

## FEBRUARY

There are a good many things that might be said about February, but the more pertinent ones should be set forth in very fine print. For February has some extremely bad habits. Its reputation is not of the best, despite its famous birthdays and its midmonth festival of love. It starts out with Ground Hog Day, and it ends on the eve of March, and though it has a minimum of days between it usually manages to pack those days with an assortment of weather that is, to say the least, trying to a body that has just endured January. February is something less than nature's pampered darling.

There are places in this hemisphere where February is the beginning of spring, places where mockingbirds sing and swamp maples turn livid with bloom. But not in this latitude. There are also places, beyond the equator to the south, where February is midsummer, with heat that blisters and drought that burns. But not here. February in these parts is the executioner of the mischief which January lacked time or temper to complete. By tradition and statistic, February is the month of snow liberally mixed with ice. And its winds are the blasts of January partaking of the whimsy of March. February is the problem child of the year.

Now and then, of course, February beams. How else could the legend of Ground Hog Day have arisen and persisted? February even brings flowers, sometimes. Such flowers as snowdrops. And some eager souls can see spring in a snowdrop. Such persons still have a bit to learn about February, about spring, and about snowdrops. For instance, that snowdrops and snowflakes have more than a nodding acquaintance.

But February passes, as do all things good and bad. February yields to March, in due time. And no matter what else you can say about March, it turns into April. Stated that way, it's rather simple. It's February, and we can already think about April, by trying hard.

### Man Who Went Back

Sun-tanned, 33-year-old David Ferguson was wounded during the grim struggle around Caen in 1944. So when he and his attractive young wife went to Britain from Canada to visit his native Scotland recently, he rode on the back saddle of their tandem as they pedalled to Dunfermline from London.

David had met Patricia in Toronto after the war and they had graduated together from Toronto University, always planning to visit Britain. On their travels Patricia took pictures of ancient castles, famous buildings and the lovely scenery. With her help, David will show them to his college students this year.

As they rode, David often talked to her about Normandy. "Before we return to Canada, I'll take you to the spot where I was wounded," he promised. So they crossed the Channel and the tandem headed for Caen, now at peace in the sunshine.

David, who served in the North Nova Scotia Highlanders during the war, felt tense with excitement as they drew nearer and nearer to the battlefield he knew so well. Suddenly, as they reached the village of Authie, David cried, "Stop!" to the wife he has never seen.

They had reached the spot where, in 1944, shrapnel from an exploding German shell had robbed him of his sight!

### THE EDITOR'S SONG

If you have a tale to tell,  
Boil it down!  
Write it out and write it well,  
Being careful how you spell;  
Send the kernel, keep the shell;  
Boil it down!

Then, when all the job is done,  
Boil it down!  
If you want to share our fun,  
Know just how a paper's run,  
Day by day from sun to sun,  
Boil it down!

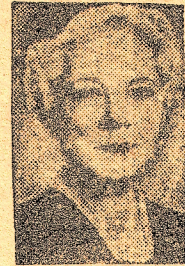
When there's not a word to spare  
Boil it down!  
Heave a sigh and lift a prayer,  
Stamp your foot and tear your hair,  
Then begin again with care—  
Boil it down!

When, all done, you send it in,  
We'll boil it down,  
Where you end there we begin;  
This is our besetting sin;  
With a scowl or with a grin,  
We'll boil it down.

## ANNE HIRST

Your Family Counselor

"Dear Anne Hirst: I am so alone in my trouble! My mother died two years ago and I've been keeping house for Dad, as well as holding an interesting job. Now he is



thinking of marrying again. I don't like the idea. "Living with him has not been easy. He is very autocratic, and though I try to keep things running as Mom did, nothing I do pleases him. This attitude, and my many home duties, keep me nervously upset. He still thinks I'm a child; if a boy appears, he discourages him. Consequently, I have little social life except for girl friends—and you know that isn't enough!"

"I've met this woman; she's a widow with married children. She has gone out her way to be nice to me, and if Dad weren't marrying her I expect I'd enjoy knowing her. But won't she try to curtail my life even more? I've heard of second wives who were so arbitrary, and even jealous of their stepdaughters."

"I was close to Mom, and still miss her terribly. How can Dad think of bringing in someone else to take her place—and so soon? I guess I'm just—"

### ALL MIXED UP

#### CALM DOWN

\* Until you are older, you cannot comprehend your father's loneliness since your Mother died.

\* He has been lost without her, floundering in a morass of confusion as only a devoted husband can. This has contributed to his criticisms of your efforts to keep things going as usual at home; in asserting his authority, he has found an outlet for his grief and turmoil. As to his dislike of boy friends, that reveals his fear that you might marry and leave him.

\* If he marries this widow, I think he will be a changed man. Her companionship and tenderness will assuage his loneliness, and for the first time since he lost your mother, he will relax.

\* I wish you would not dread her coming. As your father's wife, she will take over the management of the house, and free you of all those burdens. You will give over the reins gratefully, ask her what duties she wants you to accept, but leave the real responsibilities to her. She will expect that, and enjoy having a home of her own again to superintend.

\* Having raised a family, she will, I expect, sympathize with your longing for boy friends and encourage them, and then your father will too. Most stepmothers want to make their new husband and family happier than they have been. Give her the benefit of your doubt, and look forward to the marriage.

\* Go ahead hard in this interesting job you have. Make new friends, and enjoy them. You have been deprived too long of the diversions you need so much. I believe your chance to get it is right around the corner.

\* Cheer up! Most stepmothers are wonderful people. Yours will probably be, too.

If you face the problem of hav-



923

### LAURA WHEELER

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ing a stepmother, give her a warm welcome. Most of them are wonderful people, anxious only to make their new life a happy one for everyone concerned. Ask Anne Hirst about anything that is worrying you. Address her at Box 1, 123 Eighteenth St., New Toronto, Ont.

### GIVE AWAY

An elderly woman wishing to impress her clergyman with the fact that she read the Bible frequently took it up as he came in at the door. As she opened it she exclaimed, "Well, how glad I am! Here are my spectacles which I lost a year ago!"

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### CHEESE CORNMEAL FINGERS

Mix and sift into bowl, 1½ c. once-sifted pastry flour (or 1½ c. once-sifted hard-wheat flour), 3 tps. Magic Baking Powder, ¼ tsp. salt. Cut in finely 3 tbs. chilled shortening and mix in ½ c. yellow cornmeal, ¼ c. shredded cheese and 2 tbs. chopped parsley. Make a well in centre, pour in ¾ c. milk and mix lightly with a fork. Knead for 10 seconds on a lightly-floured board and roll out to ¾" thick rectangle; cut into 12 fingers and arrange, slightly apart, on greased baking sheet. Bake in hot oven, 425°, about 15 mins. Serve hot with butter or margarine. Yield—1 dozen fingers.



## CHRONICLES OF GINGER FARM

by Gwendoline P. Clarke

Last week, if you remember, I was wishing we could have just a little more snow. We got it all right... but it wasn't "just a little." Now the lane has filled in to much for me to attempt taking the car out—although I noticed a picture in the paper the other day showing a little English car like ours making its way gaily through deep snow while bigger cars were getting stuck. Just for fun I would like to see what our car would do. In fact I would try it if it were not for giving Partner the trouble of hauling me out, supposing I got stuck.

Right now I am working with one ear cocked for a telephone call as we are expecting visitors this week-end—and frankly, I am little worried. Trying to heat the house against high winds and zero temperature is hard enough when we are alone but to have visitors and not be able to keep them warm and comfortable is a headache. For one thing people always feel the cold more away from home, as they are naturally less active with no ordinary every-day chores to do.

Well, for goodness sakes, it isn't a telephone call I am getting at all, but our visitors themselves. At least this very minute a taxi is chugging up the lane—whether it gets through or not is a question. "Bye for now."

The foregoing was written Friday night. What follows is one of those dreadful tragedies that sometimes strikes with unbelievable swiftness.

Partner's brother Colin and his wife Jessie arrived on our doorstep, carefree and happy, apparently in the best of health and prepared to enjoy a quiet family week-end. We sat around talking until nearly twelve o'clock and then went to bed. Sometime during the night Colin called out to me—"Come Gwen, come and look at Jessie... there's something wrong... she can't speak to me!"

There was indeed something wrong. Poor Jessie was quite unconscious. We sent for the doctor—and he had to walk up our long lane at 12 below zero. Unfortunately, he said there was nothing he could do until she regained consciousness and that we had better make preparations for getting her to hospital first thing in the morning.

Preparations included getting a

**ACHES AND PAINS OF COLDS**

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snowplough to open the lane; an ambulance to take her to hospital; long distance calls to her daughters and to maintain a constant watch at her bedside.

By ten next morning Jessie was in hospital bed and receiving the best of care. Colin came back to dinner as he felt he was only in the way and could be no help at all. Shortly after dinner he was recalled to the hospital... his wife was sinking fast. Hurry... how we wanted to hurry! But the car wouldn't start—12 below had been too much for it. There are all kinds of taxis in town but not one could we get. Colin started out walking. I followed half-an-hour later. At the hospital we sat by Jessie's bed—watching and waiting—wondering if it would be too late when the girls arrived. The bus was due in at 3 o'clock—it was ten minutes late—just when every minute counted. One daughter was in time but not the other two. Betty arrived by plane from North Bay. Joy and I drove to Malton to fetch her. But there we ran into difficulties again. Knowing we could not be there in time we had telephoned ahead to have her paged and advised to wait until we came. She did not get the call and had gone on to Toronto. By means of a lot of telephone calls between the airport and Toronto we finally located her and she came back to Malton. So now we all three are here; our daughter came with one of the girls from Toronto and Bob arrived from Matheson during last night.

The funeral is on Wednesday, so I need hardly say how busy we expect to be from now until then.

What struck us as all so very forcibly at the time is the amazing kindness of our friends and neighbours. Jessie was only known to a few of them yet there are offers of help in the way of accommodation and extra baking coming from so many quarters. Sometimes we are inclined to think that in this day and age people everywhere seem to be growing apart but in a crisis we find there is still plenty of kindness—just as much kindness and help as there always was. And we are very deeply touched and appreciative. It is something we shall always remember. To Colin and his family it has meant a lot—to know that Jessie's last resting place will be among kind and friendly people.

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