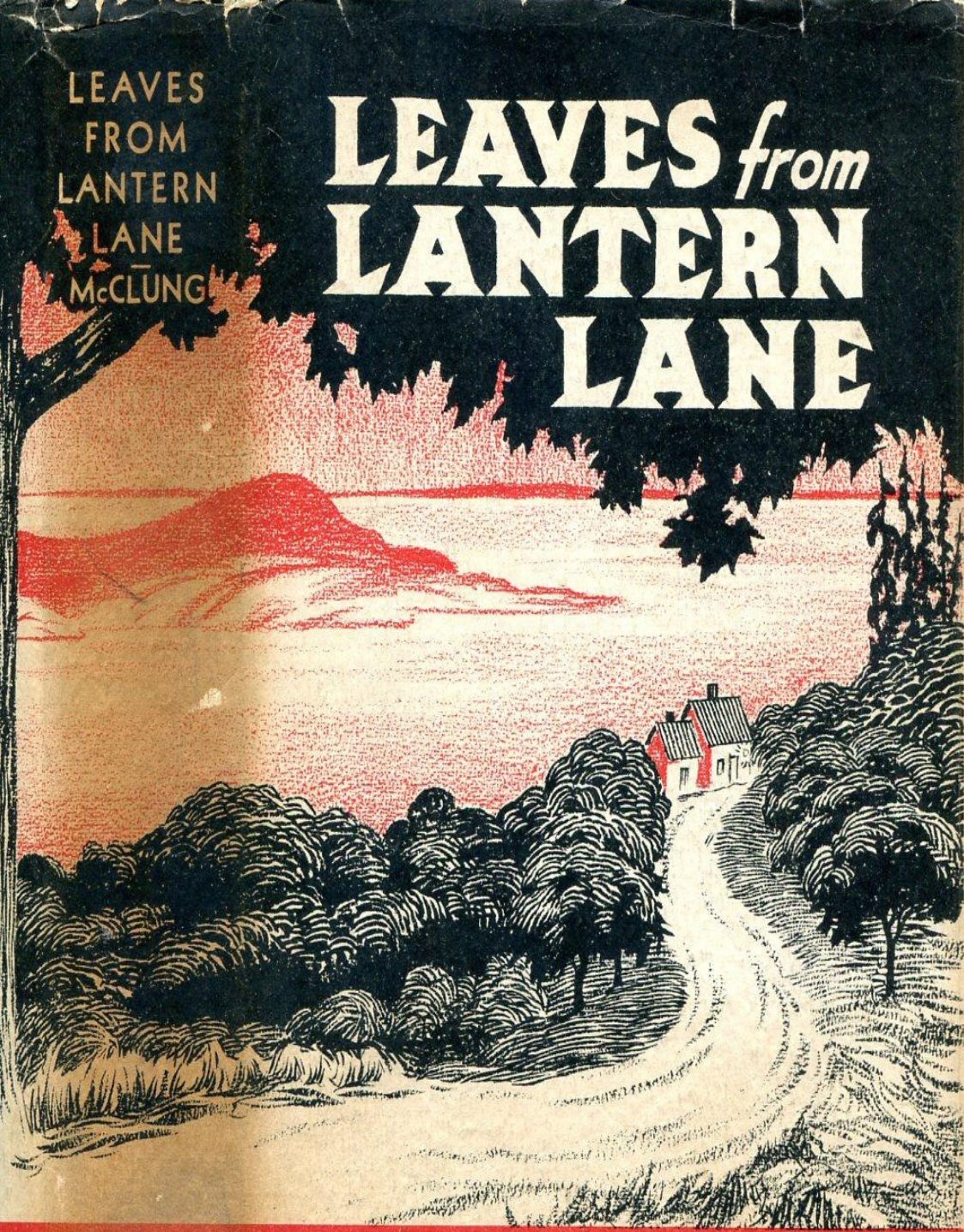
LEAVES FROM LANTERN LANE McCLUNG

LEAVES *from* LANTERN LANE



THOMAS ALLEN

Nellie L. McClung

*** A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook ***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please check with a https://www.fadedpage.com administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at https://www.fadedpage.com.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. **If the book is under copyright in your country, do not download or redistribute this file.**

Title: Leaves from Lantern Lane
Author: McClung, Nellie Letitia (1873-1951)
Date of first publication: 1936
Edition used as base for this ebook: Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1936 [first edition]
Date first posted: 14 December 2010
Date last updated: March 24, 2019
Faded Page ebook#201410D0

This eBook was produced by: Al Haines

LEAVES FROM LANTERN LANE

by

Nellie L. McClung

THOMAS ALLEN PUBLISHER
TORONTO, CANADA

COPYRIGHT, CANADA, 1936
BY
NELLIE L. McCLUNG

Other Books by
NELLIE L. McCLUNG

Sowing Seeds in Danny
The Second Chance
Purple Springs
Painted Fires
When Christmas Crossed the Peace
The Black Creek Stopping House
All We Like Sheep
In Times Like These
The Next of Kin
Be Good to Yourself
Flowers for the Living
Clearing in the West

CONTENTS

LEAVES FROM LANTERN LANE

LANTERN LANE

January 19th, 1935 was a perfect day to look at a house with the intention of buying. None of your beguiling, sunshiny, wheedling days that lowers one's sales resistance and makes almost any place in the country appear inviting. No, it was a rough, gray day, with razor blades in the wind and white caps on the sea. Not only that, but in spite of the cold, there had been down-pours of rain from the iron-gray clouds that had obscured the sun for weeks. Indeed I had a sinking feeling sometimes that the sun might never shine again. There was a finality about it all, a thick, settled, stubborn grayness.

We were not enthusiastic when we heard of another country place. No one could be enthusiastic about anything. The whole country, east and west, was in the grip of the worst winter since '79; but we had come to Vancouver Island to buy and we drove out the six miles to see the place. Nobody spoke. It was better to do anything than sit in the lounge of the hotel and look out at the slanting rain between us and Elbethel Chapel, or watch the motionless old ladies in their purple and gray nightingales, just sitting watching the fire, with no sound in the room but the ticking of a clock on the mantle. The hotel advertising mentioned that it was "a quiet place," and we found

it had not exaggerated.

We drove out the six miles to Ferndale Road and saw the house, standing well back from the gate. "For Sale" signs leaned against the fence. We turned off the road and drove between two rows of cherry trees up the lane. The land sloped to the east and south, and even in the cobwebby light, it had a certain beauty. The house, a dark green, shingled semi-bungalow, looked old and comfortless, but any empty house on a dull day of drizzling rain looks like a woman who has just washed her hair.

We got out of the car, and went to the front of the house, and up the steps to the veranda, and then something happened which seemed like fate.

The sun came out! A sudden, unexpected flood of light ran over the fields and down to the sea. It lingered on the bright red roof of a white house on the right, almost hidden in the trees; it caught the wings of a wind-mill on a water tower below us; it lighted up the wall of evergreens across Ferndale Road to the north; it glittered on a white sail out on the sea. And then it was gone, and the woolly grayness rolled back. But we had seen the beauty of Gordon Head in that one bright, revealing flash.

The house had been empty for several months. Rain had filled the chimney and soaked through the plaster, pools of water stood on the floors, and the smell of wet lime added a touch of desolation. But we could see that the floors were straight, the windows opened easily on pulleys, and there were plenty of them; there were three fireplaces, and upstairs off one

of the bedrooms was a sunporch, looking out to sea. Its windows were broken—old torn blinds hung crookedly, water stood on the floor, but none of these things mattered. The little place had the right feel. It was friendly and welcomed me in. Windows can be made whole, old blinds can be changed to new ones. I knew I would have bright draw curtains on the windows and the ceiling would be painted white, and I would put a light on the south wall, and my desk and filing cabinets would fit in, and I'd have a long hanging shelf for a few books above my desk—and when I looked up from my work I would see the sea! I would look out on a world of great waters!

Downstairs in the den there was a cobble-stone fireplace, and on the mantle I found a name "John Fullerton," and then I was sure this was the house for me, for was not my grandmother one of the Fullerton girls away back in Dundee?

* * * * *

And now we have been here a year, and the little sunporch is mine. I have the draw curtains and the light over my desk. Above the garage door we have a ship's lantern, which throws a welcoming beam of light on a dark night, down the lane between the cherry trees, and gave us the name "Lantern Lane." There are no street lights out this far, of course, but no one minds that. When we visit the neighbors in the evening we carry a homemade light made by sticking a candle in the curving side of a jam-tin and carry it by a wire handle fastened to the two sides, which lets the light stream out in a circle on the road ahead of us. At first we used a flash-light, but it was a feckless thing that went out one real dark night we were out, and left us to come home by the Braille method. But there was

something pleasant in that too, for it made us think of the times we found our way home over Manitoba trails on moonless nights, with the wolves howling.

Across Ferndale Road there is a woody path called "Banshee Lane" which leads to the sea, and when I first turned in at this dark green archway and walked on its carpet of leaves below the trees, breathing the clean earthy odors of moss and fallen trees, and saw the path ahead of me stippled with sunshine, and heard the myriad sounds of the little wild creatures, and knew this bit of wild wood was mine by right of an ancient inheritance, I had all the exaltation of one who has come into a fortune. "Banshee Lane" is a public path, by the generosity of one of the old inhabitants, and it can never be widened into a motor road. Great arbutus trees with their smooth red boles that make one want to stroke them, symmetrical maples, and evergreens so high that looking at them becomes a good exercise for the neck, the kind that must be taken carefully, make up the woods, with hard old yews, descended probably from the trees from which Robin Hood and his men made their bows. The shiny-leafed Oregon grape carpets the ground, and in their season, white and pink mayflowers abound, with the glorious crimson of the flowering currant. There are flat logs to sit on beside the path, and open grassy places, whose brightness smites the eye after the dim greenness of the thick woods.

The welcoming feel of the house on Lantern Lane has been sustained and confirmed by the whole neighborhood. Not once have we rued the haste with which we bought it. Our neighbor to the east, whose wind-mill caught the rays of that first flash of sunshine, is a bulb-grower from the Scilly Islands, who

came here twenty-five years ago, with a wagon-box full of bulbs. Now his fields of daffodils and tulips often appear in pictures, and the blooms go far and wide. But the commercial side of it fails to interest him. He is a grower and a lover of flowers for their own sakes, and is not disposed to bargain as to their disposal. When a new neighbor comes in, he is ever ready to give assistance and practical help. When he says he'll send you over a few bulbs—you may get five thousand. The men and women in this neighborhood who spent their youth here, owe him a debt, for he made it his business to see that they all learned to swim, and they will tell you now how Mr. Edwards would leave his team standing at the head-land at any hour of the day, to go down to the sea and give a lesson to anyone who came. His "Sea Cadets" are men and women now and they are imparting the love of the sea, learned from him, to their own children. So his good deeds go on, an unfading entry on the right side of life's ledger.

Then we have for our neighbors, on the other side, two retired Hudson's Bay people who spent many years in the North, and from them we hear fascinating tales of Indians and missionaries; of the uncanny intelligence of the wild things; and of how the beaver families separate at the end of the first year, by some inexorable eugenic law, all the males going upstream and the females downstream.

There are three Irish sisters, belonging to an old and aristocratic family in the County Dublin, who live in a house hidden in trees, but who would no more think of cutting one down than of bobbing their hair. From them I get Irish newspapers and we talk of Don Byrnne and the horse races at the Curragh.

There is another neighbor who makes it her care to see that the sick are visited and the needy clothed. She has a quilt in the frames perpetually (not the same quilt) for some poor family. She is the Good Angel of Gordon Head, whose "light goeth not out at night."

The house, whose red roof almost hidden in trees, gleamed its welcome that first day, belongs to a Winnipeg friend, whose fine old black cat, "Major", ended his glorious career just before we came. "Major" was raffled at a Red Cross meeting in Paris, as soon as his eyes were opened, in the first days of the war, and was won by a Canadian war-bride who lived in hotels and who carried him past hotel clerks in her muff. "Major" came to Victoria when the war ended; when his people moved back to England he was brought to the red-roofed house in Gordon Head and lived the life of a country gentleman, and died full of years and honors. He had killed many mice and rats in his day, but always buried them decently.

At the corner of Tyndal and Ferndale Roads there is a lovely garden whose beautifully wrought iron gates are always open, and over its green lawns we are all welcome to wander, by the generosity of the owners, who are also prairie people. In the spring there are flower beds of red tulips, shaped like baskets, and little crocuses in yellow, white and purple, star the grass. Over the low stone wall runs a lacy green creeper that changes to pink and red as the season advances. And near the house are stately maples and cypress and among them a deodar, (which to me existed only in Kipling stories), a deodar with its spreading lower branches resting on the ground and quite at home in Canadian soil.

There are two men in our neighborhood who came in to Vancouver on the first transcontinental train, fifty years ago, and from them we hear stories of the romance of railway building and of the rugged men who planned the conquest of the mountains. There is a pianist from one of the prairie cities, who plays for us every Friday night in the winter, Chopin and Mendelssohn and Bach, in her huge living room. The log fire burns down into coals, then into embers, and the last bus changes gears on the hill, and we know very well that it is twenty minutes to twelve, but, under the magic of her fingers, all sense of time has gone.

We see on fine days, to the south, the snow-capped Olympics over in Washington. The snowy top of Mount Baker looks down on us, over the shoulder of San Juan Island across the Strait of Haro, and the lights of the city six miles away form a pale illumination on the southern sky.

Surely, I said to myself, here is a place to dig in, and be at peace, where no harsh sounds break into one's reverie. The day breaks gently over the sea; the dogs bark softly, or not at all. Life comes on like distant organ music. Vancouver Island takes you as you are, without comment, because it knows what you are does not really matter. So you can go ahead and say what you like. Write to the papers if you wish. No one will be disturbed or bothered, for the real business of life will go on anyway. The salmon will run and spawn and die; the purple and white and yellow aubretia will cover the rocks; the broom will pour out its gold in May; and the Olympics across the straits will glow at sunset with cool radiant fire.

It was my intention to write a continuation of "Clearing in

the West" as soon as we were settled here. I had seen the beginning of so many things; women's struggle for political equality, the rise of women's clubs, the heroic struggle to eliminate the liquor traffic and its disastrous sequel. I had been at so many "first" meetings, and had known the women who had shaped opinion in Canada, many of them gone now, too soon. I wanted to put into words what I knew of these women who had been too busy making history to write it.

But I couldn't write it. I was too comfortable. I had not grown accustomed to a spring that comes in February, with snowdrops and violets and wallflowers. The anaesthesia of beauty had me in its clutches.

I had laughed at the story of the two rival editors from the prairie, who had come to this Island and happened to settle quite near to each other. In the little town in which they had lived in Manitoba, they had fought each other in the gallant red-blooded way that belongs to that exhilarating climate. They had never missed a chance of reviling each other and they did it with a tartness of invective that delighted their readers. Now, they live side by side, amicably sharing a party line telephone. They talk across the fence about tent-caterpillars and sprays and fertilizers, and exchange confidences on how their arteries are hardening. They send each other gifts of roses, and violets wet with dew, new potatoes and Swiss chard. When I heard about the Swiss chard I could have wept, remembering what bonnie fighters they once were. If any gift from the vegetable kingdom had passed between them then, it would have been a sheaf of poison ivy, tied with barbed wire.

Now something like this has come over me, and I want to

talk about the lavender bed, from which I cut the old stalks to make way for the new ones; or the wallflowers that are making a golden brown glow against the new stucco on the house; and the daphne, with its faintly fragrant berries; and the laburnum tree at the gate that will soon swing its golden lanterns in the wind.

YOU CAN'T MAKE IT PAY

Life in this lovely corner of the world is so full of beautiful, generous and kindly things, that I cannot keep from telling about them. From the time the dawn rolls down the day like a golden scroll until the sun sets in a saffron glow behind the tall evergreens, powdered here and there with whitened cherry trees, the whole day is full of interest, and beauty, and surprises.

Just at first, when we moved in, all eager and radiant over our good fortune in having at last a parcel of good land, near a city, with a view of the sea, our enthusiasm was dampened a little by what we heard from the neighbors about the economic conditions in the basic industry of agriculture in this Province.

"You cannot possibly make any money on a farm in B.C.", they said, "not even here in the finest part of the Island; you can work long hours, hoe and rake, pull weeds and fertilize, but you won't make any money. It's a long time since the farmer could even make wages. Now he loses on every crop."

Then followed stories of actual cases with names and dates, —loganberries that only paid the pickers, gooseberries for which the owners got one-half cent a pound, pears left rotting on the ground.

The stories had a familiar sound. We came from a Province where stories like this abound, authenticated and documented. We knew people who owed a bill to the railway company that carried their grain, which the price of the grain would not cover. We knew a woman who could prove to you that she lost money every time she milked the cow. We knew—we knew plenty!

But we had come to a place now, with a more diversified list of products, a longer season, a milder climate, where, it seemed, honest toil must bring a reward. But from all we could hear, these smiling fields, if we let them, might lure us on to financial disintegration. The only safe thing to do, it seemed, was to do nothing. It would cost thirty-five dollars to spray the cherry trees, and the robins would eat the cherries just the same, and even if they left any, there would be no sale for them. Life suddenly sank into a mire of negation, as complete as the schoolboy's definition of pins, when he wrote—"Pins are things which save people's lives by not swallowing them!"

One ray of comfort and hope lightened these depressing bulletins and that was the genial, friendly, well-favored faces of the people who brought them. Not one person in this neighborhood have I seen, who appeared to be in want, nor have I heard anyone say he would like to live elsewhere.

There was another ameliorating factor, too, in the hearing of

so much grief concerning economic conditions. The information was often accompanied by gifts of flowers, and shrubs and seeds, and generous invitations to help ourselves to anything else we wanted. It is impossible to keep one's spirits from rising, when presented with a basket of forget-me-nots ready for planting and all knotted to blossom, even if you do hear, at the same time, that someone is digging out his cherry trees and will rent his land at seven dollars per acre.

Still, one wonders what these friendly, genial, good-humored people are using for money. How do they run their cars, and paint their houses, and go to picture shows? Are they all pensioners or beneficiaries under the wills of old estates? Some of them are, I know, but surely not all!

Yesterday afternoon I went down the woodland path to the beach, thinking heavily of these things, and wondering why the economic prospects of this delightful place were not brighter. "Surely," I thought, "it is an ill world and needs to be made over!" But though my mind was clogged with perplexities, my feet soon began to feel the comfort of the soft, springing soil of the deep woods, and the trees above me whispered happily in the sunshine. I sat on a fallen log, covered with moss, a great giant of a log that had fallen maybe fifty years ago, and listened to the muted voices of the woods, the syncopated notes of an axe and its echo, the rustle of leaves, and the wash of the waves frilling on the gravelly beach below.

Beside me, infinitely cheerful and heartening, a cricket with his tiny castanets seemed to snap his fingers at every kind of problem. I looked through a dappled tangle of green branches, out to sea, and saw the Vancouver boat noiselessly treading the

water on its way to the big city; and over the jutting rocks, the sea-gulls circled and screamed, dropping clam shells, then swept down to get the meat set free by the fall, letting gravitation solve their problem. Sometimes another gull was there ahead of the lawful owner, but the process went on.

Gulls are a low form of bird life, with few admirers, atrocious manners and fallen arches, but they have a core of good hard sense, and know enough to work with nature. I wondered if there were any gulls who kept books, and so knew that the percentage of failure was heavy from three causes—(1) the intervention of other gulls—(2) some clam shells not breaking—(3) some clams being poor, ill-nourished things. I wonder if any of the hunters, after making a careful survey, become convinced that there is nothing in clam-fishing, for a self-respecting young gull, anxious to get along.

And as I sat there on the fallen tree, looking out to sea, with the sunlight falling around me and the cool, green, free essence of the wild coming to me in the tang of the forest, I began to feel that the centre of gravity in my life was shifting and very pleasantly too.

Here were riches—beauty, silence, peace so deep it was entering into the very marrow of my soul. How very little, after all, we need to make us happy—a woody path to the sea, the scent of wild flowers, the flash of a bluebird's wing, a few friends, books by the fire on a winter's night and a plate of apples, a good conscience, space in which to work—going tired to bed—and then another day, rolling down like a scroll!

Money! Enough to keep stamps in the house and the

milkman coming! I could see how people can be very happy, even with small profits. I began to see what Emerson meant when someone told him the world was coming to an end and he replied that that was all right with him; he could get along without it!

THE ONION-GROWER

For years I have cherished a secret ambition, buried deeply in my heart, and only thought of in my wildest moments of imagination. It seemed so far away and unlikely of fulfilment.

But today, March 1, I have made a start. I am 18 rows nearer to my goal than I was this morning and having definitely embarked on this career, I feel free to speak of it.

I would grow onions! Acres of onions!

My heart has always inclined toward onions since the days back in Manitoba, when I had to weed the garden before I went to school, and the onion rows gave some return for my labors. Young carrots, beets, turnips, while great in promise, made no immediate contribution, but a dozen young onions, when washed in the creek and wrapped in a bit of the Brandon Times, and put in the dinner pail, helped to season the noon-hour.

You are perhaps wondering about their effect socially,

remembering the old saying about "an apple a day keeps the doctor away, but an onion a day will keep everyone away." Was there any danger of onion ostracism? Not at all. At Northfield school we all ate onions when we had them, most of us from choice, and the others in self-defence.

In addition to the part they played in my diet, I liked onions for their own sake. They were such a sure crop, and having hidden fires in their own stout hearts, they did not fear the early frosts like some other garden plants. And I liked their perky little top-knots, and the whole circle of their growth. And who has not made onion curls from the long green stocks?

And then their place in cooking and the incense they add to so many dishes! Try to make a meat pie, or a stew, or fry hamburger without an onion, or make potato, or celery, or tomato soup, and see how it is missed!

Onions are really one of the ameliorations of life, like tea and coffee. They make flat food savoury, and all foods better. They are the cook's best friends.

And they are good to look at—the big ivory Spanish onions, so firm and solid and accurately grained like a section of hardwood that has taken a century to grow; and the green onions with their pearly white tips. The aesthetic value of an onion has not been appreciated at its full value.

But onions are climbing the social ladder. They are advancing like liver, which used to be thrown in by the butcher "for your cat," and now sells for as much as beefsteak; or like the humble prune that once came in barrels, but now is

wrapped in cellophane and served with whipped cream.

Onions are getting on! I heard a conversation not long ago between two women at a lecture, and while we waited for the great man to appear, one told the other of being at a bride's reception, and "there was just a trace of onion in the sandwiches." The other one expressed surprise, but she was put in her place when the lady who had the floor informed her that "the very nicest people are using onions now, in sandwiches and salads."

And wasn't that good news to me!

I have grown onions in short rows in crabbed city lots for years—nice onions, too—gone, alas, too soon. But today I planted my onion seed on a sunny slope in Gordon Head, in sight of the sea and within sound of the skylarks. And the seed I put in is the Ailsa Craig, hand-picked and vouched for. Having dug out the twitch grass from that piece of soil, I felt it had to have the best seed on the market.

I went to the Department to find out what could be done about twitch grass, and I found it cannot be removed by observation, or science, or chemistry, or machinery, unless you call your own two hands, grasping a spade, a bit of machinery. It has to be dug out, in shovelfuls of earth, and then the earth broken by hand, and the twitch grass removed. And that process has to go on and on.

At the Department I got a book on "Weeds and Their Control," and I read in it that twitch grass is the most pernicious of farm weeds, and came to us from Europe; and it

is also called couch grass, quack grass and scutch grass; and it even has a Latin name, "Agropyron repens."

In the books on "Weeds", twitch grass has a full page illustration and an accurate description of its leaves, spikes, character, disposition, mode of growth and diabolical persistence. After routing out twitch grass for two afternoons to get ready for my onion planting, I can add no word to the description except that the pink stems can easily be mistaken for earthworms, but you soon know the difference. Earthworms curl engagingly around your fingers.

Of all the names given in the text, I like twitch grass the best. I can see it is the grass to which you must give your best efforts, and it provides the farmer and his family endless activity. But I hear it can be turned to a good use, too. Put in a box or in a hole in the ground, and sprinkled with sulphate of ammonia, it can be turned into a fertilizer.

That surely is putting one over on the twitch grass! One of the boys who was digging out twitch grass for us said he had seen a spear of it grow through a potato!

But to return to my onions. There they lie—the seeds I mean—under an inch of soil in rows fourteen inches apart, according to directions on the envelope, and when the rain falls now it will have a new meaning for me, for it will start the little hard seeds to germinate. And soon the little green threads will pierce the sod, and then no longer on government papers, or other places, will I need to give my occupation as "housewife," that pallid name which no woman likes to own. I will boldly inscribe in that column this good strong word

—"Onion-Grower!"

THE THREAT OF THRIPS

It is a mistake to know too much about farming! I had just the right amount of information that sparkling day in early March, when I sowed my Ailsa Craig onions in a warm, well-worked soil, from which the twitch grass had been removed. I felt sure that day that all nature was working with me, as I brought the soil and seed together. I felt the comradeship of air and sun, nitrogen, humus, vitamins A, B, C, right down the list, and knew the goodwill of the Department of Agriculture was upon me, too. That was but one short month ago. In that time I have learned many things. I've learned about quail and pheasants and their predatory habits and how they sit back in ambush and watch you plant your seeds, taking exact note of location and return in the gray dawn, when all the good people of Gordon Head are fast asleep, and dig out the seed and pull up young plants by the roots and eat them without ever putting a tooth in them.

And I know that robins sweep down on the cherry trees and take a bite out of the fruit, doing great damage. All this I have learned and been able to bear, partly because these birds all have entries on the other side of the ledger. I cannot see how anyone can be crusty with the robins, even if they do fancy the cherries. And the pheasants and quail pay their way with their beauty. I feel like the Queen of Sheba when I see them turn in

our roadway and saunter across the fields, remembering that they were introduced by the Argonauts into Europe, and by the Romans into England, and that they have a distinct place in the literature of the world. King Henry VIII paid a French priest out of his own hard savings to look after his pheasants, and as early as 1607, there is a record of stores of wheat being set aside for the pheasants in Surrey, England.

Of course, it is hard on the farmer to see the pheasants eating his crops and something should be done about it.

We are fortunate in having a neighbor who has a beautiful Llewellyn setter named Chance, and Chance flushes the pheasants from all the fields around in the mornings, without a sound but the whirring of their wings. But Chance is a very young dog, and sometimes sleeps in and then the crops suffer. However, I hear there is to be an alarm clock set for him.

I had a drive one snowy day last January with one of the officials of the Department of Agriculture, and he carried wheat in his car, which he scattered here and there on the snow for the pheasants—and with this matter in our minds we naturally discussed the high freight rates between here and the Prairie Provinces.

It is impossible to consider any aspect of farming in B. C. without coming to this stone wall and wondering who is benefited by the prohibitive rates to make up for the hardship that comes to both the prairie people, with their stores of grain which they cannot sell, and the people of B. C. who need it so badly.

When that bright morning dawns, when feeding grains are carried as cheaply to the Coast for the benefit of B. C. as they are carried now for shipping to the Orient, there will be plenty of grain for the pheasants and quail and they will not need to destroy the farmer's crops.

Of course, it is easy for me to be high-minded and philosophical about the pheasants, quail and robins, for they are not disposed to meddle with onions.

Still we onion-growers have our troubles. For one full month my Ailsa Craigs have lain in the warm, rich soil, and nothing seems to have happened. Rain has fallen on them and the sun has shone and when the moon came to a fulness, a silver blue moonlight fell on them and every morning the exquisite notes of the skylarks have called to them and yet there is not a sign or quiver. There were times when I was tempted to exhume a few and see what was holding them back. But I resisted this impulse, feeling it to be unworthy. Instead of excavating, I consulted the accrued wisdom of onion-growers and found out the onion has its secret sorrow too, for all its strong exterior.

It seems that even when onions do grow and struggle upward to the light, there is a nemesis that dogs their pathway. When a hardy young onion gets on his feet all ready to brighten the corner where he is, he may find that a whole family of thrips has moved in on him, laying their eggs in the "axils of his leaves close to the bulb." The Department of Agriculture pamphlet No. 36 gives the whole history of the thrips family, keeping back nothing, and telling of the egg, larva, nymph and adult stages of development. There is a picture of a full-sized adult on the first page, which abundantly

bears out the fact that the thrips has a coarse and sullen nature, insensible to argument.

The text says a soft-soap spray is the thing "as often as is deemed necessary."

I chose onions for my crop because I knew them as self-supporting, perky little fellows who go through life with heads erect; their peculiar vibration calling "gangway" to all lesser plants. I knew the weeds would have to be pulled from among them, and there might be a need for water. But I had not counted on daily observation or sitting up at night with them. I had not known of this subtle enemy whose dour countenance stares out from pamphlet 36, the inexorable, insatiable thrips with four distinct sets of wings, two of them heavily set with spears, a hairy ridged posterior, low, beetling brow, and his braces crossed on his back. Just as I finish writing this, there is an alarm at the door.

The onions are up! Sure enough, there they come knuckling through the soil, thrips, or no thrips!

THE TYRANNY OF TRIFLES

It is the little things of life that harry us, torment us and get us down, making us old before our time, and I wish there was something we could do about it! This is a problem on which there is no governmental booklet.

Now, here am I in the place I have always wanted to be—on a farm, near a city, within sight of the sea, (with my onions planted in a "warm rich soil on a sunny hillside, with natural drainage") and with a large percentage of the things I have always craved, including glass knobs on every door in the house, and a peach tree fastened to the south wall.

And yet my soul is downcast and oppressed, and the beauty of Gordon Head at this moment seems powerless to scatter my gloom.

We can't find the uprights for my bureau! They seem to have been lost in the moving!

When I go out to listen to the skylarks, singing and soaring and disappearing in the upper air, yet throwing back to us the song that has moved poets to a fine frenzy, even while I listen, part of my mind is burrowing in boxes and barrels, looking for two little bits of wood. And in my agitated heart, I revile the innocent songster for his joyous ecstasy, and tell him it is easy for him to be light-hearted. His bureau is not standing beheaded, in the middle of the floor, with visitors coming at the week-end!

When my first two neighbors called, and I removed five casters and a picture of Queen Victoria from the chesterfield and made them welcome, my first thought of these two friendly and pleasant people was that they might be able to help me. No doubt they had packed, and unpacked, and so might be able to hazard a guess as to where uprights are usually put. Maybe they knew something of the ways of professional packers and movers when they are in full flight

and flower. Perhaps there is a secret place for uprights known only to the United Brotherhood of Packers.... I would ask them, when the greetings were over. We talked along about the daffodils, and the lateness of Easter, and in some way found ourselves discussing goats. One of the friends advised me against goats, because of their habits of destruction.

"If a goat ever gets loose," she said, "it will find your most valued possession and eat it.... I know a goat which grazed contentedly along the roadside here for years, securely tied, of course, and to all appearances a perfectly behaved goat; but one day the woman who owned it put her best satin eiderdown on the line, and that was mere than the goat could stand. It made the supreme effort, and got loose ... the wind was blowing our way, and we thought it was a snowstorm! Another goat out at Royal Oak got loose and ate the one and only cherry tree in the garden right down to the roots ... there is something mysterious and psychic about goats. They have a way of telling what you treasure most!"

I wondered about the lost uprights, and told them my troubles. Could a goat trace lost treasure? They thought he could, but as it stood now I might, probably would, find them, and my friends thought I had better wait. Lost uprights were better than no uprights at all.

I have been waiting, and doing other things; but interrupting all my work with feverish huntings as I think of other places where two uprights might be. Just as I am separating bulbs and enjoying the sweetness of the morning, and feeling immensely rich in owning plants that have been only names to me before, berberis, pyrethrum, centaurea (which I, in my ignorance, had

always called "dusty miller"), suddenly I remember some nook or corner that I have not thoroughly searched, and all my dream-patterns are broken, while I turn out boxes and barrels, and go through the wrappings again.

I got above the uprights one night last week, one cloudless silvery blue night, when the moon was full. The whole scene was one of bewildering beauty, with San Juan visible in the clear light, and a ship going by, all its riding lights burning, making a long diamond brooch on the blue mantle of the sea.

We watched the never-sleeping eyes of the two lighthouses opening and shutting and keeping their own rhythm for the guidance of all those who go down to the sea in ships, and it was all so lovely, and silent, and majestic that I was ashamed to think had "fashed" myself about the uprights. That night as I looked at the sea, and the stars, and the moon, I was sure I would never think of them again and I could do very well without the mirror and would just let it stand there with its face to the wall.

I'll just get a nice new tin pan, I thought, and put it on the wall, and I'll find it more comforting than the big mirror, (which really seems to have fallen off a bit since I looked into it, three years ago.) The tin pan will suit me better now, for if it shows a break in the chin-line I can make myself believe it is a flaw in the reflection, and so will not grieve for the passing years that leave their mark on us all!

But I would like to find the uprights!

PLANTING TIME

In a changing world, where fashions, even in baby clothes, rise and fall, it is a relief to find that some things remain. So when I sat on a wheelbarrow last Saturday afternoon and cut seed potatoes, it steadied my soul to find that seed potatoes are still cut toward the stem, and are planted eyes up, three pieces in a hill!

And I was further reassured that all is well with the world when I found that the Early Rose potato is returning to public favor. For some time it seemed to have fallen under the blight of oblivion, pushed back by flashier favorites. I have asked for Early Rose potatoes in seed stores and been met by dubious looks from young salesmen, who asked me if I did not mean Netted Gems or Irish Cobblers or Wee McGregor. Some of them with a long reach of memory have confessed to a hazy recollection of hearing some ancient relative, now deceased, speak of Early Rose.

And now they are back, pink, fine, clean-skinned as ever, and it makes potato planting more real, for they will ever be associated in my mind with the rich black soil of Manitoba, and the hurried morning of May 24th., when the whole family arose early to plant the potatoes in the forenoon, so we might all go to the "Twenty-Fourth" in the afternoon. It was recognized as a part of the patriotic celebration, and for years I believed Queen Victoria wouldn't like it if we were late with the potatoes.

I got the picnic feeling again last Saturday as I cut the seed, the eager anticipation of salmon sandwiches, and tea made in a blackened pail hung from a stout green willow over a fire of dried poplar. That hot tea was a pleasant feature of the 24th. for a bit of winter usually lingers in the lap of May. However nothing short of snow discouraged us.

This new experience of potato planting brought back the day I renounced it. I was fifteen years old and would write for a teacher's certificate in July. Every year since I could remember, I had been a "dropper," bending down to place the three pieces in each hill, right side up, until it seemed my back would break; and now events had transpired that seemed to me to be sufficient reason for me to take my demit from the Lodge and retire in good order. I was going to be concerned with higher things than potatoes. If I passed my examinations I would go to the Normal in Winnipeg. More than that, I had recited a moving tragedy at a Masonic At-Home a short time before and been encored. I had dramatized a portion of Ten Nights in a Bar-room, and played the part of the drunkard's wife at a school concert in a way that left no doubt in my mind that the stage was calling me. I was the local correspondent for the Brandon Times—so with all these careers opening before me, I could not very well drop potatoes year after year!

I had prepared my speech of retirement, my declaration of independence, as tactfully as I could, for I felt that the potato industry was about to suffer a severe loss. But no one seemed to be disturbed over my secession and my resignation seems to have been accepted without comment, and the Early Roses from that year on, still reared their thick green leaves above the sod without any help from me, and time went on.

And now I am back to potato planting and have entered again into the fellowship of the soil and the sun and the wind and the rain, and I am reinstated without explanation. There are no black lists, no endorsations, or periods of probation when one desires to enter this great fraternity. The books are always open and no questions asked.

Nothing has changed much in the environment of potato planting either. The same little hot whirlwinds ruffle the newly ploughed field and twist the grasses on the headlands. The crows in the trees have the same husky throaty notes they had so many years ago in Manitoba; and there is the old hope in the air and the same promise of rain. The texture of life is full of golden threads in planting time in any country. Other springs have suddenly stood still, dried, withered and sunk into the dust, but not this one! Never this one! Everything is going to do well this year!

And there is more in planting than the hope of harvest, too. To plant a seed, or build a house, or make a room gay with bright curtains, or organize a study club, comforts and soothes us, because, as Mary Webb says in the "Golden Arrow"—"All these things keep away the idea of death, and build around the fleeting moment the sapphire walls of immortality."

NEIGHBORHOOD TALK

Conversation is not a lost art in our neighborhood. We use it

when we get together, and we meet often and without formality. We just step over when the chores are done.

Just now we talk about the birds and their ways, for there is much activity in nest building. The quail or grouse takes up the matter of hatching in a big way, sitting on as many as twenty eggs, which she places in a basin-like nest in the grass under fallen trees. Just how this little bird can cover twenty eggs is a mystery, but it seems to be successfully accomplished for the families appear in due season. The quail nests twice a year and so there must be a high mortality rate from cats and crows or we would see more of them. The Bob White which was once numerous in this district has disappeared entirely. The quail with its saucy little top-knot is not afraid of people and it walks through the gardens unabashed, taking what it can get of garden stuff. Its note is the clearest in meaning of all the bird calls. "Cut-that-out, cut-that-out" it cries, in an even tone of settled fault finding, and when still more exasperated speeds up the cry into "cutitout—cutitout." Its never-changing tone of protest leads one to wonder if the slang word "grouse" meaning to complain and find fault, may have originated from this.

The quail makes its nest of leaves and grass arranged with loose edges so that when the bird flies off the nest the suction of her wings draws in this fringe to cover the eggs.

The little ones, no bigger than good sized butterflies, are fully dressed in down when they step out of the shell, and are ready to go. They are born with a keen instinct for self preservation, and one of the neighbors tells me he has seen a little one, when pursued, fall on its back, and pull a leaf down

over it.

The humming birds have deserted our garden now, for we have no honeysuckle, but they may be seen in the woods, where the wild honeysuckle is in bloom. They build their nest on a tree trunk, and lay two eggs not much bigger than rice kernels. The nest is high in the tree, above the height of an average person, and is covered with green lichen so it looks like a small bunch of moss on the tree trunk. The preference seems to be for maple trees.

The humming bird is a never-ending source of pleasure, darting, wheeling, standing on the naked air, as if he had the support of a wire, so intent on his own affairs and so capable of looking after himself in the world of enemies. They will come back to the delphiniums and foxglove, for they love bright colors.

Our neighbors across Ferndale Road have a robin's nest in a tree that has a shipping tag at its front door, with a name and address. The tag evidently had a string attached, which the birds saw they could use so the tag came along with it.

And now we are right in line with the other neighbors for we have our own bird's nest; two martins are building their nest in our garage, plastering down their little pellets of mud in the corner made by a cross piece of lumber between the beams. This is a bit of good luck, and shows that we are accepted by the neighborhood:—The Martins have taken us on.

The martin is a species of swallow, and has the same skimming motion. It has a black body with buff colored under

feathers, and a long tail, giving it a very graceful slender appearance. The garage door is open all day and the work is going on with considerable haste.

The birds do not seem to mind the men of the family, but when I went out to see the nest building I was afraid I had disrupted the operation, for the bird that was coming in with a load turned back rather sulkily and went up into a cherry tree. But when the lady bird came with her load he gave her no word of warning and she sailed in and deposited her load, and then he came too. I think he knew the lady bird could hold her own with anybody.

The garage door is closed at night and the birds are not any too well pleased about it. They can't understand this big brown barrier that keeps them out. This morning they were sitting on the light wire, waiting for us to get up and open the door. They gave us the impression that they had been there all night. Their attitude, while not noisily offensive, made it clear that they would like a little more co-operation. The door wasn't open twenty seconds until they were in; and now there is such a coming and going it looks like a bird bee.

The bees are filling the air with their drowsy humming, rifling the catnip, poppies and roses; big stumbling fellows in black velvet and gold and the quick little working bees, very intent on the day's hunting.

They drove me in just now when I was enjoying a fine period of puttering, not by any act of aggression but by their disconcerting industry. They are a constant and terrifying example to all of us who like to idle when we should be

working. Anyway there is something uncanny about bees with their perfect organization, their distribution of work and wages, their orderly marketing and effective way of regulating the population, and their dealing with unemployment. It is impossible to feel superior and wise in the presence of a bee!

I would like to have a hive or two just the same. It must be quite a pleasant feeling to get up in the morning and let out the bees and see them take off across the fields to the neighbors' gardens.

THE PURPLE LILY

That old subject for debate that once raged in country school houses on Friday afternoons respecting the relative value of Anticipation and Realization scored a victory for the former again last week.

I had a lily. I had five lilies. I speak of them in the past tense. I had the most promising lilies, with mottled stems, wonderfully exotic and snaky, which promised mysterious flowers. The five came up in a long straight line, in the early spring, and leafed out in a queerly divided leaf, strengthening the belief that here was something rare and strange. I cleared away the grass and other plants, ruthlessly tearing out some unoffending violets that clustered near. I feared they would take nourishment from the lilies.

I led many visitors to the lilies, but no one had seen anything like them, all agreeing that they gave promise of wonderful flowers. The snaky stalks suggested a foreign shore and an alien sky!

Time passed, and I weeded and hoed and watered the lilies. One day I discovered a bud, a long green sheath, one on each plant, and that day I "finger-mingled" the earth around the roots, and drove off a cut-worm, put up some stakes and issued warning to amateur gardeners not to trespass.

The sheath lengthened, thickened, and changed from green to dark purple on the edge where the two sides came together. Then for a period the lily rested and paused in its growth; and seemed to be in some doubt as to whether it would bloom or not—but I went on showing it to the passers-by; halting and hailing people, busy people too, intent on their own affairs. No one had ever seen anything like it.

I knew then I had a treasure, and began to make plans; I would give the lily a name—the ordinary name is always the poetical one anyway. Lantern Lane Lily would be its name—the word would look well above an exhibit at the Horticultural Fair. I must be generous about this plant and make the world the richer.

It was strange, I thought, how our garden should have this rare plant. The former owners must have brought it here, and perhaps had never seen the bloom. I would write to them—I would send them the first flower. I drafted the letter, as I worked—a good letter too, full of fine phrases, One sows and another reaps—He who plants a seed sows a hope...

In a few days I began to worry over the color. It was exactly the color of a bruise, a livid ugly bruise. Maybe there would be a bright lining in the lily, yellow or rose or peach. There must be!

Then after many days—the sheath divided, the lily stood revealed—the blow fell. It had no lining, no color, no form or beauty. Just an ugly, boat-shaped clout with a stick in it of the same color. I did not know that anything in the plant world could be so forbidding and grim. It looked like a Black Hand Letter or a Pirate's Flag. It could replace the skull and cross-bones on a poison label!

One of the neighbors found out about it in an encyclopedia and wrote it down for me. "Arum Proboscidium, native of South Europe. Hardy. Blooms in May!"

Another neighbor, who came to see it, told me it was a close relative of the Skunk Cabbage with all the family failings. "The best you can say of it," he said, kindly, moving to windward, "is that it is odd!"

So we'll let it go at that. It's odd.

After this disappointment, I turn again to my onions. They are sturdy and strong and I am learning more about them. Onions have a deeply ingrained love of home, and, to achieve the best results, must be planted year after year in the same ground. Parsley is the onion's best friend, and if planted between the onion rows will ward off the noxious thrips. A lady in Portland sent me this information and I thank her for it.

And we found the uprights! They had been thrown out with

the packing!

MORE NEIGHBORHOOD TALK

A reader has written to tell me I am all wrong in my interpretation of the quail's note. It does not say, "Cut that out." It says "Took-uh-ooo." And it is not a fault-finder or protestor. The quail is a light-hearted, merry little bird and the quail and grouse are two distinct varieties of game birds (I thought they were at least cousins) and that only the male quails have top-knots. This is quite likely—nature was ever prone to favor the male—in the humbler creations.

So I stand corrected, in everything but the words of the quail, and I still say they are words of protesting and fault-finding, and I can hear them say "Cut-that-out" quite plainly. So that's my story, and I am going to stick to it.

Another reader corrects me on the matter of letting out the bees in the morning. It isn't done. The bees won't stand for it. They would be in a black temper if they couldn't get out just when they want to go. All right—I accept this too, but it rather spoils the thought of keeping bees, for me. I wanted to see them take off in massed formation in the gray dawn, darkening the sky in their flight, to make an impressive yet noiseless landing on the neighbors' gardens. And having started the gang to work, I wanted to go back to sleep, all thrilled and cheered by that exquisite feeling of vicarious activity.

Now let us consider the skylark, that dependable little bird which never fails us and will perform even when visitors come. They will not let you down by not being in the mood, or having forgotten their music. They will not plead a headache, or chapped hands, or being out of practice. Not at all. Only rarely is there not at least one aloft, pouring out his notes of liquid joy, and there can be no controversy over what the skylark has in his mind. The skylark builds his nest on the ground, in a hollow place, arching over it some sort of protection. The color is the same as the surroundings, and to this he trusts, to keep his little brood from harm. The nest contains three to five grayish eggs and the hatching takes place twice a year.

Last year a nest was found on Uplands Golf Course near one of the tees, under a tiny ridge. The grass cutter had gone over it, numberless feet had pressed its roof, but the superstructure had held. Few people have seen the nests until the operation of hatching is over; for the male bird is careful not to rise from his own door step and thus betray its location.

He runs along the ground before he rises, and then takes off with a burst of melody, rising and singing, sometimes stopping his flight for a moment in mid-air with a flutter of wings, then onward and upward without a pause in his song, sometimes going entirely out of sight, but still, in his prodigality, scattering down his silver notes to the needy world below, not even looking to see who catches them. And when he has finished his song, he falls, suddenly, straight to the ground.

The first time I saw one fall, I thought something had happened to the little singer.

Uplands, Cadboro Bay and Gordon Head, claim to have the only skylarks in Canada, i.e. the real English skylarks, the inspiration of Shelley's poem—

"Hail to thee blithe spirit
Bird thou never wert
That from heaven, or near it
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art."

Contrary to general belief, the skylark sings not only in the morning but all day long. Shelley knew this too and writes—

"The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen and yet I hear thy shrill delight"

"Shrill delight" is in every note, a bursting joy that cannot be stilled. The poet uses many similes to describe the rapture of the lark's song and yet leaves the story half told. He compares the song to—

"Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass
Rain-awakened flowers
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh thy music does surpass."

"What thou art, we know not

What is most like thee
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody."

And this is the song that can be heard almost any day from Uplands to Gordon Head, coming down on us as we weed the onions or hoe the corn or escort the potato peelings to the compost pit.

I often wonder if there are skylarks anywhere else in British Columbia, and would like to know for sure. The skylarks were brought here from England many years ago and placed in many parts of this Province; but so far as can be learned, survived only in the places named.

Skylarks do not live in unpopulated areas, nor do they ever frequent cities. They prefer settled farming communities, for they are sociable little fellows and like to see people about and open fields. But just why they have survived in this part and not in others, is a matter of wonder. The fact that there are always plenty of drinking places here, even in the driest summer, may be one reason. The crops and lawns are watered night and day in the dry months, and many people leave out pans of water for the birds. An old tire cut in two, with stones for standing places, makes a real community centre and attracts birds of many kinds, from sparrows to orioles.

A DAY IN VANCOUVER

A fine day in Vancouver, in any season of the year, can fill up all the moulds for beauty in the imagination. Just now with the gardens full of flowers, and vegetables from onions to kohlrabbi, the trees bending under the load of fruit, the maples beginning to redden in the woods, the bathing beaches swarming with humanity with the color-line entirely wiped out under the influence of that fine old democrat, the sun, with the mountains blue and silver above the harbor and the harbor full of shipping, Vancouver is a dream of delight.

I began to feel the exaltation of the big city when we came through the Narrows, and the Princess Kathleen threaded her way cautiously to her own parking place beside the pier, sending out a deep blast of announcement to whom it might concern. I love to see the high buildings glistening against the sky, the pattern of streets running up the hills and sense the activity of the twenty-two miles of shops, remembering that nearly two-thirds of all the people of British Columbia are gathered together in the great Canadian seaport.

Vancouver, on a fine day, is a many-colored scene, full of hopes and ambitions, sudden fortunes, world-embracing schemes and a strange mingling of races; a city of contrasts, too, where the eye follows the swift course of the ferries that ply like shuttles across the harbor in their eagerness to weave the broken pieces of the city together; while above all this activity and turmoil, serene and unmoved, the Sleeping Beauty lies, dreaming the centuries away, with a growing forest in her hair and a million tons of rock on her cold breast.

Vancouver has her low moods, too. Indeed, I know of no city that has as long a spread between her good and bad days. When a fog blots out the mountains and a cold rain streaked with sleet comes in from the sea, scattering dead leaves on the sidewalks, and a mean cutting wind lashes the trees and bites spitefully into doorways, and the air is heavy and clogged with smoke, and the people hurry through the streets in drab waterproofs and slogging rubbers, carrying umbrellas that may turn inside out at the first street corner, and the lights in the houses have to be turned on at four o'clock, and every house looks rain-soaked and cheerless and mortgaged, and the distances are so long, and the street car you want has changed its routing—that is Vancouver at its lowest ebb!

Someway, Victoria never seems to be quite as desolate. Even when melancholy days come on and the chilling winds traverse its streets and mourn in the smoky chimneys, the weather-beaten houses seem to preserve a certain dignity which would lead one to believe they do not mind the buffetings of the blast, for they are warmed from within by pleasing memories, like a reduced gentlewoman who has not forgotten the time when her aunt was presented at Court, and who still has a distant cousin "who is something in the city!"

But my day in Vancouver this week was one of the blue and white dancing days, when no hint of fog or warning of wind troubled the mind. I gave myself the luxury of a good stay in the station and let my soul rejoice in the ringing of the train bells, and the arrival, in two sections, of the Mountaineer. I stood where I could get the full rhythm of the pounding rails, and saw the great engine come to rest, heaving steamy sighs of relief that once again it had brought its load up the grades,

through the tunnels, over the bridges and round the curves.

In the station I stood in the sidewalls of humanity, and watched the stream flowing past. I like to see the foreign labels on the well-worn bags.

One smart little lady, who would have passed for 40 but for the stiff ankles of 60, carried a bag plastered over with hotel stickers, the biggest and brightest bearing the magic name of "Capri," and as she passed someone called it out, someone else whistled the tune, whereupon it ran across the waiting-room like a whirlwind over a ploughed field.

The next morning I went to the university to hear one of the summer school lectures by Professor Sedgwick, and found there many of my old friends, some from as far as Manitoba, who were taking their holidays in this delightful place. (Every time I sit in a student's chair, which has the little table below one's right hand, I tell myself I am going to get myself one for periods of serious reading.)

The audience ranged in ages from 17 to 70, and the young and old were equally interested. Intelligence knows no age limits anyway. The professor had a delightful theme which had to do with poetry and its implications—was it a means to an end, or an end in itself? Did it have to be true and moral, bound by laws, or could it exist and prosper and be enjoyed for its own beauty? The professor took the ground that it could; and warned his audience against "doctrinal adhesions" and advised them to soak themselves in Shakespeare, whose personal opinions do not stick out through his characters; he can put his characters into an hysteria of fear as they contemplate death, or

he can make them argue that life is a beastly bore, and it is well to be done with it.

Professor Sedgwick has a delightful voice, and while we listened to him we believed that the foundation timbers of truth are of but feeble consequence if the superstructure of beauty be sufficiently compelling.

Edna St. Vincent Millay once put a similar thought in beautiful words when she wrote—

"Safe upon the solid rocks the ugly houses stand;
Come and see my shining palace built upon the sand."

When we got away and out from the spell of his voice and his delightfully phrased sentences, we argued about it, and could not believe that the form of words was all, no matter how polished, or patterned, or full of sweet music they are.

I read over again that night the part of the "Confessions of an Opium Eater," in which de Quincy praises the chemist who first gave him the celestial drug. The words are musical and rhythmic, and the scene is painted in unfading colors, but it cannot move and bind me for all that. I have a "doctrinal adhesion" which tells me it was not a happy day for Thomas de Quincy when the "paradise of opium eaters was laid open" to him.

But it's a good lecture that sends the audience out discussing and debating and leaves a kindling interest that makes one want to hear more.

In my twenty-four hours visit to the big city I heard reports

of three conventions held in the East this summer; a discussion of Social Credit, both sides; heard some of the plans for the Folk Festival which will be held in October, and which is going to be bigger than ever; bought one book and borrowed two; had my picture taken and my fortune told; heard that tansy leaves will keep ants away from pantry shelves, and was given a "setting" of same—and so came home well satisfied.

A TOUR OF THE ISLANDS

Having two birthdays this week in our family, we felt we had to do something that could be remembered, so we picked up a few eatables, loaded the camera, left the garage door open for the martins who have a nest under the beam, and drove to Swartz Bay, 25 miles north of Victoria, where the ferry "Cy Peck" was billed to leave at ten o'clock.

The "Cy Peck" is a light little steamer, crisply white and black in its new coat of marine paint, and can carry 135 passengers when the occasion arises. Each day except Wednesday it makes four trips from Swartz Bay, which is a few miles north of Sidney, to Fulford Harbor on Salt Spring Island. But on Wednesday the little boat does a turn of the Islands, giving an eight-hour excursion of changing delights.

There is Piers Island to see first, with its interesting and none-too-happy story of the incarceration of the Doukhobors for the offence of parading without clothing. For three years

they were kept as prisoners on this island, men and women in separate compounds.

"Smarter fellows I never saw," said one of the ship's men who had been a guard at the Island for two years, and in proof of that he showed us a little tie-pin made by a Doukhobor. It is an ingenious little design, a bird with silver head, wings and tail and a colored body. The material used for the body was the celluloid of a tooth brush holder, with red and yellow paper below, taken from a nut bar. The silver came from an old teapot found on the island.

I asked about the women and how they spent their time. "They made drawn designs on the flour sacks," he said, "beautiful work, too. They would have done other work, but they had nothing to do it with."

Evidently the Government's objective in placing them on the island was punishment, not reform, for work was denied to these people to whom work is the dearest possession. The grim, bare buildings now stand gaunt and deserted, and belong to the owners of the island.

Our first stop was at Fulford Harbor on Salt Spring Island, where the boat stayed two hours, giving us time to eat a leisurely lunch. We found, without difficulty, a little promontory where mossy stones made comfortable seats, and where we could look across the estuary to the dim outline of the American shore. Before us on our left and right, were the high hills running down to the sea, heavily wooded with evergreens and maples; the trees laid on like the plumage of a bird, and showing a great variety of greens. Below us on the

water-worn rocks the waves beat gently, for the day was still, and the water rippled but slightly. Once in a while a ground swell rolled over in long undulations.

Nothing could be more peaceful or serene. We had shade under the trees, a view of the sea and mountains; not a mosquito or fly, and the day was warm and pleasant, scented by the pine trees. There was even the friendly presence of a little black dog, who joined our circle but politely declined to eat anything. His manner indicated that he did not wish to be misunderstood; his visit was purely social. We found out afterwards that the house above us belonged to the captain of the boat, so the little dog probably felt it was his duty to come down and welcome us in a semi-official capacity.

The boat, leaving Fulford Harbor, took us to Pender Island, Mayne and Galiano. At Mayne Island we stayed long enough to have tea at Grand View Lodge, run by Mrs. Naylor. In an old-fashioned dining room, with point lace on the high shelf of the sideboard and pictures on the walls in carved wooden frames with leaves on the corners, we ate strawberry shortcake and drank tea out of nice old English china. We were served by a tall Swedish girl born in Hong Kong, the daughter of a missionary to the Chinese, who, we heard afterwards from one of Mrs. Naylor's boarders, is an accomplished pianist. She gave us folders advertising the beauties of Mayne Island, in sincere but sketchy verse, from which I quote—

> "Why go to California to get a climate rare?
> I'll let you in a secret, if you're looking for fresh air;
> And when you've seen it through and through, I know
> you will exclaim:

There's nothing farther south to beat our Isle of Mayne.
There are stores upon the island, and autos quite a lot,
With roads to take you all around, and shade when you are hot.
_____"

In Mrs. Naylor's lawn there is a stump of a giant tree, cut smoothly across to make a seat. We counted the rings of growth to tell its age, and according to our record, it was 300 years old. Some of the younger members of the party discovered dry seasons and periods of high winds and deep snow, but we had to leave them at that point.

It was on the veranda at Mrs. Naylor's that we saw a bulletin of the church services of Galiano, Mayne Island, Port Washington, Saturna and North Galiano. The services were divided quite evenly between the first four, but North Galiano seems to be cut pretty short. It gets a service at 11 a.m. on each fifth Sunday, which will be four each year, with a possible five on leap year.

The Gulf Islands are many in number and have a population of about three thousand people, a third of which are residents of Salt Spring. Many of them are merely reefs where a few brave trees hang perilously to the rocks.

The first settlers came in row-boats 60 years ago, took up land on the larger island, cleared away the forest, set out orchards and gardens, fished in the winter time and made a living, without any one's help. Now there are farms on the

islands being worked by the third generation, still happy contented people. There are very few people receiving relief on the Islands. Poultry, dairying, seed raising, gardening and fruit farming are the common industries, and of late years the tourist trade gives occupation to many. Galiano last year had 850 people from outside.

They claim that their climate is better than that of Victoria, and can prove that they have more rain and less wind. Whatever it is they have, it suits them, and a more contented people cannot be found anywhere. One woman who came on the boat boasts that she has not been away from Salt Spring Island for 12 years, and expressed surprise that anyone should think this remarkable. "Why should I leave?" she said. "We have everything here. We have boats calling regularly; we get the papers from Victoria and Vancouver, we have sunsets, tennis courts, dramatic club, churches, neighbors, radio. What more do we want?" And there could be no answer to that.

One man on the boat, who has lived on one of the Islands for many years, said to me that he looks for a great many people to come in during the next few years. People can live so well on such a small income, he said. I asked him what he meant by a small income and he said $600 a year and that, he said, would provide an abundant living for a family, with what could be secured from the land and water. He also told me that the peace and security of the Islands attracts people from the south, who are frightened by the kidnapping of recent years, and mentioned a peninsula on Salt Spring Island on which an American woman was building a beautiful home.

When we left Mayne Island and headed for home through

Active Pass, we had a feeling that the picnic was drawing to a close. The lunch had been eaten at Fulford Harbor, and at Mayne Island we had tea. We had watched the young people skipping on the lower deck and talked to everyone who would talk. I went upstairs and began to read "Mary Peters" again. Even on a sunshiny excursion it is always well to have a book. Suddenly I heard people on deck, talking excitedly and I hurried out.

A school of black fish was on the left, blowing and tumbling, black fins showing like little tents on the water; so many we could not watch them all. We knew the other fish would have their hearts in their mouths when these hungry and roomy monsters were after them, for they were the black fish or killer whales, the terror of the sea.

Many of the passengers had seen them before, but not so close. I had seen them only in pictures.

Suddenly we saw some of them ahead of the boat rolling, turning, blowing sprays of water into the air; and as they rolled there was sometimes a gleam of white which puzzled those of our number who knew something of whales. I heard about them from one of the passengers. Whales are not fish; they are mammals just as much as cows or sheep, and they have to come up to the surface of the water to breathe, and their tails are not set on like fish tails, but horizontally, to make it easier to rise in the water. The blowing occurs when they come up and clear out the water from their lungs before taking a breath.

While I was listening to this, the whales were in front of us, and suddenly began a series of leaps into the air; they hooped

themselves and sprang clear out of the water, a dazzling display of black and white. We could see the flukes in their tails and the big triangular fins. There were three of them in the performing group, one of which remained until it seemed that the boat might hit him.

We hurried to the back of the boat then, and watched the performance until the boat had gone too far for us to see them. The friend who had been telling me about them, said he had never seen them leaping like this; nor did he know that they had so much white on them. The second mate explained the presence of the whales by a proprietory wave of his hand: "We've arranged with them for Wednesday performances all season," he said.

I heard of another great monster seen in these waters two months ago, a tiger shark, forty feet long with black stripes around his gills. He had, no doubt, drifted north from the tropical waters of the south and when seen was in a state of languor, probably caused by the colder water or the lack of proper food.

I have not said half enough about the scenery, for in addition to the wild natural beauty of sea and mountains, there are the glimpses of the gardens, cultivated fields with plants in even rows; the presence of fat cattle lying in the shade of spreading trees, the dignified little weather-beaten churches; beautiful homes set in protecting shrubberies, as if their owners wished to think their own thoughts, undisturbed even by the presence of a passing boat; the activities of the little ports of call, and the endless change of scene as the boat winds and turns through the aisles of the sea heralding its approach by a deep-

throated whistle that tears the echoes from the mountain sides.

Eight hours of this, on a day of clear sunshine, warm and pine-scented, leaves a memory of complete tranquility and an added sense of the diversity and richness of the Canadian scene.

DOES THE SMALL FARM PAY?

I have been reading a book entitled "The Next Hundred Years," with a sub-title "The Unfinished Book of Science," which has disturbed me, particularly in the chapters on the farm. The writer, C. C. Furnas, says the small farm is doomed, for it is being conducted in an uneconomic way and has about as much chance of paying a dividend as fishing with a hook and line. The small farm, he says, is a luxury and nothing more.

The farm should be, he says, a highly specialized large-unit industry employing all the scientific engineering and financial ability available. The farm is an organic chemical factory and nothing more. It is Big Business, if we only knew it!

And to add the crowning touch to this arraignment of the farm as it is now conducted, Mr. Furnas says "there is no room for animals on a farm, except perhaps a dog for company. For why should a man plow one acre of land a day with a broken down pair of horses when the same man might plow 10 to 20

acres with a medium sized tractor?"

I disagree with Mr. Furnas. I believe the small farm does pay dividends. I believe the farm is not only a way of making a living. It is a way of life!

The people who work on farms have joys and pleasures that other people travel far and spend money to achieve. There is the heavenly quiet of the nights, when silence encircles us around, the fragrant starlit silence of the countryside, a healing soothing stillness, broken only by the sound of stirring leaves or the liquid note of a night bird passing by. There is a joy in sowing and reaping that can never come from merely operating a machine—the intimate touch of the good earth that gives us a feeling of fellowship with the eternal rightness of nature.

And it gives a piquancy and relish to our reading. It pushes back the horizons of our thought.

When Dr. E. Cora Hind wrote back from Russia that the scientists there had actually crossed the common and much detested couch grass with wheat and developed a perennial grain, and that she had seen it and was bringing back six grains of it to Canada, I had a thrill of achievement too, and I could not have experienced this if I had never done battle with this most persistent of farm weeds. I know its ugly little white worm-like roots, and how they burrow and spread, and thrive on opposition. I had often wished that will-to-live could have been given to some flower or grain, and now it has been done!

I am glad to live in a neighborhood where we see horses going up and down the fields. It may not be economic—but

that can be argued too—anyway they are picturesque and altogether beautiful. And the man who drives his own team on his own field has a sense of well-being that could never come to the one who drives the company's tractor on a ten thousand acre farm.

The farm people live while they work and are not driven by bells or bosses or fear of losing their jobs. That they get small returns in money, I admit, but there is something people crave more than money and that is security. The crash of 1929 is still remembered.

That was the time when people had the most money and—as it proved—the least security. Piling up goods, radios, cars, and building beautiful houses, did not protect the owners, nor did bonds and shares and stocks, even the gilt-edged ones. But a fine field of potatoes and a row of apple trees, and a few red and white cows chewing their cuds under the shade of a spreading tree, will not lose their value in a night.

Mr. Furnas says that all this talk about wanting to get back to the land is fine for sentimental songs, but no one really wants to do it, and again I think he is wrong.

I will not revive the old argument about the farm being the birthplace of great men; I will affirm that the farm affords the best opportunity to combine work with a little thinking, deep contentment and a placid mind.

All around us on the farm, is a world of pulsating interest. Plants and their ways, the sowing and reaping, the uncanny intelligence of growing things, and the activity of the birds

with its significance.

When the gulls sit with their noses turned into the wind, on the plowed land, looking stonily out to sea, bad weather is indicated. And when there is a sudden appearance of little gray birds, falling down around the houses like a gust of dead leaves, you know there's a break coming, too, in the fine weather, and these provident little things have interrupted their northern flight to put in one good fill, knowing the days are evil.

They are a species of junco bird, very trim and smart, with a black head and neck, resembling a cowl. One of the neighbors, who has a poetic turn, calls them "nuns."

The people who live by the land, and on the land, have a love and fellowship with these little creatures, which brightens their lives and stirs their imaginations. Often I get a phone call from a neighbor to tell me that certain birds have come. The varied thrush which is a transient here, too, like the junco, appeared last week by the hundred, and two neighbors were good enough to tell me. So when our quota swarmed down from the sky a few minutes after I got the message, and accepted the hospitality of grain and suet which we had ready for them, I felt the farm was paying a dividend.

HANDICRAFT REVIVAL

THE VALUE OF A HANDICRAFT FESTIVAL

The Folk Festival in Vancouver, coming after the election upheaval, did much to restore us to good humor and sanity, reminding us that there is no difference between Conservatives, Liberals, C.C.F. or Reconstructionists in matters of fine arts and music, and in the appreciation of other people's handicrafts. We are all neighbors once more—pushing back the walls of indifference and misunderstanding that have hidden us from each other.

I had three good days at the Festival and saw and heard enough to warm my heart for many a day. I think of the Hebrew Choir from Seattle, coming up by bus, singing for the great audience that packed the Aztec ballroom in the Georgia Hotel, then down to the overflow below and repeating their magnificent performance before leaving for their hundred and fifty mile ride back, each one of them losing a day's pay to help the Festival in another city and another country.

"The first year", said one of the directors, "it was hard to get the people interested—some of them were ready to put me out when I came to their houses to ask for exhibits, they were sure there was some catch in the Festival and someone was making money out of it. Now they know what it means and they come gladly with their embroideries and tapestries, they know that the Festival is a friendly gathering, whose object is goodwill to all nations. Our people are suspicious when they do not know, but next year we will have a much larger display."

I asked for a woman who exhibited last year in another section and found she had received so many orders for her work that she had been busy all year and so left the space for others of her country-folk to show their handicraft.

In this section I heard a discussion on the difference between the Old Land and the New: "This country is too fine in weather to ever be good for handwork—in Old Country the winters are so cold, we cannot go out and so we work all the time. My mother keep me working since I was seven. No child here will work like that, so beautiful are the days."

I asked her if the long winter rains might not help people to stay in. She shook her head of curly hair. "The rain is lovely," she said, "so soft to the face and good for the hair." "Not for mine,", I said, thinking of the good marcel I had lost that morning.

"These people from the Old Country," said a Vancouver woman to me, "have the knack of making a home out of nothing, or rather what we would call nothing—I had a Swedish woman and her little girl for three months and she showed me more about home-making than anyone I ever had in my house. She turned the maid's room into a home with a few deft touches. My other maids had left it just as it was, maybe stuck a post card or two in the mirror. This woman hung a motto on the wall which she told me meant Peace and Friendship make the home,—she also had a hand-woven bed spread. It was not these things that made the difference—I cannot say how she did it, but she made that room feel like a home."

"And she showed me the place under a window in my kitchen where, in Sweden, the loom would stand and told me that all wool in her country is used more than once, often three or four times. When a sweater was worn out, it was ripped down and made into socks and even scraps of wool could be carded and spun again and woven. That's thrift and ingenuity of which we know nothing."

"But we are learning!" I said, and went to the Canadian exhibit.

I had to admit that most of the Canadian exhibits were beautiful creations of long ago—the work of the great grandmothers and grandfathers of this generation, a maple knot hollowed out to make a bowl fifty-five years old, and done by a man who lived near Owen Sound. Seed wreaths, darned net, a lovely old bonnet of lace and ribbon which may have been worn at the Duchess of Richmond's Ball on that fatal June night in 1815. The furniture is a reproduction of the Colonial style, loaned by one of the stores, perfect in form to the last wooden peg.

The most interesting Canadian exhibits I saw were the Home Crafts of this store, where all sorts of handmade rugs, quilts and wooden articles were shown. Then there was the wool and spinning exhibit of the two women from Burnaby who raise their own angora rabbits, clip the wool, card and spin and knit it. They use vegetable dyes, onion skins and lichens for browns and tans, beet root for rosewood and pinks. Their's is an active, real, present-day craft and they are making a success of it because they love it and are women of imagination.

The best work done by an exhibition of this kind is the conservation of the old arts by the simple process of appreciation. Many a woman has laid aside her loom and her old-fashioned fancy work, feeling that her work belonged to a day that was dead and that newer, more attractive substitutes were now in favor.

The first day I went to school, thirty miles from Brandon, I had on a homespun dress. My mother had woven it on her loom in Grey County, Ontario. It was a red and gray plaid, and I was bitterly ashamed of it. I was afraid I would be the only girl there with a handwoven dress, and I was!

As I looked in vain for some companion in distress and found none—was my face red! Now I would give much to own a bit of that same stout plaid, even as large as my hand.

THE WEALTH IN WORDS

I was at an agricultural fair yesterday and I saw evidences of the encumbering weight of standardization, and I saw, too, redeeming flashes of originality. In the children's work there was an exhibit of writing. The exhibits read something like this:

> "I am eight years old. I live at the Gorge. My teacher's name is Miss Smithers. I walk a mile to school."

All but one. One child wrote:

"Humble we must be
If to heaven we go
For tho' the roof is high
The gate is low."

That exhibit will be remembered even though it did not get a prize.

What an interesting competition this would have been if the children had been encouraged to choose a verse, or a sentence for its beauty. Think how the households might have been stirred in that search for a little gem of poetry—scrap-books leafed over—volumes of verse reviewed. I spoke to one of the parents and she said her little girl wanted to write a verse but the rules plainly said "four sentences." So the exhibit stood, bleak and uninteresting, but for the one competitor who stepped out from under the rules.

The same thing applied in the photographic display. I will always remember one, because it had a name as beautiful as the picture, a name which suddenly lighted the scene, and made it glow with warmth and color. The picture showed a tree from which the leaves had fallen, lying now around its feet in profusion. As it stood it was a piece of fine photography, a perfect study in light and shade, but when I read the pencilled title it became a living, throbbing, moving picture, for the name was "The Golden Robe." I saw the tree then, ripe with autumn, dropping its leaves, yellow and crimson, russet and

brown, and letting them go, without regret, for the summer was ending. So the golden robe had been shed, bit by bit, and the coin-like leaves were heaped up below the tree as a garment that waxes old. It was all in the name, that beautiful, musical, sonorous phrase—"The Golden Robe."

Another fine photograph will live because of its name—the picture of a cat, a gray cat with slumberous shrouded eyes, smooth coat of mixed gray, and a well-fed, well-cared-for look! A born aristocrat, who had slept on cushions and been fed chopped meat all his life and took his good fortune as his rightful due. The world owed him a living and he accepted it with condescension in which there lurked a trace of insolence. But that cat paid his way by being an ornament at the fireside, and although he had a hard and selfish heart, he had his standards of behaviour; and all this was told in the title —"Portrait of a Gentleman."

A good title can make an indifferent picture. "Harp of the Winds" is the name of a picture that has lived and will live, because of this beautiful phrase. It is not a remarkable picture, but this whistling title has carried it down the years and given it a place among the great pictures of the world. Lombardy poplars swept with wind are given sound effects by the magic of words—"Harp of the Winds."

The Women's Institute section showed plenty of originality and received the delighted comments of many visitors. One part of the room was made into a Colonial room, with hand-woven curtains in sunset shades, home-made rugs, a bed with woven blue and white spread. In the room stood looms and there the weavers plied their art. One woman from Mayne

Island had made her own loom from driftwood and the whole place had an atmosphere of old-fashioned neighborliness and good will. No one was too busy to talk. I could almost smell bread cooking and believe that smoked hams were hanging from the rafters.

The Women's Institutes are helping women to find hobbies —weaving, pottery-making and basket-weaving—and are thereby helping many to be ready for the dark days of winter and the still darker days of old age.

An exhibit of lovely laces and cushions, rugs and quilts and pictures, made by women over seventy, showed that many old ladies have found these pleasant ways of keeping their hearts happy as the years go on unnoticed. I wish all people could have the joys of making beautiful things when the fires of life begin to burn low.

The flower show is always a delightful place to go. But here again, I think, something could be done to give an added interest. The flowers are all given their proper names, which is as it should be, but if the popular names were given, too, what a help that would be to the unlearned, like myself, and I think we are in the majority. There was a lovely old-fashioned flower on display in many colors which rang the bell with many of us who recognized it as "Grandmother's Pin-Cushion." This name is descriptive, appropriate and colorful, but the real name is Scabiosa. Scabiosa!—a hard name to apply to a lovely flower! Could not the proper and popular names stand side by side? There is beauty and poetry in many of the old names and we stand in danger of losing them altogether: Ragged Robin, Bleeding Heart, Love in a Mist, Lad's Love, Velvet Flower,

Queen Anne's Lace, Job's Tears, Four o'Clocks.

I was interested to see the new gladioli, many of them unnamed, and to hear that one deep red was likely to be called "Haili Selassie," a very good name, too, which would date the new variety as well as name it.

Perhaps another year the directors will give a prize for names as well as flowers. I grieve to see a lovely deep rose whose depths hold hidden fire with the prosaic names of "Hugh Dickson." (There is another one called "George Dickson," which will always be a shining name to those of us who knew the dynamic preacher of Knox Church, Calgary, now in Toronto with his flaming messages. We ordered a "George Dickson" rose bush from a catalogue, just because it bore this honored name.) But "Hugh Dickson" means nothing, nor does "Van Fleet" or "F. J. Gootendorst." Let us have more like "Scarlet Letter," "Red Letter Day" and "Daily Mail," which have a significance and tell a story.

Language is a great democracy. It belongs to us all and does not, like many of the good things of life, perish in the using. But we are in danger of living here in poverty, in the midst of abundance. With all this great inheritance of English, pure and undefiled, we are in grave danger of just scraping along with a language of commodities, rather than one of emotions and ideals.

CONFESSIONS OF AN ONION-GROWER

Everything in life starts with an idea. Something crosses your mind, vagrant and casual maybe as a little back-fire of wind that stirs the hollyhocks outside your window. If you entertain the thought for a moment it seems to leave a deposit in your brain cells which makes it easy for the thought to come again.

The thought of growing onions has been in my mind off and on for years, beginning I think at a time when I discovered I had no onion and wanted to make a potato salad. We all like to dream of what we will do, when we are released from care and worry. Many of my friends have chosen chickens as their insurance against the boredom of retirement. Chickens are very chatty and companionable, resourceful and dependable, but I was janitor and mother's-help to too many chickens in my youth to ever choose these positions. I would grow onions!

When I put in the eighteen rows of Ailsa Craigs last March, even though my hands were sore from pulling out twitch grass, I felt I had embarked on a worthy career and announced it with enthusiasm in this column.

Quite soon people came to see my onion bed, and the seed houses put me on their lists. The visitors were a bit disappointed to find such a small bed, but I did my best to convince them that the idea was the important thing—the will to do. Everything had to have a beginning, and anyway, direction is more important than speed.

Some of them sent me onions after they had seen my

eighteen rows. Chives, too, came in, ready for planting, and leeks—also a bag of onion sets, and I rejoiced in the possession of such kind neighbors. I was getting on!

The crop of Ailsa Craigs, when they began to push their green threads through the sod, seemed pretty thin to me; but I watered them and loosened the soil, and quoted lines about patience and the secret processes of growth. But it was not poetry or patience they needed, I know now. They needed a fertilizer, organic or inorganic. I had thought of crop raising as I knew it in Manitoba or Alberta, where seed and soil and a little time brought the crop; where there was something left for Providence and favoring airs; where crops were "kissed by the sun, washed by the dew," but that is not enough here. On Vancouver Island the slogan is—You get out of the soil what you put in. Fertilizer is the magic that brings the crop.

When I came here first I marvelled at the place fertilizers had in conversations. We might begin with church history or the place of fashion in literature, or unemployment, but we would drift into wood ashes, lime or "Elephant," or the best way of making a compost heap. I heard of a woman in Vancouver who gave her husband a load of fertilizer for a Christmas present last year, ordering it in advance and having it delivered the day before Christmas, just inside the garden gate, with a few flags stuck in it here and there to preserve the festal spirit.

I thought, in my inexperience, that this was a joke. Now, thinking of the fine big onions I might have had, I wish someone had done the same for me.

But there is something to be said for onions like mine. They are small, I'll admit, but they are shapely and hard and white and are filled with the real old onion spirit. Not a thrips have they harbored, and they are pushing each other out of the ground wherever they are thick enough, just as arrogantly as the bigger ones.

I was discouraged when I saw the neighbors' onions, big enough for croquet balls, or door stops. But after all, onions were not originally designed for any of these things.

I had hoped to use onions this year for Christmas greetings, tastefully wrapped in onion skin paper and packed in little green boxes with little onion seals. It is high time the onion was recognized as a symbol of the festivities of Christmas, for that pleasant piquant savor which pervades the kitchen when the turkey is roasting would be definitely lowered if the onion were absent.

I know my onions would be criticized on size if I sent them out in this present evil world, where bulk has such a high rating. But I can send out onion seed. Mine will be as big and black as any. I put in two dozen Ailsa Craigs last March for seed, and they are standing up as straight as flag poles now, bearing aloft their shaggy heads, with enough seed to sow an acre. Nora Wain, in her Chinese Flower Diary, tells of the custom of giving seeds and slips on certain holidays; and I think it is a significant and gracious form of greeting.

I remember speaking in Olds, Alberta, one bitterly cold January night, soon after my arrival in that province, in 1914; and at the close of the meeting I was presented by the local

council with a beautiful bouquet of winter house flowers, ivy, geraniums, petunias and fuchsias. I wrapped them up carefully from the frost and when I got home rooted the slips in water and later put them in pots, and enjoyed that bouquet for years.

Speaking of seeds; one of the neighbors here tells me a friend of hers, visiting here from Scotland years ago, took home the seeds of the Enthronium (sometimes called by Victoria people "Uplands Lily" and mentioned for the honor of being the official flower of Vancouver Island). The seeds proved a disappointment for they did not come up and were naturally forgotten as the years passed. Last year the lilies sprang up and blossomed, after twenty years!—the Rip Van Winkle of flowers.

To return to my onions—eighteen rows are not very many, but it is twice as many as the poet Yeats had of beans, when he said he would arise now and go to Innisfree to find peace. He was a little short of bees too, according to the text—

> "I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree
> And a small cabin build there of clay and wattles made
> Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee
> And live alone in the bee-loud glade.
> And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow
> Dropping from the veils of morning where the cricket sings
> There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow
> And evening full of the linnet's wings."

AN ONION SCRAPBOOK

Our own comes to us out of the shadows, out of the wide spaces, out of the unknown.

In my Christmas mail I had a scrapbook sent to me anonymously, a scrapbook all about onions. Not a word, not a name, to tell who sent it. But I know who compiled it, for the name is written on the flyleaf, in ink now faded to a rusty brown—

Thomas J. Johnston
Knox College
Toronto.

No doubt Mr. Johnston was a theological student, and in later life turned from oratory to onions, and used this theological book, entitled "History of the Patriarchs," to hold his onion clippings. In between the clippings there creeps in here and there a few lines of ancient history, giving a certain literary flavor to the text.

The first entry in it reveals how the world, even then, had speeded up its processes and looked back pityingly to the laborious ways of yesterday. "Forty years ago," it begins airily, "it took twenty-five men and four teams one day to sow an acre

of onions. Now two men, a boy and a horse can do the work in two days and do it better." Twenty-five men, all at work on one acre, would need to be on speaking terms. I tried to picture the scene. It would look like a public meeting.

This clipping is followed by an entry in fine round writing in faded ink that gives out this good news. "A farmer on the London road near Sarnia, made $400 from a quarter acre of onions this year (1881)." That's the sort of onion talk I like to hear, and it's news, too, even if it is fifty-five years old. I am afraid it always will be news to me.

But the book is not too optimistic in tone. It has a stern realism. Listen to this:

"Unless one is prepared to give thorough weeding and at the right time, he should not attempt to raise onions. It is no fancy work and there is no machine that will do it. Unless one can go down on his hands and knees astride of the row, and remove all weeds with his fingers, twice or maybe three times, he will not be much troubled at the harvest time. Excellent hand-weeders are made to run close to the rows but until a machine can be made to think, the rows must be weeded by hand." Isn't it the truth?

The compiler of this book uses clippings from Ontario papers, and American papers too. He takes an international attitude on the great question of onions. The "Ohio Farmer," the "Country Gentleman" are set side by side with the "Toronto Globe."

Another clipping tells of a good device for showing the

unskilled onion-grower where his rows are.

"Sow an ounce or two of radish seed with every pound of onion seed. The radishes will come up in a few days and so mark the rows."

S. C. Brown of Whitby, Ontario, makes a contribution. He says: "Successful culture depends upon shallow culture, and early sowing."

I searched the little book through to see if the onion expert knew about thrips. I rather hoped he did not. After all, science surely has made some advances. I thumbed the old book over. Not a thrips. But wait—I found an entry with an engaging headline, "Hunting the Onion Grub By Torchlight."

I felt I was getting "warm." "Crossing the great onion meadows by night," I read "passengers travelling between Greyheart and Chester are attracted by myriads of lights that gleam in all directions. They are lanterns and torches in the hands of men, women and children, carefully seeking what is known as the onion grub. So destructive is this entirely new pest that acres of onions have had to be ploughed up and replaced by other crops. Farmers have found no way to destroy it except by hunting it at nights during which time it does its feeding, remaining hidden during the daytime; and when he awakened he said "how dreadful is this place!" I sat up at that —here was a new side to the onion grub.

B. C. Leaflet 36 did not tell the whole story of this intriguing little pest!

I looked again—and discovered my mistake. I had run over

the edge of the clipping and had landed squarely into the story of Jacob the night he left his father's house, and slept at Padanaram. It was here, too, that he turned his pillow into a pillar and so gave many a young preacher the chance of making a pun at the strawberry social.

There are many other valuable hints on onion culture in the little scrap book. Freezing does not hurt an onion if the thawing out is not hurried. That's the sort of plant to have. The onion can take it! And you do not need to be hunting fresh pastures every year. Leave it be! It grows to love its home. And parsley sowed with the onions will discourage the onion grub. Radishes for guidance, parsley for protection! And celery should be put in every sixth row so that when the onions are harvested the celery can be banked up and blanched. There's the sort of vegetable to have. Home-loving, frost resisting, agreeable, willing to grow and let grow!

I thank the kind friend who sent me the book. It has given me a pleasant evening.

CAN WE TAKE IT?

I have just heard a radio announcer say that Dr. Anna Louise Strong has been denied the use of a hall in Bellingham, Washington, because her speech has Communistic teaching in it.

And so it has, for I heard her here in Victoria a few nights ago. But can we dismiss Communism by refusing to listen to it? We know there is such a thing and that it has to be faced. Why do we hide our heads in the sand?

Dr. Strong is one of our own people. A well known, sober-minded, honest woman, and she has something to say to the world to which everyone should give heed. I do not agree with her conclusions but we cannot ignore her premises.

She has lived for fourteen years in Russia and she believes that Russia has made great progress. She thinks their system is better than ours, and she told us in a convincing way, why she thinks so.

Her address did not give me any desire to adopt this system, but it did give me a challenge, a real call to arms. She convinced me of one thing, and that is that we will have to choose which system we want to live under; Communism, which does achieve in a Godless, ruthless way many excellent results; or our present system which has a definite program for the individual, but no definite plan to remove poverty, waste, or war.

Russia is a country of contrasts. I mean the present U. S. S. R. It repudiated its debts, but it pays its students while they are learning and so really has free education. It slew the Royal Family, but protects its children now better than we do. It has no mercy on non co-operators, but reforms its criminals by patient, sensible methods. It threw religion overboard, but has adopted in many spectacular reforms the tenets of our Lord. It is the one country which gives absolute equality to all colors,

all races, and to men and women. The Jews and the Negroes there need have no fears.

It is easy to understand why it left the path of religion. To begin with, religion, as seen in the Orthodox Church of Russia, was merely part of the tyranny that oppressed and kept the heel of authority on the necks of the eighty percent. It was an Established Church and more of a ritual than an ideal. It had never been a champion or a help to the down-trodden people. The teaching was briefly this—bring in your taxes, obey your betters, endure, suffer here and you will go to Heaven by and by. No wonder the rising tide of independent thinkers regarded it as the "opiate of the people."

We know better. We know religion is a call to do something. It is a trumpet-blast in the soul to right wrongs—set the captives free—make the rough places plain—prepare the way of the Lord.

We know that every good thing the Russian people have done could have been done, and should have been done by the Christian nations. Our trouble is that we have not taken our Christianity seriously, yet. We read these words and think they are merely beautiful phrases:

"Bear ye one another's burdens."

"If any man take away your coat, give him your cloak also."

"He that is strong, should bear the infirmity of the weak."

I hope to hear that one of the Christian churches came forward in Bellingham and invited Dr. Strong to speak. That

would be a wise and friendly thing to do. She does not condone the evils in the Russian systems, but she sees beyond the ruthlessness the core of truth and justice. Communism and Christianity have need of each other. Communism has a program of social reconstruction without the Christian dynamo behind it, and Christianity has the dynamo which changes hearts but has not yet a unified program for social regeneration. The combination would make a new world by working through the regenerated individual and the reconstructed state.

BEACH MEDITATIONS

Almost any thing in life is an asset if you have enough of it!

Seeing the Quintuplets in the last month has set me thinking along this line. Babies are a joy and delight, but their keenest admirers have never claimed that they were an economic advantage to their parents. Indeed with doctor's fees, nurses' fees—and incidentals, to have a baby is sometimes ruinous to the struggling young couple. Now consider the Quintuplets. Their parents have definitely departed from labour; they have a government allowance and money in the bank. One baby would have set them deeper into the mire of depression but the Five have made them independent for life. One baby is an expense; five babies a fortune!

I have a friend here, who is a very sick looking man, and so thin, he would pass for the original of the story of the man who

had to pass a place twice to throw a shadow. But see what his pale face, and thin body have done for him. He has a fine job now with a moving picture company. He is their official invalid, and a very romantic and handsome invalid he is. He is wheeled in a chair and fed on chicken broth and ice-cream, and has doctors attending him. And he is paid for all this!

There is a real philosophy in this which the wise person takes to heart. It is, in brief, that we do well to stick to our own line, improve and develop it. This is one reason for Victoria holding on to its quiet dignity, its settled orderliness, its fragrant silences. Victoria has a flavor all its own. I was in the Empress Hotel today, and sat looking out at the garden, where the sunshine brought to life the red berries on the catoneasters, and turned the little pools of water into shining mirrors. Groups of people sat scattered over the room drinking tea, and the murmur of conversation beat softly on the air, like the voices heard in a dream. In one of the deep chairs a man slept with a book in his hand. At the far end of the room an orchestra played "Red Sails in the Sunset". Contentment wrapped us around. I began to feel a bit drowsy too.

I recalled a story I heard when I was in the East. A man said that when he was in Victoria he saw a dog chase a cat across the street, and they were both walking! We welcome all such stories. Indeed we sometimes make them up ourselves. Victoria has great wisdom in her calm repose. Let no one dream it is the languor of dullness.

So I return to where I began. Almost anything in life is an asset if we have enough of it!

The sea-gulls have learned something in their hard lives. The day of the storm, long before the wind began, the gulls came in from the sea, and sat solemnly on the ploughed fields in almost regular lines with their beaks to the wind, ready for anything. Gulls have learned to read the signals.

The moon is full to-night and the setting of broken clouds brings out all its majesty and beauty. This is the sort of moon that Alfred Noyes had in his poem, "The Highwayman," and which he described as "a ghostly galleon tossing on silver seas." Below the moon, on the smooth surface of the sea, go the passenger boats, beaded with lights, intent on their own affairs. And the two lighthouses signal across the water. The ways of the sea on a night like this are ways of quietness.

Divorces are increasing in Canada and elsewhere. There is no denying the fact that women are growing more independent of men; there are many occupations open to women now and if things are not going on happily at home, they take the open door. A job waiting down the street has a tendency to give a simple family quarrel a dramatic and tragic ending. But that is not the only reason for the increase in divorces. The times are difficult; the scarcity of employment breaks homes too. I talked to some homeless men recently and found that several of them were married but separated from their wives. The statement was given in simple words. "I lost my job and my Missus left me ... She went to her people when we lost the house." The individuals are not always to blame. Divorces

occur most frequently in the extremes of society—the rich and the poor. Too much or too little makes marriage difficult.

There is another reason for broken homes, more subtle than either of these. The moral fibre of both men and women has been insidiously loosened by song, story and screen, for evil is deemed to be more dramatic and picturesque than good. The virtuous woman is no longer the heroine of the story. She has been superseded by the smart woman, who can bend all men to her will. Becky Sharp outshines Amelia Sedley, and Becky Sharp, while very amusing, is not a homemaker.

When any writer is short of plots or ideas for stories, the newspapers can oblige! Here is a sad one. A little girl of seven was spending Christmas away from home for the first time, and it happened that her uncle, at whose house she was staying, was a just man, lacking imagination, who did not believe in Santa Claus. He believed in telling the bitter truth to children. When the little girl awakened on Christmas morning she came out of her room all ready to open Santa's offerings (she had hung her stocking in front of the fire on the back of a chair the night before). She was met by her uncle who motioned her to keep quiet and go back to bed. He had the empty stocking in his hand!

Offset that one by the following, which comes from Prince Edward Island.

Chapter I.

1900. A woman stands beside her sister's grave in a strange land, shaken with grief. Another woman, looking from her window at the edge of the cemetery, sees the lonely mourner, goes out and asks her to come in and sit awhile. They drink a cup of tea together and the mourner's heart is comforted by human sympathy.

Chapter II.

1936. The postman calls at the house which faces on the cemetery, with a registered letter for the woman who made the cup of tea thirty-six years ago. It contains one thousand dollars, from the will of the former visitor, who did not forget the friend who tried to comfort her in her sore need.

And this leads to the following verse quoted in "England all the Way".

A Fragment

"Four good walls and a roof that's sound,
A nice square piece of garden ground,
A little shaw of underwood
South to the sun, with a view that's good.
With these a hill, some trees, a spring,
Remember poor folk wayfaring.
And if some wandering soul should stray
To watch your merry wood-fires play;
Take from your kitchen cup and plate

And greet the stranger at your gate.
Who knows but from the cold and rain
You may an angel entertain."

THE CALL OF THE WILD

Nineteen-thirty six has given us a reluctant spring, a niggardly begrudging spring, which lets us have an occasional bright day, but follows it with sombre skies and scouring winds.

Yet in spite of all, the daffodils have come, lighting their bright candles, not only in the cultivated rows but in the grass and on the headlands, and even in the gloomy woods.

Daffodils have a courage and hardiness that warm the heart even more than their exquisite beauty. This year they have been frozen, beaten by ferocious winds, their delicate trumpets filled with snow, but they go on blooming and sending out their delicate fragrance.

Unlike any other flower I know, they grow in loveliness after they are picked. You can bring in a bowlful and think you have all the same kind, just yellow daffodils, but in a day or two you will find you have some with longer trumpets, some with pale cream sepals, some with a flare, a twist in their sepals; some with burnt orange edging on the trumpet, and all of them have grown larger. With care they last ten days in the

house and even then seem to fade gracefully away. And they are able to look after themselves, growing anywhere without care, it seems.

And I like daffodils and tulips because they will grow in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, where flowers are appreciated to their full value. It is only those of us who have done without flowers who really love them. Women who have sat up at night with a few geraniums to keep them from freezing, who have put newspapers between them and the window-glass every cold night, who have carried them from the east window to the west to catch the last glint of sunshine —they know what a treasure even one blossom can be when the whole landscape is locked in the icy clutches of winter.

There's too much going on outside now for anyone to accomplish much indoors. Indeed the outdoor life always shines adventurously when compared with the monotonous round of dishwashing and dusting. The men of our family, a few weeks ago, took out thirty old cherry trees with a stump puller and dynamite. I watched them through the window, setting the blast, lighting the fuse, running back to safety—and then the explosion—earth, rocks and tree shooting up in a great, black fountain. While I, indoors, washed brown rice six times at the sink, and set it in the oven to cook in salted water, to which would be added, in due course, milk, two eggs, raisins and sugar.

I can understand the indignation felt by a tired woman, on the occasion of her husband coming home gaily whistling. She rebuked him for his lightness of heart, by telling him life was easy for him—he could afford to whistle. "I had to work all

day in a stuffy, hot kitchen, cooking and washing," she said, "and you had nothing to do but dig in a nice cool sewer."

And now there's cleaning and burning going on all along the roadside, with a great leaping bonfire of billowing smoke, shot through with flames; when the dead branches are piled on, the smoke climbs into the trees behind, and hangs in gray veils against the green branches; and chipping sparrows sit on the fence posts and drill the air with their sweet pipings; and the skylarks are calling on all the world to forget its troubles and rejoice with them.

From our windows now we look down a gentle slope, where the gold of the daffodils flows like a tide that rises and falls. Bands of pickers, broken at the waist like jack-knives, gather the blossoms in flat boxes and carry them away on their shoulders, as epaulettes of pure gold, leaving only a few stray blossoms among the green; but they are hardly gone from the field until the tide begins to rise and you can almost see the green turning to gold again.

Beyond the daffodils, now that the underbrush is cleared away, we look into the dim recesses of the wood, black as a bear's cave, for there in all its green coolness lies the undisturbed, unspoiled forest, whose high tree-tops sway gently in the wind. There in the high branches, birds are building their nests, well above the danger line, and all around, the shy little wild things go about their affairs unmolested.

I wish everyone in the world had easy access to a bit of virgin forest, or a kindly swamp, or some place where there is no trace of man's depredation. There is a comfort and healing

in its clean earthy odors, its strange orderliness, and its feeling of freedom that somewhat atones for the insolent pressure of human life.

Thoreau, who understood and loved the wild woods as much as anyone ever did, writes, "All good things are wild and free ... I love to see domestic animals assert their native rights—it is an evidence they have not lost their original wild ways, as when my neighbor's cow breaks out of the pasture early in the spring and boldly swims the river, a cold gray tide, twenty-five rods wide."

Thoreau would have loved the thirty-six hour old calf, whose story is still told in this neighborhood. He broke away from his owner, who had come to bring the wandering cow and her calf home; broke away and ran to the top of a high cliff over the sea, jumped into the icy waters, swam to a rock and climbed upon it, and it took three men to capture him even then, and reduce him to his humble station.

This love of the wild and of freedom sings a strange tune in our veins these days, and makes the silence of the wood eloquent with meaning.

ONIONS AND OLIVES

To-day we planted our onion seed, saved from last year's Ailsa Craigs. The tall stalks with their round shaggy heads of

seed were wrapped in a paper bag last fall and hung, heads down, in the basement. When I brought them up and spread a big paper on the kitchen table, I felt quite sure the bottom of the bag would contain the black seeds with their irregular, triangular shapes.

But the seeds at the bottom of the bag were few in number, and examination showed the husks had held the seeds quite tightly. So I put on a pair of gloves and started to rub the heads, and found it was not so easy. Onion seeds are tough, black-hearted-like things that hang on to their last place of residence.... I blew the chaff, but the seeds flew all over. I got the rolling-pin and bore down heavily on them and blew again. The hulls and seeds backfired on me and settled in my hair and down my neck, but I went on. I wondered where I could borrow a fanning mill! This did not seem to be a job that could be done by primitive methods.

Then I thought of my Onion Scrapbook, and opened it at the place marked "How to grow Onion Seed."

"The tops should be gathered in August," says the wise old book, "heads cut off and spread on a warm tight floor. When dry, the seed can be pounded with a light rod, and the seed separated by winnowing, but this will save the good and bad seed together. If a high grade of seed is required, the water process must be used." Then followed directions for trial by water.

Of course I wanted the highest grade of seed, so I spread more papers and brought shallow pans of water, and scattered the crushed hulls on the water, and waited to see the heavy

seeds go down.

I will admit my seed crop made quite a litter and I got stern and haughty looks from the passers-by. Pointed inquiries were directed toward me. "When do you think you will be through with the table?" "Is there no other way of extracting onion seed?" "What does onion seed cost anyway?"—and to all of these I gave gentle and courteous reply, knowing I was in wrong and the end was not yet.

More hulls, wet ones now, fell on the floor, and as I skimmed off the ruck from the pans the accumulation of dirty dishes on the table grew and multiplied in that lavish way that dirty dishes have of adding to their number. Before I had half a saucer full of seeds, I could see I was likely to become a social outcast, but having put my hand to the plough, (or in the slough, rather) I went on skimming and pouring off water, with heavier accumulations of slag on my fingers and under my feet ... The drills were waiting for me outside, and I worked fast and hard. Then I decided that dry farming was the best way, after all. So I washed my hands, dried them thoroughly, though they still felt water logged and spongy, got on the gloves again and crushed the remaining hulls as well as I could; and sat down to blow and gather, in a dull state of resignation.

Just then, the daughter of one of the best onion growers in the neighborhood came in and told me her father did not bother to remove the hulls at all—he just rolled the heads between his hands, or used a rolling pin—it didn't matter about the chaff—it dissolved in the soil anyway.

And at that glad word of deliverance I ceased from my

labors, I swept up the chaff on the table and saved it. I swept the floor and saved the sweepings, and I went out and planted everything except the paper bag. I used the clean seed first, finishing up with the roughage; and when the rows were smoothed and packed down with a hoe, no one could tell the difference. If I had made an agricultural error, at least I had buried it, and I was glad to see the last of them. Good old earth, that covers all, and forgives all!

And I remembered how lightly and gaily I had said I was going to send out onion seed in little packages for Christmas presents last year! The old timers must have laughed at that!

* * * * *

Life has its compensations, and this close contact with the soil offers a great diversity of interest. I found out something about the wolf or silver willow, which grows abundantly on the prairie and is being tried here; something that restored my delight in growing things.

We got a dozen little plants from a prairie man, living here, who imports them for sale. We wanted to smell again that sweet searching odor of the yellow blossoms that had scented the prairie evenings long ago. Distance lends enchantment and changes values. When I was chopping down silver willows and digging out the roots, in Manitoba, I never thought that the day would come when we would pay money for these persistent little pests. But anything that will bring back the buoyant happy days before the war, before the depression, before disillusionment, before stiff knees and selected diet, before we had heard of calories or inhibitions; anything that will do this,

has a value.

Having put in a hedge of silver willow by seed, between the plants, I sought some information, and find this little, gray, green shrub with its glossy leaves and round silver balls, is no less than a wild olive. It is the poor relation of the olive tree of history and mythology, the wild and poor relative who has exchanged the rich, oily polycarp for the toughness which makes it survive the longest, coldest winter. It bears only a little dry silver berry, enclosing the seed, but even in that small berry there is an oil that smears your hand. It is of the same family, and so has a right to share in the wealth of literature that enshrines the olive.

The olive was the symbol of wealth, prosperity and peace. In Homer's world, the olive was the luxury of the wealthy, used in the bath, or after the bath for sprinkling. "Wine within, and oil without" was a favorite maxim of the Roman Empire, referring to anyone who lived a luxurious and pleasant life. It was equivalent to being born with a silver spoon in your mouth, or wearing stockings that are silk to the top.

The Garden of Gethsemane was an olive garden, and in Sidney Lanier's beautiful poem beginning, "Into the woods my Master went," these lines occur:

> "The olive trees had a mind for him
> Their little gray leaves were kind to him
> as out of the woods he came."

FASHION IN FLOWERS

Nemesia is good this year.

Nemesia is good every year, but now it has come into public favor, and the greenhouse people are wishing they had planted more. Nemesia is popularly called Persian Carpet, and I had a dream of a rectangular bed of it, with a gold border of tagetas, to carry out the idea of a rug. The bed I still have, but it will be planted with snapdragon instead, for when I went to buy nemesia plants they were gone.

No one can tell why popular favor fluctuates from one flower to another. We know no more about it than we do of rising and falling hemlines or waistlines, or why some books sell and others, equally good or better, stick on the shelves in book stores, and at last go out as "remainders."

The first flower I owned, after I had a home of my own, was a calceolaria, in deep red, a beautiful plant, given to me by the woman who ran the Section House in our little town. She was one of the people who can make anything grow. Given a leaf she could make it take root. She grew calceolaria from seed, and presented me with this beautiful plant in full flower; clusters of red velvet pouches resembling in shape the lady's slipper, with a deeply veined foliage.

And how I cared for that plant! She told me how to water it from below, letting the water soak up from the saucer. I carried it from the east window to the west window to get the last glint

of sunshine—I did not let a leaf touch the window glass. I wrapped it in a newspaper and removed it from the window when the chill of autumn filled the night air. I cultivated it with a silver fork and gave it lamp-black for its complexion.

Early in December we were invited out for the afternoon and for dinner. I did not forget my one and only flower and I took it out of its window and put it on the kitchen window where the western sun would warm it. I should have taken it with me, which was my first impulse, for houses grew cold on the prairie when the fires die down. I knew a woman once who brought her pan of bread dough with her when she came to visit, with a hot water bottle wrapped in with it for the journey. We were late that night, and the coldness of the house when we returned, struck me like a blow. I knew when I felt the earth in the pot and found it hard as iron, that the worst had come to pass. The leaves and flowers were stiff and cold. When you have only one flower and it is stricken, you are not likely to forget.

I have never had a calceolaria since, and have seldom seen one. There are little yellow ones, with clustered flowers, seen in greenhouses, but they are no longer popular in gardens.

Geraniums held their own for many years, but they are declining. The lovely beds of scarlet geraniums are seen no more in parks, nor in the window boxes of the prescribed pattern—scarlet geraniums, white daisies, and trailing lobelia. I have a photograph of our Edmonton house, with window boxes of these, taken during the war.

Geraniums are of many kinds—pink, white and red, with

every intermediate shade, all with lovely green thick leaves, which carry the perfume. Slips taken in August will bloom all winter, and the summer flowers can be carried through the winter by hanging them in the cellar. They have beauty, perfume, and hardiness. One wonders why they have been superseded by others. Perhaps the growing of them is too easy!

And then there is the sweet-scented geranium, with a little rough leaf, which I have not seen for many years. I remember a country fair in Manitoba, where an exhibitor, (a cagey woman who would never give away a recipe) won the prize in Light Sponge Cakes because her cake had a peculiarly sweet and unknown flavor; but one sharp-nosed, defeated exhibitor solved the mystery—she had put sweet-scented geranium leaves under the waxed paper on the bottom of the cake pan.

Portulaca, and balsams, and pansies brightened our lives before we had even heard of clarkia, or godetia, or scabiosa. Batchelor's-buttons too, though regarded as a weed by real gardeners, will always have a place in my garden. I like their saucy way of springing up in any flower bed, and making themselves welcome—and what a lovely shade of blue they are for bringing into the house. Batchelor's-buttons, calandulas, and white baby's breath may be common and easy to obtain, but that combination has an appeal all its own, and brings the feeling of sunshine into the house.

The pansy will never lose its place in the countries where hardiness is the number one qualification, and that is not its only claim to popular favor. Temperamentally, it is what psychologists call "Expansive." The blooms must be picked or the plant will languish. To me they have the odor of sanctity,

for the Family Bible always had a supply of them pressed between its leaves.

I have not spoken of roses. I believe they reign supreme in every heart and have all the charm of the delicate child, for they must be sprayed, and watched, and fertilized, and pruned. But when the bloom comes, this is all forgotten, in achieving the perfect flower.

There is something intimate, vital and life-giving about flowers. They furnish a bare room, and redeem an unbecoming dress. They light candles in cold places. They make the party! They are unconscious actors in many of life's dramas. Who will ever forget Mary Webb's story, which she called "With Respect and Esteem?"

Ellen Smith was a country girl, transplanted to the city, and living in a weather-beaten apartment, where not even a window box broke the drab monotony of the brick walls. In her loneliness she determined she would buy herself some flowers, a huge box of lovely flowers, and have it delivered from the florist. She would send them to herself, with an unsigned card. She would pretend she had an admirer. To this end she saved a penny here and there, and dreamed of the sensation which the coming of the flowers to Miss Ellen Smith would cause at her boarding-house, and of her joy in possessing so much beauty. At last she had saved a whole pound, and the flowers were bought; the card written to Miss Ellen Smith, "with respect and esteem." She bought them in the morning on her way to work. They would be delivered at five.

When she reached her boarding-house, there were no

flowers. She waited patiently. They would surely come. She must not appear anxious. The next morning she phoned to the florist, and found they had been sent. Then she asked the landlady if any parcel had come for her. "There was nothing for anyone," said the landlady, "only a big box of flowers, addressed to Miss Ellen Smith. I knew it must be for Nellie Smith the singer, who used to stay here. She got flowers every week. So I sent them on to her. I knew they must be for her!"

THE MINISTER'S WIFE

This is the month of Church Conferences when the Ministers come in for their Annual Meetings and to listen to sermons, and reports, and Bible expositions, and to exercise what sales-resistance they can in regard to the books artfully displayed on the Literature Table. They are clean-cut men who look as if they shave every day, gray-haired many of them, and spectacled, but alert and well-groomed.

I have not seen one who looks overfed or lazy, or in any way resembles that poor sawdust thing, the bazaar-opening "parson" so often featured in modern fiction. They look like men who could do with more money, more books, a new car, and more time to associate with other men, but they are not apologizing to anyone, and not envious of anyone, for they know the magnitude of their work.

Looking at the convention hall filled with these men, I think

of the women who stand back of them; the women who, for financial and other reasons are not attending the Conferences. In many ways the Minister's Wife has a harder place to fill than the Minister, for he has heard the call of the heavenly voices and seen the burning bush, and these come back to comfort him when life runs low. She has perhaps seen nothing but the Minister himself and as the years go by, it may have come home to her that he is but a frail craft on which to venture all, and yet, even with this knowledge, she takes the waves proudly and without fear.

For she has made her choice and she stands by it. She believes in her man and his mission. And she holds him to the faith when he is about to stumble. She is undaunted by the bare little parsonage (hot in summer, cold in winter) with its cracked stove, chipped dishes of varied patterns, burnt granite pots—still showing a little blue behind the ears; its splintery floors, and doors that either will not open, or will not stay closed. She does not tell what she thinks of the uproarious paper on the living room, put there by the parsonage committee of the Ladies' Aid, (the president's husband sells wall paper.)

She is a wise woman, and knows what to tell and what to withhold. She censors the news before it reaches the Minister, and releases it with caution, so when the Drew family got offended at the morning service because he said the story of Jonah was an allegory, she did not tell him until Monday morning when he was digging in the garden.

She attends all the services in the Church. She goes to Prayer Meeting even in house-cleaning time, when her hands

are rough and her back is aching; because it will "make one more." And above all she is free with her praise of his sermons, but she tells him to keep his voice low, and to cut out the last hymn if he has preached twenty-five minutes instead of twenty.

And although she loves pretty things and longs for the feel of silk-to-the-top stockings, and the touch of books in soft bindings—and could have had them if she had married the Ford dealer—she does not let herself think of them much, but plunges into Sunday-School Rallies, Mother and Daughter Banquets, and the Missionary Study Book, with a zeal which makes the leading lady of the Ladies' Aid say, in words that are kind, but with an emphasis that cuts like the sharp edge of paper, "Well, you certainly are a worker, and if things do not go right in this Church, it is not your fault."

So the work goes on. And the small churches, bare and unlovely as many of them are, continue to be the centres from which radiate good will, neighborliness, and high resolve, and it is here that the temple of the nation is being raised without the sound of hammer and saw,—and the High Priestess of this temple, who wears no crimson robe, and whom no acolytes attend; who is often discouraged and tired, and sad, but goes courageously forward with healing hands and words of hope, is the unpaid and too-often-unappreciated Minister's Wife.

ROUGHAGE

Now that the summer is in full blaze, and everyone is working in the gardens, we do not visit so much. We get up early and by nine o'clock bed beckons the weary toiler. But like the nations of Europe, when it is not advisable to have Conferences, we still have Conversations. We call to each other over the loganberries; and we go to see each other's plants, openly congratulatory, but inwardly grieved when they are very much better than ours.

Now I am not an envious person. Last year when our neighbor's cherry trees, much smaller than ours, were frilled with white blossoms and looked like a procession of little brides on their way to the altar, I rejoiced over them and took my friends to see them. And when the time came that they fairly sparkled with fruit, I did not refuse to share their bounty, though our big hulks of trees were so bare the robins did not even notice them. I wasn't envious, I was neighborly, and glad, and ate and carried home in fine good humor.

And I can walk over the velvety lawns of Strangewood, and sit in the arbor, and look at the waxen water lilies in the pool and feel awed in the contemplation of the petrified wood in the rockeries, (brought from Drumheller, Alberta). My heart has no trace of envy. I feel as rich as the Queen of Sheba, when I look at the beauty which my neighbor's artistic hands and money have made possible ... but the onions that are grown in this neighborhood get in my eyes like smoke! They are so big and lusty, green and healthy!—and everyone of my neighbors has them. Why cannot I achieve this one, small, early ambition? It is not as if I aspired to raising angora rabbits, or gensing, or aspidistras. I want to grow onions, and not even the big close-grained aristocrats that are taken to Fairs, and set in

formation on shining purple paper to receive the plaudits of the passing throng. The common, standard, run-of-the-mine onion is what I want—the kind that is put into a meat pie, or a potato salad to give it character.

In March this year, I planted my Ailsa Craig seed as recorded in this column; and was rewarded beyond my deserving when it came up lustily. I put the husks in with the seed in part of the rows, and found this roughage made the best showing. As I looked at its vigorous growth, I grew scornful of the Onion Scrapbook which recommended the laborious method of sifting and blowing or steeping in water.

I congratulated myself on knowing that onions do best in their accustomed place. Every prospect pleased me. The garlic had wintered well. So had the chives, and soon were in full bloom, covered with pretty purple pom-poms, like something an old lady would wear in her bonnet, if there were any bonnets, or any old ladies... Evidently the kelp fertilizer was just what onions needed—we had put kelp on the bed last fall. I had not put in any parsley to keep the thrips away, for we did not have thrips last year. A false security wrapped me in its deceptive mantle. I believed in my own good fortune—luck was with me—I was born with a caul like David Copperfield, and "would never be in a ship that sank, or a house that burned." No doubt, I thought exultingly, I am also covered against "Thrips in Onions."

One day, when I lead out some friends from Edmonton to gloat with me over my onions, I was suddenly smitten by what I saw. Black patches in the rows—lapses—vacancies—emptiness. Where were the myriads of little green knuckles

that had come up so promptly, and had been visibly straightening out when seen two days ago?

The Edmonton people were tactful and praised the chives. When they were gone I dug down for evidence, and found a busy little grub, the color of brown rubber, about an inch and a half long, frilled with short legs on each side, and with long feelers on his head, and able to crawl upside down with ease and speed! I had him on a trowel, and had to keep turning it quickly to keep him in sight. This little pest is called the "Garden Centipede" and the books say he can only be flooded out. But how can anyone flood a side hill with water by the gallon and on a meter?

Then there were some drooping plants, which distressed me more than the ones that the centipede had taken, for they were suffering from what is called "Club Root." Their little roots had tied themselves in knots and as they grew, the knots tightened and choked the plant like a secret sorrow. That must have been caused by some deficiency in the soil—I had failed to provide good home conditions. About half the crop was gone, or going.

I tried to remember the resolute spirit of the prairie farmers who hitch up the team, and plow down the hailed crop, getting ready for next year; and the brave woman who sent the children out to gather up the hail stones—so she could freeze ice cream.

I got some onion sets, and filled the vacant places, and tried to lighten my darkened spirit by turning to some other part of the garden.

The Mary Washington asparagus, now two years old, waves its green plumes in the breeze. It's even rows resemble a forest of miniature Lombardy poplars. The field of peas, still starred with blossoms, is beginning to bear; and the peach tree on the south side of the house is loaded with fruit.

* * * * *

The sorest touch in all this is not that the centipede and 'Club Root' attacked my onions and destroyed many of them. That can happen to anyone. But, just as a bit of perversity, can you beat this? I threw away some of the husks when I was shelling the seed-heads. Under a cherry tree I put them, and there they took root, and grew in beauty side by side. Not a thrips. Not a centipede. No knotted roots. They had no care and no fertilizer. They had nothing but a fine piece of neglect, and they are the best onions I have among the seedlings ... that's a fine way for onions to treat me—after all I've done for them!

Shakespeare's famous lines, with a slight change in punctuation, seem to supply the only explanation—

> "There is a destiny that shapes our ends rough,
> Hew them as we will."

IN PRAISE OF GREEN PEAS

We can see, across Haro Strait, the island of San Juan in the

State of Washington, where one of the industries is the raising and canning of green peas. I saw the fields two years ago and saw the "Vineries", where the crop is brought, and the peas threshed out like grain. But it grieved me to think that the young pods, not yet filled, have to be wasted. One of the brands is called "Salt-air."

Like most people who spent their childhood on the prairies, I have a sentimental regard for green peas. We often took them to school with us, to eat raw, but not many of them survived the morning recess. Shelling peas was a coveted occupation when it carried "eating privileges." Before the time of fruit trees, or the easy obtaining of fruit or canned goods from Ontario and British Columbia, green peas and wild strawberries marked the very peak of high living.

The tide of green peas broke gently over our neighborhood this week, and now the great need of the hour is for pickers. The strawberries and gooseberries have taken up the professional pickers, and the children are still in school.

However school is released at three o'clock in this province and this afternoon we had three small visitors, ranging in age from seven to eleven, offering expert picking at market rates, which is one cent and a half per pound. So they were engaged, and provided with baskets. Being of one family, we thought they would pool their pickings, but that suggestion did not get a seconder. Evidently a co-operative plan had been tried, and had left them all rugged individualists. Each man would work for himself. And when the peas were weighed in, the seven year old had done as well as any of them!

To-morrow being Saturday, the fields will be full of pickers, and the peas will be carried by bus and car into town. There will be cut rates in the stores too, to clear away the stock, so it is pleasant to think of the big vegetable dishes full of green peas, with melting butter on their luscious green beauty, which will adorn Sunday's dinner tables.

The sweetness of the green pea still makes me glad, as it did in my childhood, and I like mine cooked without mint, and cooked in as little water as possible, so there will be nothing to throw away. The vital part of cooking green peas is to be sure you have plenty of them.

Green peas are more than a food, more than the world's choicest vegetable, not forgetting asparagus or cauliflower. Peas pay their own way. They do not impoverish the soil—they enrich it. On their roots are little nodules of nitrogen which go into the soil when the stalks ripen, and that is why they are favored for cover crops. Think of that—in this country, where fertilizers are as precious as heirlooms! The pea is like a boarder who not only pays his board, but does the family washing and mends the roof!

The pea belongs to a large and distinguished family. They do not all work for a living. Some of them have been presented at Court. There is the Sweet Pea, whose perfume and beauty gladdens the world; the Wistaria and Laburnum, whose graceful lanterns sway in scented breezes; the Scarlet Runners, whose business it is to redeem old fences and old walls with living beauty; and the Broom, that flames on the hills along the roads, in the woods and on the rocks in early spring, just to reassure us that the Old Bank still has her untouched gold

reserves, in spite of the long cold winter of our unbelief.—

All of these are blood-brothers to the pea that grows in modest rows in your garden.

The legumes have seven thousand species, and furnish mankind with woods and fibres, oils and gums, dyes and medicines, as well as food.

Green peas have been known to feed the soul too. A woman once told me that her stable was struck by lightning and burned, one first of July—the second year she was in the country, and what a loss it was—what a blow. The neighbors did all they could to help. One brought hens, one a pig, another some harness, and they made a bee and drew logs to put up a new stable. And on the day of the bee, the women came with their men, bringing enough provisions to feed everyone for the day. "And what I remember most clearly about it, were the green peas my neighbor brought," she said, "for I knew what they had cost her in labor. That was a dry summer in southern Manitoba, and the old lady had to carry water to her peas from one of the remaining water holes in the creek; carried it uphill too ... brought a whole pot full all ready to cook ... she had picked them before sunrise, and shelled for two hours..."

We have a pea-sheller now, a little machine which screws on the table. I have often wondered how any machine could shell peas without crushing them, but here it is, much simpler than a meat-chopper. You turn the handle, and feed the pods into the machine. Peas drop down on one side, and the empty pods on the other, and the wear and tear on the useful thumb-nail is gone forever.

Everyone of us wanted to shell the peas the first day we had it. But now the line of willing workers has shortened ... I had no competition to-day when I said I would "shell." I feel pretty sure I'll have the job now, by acclamation.

Shelling peas, even when done by the Thumb-Nail Method, was a nice Saturday afternoon activity, on the back steps or on the front veranda in the hammock, especially when a neighbor or two dropped in and offered to help (I keep aprons in stock for volunteer workers). And here again the machine is taking the sociability out of work. No doubt women had a better time when they all went to the lake to do the community wash, and rubbed the clothes on the rocks and made a party of it. But the electric washer is easier on the back, and I am glad of the little green pea-sheller and rejoice over the time it saves.

* * * * *

I felt I should have a verse to close with. A neat little poem would do much to raise the emotional level of this column, and it looks well when set up. I searched the pages of literature, but searched in vain. However I found one at last, in the heart of a friend—

"I eat my peas with honey,
I've done it all my life
It makes the peas taste funny
But it keeps them on my knife."

WHERE CAN SAFETY BE FOUND?

In times of perplexity, people crave the comforting rightness of the soil, the honesty of sowing the seed, and caring for it. The more terrible the war news, the more I cling to the delusion that there is sanctuary in nature, that hoeing out weeds, tying up tomato plants will keep us from evil. The Ethiopians, no doubt, believed they were safe in their own wild fastnesses, impregnable, remote, secure; but the bombs fell out of the sky, and the mustard gas found its way to them. No country is safe now, and we might as well face it.

Where can Safety be found?

It has no geographical location. It is not found in anti-aircraft, or defending armies. The man who drops the bombs may perish the next second, but his bombs will accomplish their purpose. Safety can only be found in good-will, friendship and justice; and some nation may have to become a sacrifice, before these things can prevail, for the process is a slow one.

The women of Canada may be called upon to decide whether or not Canada shall take a part in the war which is threatening Europe, and this thought lies like a bad dream on us, night and day. What are we going to do, if and when we hold that ballot in our hands?

It is well to discuss it now before the hysteria of war breaks like a cyclone, twisting and tearing and uprooting the foundations of all sane thinking.

Women are not fighters. A battalion of women soldiers is an anomaly. Women give life, protect life, sustain life, but are "out of character" when they take life.

I am not trying to prove that only women are opposed to war. The last war is too recent for that. No normal person wants war, and yet it is closing in on us, and we feel as helpless as the settlers in the bush, hemmed in by fire.

There are two questions I would have to be able to answer in the affirmative before I could say, "Let US fight!" I will mention the first one only, and here it is:

Has every effort been made by us to avoid war? Sir Edward Grey said of the last war, that if the representatives of the countries involved could have been gathered around a table, even the night of August 3rd, the war could have been averted, but it could not be done. "There was not enough good-will." Now what has been done along the line of fostering good-will?

It has been suggested and urged by a group of generous souls in England, of whom Lady Astor is one, that Germany should be treated as an equal, and that no longer the settlement imposed upon her by the Treaty of Versailles should be perpetuated. This treaty was made in passion and hatred, and no good can come of it.

It has been suggested in several quarters that Germany be given back her colonies, as an expression of good-will, and a means to peace, but Premier Baldwin has flatly said this will not be done. I do not believe that giving back of the colonies would change the fiery heart of Adolph Hitler, but I do believe

it would remove one of the grievances of the German people against us and take away from Hitler one of his best talking points in lashing the people into a fury of hatred. Our present method of treating Germany has created a sense of injustice and hatred. The placatory plan might fail, too, but again it might not.

Germany has plenty of grounds for bad feeling toward us. Beverley Nichols is my authority for this statement. "If anyone will dig back into the dusty files of the Versailles Treaty, he will find that the Allies demanded from Germany more gold than there is in the whole world.... And this grotesque demand was made by the economic master minds of the world, in the name of justice."

Now, I submit it is well for us to think about these things in these quiet times, while we may yet think, and ask ourselves are we willing to pledge ourselves and our sons to fight for this?

I spoke of the hysteria of war, and I confess I am afraid of it. Mass hatred is a terrible thing and we had our share of it. When as saintly a man as the Bishop of London could say as he did, at the end of 1915, in Westminster Abbey, that "we were banded together in a great crusade to kill Germans, to kill the young and the old, the good Germans as well as the bad, and to kill even those who have shown kindness to our prisoners," we need not wonder at the blind devouring hatred that dictated the Treaty of Versailles.

But now we are clear-headed enough to see that the iron ring which that Treaty put around Germany was poor

statesmanship, and bad ethics, and it was this which produced Adolph Hitler and his poisonous doctrine of "Germany against the world."

There is nothing sacred about a bad treaty, made in anger. It was intended for a punishment, and that end has been accomplished, though the punishment fell most heavily on the innocent, as that sort of punishment always does. It was the common people of Germany who suffered—the clean, hard-working, decent people; the same sort of people that we know here in Canada, our good German neighbors—not the Kaiser or the war lords. They continued to eat regularly.

The people of Canada know these things, and if we fight Germany again it will be with a bad conscience. Wouldn't it be better to back down right now and be generous about it? It may not be amiss to remind ourselves that our religion is very clear on this point.

ON LEAVING HOME

Leaving home does not bother me a bit when it is anything over one week away. I can go gladly, even joyously, with all my hopes ahead. I am sure it is the best thing to do, to move about, see new places, new faces, gather impressions. Anyone who writes must do this to keep a new, fresh outlook. Yes indeed, it is the progressive, adventurous attitude which counts ... no wonder the Eastern provinces and states found their

national life thinned and impoverished when the great drift of population began to the West. Anna Howard Shaw reviled the East in one of her addresses, for their hidebound prejudices, by saying that "the cream of the population had gone out to seek other homes, leaving the skim-milk, blue and thin."

I am full of this great spirit of adventure until a few days before my day of departure. I am sure my absence will do my family good too. People can be too much under foot. Absence does make the heart grow fonder. Husbands and wives should take their holidays separately. I have always believed that! It makes them more interesting and self reliant, and resourceful. And family members appreciate their mother more when her hand is withdrawn for a while from the steering wheel of their lives. Perhaps I dip into their affairs too much, I tell myself. It's hard to understand that they are all going-concerns now. I do not want to be one of these managing women who run after a grown-up son with overcoat and rubbers when it looks like rain. Let him get wet if he wants to, I say. After all, I can't watch the whole five of them—so I'll go and forget them, and it will be a fine thing for all of us ... if they forget to put out the milk bottles, they can drink their coffee clear ... experience is the best teacher anyway and puts the lesson over without a word. Most women talk too much ... and what good does it do?

Yes, that's what I thought. I was full of that great conquering spirit and had the real "Dorothy Dix" philosophy of home life. I would go and stay away awhile, and give them time to miss me and to see that I was a handy person to have around.

Now the future has become the present. I am going to-morrow and there is no turning back. I have to go now, and it's

no fun at all. There are so many things that could happen while I am away. I have been around the garden this morning and the roses are coming out, Daily Mail, Scarlet Letter, Van Fleet ... I have been watching them all these months, and now, just when the reward is here, I am going away. And if the little seedlings coming in the boxes are not watered, they will all be dead when I come back ... in a box they have no thickness of earth ... June is a poor time to be away from this Island, when summer arises to its full height.

It grows harder every minute to leave! ... I cannot expect anyone else to look after all the little plants ... there are the Coonara poppies I have been nursing along ... they'll surely die as soon as my back is turned. No one will think of putting the glass over them at night. And it is not much fun for the two lads to have to get their own meals ... they won't bother to cook the things they should have. If one of them should take sick! ...

After all, when a woman has children, even grown-up ones, her first obligation is to them. Friends, conventions, new scenes, experiences, are all very well, but the family should come first. Clubs and societies come and go, but the family is mine. I think of the other women who have gone away and left their children, and accidents have happened—

It will be hotter than an oven going over the desert, so hot the tires may blow out—a front tire too ... and in the withering heat, the curl will come out of my hair, and my glasses will mist over, and my shoes will feel too small for me—and the cabins will be too noisy to sleep in, for it is the season for trippers, with radios in their cars, broadcasting political speakers saving their country. And here I am rushing into all

this and leaving the heavenly quiet of Gordon Head, rose-scented and cool! The best time of the year ... and I am leaving it!

I shouldn't have agreed to go to this Convention ... there are plenty of speakers for conventions, young women with the new viewpoint ... I was flattered when I got the letter asking me to give the opening address. I had been their speaker twenty-five years ago when their Society was organized. Flattered—that explains it. Middle-aged vanity—I've seen it in other women, and it's not a pretty sight. To be middle-aged is worse than being old, for the old have peace and dignity, and repose of mind, and release from ambition. They know they are through and done with striving, and so they no longer care for these things. They settle down and enjoy the fruits of their years of activity ... if I were really old I would be staying with the roses and enjoying the sunsets that glimmer through the trees, not tearing myself to pieces, pretending I am as good as ever! If I were old, I could knit on the veranda, and brag about my grandchildren. But I have to go. My only comfort is that I have been in a dither like this before, and always came out of it!

* * * * *

I wrote this the day before I left to go to the Home-makers Convention in Saskatoon. Now I wonder why I had no faith in anyone. My trip was full of pleasure and interest. Everything went right, at home and abroad. There were no accidents, no one forgot anything. Roses budded and bloomed. Rain fell and the sun shone. The two boys had a good time. They said it was lonely but peaceful.

No part of the trip was more enjoyable than the drive across the desert in the long saffron dusk, lighted by a growing moon, that brightened as the twilight deepened. The broad highway, looped like a ribbon over the sage-brush country, was alive with cars, many of them the great double trucks with their green and red lights, sliding past us with a roar. But the road is wide and safe, and every driver it seems, is a good one. Every curve and hill on the road is marked, and the edges on the hills have bright yellow fences. The air of the desert has a healing tang, sun-cured and sweet.

At the Convention I met women from all over Saskatchewan, capable, resolute, far-thinking women, the undefeated, unrecorded heroines, who have refused to be discouraged in these last hard years. We met in Convocation Hall of the University, where the walls are hung with fine pictures. One picture of Highland cattle drew the Scotch women like a magnet—a Watson picture of the shaggy, wild-looking cattle, held against a steep mountainside by three beautiful dogs and their master. In that gallery of fine art this picture dominates.

"I love the stirks," one of the women said to me, "they mind me of home. On my grandfather's farm they looked just like this, tossing their horns, and looking so fierce. I was awed by them when I was a child, and I am awed now, as I look."

So was I, and that was the charm of the picture—and I loved to hear again that fine old word 'stirks!'

THE HOMEMAKERS

"People are no more important than the things with which they are concerned."

I thought of this as I listened to the discussions of the "Homemakers" at Saskatoon. They were concerned with Public Health, Peace between the Nations, Social Justice, Education, Hospitals, Libraries, Playgrounds. And their discussions were carried on with dignity and intelligence. No one was allowed to take the bit in her teeth, and run away with the meeting. The rules of debate were rigidly observed, and every discussion, though keenly pursued, was good-natured and orderly.

The prairie women are developing a type. They are sure, explicit, low-voiced, and capable. In appearance, they are neat, tailored, gray-haired and spectacled. No doubt the bright sun accounts for the latter two conditions. I noticed the dress of the delegates. Almost all of the women wore bright dresses, flowered, striped or dotted, and as they sat in one of the theatres of the University, where the seats rose tier on tier, they made a veritable bank of color. There is something cheering about clothes and I am glad to see women of all ages wearing greens, blues and reds.

We had our meals in the dining-hall, for we were all guests of the University during the Convention, and there I heard conversations which gave me revealing glimpses of the women. One woman told me her husband had gone to the

hospital for a serious operation, just after seeding. "He would not go until the crop was all in," she said, "hard as it was for him to work. He worked awhile and then lay down awhile, then worked some more, and at last he had every field sowed ... he is making a good recovery ... and the rains have helped him as much as anything. The rains falling on the fields—each drop has healing in it, not only for the soil but for us. When people have lived on the land, and by the land, they become part of it and have a feeling for it that other people cannot quite understand. We have only a quarter section but it is good soil ... and everything we have is paid for ... we've had our ups and downs, but we've managed!"

We've managed! Therein lies the secret of survival. Crops fail, soil drifts, the skies withhold their healing showers, but still the prairie people manage some way.

I saw many encouraging features on the way to Saskatoon—sights that cheered my prairie heart. I saw fat cattle on the meadows, standing in good grass; I saw ponds full of water and wild ducks sailing on them; I saw horses in pastures, resting after the seeding season, old teams whose honest shoulders bore the marks of the harness, with their necks crossed over the pasture bars. I saw fine fields, well-cultivated and summer-fallowed for next year's seeding. I saw little towns with the station garden ablaze with flowers. I saw rows of trees, down the middle of the main streets, and parks of fine grass and flower beds. I saw golf courses made from raw prairie by the simple method of mowing the grass and putting up stakes, and sinking tomato cans ... and new houses are being built, and new ground broken.

The last time I made this journey, my eyes were blistered by the sight of dead trees, deserted houses, and sand-covered fields, and that memory made this year's green fields greener, and the beauty of the countryside more poignant.

I did not read a printed word, though I had brought a book for the journey, for my eyes were eager to see all I could of that throbbing drama. I know how they feel—these people who watch the skies. I know the agony of hope and fear, and the sustaining calm that comes, too, in the darkest hour—that sudden detachment that falls on the desolate heart, like a breath of ether when the pain can no longer be borne.

No one lives more dangerously than the farmer. No one is more at the mercy of the elements, not even the sailor or fisherman. And when the crop fails on the prairie, it's a cruel long time to wait for Next Year. But they do it. They manage!

I cannot believe that the good black prairie soil will betray the hearts that have loved it and trusted in it.

Even the Washington and Idaho desert this year has its beauty spots of green. I have never seen it so full of promise. Perhaps it is the prospect of the water that will soon come from the great dam and relieve the dryness of that arid region, that has even, in hope, brought moisture. Certain it is that the orchards on the desert are loaded with fruit, the cattle fat and shining, and the people elated.

There have been dismal forebodings that the great American desert is moving northward into Canada, but this year that word of doom is hushed in the rustle of leaves and the falling

of showers. I hold my breath as I write these words, for the end is not yet, and in many places the crop is hovering between death and life.

Meanwhile the "Homemakers," men and women, carry on. Meals are cooked, books are studied, fields are ploughed, and meadows mowed. Strangers are visited, meetings are held, the faithful groups gather at the country churches—and the spirit of the people is one of indomitable hopefulness. Every time I go back to the Prairies and feel again the impact of that courage that does not admit defeat, I have a queer guilty feeling of having deserted my native land in her bad years, and sought an easier, safer life, here by the sea, where both the cold and the heat are tempered with mercy. Who am I to seek the sheltered ways of life? ... we can be too safe!

OUTDOOR RELIGION

"Give us, Oh Lord, a religion that will stand the out-of-doors." This is part of the prayer I heard when I joined the open-air congregation on the hill-side, overlooking the city of Calgary, on the last Sunday in June.

These open-air Sunday evening gatherings are new in my experience, and I had listened to the criticism of the old and rheumatic,—that this was merely a publicity move on the part of the young preacher of Knox Church. Wasn't the church good enough? Why sit on your long suffering feet, molested by

mosquitoes and black flies, when the congregation has provided comfortable pews in a beautiful church? There was no virtue in being uncomfortable—surely, the Lord's House should be a pleasant place.

I'll admit I shared these views but this was my only chance of hearing this interesting young man, who is "troubling Israel" with his plain speaking.

Knox Church, Calgary, is known for its wealth, and conservatism, its organ and choir, the height of its pulpit (lowered some now), its poor acoustics, as well as for its great congregations and the cars that park before its doors. It is a United Church, but cannily so. There is a story that in one of its Board Meetings at the time of Union, one of the members of that solemn body said it would be a long time before they would engage a minister who was not from their own side of the house. I mention this, not to revive old memories, but merely to show that it is rooted in tradition and not given to change. Two years ago, this tawny-haired young man came from Newfoundland, a protégé of Sir Wilfred Grenfell, and the deep waters have been stirred by his preaching ever since. No one can enjoy a quiet sleep, either morning or evening, and his message is for the young, more than the middle-aged or old. He is a serious-minded young man who puts a literal interpretation on the words of Christ, which is disconcerting. He is not content to preach a Gospel of Comfort. He wants results, and he wants them now.

When he reads that Christ told Nicodemus that he must sell all he had and give it to the poor, he refuses to believe that Christ was exaggerating and really meant five dollars a Sunday

with an extra twenty-five when an effort is made to raise the Missionary Allocation.

This young man has preached so much about giving and sharing, and a new Christian Order, that several old and valued members have decided to stay at home and get their spiritual food from the radio. The radio can be so deftly turned off; and a former official of the church has offered to bring in $15,000 in a few weeks if the Board of Managers will get rid of this young Elijah.

The Sunday evening threatened rain. Dark clouds, from which lightning glanced, obscured the sinking sun, and the air had cooled from the heat of afternoon. But the people streamed up the hill from the street cars, and walked in from every direction, and the line of motor cars grew longer. Young and old, men and women, girls and boys—such great crowds of boys came, and stood or sat on the grass. Most of the women carried cushions, shawls or rugs, and some had camp-chairs.

I thought I would be able to sit in the car, but when the service began, I found I could not hear. The preacher stood beside the little organ and his voice, though strong and resonant did not reach me. So I went over with a cushion and sat with the others.

The first clause of his prayer—"O Lord, give us a religion that will stand the out-of-doors," set me thinking. I knew what sort of religion that would be—a religion that you could take into the harvest field, even when the binder had broken down; or into a lumber camp, or a mining camp—or out where men were building a bridge or a railway—or even into an

unemployment camp, where young men were growing bitter and profane from hopelessness and frustration. It would need to be a pretty sturdy religion, with no help from Responsive Readings, or a Ladies' Aid, or a Board of Managers.

"May it be fadeless as the sky, unchanged through constant exposure," he went on. "Exposure" is a strange word to apply to religion, rather an immodest word, really. Religion is a cloistered, personal possession, hidden in the heart, not to be spoken of lightly, and here is a man who speaks of its eternal exposure.

I was sitting too low to see his face, though his voice reached me clearly. But I was struck by the faces of the young men around me, and especially of a young boy of perhaps fifteen, who stood with his arms folded across his football sweater. There was no question about this lad's interest. He followed every word. His face was so eloquent that I stood up —I wanted to see what he was seeing. I knew he was catching a vision of a new heaven and a new earth.

"The earth is full of thy riches"—the congregation had repeated this response. I wondered what part of it this boy would get.

Just then out of the threatening west, came a long freight train, running beside the Bow River, and tearing the silence of the evening into shreds with its echoing whistle. It broke in on us with a deep reminder of everyday life. Here was realism. I wondered how many desperate, drifting men it carried, for I knew the idle men are now denied even this privilege, though trainmen have been known to mercifully close their eyes ... I

wondered if this lad with the glowing face would even ride the rods! Would that be his portion in this land of plenty, this earth which is "full of thy riches."

The air had grown darker and the rain seemed near, but no one minded. There was a tension, a strain, a solemnity that caused the minor happenings of life to fade down into nothing.

I lost the thread of the sermon then, wondering about this boy, whose radiant face told me he was seeing the heavens opened. I was thinking of what the world held for him, and his generation. Over in Europe at this moment, be it daylight or dark, I knew the munition factories were bursting with light and activity. Bombs and bullets and shells and gasses were being made. Would his name and number be on any of them? Would he be caught in the tornado of hate and suspicion and greed that was adding up against him and every other boy of his age in this world? Was there any hope, any answer, any way of escape?

The sun came out then from behind the cloud, and the face of the boy grew pink in the warm sunshine, and these were the words I heard the congregation repeating—

"He touched the sightless eyes,
Before him the demons flee,
To the dead he sayeth 'arise'
To the living, 'Follow me'!"

and I felt a strange warming of my heart, as I caught a glimpse of what life might be, if each one of us would answer the call.

I wondered afterwards, when the glamour of the hillside had

worn away, what was the secret of this young preacher's power. The things he said have been said before. They are all in the Book. We've heard them many times. He is entirely orthodox.

I think his power lies in his terrible earnestness. He believes. He does not care what happens to himself. He has the vision that came to John the Baptist when he cried "The Kingdom of God is at hand!"

SATURDAY AFTERNOON ON THE BEACH

Saturday afternoon is a good time to leave the house, with its accumulation of odd jobs. There is a pile of unanswered letters on my desk. A boy in Ontario has written asking me to help him to get autographs of the leading Canadian poets; he says he has written to them but they have not answered, and so, if I have ever had letters from them, will I please send them to him, for this is his pet ambition. And I have two manuscripts to read. There are a few stockings to darn, and I should pick some late cherries, but I have a working alibi for leaving the house any time I want to now—some one should take the two little girls to the beach!

So we go down the wooded path past the place we sowed the snapdragon seed, which did not grow, and past the cascara tree, where each girl gets a leaf to chew as a special treat, and on to the fallen tree, with a section cut out for the path, where

everyone who wishes can sit a while, but that is only done on the return journey—and so along to the top of the steps which lead to the water.

In one's first year at the Coast, tide-tables are studied so that the high and low tide are known, but that state of mental curiosity soon passes, and now we never know where the tide is until we stand above the sea. Speculation goes on as we approach. I find each girl believes the tide will be where she wants it. Nellie believes the tide will be in, for she wants to sail her boat and does not want to have to cross the gravel in her bare feet. Jane believes the tide will be out, for she has a basket to hold the crystals and agates she expects to find, and a low tide will enlarge her territory. I am appealed to for a definite ruling on the position of the tide, but can only use the formula, so repugnant to impatient youth, "Wait and see."

Saturday afternoon brings many of the neighbors to Margaret's Bay. One party of four have their string bags and paper boxes and have had their lunch on the great square log; a fire smoulders with a tripod over it where water was boiled in the blackened pail. There are many visitors in our neighborhood now, prairie people who come to the beach every day. It is easy to spot the prairie people by the wistfulness of their faces as they watch the waves frilling the shore. Their eyes are hungry for the sight of great waters, rolling, abundant, eternal.

We find that day that every one of us had lived on the Prairies, and then the talk began. The water was too cold for swimming, at least to people over fifteen, but we waded in it and sat on the rocks and let it break over our bare feet, and told

each other of the healing qualities of the sea, and how the salt water draws the fire from swollen ankles.

One woman wished she had all the children in her neighborhood to play on this beach—"we drew a load of sand ten miles for our children," she said, "when we lived in Southern Saskatchewan—that was for the two eldest children. We had it in an old wagon box near the pump—so they made castles and forts and planted forests of lamb's-quarters. That was in the good years when rain fell and the crops grew—it seems queer now to think of drawing sand, when the whole country has turned to sand. The wagon box has long been covered with it..."

The "Empress of Japan" had passed on her way to Victoria and the swell sent us up the shore. One of the rock-sitters told us it takes the roll longer to come in from the Empress boats than from the smaller boats. Twenty minutes brings the first disturbance from the Princesses, but from the big boats, waves do not come in for half an hour—and the waves come in threes, and there are three distinct disturbances, with the second one, the highest. The junior congregation (fifteen and under), in bathing suits, were filled with joy at the commotion of the waves, and the hurried flight of their barefooted elders from the rocks.

After the waves had died away, the sea grew peaceful again, and still, with little paths across its plain surface, like roads in the snow. Every stick and log on its surface became visible, and we could see the salmon jumping. Kingfishers skimmed across in front of us, and colonies of gulls sat on the water like clusters of seed pearls on blue velvet.

The man from North-eastern Alberta told us of the grand old days when he pastured cattle on land leased from the Government, where his son still carries on with two hundred and fifty head. "Horses and cattle," he said, leaning on a stout cane like a shepherd's crook, "will redeem the Prairies ... cattle and horses, and maybe sheep, though I never liked them, will bring back good times. It was the war that bedevilled the Prairies and the cry of 'Raise more grain, drain the sloughs, produce, produce, feed the Empire!—plow and harrow and sow.' This caused men to break up land that should never have been taken out of grass. The north still gets rain—what makes the difference? Trees and cattle and horses. President Roosevelt is right about the windbreaks—nature will solve the problem if she gets a chance."

Then, because the tragedy of the great drought was in our minds, the conversation turned to rain-making, as starving people discuss food. It came out that most of us had tried to make rain. I recalled the hot day I sat on the bank of a shrinking slough, minding the cows, in Manitoba, when the grain was yellowing in the heat. There were clouds above me full of rain and I thought I could bring it down if I threatened God that I would hold my breath until the rain fell. He would surely not let me die. But no rain fell, and so I went out of the rain-making business with my faith shattered.

One man said he thought he could get a shower if he gave his lunch to the birds, when he was out berry-picking, but nothing happened, and so he went back after an hour or so and took what the birds had left. That night it did rain, and he felt pretty mean.

Mention was made of the newspaper story of the Indians in New Mexico, whose prayers brought rain just recently.

"We do not pray enough," said a little woman who had not spoken. She is a minister's wife from one of the dry parts of the Prairies, but her faith has not failed her in spite of the dust and drought. She has seen the dust lie an inch thick on her floors; she has seen her flowers blown out by the roots and felt the cruel sting of sand in her eyes. "Prosperity did not bring godliness," she said calmly, "there was no definite move to abolish poverty, or drunkenness, or cruelty in the good years. There was no sharing of the fruits of the earth; so we really cannot complain now that evil days have come. God was ready to deal with us. He said, 'Bring in your tithes and see if I won't open the windows of heaven!' But we did not take His offer."

"But some people have tithed," I said, "and prayed, and shared, and done everything they could, and their crops have blown out just the same. You did all these things yourself."

"God punishes and rewards nations here on earth," she said, "not individuals. It will all be made up to the individual in the next world. I will get back my pansies. There's a definite promise covering that, 'I will restore the years which the canker-worm has eaten!'—that is grasshoppers, rust, dust, frost, everything. But as a whole nation we will have to turn to God and live the Golden Rule, if we are ever going to claim his promises."

Silence fell on the beach then, broken only by the crying of the gulls. This little sun-baked woman from Saskatchewan had closed the conversation and given us something to think about,

as the tide advanced and retreated, and crept up a little higher in each wave. There was something in her words that was akin to the tide—patient, ageless, inexorable!

DEFENSIVE COMMON-SENSE

In cherry time, the robins come in for much harsh comment. They spoil the cherries by their greedy, wasteful way of taking one bite from each cherry. No one would begrudge the robin a few cherries, but to see the fruit ruined by one bite is hard to take.

Some practical idealist gave out the word this spring, through a letter in the paper, that robins eat cherries because they are thirsty, and if cherry orchards were supplied with plenty of drinking places the robins would leave the fruit alone. So we have supplied more places for birds to drink, and I am glad to say I have found very few cherries with the robin's mark on them. Doubters may arise and say I am a prejudiced witness, but these are the facts.

Now this leads circuitously to something more important, which is a letter by Lady Astor in "Time and Tide," on the treatment of Germany. Lady Astor, in company with other generous people, has advocated for years that Germany should be treated as an equal. She has worked hard by voice and pen for a "reversal of the policy of goading the German people into restlessness by trying to keep them in a state of inferiority, and

of perpetuating the settlement imposed on Europe by the Versailles Treaty in a moment of passion." "Treating Germans decently and as members of a great nation might have failed, but I still think," Lady Astor writes, "this policy would have been more likely to lead to an atmosphere of peace in Europe. Is it too late to try now?" she concludes.

It seems to me that giving water to the robins to keep them from the cherries, and giving equality to Germans and allowing them to have their colonies back, are two examples of something that could be described as defensive common-sense, —but how puerile and thin-blooded this conciliation in regard to Germany seems to the fighting-folk, the people who still believe that there is virtue in shedding blood, and that peace can come only by force.

Peace between individuals, even divergent groups of people, has come by compromise, by surrendering personal rights and liberties for the common good, and this reasonable solution can surely be applied to nations.

Peace is not a pale negative, a state of doing nothing. Peace has to be worked for, and bought at a great price. Peace may even mean a sacrifice of someone's dignity, and the giving up of some of one's dearest prejudices.

Asking people to sign a peace petition has in it the sweet simplicity of the old-time evangelist, who used to ask all those who wished to go to heaven to stand up. Naturally the house rose.

One Sunday afternoon I was invited to a Peace Meeting,

where a petition was presented to us, and we all signed it. There were speeches and songs, and discussion. The armament makers got what-for, tea was served, and we all felt we were good little workers in the vineyard of the Lord. But by some mischance, the question of the Oriental vote came up, and the fat was in the fire at once. The Oriental vote is a touchy subject in British Columbia. Orientals vote in all the other provinces, but not in British Columbia. The other provinces have comparatively few Orientals, but British Columbia has a large and growing population, and there are fears of Oriental dominance through block voting. It was in vain that some of us urged that government must rest on the consent of the governed; that to bestow the vote on the native-born Oriental is a gesture of friendliness and good-will; that the more we raise the Oriental to our standard of living, the less he will be an unfair competitor in our labor market; that to make the young Japanese and Chinese feel they are part of our Canadian life is the right and kindly thing to do ... and a step toward world brotherhood.

The peace signers could not be moved. They wanted peace but not this way. The risk was too great, they said. Clearly, peace is a hazardous thing and calls for heroism!

I wish we had more women leaders like Lady Astor, Agnes Macphail and Maude Royden (who was in Toronto this summer.) If we had more women leaders, preachers, and editorial writers, we would have more of the spindle and less of the spear in our mentality. I believe it is easier for women to see to the heart of the Peace Question than for men. They have

a greater horror of war, with its waste and stupidity. But even more than that, I believe women in public life could help the cause of peace by their ability to compromise. They can step down more easily than men; swallow their pride and eat humble pie. They have had to do it in this man-made world, where humility has never been regarded as a manly virtue.

We see a curious proof of this now in the attitude of some of the British leaders who condemned the Treaty of Versailles when it was made, and who now declare we should hold to it "because it is the law."

This attitude brings back the grim story of Jeptha, who vowed he would sacrifice the first living thing that came out to meet him, if the Lord would give him victory over the children of Ammon, and though it was his only daughter who came out to welcome him, he kept his vow. The story carries no word of censure. Jeptha was "a man of valour." The last verse of the chapter says the daughters of Israel made a pilgrimage of four days every year, to lament the daughter of Jeptha. I would like to see the unexpurgated minutes of that four-day Convention, but I can imagine what the women thought of the "valiant" man who paid his vow by slaughtering his daughter.

There is one phase of the present situation which may bring a solution. No one is safe now in the event of war. One set of men cannot make war and appoint another set to do the fighting. There will be no safe seats in the next war. Jeptha can no longer save his face by sacrificing his daughter, and that condition may help to develop defensive common-sense.

THE LITTLE DRIFTER

Young Geraldine has her mind made up in the matter of her future occupation. She is thirteen years old, has just passed into Grade Eight, has taken dancing lessons, rides a bicycle, swims well, prefers Charlie Chan to Shirley Temple, and can't see why her mother will not let her go on a hiking trip all alone. She is a strong, well-built little girl, enjoys excellent health, cares little about clothes, loves animals and smaller children, thinks nothing of a ten-mile ride on her bicycle, carrying a smaller child behind her on the saddle.

She astonished a group of us at the beach last week by telling us that when she was old enough she was going on relief. "The people on relief have the best time," she said with conviction. "I know a lot of them who live in little shacks near the beach and they go in swimming, dance, and go to shows, and have no work to do and no worries. My mother works night and day, and has no fun, and she's just getting by and can't get enough money to take a trip any place and has given up all hope of ever getting ahead. My cousin works in a store and does house work too, and she never has any fun either, and she is thin as a rail. I can't see why I should go on to school, for even school-teachers now are out of jobs; so are stenographers and nurses and everyone. School-teachers and stenographers and people like that suffer more than roughnecks."

We tried to appeal to her pride. "You can't live on pride forever," she said, "the Wilkins tried that. They wouldn't go on

relief at first and they sold everything, piano, radio, even Mr. Wilkin's dress-suit. Mr. Wilkins is a musician and he hung on to his dress-suit to the very last, because there was always a chance he might get back his job and he would need it; but they are on relief now. I am not going to have pride when I grow up—it hurts too much. Mamie Wilkins is my chum and I know what they went through. I'll go on relief when I'm old enough, and I won't care who knows it. That's the best way!" "I would work if there was anything to do," she said, when we suggested this. "I like to work all right ... My last job was picking loganberries. It cost me ten cents each way for bus fare, I carried my lunch and worked all day for forty-eight cents, so I had twenty-eight cents for my wages. I worked three days and bought a pair of silk stockings for my mother. I'd be picking still, but they are all done. I would rather work than be idle, but there is no work now. I take care of a little girl and get twenty-five cents a week for myself, so I go to shows—that's the best fun I have."

Here is a young Canadian girl, strong, honest, shrewd, capable of achieving, yet drifting with the tide, thoroughly disillusioned.

Whose fault is it?

Naturally we like to blame someone, and the easiest person to lay the blame on is her mother.

Geraldine's mother is a widow, and has an office position which pays her $60.00 a month. She does her own and Geraldine's sewing. She is a good manager and has kept out of debt. On Sunday she does the washing and ironing, and rarely

gets out to church. She has no social life. She is only forty, but she seems old to the girls in the office, so they never invite her to join them in their outings. She has no relaxation except to go to a movie once a week with Geraldine. She is a shy, reserved woman and does not make friends.

I don't believe her mother can be blamed.

Let us see if we can blame the Church.

There are several churches in the small city where Geraldine lives, but the church membership is not more than 10 percent of the population. There are girls' classes in the Sunday-School and camps for girls during the holidays have been carried on by public-spirited women in the church and other organizations, but unfortunately Geraldine does not belong to any of these groups. If she were a thin and puny child, she might have been sent to a camp by some organization, but she is the picture of health.

So we are stuck. If the mother and the Church are not at fault, where are we? Of course, we still have the Women's Clubs and the School System.

If Geraldine were in Russia, or in Germany, or in Italy, she would be employed and life would have a meaning for her. These countries, for reasons of their own, have enlisted their young people and put them to work, with enthusiasm and patriotic fervor.

I have on my desk a little book called "New Russia's Primer" which is used in the schools in Russia. It is written for the boys and girls, and explains to them in simple language the

Soviet plan for a new Russia. It enlists the help of every child in this great enterprise. It shows them how they can be "Conquerors of their own Country"—how they can protect trees and birds, eradicate weeds and parasites, discover the resources of the country, and above all, prepare themselves for specialized work.

I have had Geraldine heavily on my mind since I heard her declaration. To find such a settled feeling of frustration in a child of thirteen is surely a serious indictment of our whole social system.... I think of what life meant to me when I was her age. I had only a few of her advantages, but I had something that has been denied her. I had security ... I had never seen or heard of a family breakdown. I did not know that there ever could be a scarcity of work. And there were no contrasts. When I walked the two miles to Northfield school, in all weathers, all the other children walked too. No one glided past us in a car, splashing mud on us! There was one level of society. That day of simplicity is gone forever. We must look for another solution.

So I was specially interested in reading in this morning's paper, a news story, telling what one man is doing for the boys of his community. He has enlisted them in the protection of the forest by organizing Young Ranger Bands, and already their good work has been noticed by the Forestry Department of the Government, for they have put out several fires and have done precautionary work—and several other communities have followed his example. We have Girl Guides, C. G. I. T. Clubs, Y. M. C. A., I. O. D. E., but not enough of them to gather in all the Geraldines, who find time long, and life meaningless.

The need seems to be for more leaders—women of vision and enthusiasm, who will break away from the ranks of the pleasure-seekers, and help these little stray ones to find their place in the life of this great country. Russia, Italy and Germany have enlisted their young people for nationalistic reasons. Italy and Germany have spurred their people into action by the fear and hatred of other countries. The motive is wrong, but the results are excellent. Could not we, who enjoy so much liberty in this freest and best country in the world, for love and sheer gratitude, do something more for our young people?

THE EXPERT

It is not every day that we have the opportunity of hearing an Expert speak on his chosen theme, so we hurried into town and were all in our places, and because of the heat and the hurry, we may have had the "bright shiny faces" too. But we were not bothered about that, for we were interested in the gentleman's theme, which was "Unemployment."

And we heard about the rise and fall of unemployment in this Province and elsewhere. We saw charts and diagrams and we had figures to prove the causes, and we heard about the unemployable people and why they were what they were. Excerpts from the reports of Commissions were read to us and some of the listeners wrote down figures in their little note books.

I did not write anything. I had not heard anything yet. I knew before I came that there were many people out of work and some who never could work. I was waiting to hear what we could do about it. I hoped for some word of hope, some plan. Surely the Commissions had something to suggest. Surely they had not spent all their time gathering statistics and filing reports.

No doubt there is a great value in having accurate information on file concerning each family. It is certainly a beginning and I was impressed with what I heard of the thorough investigations that had been made. But when I saw the gentleman folding up his notes, and preparing to return the charts to their black box, I was disappointed. I wanted to know how the Experts dealt with family difficulties ... I thought of Josephine Lawrence's book, "If I had Four Apples," and how she had visited the Hoe family and tried to persuade Mrs. Hoe not to buy everything she was offered, even if she could get it for a dollar down and a dollar a week ... I thought of her efforts to persuade Mr. Hoe to let the house go—the ramshackle house that was bleeding him white; ... I thought of poor Dallas Hoe who worked on the puzzles hoping to win five thousand dollars and got five dollars instead ... I thought of poor little Sythia Hoe (what a name!) who was determined to be a dancer, though she had no sense of rhythm, no grace, no beauty, and who at last found her place in a beauty parlor when she found work there. I wondered if this man's Commission sent out any kindly, understanding people to guide the foolish and perplexed. If so, we heard nothing of it and I came away sorrowful.

But on my way home, just to assure myself that efforts are

being made to deal with unemployment, I went into the Women's Workroom, where unemployed women come to work each day. Here I saw them busily sewing, knitting, rug-making. Under the supervision of dressmakers, the women are taught to cut out garments and sew, and as they work they learn. The garments they make are sold, and each woman is paid for her work. The Workroom is run by capable women who work hard for its success. Now if one of them were to give us a talk on what she knows, I would like to be present.

When I came home I found a pedlar with a valise at my door. From her I learned another side of the question of unemployment.

She was a little wisp of a woman with a bluish-white skin, and big brown eyes, as sweet as the eyes of a kind collie dog. Peddling in the country, where the houses are far apart, is a pretty heavy job, and as it was just the noon hour, I asked her if she wouldn't like something to eat. She would indeed, she said, for she had come out on the early bus. When I set a plate before her and gave her strawberry jam and homemade biscuits for dessert, she told me it was 'like Christmas.'

Then she told me her story. She lost her husband after the war, but his illness could not be traced to his war injuries. She had four children, and there had been serious illness and one death in her family. Still, she said, the neighbors had helped her wonderfully, and the Woman's Workroom had given her work at dressmaking and had never failed to find a place for her. "And they are that kind," she said, tremulously, "you wouldn't believe—always ready to call it an hour, even if it was only three-quarters, and making up little parcels for me to

take home. And you know there are so many women on the list they hardly know who to give the work to. And when my little girl was in the hospital, one of the ladies would come for me in her car and take me to see her, for I live a long way out, and she would say she was going to the hospital anyway ... and when a person is in sore trouble like I was over Jeanie, it's grand to have a friend like that."

"Why are you not working at the Workroom now?" I asked, later in the conversation. "Is this a slack time?"

"No, the ladies never let the work run out, they get their friends to have a tea or a dance or a concert, and get money that way to buy materials and the work goes on about the same —but I got a friend of mine in ... she's a much older woman than I am and she's bad with rheumatism, she couldn't carry a valise like I can, and go from door to door. She hadn't the strength, but she can sew ... and so I gave her my place, and the peddling won't be so bad when I get used to it. Sometimes when some one shuts the door in my face I feel I can't go on, but I try to remember how pleased the old lady is to be working ... and when I get a real bad one, I always say to myself the next one will be better...."

I watched her as she went down the road ... no longer was she just a shabby, little faded woman, exactly like a thousand other shabby little faded women. She was the best unemployment expert I knew, for she had actually found a job for some one by the old sure way of sacrifice ... I looked at the small plodding figure with admiration and a great humility. I had never given up my place in the line!

I watched her as she turned into one of the houses at the foot of the hill, and found my heart beating in my throat—I couldn't bear it if another door were slammed in her face!—I saw her go in.

I looked up the word 'expert' in the dictionary, before I wrote it for the title of this, and I find it is "one who learns by practice." So it stands.

I wish we had more Unemployment Experts! I believe that people who serve on Unemployment Commissions should all be Experts. Let them have at least two weeks of being actually out of employment, hunting a job, going from place to place, getting the glassy eye from employers who point to the notice 'No help required'; having doors slammed in their faces, sleeping where they can, eating at soup kitchens, or not eating at all—having that terrible desolate feeling of not being wanted anywhere. Hunger, real aching, gnawing hunger, if experienced by the right people, would soon solve our problems.

By all means let us have more Experts!

LIFE'S BALANCE

Here is more in a garden than just the soil and plants, or the paths and bird-baths. It is not only a place—it's a state-of-being. It is a Refuge—and Way of Escape; a Golden Door, a

Balance-wheel.

You have heard it said that an ill-tempered woman is often a good housekeeper. No doubt she enjoys beating a carpet on the line, or a cake in a dish, or roasting meat. She probably has them all named for her relatives and friends. She likes to scrub the sink and rattle the stove, and slam the pot-lids. It gives her a certain satisfaction.

I like to pull weeds when I'm disturbed in my mind. I can tidy up a bed, and neatly trim the edge of the lawn, while all the ill-feeling is escaping through my fingers, and when I suddenly come back to earth, the storm is over and all is well with the world.

Life is like a railway system. It needs switches—some place where one train can pull off at the side, letting the other train go by. Many a collision would be saved if all families were equipped in this way, with a garden, an attic, a basement, or even a hay-mow.

I do not know how families are able to live in peace in these little suites, with nothing outside but a fire-escape. Four rooms and a bath and every one at home! How can they ever escape each other? Oh, I know these little places are easy to work in! I know you can stand in one place, cook the dinner, serve it, eat it and wash the dishes. It saves steps, but is hard on the soul!

Conveniences may cost too much in mental wear and tear. And I am old-fashioned enough to like to go upstairs when I go to bed. It helps the illusion that now the cares of the world have been left below, and even if the telephone does ring, I

may not hear it. There is a strange joy and a sadness too, in sitting upstairs at an open window, as the purple night comes down, looking out at the darkening landscape. There is always a tragic suggestion in the coming down of the night. It is then that we get a sense of our own littleness and the unreality of many of the things which seem great and terrible in the daylight. What does it matter—these earthly hopes men set their hearts upon? Why are we disquieted in vain? We need so little, really, to make us happy, and we cannot take anything with us.

I look down at the twinkling lights in the neighborhood, and I think of what has really endured in this district, since the days when the only way to come out from Victoria was by the sea, for there was no road through the bush. What is left of all the coming and going, the heart-burnings and strivings of the people who made the roads and travelled on them?

Down in the deep woods between us and the sea, on the bank of a steep ravine, there blooms every springtime, a lovely lilac tree, a perfectly shaped lilac, with heavy bloom. No kind hand has dug around its roots for many years, but there it stands, bearing its proud blossoms without the help of man. I wonder who planted it and whose disappointed hopes are held in its keeping. There is a feeling that some man once bought the land and planted a few trees in the place where his house was to have been; but the house was never built, and only the lilac is left. Still some people live long lives without leaving any beauty at all!

I like the quiet of the country places, and the people who live in them. They are real people who, having room to

develop, have achieved personalities of their own. They are individuals, not merely fractions of crowds!

The desire to leave something that will remain, is in all of us and grows stronger as we see the toll of our years adding up. It finds an outlet for some in carving their initials on a park bench, or in a tree. I was at a picnic yesterday in a park and was grieved to see trees marred in this way. In an old pasture field in Manitoba, there is a fence post (I chose the thickest one I could find) that bears a deeply cut 'N.L.M.' over which I spent considerable time. No doubt it has rotted away in these long years, but it looked very permanent when I put it there.

Old Johnny Murray who came from Woodstock to the Souris Valley with the Ingram family in 1882, made a better memorial for himself when he planted two long rows of trees on his lot in Wawanesa. I saw him planting them one hot spring day, little saplings they were, but old Johnny had vision. "They will be here when I'm gone," he said—"they will be called Johnny Murray's trees—for awhile, and then no one will know who planted them and no one will care, but they will be here." And so they are, and they are still called Johnny Murray's trees. The prairie people are not likely to cut down trees.

Not only in the vague realm of immortality does a garden bring comfort to human hearts. It is a present help in time of trouble. I met a fiery young woman a few days ago who asked me what can be done with 'people who use the same word, or phrase, or sentence so often that it wears a sore spot in your brain?' I asked her to explain further, and she told me. She is the working companion and housekeeper for a very amiable

old lady who has been very kind to her. "But," she said, "she is getting me down. Every time the plane passes over the house, and that is twice a day—she says in exactly the same tone —'We live in a wonderful age.' Every time she asks me to do anything she says, 'Jessie, your legs are younger than mine'— and she miscalls words, which is bad enough, but she gives the explanation every time, which is worse. She calls rhubarb, 'rububb' and tells me her little brother who died called it that— and for sausages, she says 'saw-sages' for she heard that at a show. I'm afraid some day I'll scream."

I tried to tell her that everyone has something to put up with, and these were small things. I told her I had a principal one time who clicked his false teeth when he talked, and still he was a good man and kind to his mother, and could recite Shakespeare. I told her I know a young minister now who says 'idear, and Reginar' and what of it? She must expect some annoyances.

And then I asked her what pleasures she had to balance this, and at once she said, "We have a lovely garden and I get out every chance I can. She doesn't follow me either, for she's afraid of the bees, and I pretend I have a sting once in a while, to keep her frightened."

So we drew up a balance sheet on an old envelope, and put on one side the 'rububb' and 'saw-sages' and on the other side the garden, with its joys and comforts, its heavenly quiet and freedom and hope and beauty. The garden won. So if Jessie is a wise girl, she won't scream—she will go out and dig! There is no security in life—there is only balance!

LEARN TO FORGET

Life cracks down on all of us sooner or later—disappointments—losses—bad investments. Who hasn't a morgue somewhere in the house where the worthless stocks and shares are kept, in a drawer no longer locked? And in addition to the major disappointments there comes a whole troop of little annoyances to beset us. Clothes-lines that break—jelly that won't jell—the cake that falls—the people who will not answer letters—the party so carefully planned that went flat.— We all have them, if that is any comfort.

But in spite of all these trials of the flesh and spirit, life pays great dividends. It is a good world, if we look at it squarely.

One of the dividends of life is the wonderful provision that has been made for us in our Ability to Forget. We can all be sundials—registering only the happy hours. Look back at your childhood and you will find you remember the new boots that squeaked, thereby proclaiming their newness, and you have long since forgotten that they put a blister on your heel. I remember the day I won a medal in a bicycle race, an engraved medal with five points like a star, and a bicycle in the middle; the silver medal it was—another girl got the gold medal—and such are the cheerful ways of memory that I have almost forgotten that there were only two of us in the race.

But here and there we find people who nourish and protect

their sorrows to their own destruction, glorying in their infirmities, and keeping them alive by talking about them. Recently I made a visit to a former place of residence and I found an old quarrel still in force and eating into the life of the neighborhood. One woman, the leader of the affirmative, brought the story up-to-date, leaving out no detail,—conversations, gestures, looks, expressions, dates. She slighted nothing—and when she was through she said pathetically, "I am willing to forgive, but I can never forget." Naturally she could not.

I thought of the first phonograph we had, the kind that had the tunes on rollers, and how one day something went wrong and it foundered and stuck, playing the same words over and over. The tune it was playing was "All aboard for Dreamland," but in its derangement it shouted "All aboard all aboard all aboard" until someone cut off the power.

Nature has her own Red Cross and her wounds soon heal. Grass and flowers grow over the scar where the avalanche tore down the mountain last year. The glowing purple of the fireweed breaks over the charred forest.

In this matter of forgetting there is a simple rule, which is—pass quickly on to something else. I know a woman who lost her only daughter, and the day after the funeral she ordered over the phone, wool-bats and other quilt material, and made eight quilts before she stopped. She hired a dressmaker who was out of work, to help her, and they worked feverishly. She told me it saved her to feel a needle in her hand and to see the quilted pattern grow under her fingers—and the long hours exhausted her so she slept. "I couldn't cry," she said, "while I

was quilting. It would never do to spot the quilt."

Another dividend time pays us is in Humility. We grow more mellow as we grow older. We have been wrong so often ourselves that we have more charity for mistaken people, and we come to know that there is always the chance that the other person is right. I knew a lot when I was sixteen. I have never known so much since and could not, if I lived to be a hundred.

And time pays us a dividend in giving us a Longer View. "This too will pass," we can say confidently. Everything comes to an end. The only thing we can be sure of is change.

Life has an itinerant system, like the old Methodist Church, that in its wisdom moved its ministers every four years, and the system bore the sweet fruits of the spirit. The minister carried his crosses hopefully, even if his study had poor lighting, and the leading soprano 'flatted' occasionally, and the recording steward dropped his h's. The people, too, reasoned that even if he were not all they could desire in a minister, four years would soon pass and they would have another sent to them. Courtesy, helpfulness, friendliness resulted to their mutual benefit.

Swinbourne put this idea of Life's itinerant system into bold and singing words, which have comforted many—

> "From too much love of living
> From fear of death set free
> We thank with brief thanksgiving
> Whatever gods there be
> That no life lives forever

That dead men rise up never
That even the weariest river
Leads somehow safe to sea!"

And the old hymn recognizes the same curative power in the fugitive years—

"Time like an ever-rolling stream
Bears all our griefs away
They die, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the break of day."

HAPPY ENDINGS

As people grow older, they become keenly alive to the appearance of age. Women have cried at sight of the first gray hair. Lapses of memory, which in youth seem humorous, become tragic as we grow older. "The falling of the leaves of memory!" we say gaily, when we realize we have told our friend the same story yesterday, but we say it with a grim foreboding, knowing the days are evil.

One quality of mind, I hope I may retain, even after my hair falls out, and my eyes grow dim. I hope I can still believe in miracles—the fortunate, unbelievably happy coincidences of life—the things which just happen, and might not happen again in a thousand years.

Everyone could tell a story of how one time at least, luck intervened for him. I remembered a day, when as a special reward for good behavior, I, the youngest of the three girls, was taken berry-picking down to the Souris River. The way was long and rough, but it was high adventure for me; and besides the joy of finding berries, we were invited to go to supper at a neighbor's, who lived near the little country store at Millford where we did our trading.

I do not remember how the 'take' of berries stood, but I do remember that just at the end of the day, when the sun confirmed our belief that it was near supper time, I fell down a steep and treacherous bank and ripped one stocking from ankle to knee and skinned my leg.

Now a skinned leg will heal but a torn stocking is serious. I bore my affliction with fortitude until I suddenly realized that I could not go to the neighbor's with a bare leg, 'passing the store and all.' Then I lifted up my voice and wept. I was debarred by that one bare leg, but I claimed the right to go with them as far as the woods sheltered me. I would wait for them in a clump of bushes—the last clump. The two girls agreed to this, and we set out, following a wagon-road which led to the store.

We had gone but a short distance when I saw something gleaming on the road. I advanced cautiously not daring to hope —I had been fooled before by the tiny disk off a plug of tobacco—but this gleam was real. An American quarter lay in my hand, and I raised a glad shout. Here was deliverance!

The girls went on to the store, bought a pair of green cashmere stockings which I put on, knowing nothing of

microbes or infection, and went with them merrily into the feast. Green stockings evidently were poor sellers, and that's why these were sold for a quarter.

Later, when in Sunday School, we read of the ravens feeding Elijah by the brook Kedron—I found no difficulty in believing it. I had seen a miracle too!

There was a verse written once about a man who always believed the clouds would break—always thought to-morrow would be better than to-day—even believed that the pot of gold was still at the foot of the rainbow. I must say I admire the type and would be glad to think I might be eligible for membership in the Believer's Club, though I have not quite the optimism of the man who spent his last quarter for an oyster-stew (he knew his money would bring him more real sustenance if he bought fish and chips) hoping there might be a pearl in the oyster stew!

I was at a meeting this week, where many old friends were gathered; people I had not seen for years, and I was shocked to see how old some of them looked. Time goes over us like a blight, to be sure, and the years, like great black oxen, plough the world. But it was not the wrinkles, or the sunken eyes or trembling hands of these few which seemed the worst; it was the lack of interest in their faces. Men and women whom I remembered as people of thought and action had dulled down into boredom. They looked like people who expected the worst and did not care if it did come.

In contrast to these sunken ones, there was an old man of eighty-one, who told me he did not like Victoria, because there

wasn't enough action here—he was going up to Peace River. "There is too much sameness even in weather," he said. "Fine weather here, day after day, days as alike as two beans. I like a good rousing, crackling thunder storm—clears the air like nothing else and makes us all glad when it's over—I may come back here in a few years when I slow down. Nice place for old folks sure enough, but I can't put in my time throwing horse shoes. I like action—I've left word with my boys that if I ever do die, I want them to trot the horses at the funeral, both going and coming! I know it won't be horses, but the boys will carry out the idea."

We discussed a Believe It or Not Club over the supper table, but we only got as far as the first story, told by a retired Hudson's Bay man. He said the Company had one time brought one of its old river boats four hundred miles down the Peace River and one hundred miles down the Slave, to the post at Fort Fitzgerald, where it was landed on a beach and tied up. There were certain parts of it that might be useful, though the boat itself was condemned and would be left on the beach to rot. In the days when the boat operated, it had often drawn a scow which now was old and abandoned too, but it had not been brought down with the boat, being utterly useless.

A week after the boat was beached, the scow arrived and drew in beside its old friend. It had made the five hundred mile trip on its own, and came to rest on the beach, as neatly as if directed by a skilled hand. It had been floated off its resting place by the high water, but just why it had not gone ashore at some turn, and how it happened to swing in beside the boat is not so easily explained. But the fact remains that it came. Four hundred miles on the Peace and one hundred miles on the

Slave.

The romantically-minded may say there was an attraction between the boat and the scow after their long years together, which guided the scow down the stream on its last long trip to rejoin the friend it had followed so long. Anyway it is pleasant to think of the two old friends, sitting side by side in the silence, slowly yielding to the sure disintegration of wind and weather.

LADY TWEEDSMUIR HELPS THE POETS

When Lady Tweedsmuir made her tour across Canada this Fall, she did what no other Governor-General's wife has done. She spoke to her audiences about poetry. She declared her love of poetry and gave reasons for this love by reading many beautiful passages. She especially commended the work of Audrey Alexandra Brown, the Nanaimo poet, who now lives in Victoria.

All across Canada, people are writing good poetry, but getting neither fame, nor money; and if Lady Tweedsmuir can incline the ear of the Canadian people to the music of poetry, either our own, or of other countries, she will make a great contribution to our national life.

The average person, especially if that person is a man, fights shy of poetry. He feels it to be an effeminate thing. The poet,

to him, is a person who is a bit queer and full of 'havers.'

I think the trouble began in school when the poetry in the Readers was badly chosen. I would not expect a child to be very fond of poetry when his first experience with it took the form of committing the "Charge of the Light Brigade" to memory, as a punishment for not doing his homework. A teacher who has no love of poetry, can cut off many young persons from this great inheritance.

Poetry is one of the joys of life, like music or travel or playing games. It should never be associated with dullness or plodding effort. A child shows his love of rhythm when he beats a spoon on a plate and long before he knows the meaning of it, he loves to hear the jingle of poetry.

Every child, if he has any help at all, is a traveller into the world of romance. He can see a world in a soap-bubble, and loves to think of fairies, and dragons, and giants. Imagination is a good gift that enables us to draw from an inexhaustible store of happiness, when the sands of life run low, or evil days come to us.

Anne Lindbergh, when going through her hard trial, read poetry. On his death-bed, Thomas Hardy asked to have the "Listeners" by Walter de la Mare read to him. Imagination can store up courage for us, as the squirrel stores up nuts for the winter.

In that picture, "The Petrified Forest," Gabrielle found something to comfort her in Francois Villon's poem, when all her dreams lay shattered by the killer's pistol shot, and her

lover died in her arms.

The poet shows us how we may escape from our surroundings, if we crave escape. You may live in one room, and a very dull, drab little room at that, but that is not the measure of your soul. We are as we think, not as we dress, or eat. The world of the spirit is the real world, and to that world the poet can guide us.

Walt Whitman tells in one of his poems that his whole life was changed by hearing a robin sing under a "pale and sagging moon." All at once he felt himself a part of a new world of beauty. Abraham Lincoln said he was made aware of the world of literature when he was ten years old, by hearing this sentence read, "The rain was pattering on the roof." He knew about rain on a roof, and he knew that "pattering" described the sound. So that one sentence was the bridge that carried him into a world of beauty.

Every child's mind is waiting to be awakened. I got my start from Tennyson's "Lady of Shallot," which I studied because it was on the curriculum. I was not very much interested in the girl who only saw life in a looking-glass, and who resolutely turned her back on all that was passing below on the river. I couldn't see what it was all about, and when at last she turned around and looked at 'Sir Lancelot,' and the mirror cracked behind her, and she cried out in fear that the curse had come upon her, I was still more mystified. Such doings were far removed from the bright sunshine of Manitoba and its plain people. I could not even work up any emotion when the love-torn maiden made her last journey down the river, with her glassy countenance, and even when her sad little song ended

and 'her blood was frozen slowly' and 'her eyes were darkened wholly,' I could not mourn her as I should. She had quit too soon—she had turned up her toes and died like a young turkey! When I went back to the beginning of the poem, determined to squeeze out the last bit of meaning from the words, I read:

"Willows whiten, aspens quiver
Little breezes dusk and shiver."

I was sitting on a bank above Springbrook, that hot July day, watching that the cows did not go into the grain. The bright sun poured down on the little creek below me. Willows bent over the stream and as the wind passed over them the white undersides of the leaves were turned up. I suddenly made contact with the writer. "Willows whiten, aspens quiver." The story came alive in that moment. "The Lady of Shallot" might have been passing below me in her barge!

We have not let our poets lead us. We have not given them a fair chance. We have worshipped at strange altars,—wealth, power, lavish display, shrill pleasure, great speed,—and these things have failed us, for they had no foundation. We have not valued our poets. We have not given them a word of praise. I read the other day in a literary essay that it was a rare sight to see a Canadian with a book of poetry in his or her hand, though we are keen to claim a poet after his death, which is history repeating itself—

"Six cities claimed great Homer dead
Through which the living Homer begged his bread."

The ancient Athenians loved their poets, and preserved their

work, to their everlasting glory. A verse of poetry on the lips of a captive was sufficient to give him his liberty.

I'll admit there is poetry that I cannot understand, but I do not begrudge it to those who do. To me, poetry is not the possession of the high-brow alone. It is made of the same stuff as the sunlight, or the running stream, or the flash of a bluebird's wing, or the sun on a field of daffodils. It belongs to us all, only unfortunately there are many who do not claim it. And it is being offered to us in modest little books, and in newspapers and magazines every day. It is holding up its hand to get us to stop. But we are in too big a hurry.

> "A poor world this if full of care
> We have no time to stop and stare
> No time to see in broad daylight
> Streams full of stars like skies at night."

But it may be that now, with the lead that Lady Tweedsmuir has given us, we may suddenly awaken to an appreciation of poetry. We may even buy a book of poetry to read in the winter evenings, or to give to a friend who is going away.

THE SPIRIT OF THE GARDEN

We sat on the lawn, looking through the opening in the

trees, right down the estuary—known as Cowichan Bay. We could see the Gulf Islands folded into each other and growing more shadowy with distance, until the dim shore of the State of Washington completed the picture.

Across the narrow space, a white boat, gleaming in the sunshine, quickly passed, and to it we paid the tribute of a sudden silence. "I will never grow indifferent to the traffic of the sea," my hostess said. "It will always lift me up and take me with it. Every boat or barge, intent on the far country, busy with its own affairs, a little world of its own with joy and sorrow, and the broad breast of the sea carrying them all—it's life—that's why it binds me ... All life is of the same texture."

I looked at her in surprise. We had been talking of shrubs and bulbs and early-blooming annuals. She had been telling me of the long hours of work on her place; the dryness of the season, the difficulty of pumping water, the need of mulching. I knew she was a woman of tireless activity. Her place showed that. The care of a house, many visitors like ourselves, attracted by the beautiful plants she had for sale; no convenient bakery to tide her over the daily needs; work inside and out waiting for her, clamoring to be done. But her eyes were deep pools of peace and her laugh had the contagious gaiety of a child at play.

I asked her about it, for our time was short, and I wanted to know—I saw she had something. There was no need of formality or apologies between us.

"We came here many years ago," she said, "to retire. Yes, it is a lovely spot. We did not make the choice quickly. We had it

in mind for years, believing it to be the loveliest place we had seen. We built this for our cottage, to live in, while we made our place down on the next level, closer to the sea. We had plans for a beautiful house and grounds. Then the war came! And perhaps you know what the war did to incomes. Yes, we were only one of the many, and much better off than many, for we loved plants. We had planned to raise many plants for pleasure. We held to that plan. We still have pleasure in our work, but we make our living too."

"We have been here twenty-one years, and life has been good to us. We have health, and peace and a great interest. The days are not long enough for all we want to do, and our efforts to produce plants of loveliness is a family tie. We all work at it. It holds us together, and we rejoice in our little successes."

She explained some phases of the work to me as we walked through the gardens. "It is all interesting," she said, "so fascinating one forgets that it is hard work. Every month, every day, brings surprises. I think it is this element of surprise and chance that makes the work so intriguing. Now here are the lilies, my daughter's part of the garden. She has been experimenting to get a heavier texture and brighter colors, with some success."

The evidence was before us. Stately lilies, in clusters on high stalks, graduated from the usual flower to a rich, heavy texture that made me think of duchess satin. The markings on the lilies were in deep maroon.

"We will feature them in our exhibit at the flower show," she said, "I do not know yet how to arrange them, but I think I

will make a background of this." She showed me a strange little shrub, resembling an ostrich plume of smoky old rose. "It is sometimes called just that," she said, "the Smoke Tree." Then she told me the real name.

"How do you achieve your artistic effects?" I asked her—for I know her exhibits at the flower shows are always the high spots of the day. "I go away by myself," she said, "and try to get the spirit of the garden. I think about it until it comes to me."

Everything she showed me gleamed with interest as she talked. I noticed her lavender beds, and she explained that she carried on a satisfactory side-line filling lavender sachets, on rainy days. The flowers are cut in early August, dried and screened, and the sachets made of odds and ends of silk and ribbon. Then she talked of lavender, how it produces no seeds but grows by root division, and was used in ancient times in the bath, hence the word from "lavare," to wash; and was believed to be a remedy for disorders of the head and nerves.

We talked of the development of new flowers, and she told me of the "Cowichan Poppy" which one of her neighbors had developed and marketed with great success; and I noticed she told of this achievement with greater readiness than of successes of her own family in producing new varieties, though when I questioned her, she did tell me of a new gladiolus, called "Picardy," that had been received with enthusiasm and awarded a special merit prize by the Royal Horticultural Society.

The next week I went to the flower show at the "Willows" in

Victoria and promised myself I would not look at the names. I thought I might be able to pick out her exhibit.

There it was. Great clusters of lilies with the smoky plumes for a background, with tamarisk, softly pink and ferny, below, and at each side spikes of huge gladioli (her own seedlings) of a color I had never seen, ashy gray shading into midnight purple. At each side were blue bowls filled with bright yellow flowers that gleamed like little suns and gave an underglow to the display. All the pots used were of pretty gray-green bark and were of her own making.

I cannot describe this exhibit in words. It had an air, a character, a hidden beauty that made it exciting and explosive. It was so lovely it made my heart beat faster. It was not merely a matter of height, width and depth. It had another dimension that has to do with the imagination. I think it was the exquisite background, all contributing to and complementing the queenly lilies. There was no cross purpose, no division of interest. It was a complete harmony, reflecting the soul of the woman whose skilful hands had formed it.

I thought of her words: "I go by myself," she had said, "and think of the spirit of the garden and try to bring it to the exhibition." That was it—the spirit of the garden.

THANKSGIVING

When Thanksgiving Day, with its turkey and sage, pumpkin pie, and visitors from town, comes again, we will talk about our blessings when the dinner is over and everyone is at peace with the world, and has even forgiven his relatives. We will enumerate our special causes for thankfulness—that we are all well: that the rent is paid: that none of the family is in jail: that we will have enough potatoes to put us past Christmas. And then, in the expansive mood that is sure to follow a Thanksgiving dinner, our minds will push out beyond the garden fence and the pasture lot, and we will begin to take a look at the world.

We will agree that Canada is the freest and safest country in the world, and we will be glad that we became a country, not by act of aggression, but by act of parliament; and so we have no hereditary enemies and no hymn-of-hate.

Then we will remember to be glad that we have a friendly Neighbor living beside us in perfect harmony, people who look like us, talk like us, and are so much like us that we know them for "foreigners" only by looking at their license plates.

We are glad the Government has declared the drought situation on the Prairies to be an emergency, and so has decided to go ahead with its plans for relief, and we add a rider to that, that we hope it loses no time in arguing or explaining, but proceeds without notice-of-motion, for hungry people and livestock cannot wait.

And from there on, we will talk about our own people in this great distress, and wonder what we should do, we who live in other parts of Canada.

We deplore the attitude of some speakers and editorial writers who say the farmers are being punished for their sins and mistakes. That sort of talk seems a bit out of place at this time, and presumptuous at any time. If the farmers made mistakes in cutting down scrub and trees, and in draining sloughs, they know it now and are suffering for it.

Mistakes were made, we know. Whole districts should never have been taken out of grass. The farmers did not summer-fallow enough, and they should have planted more trees. If the farm women had had their way, more trees would have been planted. But there is no use trying to pin the blame on anyone now. None of us knew what was going to happen.

And now at Thanksgiving time, when we look abroad and see fields that have yielded us their increase, we think of the desolation of the dry country and with sympathy in our hearts for the disappointed people whose hard worked-for crops have withered in the heat and gone with the wind, let us earnestly ponder what good deed we can perform for these, our own people.

The Government is spending money (and I hope it is consulting with the farm women as well as the men) in this crisis. But the Government relief, by necessity, is scanty and covers only the stark, imperative needs.

Our own Thanksgiving dinner will taste better if we have plans afoot for sharing with our stricken friends. In other years, Ontario has been exceedingly generous in its gifts of apples and vegetables. Carloads have been sent to the West from Ontario and distributed through the churches. But this year

Ontario has experienced a hard drought too, and may not be able to contribute so lavishly as in former years.

But there are good crops across Canada. We have plenty still, if it were only distributed. Our need is for leaders now to gather up the loose sentiments of pity and sympathy, and turn them into apples, and cauliflowers and carrots, and clothing, and subscriptions to papers and magazines, wool to be knitted into stockings and sweaters, quilt patterns, and friendly letters.

I spoke a few days ago at a gathering of women, about the great need of reading-matter in the homes of the stricken farmers, who will not be able to subscribe for papers, now that the crop is gone; and it has been a great joy to me to find there has been some response and women have phoned, saying they would undertake to supply families with reading-matter for a year, if I would give them the addresses.

There is a good name used by the Associated Farm Women of the World for one who gives this service, which we might borrow for this occasion. The person who undertakes to perform this friendly act might be called a "Pen-friend" for the sending of reading material would be more gracious, and personal if letters were exchanged. There is a psychological release in being able to tell our troubles to a friend, and here is an opportunity for a real work of neighborliness.

In the favored parts of Canada, we must have gratitude in our hearts this Thanksgiving. We are poor dumb clods if we are not grateful for peace, and security, and freedom at this time, when we think of the terrible happenings in other countries. Unexpressed emotion even when the emotion is that

of gratitude, is bad for the soul. It clogs the pores of the heart and results in a sort of spiritual anaemia. So if we have any glimmerings of gratitude on this Thanksgiving Day, let us rise up quickly before the gleam fades, and implement our impulse by becoming a Pen-friend to someone. Perhaps we know a family in the stricken areas—maybe we have relatives there to whom we have not written for years. This seems to be a time for strengthening the ties of friendship, and of neighborliness, right now when our hearts are tender!

Look at Spain, and see what hatred can do to a nation, how it can wreck and destroy a civilization; and hatred grows on coldness and neglect as well as on the larger injustices. There is an old proverb which we may well ponder this day—"When your neighbor's house is burning, it is well to put a little water on your own!"

IN THE WORLD OF TRADE AND BARTER

Last September, when the abundance of the garden was spilling over the paths and threatening to go to waste if a market were not found, I decided to see for myself if there could not be found some place where fresh vegetables could be turned into butter or pineapple juice or some of the things we were buying. I had heard our neighbors say there was no sale for small quantities, but full of zeal and that pioneering spirit that we have all read about, I decided to venture into the great world of trade and barter.

The night before, we had had for dinner a "Gordon Head Goose" which is a yellow vegetable marrow stuffed with chopped beef steak, onions, sage, bread-crumbs and green peppers; and it had made a fine appearance on its bed of parsley. With it we served baked potatoes and pickled ripe cucumbers, and there were 'no complaints.'

So, full of hope, I went into town with a dozen marrows in the back of the car. I was proud of these fine marrows. I had seen them come into being. In a needy hungry world, where one-third of the people never have enough to eat, it is a privilege and an honor to produce anything that people can eat, I told myself. I believe I had a vague, subconscious feeling that the raising of vegetable marrows was a more honorable calling than writing books.

As I passed the little farms and saw people working up and down the rows, I felt like calling to them, for were we not all of the same guild?—we were the producers; our was the basic industry. The world could not do without us. Synthetic foods were a dream, a myth, a poor, pallid substitute for real food. How could people gather round a table and enjoy a few yellow, or blue or brown pills, and grow mellow and neighborly over them? A powder dissolved in hot water, however nutritious, cannot compete with a plate filled with stuffed marrow, baked potatoes, brown gravy and ripe cucumber pickle!

I went to the grocery store, where we had been buying our stuff since we came to live at Lantern Lane. I was very cordially received. The store was crowded with customers, to me potential buyers of marrows. I hurried over to the vegetable department and sought the manager and asked him the price of

marrows. He said the local marrows were just coming in and the price was still high, they were six cents a pound. Then I broke the news to him that I had brought in a dozen to exchange for groceries, whereupon his attitude changed and he was on his guard at once. The genial face hardened, and the wind from the snow-clad Olympics across the straits blew cold. In that case he said the price is two cents a pound, and we will be flooded with marrows from now on. He said vegetable marrows were poor vegetables, very few people used them at all. I protested. I threatened. I would not part with these hand-grown marrows for such a miserable price. If people did not like them, it was because they didn't know how to cook them—I was not asking for money. He would have his profit on the things I bought—did he want two profits on one transaction?—why should he receive four cents for merely handling a marrow, while the growers got only two cents—and these marrows had been tenderly reared and started in the house, watered and fertilized?

He was a mild little gray-haired man, of rosy countenance, and he did not like to argue, especially with a customer. Finally I got him up to three cents a pound, and I got my cornflakes and pineapple juice, and came home, a bit weary and disillusioned.

The great world of commerce was a cold, forbidding place, and I was glad to get out of it. It's fun to raise garden stuff, but the only pleasant way of disposal is to eat it or give it away, it seems, and now I am wondering who is to blame for this. Why had I lost all my enthusiasm for the marrows and the whole business of producing food and helping to feed a starving world? Why did the mild little man make me feel like an

interloper, or an ear-wig and leave me with the horrible conviction that he had taken the marrows just to get rid of me? I knew I had no right to resent his words. He was right in saying the market would be flooded. He had his own problems, and had to make his department pay—naturally he wanted to buy as cheaply as he could. There was no sentiment in it for him.

I think, down in our hearts, we all have a false sense of our own importance. We hate to be found doing little trifling things. We think it is beneath us. We like to think of ourselves as "Big Shots."

I knew very well that I once had ideas of this kind, but believed I had advanced. I remember how humiliated I was when I had to deliver butter to three customers in Wawanesa years ago. To Mrs. William Story, Mrs. John Story, and Mrs. Gorrie, every Saturday morning I carried prints of butter in a covered basket, lined with cabbage leaves, going to the back-door and collecting the money, and how I hated it! I had no pride in the fact that it was good butter and was paid for in cash, and always above the market price. It was peddling, back-door peddling!; and I was afraid it would mark me for life. And now after the lapse of years, I found myself with the same feeling of injured pride, and I argued with myself on the way home. I felt foolish and ashamed. I was like the woman who starved all the way from Winnipeg to Calgary because she hadn't the money to pay for her meals in the diner, and was too proud to eat from a pasteboard box in her seat in the tourist car. I thought of the southern town that looked so "tacky" and run-down for the same reason--they were too poor to paint, and too proud to white-wash!

Women, I said, are courageous in droves, but not as individuals.

I read with eagerness, in the "Country Woman," of what the people of Norway have done this summer to encourage the growing of potatoes, and the use of fish as a diet for animals as well as people. How they held demonstrations to show the people that potato flour makes excellent bread, more nourishing than wheat bread; and with pictures, drawings and photographs, have shown the people what kinds of fish it is possible to catch along the coast; and as a finishing touch there were many new recipes demonstrated and directions given for serving fish in tempting dishes.

I note with interest that two women are on the executive of this Committee and that the movement, which is nation-wide, is called "The Ten Year Plan for the Utilization of the Country's Resources." I knew how joyously the demonstrations would be carried on, but I wondered if either of these two women had ever marketed a dozen marrows in the unfriendly atmosphere of a retail grocery.

THE OLD READER

One of our neighbors has given me a pleasant evening by bringing me an armful of old school books which she has carefully preserved all these years; and what a visit I have had with these old friends!

Best of all, I like the Ontario Readers, of which I was not a student but an interested spectator. These readers must have been in use when my family left the security of Grey County to seek their fortunes in the North-West. Every page of them is familiar and the pictures live again in thrilling interest.

Life has changed the world and the manners of the people, but the old Reader has a dreadful permanence. The artist who throws his sketch book at the bear is still poised dangerously over the water. I expected that fellow to fall in fifty years ago, and here he is, still in mid-air!

Robert Bruce still leans on his elbow and watches the spider trying to swing from one beam to another; tries and fails, and at last succeeds, and Robert springs up and shouts, "If that little fellow can do it, so can I," and he goes after the English with renewed vigor and drives them out like chaff.

There is the story of Napoleon, the brave Newfoundland dog, whose tail was cut off by the cruel Captain because Napoleon wagged his tail when he came into the Captain's cabin and upset a miserable little bottle of ink that the captain had left uncorked. A few days after, the Captain fell overboard, which certainly served him right, and the man-eating shark had him spotted, but brave Napoleon, resolved to be noble and forgiving, plunged right in, and did battle with the shark, and the Captain was saved. "I would give my right arm," the Captain said bitterly as he patted Napoleon's head, "if I could repair the injury I did to this splendid fellow." 'Napoleon' became the name of our brown spaniel with the silky ears, in Grey County, and afterwards this same name was given to the dear dog in Manitoba who guarded the henhouse door when I

had forgotten to close it. It would be interesting to know how many 'Napoleons' there were among the dogs of that generation.

There is a touch of humor sorely needed in that dreary waste of "battle, murder, and sudden death," in the story of the milk-maid who did a little premature reckoning on the pail of milk she carried on her head.

She decided to sell the milk and buy eggs, eggs having more future than milk. She looks facts in the face and allows for breakage and shrinkage and infant mortality, and still believes she is 'in the money.' There is a lovely touch in one of the verses, a revealing touch when she grows confused in adding up what she will have when she sells her fifty chickens at three shillings and sixpence a pair—

> "Now what will that make?—fifty chickens I said
> Fifty times three and sixpence—I'll ask brother Ned!"

And of course in the end the poor girl is rebuked for trying to enter the world of finance, for in her enthusiasm she tosses her head and her entire capital lies in ruin at and over her feet, and of course there's a moral in that! Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.

There is heroism and disaster on the high seas in 'The Wreck of the Hesperus,' and the 'Loss of the Lady Elgin,' and stinging tragedy in 'The Little Match Girl,' and the 'Soldier's Dream' and the 'Abenaqui's Story.' I remember how anguished I was over the picture of the Indian trying to revive his dying cousin with snow which he had melted in the corner of a blanket. His

cousin had been attacked by a wild cat, and had slipped into a crack in the rock and broken his leg. He could not get out and could not reach his gun to call help, and when found dying, could only say "Nipi, Nipi—water—water." The dying man had known trouble was coming, for he had seen Wendigo tracks in the snow the year before. I often looked fearfully for Wendigo tracks in the snow, hoping I would not find any.

But the high water mark in grief that knew no solace was found in the 'Story of Brave Gelert.'

Gelert was a dog belonging to a mighty man called 'Llewellyn,' and one day in Llewellyn's absence, his son and heir, a young gentleman of tender years, was attacked by a wolf. Nothing could have saved him but the bravery of Gelert, who gave the wolf a terrific battle. Master Llewellyn seems to have witnessed the strife and then to have fallen into a sweet sleep when the wolf was safely killed. Now, where Gelert seems to have made his mistake was in not getting cleaned up after the fight, but no doubt he was proud of his bloody coat and honorable scars. Anyway he went gaily out to meet his master coming back from the chase. Gelert did not get the hand he expected, for his master had missed him in the chase and wasn't any too well pleased with him for staying at home. But Gelert, knowing what he knew, bounded and frisked and tried to make his master understand he had done a good day's work for him, even if he had been at home all day. Then the master noticed the blood on Gelert. Listen to this!—

"The hound was smeared with gouts of gore
His lips and fangs ran blood
Onward in haste his master passed

And on went Gelert too
And still where're his eyes were cast
Fresh blood-gouts shocked his view."

(Note the grand old word "gout." It certainly has a gory sound.) Gelert's master, in alarm, calls his child, but receives no reply and being quicker on the draw than in his mental processes—

"Hell hound by thee, my child's devoured
The frantic father cried
And to the hilt, his vengeful sword
He plunged in Gelert's side."

Then, Master Llewellyn roused by the commotion, stepped out, "all glowing from his rosy sleep" and there were explanations, and grief and commotion, repentance and apologies. A gallant tomb was raised for Gelert, and the grass around was oft besprinkled by Llewellyn's tears, and the young readers were left to hope that some way this made it up to brave Gelert for the shabby way he had been treated.

The children of that day were surely spared no pang of grief nor shock of horror—they were dragged through a reeking morass of cruelty and bloodshed.

In another reader called "The New Code Progressive Reader" which bears the date 1877, I see there is a realistic description of the "Execution of Lady Jane Grey," complete with picture, where Lady Jane kneels before the block while the headsman stands with his hand on the axe. And another

little bit of light reading is called "Wife Burning in India."

The children of that day must have been a hardy race, to survive all the shocks that beat upon their young souls. There may have been some hidden virtue in this, but I doubt it. I see a modern poet, Phyllis Hartnall, has a poem addressed to youth adjuring them to suffer gladly. It begins:

> "He who in his youth has walked with sorrow
> Will better bear his griefs tomorrow."

I do not believe this. I believe a happy childhood is the best fortification against life's sorrows!

WE WENT TO HOLLYWOOD

In California you have to become inured to beauty. You must be able to look, without quivering, at a rose-bush full of blossoms. You must be content to leave it, too, for there are bigger bushes and brighter blossoms ahead; and always there are the moulded, green hills, folded back upon each other, green as furniture plush, and green to the very top; and on the top there may be red and white cows silhouetted against the blue sky. Perhaps the side of the hill next to you has a great, flashing medallion of gold, that moves in the breeze, for it is made of silky poppies. Beside the road runs an orchard, in even rows that march in perfect formation, making a pattern that changes as you drive along but never loses step with you,

each tree a vision of bridal whiteness, with an occasional, pale pink one to indicate a bridesmaid; and there may be grape orchards on the hills, so accurately planted that the twisted black stalks, cut low to the ground, make a mesh of woven wire that fits the hill top like a cap.

And then there are the orange groves with their rich dark leaves, glossy and still, and their golden globes of fruit—millions and millions of them! Here, they are as common as dandelions on the lawn. They lie on the ground in their profusion, offering their golden, juicy sweetness to an uncaring world that rolls past. There is an Arabian Nights' unreality about it all to one who has only seen oranges in stout, brown, paper bags, or occasionally in wooden boxes with bulging, slatted tops.

California is surely a land for holidays and happiness, play, and picnics, where it is hard for any one to have a serious purpose. Of course, I have seen it only at this blossoming time, when nothing mars its bursting beauty. But when I see a little house over which a peach tree spreads its ruffled, pink arms in benediction, I cannot think that anyone in that house can live meanly, or shabbily. I saw much to support me in this view, too, for barefooted children seemed to be ever at play in leafy lanes, and bareheaded women were sitting on rose covered verandas, or gossiping over vine-covered fences with no impinging thought of household cares.

Oil wells in the ocean actively pumping—long avenues of them—are a feature of the drive from San Luis Obispo to Santa Barbara.

Soon after we left Santa Barbara, where the mountains come down close to the sea, making an effective back curtain for the setting of this beautiful city, we began to feel the excitement of getting near Hollywood—it is not every day we come to the amusement centre of the world, where fashions are set, not only in dresses, but in words and thought and behavior. The traveller is conscious of a change as Hollywood draws near. The service stations and eating places are more ornate and grotesque. An ice-cream cone as high as a house, and criss-crossed like a waffle, marks the place where ice-cream is served; and across the way a huge, golden bird cage dispenses gasoline and oil. Another corner has a Mexican village of adobe, where lunches are served by girls in Mexican dress of red and white. There is a feudal castle with a moat around it, which, however, leaves room for cars to drive in and get anything their occupants ask for—magazines, candy, root-beer, or gasoline. There is a Dutch windmill in blue and gray tiles for the same purpose; and beside the highway on both sides are orchards running down to the sea.

We knew we were in Hollywood when we saw a great round-roofed building that proclaimed in large letters, "Mack Sennett's Studios". Then came a district where dogs are trained and kept, and healed of their diseases, (I counted six dog hospitals), and a long, low building on whose roof are these words "The World's Most Intensive Acre", which we found was the home of someone's great Dane dogs.

The avenue widened, and the traffic grew in volume, the finest, shiniest cars darting past us noiselessly, long, low and graceful in outline, driven by chauffeurs in uniform. The avenue was wide enough for six cars to travel side by side, and

against the curb, marked off by a white band, was the space allotted to the slow driver, or the one about to stop. The traffic was all very well managed, and everyone seemed to drive with ease and confidence. The high white buildings glistened in a sunshine as clear as cellophane, intensified by a blue and cloudless sky.

We found a good hotel high up on the hillside, and from our windows we could look down on the brilliantly lighted city at night, where dazzling signs of red and blue and orange drove back the darkness. A beacon—like a moving finger—stroked the sky all night long, and a Dutch windmill, each blade made of blue lights, kept turning and turning. From our windows, too, we looked into a fruit market across the street where a pyramid of oranges towered above the stalls, and great green tubs of flowers—snapdragons, gaillardia, marigolds, roses, and sweet peas—stood on the sidewalk.

I was glad when the elevator boy told me the hotel was full of theatre people. The next morning I saw them at breakfast. One pallid girl with great burning, black eyes, hair that seemed to have been combed with an egg-beater, crimson lips fresh as sword wounds, and black earrings like inverted question marks, sat near me, with a book propped against the sugarbowl, ostentatiously learning her lines as she ate sparingly of rye-bread toast. Great swarms of blondes (who ate hot-cakes and syrup with a fine disregard for their "lines") called to her to come on and eat, and forget that "tripe, it may all be changed anyway." But the pallid one went on mumbling. There were good-looking boys, who might be agricultural students, from their honest, sunburnt faces, and their robust conversation; and an older man and woman who sat apart from

the swarm and seemed to disapprove of the clatter. I know that they had written a play, and were a bit disgruntled because it had not been accepted. I wondered if it seemed as wonderful to them as it did when they left Clay Center, or wherever they came from. I wanted to go over and sympathize, but could see that they were not talking to anyone less than a producer.

The appearance of the girls disappointed me. It may be all right at one meal time to be a bit blousy and grubby, with smears of grease paint on hand and cheek, but when the same untidiness prevails all day, and all the days, it passes from interesting local color into common grime.

I sought my friend, the elevator boy, and besought him to enlighten me. Loyal to the house, he still stuck to his story that these were movie people, but admitted they did small parts. I could believe that—"villagers", "tumult in the street", "shouts without," or "an alarm at the door." Still, who can tell? In many a dark abode the fires of genius have burned.

We had a drive in Beverley Hills, and saw the beautiful homes, so utterly, wantonly beautiful: no two alike, and some too garish and quite dropsical with ornamentation: garage doors in geometric designs of colored tiles: chimneys like cloisonne vases; black marble steps with gold leaf railings. Some of the houses are perfect gems of beautiful architecture, set in such exquisite surroundings of grass and flowers and trees that it is easy to see how a tired soul, jaded with voices and clamor, could rest here under the wings of beauty and silence. Marie Dressler's house is of the type known as a farmhouse, ample, square and substantial; and here, they told me, Marie loved to gather the disappointed ones who had not

yet succeeded; and it was her delight to put on an apron and go to her bright kitchen and cook a meal for them herself of good, old-fashioned dishes. Ann Harding has a big white house on the hilltop, with red-tiled roof, Harold Lloyd has an estate like a baronial country home. "Pickfair", the home of Mary and Douglas Fairbanks, can hardly be seen for the trees; and it was there the present King was entertained during his visit to Hollywood, when he asked to meet Marie Dressier only, of all the stars of Hollywood. We saw, too, the bridle-path on Beverley Boulevard, where the stars ride their horses on certain afternoons, and heard of Hobart Bosworth who rode his white horse there, making an impressive figure with his head of silvery hair.

The houses have one little appendage that brings a note of sadness. About one in every five carries a "For Sale" sign—mute evidence of the crash in stocks. We saw beautiful places that can be bought for half their cost; but one must be night-minded to live in the colony where life is cast in a high shrill scale, and has not much relation to the substantial things we know.

Of all the stars, Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin are the best beloved. Stars may beam, twinkle and fade, but these remain steadfastly shining in the hearts of their fellowmen. Mary is the President of a Society for the preservation of Californian wild flowers, whose placards are to be seen everywhere imploring the tourists to "let the flowers be"; we heard, too, of her regular church attendance, her unfailing kindness to the unemployed, and we saw the golf course she had made some years ago to give work to the idle.

Henry's Restaurant was built by Charlie Chaplin, and given to one of his actors, who now presides genially in this favored eating place. Seeing the number of blondes here, I asked one of the girls how it came about that four out of five of the waitresses had this shade of hair. From where I sat I could see six light-haired ones running from silver platinum through corn-tassels to light sorrel. She said they were girls who had come to Hollywood expecting to get into the pictures and had bleached their hair to be ready when the call came. I saw blondes everywhere, modelling dresses, handing out oranges and potatoes, wheeling baby carriages, washing windows.

On Sunday evening I went to Aimee Semple McPherson's temple, just off Sunset Boulevard. It is a round building like an arc, with a great electric sign against the sky—a huge place with an auditorium that holds many thousands of people—I do not know how many. But I do know that on the Sunday evening I was there, there was a capacity house and one more. I was the extra one who sat on the stone railing below the gallery, where the worshippers were good enough to move their feet and give me a little space.

I was shocked to see Aimee so haggard and worn, remembering her as she was years ago in Winnipeg, a handsome young woman of twenty-eight, with luxuriant, reddish-brown hair tiered high on her shapely head. Now she is thin and pale, with hollowed cheeks, and restless hands, but the hearts of her people are loyal and true, and where I sat I heard many fervent prayers being audibly offered for her.

"She is killing herself to save souls," one woman told me when the service was over. "She knows her time is short. 'It's

better to burn out than rust out' she says. But what will happen to the temple, if Sister goes, I do not know. She carries the whole burden."

I heard many stories of Aimee, of her wit, her courage, her radio plays and talks. Once she announced that on a certain day and hour she would name the biggest liar in Los Angeles; and much excitement prevailed as the time drew near. Threatening letters were sent her, (which she read to her listeners), withholding only the name of the writers, predicting dire results to her if she dared to name certain people. When the hour came for the great disclosure she simply said: "The Devil is the greatest liar in Los Angeles." Her service abounds in color and movement. The white-robed choir sit on each side of the altar. The light comes in through beautiful windows, richly blue and crimson. An orchestra sits in the pit, and the popular tunes to which religious words have been set are sung by her soloists. There is not a dull moment in her programs for she knows the value of surprises. The night I heard her, two little girls in brief costumes of pink and mauve chiffon, frilled and spangled, sang "Throw out the life-line", and into the packed auditorium threw colored streamers that rolled back into their hands; yet so perfectly was it done, I saw nothing incongruous in the performance.

On the way out to Sunset Boulevard, where I got a car which took me back to Hollywood, I talked with a Canadian woman, who lives now in Los Angeles, and was formerly one of Aimee's followers.

"I loved that woman," she said passionately, "and believed in her, long after all my circle of friends had turned against her.

But I am done with her now."

I asked her why.

"I could stand her spectacular ways," she said. "I even believed, and still believe in the kidnapping, but I simply could not follow her any longer when I found she was dyeing her hair. It seemed so false, so hypocritical and artificial."

The night was close and hot, and the lady removed her hat to fan herself, for the climbing of the stairs that led up to the boulevard had winded her. Under the glare of the street lamps, I observed her own crown of glory. The lifeless, syrupy brown of her locks, ropelike and stringy, told the story; and the wide edges of the part that ran from the crown of her head to her brow confirmed it!

Still it could not be said she was deceiving any one. There was nothing false about her hair. It had all the realism of an old buffalo-robe. Perhaps she did not object so much to Aimee dyeing her hair, as to the fact that she did it well. My car came first, and I left her there, and as I travelled back on the swinging, twisting street car, I pondered deeply on the ways of humanity. People may be inconsistent, uncharitable or even cruel, but they are certainly not dull!

THE LITTLE CHURCH

Three miles from 'Lantern Lane,' and under the shadow of Mount Tolmie, stands the little country church to which we belong—a little white church with a wrought iron lamp above its door, on which appears the word "St. Aidan's." I was curious about the name, and was glad to get a clipping from one of the members, in which the story was told of the young missionary who had gone out from the monastery of Iona in the seventh century. It seems that the work in Northumbria had been slipping for some time and the last two incumbents had come back to the home base, discouraged and dismayed, reporting that the Northumbrians were a wild lot, as fierce as their own wild beasts and nothing could be done for them. Then Aidan volunteered for service and went out alone.

One day he returned in triumph to his Alma Mater, reporting that the Northumbrians were not as black as they had been painted, for the "cause" was flourishing in many places; and from the efforts of this young man, who labored with the Northumbrians all his life, the banners of the Cross were firmly planted in that wide region which comprised all the territory from the Humber to the Forth. He died on the 31st. day of August, 651.

"St. Aidan's" has an ecclesiastical taste on the tongue, and makes a more dignified name for a church than "First" or "Central" or "Sixth Avenue."—

Lately we have had an outbreak of weddings at St. Aidan's. It is no uncommon sight on a Sunday morning to see confetti on the steps, and a great arch of flowers in front of the altar. The explanation given by the caretaker of "folks from town, who phoned out for flowers, and came out in three cars, just

because they like our little church, being as it reminds them of the church they attended back in Ontario," is easily understood, for we felt the charm of St. Aidan's too, the first time we entered it. It has an atmosphere of peace and beauty, and remoteness from this troublesome world. St. Aidan himself would be pleased with it—especially since we got our windows.

The windows came from England many years ago, for the home of one of our Premiers. Three years ago, the minister of St. Aidan's was a caller at this lovely home and admired the windows. The mistress of the house said she cared but little for them, they were too formal and old-fashioned for a home, and really should be in some church. Plain glass, she said, would suit her better. Whereupon the minister, with a sudden wild plan forming in his mind, said he would take her at her word, and give her plain glass for the stained glass.

St. Aidan's Board of Managers confirmed the bargain, and there began at once a season of activity. The Ladies' Aid went into action on all fronts. Teas, bazaars, rummage sales, home-cooking sales, autographed quilts. It was not merely the exchange of windows, the whole church had to be gone over, massaged and manicured. It had to have its floors scraped; its roof painted; a new system of lighting; the beautiful windows had to have the proper setting. One of the members, a builder, spent his evenings carving an oak pulpit and communion table.

One bright sunshiny day, all was ready, and the new St. Aidan's was opened, and re-consecrated to the "service of God, and the community." The windows, one in the north over the pulpit, and the other in the south over the front door, have a

design of autumn leaves, flowers and birds in subdued colors, that glow and gleam in the filtered light. So exquisite is the workmanship that if you look closely, you will see a spider spinning his web.

The minister, whose quick thinking started the crusade for a more beautiful St. Aidan's, left a year ago for a larger church in a neighboring city, and another came to us. Again the beneficent spirit of St. Aidan's brooded over the little church under the hill, for our new man, in addition to his many gifts, is a gardener of ability and imagination, and quite early in his ministry he called out the troops to make the outside of St. Aidan's as beautiful as the inside.

He set the men digging and rolling and planting, and now St. Aidan's sits up proudly on a terraced lawn, and rejoices in hedges and rock plants, and borders of annuals; while behind the church in the grounds of the manse are fruit trees and a lily-pond, with ferns and gold fish. Two golden holly trees flank the new cement walk, and now the autumn flowers in blues, yellows and golden brown, hold back the gloom of the rainy season.

Naturally, we are all proud of our lovely little church, though proud is not exactly the right word. Our people come to church gladly, and they come long distances, many of them. Market gardeners, dairy farmers, chicken farmers, naturally work long hours, but they manage to go to church, and to accommodate the whole family and some of the neighbors, they drive their trucks. No one drives away with empty seats in his car, and a car is not considered full if the doors will close.

The neighbor, whom I called the 'Good Angel of Gordon Head,' and who knows everyone in the church, is the unofficial traffic manager. When the service is over, she will tell you whom you are to take home. She can flash one glance over the congregation and compute the motor needs as quickly as that. If the morning is rainy, some cars may have to make two trips, but no one minds that. We like to stay awhile and talk anyway.

St. Aidan's finances in a simple way. The Elders and the Board of Managers meet once a month, and everyone comes, for we have a good time. There are no threatening letters from banks or finance companies. The financial secretary's report is a model of simplicity. The envelopes and loose collections bring in enough to pay the minister and caretaker, and they are paid weekly. We may have six dollars on hand to start the new month, or we may have only three. One month we had ten dollars left over and we gave a bonus to the caretaker, for he had done extra work around the garden. That left us with five dollars, which was plenty. We are not hoarders.

We are very proud of our choir, but we are not narrow or mean, for when singing visitors come to our neighborhood, we invite them to sing for us. Our choir leader is a Yorkshire man, and he loves the swelling melodies of the old hymns, and leads us through 'Belmont' and 'St. Agnes,' 'Wiltshire' and 'Olivet.' We are glad to hear again, the rolling cadences of

> "There is a land of pure delight
> Where saints immortal reign."

sung to the old tune 'Lyngham,' which brings us back in memory to the joy of our first love.

Our Sunday School meets before the morning service, in the new part of the church, built at the time of the Window Upheaval, and called The Assembly Hall. It's a snug little place, with an open fireplace, which has a welcome feel, now that the colder weather is here. The superintendent is a young man (whom the children call by his first name) who has the gift of talking seriously to children, and yet gripping their attention.

I often look at this room full of children, well-brushed and comfortably dressed, and think with admiration of the tired women who get up early on Sunday morning to get their families into this state of soap-and-water righteousness. There is one family which lives two miles or more from the church, whose members come in at intervals. The mother evidently releases each child as soon as he is ready (she probably tried the plan of putting the clean ones on chairs to wait, but found it did not work.) So they arrive one-at-a-time, shiny-faced, punctuating the opening exercises. In bee-time a percentage bear evidences of stings, but, nothing daunted, they arrive!

I met the mother at our annual picnic, and was surprised to see how young and light hearted she is. She won all the women's races. I asked her how it happened that she was such a good runner. Had she chased jack-rabbits in her childhood? She said she had always been a good runner, and added, "You have to be, with eight children to chase after!"

The attendance of babies at our Sunday-school has been large this year. Little girls who have young sisters or brothers, bring them to Sunday-school, and those who have none, canvass their neighbors for the privilege of bringing a visiting

baby. Little girls carry in babies almost as big as themselves, staggering under their weight.

Babies with birthdays are especially popular, for then there is a ceremony, in which the baby is taken to the Superintendent's desk, where he holds out a red and gold elephant with a slit in its back, into which the baby drops one penny for each year, and "Happy Birthday" is sung by the school. Last Sunday a small five-year-old blonde in a pale pink velvet dress dropped in with great dignity, ten pennies instead of five; for, at the last minute she demanded the entire collection of her sponsors, under threat of not performing at all if she could not put in every copper in sight!

The people of St. Aidan's have not lived lives of ease. Some are out of work. Many have lost their securities. Death and sorrowing have come to them as it comes to all. The Memorial Tablet in the church bears names of sons, fathers, and husbands. You see lamed men and shattered men in the congregations. But you hear no word of complaint. We have no soured old people, or cynical young people.

They have something in this little church which causes them to walk in the light. If there are shadows, they fall behind them, not in front. The people have that priceless thing, which Lloyd Douglas, in his "White Banners" calls personal peace. In the old Methodist Church we used to call it an "experience of grace."

When one of the women of the congregation died this summer, after a long and terrible illness, her husband, whose love and devotion had never wavered during these long years,

was in his place at the door the next Sunday; haggard and greatly shaken, but he told us, with a radiant face, that she was sustained to the last. Angels had ministered to her, and God in His mercy had dulled her pain, so she could speak words of comfort to him before she fell asleep. She had fought a good fight, he said, she had kept the faith!

"Have they any plan for bringing in the new social order?" a friend of mine asked me, when I was telling her of our pleasant associations in the little church, with these delightful people.

I could not say they had. Not a really definite, black and white plan, but they had a pattern—I know they have a pattern, for their own lives, which they try to follow. A pattern is a more individual and intimate thing than a plan, anyway; a warmer, closer experience; and, so far as I can judge, their pattern is the one left to us long ago by a man called Micah, and later confirmed, and demonstrated by One who gave His life for it.

"He hath showed thee, Oh Man, what is good, and what doth now the Lord require of thee? but to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God."

[End of *Leaves from Lantern Lane* by Nellie L. McClung]