just run across in regard to the importance of selecting teachers for our children. This bit of wisdom is somewhere between two and three hundred years old, I suppose, for it comes from Roger Escham in the time of Queen Elizabeth and Will Shakespeare. It seems to be as sound in principle today as ever:

"It is a pity that commonly more care is had, yea, and that amongst very wise men, to find out rather a cunning man for their horse than a cunning man for their children. They say nay in word, but they do so in deed. For to the one they will gladly give a stipend of 200 crowns and loth to offer to the other 200 shillings. God that sitteth in heaven laugheth their choice to scorn and rewardeth their liberality as it should, for he suffereth them to have a tame and well ordered horse, but wild and unfortunate children, and therefore in the end they find more pleasure in their horse than comfort in their children."—Hope.



Hope Needham

"I look for a storm about Tad's letter," wrote a Household sister, and she was right. The storm has come upon us. Many have pointed out that some of our greatest Americans were members of large families and were very poor—Franklin, Lincoln and all the rest. They have pointed out that these men were self-educated. They have pointed out, too, that Leopold and Loeb were members of small families, and were very rich, and had education thrust upon them.



Hope Needham

It is well to remember that some of our great men and women were well-to-do, and most of our criminals are poor; that many great people were surrounded by intellectual culture from birth, and that many of the criminals went wrong because they didn't have a chance to learn. Considering that there are comparatively few rich families and many, many poor ones, the proportion of greatness is not so different in the two classes. And it is hardly fair to conclude that an education which is planned and provided for is worse than one which is wrung by sacrifice from an untoward environment.

Many a man who has achieved success at the cost of youthful toil and humiliation has said, "God forbid that my children have to work as hard!" And to spare them, he makes their path too soft and rosy. But no one, surely, would go to the other extreme and say, "Poverty makes greatness; therefore I want my children to feel the pinch of want!"

Meeting Obstacles

It is not poverty that makes greatness. It is meeting obstacles. They may be financial, as with many of our great men, or physical as with Roosevelt, or moral or mental or any other sort. But it takes ideals, ambition, vision, perseverance, and love of fellow-man to overcome obstacles; and comparatively few individuals have the character and the strength to win out. For every Lincoln who suffered want and achieved greatness, there are hundreds upon hundreds of common people who suffered want and achieved nothing. For every Loeb and Leopold who had money and went wrong, there are hundreds who are comfortable, happy and good, destined to be mediocre, to be sure, but in place of greatness, let them have some of the joy of life.

Contrast Miss Anne Morgan, the daughter of the financier, with Loeb and Leopold. Having money, education and ability, she voluntarily went into war-ridden France and helped rebuild it. Many of you corn belt farm women have as much executive ability as she; you have the vitality and the vision and courage, but you are limited and restrained by your personal economic needs, and she was not. It is lucky for the world that she was free to take up the work when the need arose.

Seems Cruel

Those who are destined to be great will find their obstacles and surmount

them; but it seems cruel, on the hope of developing greatness in a few, to deprive the many common people of simple physical comforts and enough education to enable them to understand and love their fellow-man. It is a finer ideal to strive to make the bulk of humanity contented and comfortable. The great will find their way in spite of it.

When I was in college there was a Hindu scholar on the campus who had been there eight years, they said, and who aspired to take every course offered in the university. Dressed in dark, conventional clothes except for the great snow-white turban around his head, there was something almost Christ-like in the expression of his bearded face. There was a glow in his dark eyes and a gentleness about the mouth that proved him to be a philosopher, aristocrat and scholar. He was the flower of Hindu culture. He lived in a purely intellectual realm, un-touched by earthly cares. Like the lily, he toiled not, neither did he spin.

Provided an Annual Tribute

It was said that in order for him to live thus untouched by material cares, hundreds of native peasants toiled in the hot fields of his estates in India to provide him annual tribute. They lived in abysmal ignorance, while he, their landlord, aspired to know all. He was not a cruel task-master; he never saw his servants. He was not deliberately climbing to selfish heights at the expense of their bowed backs. He was simply the product of the caste system, which is based on the idea that it is best for no one to aspire to greater heights than his father knew before; that it is best to sacrifice all the laboring castes, if need be, to produce a few fine flowers of pure culture.

That is not the American ideal. We stand for universal education and the breaking down of class barriers. We believe that we can share knowledge and liberty with all and still produce the needed great, fine characters. Our constitution guarantees to every man "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

As some one has aptly remarked, it guarantees the pursuit of happiness, but you have to catch up with it yourself.

MARCH 1, 1926

CHILD VICES

Isn't it strange, when you stop to think of it, that we struggle to eradicate in our children the very characteristics which we most admire in an adult? The "willful, sassy, stubborn" child is a thorn in his parents' flesh, but all the great men of all time are "willful, sassy, stubborn men," though we dignify the words somewhat and say they are "strong-minded, quick-witted, and persevering."



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I'm afraid, if the whole truth were told, we sometimes try to weed out, not vices, but inconveniences, when we train the children. It requires so much of our precious time and thought to plan the training of a child who has individuality. The decorous child is so much less of a problem—while he is small.



He sits quietly when told to do so; he remains clean after being cleaned up; he is amenable and tractable in all ways; he gets on nobody's nerves. But when he is grown he is without ambition or initiative, and, to say the least, he is in very dull company when he is alone. But the normal child, by his very nature, is nerve racking to an adult. He wants noise when the adult wants quiet; he wants play when the adult must work. It is an adroit and ingenious parent who can live amicably with his offspring.

#### Must Meet Ideas With Ideas

A parent must learn to replace an inconvenient game or interest with a convenient one; he must "meet an idea with an idea," and so, without openly warring with childish wants, lead the child, unconsciously, to be a social being.

Look at La Follette, Borah, Woodrow Wilson, Roosevelt—all "willful, sassy, stubborn" men, who never yield an inch while they feel they are in the right. I wonder if they were "irreconcilable" when they were children; I wonder if they were perfectly obnoxious to live with? If you notice, every such great man has gentler charms along with his strength of character; every one has a following of loyal and loving friends. Some way, I believe they attained greatness because their parents were wise enough not to stress the "willful, sassy, stubborn" traits in childhood, as though it were a war to the death between man and child. I believe those parents have quietly cultivated the more affable graces, and let those strong and violent traits "fallow."

MARCH 2, 1926

#### HOUSECLEANING

Just a few weeks ago we were in the dead level of winter. The world was a poster in black and white and gray;

the dawn came without a streak of light, just a slow fading of dark gray into light. But suddenly the sun smiled, the snow melted, the "bottom went out of the roads"; the mailman, who usually dashes merrily by in a fiver at 9 o'clock, came plosh-plosh-ing by with a team and buggy at noon. The sun went away and we were left with ruts and mud-puddles and needles of ice that were undecided to thaw out or freeze a bit more.

Then came rain, incessant rain for hours, drizzling on the sodden black plowed fields and the dead hedges. The wind came up at night and howled desolately. Rain clouds hid the sun in the morning, and suddenly the rain became featherly snow, which blew furiously from the northeast till the whole air was white and the children cried, "Mother Frost is shaking her feather-beds now!" The wet white blanket covered the ugly ground, but sodden pools stained the white cover here and there. There came colder wind, and finer, colder snow. By morning the roads were drifted full, and the sun shone on a brilliantly squeaky-cold world. The snow in the yard lay in hummocks like a colossal meringue.



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#### Looks Like Spring

Now it has thawed again; the snow is all gone but a few scattering streaks in the dead furrows and the hedge-rows. Without a single visible change, something about the landscape "looks" like spring. The very earth seems bursting with energy. The children wonder how soon we can begin to clean the yard and transplant the baby Dorothy Perkins rose and make the soap and clean out the playhouse (which has been abandoned during winter, with all its glorious outfit of broken crockery and leaky tins and soapbox cupboards and ancient brooder stove).

I spend my time restlessly between white-sale catalogs, seed catalogs, paint catalogs and landscape plans. I say to daddy with the annual glitter in my eye, "It's nearly housecleaning time!" and he answers with a resigned look and the usual twinkle, "Yes, it's high time everything was moved around again!"—Hope.

APRIL 2, 1926

#### "WE, THE PEOPLE"

Politics and political questions have never been discussed in our Household, but we are never barred from advocating good, interested citizenship. In Illinois the important primaries come during April and our thinking women are doing their best to post themselves on the candidates to be elected and the issues to be decided.

"We, the people," constitute the government; and it is appalling to think that at the last presidential election

only half of the eligible voters bothered to go to the polls. Since a majority of votes cast is sufficient to elect, it is possible for the president himself to be the choice of a little more than one-fourth of the voters. Unless we do our full duty as citizens at the polls, we have no right to complain of government in any way.

It is hard to come to a fair and just decision on any matter to be voted upon. We have to depend upon hearsay or upon some one else's judgment for many of our decisions, and both sources may be unreliable or prejudiced. Many times, no doubt, our decisions would be reversed if we could know all the facts. But imperfect though it be, our judgment is surely as good, and our vote worth as much, as the vote of the hired henchman who does the boss' bidding at the polls. Our votes are needed to balance such evil influences.

#### The Canvasser Helps

The other day a man canvassed our neighborhood asking every one to vote on several important political questions. On one of them I said: "I don't know whether to say yes or no to this." "Everybody's votin' no to that one, lady," said the canvasser, cheerfully. "But the question is worded so that whether I say yes or no, my vote may be misinterpreted." "Oh, it don't matter, lady; either one will do!" was his reply. He seemed surprised that I took the matter so seriously. Finally he apparently thought of an argument which he had heard used by some one else, and said, "Who do you think is gettin' up this bill, anyway—the rich



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folks or the poor folks?" I said, "Neither. I think it is the women. And their ideals and their motives are right. The only question is whether the details are practical and fair, as they mean to have them be." He looked hopeless, but rather than try to argue with such an unreasonable creature, he rejoined: "I don't know nothing about it, lady. Smarter men than me got up these questions!"

"Smarter men than me" get up most of the questions on which we have to vote. But I propose to do my own thinking as well as I am able and vote according to my conscience and not according to how the rest of the people are voting—don't you?—Hope.

MARCH 26, 1926

#### SONNY'S BIRTHDAY

Today is sonny-boy's birthday; he is 4 years old. He is right when he says he isn't a baby any more. And a house without a baby is a lonesome place. I'll have to count on all Householders with new little ones to keep me in touch with babyhood. Jim's Wife of Iowa has a new one—that makes two boys and two girls for her. I hope she will write me a lot about the babies.

Since Daddy-Jim has to be away and we can't have a family dinner, the boys will take the birthday cake to school and share it with the children there. I'm going down, too, to hear all the arithmetic lessons; so it will be a big day.

Sonny has a real name, poor dear! but he seldom hears it. I am afraid he will grow up somewhat distorted in his letters, for when the children sort out the stockings, R stands for Ruth, W for Wilbert, but E stands for Thonny.

A night or two ago the children stayed up late (8 o'clock) and enjoyed an evening with daddy while mother went down to Sunrise to the play, the last number on our home talent "lyceum course." The early evening seems to have been spent in college songs, the vociferous type of music being the favorite just now. The air has been full of "Oskey-wow-wow" and "We're loyal to you, Illinois," ever since. To top off a restful evening, they had stories of wild animals—a singular bed time topic? Brother-boy tells me that daddy told them all about porky pines, laughing halloweenas and striped Hebrews. It sounds just like Little Jane's Adventures to me!



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#### MEMORY GEM

Expect some good today and it will come,  
As surely as supply succeeds demand.  
Expect some good today and it will seem  
A blessing in your outstretched hand.  
Expect perfection, happiness and peace,  
With eagerness, with faith sincere and true,  
And ere the day is gone some good  
Will come to you.

—Selected.



MARCH 30, 1926

A DAY OUTDOORS

The first spring day! The first whole day of sunshine and warm soft wind after a spotty and gloomy winter! The boys and I spent the afternoon together out of doors. We raked a section of the yard, hauled some trash in the little wagon, and had a bonfire. We walked around the garden and found the rhubarb just beginning to swell through the ground, all curly and red. The winter onions had valiently tried to grow and apparently had been discouraged several times, but they show up bravely green, nevertheless.



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On the baby Dorothy Perkins rose we found tiny red buds getting ready to grow. The other roses are on the verge of drawing a breath of life, the iris clumps are pushing their blunt green way through the ground, and the buds of the three-year-old lilac are swelling till they are like to burst. We couldn't find a trace of the crocus, though we hunted a long while, nor of the peonies, either. We found a bird's nest caught in the raspberry bushes, apparently blown out of the gnarled old hackberry tree.

Raid Lumber Pile

When the passive enjoyment of the beauties of nature began to pall, as it sometimes seems to do on masculine minds, the boys and I raided the lumber pile and found some packing crates and boxes. Now, for mother undertaking any sort of "manual training" is like venturing into uncharted seas; but we mothers have to venture much! So we got our hammers and made two very presentable garden seats from the crates in which the sink and wash basin were shipped. It only required the inserting of a few nails, but we feel all the glow of creation! Then on another crate we nailed broad, thin boards and made a table. "Oh, sighed the impractical feminine member of the party when it was done, "what a charming tea-table!" "Why, mother!" answered the practical masculine two-thirds in astonishment, "it's a carpenter's bench!" And as Ruth remarked when she came home from school, with the judicial logic which she inherits from her daddy, "Well, it is really better so; because they couldn't have tea parties much of the time, but, using it for a bench, they'll remember not to pound things on the dining room table any more!"

So the three of them are pounding nails in and out of boards and making a new sand box, while I write to you, and daddy has promised us some red barn paint to "beautify" with tomorrow.

Ruth says she saw three bees today!  
Hope.

MEMORY GEM

Oh, be not the first to discover  
The blot on the name of a friend,  
Or the flaw in the faith of a lover  
Whose heart may prove true in  
the end. —Selected.

APRIL 10, 1926

LIFTING THE ROCKS

"Too many parents are worrying and overburdening themselves to lift all the rocks out of the children's road of life instead of training the children to be able to clear their own roads, fight their own battles and make their own way, writes a mother, apropos of Tad's letter of a while ago. "So much self-sacrifice for children seems to me a great loss: a selfishness, for the children would get so much more from a mother who kept interests of her own," writes another. "The primary object of life is not self-sacrifice, but self-fulfillment."



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This lifting the rocks is the big task of parenthood. There are so many kinds of rocks in the path of life, and some of them need to be lifted. The question is which ones should be lifted. If we strive mainly to lift financial rocks and provide material comforts, we may not be doing our children the service we intend. For it is a peculiar attribute of money that it brings most satisfaction to him who has earned it.

But there are character rocks to lift. We can, with what meager knowledge and poor ability we have, try to lessen the frailties and faults which our children inherited from us and protect them from our mistakes. We can never lift aside all such rocks, for personality is a mysterious compound of impulses, cravings and ambitions, and it is so hedged and walled about by reserve that we never know our children well enough to protect them altogether.

Must Lift for Themselves

Then there are achievement rocks. Most of these the children must lift for themselves, but we must pick the rocks which are adjusted to their strength, and we must be ready to help them until they learn to help themselves.

Whenever we talk of lifting these rocks we talk of self-sacrifice and self-fulfillment. But nobody knows what those words mean. We interpret them differently. Sometimes I think self-development is only achieved through much apparent self-sacrifice. Sometimes "self-fulfillment" is only an excuse to cut loose from irksome ties and responsibilities. But most of us agree that there is in the average life a line beyond which self-sacrifice should not go, for the good of all individuals concerned. Each of us must find his own line. In discussing such a question we understand each other so. We seem to speak the same language, but with a different accent.

"Scotland's a-Burning"

It reminds me of a story Grandmother Kate used to tell of her childhood. At one of the neighborhood parties the game of "Scotland's a-burning" was being played. Grandmother Kate, standing next to a carpet-topped, raw-boned maiden afflicted with a heavy cold, modeled her singing after her neighbor and caroled trustfully in a clear, treble voice, "Scotland's a bird-egg!" All she got for her sincere expression of the music as she under-

stood it was a glare from carrot-top and snickers from the rest of the crowd, and her mother ushered her hastily into a back room for explanations.

It is the same way when we talk of child training. We are all trying to do our best and give our children the best, but when we try to put our motives into words, it seems as though part of us sing "Scotland's a-burning;" and the rest sing "Scotland's a bird-egg!" and then we glare at each other, but it is all the same song.

And I suppose we'll go on singing the same song, with different accents to the end of time.

APRIL 24, 1926

POND LILIES AND DEW

When we talk of housework schedules, we do so with the typical American admiration of efficiency. We concede the logic of a schedule, we admit the value of orderly systems. Some of us get a thrill out of following a schedule, but some of us, admiring the theory, still strain against the leashes. Most of us have felt the craving to do something not on the plan. It is like the incident in the following letter, where a bride wept because she



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had to do dishes when she wanted to see the pond lilies while the dew was still on them. She solved her problem the next day by abandoning the dishes and going to the lilies while they were still fresh with morning dew. "And I've always been glad I did," she says. "I shall never forget the picture and I've entirely forgotten the pattern on the cups and saucers."

The incident is symbolic of much that happens in all of our lives. In the pressure of the need for making a living or caring for a family, too often we repress the longing to enjoy the pond lilies. We force ourselves to stay with the cups and saucers, thinking that later will be time enough for the coveted pleasure. But sometimes, when we wait too long, the dew is gone and we miss the fine spiritual savor that might have uplifted us and eased our burdens along the way.

Could Not Sleep

One hot summer night when Margie Ruth was about three, she was restless and uncomfortable in her little bed. Instead of falling asleep at the scheduled time, she tossed and turned, asked for a drink, and finally whimpered, "Mother, can't I get up a little while?" Now, I had determined to raise my baby according to the best of rules, and I knew that regularity was one of the cardinal virtues; but some way that night the impulse to break over the rule came to me, and I lifted the child and carried her out with me into the big, dark yard, where the lightest of breezes touched us softly, and the mildest of sweet odors soothed us, and the faint country night noises murmured around us. The velvety, star-sprinkled sky spread far and cool above us; and the spirit of rest brooded over us. Margie Ruth drew a deep breath of wonder at the magnificence and strangeness of night. She seemed



to feel, as I did, a strange expanding or communion of the spirit. She clasped her little hand in mine, and with a contented sigh she cuddled against me and in a few minutes her soft, even breathing showed she was asleep.

#### Had More Confidence

Some way, I have always felt that the sympathy between us was greater and her confidence in me was firmer because I took her out into that beautiful, restful night, instead of insisting on the letter of the law. Discipline is a valuable, an indispensable thing, but some things are bigger and more important than discipline.

Every one ought sometimes—not too often—to abandon the duty of the moment and take time to look at the spiritual pond lilies of life before the dew is off. And there is no denying that a consistent schedule will keep a person in shape to seize the opportunities for these beautiful, immaterial things whenever they come up.

MAY 28, 1926

#### GRADUATION

At this time of year it is usually hard to tear rural people away from their work for community meetings.

But there is one function which never fails to fill the hall. That is the eighth grade graduation. Last night the 10 rural schools of our township held their joint exercises at Sunrise community hall. The house was packed to overflowing. Friends and neighbors and proud parents entered into the jolly, festive spirit of the children's



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program of songs, drills, dialogues and pantomimes. Then came the solemn time, so momentous to the graduates, when the superintendent of schools publicly commended them for their achievements and presented them with diplomas in recognition of the fact that they had successfully finished one of the first great tasks of their lives.

Other pupils who had won commendation by perfect attendance, extra reading and other endeavors, were presented with suitable awards and certificates, and the meeting closed on a note of good fellowship, mutual affection and respect. Home and school and community for the time were united in a common bond, the desire for the welfare and progress of the children.

Within a few days countless communities will gather on the hillsides and prairies of America in another sort of fellowship, just as effective. Instead of looking to the present and the future, they will pause a little while in memory of the past. On Memorial day we will be bound together in recognition of our human heritage of sorrow and inevitable parting. And in remembering the courage and nobility and fortitude of those who have gone before, we will gain strength and faith to go into the future.

Whether happy or sad, emotional contact with our kind, above the level of the commonplace, is wholesome and uplifting. By such contacts our souls expand.—Hope.

JULY 6, 1926

#### DAD'S DAY

The official national Father's day has come and gone without any observance on the part of the Household. As so often happens, dad has been pushed into the background in the pressure of other matters. Some one facetiously remarked that having Father's day would make the presentation of neckties a semi-annual affair for father instead of just a Christmas event. Giving a necktie seems to be the American woman's inadequate and inarticulate method of expressing love and appreciation to her menfolks. But, homely as the gift may be, any dad who wakes up some day and finds an assortment of neckties from his family will understand without words that the family is trying to express thanks for the patience, persistence and unswerving loyalty of the "head of the house." The gift will touch his heart as much, and probably embarrass him less, than a rush of words.

Today, in honor of Dad's day, we turn over most of the space to contributions from men. It will do them good to express themselves, and it will do us good to get their points of view.—Hope.



Hope Needham

JULY 10, 1926

#### TEACHING MODERATION

"It is more important to teach our young people to be moderate in all things than to surround them with prohibitions." So says a good household friend, whose letter follows. She strikes the keynote of keeping control of the adolescent child. "Old men for counsel, young men for action," is as true now as it ever was. We cannot hope to repress our young people with "Thou-shalt-nots." It is natural and inevitable that they should be active, alert, up and doing. We must not try to curb this activity, only try to guide it and keep it within proper and sensible bounds.

It is natural for them to "run with the pack." We must not try to isolate them or make them too different from the folks their age with whom they must associate. It is the duty of every parent to set restraints and limits on the children, for the sake of their health and welfare, but for every "Thou shalt not" let's try to provide a "This you may do." If we object to dancing, cards, smoking, parties, extreme styles, let's provide some wholesome amusement in their stead. Or, let's permit certain kinds of parties and dancing under certain supervision and restriction. "Teach them to be moderate in all things, rather than surround them with prohibitions."



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AUGUST 4, 1926

#### WHY TIN CANS?

Why it is that so many people believe that a farm woman, to fulfill her duty, must continue to be as primitive as possible, work as hard as her great-grandmother with little more equipment, and be content to see her city sister freed from all physical sports, one by one, through the help of commercial processes and improved home machinery?

Once upon a time, not many months ago, I went into a grocery to buy supplies for thrashing. It happened to be a busy time, and the crew was coming a day or two earlier than we had expected. Among other things, I bought baker's bread. A friend of mine happened to be in store at the same time. She was astonished at my unseemly act. "Baker's bread—and you live in the country!" she said. She is a woman who lives in town. She never bakes bread. Neither does she can fruit or vegetables or raise chickens or feed hired men or do her laundry. Why would she be so amazed that I, who do all of those things to some extent, should buy baker's bread when it suited my plans better than to bake it myself? Are all town women Marys, free to sit at the Master's feet, and all country women Marthas, obliged forever to fret over house and food?

#### Take Duties Seriously

The majority of country women, I believe, take their duties as seriously as any other class of women and are anxious to do their share of the world's work. Since no human being can do everything, I believe the country women should be allowed to choose that work they can do from among the many opportunities before them, with no questions asked. If a woman tends the house and a family of little children, and feels that she has not strength enough to go beyond three things, let her do them well and not try to tend a garden and raise chickens and mow the yard. If her children are older, and if she has strength enough, let her take on as many of the other duties as she can successfully handle. If she can do all the family sewing and mending, washing and ironing, churning and baking, and still have a little time to read and rest, still be able to smile at husband and children instead of nagging at them—all honor to her. But why, just because she lives in the country, should it be assumed that a woman has extraordinary physical strength and ability to manage?

I have known a town woman who would faint if her fond husband unexpectedly sent her out a bushel of peaches to put up. She would have to cancel all engagements for the day and perhaps have husband help with the peeling in order to take care of them. I have known country women who could run that much extra work in between the routine chores, without turning a hair. I have known women who were almost exhausted in caring for their two children—no baking, no washing, no ironing, no fuel to carry, no outdoor chores to do, no canning, no window washing, no heavy cleaning. I have known others who raised



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families of as many as 11 children, cheerfully and efficiently, including all these other duties, with the care of the little ones.

#### Gives Pertinent Answer

The whole question came strongly to me recently, when a Household friend sent in a clipping which will be quoted later in the column today. It is an editorial by an honest and eminent minister, who is surprised and grieved to find that tin cans repose on the pantry shelves of corn belt farm houses. He asks, "Why tin cans?" And the Household friend who sent in the clipping has given him some very pertinent answers.

It is true that corn belt farms are fertile. It is true that they will produce great quantities of vegetables or fruits, as well as a variety of grains. We hear much talk of diversified farming, and the most prosperous farmers practice it. But by diversified farming we do not mean that one man tries to raise everything which his land is capable of producing. We mean rather that he selects a variety of projects which are suited to his locality and which will fit together so that the labor, as well as the income, will be more evenly spread over the year. Farm women can usually find time to can what surplus is raised in the garden, but not many can take full charge of raising the garden crops. Nor can the men, for the season when the garden needs most attention is the time the corn has to be plowed and the alfalfa put up. To care for a fair-sized garden in an efficient way would require the full-time service of one able-bodied man. On most corn belt farms it will not pay to hire a man just for the garden. It is cheaper to raise what can be raised with the combined help of the family, for summer use, canning just the surplus (which will vary from year to year, according to the kind of season), and buy the balance of what is needed for winter food. An orchard or a berry patch requires considerable work. Some of it can be done at slack times; some cannot. The farmers themselves are the best judge of whether it pays to neglect other things for the sake of raising more fruit. A farmer's wife might make more by raising poultry than by tending garden. Every family will need to figure it out for itself.

#### Seems Waste of Energy

It always seems a waste of energy to can what can be kept satisfactorily without. Some vegetables can be salted down or dried with less trouble than canning. Some can be wrapped in paper or packed in sand or wet leaves or dirt and kept fresh far into the winter. It seems unwise to can vegetables which require an undue amount of labor, or which can be more efficiently cared for commercially. Peas, for instance, are a tedious crop to can at home. There must be several pickings, for one thing; whereas, commercially, the plant and all is pulled by machinery at one time; the peas are podded and graded by machinery and canned with much less bother than at home, and at a very reasonable price to the consumer. The same principle holds good in regard to buying ready-made garments. Such standardized garments as men's night-wear, shirts and union suits are made so efficiently and in such quantities that only a few cents can be saved on each one by making them at home. It is up to a woman to decide how much her time is worth and use it to the best advantage.

After all, it is not merely how much work a woman does that will measure her worth to her family and her friends. It is how much work she can do while she keeps up the morale of

the family. Being gifted with less physical strength than the men, they must balance the ledger by providing other qualities, such as tranquillity, neatness, confidence and good humor.—Hope.

AUGUST 6, 1926

### COMMUNITY THRIFT

"If you want a thing well done, do it yourself." This is an old and true maxim, and one that applies as well to communities as to individuals. One of the biggest jobs a community has to do is to provide education for its young people, and the more of this education that can be given right in the community the better for all concerned.

By this I mean that nearly every community can and should provide facilities for a high school education, so that its young people need not be sent far away from home to school at such an early age. Every time I go past the high school in our town, which is ten miles from home and see the dozens of student cars lined up along the street, I have the profound hope that somehow before our children are old enough to go to high school we can have one nearer home, right out in our own community in the open country, where the surroundings are pure and wholesome and beautiful.

#### Went Ten Miles to School

To be sure, I went ten miles from home to a town high school twenty years ago, and I don't know that I suffered any serious consequences from it. But times have changed a lot in twenty years, and the young people of today have a lot of freedom and do a lot of things that were not even dreamed of then. While I think it is true that the young people now are no worse than they were then, certainly they have more temptations to meet, and have greater need for good home influence than ever before. When I went to high school it would hardly have been considered proper for the principal to frequent poolrooms up town and swagger down the street putting a cigar, but such things now seem to add to his popularity. To my mind there is no worse institution in our little cities today than the poolrooms, and I would like to have my children go through high school out here where they are not in close contact with those demoralizing agencies.

There is an ever increasing demand for good schools. Here in Illinois there are 64 new school buildings, being built this year. These are either township or community schools. Many of these, of course, are located in towns of some size, while a fair sprinkling of them will serve very largely rural communities.

#### Spend Too Much Money

One thing that holds many communities back from the building of community high schools is the amount of money that is being spent for many of them. One town of about 4,000 people is spending \$300,000 on a new school building, and it is reported that one town of 17,000 population is planning to spend a million dollars on a



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high school plant. Unless these communities have a very unusual source of income, it looks as though they would be saddled with a school debt for many years to come. And the fact is that their children will not get any better preparation than they would in schools that would only cost one-fourth as much.

The tendency seems to be growing to make our high schools more and more elaborate as to architecture and equipment until many of these new buildings would do credit to a college or university. But in a great many of them the pupils are no better prepared for college or for life work than they were a quarter of a century ago, when the schools and equipment and curricula were much less pretentious.

#### Not Necessary

It is not the purpose of this discussion to say why this is true, but the fact to be remembered is that elaborate and costly buildings and equipment are not necessary for good high schools. In any school the teacher is the most important factor. A good teacher with modest or even meager equipment will do better than a mediocre teacher with the finest equipment. Let us come down to earth again in our school building program, and then let us have these schools scattered throughout the country so they are readily accessible to our country children and are surrounded by the influences that we want our children to have.

There are notable examples of this kind of school to be found in every part of the corn belt. Here in Illinois there is none more famous than the John Swaney school in Putnam county. For a quarter of a century or so it has been there, a pioneer in the field, a modern, complete, accredited high school right out in the open country, two miles from any town, in one of the prettiest spots in that part of the state. It not only provides high school instruction for the children of that community and for others who come from a distance and pay tuition, but it has become a social center for the community. Athletic contests, amateur dramatics, literary programs and social events all center at the school. Practical instruction in agriculture and household science is given the pupils and institute and farm bureau meetings held at the school attract the older people and stimulate progress in their work.

#### Good Cannot Be Estimated

It is impossible to estimate the good that such a school does in a community. The leaders in thought and action in our business, professional and political life are going to come from the farm as they have done in the past, provided we can give them the right kind of training there. But if we allow them to be lured to the city at an early age, before they are old enough or experienced enough to have some perspective of life, their foundation of training will not be as solid nor their vision as broad as the biggest things in life are going to demand. And our young people will be and are being lured to the city wherever there is nothing adequate provided at home to interest them and fill their leisure hours.

So there is no more important item in a program of real community thrift than the item of education. Educate the children as near at home as possible until they are through high school. Surround them with favorable influences, occupy their time with the things that are interesting, let the parents know and take an interest in whatever the children do, and they need have little fear that the children will be demoralized if they go away to college.—Daddy of Illinois.



OCTOBER 5, 1926

SCHOOL DAYS

There has been many an argument presented in favor of consolidated rural schools for the children's sake. One

might be given for the teachers' sake. A consolidated school gives them a chance to come in contact with other adults a bit at the noon hour and recess. In the one-room schools the teacher is all day long under pressure, with the children making constant demands on resourcefulness and patience. It must be lonely many a day for these teachers,



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and I have never found one who did not welcome an interested visitor at any time of day.

Following a resolve to visit our school every month this year, the boys and I went down on Friday afternoon at the end of the third week of the session, taking Ruth's birthday cake with us for a surprise. We are proud of our school, even if it is a little old, one-room building. It is shiny white with new paint and it stands in a big grassy yard, in a group of maple trees so big that the two largest children in school can't reach around some of them. Our children are the third generation of the family to "get their bearings" in the same old building.

Gave Place a Cleaning

Three weeks ago the neighbors got together one morning when no one could thresh and gave the place a rousing cleaning. While the women scrubbed and polished the men mowed the lawn and trimmed the trees, and after our picnic dinner in the shady yard we left it immaculate, with that delicious soapy-watery clean smell that is sweeter to a woman in housecleaning season than all the perfumes of Arabia.

We left it immaculate but very, very bare. When we went down Friday we were surprised at the difference three weeks had made. The school was a busy, live community; a regular hive of activity. Tinted tissue paper curtains at the windows and bright-colored "busy work" of the beginners cheered and adorned the room. The row of wraps near the door, the shelf of shining dinner pails, the row of towels and cups near the water cooler and basin, all gave evidence of friendly habitation. Most striking of all was the new sandtable at the center front of the room.

Arrived at Recess

We arrived just as school was dismissed for recess, and at once all the nine pupils dashed up to call my attention to this new plaything and the things they had done with it. It was divided by a cardboard partition into two equal parts. In one the girls had built a park; in the other the boys had laid out a farm. Even the seventh-graders were bubbling over with naive delight in the achievement. Everything was complete in miniature: swings, tables, benches and a fountain in the park; paper buildings and fences in the farm. There was even a pretentious cardboard entrance gate to the park, and a large pebble monument memorial to the soldier boys. The boys had some wheat growing in their farm,

and it stood almost seven inches high, spindly and pale, but still growing and green, towering far above the windmill. Next week they are going to tear up the park and the farm and set up a village. Every one has his special buildings to do, and there is a fine feeling of co-operation. It set me wondering, seeing them so thrilled with what many folks would call a baby's toy, whether we are starving our rural children on the equipment question.

There is nothing at all at our school (and it is not much different from others hereabouts) which could be listed as playground equipment except a ball and bat and a tennis racket. Of course that provides amply for scrub baseball and Andy-I-over, the two stand-bys of country schools since ancient times, and the tennis racket introduces a more modern diversion, perhaps peculiar to our own school, known as "bat-up-flies."

Lack Amusement Equipment

Then there are the many games which need no equipment—cheese-it, hide-and-seek, tag, and so on. And for muscular practice, there is the fence to walk when teacher is busy. But it does not mean that a little simple, inexpensive equipment might add considerably to their joy of play, as well as give the children more well-rounded muscular exercise than walking to school and doing chores can do. A swing or two, a teeter board, and a slide would be in reach of most districts' means.

Where country schools are reasonably large, parent-teachers' associations are thoroughly worth while. Last year we had only three families represented in the school, and we contented ourselves with meeting at programs at the school on Thanksgiving and Christmas, the official school meeting in April, and the cleaning day in the fall. But we have quite a group of youngsters coming on, so that in a year or two we will have quite a school, and we hope by then to have a regularly organized association. If it seems that we have too many organizations already, we can at least plan to meet at the school for special occasions, to show the teacher and the children that we are all co-operating. —Hope.

OCTOBER 11, 1926

HARVEST HOME

In spite of two months of rainy weather; in spite of the fact that the threshing is still one-half done, and

the silos not filled, and the wheat not in, and no prospect of getting the work done on account of the water logged ground—in spite of all these adverse circumstances, Sunrise, on the last day of September, held its second annual harvest home. It is a genuine all-community affair, for the church, the boosters and the farm bureau co-operated to make it so.



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The nine one-room schools of the township contributed exhibits, and all schools were dismissed for the day. The girls' 4-H club also exhibited summer's work, and held their achievement day in connection with the program. The crowd was not as large as it would have been in good weather, but no one was downhearted, and it

was a cheerful day for all.

Rain spoiled most of the sports in the morning, except the horseshoe tournament between men of the three teams—church, boosters and farm bureau. The respective colors of the teams were white, blue and red. Many of the rooters were obliged to wear small flags, being loyal to all three. The big picnic dinner was followed by some rollicking community singing, led by the preacher. Then the girls' club gave us their program, and then, having word that the speaker of the day was having trouble with the roads, we filled in an interval with more singing until he arrived. His talk was a good, solid one on the proposed revenue amendment to the Illinois state constitution. Our people were already well informed on the matter, and they listened with great interest to Mr. Cowles' discussion. Farmers as a class take their citizenship more seriously than some folks, perhaps because they feel government more keenly than others. Taxes, especially, are a very real and tangible thing with a farmer!

Came Back in the Evening

After the speaking and the open forum following, the crowd dispersed for a little while. All who could be spared from chores stayed at the community hall to visit and have supper; the rest dashed home for the evening work and came back for the evening. Music, a local talent program, and moving pictures were the order of the day. During the evening it was decided to make the harvest home an annual affair, with the pastor of Hope-well church, the president of the Community Boosters and the director of the local farm bureau a permanent committee in charge.

An element of sadness entered into the closing minutes of the meeting, for it was the farewell appearance of our pastor, who is going to a new charge this year. We closed the day by singing "Blessed be the tie that binds." And when we stepped out into the open air it seemed an auspicious omen that the stars were shining.

Those stars actually shone that night and the next. We had a day or two of good weather! But rain has descended on us again, and we are once more in gloom.

Are Not Discouraged

During the dinner some one chanced to remark, in connection with a discussion of the Miami hurricane sufferers, "Those crazy people! Why do they go right back and rebuild on the same spot, when they know that every so often another flood will come?" "Yes," some one else remarked; "they do it every time. An earthquake knocks the ground from under the Japanese, and they go back and build over the cracks. Fire and earthquake destroy San Francisco, and they rebuild as fast as they can, and even deny they had an earthquake. Mount Vesuvius has an eruption and buries cities, but as soon as the lava cools, back come the survivors and camp there at the foot again." "Well, take Shawneetown," some one else pointed out. "That's a little Illinois village on the banks of the river; has been there since Indian days, practically walled in on all sides for protection from water. Every so often the walls break, the town is flooded, folks run for their lives; and when the water subsides they go right back to the same spot, fix up the walls and go on living."

"They haven't, any of them, got a thing on the farmer, though," some one else contributed. "He takes hard knocks of one sort or another every season, and comes back for more. Doesn't have sense enough to quit. Never knows when he's licked. But, somehow," he added, in the general



laugh that followed, "I think more of him than if he quit!"

That's just it! It isn't lack of sense, and it isn't just obstinacy, that makes human beings go back and try again and again until they conquer nature. It is some of the finest and strongest traits within them that call on them to go back till they win; loyalty, stability, patience and courage!

#### Another Home-Coming

While we are talking of harvest homes and home-comings, it will be interesting to mention a case in our neighboring township. St. Andrew's church over there is to celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary during the month of October. This is a real "open country" church, the only one of its kind in the Episcopal diocese of Chicago. It marks the place of a vanished settlement and early educational center. Today it occupies a commanding position on the highest point in the Illinois valley, and in the midst of a farming community.

Seventy-five years would not seem long in the east, where the Puritan and Quaker settlements date back 150 to 200 years or more, but in the corn belt 75 years of continuous organization is worthy of note. The stones in St. Andrew's cemetery date back 100 years, though the church parish has only been organized 75. In the early forties the people, who mostly emigrated from the east, came into contact with Bishop Case and received the occasional ministrations of the "church on horseback." In 1850, 10 acres of land was given by a loyal settler for the building of a church. In 1851 the parish was organized and a year later was admitted into union with the convention. The original frame building (seating capacity, 100) was replaced in 1908 by a larger, attractive brick one. The old rectory has been repaired and remodeled and now serves as a community center.

#### Served 45 Years

Originally the parish had a resident minister, and it is interesting to know that out of the 75 years' history, 45 consecutive years were under the ministry of one man, Rev. H. T. Hiester. Since his death, in 1906, the parish has been served from ministers of large towns near by.

Early pioneer life endured many hardships. And the church has passed through many vicissitudes. American rural life has sometimes drifted away from the church, but in recent years there has been an awakening. The people of St. Andrew's are to be congratulated on their years of service in the community. It is a record to be proud of.—Hope.

OCTOBER 15, 1926

#### ON VOTING

"Of course, I know I ought to vote, and to many I may seem silly, but I just have a horror of doing the wrong thing, and I hate to go down to the polling place and begin," writes Stay-at-Home from Illinois. "Frankly, I don't know the etiquette of voting, and the thought of it gives me the same sinking feeling I have when there are too many forks on the table at a function."

The etiquette of metropolitan voting is an unsolved mystery to me.



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but the rural style is quite easy to acquire. Since you are from Illinois, our system will probably be the same as yours. When you approach the polling place, you will be accosted, no doubt, by one or more volunteer bureaus of information, who will offer you marked ballots to guide you in your voting. It is good form to listen to what they have to say, if you have not studied up on the matter, and to accept their marked ballots. You are allowed to carry these ballots into the voting booth with you. If the zealous worker convinced you that he knew what he was talking about, mark your ballot like the one he gave you, but if he did not, you have the privilege of marking all the opposing candidates.

#### Is Quite Simple

But first you must get into the booth. Our voting is done in a little town hall, just as yours, probably. You should sweep regally into the room, as though this were all old stuff to you, and quite a bore; meanwhile, cast your eagle eye about until you spot a table with six men grouped informally about it. There's bound to be a table, because three of the men are clerks and they must have copy-books to write in. The other three are judges, and they resemble the landed aristocracy in that they have very little to do till evening. Part of the six will be in their shirt sleeves, part will be chewing gum, and most all of them will be tilted back in their chairs in luxurious comfort until you approach. It is a political custom.

If you have lived long in the community, you will probably know them all, but you needn't admit it unless you feel like it. When you come close to the table, three of the men will straighten up and hold pens poised over copy-books as though about to begin work; one will simply stare at you, one will begin to put his initials on a folded ballot, and the sixth will ask you your name. Take the ballot, noticing carefully how it is folded, and then look about you for some small cubby-holes with curtains at the front, known as voting booths. Step into one of them which is not already occupied, as it is against the rules of the game, as well as being somewhat crowded, for more than one to use the same booth at the same time. You will find pencil attached to strong string, and a table about chest high on which to spread out your ballot. Usually most of the ballot has to hang over the edge. No doubt you will drop several small sheets of paper to the floor, and you should pick these up and read them, for they are ballots on special questions, such as the tax amendment, and so on.

#### May Simplify the Work

If you want to hasten the ordeal, when you open your ballot look for the name of the party to which you belong and put a big X in the black party circle alongside. But if you want to be a real woman, you will "split the ticket." That doesn't mean that you tear off part of it, but that you leave the party circle empty and put little X's in all the squares you pick out as you go down the list of candidates. The practice of splitting tickets seems to be very popular with women, for they seem to want to vote for a man or a principle rather than a party. It has made them rather unpopular with the professional politicians, as well as with the judges and clerks, who have to count the votes. However, if you make an effort not to look guilty when you come out of the booth they will never know until it's too late.

When you have marked up the proper number of X's, fold the ballot carefully just as it was given to you;

then, if it is wrong, it's not your fault. Take it back to the man who gave it to you, and he will announce formally that "Amaryllis Jones has voted." The three clerks studiously write it on their lists. One may spell it Emerillis and one Ammarrillis, but that's their business, and your vote is safely cast. You do not need to linger to tell them you enjoyed the party, but may walk out at once and either visit a while with the neighbors outside or go back home and finish up the sweeping.

#### Can Carry It Off Airily

It's not at all difficult, and after a little practice one gets to carry it off with quite an air. And it really disturbs the board very little, as they are tilted back comfortably again before you reach the door.

I forgot to say that candidates will sometimes have boxes of chocolates to pass to the lady voters. It is considered very shrewd to accept a little from each, as it will artfully conceal your political prejudices.

But, to be serious, you ought to vote. It will only be formidable once, and even if you vote unwisely, that is better than not voting at all. You will never learn to swim if you resolve to stay away from the water till you learn how.—Hope.

OCTOBER 17, 1925

#### HOPE TO AUNT HOPE

They say a woman always insists on having the last word. I am even worse than that, for I take both the first and the last.

A good letter from "Aunt Hope" on child training follows these paragraphs, but I am preceding it with my answer. It all hinges on the old saying, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," which "Ruth Vernon," a modern young mother, denounced in this column not so long ago. Aunt Hope answers her argument with the sound doctrine of the older generation. Aunt Hope quotes Scripture to show that it is our duty to "chasten" our children. It seems to me that the whole matter rests on how we interpret the word "chasten." If it means literally using the rod, Aunt Hope is right; if it can be used in a milder sense, Ruth Vernon and I are also right.

Now, I am not one of those ultra-modern mothers who never says "Don't!" to a child. I consider "don't" a very powerful emergency brake. But I do not run a car with the emergency brake on all the time. The more we can avoid the use of "don't" in every day routine, the more powerful the word will be on special occasions.

There is nothing I admire more than a mother who can be severely strict with her children, and yet at the same time, kind and just. That sort of mother builds the strongest of characters. Many of us, however, are stern and strict at the wrong time and the wrong place and are not consistently rigorous at all. I must confess that the only times I have spanked my children have been when I was mad. Literally, plumb irritated and mad and too rushed to take time to think. By the time I cooled down, I could think of much better ways to handle the situa-



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tion than corporal punishment. Don't you think a lot of us are that way? And don't you think it is a dangerous habit to get into of spanking the child impulsively in the heat of anger? For it is a habit that grows, like the scolding and nagging habit. It is likely to drive a child into deceitfulness, rather than to teach him the error of his ways.

**"Chasten"**

If we mean by "chasten" to punish a child by using the natural laws of consequences, then Aunt Hope is right. The younger a child learns to meet disappointments and to recognize the fact that he can not have mother and daddy protect him from life itself, the better off he is. It is punishment enough for him to go without a plaything if he has lost or destroyed it. A spanking will hardly impress the lesson on him more. If he has to give up a coveted trip to town because of rain, which not even mother or daddy can help, a mother can say, "Well, that gives us a chance to paste those pictures in the scrapbooks," but, if the child prefers to make a scene about it, let him go to his room and weep. He will soon come to the philosophical conclusion that he loses more than he gains by rebelling against nature. A nickel or some candy or a glowing promise of some future treat will only aggravate his troubles. If he gets "anything to make him stop crying" he will assume that whenever he can't have what he wants he will get something just as good by stirring up a fuss, and he will likely grow up believing that the world "owes him a living." In such a case as this a mother does not need a rod. All she needs is cheerfulness, gentleness and a little patience. Nature will do the chastening.

Some way, I can not think that the Apostle Paul meant for us to use the rod on these tender little bodies before we had given them a chance to learn the why and wherefore. Later, if they persist in evil, the rod may be the only cure. Paul wrote to the Ephesians (6:4), "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." I think he means for us to be watchful and gentle and tender to the babies, and let the Lord, through the natural laws, be the Chastener. For Paul also wrote to the Ephesians (4:31), "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and railing be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also forgave you."

**OCTOBER 19, 1926**

**TEN YEARS**

The day this is written daddy and I are celebrating our tenth wedding anniversary. Ten years! How long it seems, and yet how short! That autumn day so long ago marked the first break in his family circle and in mine. At our house there were six children, none of whom had yet gone out into the world to seek his fortune. We had never been separated on Thanksgiving or Christmas. We had never known death or sickness or suffering in the



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family group, as far back as we children could remember. Both our parents and three of our grandparents were still living, and we had aunts and uncles and cousins galore. Our life was so normal and contented that when a sister of mine once wrote a story about us, her professor (not knowing it was taken from life) made the comment, "Interesting, but for pity's sake have something HAPPEN!"

Since that autumn day every one of the six children has married and gone away. Only one lives in the same community as the parents; the rest are scattered from Ohio to California. Ten grandchildren have come into the family, but two of the precious souls had to be given up in their infancy. The aged grandparents, still so active and alert on our wedding day, have passed away.

**How Short They Seem!**

How short the years have seemed! So crowded with events, so busy! That autumn, 10 years ago, we were the community newlyweds, and we received our traditional charivari and gave our traditional party. But in a few months another couple was in the limelight, and then another, and another. At first we were the "young married folks," but little by little, as our families began to absorb more of our time and attention, we dropped out of the more active set and newer couples filled our places. It has been so gradual a process that we have hardly realized it; like the man who edged over farther and farther on the log to make room for others, until he suddenly fell off the end. The youngsters who are marrying this year were in the grades 10 years ago! No doubt they class us (as we did folks with families, when we married) as "the old folks."

Ten years gives folks a tremendous education in the business of living. I remember we anticipated that in 10 years we would be so well established in life that we would build our new and permanent home. Well, we have done it; not because we reached the point we had expected, but because Fate played us a trick. We had to build to replace the house that burned.

**Allows One-Half**

The first or second fall we were married, daddy made some computations on paper relative to the profits in a hog project. I remember looking over the figures admiringly, thinking, "How sound and conservative he is! He has provided for every possible contingency, and this 'net profit' is really bound to be larger than he has made it." But when we showed the figures to his mother she smiled and said, "After you have deducted every loss or expense you can think of, just divide the 'net profit' in two, and you will come near to having your actual profit."

I was quite shocked that any one could be so cynical! But that fall, when we shipped in some feeder pigs from Kansas City, by somebody's error a cargo of deadly cholera germs came along. One by one our beautiful pure-bred Berkshires succumbed—little pigs, half-grown shoats and big hogs. It was not many days before we had a horrible funeral pyre to mark the place where that year's profits went up in smoke. Since then I have considered it one of the soundest principles of bookkeeping or budget-making to allow a margin of safety of just one-half the anticipated profit. It is a neat and simple device for avoiding distress; for nine times out of ten a timely little disaster will happen along and knock all your plans edgewise. "Blessed be those who expect little, for they shall not be disappointed."

**Are Just Preliminary**

But, on an average, we haven't had too much of bad luck—and not TOO much of good. It seems as though all these 10 years are just a preliminary. We have our children well started, our house built, and our business on a sound foundation. Now we are ready to begin! Doubtless there could be a lot of moralizing on the significance of the first 10 years, but—

I just called Jim to look this over, saying, "I don't know how to finish it." His frivolous reply was, "Nobody knows yet how it's going to finish!" He spoke a weightier truth than he intended. Ten years is hardly far enough along the path of married life for one to draw profound conclusions on the philosophy of the world. I'll just leave it at this, "We have been married 10 years." And every one of you will supply your own thoughts, sweet or bitter, according to your own experiences. Those who have traveled on beyond our milestone will smile and say, "How much they have yet to learn!" And those who have just been married will cry, "Ten years! An eternity!"—Hope.

**NOVEMBER 6, 1926**

**CLOTHING BUDGETS**

During the summer "Economist" was kind enough to give us a three-year clothing budget for herself. Now comes the request that we take up the question of a clothing budget for a whole family. What proportion of the farm income should go for clothes for the ordinary family? How fast do clothing expenses increase as the child grows older?



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Since our oldest child is only 9, we can't give personal experiences beyond that. Suppose we draw up a sample budget and invite comments on it. Will you please look over the list following and let us know whether you think it would cover the needed clothing for a child, say, 4 to 10 years old? If the amount is too small, how much shall we increase it? If it is large enough, how much can you cut it down by using leftovers, remnants, make-overs, home sewing, and bargains? We make the list, assuming that the child is in "going order"; that is, we are not trying to outfit a child who has nothing, but one who has had all he required the preceding year, and this list is to cover what would need to be bought for him in one calendar year.

**Requirements of the Child**

|                                    |         |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| One good suit of underwear,        |         |
| winter .....                       | \$ 1.50 |
| Two summer union suits.....        | 1.00    |
| Six pair hose at 35 cents.....     | 2.10    |
| Shoes and overshoes for winter.    | 6.75    |
| Shoes and rubbers for summer..     | 6.75    |
| Caps, mittens, ties, ribbons, etc. | 6.00    |
| Coat (for good) .....              | 10.00   |
| Suit or good dress.....            | 10.00   |
| Sweater .....                      | 2.50    |
| Shirts, or common dresses.....     | 3.00    |
| Overalls, or play dresses or       |         |
| knickers .....                     | 5.00    |

\$54.60

In our county our champion in the girls' 4 H club a year ago estimated that a budget of \$80 a year would outfit her for high school. A woman



probably would not require much different than a high school girl. We have had no figures on a man's clothing budget, but if we can work out a fair amount for the other members of the family, Dad can use whatever is left.

If we use the family described in the following letter—mother, father and five children ranging from 9 years to 1½, our tentative clothing budget would total up (allowing the same for both parents): Father and mother, \$160; five children at \$55 each, \$275; total, \$435. However, in a family that size, there would be considerable saving in handing down outgrown clothing from one child to another, especially in the item of good coats and dresses.

How does this figuring compare with what you and your family spend for clothing?—Hope.

NOVEMBER 8, 1926

NOVEMBER

The melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year. The air is wet and heavy on these short, gray, bleak days and the men shiver in their sheepskin coats. We are all burdened with the somber spirit expressed in the well known lines: "The ivy clings to the moldering wall, and at every gust the dead leaves fall," even though our walls are far too few to molder, and the ivy, alas! has never condescended to cling, though I have struggled all summer with it, coaxing, propping, almost leaning upon it—doing everything but paste it up with adhesive tape.



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But intermittently we have those gorgeous golden days so typical of our prairie autumn, neither warm nor cold. The white frost lies heavy in the shadows until noon, when the rising sun has crept up on it imperceptibly and forced it to slink away. By mid-day the air is almost balmy, and we have a few brilliant hours set like a jewel between chill and chill. Suddenly the sun sets, the wind comes up raw, and, without twilight, we have night.

"Go by the pretty road," the children beg when we start to town, and so we wind through timber-land on the crooked old pioneer pathway, reveling in the masses of flaunting color in the groves of oak and walnut, hickory and maple.

Is a Busy Season

It is a busy season. The two months of rain have jammed all the fall work together into these short weeks. Threshing was barely finished by election day. Lots of folks are wanting to shell corn in order to have room for the new crop. Others still have silos to fill and beans to thresh. It is hard to find help enough to man all the crews wanted. Occasionally a little shower throws all the plans askew. Perhaps we have planned to thresh

beans in the morning, to be out of the way of a neighbor who wants to shell corn in the afternoon, to be out of the way of a neighbor who wants to fill silo the next day. Every one goes to bed serene in the belief that two days are well planned. Toward morning every one is waked by a gentle, persistent dripping. And we find that there is just enough rain to spoil the threshing, and no one is quite ready to fill silo or shell corn, so there is great scurrying by every one to put in the morning profitably and locate enough help for the afternoon.

At our house it is elected to grind feed for the cows. At a quarter to 10 the head of the house dashes in. "Can we have dinner at 11? There'll be two extra men. And I wish you would call So-and-So for threshing help right after dinner, and if you can make it, I guess you'll have to get in the car and go to tell Such-and-Such, since they have no phone." And away he dashes to throw another bushel of corn into the grinder, leaving his humble servant feeling as though the house had tumbled around her ears.

Has Its Compensations

Oh, these captains of industry, with their authoritative ways! You know that luxurious feeling of leisure that comes over a housewife when she has expected to have to feed a threshing gang and finds she doesn't? Gone, all gone! Drop all that pick-up work you had hoped to do, stir up the fire, grab a paring knife, get dinner cooking, try the telephone, find the line busy, get in the car and dash up and down the road delivering messages, get back just in time to rescue the cake from charring, and by the skin of your teeth have dinner ready when the men arrive, luckily ten minutes late.

But after dinner there is an extra hour—so what difference has it made? There is such a satisfaction in feeling that every one has a part in getting things done. Loaded racks rumble by and tractors putt-putt in all directions, near and far; some of them from threshing runs, some from fields being plowed. It may be a melancholy time of year, but there are compensations in cheerful achievement and pleasant peace.—Hope.

NOVEMBER 10, 1926

PARENT-TEACHERS' ASS'N

Maple Grove (that's our little one-room school out here at Sunrise) now has a parent-teachers' association. We have only nine pupils in school, but we have 18 members sign up for the parent-teachers' association at the organization meeting. The children and their teacher planned a delightful Halloween program and invited all the patrons of the school to attend, and in the friendly, festive atmosphere of the occasion we organized our club. I can't help but feel that these little clubs centered in our little schools may do as much to solve the problem of



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educating our children and producing good citizens as any of the more expensive methods advocated by various well meaning educators and politicians.

A girl who used to attend Maple Grove, now grown and with children of her own in a neighboring school, told us what their parent-teachers' association had accomplished in its two years of existence. "Our teacher came to me two years ago," she said, "and told me that she was starting her third year in the district and had not seen more than half of the parents of her pupils. It startled me to think that so many of us send our children for eight or nine months of the year, for most of their waking hours, for eight years or more, to a strange place and a strange teacher, and then wonder why we do not have more control over them."

Should Pull Together

Why shouldn't the parents and that teacher get together, be friends, understand each other, pull together—when there is nothing more important to any of us than the welfare of our children? . . . And the interesting thing about it all was, that when we got together, we began at once to notice that the school needed things; it was not the sort of place we really wanted our children to grow up in. If we hadn't started the club and got together and actually visited the building, which might have gone on thinking that whatever was there was plenty good enough, but when we actually saw conditions and had our interest roused, we saw a number of places where we could improve matters and give our children more of what we wanted them to have. . . . Our building is more than a hundred years old, located in a beautiful section of timberland, in a region rich in historic lore. Why shouldn't that school be made to be as big and fine an influence in our children's lives as any million dollar alma mater with gymnasium and pipe organ farther away from home? It will not need to raise the taxes much, either, to make it so; for if we parents meet and play with the children and the teacher, keep the building fresh with paint and in good repair, their memories of their school will be happy ones, and the influence it will have on them will be strong and permanent."

Here is an article by an eastern woman, who is having unusual success in educating children by a system different from the "graded schools." Her ideas may not be acceptable to all of us, but at any rate they are refreshingly interesting and perhaps they will make some of us better satisfied with improving the schools we have, instead of fretting because we can't have better.—Hope.

MEMORY GEM

The clothes line is a rosary  
Of household help and care,  
Each little saint the mother loves  
Is represented there.  
And when across the garden plot  
She walks with thoughtful heed,  
I should not wonder if she told  
Each garment for a bead.  
A stranger passing, I salute  
The household in its wear,  
And smile to think how near of kin  
Are love and toil and prayer.  
—Selected.



# 1927

JANUARY 3, 1927



Address Hope Needham, Household Editor, Drivers Journal. Use one side of paper only. Real name and address must be given, but will not be printed if not desired.

## THE NEW YEAR

When you read this you will have begun the new year. I am writing on the day after Christmas. Perhaps you will watch the old year out with festivities and hilarity; perhaps with a quiet family hour before the fireplace; but if your husking is dragging on like ours, you will observe midnight only with the calm and gentle sleep that comes these strenuous days. The old year will die and the new year will be ushered in, and to us it will be only one more restful night in the continuity of time.



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This Sunday afternoon has been bright and sunny. There is no snow, but moisture has condensed and frozen on every tiniest twig and sprig of vegetation till the world looks white. The heavy rime glowing and glittering on trees and hedges adorns them with the lace-like tracery of old cathedrals. It has been a long, luxurious, drowsy, restful day. The boys are busy with their new toys, Ruth and I are writing you thank-you letters, and daddy is napping on the davenport. All the greeting cards are crowded on the mantel at the feet of the tall red Christmas candles, yours among the many. And before we go farther let me here thank you for the friendly and loyal greetings so many of you sent to me and to the Household. I know I don't deserve the pleasant things you said, but praise is always sweet, and it will help me carry on in the dull times and try to do better in

receiving and sorting and arranging your letters, so that you will be kept in friendly touch with one another and continue to find the Household profitable in both material and spiritual ways.

### Hold Special Services

It is nearly chore time. Daddy will have to rouse himself and go to milk the cows. While he is gone the children and I will have our play-time, only today it will be our "very special own" Christmas service instead. We have held it every Christmas since Sonny was big enough to lift his lusty voice in so-called song. We will cuddle down before the fireplace, and this year we will throw on the fire some "fairy fuel" which makes the flame burn blue (blue for happiness, you know!), and the soft light will flare and fade on the Christmas tree in the corner; and the red candles will throw a mild glimmer over your names and messages on the mantel, till it will almost seem that you are with us, and then we will sing our favorite songs, beginning with "Silent Night." Of course, not one of us can carry a tune, and part of us lisp a little on the words, but it will be a sort of poetry to us, and if we can't do well enough to make the atmosphere solemn, we can at least have a good laugh.

Happy New Year to you all!—Hope.

### MEMORY GEM

Speak a shade more kindly  
Than the year before;  
Pray a little oftener;  
Love a little more;  
Cling a little closer  
To the Father's love;  
Life below shall liker grow  
To the Life above.

—Selected.

JANUARY 17, 1927

## A VISIT TO NEBRASKA

Here is the editor of your Household department snugly settled in a Pullman for the night ride from Illinois

to Nebraska. The children packed their suitcase and moved up to grandma's this afternoon, as delighted over their trip of a quarter-mile as I am of mine of several hundred miles. It was after dark, and a heavy, chilly spring-like rain was falling when daddy took me to the train. As the train speeds on through fog and rain I can see the glimmering lights of villages and farm houses, and I wonder how many of you readers I am passing on the way.



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Later in the night I woke and looked out the window just as we crossed the sluggish Mississippi, choked with ice. At daybreak we were at Council Bluffs, where the rough and rolling country seemed strange, after our level prairies. On through Omaha we went, and reached Lincoln at mid-morning of a delightful, mild and sunny day.

Farming seems to be about the same here as it is at home; lots of corn, lots of wheat, lots of live stock grazing in the fields where the corn has been picked. The landscapes are beautiful in this part of the country, even at this dullest of seasons. The country is rolling enough to be interesting and there is a thrilling spaciousness about it all. I have just talked from the hotel to Miss Mary Ellen Brown, state leader in the extension service, and she urges me to hurry out to the campus, for there is a particularly interesting session going on. So I go by street car out to the edge of town, where the agricultural college is located in a beautiful setting. The larger part of the university is located downtown, but the agricultural college is on a separate tract of land. It is something like our Illinois campus—a big, friendly place, with plenty of room between the buildings and no crowding out of the outspread natural panorama. The older buildings are red brick and the newer ones are cream colored.



### Pays Rich Rewards

It is "Organized Agriculture Week" and all sorts of farm and home organizations unite in the programs. There are interesting programs scheduled for all phases of animal husbandry and dairying and poultry and crops, but no one person can take them all in. So we are limited to the women's home economics section. That meeting is being held in the big new College Activities building. And as the days go by I'll try to tell you a little of what is going on at this big gathering of women. Some of them have come from parts of Nebraska as far from Lincoln as my home is. Some of them come from grain and live stock and dairy farms; some of them from enormous ranches of grazing country; but all of them are friendly and neighborly. If any of you have the chance to attend your state "farmers' week" or whatever it may be called, do try to take advantage of it. I do not know of any other kind of a meeting that pays richer rewards for the time and money spent.

And now I am at the campus, with the girls of the extension staff all busy helping us late-comers to register and helping us to get in touch with the officials in charge of the program, and from now on the day will be so busy that I can't write any more.

### Shares After Christmas Letters

I want to share with you some amusing and affectionate letters from the grandparents and aunts and cousins that came in the mail just before I left home. They are like the letters the rest of you are getting nowadays, if you are scattered from your people, as the aftermath of Christmas. Sometimes I think the very sweetest part of Christmas is the time of the thank-you letters, carrying the fragrance of the season into the new year.

My Dear Granddaughter: We received your nice Christmas box some days ago. Should have answered sooner, but your grandmother was in bed with a sick headache and I had to do the housework, keeping up the fires and act as "trained nurse," besides answering the doorbell and telephone and entertaining callers, so I am behind with "our correspondence." I really ought to do this on the typewriter, but ours is so poor I don't seem to know how to spell, so maybe you can make out to read this poor hand. Grandma is better today and is down by the fireplace, but I still carry up the coal.

### Had Enjoyable Christmas

We had a real nice Christmas. Uncle Hugh and Aunt Carrie brought a Christmas tree and strings of little electric lights. The boxes were laid at the roots of it and Uncle Hugh picked them up one at a time and called out the names and I had to pass them to the ladies present, Uncle Hugh's wife and her ma. I cannot tell you all they got, for if I could remember it would take me so long that you would not get this till the middle of summer. I got a book called, "Oh, Professor, How Could You," by Harry Leon Wilson, and Carrie gave me a styptic pencil which she said was good to use on my face in case I cut myself with the razor. It would stop the blood and heal the cut, but she said she cut her thumb and tried it on that, but it did not stop the blood, so I am still going to be careful when I shave. My family all join me in many thanks for the nice things you sent in the box—all original and hand-made, and wishing you many happy returns of the day.

Uncle Hugh and myself divided the bag of candy and apples, which were nice indeed, and I especially want to thank you for the nice long string

around the box. I saved every bit of it, six and a quarter yards of it. I rolled it into a nice ball and put it in the "string box," and if grandma does not find it, maybe we will send it back to you around another Christmas box. We also got your nice letter telling of your presents. We are always glad to get your nice letters. We always like to hear from you, of your studies in the school and in your music and your theatricals. We also enjoy a word of your father and mother and of those darling boys. Don't forget to put in a hint of their darling escapades. Tell us of your father's problems and your mother's career, and of your grandparents on the other side, and of Uncle Will and Aunt Minnie, and Bobby and his folks. Tell us how many pigs and calves and chickens and cats you have. We would also like to know something of your ambitions; what you wish to do when you get big. We are sending your mother a box by parcel post that she will smack her lips over for the coming year.

With many good wishes for you and all of you for the coming year, and don't fall down on your schule work, I am as ever, your affectionate Grandfather Needham.

### Was Her First Christmas

Dear Wilbert, Sonny and Ruth: Papa gave me this piece of paper to write you a letter on, and mamma is writing it for me, because I am too little. I shall be a year old the eighteenth of January. (First, I said "I will be," but Margie Ruth is so very particular about her grammar, that mamma thought I had better say shall.) So you see, this is my first real Christmas, and I was very glad to get so many things, from my cousins. Did you make the dolly yourselves? Where did you get so many kinds of paint? I wish I had some colored paint to play in, but the dolly is just as good, and mamma thinks it is much better.

Perhaps you thought I was too little to enjoy the big picture book, but no, mama has been showing me pictures for a long time. She never would let me turn the pages though, and now she does. Even mama was surprised to see how well I can turn them. She didn't think I knew how. I was a little disappointed at first because I couldn't tear the pages. But the pictures are so pretty that I don't mind very much. Mama lets me poke my fingers in all the eyes I can find. Some other parts of the pictures are pretty too, and I pat them and scratch them with my finger-nails. But I like eyes best.

### Visited a Store

Mama and papa say to thank you for the other things, too. Did Aunt Hope let you help pick them out and buy them? I have never been in a store except when I was in Urbana. Grandpa gave mama some money and then grandma went with us to buy me an organdie bonnet. Some day when I am bigger, I will go to a store again and buy things for all my cousins.

I wish I could go to visit you again. I am much bigger now. I can walk all around if I have something to hold to with one hand. And sometimes I let go and take one or two steps all by myself. I have four teeth now, and can bite big holes in my celluloid playthings. I think I am going to have some more teeth right away. Something hurts me most all the time, and mama has to give me dollies to play with.

I am going to stand up in my bed now and watch mama take this letter to the mail box.—Your loving cousin, Rosemary.

JANUARY 29, 1927

### HOME AGAIN!

Home again! And it's good to be where the firelight glows, indeed, for while last week in Nebraska was balmy and mild

as spring, this week winter has descended on us. It has snowed for two days and nights, a soft, wet, thick snow, not very cold. Now it is dusk of the second day and the wind has risen higher and higher all afternoon. Drifts are already knee deep in the barnyard. I've just come in from flo undering through them, dressed in coveralls and galoshes and gauntlets, and it is pleasant to find the children reading happily by the fire-side when I come in.

The storm is growing worse and the temperature is falling. There was a funeral in our neighborhood this afternoon—a wild and heart-breaking day for such an event. And now whenever the telephone rings it brings news of another car stranded in the drifts and unable to get home. Bob-sleds and wagons are being got ready to haul the wayfarers home. One car is stuck a few rods up the road from us and occasionally I leave the children and carry a telephone message to the folks up there, for the women in the party are not strong enough nor dressed suitably to climb and struggle through the drifts to our house. At last a neighbor man comes to the door, red and breathless from the stinging wind, and asks, "Are our folks here?" "Waiting in the car, a few rods up," we answer. "We can't see ten feet in front of us," he tells us; and as he starts back to the bob-sled he is hidden by the thick curtain of snow before he reaches the lane. We can see just a faint glimmer of lantern light and a dim shadow climbing into the box, then away skims the bob-sled with the soft jingle of sleigh bells.

### Tucked in Snugly

Later the children are snugly tucked away in bed and the house is very still. The telephone is quiet now, for every one is safely home who could get there or is resigned to staying away over night. Our daddy was 20 miles away, and he can't get home till tomorrow, and perhaps not then, unless the snow stops drifting so the roads can be opened up.

Now at last the wind dies down and the sky clears, and the moon shines out, hard and brilliant, over the glittering expanse of snow. The thermometer is dropping, dropping—there is no sound anywhere except the crackling of ice on branches. And as I stand alone at the window, looking out at the scene, beautiful but so cold, I think of that bereaved family down the road, shut in alone with their first night of grief, and I wonder which is harder for them to bear, the wild, howling storm, or this "hard, dull bitterness of cold."—Hope.

### MEMORY GEM

Never guest was quainter;  
Pussy came to town  
In a hood of silver gray  
And a coat of brown.  
Happy little children  
Cried with laugh and shout,  
"Spring is coming, coming,  
Pussy Willow's out."  
—Kate I. Brown.



Hope Needham



TWO LETTERS

Two letters came to my desk on the same day. One is from a discouraged farm mother, struggling against poverty, who feels (rightly) that somehow life is not always fair, financially, to farmers. The other is from another farm woman, who also had a hard enough time in the country, but who found after they had come to town that life was not always rosy, even there.



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The first woman takes exception to the results of the Nebraska questionnaire mentioned here a few weeks ago on "What's on the Farm Woman's Mind." The answers to that questionnaire, the opinions of several hundred Nebraska women, put as the matter of first importance better schools. Each woman was to mark the five questions that seemed to her of most importance out of a list of questions. When the vote was totaled up the school question had been marked oftenest.

Need Better Homes

Our correspondent of today maintains that she and a good many others feel that it is not better schools but better homes that are needed, and to get the better homes all we need is a better economic situation for the farmer. "Give the farmer a square deal," she says, "and he and his family will fix up their homes as they want them." This attitude is quite in line with a report which was made by an Illinois committee on which my husband served. My husband's part was to correspond with a number of agricultural college graduates of recent years and find out whether they were satisfied with farm life, and if not, why not. Even before the answers were received my husband remarked that the first and main problem was an economic one. Given an intelligent group of farmers and a fair financial return for their efforts, and they will look after all the other problems as the need arises—roads, schools, markets, and so on. The answers to his letters bore him out in this opinion. As one man put it, "If you inherit land or marry it, you can make a go of farming. If you have to buy and pay for it, the way things are now, it is discouraging. If we can get prices and production adjusted, whether by legislation or co-operation or any other means, my answer would be, "Of course I'm satisfied with farming. It is the only life."

I am inclined to agree to a great extent with the correspondent of today, in that the home is most important. But it might be argued, and perhaps this is why so many Nebraska women voted for schools first, that in order to get better homes we must educate a generation to it.

Is Unduly Bitter

There is one point in this friend's letter which needs comment. She is bitter against salaried folks, particularly teachers. "Their salaries are greater than they need," she says. "If they can have a bank account, an automobile and when summer comes take a trip to Europe or some other

place for pleasure, they are surely drawing a fair salary."

It seems to me that as many farmers as teachers have bank accounts and automobiles. And as for trips to Europe, those farmers whose land is free of incumbrance and whose children are grown and independent, may be able to afford a trip to Europe, but take trips in America instead, while teachers feel that European travel helps them in their work. It is a mistake to feel that such advantages of life are limited to any one class. It is pretty safe to assume that no individual and no class has all the advantages of life. I know a good many teachers, and it is my experience that the ones who have no real home and no family to provide for frequently are able, after a number of years of teaching, to devote \$500 or \$600 to a trip abroad. But those who are married, buying a home and raising a family, do just about as the rest of us do: try to make the money reach around expenses, try to keep the children in shoes and school houses, books, pay the taxes when they are due, stall off the doctor and dentist as long as we dare. That's what we call compensation. Some of the teachers who go to Europe would cheerfully swap their travel for our homes and babies, if they could. Some of them prefer the life they have chosen, and I'm sure they have a right to live their own way. They wouldn't make successful parents and homesteaders.

Need Touch of Prosperity

It may be that the teachers and other classes are better paid for their exertions than we are, but it is a pity to let ourselves get embittered about it. Farmers all over the country are coming nearer and nearer together, and surely they will eventually find a way out of their difficulties. As Jim told us a year ago, "What we need is just a touch of prosperity." It would make all the difference in the world in the way we compare our blessings with other folks.

The second letter I mentioned in the beginning is from a farm woman in town, and we put it side by side with the discouraged letter from the country, hoping there will be a grain of comfort for both these women, our friends.

WHAT'S DOING ON THE FARM

February has come and gone, with its mild and balmy air and its abominable mud, March has come in like

a lion and given us a running assortment of rain, snow, sleet, sunshine, fog, mud and ice, but appears to be straightening around for a settled spring. February quite lost its senses this year. The air was so invigorating, the temperature so comfortable, that one's pulses went bounding and one's soul went soaring and all that, but two or three pounds of mud on each foot was sufficient to hold ambition down to earth, and nothing much was accomplished in the farming and gardening line.



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The frost is out of the ground now, so that walking is not quite so treacherous. We hear once more the music of bang-boards in the land, for some of the corn has stood unhusked all winter, in the midst of snow and mud. Not till that is finished will much be done toward the new season's work.

It is customary hereabouts to do the main butchering in February, but the weather was so warm that we had to look sharp to find a suitable spell. When we chose our time, we had to rush the work to get it done before the temperature rose again. Daddy and the children and I cut up lard in the basement after supper one night until Sonny cut a finger, and after that the youngsters perched on the cellar steps and conversed vigorously, hoping, I suppose, to make us forget it was bed-time. They outlined their life ambitions to us at some length. Ruth hopes to be a farmer's wife; Sonny plans to be an Injun-eeer; and Wilbert has set his heart on becoming a million-eeer.

Settle Community Problems

After they finally were tucked away for the night, Daddy and I settled the problems of the community and the universe while we finished cutting up the meat. And eventually the butchering was completed for this year.

The farm sales are practically over, and there never was a season in these parts when there were so many. It has really been quite festive; the men have had somewhere to go nearly all winter.

The annual meetings of most local organizations are safely over, and we all know who's who in every club and association. Our home talent lyceum course, sadly delayed by the bad roads and storms of January and February, is being rushed through this month, date crowding date. The last of the home-talent plays are being whipped into shape, the farewell parties for departing neighbors have been held, and all in all we are settling down to work.

First Taste of Tragedy

Our little parent-teachers association is hanging together loyally, though our teacher is quite ill and the school is almost broken up. It is hard to find a substitute at this time of year, and our youngsters may have to be "farmed out" to adjoining districts. Daughter Ruth has had her first taste of real tragedy this spring, first in the illness of the beloved teacher and then in the departure of favorite playmates from the school. "Isn't it awful to have to be separated from the ones you like the best?" she asks with quivering lips, on the last, fatal day. "Seems like the last minute is the worst. We were so happy all day, singing the songs they liked the best and playing the games they chose, and then at the last, it seemed as though we couldn't stand to say good-by." The little girls are just moving a few miles away, but to the children it is as hard a parting as though they were going overseas forever. We are prone to be untouched by such apparently slight childish griefs, but who shall say that they are not as deep and painful as any experiences we ever meet in life? "Friend after friend departs,

Who has no lost a friend? There is no friendship here on earth That has not here an end."

And now comes the last of the sewing, and the housecleaning, and the gardening, and the chicken-raising. It is the turn of the year, when there comes a fresh inspiration. From now on there is a little more poetry in wash-day, a little less bleakness on the farm.



MARCH 21, 1927

SPRING IS COME

Spring is really here, with the grass growing greener and the sky growing bluer, with the big white washing down the road and the big white washing up the hill waving hilarious greetings to my big white washing, and the trees of my farm sending jaunty messages to the trees of your farm and getting them back again by the warm wind that whistles and whirs and urges the countryside to one grand sweet chorus of rejoicing.



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Everything throbs with vitality, from the gay dawning to the peaceful night. Seems as though the village lights off to the southeast twinkle more vivaciously than ever, these evenings, and the row of airplane beacons around the northern and western horizon flare more brilliantly in their steady rhythm — now the first one describing its slow bright arc, now the next, and the next, and the next.

And the moonlight nights! Is there anything more thrilling than the glorious white light of the spring moon? One of the children woke up a night or two ago and exclaimed at the whiteness of the glow. That woke the other two, and we let them stand at the windows and marvel at the sight. To them (they are so seldom awake at that time of night) it all seemed "wondrous strange."

#### A Red Letter Day

It is warm enough that Ruth comes trudging home from school with her coat flung open and little bits of moisture on her flushed forehead. As Sonny remarked, "She is so warm she is covered with sweatness." The boys come in for meals, flushed and covered not only with sweatness, but with dust. It was a red letter day for them last week, one busy day, when daddy got up from the breakfast table to hurry away and said, "Boys, you feed the calves for me this morning." What a squaring of shoulders was there; what an exaggerated strut, as they tossed their caps on sideways (in imitation of the current hired man); what pride that they were given instructions like the rest of the men, but not detailed instructions like babies! Daddy knew better than to tell them what to feed, and how much; hadn't they watched him do it every time it had been done so far?

Away they went to get their chores done, and reported afterward that they had made an equitable division of the five heifer calves now on hand. Sonny chose the two largest ones, because they will be grown the soonest, and brother took the three little ones, because there are more of them. Since that day the boys have tended the calves and played with them, and almost lived among them. Sonny even wanted to know if they could take their naps out there, as he had tried resting his head on one of the calves, and it made such a soft pillow and lay so quiet. Brother wanted their supper packed in paper bags, as it is when they play miner or workman going to the factory, and wanted to eat out there with the calves. When

I pointed out that it was not just exactly a sanitary place in which to eat, he maintained that the white on the calves was whiter than snow, and that they smelled so sweet!

#### Hitches in Single and Double

They have harnessed the calves and driven them single and double. Wilbert has named his three Petty, Small and Nice. He wants Sonny to name his George and Link, after the Father of His Country, and the Great Emancipator, respectively, but up to date Sonny hasn't seemed impressed with the suggestion.

One day they took me out to give me a demonstration of putting the calves into the stanchions to feed. The system was for Sonny to push on the hind quarters and Wilbert to stand in front of the stanchions and guide the head into the proper place and clamp it. All went well with the first four; they looked rather bored and made no trouble, as they had no desire to go anywhere else. But the fifth and largest displayed a little obstinacy. It jerked and pulled away, kicked up its heels and went into reverse, dragging Sonny sprawling. He burst into tears of rage and humiliation and cried, "You're always shoving me around!" But then catching the look of alarm on my face, and apparently fearing that I would forbid further activities in such a dangerous place, he quickly straightened up and remarked, with forced casualness, "He kicks me lots of times, but it never hurts."

Today we are using our precious hour of playtime together to drive over to the village and call on your preacher, who is still sick. We'll pick up Ruth on the way, and we're going to look for pussy willows as we go.

Happy little children

Cry and laugh and shout,  
"Spring is coming, coming,  
Pussy Willow's out!"

—Hope.

APRIL 4, 1927

ACROSS THE FIELDS

There is an instinct that tells the little birds when to come north in the spring, and there is likewise an instinct that tells our youngsters when it is time for the first jaunt across the fields.

It is always earlier than I anticipate, but perhaps that is because my touch with Nature weakens as the years go by. Anyway, the time has come this season, the children say, and we have made the first momentous pilgrimage "over the pasture to Aunt Elmira's." When we make this trip, spring has formally arrived. The route "over the pasture" includes a hog lot, about six fences, a creek or two, a field of cornstalks, and what not; but when the time comes, mother is expected to negotiate these difficulties without a murmur, though she would infinitely prefer to get out the car and go by the civilized road. But a mother never knows when she will lose caste with her children by weakness in such little matters; and I for one would not risk complaining.

The sun was bright and the sky was blue on the day selected; but the



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ditches ran brawling with water and the ground was spongy with recent rains; and the wind blew raw. At the last moment daddy convinced the children that the regular route was no fit trail for a house plant like mother, and they obligingly consented to go around by the road, provided we would not walk on the gravel straight along, but would have to follow the leader.

#### Line Up in Military Order

The leader was Ruth, of course. She lined us up in formal fashion and outlined a set of signals which she fondly imagined were the last word in military discipline. She is partial to autocratic methods, when she is in charge of a project. This would work out very effectively, if it were not for the fact that the boys are what you might call "personal-rights" men.

Isn't it strange that we admire in adults some of the traits that annoy us most in children? Since being acquainted with my little brood, I never read a biography of a great man saying, "He knew what he wanted and never let anything interfere till he got it," but what I think, "How he must have annoyed his sister when he was little!" And whenever I hear a woman talk strongly about "standing up for her rights," I think she must have been driven into such firmness by her little brothers' being obstreperous and rebellious in their childhood.

#### Picks Precarious Places

But anyway, we set out on our journey this bright morning, when fate decreed we should go. The leader's system seemed to be to choose the most precarious places to walk. We walked odd stepping-stones back and forth over the ditches; we crossed the creek, not by bridge, but by frail branches and clumps of trash that had caught in the stream; at one place we crept through a hole in a hedge and walked in a lane roughened by cow tracks. Not even the most tender-hearted poet could have referred to our "light and airy tread." All in all it was a clumpy and strenuous trip, but in spite of difficulties we managed to admire the pussy-willows and the other growing things we found. Once mother almost lost her grip on her iron nerves, however; that was when brother brought up for admiration a graceful baby grass snake about six inches long and as thick as a lead pencil. Of a most adorable shade of green! It would have harmonized beautifully with the kitchen woodwork, but we did not bring it home.

There is much of courage and appreciation for "a mother to learn by taking a walk with her children. She has a chance for a wonderful renewal of childhood, which will be richer for the years of living that have passed since her own half-forgotten early experiences in a great, wide, wonderful, beautiful world. And it seems to me that it gives the child a fairer chance in life to have as much enjoyment with his parents as he can be given. Goodness knows, we have to curtail their pleasures soon enough; we have to discipline them early, to protect them from a harsh world. Let's at least be playfellows with them when we can!"

#### Why They Were Punished

Did I ever tell you about the interesting investigation some teachers made with a lot of children of kindergarten age? The problem was to find out something about the punishment of children; and the teachers asked the children to tell what they were punished for. Three-fourths of the acts that were punished were not wrong in themselves, but involved inconvenience to the adults in charge of the children. One little fellow said that he



was punished "for settin' on the sofy in my dirty pants, and for settin' on the ground in my clea' ones."

It is commendable, I am sure, for any parents to have their child, as a work of art, "settin' on the sofy" in clean pants part of the time; but for health and happiness, dress him so he can sit on the ground part of the time in pants that can't be spoiled by normal activity. And play with him while he is in his play clothes. You will be surprised how much you will learn about him, and how much more competent you feel to manage him. And, incidentally, you will learn a lot about how to manage yourself.

But I hadn't much time to let my mind dwell on thoughts such as these during our blithe and busy trip. We reached home at last; and mother was ready to relax for an absolute rest after devoting the better part of a morning to her active offspring, hopping they, too, were ready for a period of quiet. But alas for hopes! Before any one had a chance to sit down, there came anew that refrain that runs like a golden thread through all a mother's waking hours:

"Mother, NOW what can we do?"—Hope.

APRIL 18, 1927

THE FIRST DANDELIONS

"Shut your eyes till I get in the kitchen—something nice!" was Sonny's cry, as my two tousled, blue-overalled youngsters tumbled in the back door at noon the other day. And when I "shut my eyes and held out my hand I was given five stubby, grimy, crushed little dandelions, the first we've seen this season. Of course, to mothers the dandelions her babies bring to her are the sweetest flowers that blow, and I made a proper fuss over them.



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and listened as best as I could while I put dinner on the table to the whole detailed story of where they were found and how hard they were to get.

You see, the boys had made a couple of wheel-sticks, or stick-wheels; I never can remember which it is. But you find an old rusty wheel, and size, but preferably small; and to it you bolt a stick, any length and shape and condition, but preferably not too rough and about three feet long. Sometimes it takes quite a while to find a bolt with a burr that will fit and that isn't too rusty to use, but it is a happy search if it takes all forenoon. But anyway, on this particular morning luck was with the boys and they got their wheel-sticks made early, and then they felt an urgent call to go down the road and show them to their little chums, two boys of corresponding ages in a neighboring family. These wheel-sticks are not for anything in particular, but you push them and run, and it's so pleasant to guide them and make them go fast. If you are big enough for your daddy to let you stand on the runnig board of the car, you can trail the wheel stick on the ground and whee but it goes! But if you're too little for that, you have to just run on your own chubby feet as fast as you can.

Spied Something Yellow

After they showed their wheel-sticks to the boys and helped them find supplies to make some for themselves and then started home, why, right across the ditch they saw something yellow. It was in a hard place, but they got over, and sure enough it was dandelions, two of them. And so after they got those they watched pretty close the rest of the way home, and finally they found three more, and here they were.

We floated them in a white saucer, and they made a cheerful centerpiece for the dining table. And radiant with satisfaction of a good deed well appreciated, Sonny announced beautifully, "After nap we're going to hunt up a big bunch and take to Miss Anna." (For our teacher is still dreadfully ill at the hospital and will not be strong for a long time.) Brother-boy squelched him with a superior grunt. "Won't do for that," he said. And I thought, with one of those hurt-y little twinges that come so often to mothers when their little ones are growing out of babyhood, "Has he already learned that it is only to mothers that these common little furry golden balls are sweet, and to them only because their own darlings made the effort to get them? Is he already touched by that malady which gets us all—that is not the love and the effort alone that count, but what 'other people think?'"

But no! He is still just a baby, unsullied by convention. "Won't do for that," he said. "Stems too short. Wouldn't have a vase to fit 'em." So we shan't carry the dandelions to the hospital, where the grown-ups might be embarrassed lest some one think we didn't know any better. We'll just wait till we find some weeds with longer stems.—Hope.

APRIL 22, 1927

LOOSENING BONDS

One evening not long ago our Daddy was delayed a few minutes with his evening chores, just enough that we missed connections for about five minutes before we reached home, I had to leave to go to town with some neighbors. And for that little interim the children were left alone in the house. A thing like that doesn't happen often, and all evening a ghost of a worry haunted me; though I was sure they would be perfectly safe. The next day at dinner, talk came up of some event to which Daddy and I both wanted to go; but we are so in the habit of arranging for some one to be with the children that we had to decide which of us was to go. Brother-boy, aged six, looked up in a matter of fact way and remarked, "Why don't you both go? We can do the outside work like he always does, and we can run the house."



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A simple remark, but how startling in its significance! Can it be that there is a time coming when we won't need always to plan our days according to whether some one can look after the babies? In the beginning,

the chains galled us some, but as time wore on, it became second nature for us to adapt our comings and goings around the welfare of the little ones. And the stranger the habit grew, the less the chains chafed. And now, at the prospect of liberty, we are almost appalled.

Begged to Get Back

A few days ago the newspapers carried a story of an old man who after spending most of his years in a penitentiary was pardoned and turned loose in a world strange to him. In a very short while he came back to the prison, begging pitifully to be re-admitted, for he couldn't adjust himself to freedom. I think parents can understand his feeling, when their children shoot up suddenly into independent girlhood and boyhood. One by one the bonds are loosening; babies learn to feed themselves, and to dress themselves, and to bathe themselves, to keep out of dangerous places without being watched, and later to think and decide and act for themselves. It all leaves a parent with a lorn sort of feeling, questioning whether freedom is all that it is cracked up to be. Those bonds were sweet, after all.

If there is a moral to all this, it would be a word of encouragement to those poor, tired, young mothers whose moments are packed so full of tending babies that they have no time to take care of themselves, that there is an easier time coming; that this hardest time is short. And a word of warning to the rebellious young mothers who are afraid they will lose too much of their own life if they devote themselves to babies now. "Who loseth his life shall find it." In tending this rose-garden of babyhood, we have a thorny time in many ways. Some days we can notice nothing but prickles. But after the hard work is done and we look back on the arduous days, we see nothing but a mass of bloom.—Hope.

MAY 6, 1927

MOTHER'S DAY

As this momentous day approaches once more, it seems appropriate to include, along with the memory gem which so many asked to have re-printed for the occasion, the letters which came in response to Ruth Vernon's recent letter which included a mention of Mother's day. It is especially appropriate that one of the letters is from "Twenty Some," who originally contributed Gillilan's poem to this column last fall.



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Mother's day seems to me to be a wonderful day to retain in the calendar; and I, like the rest of you, feel that father deserved credit, too. But I would rather build up a separate Father's day, wouldn't you? Seems to me we could spare a day apiece for the two wonderful people who gave up themselves and ordered their lives for our sakes. Mother's day is not a selfish day even for the mothers. I know as I pack my box of dewy crabapple blossoms for my own little mother, I am thinking of the day as a tribute to me, though I am a mother; for I know in my heart that I have not gone far enough nor done well enough



to deserve tributes yet. I am thinking only of her, and the sweetness of her influence on all the lives that touched her.

#### Thinking Back

And as she sits at home on Mother's day and receives the boxes and the telegrams from her six scattered children and their mates, I know that she is not accepting them smugly as her due, but is thinking back to her mother—little lame Grandmother Kate, that ardent, unvanquished spirit who raised seven children and conquered the trials of pioneer life as gallantly as any emperor marshaling his legions against barbarians, and who, at the age of 85, left this life for one which, I hope, will provide her a satisfying outlet for her activity and her brilliance.

So it goes. No mother is basking in the glory of the day, though the remembrance and appreciation of her children is sweet to her, but each is looking back and laying her gratitude at the feet of her own mother. It is a sort of "ancestor worship," which broadens the heart in humility and reverence.—Hope.

MAY 9, 1927

#### FLOOD WATERS

"April has wept itself to May," as the poet says, in literal truth this year. Such prolonged and heavy rains as we all have had through the middle west! The worst of it seems to be over where we are, in north central Illinois, the flood waters having drained away and left our land almost tillable; but our hearts and sympathies are with those farther down the Mississippi, who must suffer not only the evil effects of their own rainfall, but the accumulated disaster of all of ours as well.

Our farmers are three weeks behind with spring work, and it will take good weather and strenuous days to get the corn land ready to plant in time. A goodly acreage of the customary oats crop could not be seeded at all. Strangely enough, the three successive freezes we had late in April did not seem to affect the fruit much.

Whatever misfortune we get in the way of rain is soon over; the real tragedy comes to the dwellers by the riverside, when the drainage waters gather into the big streams, swelling them to overflowing.

#### A Test of Courage

Honor to those farmers who submitted to the ruination of their lands for the sake of saving New Orleans! There was a powerful test of courage and strength of character. How many of us, if our ancestors had worked that land 200 years and had built the levees to protect our homes, could have stood without a protest and seen those levees wrecked and our property ruined, for the sake of saving a strange city, apparently a selfish city, a city which had done nothing in particular to help us? If many of those farmers were bitter and rebellious at the blasting of the walls, what right have we to judge them? Their only fault was in not being able to see a



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larger pattern in life; in not recognizing the need of the few to suffer for the sake of saving many.

How many of us rebel against much smaller troubles in our daily lives, just because we have the same limitation? We can at least give what succor we can afford to the suffering flood victims, and meanwhile we can count our many blessings and be glad of some of the little happinesses that lie before us.

#### A Riot of Bloom

The tall, strong crabapple tree which we watch from the kitchen window every spring is riotous with bloom. It is the tree which gets green first of any tree in the spring, and its development is one of the delights of our country life. It begins with just a hint of almost imperceptible color, and swiftly, day by day, becomes a mass of living green, when the maples are just barely beginning to swell their crimson buds. Then some morning our crab tree is overlaid with the pink of buds, and from then on for a week or two it grows more and more splendid, until it is like a snow bank with bloom. As a fruit tree it is no good, as daddy sagely remembers; the apples are very tiny yellow ones, much afflicted with worms, and so high as to be inaccessible without an extension ladder and the sturdy right arm of the head of the house. But as a thing of beauty, merely, it is a joy forever—not just in spring but the year round.

Our gladioli bulbs are thriving, too. We spent more than we really could afford for them, and then, following the recommendation of an authority on the subject, I put them in the ground early in April. "Gladioli are very hardy," he said, "and the choicest ones should be put out the first of April, so they will have a long season in which to multiply." Then the three freezes came, and truly I believed that the way of the transgressor is hard. I resolved it should be a lesson to me not to indulge in any more high priced bulbs until my ship comes in. But a few days later the slim green shoots began to come through the ground, and now I feel quite proud of my "skill" with flowers. Nothing ventured, nothing won, they say.

#### Would Not Hold to the Supports

The ivy is another triumph for me, of which I must tell you. Last spring I selected the sort of ivy which seemed to me to fill the bill of what we wanted, and I set out and tended the plants. They grew luxuriously, but they simply would not cling to the wall. I contrived all sorts of queer supports, but accomplished nothing. My ivy became one of the family standing jokes. Then this spring daddy assured me that my ivy was dead, and he chose a different variety and set it out to start. The frosts got part of him; but the joke is that my ivy is beginning to grow. Of course, I can't guarantee that it will stick to the stucco any better this year than last, but I have hopes. It ought to be "acclimated" by now.

The boys' calves have been turned out into a new pasture just across the lane from the house. The boys spend much time among their little pets. When one boy comes to the back door and yells, "All down," he means the calves are resting. The other one goes scampering, and over the gate they both scramble to nestle among the group of calves. Wilbert's three—Petty, Goody and Smally—are still a neat size for a little boy to manage. He can stand comfortably between two of them, with an arm thrown affectionately over each. He has given Goody to Ruth, so she can play with them mornings and evenings. She has christened it "Little Goody Two Shoes," rather meaningless for a calf,

it seems to me, but apparently satisfying to her esthetic sense.

#### Star and Butter

Sonny's two calves have grown until they are taller than he is, so that his best times for petting them are when they are lying down to rest. He has named them Star and Butter. "Do you call her Butter," asks sentimental mother, "because she is the yellowest one of all?" "I call her Butter," says Sonny, "because she butts me down."

We have a new dog, too. Not really our own, but one to keep for the summer. The boys went to the village with daddy the other day and brought it home. They fairly battered me with information in their excitement when they got back. "A dog, mother, for us to keep all summer!" "He's the black-smith's, and he wants him to run around outdoors!" "In town he just has to stay at home all the time; think of that!" "Down cellar mostly; can you 'magine it?" "We have to keep him tied a few days, daddy says, and then he can run and play with us." "He's a rat terrier." "And he's a mouse terrier, too." "He's white and fat and has a black spot on his eye." "He's friends with us already." "Isn't he cute?" "And his name," adds solemn Sonny, in a final burst of eloquence before he is entirely out of breath, "is Betty."—Hope.

MAY 23, 1927

#### THE SCHOOL PICNIC

The last day of school has come and gone, and the picnic is over. It is a strenuous but happy time for children and parents alike; with its ice cream and other eatables and the reports of "who passed" and the chatter about summer plans and next year's work.

At Ruth's school we had a fine big crowd. The men came in just for dinner, in their field clothes, for the days are crowded to the brim with work hereabouts, and they could not come for all day.

But no matter how busy they are, it was worth while for them to come for a short time on such a day. Some way the children are a little prouder and happier if an event is important enough to have daddy there. Mothers are always on deck, of course. They have to come to bring the lunch, if nothing else, and they usually visit school a few times during the year. But it takes a special inducement to get the fathers out. We had lots of laughing and fun. And after dinner, when the men had gone back to their tractors, and the little ones had gone outdoors to romp and the "big boys" had gone to practice for the graduation operetta, the women organized a parent-teachers association. That is the third rural P.-T. A. in our neighborhood, and we are proud of all of them.

And now all that activity is off our minds till fall. What we must have now is a long pull and a strong pull and a pull all together, to get the crops in. The women and children must look after chickens and garden and as many of the chores as possible; lunches must be taken to men in the fields, and every moment must be made to count. The weather stays cold and cloudy and windy, but we



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have had enough dry weather for plowing and disking. On a good day we can actually count eight tractors weaving their tireless way back and forth across fields, from daylight to dark, trailing black ribbons of mellow soil, and we can hear the roar of as many more that are out of sight. The proverbial peace and quiet of the countryside has disappeared for the time being.

The incessant rumble might be nerve-racking to a vacationist, but to us it is music in our ears. It means achievement of worth-while things to us, and it means safety and prosperity for the coming year. We'd a lot rather hear that rumble than not! The days when the tractors have to be idle are the days that are nerve-racking to us, this spring.—Hope.

MAY 31, 1927

FATHER'S DAY

It was Ruth Vernoh, I believe, who began the discussion of honoring the fathers with a special day as we do the mothers. So far as we have learned there is no national father's day set apart, corresponding to the second Sunday in May, now universally accepted as mother's day. Some of the universities celebrate Dad's day on a Saturday in the fall, with a big football game as the main attraction.



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Father and Son banquets are increasingly popular among the churches and the Y. M. C. A., but there does not seem to be a uniform time for holding them. This year our town held these banquets in the winter, every church entertaining its own group on the same night. In some letters printed today a Father's day on the second Sunday in June is mentioned. That day, I believe, is observed in practically all Protestant churches as Children's day, though a movement to call May day Children's day is growing in strength year by year. It was started by child welfare organizations.

Suggests Parents' Week

Another letter printed today suggests a Parents' week, with Mother's day on the first Sunday and Father's day on the next. This seems to me a good suggestion, with a lot of possibilities. Won't you write what you think about it—and let's set a Father's day for our Household, even though the nation at large has not chosen one: By beginning now we may be able to work up enough sentiment to have a widespread observance next spring.

At our little Hopewell church it is customary on Mother's day for a committee to provide sweet peas, pink and white, and to distribute them to all in the congregation. Of course, every one who has flowers brings bouquets to church for decorations, and one of the biggest and finest is presented at the close of the services to the oldest mother present, and one to the mother having the largest family present and one to the youngest mother.

JUNE 6, 1927

AT HOME ON A RAINY DAY

The fall trees have been swishing pretty steadily for some time, according to the little poem, but they haven't swept our skies blue much of the time. We still have rain and wind and cold and clouds, which surely make us appreciate the few bright, balmy days that occur once in a while. Very little corn is in the ground, and what little has begun to grow looks yellow and dispirited.

It is the time when our men are normally straining every nerve to keep the cornfields clean and yet get the alfalfa hay put up. This year there is nothing ready to plow and very little alfalfa to worry about. Much alfalfa killed out this winter. It seems strange to us to hear of the young fellows starting out to the Kansas harvest. Our wheat is growthy and green, but has not started to head. The gardens are thrifty, and I never saw the berries bloom so beautifully: The children are all out of school and fill the long days with caring for chickens and calves and pigs.

Helped Shell Seed Corn

The other day the children and I spent the rainy afternoon in the loft of the corn crib, helping daddy shell the seed corn. The rain beat on the roof, and shadows covered the gloomy corners and softened the lines of all the dusty things that accumulate in such a place. We sat on inverted paint pails and bushel baskets, and while daddy sorted and butted and tipped, we shelled the golden grains, the brightest things in the loft, from the glowing red cobs.

When the little boys had blistered their hands enough to satisfy them they set about other activities—brother at some prying and pounding that seemed intensely important to him, Sonny piling the red cobs into intricate shapes. Ruth and I raced each other in the shelling. There would be silence for a while, except for the rain; then we would talk a little, then be quiet again. We covered a lot of subjects in a random way, but one remark of daddy's stands out in memory, making the little homely scene one of those pictures that we carry with us always, not important in themselves, but close to our hearts for their very simplicity.

Isolation Has Its Advantages

"Folks talk a lot," he said, "about the need children have for social life and companionship. I used to pity myself when I was young because I was the only boy and led what I thought was a lonely life. It was lonelier in some ways than country folks have now, for we had no telephones, radios or automobiles. But the longer I live the more I feel that there are a lot of advantages in being isolated a bit from the bustle and stir of life. A person learns of necessity to develop resources in himself, to do some independent thinking, and to be satisfied without being entertained all the time.

"These children of ours, though they



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don't see the movies and the fire engines often, and don't get to hail the ice cream cone wagon a couple of times a day, and don't have enough folks around to get up a ball team or a tug-of-war, still have some opportunities for self-development. Sonny here will never be fidgety, because he hasn't a gang around; he will find contentment in something near at hand, if it is only piling red cobs to see how high he can build before they will topple. There are lots of compensations in being a country child."—Hope.

AUGUST 8, 1927

WHAT TIME FOR MONOTONY!

"The monotony of farm life." I wonder how that phrase originated? It has actually appeared in print; but have any of you found it in actual life? Remember how a short time ago it was that we were all excited over the beginning of gardening, and the starting of baby chicks, and the delay in farming caused by the heavy and continuous rains? And now, before we have caught our breath, the fields have grown lush and green, the grain has



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turned paler and paler until it glistens in pale gold; it has been cut and shocked, and tomorrow we thresh. Harvest is the turning point of our busy summer; then after the rush of threshing there is the annual breathing spell, when we have time to pick up the loose ends that have been obliged to hang while the bulk of the work went on. Now is the time for a few days' vacation for farm folk, if they have a vacation at all; now is the time to plan on saving flower seed and bulbs and consider the layout of next year's improvements in the farm and grounds, the lawns and fences. Now is the strenuous canning season, from now till frost. Then before we know it, the children must be ready for school, and the sewing must be done and the house must be cleaned, all in time for the winter's round of meetings and holidays.

Ruth and the boys spend the early forenoons helping the men pick cucumbers, and for reward get to ride with the cucumbers to the factory. Clumsy big Fido and little whirlwind Betty follow them everywhere they go. The lusty little Leghorns fill the air all day long with their crowing. Sonny says, with a twinkle in his eye, that they say, "Feed the roo-ooo-boosters!" And he answers them occasionally, "You are fed!" The new little white-belted pigs are a source of endless delight. Innumerable kittens help to make life interesting. A new calf or two for pets crowd out the ones so dear last spring, Butter and Goody and the rest. Wilbert and Ruth are counting the days until school begins. Sonny and I are wondering how we will get along without them. We have to be each other's pals. When threshing is done we will make a flying trip to the other grandmas—and then we must settle down again to that so-called "monotony of farm life."



AUGUST 17, 1927

A CHATTY VISIT WITH HOPE

It has been a long time since we described any of the escapades of the children at this house, but since so many of you have said, "Tell us more about them," and since this is a pleasant, leisurely time of year for chatting (this little interval between threshing and fall work), it is a good time to catch up on their summer doings. We have just had our "vacation," a week-end with the other grandma, a hundred miles away. We went down on Saturday and came back on Monday, leaving Ruth for an important two weeks' visit. She is released from music lessons for the month of August, and she feels quite grown-up, making a visit alone.



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Sonny has had a ringworm on his scalp, caught from his pet calf, Quillie. It did not seem to give him any discomfort, but it was an ugly and slow healing sore. Incidentally, he broke out in a heat rash for a few days, and altogether looked well battered up—though, to tell the truth, that is more or less his normal appearance. I never saw a child who carried more scars of battle on his body at one time. Bruises, scratches, rash, blisters, splinters, bee stings, and so weiter. Furthermore, he both tans, sunburns and freckles; but his darling smile brightens up his little battered face like a lily in bloom.

Speaking of Lillies

Speaking of lillies, our big boy Wilbert has the babylike complexion of the family. He is tanned a little, but normally his skin is lily-white, with a damask rose blush and his hair is light and fluffy. That is, it is fluffy while he sleeps and midway between meals. When he comes to the table it is plastered down to his head with so much water that it fairly drips. He feels more masculine with flat hair. Margie Ruth is our dusky maiden—dark hair, black eyes, well browned summer skin. She is fragile in build but as hardy as a shrub. Never sick, never much banged up. Tough and active as a hickory sappling, very practical in many ways, but with a charming and amusing delicacy of fancy. She lives much of the time in a little fairy world of her own manufacture.

The other day she asked permission to get supper all alone, for the children and me (for we have early supper, before the men come home from chores). When we came in from gathering the eggs we were asked to go around to the front door, take places at the dining table and order from the menu card we would find. This was the menu:

- Coffee Melligen (French)
- Pink milk Potatoes
- Milk shake Peas (cold)
- Eggnog Onions
- Bread and butter

We were supposed to order Melligen (French), as that was what she had. It was the hobo mixture that Uncle Wilbert told us about years ago—bacon, potato, onion and egg, all

cooked together. The children and I are fond of it for its sentimental associations more than its appearance and flavor, and on state occasions, two or three times a year, we have it. For a drink we were supposed to order milk shake, as that was prepared; but the boys unexpectedly setting their hearts on eggnog, the service was delayed a little bit.

Good but Weak!

The next night Wilbert of course had to have a turn getting supper. He shut himself up in the kitchen for a while, then brought out Ruth's same menu for us to order from, but no matter what we ordered from it we had to take what he had prepared, which was cheese, sandwiches and lemonade. The sandwiches were neatly made and very good, but the lemonade was somewhat weak, as he had filled an enormous white pitcher on the strength of two lorn lemons. He told us with a shy smile that it was good, but a little weaker than common. He made a cup of coffee for me as an extra touch of a thoughtful chef.

Sonny was to have his turn the following night, but something more exciting turned up and interest in cooking temporarily waned. Heaven only knows what he would have served.

A few days later I was unexpectedly called away from home at about 11 o'clock to help cook for threshers at a neighbor's. There was no time to prepare the children's dinner, but they were tremendously excited and pleased to be told that they might pack themselves a picnic basket, using any food whatever they could find in the house, and carry it up the road to eat with grandma. The only stipulation made about appropriating any food was that they think carefully before they took it, whether we would rather save it for a more important time. They chose carefully and well, it seemed to me; none of the choicest delicacies having been used. But it would be impossible for me to say whether those delicacies were left because of sound judgment or because of the fact that the tops were on so tight.

So the days run on, full of fun and of work, of happiness and childish troubles. We talk much of the good time we had at the other grandma's, where seven little cousins were together for the first time, and we fill the days as best we can, looking forward to the time when sister will be home again and bringing Aunt Grace and little Cousin Peejee with her.—Hope.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1927

THE STORY OF THE LOST SHOE

Ever since our youngest reached the age of five last March, the word "baby" has been taboo. The two

young men of the household expect to be considered "men folks," and we have become accustomed to have them act independent and self-reliant and to spend more hours out of doors with Daddy than in the house with Mother.

But the last few days there has been a reversion to baby days for all of us, for we have a blonde and chubby three-year-old girl-cousin visiting us. In spite of their men-



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style overalls and blue chambray shirts and other accoutrements of manhood, the boys have delighted in playing with Paula Jean, no matter how childish the games she wants to play. Mud-pies, building blocks, hide and seek—anything is all right, when they have the joy of an extra playmate. Margie Ruth associates with them with the amused attitude of an elderly relative, but she has not lost her sense of superiority. Mainly she spends the hours with Peejee's mother and me. She did condescend to play in the water with them, when on a hot sunny day they dressed in bathing suits and old overalls and splashed water on each other as long as they liked. (Even quite large girls go to the beach, you know.)

Brings Forth a Thrill

But the most interesting episode of the visit has to do with the losing of a little white shoe. That brought us one of the mild but satisfying thrills that are so characteristic of our quiet country life. The boys had taken Paula up to the barns to see the Guernseys, but they went first to the house to see Grandma (probably because light refreshments may usually be expected to be served). When they started to the barn, Grandma told them that if one of them would come back to the house before they went home, she would have a little surprise package for them. Brother and Paula sent Sonny back for the package, and they rolled under a fence and scampered across a small corn patch to take a shortcut home and surprise him. But misfortune dogged their footsteps in that cornfield; Paula lost one little white shoe, and search as they might they could not find it. They reached home, hot, sweaty and discouraged—the little one sobbing because the ground hurt her foot, and Brother leading her tenderly by the hand. "We couldn't find the shoe, but we took off the stocking so it wouldn't get dirty," he announced. Just about the time they finished telling the story of their mishap, Sonny-boy arrived, serene and beaming. He had taken time to visit with Grandma and get scrubbed clean and shining and had walked happily home, by way of the road, so overflowing with pleasure in the surprise he carried that he had not thought of the two who had run ahead to tease him.

The appearance of the surprise put an end to the sobs. By the time Paula and Brother were washed up, Sonny had opened up the brown paper sack and had laid out in a row four identical round packages wrapped in waxed paper with a perky little twist for fastening; one for Ruth, one for Wilbert, one for Sonny, and one for Paula. In each round package was found a chocolate-iced chocolate cupcake and a handful of the soft little square pink and white mints.

Everybody in Good Humor

There was so much pleasure in counting the candies and admiring the cakes and eating them both that everybody was in the happiest of humors, and some one suggested that there would still be time before the men came to supper for all of us to go hunting for the little white shoe.

So away we went. Just a few rods up the road was the corner of the cornpatch, with a very convenient break between hedge and fence for us to climb through. We couldn't roll under and meet thunder, for the fence went smack to the ground. We couldn't climb over and meet clover, for there was barbed wire on top. But there was just a nice place to crawl through and meet dew, so that's the way we went. And every



single person could get through all alone, without a bit of help. The minute we left the fence and struck out diagonally through the field, our little adventure began. It was not that anything in particular happened, but that we stepped out of the commonplace into a fairy world.

#### Visited Fairyland

How cool and green it was in there, among the tall stalks, and how remote we seemed from the land of Every-day. The friendly golden tassels nodded to us when we looked up at the sunny blue sky, and the long green leaves rustled a gentle welcome. We could not see the road, nor the house, nor the barn, yet how safe and contented we felt. The cool, mellow earth under foot was so comforting; and the stalks of corn were not crowded and close, as they looked from the house, but spread apart in cool and generous spaces, like a forest. And every few hills we would come across an immense pumpkin vine—rich dark green, with leaves like elephant ears and golden blooms eight inches across. It gave us the thrill that Alice in Wonderland must have had when she drank of the bottle that made her tiny. We wandered among the crisp stalks a long time, with the children turning up to us beaming faces and squeezing our hands with their little moist ones and drawing sharp, ecstatic breaths like they do when they swing so high they touch the branches or when they slide down an extra long bump-the-bumps.

And when it was time to come home and get supper, we wandered leisurely back again, crawled through and met dew, petted the dogs who were barking madly with joy at our return, and stretched out on rugs and couches in the cool, dark living-room, as tired as if we had really been somewhere. Little simple pleasures make such big memories! Our little adventure brought back to me so sharply similar days we children spent with our Mother on long hikes through hickory groves and oak woods, long ago.

But we never did find the little white shoe!

SEPTEMBER 24, 1927

#### "THE BELL HAS RUNG"

School has started and we have all settled into the routine of fall. Margie Ruth, in the sixth grade, is one of the "big girls" of the school now—she and her classmate are the biggest ones there are, and they are not very big. We have only four beginners, and a second-grader, and our two sixth grade girls this year. Not a very large group—but how they love their school and their teacher! And our parent-teacher association is looking forward to another happy year of companionship.

Wilbert is learning his "see my kitty" and all the other words appropriate to the occasion. He learns by the phonetic system, which I imagine most of your schools are using, and I must say that it seems to be a marvelous system. Ruth could read before she started to school, but Wilbert, while he had acquired a remarkable lot of miscellaneous information, could



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not read. Now, after a scant two weeks, he can read 20 or 30 words. It seems to me to be a very simple, sound and logical system.

#### Loses Companions

Sonny is without a companion now, which puzzles him sometimes, but in the main he manages to get a lot of fun out of life even yet. The weather has been intensely hot and dry ever since school began, and Daddy sent Sonny into the house one morning because the sun was so strong, telling him he looked like a boiled beet. A day or two later Sonny came to the house voluntarily and, throwing off his straw hat, he sighed, "My, I'm all sweat!" Do I look like a boiled turnip?"

Speaking of Sonny, he is a very surprising child. He is of a disposition that doesn't need much discipline, and what he does need is very hard to apply, for he is so droll that any one who attempts to correct him is likely to burst into a fit of laughing before he gets through. The other day, while Paula Jean was still with us, the children broke down the tire swing. The rope simply wore through, and the child in the swing got a little bump, but everybody had a hilarious time over the incident, and then the boys and Peejee began to romp with the tire and the rope. With three children and two dogs in the melee, it was not long before friction arose, and I was obliged to settle the fracas. (I used to be humiliated when my children got into such affairs; I felt it was a disgrace. I have come to accept them more philosophically now. Instead of a disgrace, I consider bickerings as a natural phenomenon of childhood. Better families than mine have quarreled!)

#### Didn't Touch It

Anyway, I laid the tire beside a tree, took off the rope, and stated with considerable sternness: "This is not to play with. We'll leave it here until Daddy can put it up. Don't touch it."

Later in the day, when the children had all forgotten about the tire, Fido began to play with it, and when he got weary he left it lying flat in the middle of the lawn. I happened to be working near a window, and before long Sonny came into sight, playing gun with a stick. I noticed a great light come over his countenance when he saw the tire, similar to that which radiates from the face of a scientist when he has solved a tremendous problem. Sonny carefully stooped over the tire and inserted his stick, then he scampered away and came back with a second stick the same length. When he was satisfied that both fitted across the tire, he stepped gingerly between them and, lifting the two sticks, pulled the tire up about him like a life preserver. Then, with great chuckling, he romped and gamboled all over the yard, cutting great circles and figure eights, and wound up in front of my window, with his fat little face beaming in an infectious smile, crying exultantly: "I haven't touched it yet, mother!"

#### Kept Within the Law

I suppose he had disobeyed me; and yet he had not disobeyed the letter of the law, either, for I said, "Don't touch it." It is just such little incidents as this which prevent the art of child raising from ever becoming an exact science. No doubt a wiser parent would have devised some sort of discipline, but, as for me, I did the only thing I was capable of doing in the face of such a convulsing performance; I simply laughed until I was weak. Fortunately for my reputation, the other children were not present. If they had been there, something would have had to be done about the problem. As it was, Sonny was satisfied and soon

scampered off to other play. There had been nothing malicious or willful about his action; he simply had a funny thought and acted upon it.

I'm sure I don't know what would have been the scientific way to handle the situation. If you do, let me know. I only know I'm thankful there's only one of Sonny instead of an orphan asylum full of him.—Hope.

NOVEMBER 5, 1927

#### PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS

The movement designed to get parents and teachers acquainted and interested in the school children is rapidly gaining ground, especially in rural districts. The organizations are springing up like mushrooms in our vicinity, and let's hope it won't be long until every little one-room school has its own. A school district is such a small, intimate unit that it would be hard to find a better basis for organization. Many requests reach this desk for help in planning parent-teacher meetings, and perhaps a story of what other folks have done will be the best help we can offer.



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Here at Maple Grove we have the nicest time at P. T. A., I believe, of any organization we belong to. Our school is so small and the membership so cozy that there is no room for jealousy, rivalry, prejudice and ill will. Our main aim is friendliness—just that; and I believe we have it in abundance. We have not tried to accomplish any material objects, like raising money for pianos and playgrounds. We have only tried to get together and be friends. The children and the teacher have some fresh decorations and handwork on display at every meeting, which the parents are proud to see, and both children and adults take part in the programs, and then we have just a happy social hour at the close.

#### Get Men Folks Out

We meet in the evening, because we want the men folks always to be present. We meet on Friday evening, so all the little ones may sleep late the next day and not be over-tired. We serve refreshments, because it seems that is the pleasantest way of being sociable. But we keep the refreshments simple, so that no one will feel burdened in contributing. We have programs, we try to have every member take part at one time or another, but we do not assign any part that is a strain to the participant. We make up our programs, often, with readings from such magazines as "Children," "Hygeia," "Child Welfare."

We have never held bake sales or socials to raise money, for we feel that the school district should provide whatever the school needs. We can contribute work and ideas, but we feel that too many organizations are trying to raise money and we will be content to engage in spiritual rather than material projects. We do not have our organization for what we can make, but for what we can give to our children and our neighbors in the way of interest and friendliness. We cleaned the school house and made a picnic of it; we can get old gaspice at the junk yard and with the addition of some



rope and boards our men can rig up a set of swings. That won't cost the district much, but we would rather do it than to have a box social to raise money to buy something more expensive. Our school is a modest little white rectangle, with good, substantial equipment, but nothing extravagant. We keep the buildings painted and the trees trimmed and the yard mowed. We are contented to keep it a simple rural school plant. We would rather provide for our little ones a good teacher and a friendly spirit than all the equipment a city school can have.

#### Program Was a Success

Our first program this year was a great success. At the first meeting we make it a point to invite every household in the district, whether they have children or not. We had a good crowd, and our program was a surprise. The little children sang us the songs they had been working on since school began. I wish you could have seen those little beginners march up, beaming, and go through their parts. Two shy little twin girls were in the line, who had never "said pieces" anywhere before, but they marched up happily and unafraid at this meeting, because there was nothing to be afraid of, with nobody there but mother and daddy and the neighbors. Then we had a short business meeting and a reading of a short history of the parent-teacher movement. Then came the big surprise of the evening—a side-splitting negro dialogue by two of our women who had declared in the beginning that they never would and never could do such a thing. The cleverness of their costumes and their acting would have broken the ice in a far stiffer audience than ours.

That concluded the program, for we had purposely planned to devote most of the first evening to sociability. We had a wiener roast, serving buns and wieners and marshmallows and pumpkin pie, and what a time we had! Everybody was hilarious and happy. Groups mingled and broke and separated again, and everybody had a chance for a little visit with every one else. If there is any value in social life at all, surely it is in full measure in such a neighborly gathering as this.

#### Plan Patriotic Program

Our next meeting will be near Armistice day, and we shall have a patriotic program. We're hoping to adapt a splendid program arranged by the Kansas State Agricultural college for their Homemakers' clubs, on the topic, "Victories of Peace and War." There will be a part for every member, for the program is divided into many parts. Each one will have a few paragraphs to read about some victory, either in peace or war; no one will be over-burdened, and we will have real co-operation.

The next meeting after that will be based on a report from our delegate to the district convention, and we are hoping that she will bring us suggestions for more formal programs. Meanwhile we make use of whatever comes to hand, either in the official parent-teacher publications or elsewhere, and always we plan to allow plenty of time just for sociability—Hope.

#### MEMORY GEM

Down the lanes of August—and  
the bees upon the wing—  
All the world's in color now and  
all the songbirds sing;  
Never reds will redder be, more  
golden be the gold,  
Down the lanes of August, and  
the summer getting old.  
—Guest.

DECEMBER 12, 1927

#### GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Now are the days when every one in the Household is aquiver with secrets getting ready for Christmas, and all the mothers and fathers must carefully refrain from putting two and two together or they will find out too much and spoil the surprises. When a little ten-year-old girl says virtuously an hour before bedtime, "I'll just kiss you good-night down here and go up to my room alone, and you don't need to come in to cover me up; even if you see a light, why, don't bother," any mother knows that some mystery is afoot about which she had better not inquire. And when a six-year-old boy suddenly bursts into song, "Up on the housetop quick, quick, quick—" and then claps his hand so violently over his mouth that he almost upsets himself, a mother must quickly concentrate her attention elsewhere and never once connect the song with the Christmas program at the school.

Fortunately, we are blessed with a number of cousins and aunts and uncles, so we can do a lot of planning together. In this way the strain of secret-keeping is lessened a little. Ruth planned the wrappings this year and every bundle that goes out of our house is to be wrapped in pink tissue and plastered with Christmas seals. Evenings at playtime we usually wrap gifts nowadays, gathering in Ruth's room. She has a box for each family to whom we send gifts, and as fast as things are finished, wrapped and labeled she drops them in the proper box. Daytimes none of us are allowed in that room except under her chaperonage. Mother wraps, the boys stick-'em-shut with seals, and Ruth labels.

#### Most Gifts Are Home-Made

Most of our gifts are home-made, for whatever the children give they must give from their own pocketbooks or their own skill. Their little hoards are not very big, but they have made them stretch remarkably. We have regular pink mountains of things already and are nearly ready for the final packing. A fruit cake, some candy and nuts, and some Christmas tree decorations for each package will supplement the gifts and make each box pretentious.

One of Sonny's original ideas was to send each family a package of bandages. Bandage rolling is one of his accomplishments, and, as he reasoned, "if the cousins are like us, their mothers will be glad to have some bandages already wrapped." So every box has a package of rolled bandages tied with red ribbon. Brother, in his first year of school, is very proud that his penmanship grades even beat Ruth's, and so he painstakingly made out some sheets of writing for the dotting grandparents, containing such choice sentiments as, "Can you see me? I can run. Can you run?" and he has wrapped them as beautifully as if they were perfumes from Araby. Ruth, having achieved the eminence of 30 cents a week allowance, and having been properly frugal in spending



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all year, is luxuriating in buying what she refers to as Real Gifts, although, as she quietly remarked, "You can depend on it, mother, that most of my shopping was done in the 10-cent store."

You would be surprised at the remarkable things that can be done with spoils and lacquer. Dolls and extraordinary creeping lizards, doll beds, tables and chairs. Assorted sizes from the big linen thread spools down to the tiny buttonhole twist ones; they afford a lot of fun for busy little fingers. And the assortment of boxes that can be painted and used for something—oatmeal boxes, soap boxes and everything. All in all, we have evolved a pile of gifts out of almost nothing at all, of which none of us need to be ashamed. And what a lot of fun it has been.—Hope.

DECEMBER 20, 1927

#### JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Christmas is the children's day, of course. Everything we do is really planned for them. But during the last tumultuous days before the holidays, how many mothers and fathers of us get so intensely wrapped up in our plans that we neglect the children, give them absent-minded answers, overlook playtime, and maybe in moments of exasperation assure them that if they don't want a good Christmas, all right, but we simply cannot get things done right if we are constantly bothered, and we are doing it all for them, etc. Bless you! They'd rather have no more Christmas than extra vegetables in the soup and be "in on" plans for fixing up the house and making gifts for others and have father and mother good-natured and interested and happy with them.

Giving the children a good Christmas may not consist in giving them a great display of elaborate toys; the best we can give them is to provide experiences that will develop them into good, generous, self-reliant men and women. Giving, helping, learning to do things and to plan are experiences with which the most expensive gifts cannot compare.

#### Action Is Important

Sometimes we get the idea that Things are important to a child. Just Things mean little to him. It is doing something with Things that is important. Did you ever stop to think how full your child's life is of exciting moments of victory and satisfaction, just in every-day living? This old world has become so commonplace to us that we forget how new it is to a child. Sonny had a set of blocks given to him this fall—the bright-colored ones with which you make patterns or designs. Each cube has a red side, a white side, a blue side and a yellow side, one side half white and half red, one side half blue and half yellow. It is amazing the number of patterns that can be devised in a little set of 16 cubes. The lid of the box was covered with patterns, and I'll never forget the glow of satisfaction on Sonny's plump little countenance when he surveyed the first pattern that he managed to get right.



Hope Needham



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

When you read this, you will still be watching the old year out, but let me be the first to greet you with the old, old phrase, Happy New Year!



Hope Needham

It would be a wonderful beginning if you could all happen in on me in the course of your New Year calls—Pep, Ruth Vernon, Cinneraria, Sally Ann, and all the rest of you who have to make another year of companionship helpful and inspiring to us all. What a visit we could have together; helping to comfort the unhappy Betty Janes, discussing babies with the harassed Young Mothers who want advice, exchanging recipes with the Cranky Cooks, enjoying old songs and poems with the grandmothers and comparing their early days with ours. We would take time for cheery greetings to the men folks, who would probably be wandering about the barnyard, looking over the live stock and talking shop.

Then as twilight came on, wouldn't it be nice to urge them to come in, too, and sit with us by the fire for a friendly visit? And we could send the daughters, big and little, to the kitchen to fix up the homely sort of pick-up supper we enjoy on New Year's night, especially if it is also Sunday night; and the sons, at least the little ones, could crack nuts and pass apples (the big ones would probably be obliged to leave early!) and the babies we could tuck away upstairs for their beauty sleep. Wouldn't it be a satisfying day?

Of course, we will never meet that way. We think we would like to; but since we can not, let us find comfort in long-distance friendship. For one thing, we know each other only at our best through the Household. We know each other better, perhaps, than we ever would in the flesh. May we all be spared for another year of companionship and mutual helpfulness! And may this Household department bring all of you the enrichment of spirit that it brings to me!—Hope.

ness of an only daughter with no chums of her age. She has had to adjust herself all her life to folks either much older or much younger than herself. But now she is old old enough to join the Lone Girl Scouts, and that brings her into fellowship with hundreds of other lonely girls. She has just received the handbook. She is ecstatic; almost, one might say, consecrated! She knows the rules and regulations by heart, and she has become unnaturally polite, for courtesy is one of the first laws of the Girl Scouts. It is a momentous time in her life.

Duplicated Many Times

All these little incidents are simple and commonplace; they are duplicated in the lives of your own children. They show that just Things do not loom large in a child's life. The more closely we can keep in touch with these little experiences that seem big to them, the more sympathy we can give them, the closer we will be to them all their lives.

So, when it comes to Christmas time, don't put too much emphasis on the gifts you give your children. Keep the pre-holiday season full and interesting, but try not to crowd it with too many events. Take time to enjoy the season, even if you do not have so many hand-made articles to display. Give them a generous, wholesome Christmas dinner, but do not try so much to make it a big feed-a-serve it prettily. Let the children plan and help, but keep back some surprise.

Plan a Ritual

Plan a little ritual for Christmas day that they can remember always. Tell them about it ahead of time, so they will enter into the spirit of the program. Perhaps you will begin the day with simple Christmas carols. Perhaps it must be understood that every child will come downstairs and skip to the kitchen without taking the tiniest peek into the living room, on pain of I-don't-know-what. Five minutes to dress, 10 minutes to eat, then perhaps a dignified march into the living room, or perhaps just a mad scramble when Mother says "Go!" Maybe you will have a tree, maybe a gayly decorated box to hold the gifts, maybe a book for each child. Or maybe you will pile every one's things at his place at the breakfast table. Maybe the oldest child will pass the things, maybe the youngest. Maybe Santa Claus will arrive in person. But whatever you do, whether you look at the gifts on Christmas eve or on Christmas morning, make a pretty ceremony out of it that will color the day for all time.

After Christmas dinner be sure to have a quiet time and an outdoor time, a twilight supper and the pleasantest of talk, and get the children early to bed.

"THE GOLDEN GATEWAYS THREE"

If you are tempted to reveal a tale to you some one has told About, another, let it pass before you speak, Three Gates of Gold.

These narrow gates; first, is it true?

Then, is it needful? In your mind Give truthful answer; and the next

Is last and closest; is it kind? And if to reach your lips at last it passes through

These gateways three, then you may tell the tale, Nor fear what the results of speech may be.

He sat and admired it a long time, compared his design with his guide on the box, and it was perfect. He had copied it alone and he had got it right, and it was beautiful. And, having done it once, he had confidence that he could do it again. And not only copy the same design but try a harder one, and when that was done right he could do another and yet another. That little set of cubes provided him hours of pleasure and it was training his eye and hand at the same time, and teaching him accuracy and persistence. How much more enjoyment it gave him than would an electric train, which he would wind up and watch go, 'round and 'round, the same way always.

Wilbert has just learned to toss up a ball and bat it. It is so long ago that I first learned it that I had forgotten it took any training or skill to do it, but his joy in victory brought me as big a thrill as it did him.

Locked Easy

Some of the boys at school could do it, and it looked easy! But time after time he would throw the ball into the air, and before he could swing the bat the ball would be on the ground. Then he would get the bat ready, but when he threw the ball it went too high or too far to the side. At last, almost by accident, it seemed, he tossed the ball just right, and the bat came forward just as it should, and smack! the ball and bat met squarely. "Mother, I can do it! I can!" Then more practice, with more misses than hits, but with growing confidence that it was possible to develop certain skill in those muscles that would make you sure you could hit every time. "Now come and watch me, mother!" Another miss and, crestfallen: "Well, I did do it. Now watch!" And soon a point was reached where ball and boy and bat worked in perfect precision (almost every time). There was a real victory, a study in concentration and study and persistence.

Ruth began work on a pretty little piece she was to play for the club. First she learned the right hand, until the notes tripped from her fingers like drops of water. Then she learned the left hand, with its rich, full chords. Then she tried to play both together—and they didn't hitch. There was one place that went wrong every time. She was discouraged almost to the point of tears. She was ready to give up music entirely. "I'll try once more," she finally announced. And some way, that time, the fingers fell into the right pattern and the sounds flowed forth as they should. "Mother, mother! Listen!" she cried in rapture. "I didn't know it was so pretty." She had been so occupied with the mechanical part that she had had no chance to notice the rich, full harmonies. But, having heard them once, she had patience to practice until she could hear them every time.

Were Promoted

The boys were promoted to blue chambray shirts and overalls "just like Daddy's" some time ago, but last month, for the first time, they got four-buckle arctics that were rubber all the way up; not cloth tops like little folks wear, but rubber just like Daddy's. It was amusing to see them pose before the mirror, when they thought no one was looking, with overalls tucked into arctics with just the right bagginess, hands adjusted in pocket or bib in imitation of Daddy in what we might call the typical American farmer's "sports outfit." Boys are just as vain as girls, but instead of wanting to be beautiful they want to look like someone they admire. Heaven grant they always choose as good a model as they idolize now! Ruth has always suffered the lone-

THE NEW YEAR

I bring you, friends, what the years have brought, Since ever man toiled, aspired or thought—

Days for labor and nights for rest;

And I bring you love, a heaven-born guest;

Space to work in and work to do, And faith in that which is pure and true.

Hold me in honor, and greet me dear,

And sooth you'll find me a Happy Year.

—Margaret Sangster.

MEMORY GEM

Speak a shade more kindly Than the year before;

Pray a little oftener;

Love a little more;

Cling a little closer

To the Father's love;

Life below shall liker grow

To the life above.