

ODD MOMENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article was prepared by Mrs. J. C. Hamilton, R. R. No. 4, Durham, Ontario, and presented by her at the Grey County Rally. We publish excerpts for all to enjoy and from which to derive benefit.

We all have some ODD MOMENTS, no matter what our station in life. Some have utilized these MOMENTS to the full and have had far reaching results in giving encouragement and inspiration to others. There are few who, at some time or another, have not been compelled through illness or accident to themselves or relatives to withdraw for a time from their usual activities.

We may, at these times, feel we are martyrs when tragedy or misfortunes come to us but frequently it takes sorrow or adversity in someone's life to bring about remedies and solutions. For example, when Adelaide Hoodless, on the death of her child, realized her inadequacy in knowing how to care and feed her baby, she thought came to her, if Agricultural Colleges taught men how to care and feed their animals for better health and growth was it not more important that women be given training in the care of their children and homes. As a result the Women's Institute was instigated. Some times troubles may not all be persecutions but may prove a blessing in disguise.

When adversities do beset us, we should not sit down and moan about our troubles but try to find a way around them.

When Winston Churchill was a young man he was a prisoner of war in South Africa during the Boer War. His mother, Lady Churchill, sent him many boxes of carefully chosen books to read and study. Who can tell but that a Higher Hand was preparing Churchill to be a Moses in later life when he led his people through the difficult days of war.

The late President Roosevelt was stricken with infantile paralysis when he was 38 years of age but by great will power and perseverance he conquered his affliction and was able to walk with a cane. He conquered the depression period in 1939 which was worse in the United States than in Canada. He suffered defeat in his first attempt to enter public life. He kept trying. The last great enemy, death, conquered his body but nothing could conquer his spirit. In his indomitable courage, the nation found strength to carry on. The March of Dimes, gathered on his birthdays, have accomplished a great deal to promote research for treatment of this dreaded scourge. Despite Roosevelt's personal discomfort he did not give up but kept studying until he reached the highest position his country could offer.

John Milton, the blind poet, gives comfort in the last line of his well-known poem, "They also serve who only stand and wait". Often some handicapped person is loved and remembered for their patience and cheerfulness when they are helpless to add much to society in other ways.

Sometimes the fortitude and perseverance of many of our blind friends are an inspiration to those of us who can see. Fanny Crosby was blind when she wrote her lovely hymns "Rescue the Perishing", "Tis the Blessed Hour of Prayer" and "Pass me not, O Gentle Saviour". Also Cardinal Newman who wrote "Lead Kindly Light, Amid the Encircling Gloom"—was blind. Annie Johnston Flint who wrote "When Thou Passeth Through the Waters", and other beautiful poems, was an invalid. Robt. Louis Stevenson, who died when quite young, a victim of tuberculosis, left a heritage of lovely verse.

Musical composers are often beset with great difficulties. Rachmaninoff wrote his famous piano concerto when so troubled with anemia that raising his hand was an effort.

During the last twenty-five years of his life, Ludwig Beethoven was growing deaf. It was during these years that he did his best work. He never heard performed a note of his Ninth Symphony, considered by many his greatest work. The symphony closes with an ode of joy.



BURFORD W.I. FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY GROUP
Burford Women's Institute celebrated its Fiftieth Anniversary. Shown above are the present executive, past presidents and special guests.

Handel wrote "The Messiah" with its glorious "Hallelujah Chorus" when bankrupt and ill. Other great musicians, Chopin, Shubert, Mozart had to contend with poverty, and ill-health but their music shows no pity for self, no defeat, no bitterness. It does reveal yearning, sorrow, struggle but its keynote reflects hope and joy and faith.

My mother used to tell my two younger sisters and myself, when we were youngsters, that everyone should learn to knit; that if eye-sight failed, knitting was something you could still do.

The ability to rise above handicaps and courageously face disaster have always commanded admiration, not only in accomplishing great things but in our every day life.

To most of us the ODD MOMENT is of no importance. Every day we suppose there are millions of ODD MOMENTS permitted to slip away, unheeded and unused into the forgotten spaces of time.

It may be interesting to recall what men and women of different calibre have accomplished with the ODD MOMENT.

The ODD MOMENTS were apparently the busiest in the lives of outstanding citizens. There was Martin Luther, for instance, who published an entire library of books. Asked how he had time to translate the Bible in addition to his other work, he said, "I do a little every day." John Bunyan improved minutes that would otherwise be wasted. He wrote "Pilgrim's Progress" during his imprisonment in Bedford Park. Similarly, imprisonment in the Tower of London set Sir Walter Raleigh writing "The History of the World," a standard work of all time. Kirk White learned the Greek nouns and verbs while going to and from a lawyer's office. Dr. Burney, famous musical author, learned the French and Italian languages while travelling on horseback from one pupil to another. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote many a word of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" while waiting for bread to bake. Thomas Edison, the wizard of electricity, converted every ODD MOMENT into a busy MOMENT for the benefit of the world.

I know of a young woman who, at eleven o'clock every week-day morning during the summer holidays, went out on her verandah, gave a little whistle and her own young son and as many as seventeen children have come running. They would sit down and she would read them a story. It took a few ODD MOMENTS of her time but the children had been playing on the street for a couple of hours and while they relaxed for a few MOMENTS, their little minds were also refreshed and perhaps started on a new trend of thought. The children looked forward each day to these ODD MOMENTS.

ODD MOMENTS and handicaps have played a large part in many of our destinies.

Many women have spent half their lives over a cookstove without a

thought except to please their families. Then came a personal crisis and, faced with a husband's illness—financial troubles or the loneliness of being a widow, they turned to their kitchen skill for help.

One Christmas Mrs. Irene Glenn of Long Island had little money to buy ornaments for her Christmas tree. So she filled up the spaces with gingerbread figures. Next Christmas five mothers came around asking to buy novelties for their Christmas trees. To-day, adapted to all seasons, the gingerbread ornaments are made all year round in the Glenn kitchen and are sold from ten cents to a dollar a-piece.

One day Jane B. Smith was walking home from the grocery store, carrying an unaccustomed jar of salad dressing, when the thought came to her that she could use up her ODD MOMENTS and make salad dressing from her sister's pet recipe. Her first jars were promptly cleaned off the grocer's shelves and she has now developed a real business.

Mrs. Rush, the maker of Martha Ann products, wasn't looking for fame when she made Christmas cakes for her friends. A clerk tried to sell one of these friends a cake, when she replied, "You can't sell me a fruit cake because I have found one at home that would make yours taste like gingerbread."

These were fighting words to H. Hicks and Son Inc. They demanded proof, the friend provided a sample and it made such an impression that a dozen cakes were ordered. Mrs. Rush filled the order and named her first commercial product after her baby daughter Martha Ann.

Next year Hicks called for 500 cakes and a large business developed from those ODD MOMENTS when she made cakes as Christmas gifts for her friends.

Kenneth Smith, the genial motor-man and conductor on the Lakeside line in Baltimore, has found a way to utilize his waiting time between trolley trips. Five years ago dense underbrush and a thicket marked the half acre loop where his run ended. But Mr. Smith, who had seven minutes to waste before he was due to turn back, began putting those few minutes to work.

He cleaned out the brush and weeds and turned the unkempt loop into a garden. Now among the red oaks and poplars bloom Mexican roses, petunias, zinnias, iris and violets. White-washed cobblestones border smooth lawns; brick and cinder paths lead to a barbecue pit. On a tall pole the American flag flies daily—centre of a neighbourhood beauty spot created by one man in MOMENTS that might have flitted away.

ODD MOMENTS can be of great value in reading to a child, as these few lines imply—

"You may have tangible wealth untold
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold
Richer than I, you can never be
For I had a mother who read to me."

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Alfred Watt, O.B.E.
Died Nov. 29, 1948

We mourn the loss of our beloved leader Mrs. Alfred Watt, honorary president of the Associated Country Women of the World and founder of the Women's Institutes in Great Britain. Throughout her many active years of service Mrs. Watt has been keenly interested in Women's Institute work and its place in community and world affairs.

Born in Collingwood, Ont., Mrs. Watt was the daughter of Henry Robertson, K.C., and was one of the first women to graduate from the University of Toronto. After graduating, she entered newspaper work in New York City. She married Dr. Alfred Watt and went to live in Victoria and at William Head, B.C., where her husband was superintendent of quarantines for British Columbia. She was prominent in public life of British Columbia and was a member of the senate of the provincial university.

She and her sons left Canada for England in 1913 after the death of her husband and during the First World War in the United Kingdom she organized the Women's Institutes after the Canadian model. The immediate object was to conserve and increase the British food supply but the Women's Institutes continued to become an important part of English country life and to fulfil vital functions in the Second World War.

Between the wars Mrs. Watt organized the Associated Country Women of the World, our international alliance of Women's Institutes and kindred bodies in different countries. International conferences were held in Vienna, Stockholm, Washington and London. Mrs. Watt travelled around the world in 1936-37 in the interests of this movement.

At the beginning of the Second World War Mrs. Watt was in North America. She undertook many phases of war work, including a regional conference of the A.C.W.W. in Ottawa, and the organization of "American seeds for British soil" in the United States. In this enterprise, as in the Women's Institutes, she received the support of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary.

Mrs. Watt held the post of president of the Associated Country Women of the World from the time of its inception until the triennial conference held in Amsterdam September, 1947. She was succeeded by Mrs. Raymond Sayre of Iowa, U.S.A.

We quote Miss Beatrice Taylor, "To be in the presence of this small, eager woman was to enjoy something of her own spirit and purpose. She had a rapier-keen mind, a ready wit and a big grasp of essentials. On the public platform she made her points with ease and integrity. She believed in women sufficiently to devote her lifetime to them and brought the experience of an informed and resourceful mind to their advancement when a new effort presented itself. Her long public service covered two world wars and the troubled post war periods. She approached it with zest tempered by judgment. She saw no task as impossible and admitted no barriers to the full human Christian life."

We pay tribute to her memory. May the inspiration of her life long devotion to Women's Institute work and her fine accomplishments encourage us to grasp more keenly our opportunities for service.

A.P.L.

There is no limit to the value of the ODD MOMENT in the hands of those who use it.