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THE LITTLE COON

While Jock was still in bed waiting for his broken leg to heal the threshers had come and gone. It was a great disappointment to him not to be able to go to the barn to watch all the exciting things there but when the silo fillers came some weeks later he was happy. Daddy had sent him a pair of light crutches so he could wander around the farm without tiring the weak leg and he felt very important as he made his way down to the barn to watch the cutting box. He soon made friends with the man who was running the engine and quickly learned how to blow the whistle to bring the teams galloping from the field with more corn.

"The coons will be sorry when the corn is all cut," he said to his new friend, "we hear them in the corn field every night calling to each other."

"I caught a couple last year," said the man, "and tamed them and sold them."

"Oh gee," said Jock, longingly, "I wish I could get one. How do you catch them?"

"Well, my dog trees them, and I climb up the tree and shake them down to Bill, my chum. The big fellows put quite a fight but the young ones are easy enough to handle if you wear gloves."

When they went into dinner Jock was still talking about the coons. He sat at the big table with the men and they all did justice to the good things which had kept Mother and Aunt Madge busy baking for the last two days. Jeannie had been helping them and felt as proud of the meal as if she had got it all ready herself. After dinner Uncle John had a little chat with the engineer so that Uncle John was not as much surprised as the twins when the man drove into the yard one afternoon the following week.

"Hello," said Jock, "are we going to thresh again?"

His friend did not answer but opened the side of his coat to let the twins see what was inside. They shouted with delight for there, snuggled down tight against his arm was a baby coon looking with frightened eyes at the light.

"Got him for you last night just over in the big bush," he said to Uncle John, and Jock didn't see the money that passed between them, "he's only half grown and I pulled his big teeth so he won't be able to do much biting."

"Where will we keep him," asked Jock, "will a box do till Grandad comes home tomorrow and makes a house for him?"

"Well, a barrel would be all right with a top on it," said the man, "he's too scared to do much climbing to-night."

So they put some straw in the bottom of a barrel in the woodshed, put the frightened little coon on his new bed and covered the barrel with a wire screen so that he would have plenty of air.

At tea-time Uncle John put on a pair of gloves and brought the new pet into the house. He looked so cunning sitting on Uncle John's knee sniffing with his black little pointed nose at the food they offered him. In spite of his terror he couldn't resist the sweet things the twins offered him and they fed him honey and jam and cake icing until Aunt Madge made them stop.

"You'll give him a tummy-ache, twinnies," she said, "I don't believe his mother ever fed him cake icing. John, put him to bed or he will be sick."

When Jeannie went to bed she lay awake a long time thinking about the coonie. Presently she heard a coon give its funny sobbing call down the road.

"Oh, perhaps that's his mummy, wanting him," she thought. Then just before she went to sleep there was a little whimper from the woodshed.

In the morning when they ran out to look at their new pet he was gone.

When Grandad got home Jeannie told him about it.

"And I'm just glad he climbed out of that old barrel and went home," she said, "I heard his mummy calling him in the night and he cried. He was homesick and had a sore mouth 'cause that man pulled his teeth and he had a tummy-ache from too much cake icing so he just had to go home to his mummy. He wouldn't have been able to tell us where the pain was even if he had waited till morning and his mummy would know the place to rub without being told."

REST AND RECREATION

People rest in so many different ways depending almost altogether upon their occupations. The old saying "it's a rest for a tailor to run" had some foundation as in those days tailors sat cross-legged on their work tables stitching by hand for hours at a time. What a rest it must have been for these cramped legs to unwind themselves and exercise until the circulation was restored.

Even to-day resting does not simply mean stopping work, a complete change of occupation for a few hours will often prove to be more of a rest than idleness.

This came to my notice very clearly one day this summer. I was over tired, the ordinary, everyday household cares and worries had been piling up and there were a few extra worries thrown in for good measure. I had promised the children that if it didn't rain on Saturday I would help them build a dam in the creek to deepen their swimming hole. On Saturday the weather conditions were perfect so I had to keep my rash promise in spite of the fact that my head felt as if it were circled by an ever-tightening band of iron and also in spite of the fact that my housework was far from finished. However, I thought, in ten years they won't remember whether the stove was cleaned to-day and they may remember a happy picnic by the creek. So off we went with our spades and a picnic basket and how we toiled there in the bright sunshine all afternoon. The dam grew apace, the water in the pond deepened most satisfactorily and, finally, when we climbed ashore, tired and rather muddy, to eat our sandwiches and heat cocoa on a little bonfire I suddenly discovered that the band which had been pressing so uncomfortably on my brain was gone. It may have been the sunshine or the magic of running water which removed it but it was more likely the complete change of occupation, the utter forgetting of cares and worries and the concentrating on the digging of sods and the lifting of stones.

This is probably the reason so many doctors choose gardening for a hobby—it is such a decided change from their work. When the college professor visits the farm watch him make for the woodpile and split elm until his shoulders ache and he proudly exhibits blisters on his hands—and he will say it is the best fun he has had for a long time. See how the tired business woman loves running the churn, going for the cows and playing tag with the children. The business man who lives in the suburbs keeps chickens and works with them after office hours until he is tired physically but rested mentally. He could probably buy fresh eggs more cheaply than he can produce them but this change of work is rest and recreation and keeps him young and alert. On the other hand the man who works with his muscles all day takes a quieter form of recreation—reading, playing cards or even working cross word puzzles.

We all take our pleasure in different ways, I know a woman who gets up at four o'clock to do crochet work while the house is quiet but who would think reading, which is her neighbor's way of using her rest hour, a sinful waste of time. Nelle McClung, after her recent election campaign retired to the kitchen and did a big day's baking to quiet her nerves. She says there is nothing as soul-satisfying as an ovenful of flaky pies.

So there are as many different kinds of recreation as there are different kinds of people, and what is rest to one is hard work to another. Mark Twain once said "work is anything you dislike doing," so it looks as if anything we really enjoy comes under the head of recreation.

THINGS WORTH KNOWING

Before baking potatoes cut off the end of each. This will let the steam escape and make them mealy. If the potatoes are rubbed with butter before being put into the oven the skins will be thin and soft and may be eaten if desired.

Do you know that baking powder biscuits which are wanted for tea may be made several hours before and put in the pans? If the pans are kept in a cool place the biscuits may be popped in the oven a few minutes before tea-time thus ensuring fresh, hot biscuits without any trouble at mealtime. Another way to prepare biscuits ahead of time is to mix all the dry ingredients rub in the shortening and then when ready for the biscuits add the milk, roll out cut and bake.

If eggs you are about to boil are cracked, add a little vinegar or a teaspoonful of salt to the water and they can be boiled as satisfactorily as undamaged ones.

Apples which are to be baked should be pricked with a fork before being put in the oven and they will not break while cooking.

If a cloth is wet with vinegar, wrung out as dry as possible and wrapped around cheese, then the whole put in a paper bag and kept in a cool place the cheese will keep fresh and neither dry or mould.

Keep a wooden clothespin in the kitchen for scraping the bottoms of aluminum pots. It will not scratch them as will a metal scraper.

Seasonable Recipes

Sour Cream Cake

One cup brown sugar, three eggs, ½ teaspoonful salt, one cup sour cream, two cups flour, one teaspoonful vanilla, one teaspoonful soda (in the cream). Bake in loaf in a moderate oven.

Nut Bread

Four small cups flour, four teaspoons baking powder, one teaspoon salt, one cup white sugar, one cup chopped walnuts, one egg, two cups sweet milk. Put in buttered pan, let stand twenty minutes and bake an hour.

Date Drop Cakes

One cup butter, one and one-half cups sugar, three eggs, three cups flour, one teaspoon vanilla, one pound dates, one half cup nuts, one dessert-spoon soda dissolved in a little water. Drop dough the size of walnuts on buttered pans and bake in quick oven.

Honey Dressing

One cup honey, one cup vinegar, one tablespoon butter, one half teaspoon salt, one half cup cream.

Beat eggs, add vinegar, honey, butter and salt and cook until thick. Remove from fire and add cream. This is the best dressing for banana salad.

High Art

Yesterday I tackled
A task that's most appealing,
Gleefully I undertook
To paint the kitchen ceiling.
Ladder, paints and brushes,
Oil and turpentine,
Then the good man's overalls
I borrowed for a time.
I have paint in my eyebrows,
I have paint in my hair,
A lot of it ran up my sleeve,
There are spots everywhere.
But I like painting ceilings,
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