

FIRST PRIZE AWARD FOR A. C. W. W. COMPETITION

A COUNTRY WOMAN'S DAY

by
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Evening. The April dusk spreads a veil of violet-blue over the pale gold of the western sky. A robin twitters from the big spruce on the lawn. And from the great concert-hall in the marshlands comes the first notes of nature's springtime orchestra, the frogs.

I have just tucked our six-year-old in for the night, almost too drowsy to say her prayers, and pause at the open window to draw a long, long breath, savoring the sweetness of freshly-turned earth and growing things.

The day has been long, yet good. A typical day? On the farm? Somebody said there was no such thing. If it is interpreted as a day well ordered and planned, according to calendar and clock, I quite agree. On this farm, a typical day is one that starts out with excellent intentions of orderliness, but gets itself hopelessly side-tracked somewhere between sunrise and sundown. Today, for instance.

It was the robin's cheery whistle that awakened me at daybreak this morning. But quite apart from his insistent "Get up! Get up!", spoiling a delightful snooze, another thought prodding in the back of the mind sent me stumbling downstairs. Three hundred baby chicks were also awakening to a new day. And to a wide-awake baby chick, there are three chief aims—eating, drinking and doing its best to commit suicide.

Pulling on my old sweater, came that well-known envious twinge as I thought of my city sisters, whose before-breakfast chores consisted of turning a button on the electric range. Then self-pity was forgotten in the exquisite glory of the April morning. Chick feed in one hand and a pail of water in the other, I stopped for a long moment to drink in the beauty of it—eastern sky awash with rose and saffron, a filmy white mist over the meadows like a bridal veil, the orchard a veritable cascade of melody.

Then the outsurge of warm air as I opened the brooder-house door, and the noisy clamor of the three hundred. I replenished fire, feed and water, rescued two or three venturesome imps from strangling themselves and couldn't resist cuddling one of them against my cheek. Now that envious twinge was replaced by one of pity—pity for the city woman who has never held in the palm of her hand a tiny ball of living down, never felt the clinging of slender toes nor caught the blink of impudent, beady eyes.

But in those fleeting morning hours there is "no time to stand and stare." Already the smoke from John's morning fires was ascending, and from the barn came the clatter of milk-pails and the first erratic snorts of the milking machine motor. Soon, we hope, the quiet efficiency of hydro will take its place, but in the meantime our gasoline-run milker is a great boon.

Nevertheless the woman's hand can still find plenty to do at chore time. The laying flock must be fed and watered and first call sent up to the young fry. For her nine years, Joan is really getting quite good at dressing herself and Margie, but they do need plenty of time. Then there's the separator to attend, calves and cats to feed, finally breakfast for the human family.

The rush and bustle over at last, missing books and rubbers hunted down, John off to the field and the girls to school a great calm settled upon the house and me while I began to plan. First there was the weekly wash to be put to soak while breakfast dishes and milking utensils were scrubbed and scalded. If all went well I should be finished and the house in order by noon. Then a brief space to relax and look over my new mag-

azine, phone Jane Stewart and Fanny Carswell about the meeting of the Women's Institute programme committee. Then — oh, joy! — a long, golden afternoon in my garden. My fingers itched to get into the warm, brown earth, among the tulips and daffodils and sprouting perennials.

But "the best-laid schemes o' mice and men", says Rabbie Burns, "gang aft agley." The washing was coming along nicely when a sudden commotion arose from the front lawn—a commotion, alas, only too well known. John's blue shirt in one hand and a cake of soap in the other, I flew around the house, to behold with horror a dozen young pigs in my precious flower border, rooting and grunting with destructive glee.

The shriek I gave would have done credit to Hecate herself, descending upon the intruders with blood in my eye and the blue shirt waving above my head and calling frantically for help from John and the dog. But husbands and dogs on this farm are like the policemen in certain cities—seldom around when needed. By the time they appeared, flurried and apologetic, I had the pigs scurrying and squealing through the barnyard gate and with a few heated remarks to any who cared to listen anent pigs in general and this herd in particular, I went back to view the damage through outraged tears and attempt whatever repairs I could.

It was not quite so bad as had first appeared, although my thoughts were still bitter as I returned to my washing. Here again, I reflected, my city sisters had the advantage. Into their lovely flower beds no pig or roving chick ever dared set foot. I sighed and plumped John's shirt back into the tub.

With that the good man appeared again, announcing grimly that he had the roaming so-and-so's well fenced in this time and adding that he was about to drive up to the farmers' co-operative for feed. Was there anything I needed?

Yes, I needed laying mash and another bag of chick starter. Going through the kitchen to make a note of this in my poultry account, I glanced at the clock. Eleven already! Well, lunch would be a simple meal. There was the remains of Sunday's roast to warm over in the gravy, baked potatoes and apples in the oven, hot still from the wash-day fire. They could bake nicely while I finished the rinsing. Then the phone rang.

It was John. Bill Smith, the co-op. field man, was in the village. Was it O.K. to bring him home for lunch? For a moment my heart went plop, then I heard myself saying that of course, we were always glad to see Bill Smith. So we were. Bill Smith is, as John puts it, a good guy. But guests on washday!

Happily, Bill Smith is a friend for whom one never needs to fuss. The roast had been a big one, and he probably liked potatoes baked in their jackets and apples with thick cream. I could open a jar of home-canned corn and Saturday's rolls could be warmed in the oven. That done, I had just time to tidy my hair, dim the highlights on my nose with a dab of powder and slip into a fresh house frock when the car drove into the yard, bringing John and Bill, the children and the bags of feed.

After all, lunch was a pleasant interlude. When Joan and Margie had gone back to school, we three sat around the table having a third cup of coffee and discussing such things as the farm forum season just closed, co-operative enterprises, food contracts with Britain and the F.A.O., topics upon which people like Bill Smith often bring a fresh viewpoint. It was relaxing and enjoyable, but I quite forgot my magazine, the phone calls and the washing still in the tub!

When at long last it was finished and fluttering on the line, I glanced guiltily at the week-end's accumulation of dust, shut my eyes to it and got into my old sweater and slacks.

Two hours still remained of the golden afternoon before chore time. The garden called with a more appealing voice than the dusty furniture.

I had the two hours. Two hours of grubbing in mother earth, of digging and weeding and transplanting. There were, of course, a few minor interruptions. The children scampering home, for instance, reporting a new robin's nest in the maple tree and begging for cookies and milk, all in a breath. And later, an urgent call to come see a beautiful white calf, with soft muzzle and unsteady legs, being carried home on John's shoulders from some retreat among the pines where old Lady Primrose had hidden it. But those were not unpleasant interruptions. The two hours were still a delight.

Chores again, and supper. Our farmhouse living-room never seems quite so happy in the warm glow of the lamps. But I'm dreaming again of softly-shaded electric lights as I tuck the litted one into bed. Here in the Ottawa Valley we have waited long and patiently for the harnessing of the turbulent waters all about us.

My day isn't yet over. I must go down, soon, and see that Joan takes her nose out of "Alice in Wonderland" long enough to study her spelling lesson. Also, I still have to phone Jane and Fanny about that committee meeting, do a spot of mending and make the last trip with a flashlight to the brooder-house.

The birds are silent, now, save for the plaintive call of a lone whip-poor-will. The silver sickle of the moon hangs low in the sky. The frog chorus still goes on, diminuendo, crescendo, diminuendo. The April night is beautiful. The great Giver of all things has bestowed on us a good day.

How Women's Institutes May Help Residents In Country Homes for the Aged

The following suggestions have been sent to us by Mr. L. E. Ludlow, Director, Homes for the Aged Branch, Department of Public Welfare.

Women's Institutes might sponsor or organize regular entertainments and get-togethers, such as birthday parties. These might be held each three months and the residents' birthdays falling within that period would be those celebrated. Sing-songs and card parties are entertaining.

Bingo games have been found popular in some of the Homes. Small prizes may be given of, perhaps, 10c a game or there-abouts. The whole evening's entertainment would not run into very much money.

Show moving pictures. (Two or three of the County Homes have their own movie projectors and sound equipment, which were gifts from various organizations.)

Arrange picnics and drives.

See that there is sufficient reading material, such as daily and weekly newspapers, periodicals, etc., also playing cards, card tables, checkers, jig-saw puzzles, crossword puzzles, etc.

Friends and relatives of some of the residents may live some distance away and not be able to visit the home very often, while in other cases some of the residents may not have friends or relatives. These people would most likely enjoy having someone visit them.

Other persons might like to have letters written for them, a little personal shopping done, or those with poor vision or illiterate might appreciate having someone read to them.

In one Home an organization sends a birthday card to each one of the residents. Arrangements could be made for the spiritual advisors of the various residents to visit the Home on

F.W.I.C. TWEEDSMUIR CUP COMPETITIONS, 1949-1951

This most valuable and interesting project begun during the 1945-47 Biennial term, through the generosity of the Lady Tweedsmuir, has created much enthusiasm throughout the Provinces.

Lady Tweedsmuir donated to F.W.I.C., 3 sterling silver cups to be awarded:—

1. For Tweedsmuir History Books.
2. For a handicraft project.
3. For an Essay (or for cultural advancement).

Following the recommendations of the Tweedsmuir Cup Competitions Committee, the following are the competitions decided upon, and the regulations concerning same, for the years 1949-51:—

A. Tweedsmuir Histories.

That the History be a group effort and not the work of one individual appointed by the Institute.

That the size of the book be left to the discretion of the branch Institute.

That it be loose leaf and provision be made for a rider between the pages.

That special attention be given to the quality of the paper. If possible a good quality of Bond paper should be procured.

Suggestions by Dr. Spragge, Judge, 1949 of Tweedsmuir Histories:—

1. That it would add very much to the value of these histories were the sources of information given, wherever possible.
2. The source and date of each newspaper clipping should be given.
3. Pictures should have titles giving the place, date, and as far as possible, the names.
4. That it would be advantageous to have the books made up in the order given in the instructions.

B. Handicraft.

Hooked Rug of Typical Provincial or Canadian Design.

To be judged for suitability of (1) size, (2) design, (3) colour and (4) workmanship.

- A. Size — 27" x 45".
- B. Material — rug to be made of used woollen material.
- C. Type of Rug — floor rug (A conventionalized design, not scenery).

C. Essay. The subject—DEMOCRACY BEGINS WITH YOU, was suggested by Mrs. Raymond Sayre, President A.C.W.W.

1. Written on one side of paper only
2. 1,000 words.
3. Size of paper—8½" x 11".
4. Same judging score as 1947-49. Judges are to be chosen by the Sub-Executive Committee.

Only two entries may be made in each class from each Province.

These two entries must have been approved by the respective Provincial officers.

No competitor who already has been awarded a Tweedsmuir Cup, may compete in the same class in succeeding years.

Detailed instructions for preparing the Tweedsmuir History may be obtained from the Loan Library.

The F.W.I.C. will present a silver souvenir spoon to the "runner-up" in each class.

other days than Sunday and talk with the individual residents.

Some residents having friends or relatives within a short radius of the Home would enjoy an afternoon visit with them and perhaps members of the Women's Institutes might arrange to take them on these visits.

Assistance can be given in instructing the residents in the making of useful articles, many of which can be made from salvage.