

## Chatting

M. H. B.

FROM THE START of our trip to Florida it was a standing joke each night to say "There'll be a big change tomorrow" . . . meaning, of course, the weather. If you have never travelled south before, somehow or other, you look for a sudden dramatic change to warm weather along the line, in spite of common sense telling you this cannot be so. Indeed the transition is so gradual you hardly notice it. It is just like driving into springtime. The temperature had been getting milder and milder until now, starting out from Atlanta on our third day . . . the weather was quite mild and muggy. With one accord we shed our warm suits and put them in the trunk . . .

SO BEGAN our drive thru Georgia. As I mentioned last week, it was like a glimpse into a different world and not too nice a world at that. But interesting . . .

The flat countryside has a curiously open look, due to the fact that there are hardly any fences anywhere. We couldn't see the cotton and sugar actually growing because it wasn't the season but where the fields hadn't been cleared up after the harvest, you could see the dead black stalks of the old sugar canes and cotton plants . . . Daffodils and narcissi appeared to be growing wild in many places by the roadside and the grass was getting greener . . .

In this upper stretch of Georgia, roadside stores where they sold products made of chenille, were numerous. In order to attract the tourist driving by, they had big outdoor displays of their products. It was not at all unusual to see from 10 to 20 chenille bedspreads of every imaginable color and design flapping gaily on clotheslines, strung from either side of the little store. Frequently a small factory where the chenille was manufactured was situated nearby . . .

BUT AS WE penetrated deeper into the southern part of Georgia, such signs of industry became fewer and fewer, and the dwellings became more and more tumbledown. The first really rickety one we saw, sitting close to the road, but desolate in a flat treeless field, drew exclamations of disbelief. Surely nobody could live there! But my sister assured me "that's nothing to what you'll see farther on" — and she was too right. The farther south we drove the worse and more numerous these got. Surely there must be some nice houses down that way, but from what you see along the highway you begin to doubt it . . .

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These shacks are almost black from lack of paint, many have no windows or doors, and the walls are full of what are called "rot holes" where the wood was rotted away. But the one redeeming feature nearly every one had is its verandah. And we should add that there are also two other redeeming features — the two rocking chairs on the verandah. These are well used, considering it was a weekday when we passed by, and midafternoon at that, and the whole coloured family, ma, pa and the many children — were ensconced there enjoying the balmy afternoon . . .

IT WAS TOO DULL a day to take pictures so when we stopped at a "Stuckey's" roadside store to buy some pecans (we were now in the pecan grove country), I looked for postcards depicting the area we had just driven thru. Guess I picked one of the less flattering ones for when I handed it to the chap in charge he said — "I hope you are not feeling too sorry for the people you saw living in those tumbledown shacks. You know, the fact is they are the happiest people on earth. They haven't a care in the world. A large proportion of our tax money goes to take care of them. We educate their children and when they are in need we feed them. Their needs are few. The man of the house does not bestir himself to find an odd job unless they run out of salt pork and flour. Keeping up with the Joneses is no problem with them. And they are happy here in the south where they are comfortable and content. It is when they emigrate to the north that their unhappiness begins" . . .

Well, that was one viewpoint and no doubt it has some merit. But to an outsider passing thru, it was impossible not to feel compassion for these poor people living in such miserable conditions brought about thru no fault of their own. Seeing it with your own eyes makes you realize what a terrific racial problem the U.S. must solve . . .

AS WE NEARED Jacksonville, and the land became swampy and desolate-looking, even the shacks disappeared, and there were great lonely stretches of road with little or no sign of human habitation. We saw our first cypress trees in these swampy "swaglands", and also had our first look at the grey moss which hangs in great festoons from the trees often looping from branch to branch in eerie fashion . . .

This is an "air moss," very typical of Florida. Opinions in the car differed about this moss, as to whether it was beautiful or horrible. Must admit I didn't like it. I felt that if I lived in Florida and the moss started to hang from any of my trees, I would want to tear it off. I don't know much about it, but was told it does not actually harm the trees, since it lives off the air. Certainly nobody down there seems to feel the way I do, for there is plenty of it around, even in the loveliest residential areas. Incidentally, the moss has provided quite a prosperous industry for Florida since it has been discovered that its resilient properties are wonderful for filling cushions, upholstered furniture, etc. . . .

IN BETWEEN THE stretches of swamp, there were some truck gardens, and also on higher land, pastureland where the strange-looking Brahma cattle were grazing. They looked to me like a cross between a cow and a camel. Queer. They are a special breed conditioned for the subtropical climate . . .

Night was starting to close in by this time and with it a thick fog from the swampy areas we had encountered once before. The temperature must have been in the 80's and it was very humid. The road was the narrowest stretch we had struck yet, but we continued on trying to reach as near to St. Augustine as possible. I think we all felt a bit uneasy driving along that lonely swamp-enclosed road in the fog. Personally, I expected any minute to see an alligator go slithering across the road in front of us . . .

Was glad when lights ahead told us we were heading into civilization again. All of a sudden we were out of the swamp and into a dry area where beautiful motels abounded. We stayed at the first likely looking one — and went out for dinner. This time it was an Italian one — with no "bush puppies" served . . .

WHICH REMINDS me to tell you I had a nice note from Mrs. J. Alex Greig, Lake Rosseau, which I appreciated very much, in which she answers my query about the origin of the name Hush-puppy. Mrs. Greig explained that "In the old days when the people were cooking their fish, they usually had a number of hunting dogs and puppies around the stove begging, so when they got to the operation of making the doughnut-like affairs (as I call them), they would throw some to the dogs and say — Hush Puppies" — so now we all know, thanks to Mrs. Greig, The Greigs, former residents of town, now spend their winters in Florida and summers in Muskoka. No doubt the name "Hush-puppy" had intimidated them too . . .

## HOME & SCHOOL ASSOC. FORMED AT NORVAL

The initial meeting to form a Home and School Association for the Norval public school was held in the school on Tuesday evening, May 20th.

The meeting was opened by the local trustee, Rev. G. L. Royal, who briefly explained the aims and endeavours of a local group in conjunction with the Ontario-wide Home and School association. After the short survey of Home and school work in the province, Fred Fendley was elected as chairman for the evening and Mrs. Bill Hunter as secretary. Mrs. Joe Emmerson of Georgetown was present at the meeting and answered the many questions put by the local people. After a prolonged period of discussion the group voted affirmatively to associate themselves as a Home and School Club with the larger Ontario grouping rather than a strictly local parent-teacher federation.

The following officers were elected: president Fred Fendley, vice presidents Wray Youmans and Mrs. Ormie Carter, recording secretary Mrs. Ivan Reynolds, cor-

respondence secretary Mrs. Don Murray, treasurer Bill Hunter. Members without office — Tom Kalsbeek, Mrs. Robert Crawford, Mrs. Gerald Shering, Mrs. Lockhart Royal, and Mrs. Ken Radabalski. Others present in addition to the above listed officers were: Mrs. Tom Kalsbeek, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Fendley, Mrs. Aubrey Gray, John Walker, Collin Gordon, Mrs. Percy Donaldson, Mrs. Wesley Louth, Mrs. Wray Youmans, Mrs. Bill Hunter, Rev. G. L. Royal. With the election of officers it was decided to hold the installation meeting in September when a provincial officer will officiate. After the meeting was adjourned the 6-8 year olds and the "New Age of Science", by Mrs. Ormie Carter. Coffee and cookies were served by Mrs. Shering, Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Royal during which an enjoyable half-hour was spent.

Remember the Red Cross Blood donor clinic on June 5th. Your blood is needed.

## Weaving Course Now Available at Ont. Ag. College

Three years ago a group met in Toronto with delegates from all weaving groups in Ontario. The purpose of this gathering was to discuss the possibilities of further educating weavers, most of whom had basic training given by community programmes branch of the Dept. of Education or from the local technical schools.

This organization became known as the Ontario Handweavers and Spinners, with Mrs. George Reid, of Kingston, Ont., heading the group. After 3 years hard work they have arrived at an open road. The greatest achievement of the Ontario Handweavers and Spinners has been the establishment of a Summer School at Macdonald Institute, OAC, Guelph, Ontario. This school, now in its second year, is staffed by a number of people skilled in the craft of weaving. Classes this year will be in session from May 18 to 30. Weavers may attend for either work or both as desired at a modest rate. Enrollment in each class or "workshop" is limited in order to provide maximum

contact with the instructor and access to equipment and facilities. Techniques such as warp-faced weaving, inlay, ecclesiastical weaving, rug weaving, belting, lace weaving, summer and winter and weaving with new fibres, will be covered this year. Anyone is privileged to ask for instruction in a new technique for the following year.

The educational programme has been met and welcomed by other leading colleges through the province. Each year for four years there has been a conference. Toronto, St. Catharines, Kingston, at Queens' University and this year in London at Huron College with London district weavers as host. An invitation has been received by the Conference for next year from the Hamilton Weavers to confer at McMaster University.

The Conference opens with registration of some two hundred members. First on the agenda is the executive meeting followed by a general meeting — always there is a workshop with looms set up, demonstrations, questions and answers and this year a panel discussion by the judges of the London District Weavers Exhibition of all Canadian Handweaving, Mrs. Henryk Schoenfeld as moderator.

Questions were asked by the members, answered and generally analyzed by the judges. Miss Mary Black, Bedford, N.S., Mrs. Ethel Simons, St. Catharines, Ont. and Mrs. Hugh McKenzie, London, Ont.

The project of the past year, and through the coming year, under Mrs. Frank Anders, Learnington, Ontario, has been the circulation of some 30 books of outstanding samples of weaving. Each weaving group in the province makes a book of its best samples or made up articles with drafts, full instruction and details explained. These are rotated from club to club, with time for thorough examination of the books.

All weavers or would-be weavers would do well to affiliate with this group and receive its benefits. If summer school is not possible or the conference is too distant then the weaver still may receive the bulletin, published four times a year filled with valuable information.

The revival of weaving, aside from utilitarian purposes is a fine art where one can weave articles of original design and beauty for the home. Upholstery, wearing apparel, drapery and finer pieces such as place mats, evening bags, etc.

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