The Free Press Short Story

Bertha Reforms the Family

ALICE DYAR RUSSELL

lain had no great opinion of sewing machine, her own ability as housekeeper. and she admired her elder daughter's precise and orderly activities immensely. When friends and neighbors inquired how with her frail health she was able to keep her large family so well clothed, fed, and in such conspicuously happy spirits, she would smile and say Oh, the poor things have to put ap with a good deal; but love and laughter mixed with judicious neglect do work wonders. And, of course, I have Ber-

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Her friends would agree that it certainly was fortunate she had Bertha; for, besides this eldest girl there was Benny, aged fifteen, generally described as a perfect imp; John, in his third year high school, an excellent student, but facitum and shy to a repelling degree and Margery, an adorable but delicat child of three, who required an unusual amount of motherly attention. Chamberlain was a man not only burden sed with the conduct of a large exacting business, but a public-spirited citizen, much called upon by civic organ-Intions and Welfare Committees. H doved his home and his children, but

had neither time nor thought to spen upon the intimate machinery of their existence. The Chamberlains' was not a luxuriou home: ends did not meet without careful planning, and help in the kitchen was always uncertain. Fortunately Bertha was willing to wait a year before going to college, and as she was neither frivol ous nor indolent, but strong, serious, and competent, her mother found her indispensable. This young woman was convinced, moreover, that although she accomplished much under her mother's tolerant sway, the results were nothing

to those which could be accomplished Chamberlain's abilities were to be put to a test. The mother had borne too long a series of wearing headaches: and her husband insisted that she go to a skilled coculist in a large city near by. The decision had come upon an invitation for a month's visit from an old school friend

in Central City. leave everything in my hands." Bertha assured her mother with dignity.

Mrs. Chamberlain must have been visited by a sudden qualm of misgiving, however, for in spite of her 'daughter's warning, "Mother, there isn't time!" she ran into the kitchen for a last word with Ida, the help, "Ida," she sa'd hurriedly. "I am leaving Bertha in charge, of course, but I am depending on you, too."

The one addressed, a tall, gaunt person of middle age, glanced up with a gloomy and cryptic expression. "It shall never be said I don't know my duty, ma'ant."

"Ida," Mrs. Chamberlain whispered it quiltily in her ear. Don't faintest semblance of a smile, and Mrs. Chamberlain wrote to his wife. Chamberlain fled.

"Everything depends on system." must work out a system," said Bertha to herself, home again from the station. "If mother only used system."

Bertha worked late in her own room that night. Her final act before going to bed was to pin up beside her bureau a sheet of paper bearing several redink items in her large, neat script. AIMS

Hitch your wagon to a star. (Emer-

else what's a heaven for? (Browning.) To instill habits of general tidiness

(especially in Benny.) Note on chivalry and the manivirtues: Boys should not be ashamed to help their sisters with house-

IL BEAUTY AND DECORUM.

To instill a deeper respect for author-Discourage interference and familiarity. Symbols are helpful things. In the morning John and Benny discovered little slips of paper at their breakfast plates. Ida had one on the

1. Every article found out of place will be sent to the Armenians. 2. Set the table for breakfast alternate

kitchen table. Benny's read:

alternate evenings. every Saturday, I will give you ten to eat everything she wanted. And then home

on Sweets. Make up your own bed. Sew on your own buttons. Do not ask where anything is. I will not tell.

5. Do no talk to Ida during meals. 6. Go to bed at seven instead of eight Rise at six instead of seven

Numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, were duplicated on John's slip. In addition: 5. Be on time at meals, or you won't get | mediately put an end to coasting after any. Only one helping of potatoes, school

Cut Down On Starches. Go to bed at nine. I will take your

lamp away from you. The boys exchanged papers with each

color and a determined glint in her cool known him to display."

"I think mother does let her have

Benny started to say something, but swallowed a lump in his throat instead. he wished his mother were home. Chamberlain had also started to said something else. "Where do I come work needs to be let alone!" in?" he inquired respectfully.

vance. 'Oh, Father, if you only would! didn't dare ask, but

"Fire ahead. I can be as heroic John and Benny."

you wouldn't read the paper while to market to be met by that person, arms you eat! I intend to introduce some akimbo, a frown on her face: and I know coffee can't be good for things."

you. There's a little booklet that says-" Still—is there anything else?"

you to let Joéy Barker go, and have could go to your lit'ry meetin'!" John and Benny do the chores." (Groans from the victims.) "It will be such a good thing for the boys!"

"Joey needs the job. about my school work, huh?" Mr. Chamberlain hesitated.

beseeched Bertha in an intense idea. Your mother-"

ate reformer with scorn. dear, of course, but-"

her father dryly, and escaped

brow lowered like a thunderstorm, and thout plenty of doughnuts and cookies. would tell her what to do!

Ida looked at her a full minute: then

"You won't want to."

he did indeed scramble his belongings effort she calmed herself and returned trying: together in a terrified hurry on his sis- to soothe the sick child. gathering. He endeavored to do his and in walked that person herself, by share of the chores assigned with no her side the truant Benny. more than a to-be-expected amount of his monthly school report came out, with marks far below his average, his appearance at the dinner table that evening not so happy as Bertha. suggested that he had been crying. ity in the minds of the lower class. the system broke down at any point; it How did you happen to come?" did with Margery, the only one who had seemed to find the soft spot in Bertha's heart. The older sister adored the pretty Benny?" baby, and liked nothing better than to pet and spoil her. The child pined so mother answered evenly, and Bertha

> the child so peevish! lain's absence, Benny's teacher stopped heard your voice, Mother," he said, putthe efficiency expert on the street and ting a hand on her shoulder. That was ported to the principal for bad behavior three times in the last week; and he has failed in all his lessons. If this continues, he will not make his grade." Bertha im-

The next Sunday, Judge Lovett, one the only way I could get my thesis done." of her father's old friends, drew her confidentially aside after church.. "Your fortably from the shelter of her mother's father cannot be well," he told her with arms. other/ and snickered in an aggravating real solicitude. "A nervous, rundown condition is indicated by an extreme ir- lain, "he'll be home soon. He had an "I mean it," said Bertha, with rising ritability, such as I have never before appointment first. I saw him at the cabbage leaves alternately in a kettle or

missed Benny, or rather, evidence of usual activities. She searched John out in the fastness of his room, "Where is Benmy?" she saked pleasantly. "He's not emptied the ashes or split the kindling for Ida."

"I don't know where he is. Run away, maybe. Good idea!" growled John, his eye on his papers. "I'd run, too, if I knew of a spot where there were no

Bertha overlooked this. "You will have to look for him, and you may as well empty the ashes and split the kindling yourself, John. Ida isn't in very good numor this morning." "I may as well not!" John rose and

steered his sister to the door by the elbow. "Whenever I sit down to get some work done, it's 'John, go to the store and get the soap I forgot!' 'John, now don't be late to supper!' John, just run over and take Elsie this wool! John, did you make up your bed?' John, did you shake the furnace?' Great guns. Bertha, it used to strike mother somesomething; but changed his mind and times that a fellow doing high school

The girl struggled to free herself, but His daughter rushed to meet the ad- her brother pushed her relentlessly out of the room and shut the door. An hour later, when in desperation she went up as to find him, he was gone; he did not appear at dinner time, nor did Benny, Before that hour, however, there had time at meals! It will be so much easier been a passage with Ida: Bertha had come in from her Saturday morning trip

subject of current interest at every meal. "It simply went out of my head, Ida;" way to use every left-over. There is a Then, please let me make you a cereal apologized Bertha: "I was worrying difference between those who spend the drink instead of coffee. It's cheaper, about Benny. I don't usually forget least and those who manage well

"Yes, yes-" A faint cloud settled on remind you of 'em." Bertha had promis-Mr. Chamberlain's brow. "I know, but ed to call at the home of Ida's sister. I have drunk coffee for twenty-five years. which lay on her way, and inquire after a sick child. "And me fool enough to "Oh, Father, you're so good! I want give up my afternoon yesterday, so's you left-overs into the menus for the follow-

"I'm sorry, Ida." "Sorry you may be," spoke the queen overs. of the pitchers, beginning to take off her "See here I can stand it without hav- apron ... "I made no complaint. Miss ing so much good done me!" John burst Bertha, when you put a cap on me, and me not fifty! nor when you come into my kitchen with your upsetting ways "Father!" nor when John and Benny was set to do the work of him as knew how. There warn't a thing you asked but I done But such being the wish of your ma." remember that moderation is not a bad hung up her apron. "But now I think I'll be stepping down myself to see how "Moderation!" exclaimed the passion- Polly gets on, and it might be I'd not be coming back. It might be I'd feel Mother's - a more comfortable like with folks that ain't so high-toned, but have some human "I am aware that your mother posses- feelings in 'em!" With this final shot appetizier. The small thin slices are ses a few redeeming qualities," remarked the indignant one left Bertha to con- spread with cream cheese mixed with a template alone the scattered preparations There was less difficulty with Ida than for dinner, and the disorder of a half- radish, rolled and a sprig of parsley put Bertha anticipated. To be sure, her completed weekly cleaning.

"I think, Mother, that you can safely her accents seemed infused with vine- tasks when a sad cry from Margery smote or a fruit-cocktail. They have an exgar, but she said, "I'll wear them little upon her ear. A swift examination of cellent flavor and are easy to handle. fool caps and aprons, and hand around the flushed, heavy-eyed child made it At the actual moment of parting, the vegetables on a tray, if that's what plain even to inexperience that some- lar. It is really no more than a pan of you want, guess t'won't hurt me none, thing was wrong, but Bertha could hit biscuit dough topped with a highly and I'll put 'Miss' on your name, when upon no clue to the child's evident ill- seasoned meat mixture, covered with an-I don't forgit. As to the rest, though, my ness. She dropped her work, and sat other layer of biscuit dough and baked experience, which is considurable, tells rocking Margery in a big chair, longing This mixture is cut into squares and me boys ain't going to be good-natured for the noon hour to come. Her father served piping hot. Some people like it

Your ma believed in mixing work and Dinner time came and passed; the milk gravy. boys did not appear; Mr. Chamberlain of did not appear. Bertha remembered he had a special piece of work on hand which might well be keeping him down town. She tried to telephone, and found shredded chicken with mushrooms, sweet the line out of commission. She assured herself that Benny or John must A week went by. "We are rapidly come soon; they would not stay away all baking pan, topped with buttered crumbs day. They did not come, however; and and baked until brown. The best ever finally the girl went into Benny's room chicken salad is made by combining the stay away long enough, you won't need to investigate. An absurd little valise cold chicken with fresh pineapple, al-I to come back." He added a postcript, was missing; also his best coat and hat. monds and seeded white grapes. John's words, "Run away, maybe," re-Bertha congratulated herself that turned, and for a moment atter dismay habits of order were becoming fixed in and terror seized the head of the house. her brothers. Since Benny had lost his She could not yield to panic, for she beloved fur mittens to the Armenians, heard Margery crying for her. With an

ter's approach, but with much unpleasant The intolerably long afternoon somemuttering; and since John had been how wore away. Dusk set in. Margery, obliged to go to school twice, breakfast- resting in her sister's arms, fell into a less, because he could not stop work on light sleep; Bertha sat still as a mouse a beautiful physics problem, he did ap- while a few weary, tears wet her cheeks pear promptly at meals, but his counten- She was thinking of her mother longance cast no sunshine upon the family ingly when the door suddenly opened

Margery opened her eyes and with prompting on Bertha's part, but when plaintive sound of joy, went straight into her mother's arms, and nestled there Her face was a sight to see, but she was mother, if you knew how I wanted you!

> "I was homesick." "But Benny. Where did

"Oh, I hapened to pick him up!" pitifully for her mother during the first not know until long after, that Benny days, that Bertha could refuse her noth- with a determination born of desperaing; and with such a beginning, there tion, and a shrewdness of which no one was naturally no end. Margery began had dreamed him capable, had taken mornings. Peel potatoes for dimner to stay up late at night, and in the his savings, boarded an early train to afternoons she was seldom compelled to Central City, and with the aid of a . Instead of your molasses candy pull take her usual nap. She was allowed kindly policeman, brought his mother

cents to put in the bank. Cut Down Bertha wondered what could be making Bertha had time to say no more, before a noise on the stairs In the third week of Mrs. Chamber- John's leaning approach. 'I thought I gave news." "Benny has had to be re- all he said, but his face had never been

"John! Where have you been?" sputtered Bertha. She would really be indignant with John.

"I took the oil heater, and went up into the attic for the day. That was "Daddy?" murmured/ Margery com-

Quick Lunch next his office as we came

for a cup of coffee. You know father

needs that when he's working hard."

"I'm hungry," announced Benny. "Of course!" His mother was brisk "Run out, Bertha, dear, and tell-Ida to give us supper right away." "Ida's left she was-mad."

"Then, John," said Mrs. Chamberlain, "you'll have to go down and ask her to ome back. Tell her I've come home and I need her." heat two minutes. Add sliced onion and

"What if she won't come?" Bertha's tone was one of doubt and melancholy. "Oh she'll come!" replied Mrs. Chamberlain, and it was a tribute to Bertha's new-found respect for her mother that she was convinced Ida would. "And now for Margery." continued he

mother, who had been deftly loosening the little girl's clothes. "She seems to be pretty tired and feverish, and she will take the place of good hash, which needs to go to bed more than anything may be served to use up the left-over The girl gave a quick, appraising look beef hash made into cakes and topped around the circle of happy, contented

WHAT TO DO WITH LEFT-OYER

MEATS By Barbara B. Brooks

"Oh. Mother," she sighed, "how

material, and who finds some interesting

"No, not when your ma's around to housekeeping when there seems to be wide and varied collection of food in the refrigerator. This time arrives especially after a big Sunday dinner or a holiday feast. The woman who is wise fits the ing days. And if she is clever, the family will not recognize these foods as left-

We are going to talk particularly about left-over meats. They may be used in salads, sandwiches, stews, omelets, or in creamed mixtures. Left-over ham i delicious chopped, mixed with a small amount of chopped green pepper and onion and combined with beaten eggs for an omelet. This egg mixture is sometimes used as a sandwich filling and is served under the name of Denver

Pieces of dried beef which are left after making enough creamed dried beef on toast for the family may be used as an small amount of mustard and horseinto one end. These little rolls may She was in the midst of many weary accompany a jellied soup, tomato juice

There are dozens of ways of using leftover chicken and sometimes we like it better remade than we do originally. One of the nicest ways is to combine the breads and a thick white sauce. This mixture is put into a casserole or shallow

A vegetable and meat combination, especially stuffed vegetables, is always welcomed by the family. The following recipes are all interesting and worth

VEGETÄBLE MEAT CASSEROLE

3 medium potatoes

1 lb. ground roast beef

1 large onion (chopped)

1 small green pepper (chopped) Salt and pepper

1...1 can tomato soup

1/2 cup water 1 cup rice krispies

1/2 lb. grated cheese

Place layer of sliced raw potatoes in bottom of greased casserole; then a layer of meat mixed with chopped onion, pepper and seasonings. Alternate layers of meat and potatoes until casserole is filled. Add tomato soup diluted with water. Sprinkle rice krispies on top, then cheese

Yield: 7 servings. STUFFED VEGETABLES 3 each tomatoes, green peppers an

cabbage leaves

and dot with butter. Cover and bake in

moderate oven (350 degrees F.) for about

one hour. Remove cover the last ten

minutes so the rice krispies will brown.

1/2 lb. boiled ham

114 cups rice krisples

1 egg (well beaten)

3 small onions (chopped)

1 clove garlic (chopped). 3 pimientos (chopped)

14 teaspon salt Few grains pepper

1 tablespoon melted butter

Remove seeds and tops from peppers, remove centres from tomatoes.

with above mixture. Dip-cabbage leaves in boiling water to soften. Put stuffing in centre of each leaf. "Oh, yes!" explained Mrs. Chamber- Roll and tie or fasten with small skewers. Place stuffed peppers, tomatoes and casserole which contains tomato sauce:

SATISFY THE CUSTOMER. TOMATO SAUCE

1 tablespoon sugar

Put oil in saucepan, add pepper and

cook until a delicate brown. Mix tomato

paste with water and add this to the

in three installments allowing the mix

ture to boil up after each addition. Add

tomatoes, bay leaf, and salt and cook

slowly for 45 minutes. Put in the sugar

In a man's eye, there is nothing which

beef, pork, corned beef or veal, Corn

with poached eggs is one dish which

will always win favor with the man of

Left-overs are excellent foods and take

4. It is said that Canadi-

an women are using

more white soap for

all cleaning and dish-

washing. What white

soap was named?

5. If you wished to color

your finger nails to

match the color of

your gown, what pre-

paration is available

for such a purpose?

6. There's a certain floor

is its name?

wax giving a surface

ing feet nor scraping

chairs can mar. What

bases its appeal for

use on its declared

ability to remove the

film which forms on

toothpaste

which neither pound-

just a little ingenuity and discretion in

flavoring to eliminate the twice-cooked

2 cups tomatoes

I teaspoon salt

and cook fifteen minutes longer.

the house.

flavor or appearance.

% cup water

1 bay leaf

1/4 cup oll Flapper: "I would like to try on that 1/2 teaspoon black pepper vieux rose frock in the window." 1 onion (sliced) 3 tablespoons tomato paste

Saleslady: "I'm sorry, that is a lamnshade, but we could copy it for you."

RETORT COURTEOUS Husband-'Going to church, ch!

show your new furs. I suppose?" Wife-"No. dear, to show everybody what a generous hubby I'v got."

ASK THE INSTALMENT MAN

Hobbs-'Do you live within you

Dobbs-"Good heavens, no! It's can do to live within my credit."

WILES OF THE LADIES

Dorothy-But surely, you didn't tel him straight out that you loved him? Jane-Goodness, not squeeze it out of me.

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Here's a Game

For all the Family (or Your Guests)

SOME night, when the family is complete, or when you are giving a party, ask everybody to give answers to these questions.

Question Fill in Answer 8. "No matter What product would you use for gargling, much housework you to kill throat and have to do, you can mouth germs? easily avoid the embarrassment of Do-2. What brand of cheese mestic Hands"-so is best known to you? say the half-century--old makers of a skin 3. "French women rarely What cream cream. allow water to touch is it? their skin, but prefer cold cream for cleas ing." What cold cream is said to be the pur-9. A certain advertiser est and best for skinsays that when you cleansing? are constantly tired

and overworked. Fatigue Poisons accumulate in our sys-He makes a drinking cereal which fights fatigue poisons. What is the name of this beverage?

10. After 30 years of experience in hamcuring, a meat packer says that "Four great improvements came dramatically from a new method of smoking the 'hams" - improvements in (1) flavor, tender quality, pinkness color, and (4) firmness. The new way is called "Ovenized." What hams

are ovenized"?

You can make your own questions---by studying the advertisements in this and other newspapers.

Write out the questions, and pin the sheet of paper on the wall. Offer a small prize to the one who gives the most correct answers inside 30 minutes.

Or ask each member of the family, or each guest, to provide a question, for inclusion on the "examination paper."

You'll have an evening with lots of merriment---and-some useful instruction---in it.

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