

The Rural Home

ACWW Essays Standing Second and Third in Ontario

Our Home

By Mrs. Marshall Bethune (Westforth County)

MY ALARM CLOCK is not the only one of its kind but I can truthfully say no other device would be as effective. There is no setting nor adjusting for none is possible. Nor is there any jangling or buzzing—just the cooing and gurgling of our baby girl.

This "alarm clock" sounds at approximately six-thirty each morning and summons me to a day brimming with activities—but first we must have our fun. Before I dress I bring Baby from her crib into our bedroom and prop her up in the centre of the bed where she gazes wide-eyed at the sun streaming in the east window and tries to catch the shadows on the bed clothes. Our morning toilet is interrupted by a brisk game of peek-a-boo or patty-cake or a new game which might be called "who can make the queerest sounds." Needless to say our daughter finds my efforts feeble competition.

A quick glance at the clock in the radio on the night-table convinces me we have dawdled long enough. We do take time however, to preen ourselves before the huge mirror on my dresser. I sometimes think I'll trade clothes closets with my husband because while mine is lined with cedar his closet door has a full-length mirror!

Downstairs we go. Each morning I get a new thrill from seeing our sunny kitchen, white trimmed with red. We laid the grey and red rubber tile on the kitchen floor and are quite proud of our efforts. The counters and table are covered with grey arborite, heat-proof and stain resistant. My curtains are white trimmed with red and even my utensils and gadgets have touches of colour. I have ample cupboard space, enough in fact that I use three cupboards for baby's clothes and have allowed my husband a drawer familiarly termed a "junk drawer." The variety of its contents is amazing!

We were lucky in being able to match the counter on baby's private table, her "baby butler," with our kitchen counters. She sits in her butler, a contrivance more useful and a great deal safer than a high-chair, while I put the coffee to perk on my electric stove.

Baby's ecstatic waving of arms and kicking of legs announces the arrival of my husband. Orange juice, cold from the refrigerator, fresh milk poured into a pitcher, and breakfast is ready to be eaten. Alas! before I enjoy my coffee and toast, hot from the toaster and oozing with butter, I must spoon pablum into our now impatient child. Food disappears with

surprising rapidity. Then with the bottle in his left hand and toast in his right, my husband "administers" her formula and I can enjoy my breakfast.

Breakfast finished, the baby plays in her "butler" until I have washed the dishes in the sink and put them away. An abundance of hot soft water is a blessing I can enjoy to the full, for we have a large cistern. Our hard water comes from a drilled well and is piped to the kitchen so I have hot soft water and cold hard water at my disposal.

Dry, warm and fed, our cherub is soon asleep in her carriage on the front porch.

Back to the kitchen I go to pick up baby's toys and sweep the floor, the back hall and the washroom across the hall. Our washroom is really a two-piece bath but contains a broom closet, hooks for my husband's work clothes, a place for his boots and a mirrored medicine cabinet so necessary in a farm home. Having a washroom downstairs saves a great many steps.

In the den the papers on the desk need straightening as usual and here I never fail to admire the view from the picture window in front of which the desk sits. It is no panorama of mountains; it is not a lake mirroring the surrounding trees; there are no dainty deer in the picture. I see instead, our green pasture in which lie placidly chewing their cud, our contented black and white cows. I see my garden green with the promise of fresh vegetables and juicy strawberries and beyond this stretches acres of growing grain. Must I draw the drapes? If I do not the sun will pour in making the room too hot for comfort. Through the open double doors I can see into the living room. The tulips in the vase on the little mahogany table in front of the bay window are losing their petals. I'm glad I don't have to buy flowers. Through the window I can see the cars whizzing along the highway.

Our mushroom coloured chesterfield has a nylon covering and if a spot gets on it the covering can be washed with soap and water. Such a comfort! Until very recently we used the den furniture in the living room, but now we have our chesterfield with its matching chair and a contrasting red one. We bought a trilight, a white and gold table lamp and a nest of mahogany tables last week and just today the man came to hang our drapes. What a pleasure it is to look at my living room furnished at last. The den has its own suite back again. When the winds howl next winter I'll turn up the temperature on the thermostat, light a fire in our stone fire-place, munch a crisp Spy apple and enjoy the evenings in