

About the House

Necessary Nuisances.

In "Just David," Eleanor Porter's interesting story of a child, there is an enlightening chapter on the importance of housework as viewed from two standpoints, that of the proud housewife, and that of a child. David has been brought up alone in a mountain cabin by his father, a famous violinist, who takes the boy away from civilization in his infancy and keeps him until he is ten, so that he can have him alone in those impressionable first years. The father dies suddenly and David falls into the hands of a man and wife in middle life, who have no idea who the child is.

Shortly after David's arrival at the farm home the woman starts her weekly cleaning. David wants her to go for a walk with him. She can't go because she has so many things to do, and after that will be meals. David innocently asks her why she doesn't give the stuff away or sell it so she won't have to take care of it; then she could go for a walk. The woman is horrified at the idea of parting with her treasures. She has worked hard to get them, and works harder still to take care of them. David thinks if all they are for is to be put in a room she never has time to sit down in, she might better get rid of them, and take that time to walk or play or read or visit the neighbors. He further scandalizes her by saying his father always said cooking and washing dishes and cleaning were just necessary nuisances, to be made as simple as possible so they could have time for real things. Real things with them, of course, meant music, books, and long tramps over the mountains. The woman concludes that she ought not to expect anything better of a tramp, as she thinks David's father to be, and continues her cleaning.

Probably the majority of housekeepers will join hands with the woman. But I must confess I hold to David's view. After all, cooking and dishwashing are just necessary nuisances, we have to eat, of course, but why make a ceremonial of it? Why spend so much time getting up a meal, when simple dishes and only a few, would take so much less time and be so much better for one's health? Why, for instance, have cereal, and meat and potatoes and eggs, perhaps, and bread and butter and coffee and cookies for breakfast? Why not cut that down to cereal with loads of milk, bread and butter, eggs or bacon, and fruit. Instead of cereal and potatoes, eat more cereal, if you need the extra food. And substitute milk and cream for the extra energy furnished by the meat. Or if you must have the meat and potatoes, cut out the cereal and milk. It would mean less work, and less tax on the digestive organs.

Dinner could be simplified, too, considerably. Now mind, I am not saying eat less, simply eat fewer sorts of food at one meal. Meat, potatoes, one vegetable, bread and butter and a dessert, with tea, coffee or milk, is enough for anyone. Why multiply it by cooking two vegetables and making a fancy salad and having pie and another sweet? It means more work, and goodness knows the farm woman has plenty to do without increasing "necessary nuisances."

Aside from the saving in work, the simple fare is better for your health. You remember Daniel and his young friends would not eat the king's meat, and were allowed to try out their simple fare of pulse and water. At the end of the trial they were found to be in better health than the youths who had eaten from the king's table. To bring it right down to the twentieth century, consider how the boys in the army training camps were built up with simple fare and regular hours and proper exercise. Physicians will tell you that the poor are freer from dietary ills than the rich, because they are forced to live simply. And the recent weighing and measuring tests in the schools have revealed that there is more mal-nutrition in the homes of the well-to-do than in the homes of the poor.

From every standpoint, health, time and pocketbook, simple meals are desirable. From David's, and from the viewpoint of anyone who would like to get time for something besides catering to the mere animal wants of the human race, simplified living is a thing to be desired. But when we go in for it, we run straight up against tradition and convention and "what'll folks say?" Well do I remember the girl who left me to go to another mistress. I had put away all the bric-a-brac, junk, an unfeeling husband calls it, in order to cut out a lot of dusting, thinking thereby to gain favor with my hand maiden. But

she left for a woman who was "awful rich because she had so many things on the piano and mantel to dust." If you must do housework, there's nothing like feeling your folks are quality!

Nevertheless I shall continue to follow David's manner of living. Eating and dishes and cleaning are necessary, but they are not all important. Life was meant to be something more than a round of caring for the bodies. Otherwise we would not have been given minds and souls that crave food. If God didn't mean us to get out and view his world, he would not have made it so beautiful. If He had not meant us to meet our fellows, He would not have made us social creatures with a craving for friendship. If He had not meant us to enjoy music and art and poetry, He would not have filled the universe with music and beauty. We were meant to have some time for play, and with most housekeepers the only way to get that time is to make it. And if the only way to make it is by giving the folks bread and milk for supper, bread and milk let it be. They may growl a good deal, but they won't starve to death.

Sachets of Scent.

There are often flowers left to fade on the plant, even after the vases in the house have been kept supplied.

Why not use these surplus blooms in the making of fragrant scent-sachets? Incidentally, as the continuous cutting of blossoms is essential to continuous flowering, your outside show will be better, and last much longer.

Here is the method. It has the merit of being quite simple. Procure from a herbalist or druggist a pound of cyprus powder. This is really powdered reindeer moss. Put it in a tin or canister with a lid that is absolutely airtight. Add, daily, flower-petals, which must be gently pulled apart. You may keep to the same sort, such as heliotrope, or have a mixture. Scented flowers only are used, of course.

The day's petals should (for a pound of cyprus powder) weigh about two ounces. Stir three or four times daily, so that the powder may become well impregnated. At the end of three days sort out and remove the old, withered petals, and then begin the process again.

In three weeks the powder will be strongly perfumed, and then you can make your sachet-bags—silk is the best material—and fill them. They will last until next summer comes round. Placed in chests of drawers, handkerchief boxes, and the like, they will impart their fragrance to everything about them.

An open jar could be filled with the powder and placed in a sitting-room. The air will be delicately scented for quite a month.

Choose the blooms just before they become full-blown, and pick them, if possible, in the early morning after a rainless night.

Pyramid Building.

The Pyramid of Cleops is nearly 500 feet high, covers more than thirteen acres, and contains 90,000,000 cubic feet of stone. Its construction is said to have been a task of twenty years, employing the continuous labor of 100,000 men.

Modern engineers believe that they could reproduce it in twelve months, at a labor cost of \$1,200,000, using concrete as the material in place of limestone.

The great pyramid was built wholly by man power. To erect one like it would be a relatively easy task mechanically, inasmuch as electrical and other machinery would do the bulk of the work.

A theory generally accepted has been that the ancient Egyptians elevated the huge limestone blocks by building against the structure a long "ramp" of earth, up which the stones were dragged. Some of our foremost engineers now reject this idea, contending that the sides of the pyramid, being filled in to a smooth slant as they rose, themselves formed planes sufficiently inclined to enable gangs of men to pull up with ropes the stones required for the successive courses.

With modern devices we could build such a pyramid in a year. An enormous concrete-mixing plant would be erected, capable of handling thousands of tons of material a day. A great steel tower, or several of them, would be erected. Fresh concrete would be rushed to these by a multitude of bucket conveyers from the mixing plant. The concrete would be whisked to the tops of the towers and thence would be distributed to the points where it was wanted. Up, up, up the mighty pile would go. It would be a process twenty times as rapid as the best that slave labor could no under the lash for Old Man Cheops.

Off the Menu.

Two gentlemen who had come into a restaurant one day were scarcely at the table when the waiter rushed up and asked:

"What shall I bring you gentlemen?" "Oh, dear," said one of the gentlemen, impatiently, "give us a little respite!"

"All right!" said the waiter, and disappeared.

They had been looking over the bill of fare about five minutes, and were waiting rather anxiously for the waiter to return and take their order when he came up suddenly, as if in breathless haste.

"Sorry, gentlemen," said he, "but the respite is off."

British Produce Cotton.

A British experiment farm at Baghdad has succeeded in producing Egyptian and long staple American cotton of excellent quality and heavy yield.

Summer vacation and recreation: "To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new." A league up the road somewhere, then a bypath, and a little lodge by a rushing mountain stream, or perhaps where the sea tumbles in—cool and sweet and salt. Let the act of going—leaving your place unoccupied—be the vacation part of it. The precious days of freedom are for recreation: new tasks, new thoughts, a regeneration of mind and body. It is not a matter of doing nothing, but rather of doing something different or differently or in a different place.

and the worst is yet to come



HEALTH EDUCATION

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Dr. Middleton will be glad to answer questions on Public Health matters through this column. Address him at the Parliament Bldgs., Toronto.

Mentally defective people in large numbers are roaming at large throughout the province, spreading disease and reproducing their own defective kind. Abundant proof of the seriousness of this situation has been obtained in Toronto and other cities by social service workers who are making extensive investigations along the lines of mental hygiene.

Heredity undoubtedly plays a big part in this condition of defective mentality, for although there are exceptions, it is nature's habit to reproduce in kind. How then can this state of affairs be rectified? A scheme based on Medical Examination to prevent mentally defective people from getting married is being thought out, but this would only deal in part with the problem, as the question of illegitimacy has to be considered. Many of the illegitimate children born have mothers who are distinctly below the par of average mental capacity, as social service workers find out in dealing with such cases. This, no doubt, applies also to many of the fathers of such children, and a tremendous task thus confronts those who are endeavoring to improve the condition of humanity both mentally and physically.

One point, however, that should be emphasized is that whatever part heredity plays in the child's mental condition at birth, its mentality no less than its physical make-up, can be improved by scientific cure and feeding during the early months and years of its life. The human brain develops very rapidly in infancy and childhood, much more rapidly than the body, and hence the urgent need for sufficient nourishment of the right kind, during this critical stage of human life. At five years of age, about the time when a child begins to go to school, its brain capacity has to a certain extent already been determined. For this one can readily see how important is a scheme of child welfare that will include the supervision of infant feeding from the time the child is born and so counteract in some degree any defects of heredity.

School children with low mentality are a great hindrance to those who are normal. Not only do their habits and actions tend to lower the morals of other children, but the class work is hindered by the co-mingling of the two grades of intellect. There should be in every school district a special class for mental defectives who could be dealt with separately by a teacher specially trained in mental hygiene. These children would include those who are dull or slow-witted, those thievishly inclined, those always getting into mischief which seems to take them unawares. The classes of school children might indeed be further graded by scientific methods, and progress noted as the result of special training.

For children of school age and older, there is not at present a sufficient number or variety of institutions to accommodate the cases varying from mental defects to imbecility. For imbeciles and definitely feeble-minded there is provision made—public opinion has recognized the necessity for it, but for the higher grade of mental defectives who in many respects are bright and seemingly intelligent, nothing has been done. And yet this class of people is almost as definite a menace to the community as is the criminal. The Toronto Psychiatric Clinic, conducted by a group of physicians, psychologists, and others who take a scientific interest in mental abnormalities, is being conducted at present in the out-patient's wing of the Toronto General Hospital. The cases come from the Public Schools, the Juvenile Courts, Industrial Homes and various other institutions throughout the city, and provide excellent clinical material. But this only touches the fringe of what is to be done. The problem is province-wide; indeed, it is a national and international problem. Science can go so far, but public opinion must be awakened to come to the support of science before very great advances can be made. Besides the problem will have to be approached from the preventive as well as the curative side, and many difficulties will have to be surmounted.

SECRET TALKS THROUGH SPACE

WORK OF WONDERFUL LITTLE VALVE.

Wireless Telephone Around the World is a Marvel of the Not Distant Future.

One of the biggest dreams of wireless, full of promise for the world, is coming true. At last men of science have succeeded in the great task to which they have given their minds for years—they have made wireless secret and private.

This is the latest development in the scientific wonder of the age, and the method by which it is brought about is ingenious. A certain type of wave is used that will go from point to point without expanding, and it cannot, therefore, be picked up by any station unless that station happens to be in the direct line between the transmitting and receiving stations.

The system can be applied to wireless telephone or telegraph, and it is expected that it will be in general use before long.

Privacy by Wireless.

Wireless can, in this way, be rendered as secret and private as a message by wire.

Professor J. A. Fleming, of London University, tells us that some time ago a ship in the Atlantic spoke by wireless telephone to a station on the American coast; then, by means of a special apparatus called a thermionic valve, the message was transferred to the New York—San Francisco telephone line, and on to Los Angeles.

There it was transferred to the wireless telephone and transmitted to the island of Santa Catalina in the Pacific, thirty miles from the mainland, so that a man on a ship in the Atlantic spoke across that ocean, across the American continent, and over part of the Pacific, a distance of four thousand miles.

This wonder, and indeed the whole remarkable development of wireless over long distances, has been rendered possible by the thermionic valve, a little instrument that magnifies the current.

Even on an ordinary telephone a

much thinner and less expensive cable can be used if thermionic valves are inserted. How great the saving is can be judged by the fact that the wire of the ordinary trunk line between London and Glasgow weighs three hundred tons, and by means of the valve more than half this weight can be saved. The General Post Office is now using the valve on all its long trunk lines.

Cabinet of the Empire.

Almost every week there are advances in wireless. Some years ago Professor Fleming foretold that it might be possible one day for the Premiers of the British Commonwealth, without leaving their offices, to communicate by wireless telephone and attend an Empire Cabinet meeting in Downing Street.

It seems that we may be on the eve of such a marvel. It might be quite possible, Professor Fleming says, for a British Minister to say to a secretary: "I want the opinion of General Smuts on a matter. Ask him what he thinks," and for the secretary to come back presently and say that the Premier of South Africa approves of the decision.

Wireless telephony has one great advantage over the ordinary telephone. It does not distort the form of the sound waves. In the ordinary telephone the waves are much distorted, with the result that the sounds heard at the receiving end are far from perfect. With wireless there is no distortion, and the sound is clear.

Kitchen Four Feet Square.

Its inventor has obtained a patent for a complete kitchen that occupies a space but four feet square, yet includes stove, sink, table, set of shelves and stand of drawers.

Just one hundred years ago the French government came into possession of the Venus of Milo for the modest sum of fifteen hundred francs. A young midshipman named Voutier was exploring the island of Milo when he noticed a peasant working with a pickaxe at some object in the ground. He found that it was a statue, in three pieces, and was astonished at its unusual beauty. A Greek monk prevented him from buying the statue at once, but Voutier appealed to the French ambassador at Constantinople, who went direct to the Sultan and induced him to sell for a trifle what is now considered as the foremost work of art in the world.