

Under the name of Aunt Nellie

Mrs Jones wrote these articles for
the Country Gentleman and at
the suggestion of the Editor put
these articles into book form and
dedicated book to her husband
Dr Howard M. Jones.

52. Country
Gentlewoman
Articles.

Smoky Hill Farm
Auburndale, Wisconsin

From Mrs Nellie Kedzie Jones
Auburndale Wisconsin.

In arranging the manuscript I kept the
illustrations used by "The Country Gentleman"
though some of them are not very
desirable I think. I believe we could
have such of the cuts as we wished
to use - if we asked the Curtis people
for them. They gave me to understand
that the cuts were at my disposal
when they suggested that a book be made
of the articles.

26270

Howard Murray Jones

TO MY HUSBAND
HOWARD MURRAY JONES
WHOSE COUNSEL AND
CO-OPERATION HAVE
MADE THESE LETTERS
POSSIBLE

26270

THE NEW HOME ON THE OLD FARM

BY

NELLIE KEDZIE JONES

Preface

Making "The new home on the old farm" gives the gist of these letters. Because I have lived much both in the city and on the farm, I am ~~marked~~ ^{asked} to advise my niece, Janet, a city girl of twenty-six, a college graduate and a teacher. She and Ben, also city-bred, and an office man of twenty-seven, have just been married. They are settling on a farm, which Ben's eccentric, and somewhat miserly old great uncle, Eben, left to his namesake. Janet cannot remember her mother, so she has looked all these years to her "Aunt Nellie" for counsel and comfort. Where Ben's farm is, my curious reader, I will not tell you very definitely. It is ⁱⁿ that interesting Northern section of the middle West where the Corn Belt is cooling off into the Dairy and Potato belt. Ben and Janet live reasonably near to a great city, but whether, it is Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, or Minneapolis I shall leave you to determine after you have read these miscellaneous and very personal letters.

The only reason for letting these letters see the light, is that Janet has a typical problem; namely, making a huge old farm house of two generations ago, into a modern farm home, both comfortable and convenient for the woman who must do her own work, under present country conditions. Thousands of inexperienced young wives are struggling none too successfully, with that very same problem. If, therefore, in these letters, you, my inquiring reader, find but one good practical suggestion and go to work on it, your time and mine will not have been wasted on them. Are you one of the multitude about to join the "Back to the land" crusade? Look before you leap!

With the hope of helping some one, even a little,

STARTING THE NEW HOME

In Which I Tell My Niece How to Arrange Her Farm Kitchen

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DEAR JANET: Yes, I will help you plan to the best of my ability for the new home in the old farmhouse. At the wedding there was such a crowd and such a rush that we could scarcely get a word together, but your eager request, "Oh, Aunt Nellie, do please be thinking hard and planning for my new home," went right to my heart. I have been thinking hard and planning. But I see that I cannot get half I want to write into this letter nor the next, so brace yourself for several letters coming as fast as I can get to them.

Before launching out on planning a farm home, I must tell you, dear, how lovely you looked that night, and how beautifully your wedding was planned. The girl who could plan that wedding can plan a farm home, enlightened by experience and hard study. I want to congratulate Ben, too, on the fact that his queer old bachelor great-uncle left that farm to him instead of to certain other grand-nephews and nephews-in-law, who made it too apparent that they were in a receptive mood, to state it mildly. I have known that Great-uncle Eben ever since I was a little girl. His farm was once a fine one; but he would never sell it or live on it, or even lease it for more than a couple of years at a time, and so a string of short-time tenants has been skinning it for the last fifty years. Ben has a great chance to show what scientific farming will do.

That big barnlike house was substantially built of the best materials, but if old Uncle Eben had had a wife it would never have been planned that way. If he had consented to lease it for a term of years to some good farmer, the wife would not have let it remain so bare and bald all these years. As it is, Janet, you will have as great an opportunity with the house as Ben has with the farm. Indoors and out, you and Ben will make a great team, I know.

Stretching the Dollar

Plan to spend a thousand years there. Start right from the very beginning. Avoid makeshifts. Plan your work so carefully and do it so thoroughly that you won't have to do it over again next year. Your problem is to do a great deal with a very little money. Let me remark, you are in nowise peculiar in this. An army of young lovers—and older ones too—face the same problem. But I know you are brave enough for self-denials or you would not have made Ben cut short the wedding trip to attend the farmers' course at the agricultural college. The most hopeful thing for you two about this venture into the new field of farming is that Ben knows he does not know it all, but he does know the men who know most, and Ben has always had an insatiable appetite for information. I am sure he will make good on the farm; however prepare yourselves for a good, long, hard, uphill climb, with success at the top.

I want to repeat that, a good long hard climb, for I have seen so many city people go to the country only to fail. But you will not fail. You have gone over this whole matter carefully. Both of you after long deliberation have made the same decision. Ben owns the farm, loves outdoor life, is not too old to learn a new business, and most weighty of all, does not stand well, confinement in a city office, so in your case I really think you have made a wise decision. This is not a "Back to the land", castle in Spain, mirage but a reasoned judgement of two thoughtful people. Success will come on the farm as it comes in town only to those who are willing to pay the price, in toil and self denial. However, do not toil too incessantly, nor practise too rigid a self denial; for if you ever have any fun it must be as you go along. I believe in a heaven on the installment plan.

Start with the kitchen. For the next twenty years more of your waking hours will be spent in it than out of it. Therefore, take a pencil and paper and diagram your kitchen more carefully than you ever worked out a figure in geometry. Your success as a homemaker turns on solving the problem of carrying on the household operations with the fewest steps and the least expenditure of strength. Here knowledge is power. Do you know, for instance, how far it is from the cookstove to the dining table; how far from the cookstove to the sink; how far from the cookstove to the kitchen cabinet? How few steps will get your

dishes from the cupboard to the dining table; how many steps is it from the dining table to the sink; when washed, how many more steps will get them back again to the cupboard, completing the round trip that must be made three times a day for three hundred and sixty-five days a year on the farm? This means mathematics. You will have to do some fine figuring. What is the focus of kitchen work anyway? Is it the cookstove? The work table? The kitchen cabinet? Or is it the woman herself, continually studying to make her radii as short as possible, from a center not yet located? How far is it from the working center of your kitchen—wherever that may be—to the cellar or to the storeroom, whither you must journey every time you want to get supplies? Remember you will have to take some millions of steps in the next twenty years of your housekeeping. Be as miserly of your steps as old Uncle Eben was of his pennies.

You will have to break up a lot of old habits, and compel yourself to do the awkward new way that is awkward only till repetition makes the correct thing automatic. I know "efficiency" is a word to conjure with just now, and is being rolled so glibly on every tongue that one recoils from using it, but it is the thing you must seek as the "pearl of great price" in your homemaking. The modern factory is now on right lines, with its crude material entering, say, on the top story, and descending, process by process, till the finished product leaves on the ground level. Now it is as true in a kitchen as in Euclid, that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line; but what zigzags food must make in most homes from cellar to dining table!

Your kitchen, in the first place, is altogether too big. It is a real journey from one end of it to the other. You will recall that, on our trip to Niagara Falls, I took you into the kitchen of the dining car and pointed out how the chef stood in the middle of it and could reach so many things without moving? As a little girl I was often in your long-distance kitchen. For years I have itched to cut it up. It is typical of the way our fathers and grandfathers built kitchens, when the husband and the carpenter did all the planning for the woman who was to do her life-work there.

Cut up that kitchen of skating-rink dimensions into at least three rooms—a modern kitchen, a laundry and a storeroom. Nail strips securely to ceiling and floor, and to them nail your wall-board partitions. This cheap wall-board construction does away with the delay and the expense of studding, lath and the muss of plastering, and is satisfactory in every way. It is coming into very common use in doing over old houses.

One-half of the old kitchen will make the new kitchen. Take about two-thirds of the other half for the laundry and the remaining third for the storeroom. A storeroom on the kitchen level saves many journeys to the cellar and cuts out much lugging up and down, which has been the death warrant for generations of farm women.

The laundry is really the men's washroom. Ben and the hired men will need a place to wash in, and keep their coats, hats, rubbers, and in bad weather their top-boots. From

there they will at once pass through the kitchen to the dining room and so keep out of your way.

Monday you will use it to do the family washing in, keeping the steam and odors out of the place where food must be prepared. The labor of hauling the laundry tools into the kitchen and then out again will be avoided.

Save for a Screened-In Porch

Put the kitchen on the lightest side of the house, where you will build your screened-in porch as a kitchen annex as soon as Ben can afford it. When you get your porch, plan to do much of your work there in the open air. Even in our severe Northern climate you will be surprised to see how many days, or parts of days, at least, you can do some of your work there, during spring, summer and fall. This work in the fresh air means health and happiness for you. Put the porch near the top of the list of things indispensable.

Many screened-in porches are a joke, because of cheap wire and flimsy frames. Have good substantial construction and get a carpenter to put it up, so that it will not leak flies at every joint. While on the subject of screens I want to advise you to have a whole window-sized screen for every window, then either window sash can be raised or lowered. I should also have a screen door between the laundry and the kitchen.

One window will give light enough for the storeroom, so save the rear corner for the laundry, thus securing light from two sides and having a chance for an outside door at the rear. This laundry-washroom I have found to be one of the most convenient and necessary things in a farm home, yet it is not common. When a farmer's wife is rushing to take up a meal and get it onto the table on time, to have hired men crowd into the kitchen to wash up is an abominable nuisance, especially when hats, coats and boots have been in the stable or other unappetizing places. Through an outside door have the men enter the washroom, where clean, warm coats are waiting for them.

Place the kitchen stove near the laundry door so it will be possible for the men to get their hot water for washing without coming into the kitchen. The confusion and congestion in many country kitchens, just at meal time, in cold weather is heartbreaking. This laundry-washroom cracks that tough nut.

Your kitchen floor, to begin at the bottom, is impossible. It was made of soft wood years ago, and is badly worn. Cover it with building felt for warmth and lay a maple floor right on top of it.

Floor the whole thing before partitions for washroom and storeroom are nailed up. A coat of raw linseed oil brushed into it hot—do not boil the oil—will save you a world of work when it comes to scrubbing. While the oil is still warm wipe off the excess, and you will never have

a gummy floor. You will not have to do this more than two or three times a year. This kind of a floor does away with the old fashioned scrubbing and is very easily mopped. Use a self wringing mop and luke warm water. Dirt does not stick to a well oiled hard floor. In the long run this will look better and be cheaper for a country kitchen. It will not show wear in spots like linoleum.

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I am glad you have no pantry. Deep pantries with their dark corners belong to the past. Use your partition walls for built-in cupboards, broad and shallow, so that everything may be easily reached and cleaned. In front of the shelves have sliding doors. Doors that swing out into the way, with corners to bump your head on, are common but exasperating nevertheless. Have your cupboards built from the floor clear to the ceiling, otherwise the top of the cupboard will catch dust, and will be in danger of becoming a harbor of refuge for rubbish. In a moister climate the doors would not be needed at all but in ours, Summer and Fall we must guard against the dust. Plenty of shallow shelving protected from dust is a blessing.

Running around two sides of your kitchen have a strong work shelf, built somewhat like a counter in a store, but tight to the wall. Under it will be more cupboards for things too heavy to lift up onto the higher shelves. This will make good storage for bulky things. Doors are not necessary for this but if you have that space enclosed have as little wall and as much door space as possible

for you want to get at everything easily. your work shelf or counter does away with the large work table that is so heavy to move around and consumes so much space. Of course you will need a small table, which you can shift easily out onto the porch or next to the stove or wherever you happen to need it. The remaining wall is the place to put that indispensable kitchen cabinet,

Ben's mother gave you as a wedding gift. That is another dream come true. In mine I have assembled the materials and the utensils I use in the preparation of food. How many steps it saves. I do not now see how I lived the earlier years of my housekeeping, without a kitchen cabinet.

I see that my first letter is already too long, although I have been talking only on fixtures. In my next I shall take the matter of furnishings, meanwhile do not do any buying till I write again, for I have decided opinions on what not to buy. I have observed that most beginners in home making, buy a lot of things they do not need and need a lot of things they do not buy.

Yours Affectionate
Aunt Nellie

THE KITCHEN FURNITURE

Which Includes the Big Pieces and Also the Little Things That Simplify

DEAR JANET: Really I feel flattered that you and Ben received my letter so enthusiastically. Your very trustfulness warns me to be all the more careful in what I suggest. I shall suggest nothing, ~~however~~ which I have not tried or seen tested by other homemakers. The old warning, make haste slowly, is especially wise for young homemakers. Like a wary teamster who always keeps his eye on the road, be watchful, and do not get in where you will be swamped. I asked you not to do your buying till we could discuss it together.

We agree perfectly on the matter of the kitchen range. The best is none too good. You had better economize anywhere else than on that. Good cookery is impossible on a poor stove. Get a large six-hole range for the farm kitchen. Select one with a fire box wide and deep, so that you can put in quite big wood. It holds the fire so much more steadily than a small box which has to be fed continually on fine split wood. Ben will want to do as little splitting as possible. I often find live coals in my range when I get up in the morning. I can put in a chunk of wood, bank it and hold the fire for hours.

You will burn wood for years to come, as Uncle Eben was never willing to sell wood from the place. That timber he saved will stand you in good stead. Be sure to have a damper put in the stovepipe—it is a wonderful fuel saver. A full fire box dampered down, burning slowly, gives the evenest heat at least cost and least work.

I prefer a range on legs to one on a solid base, for it heats the kitchen floor better and I do not bump my toes against the base. Be sure to get a range with a large reservoir. In cold weather, with chicken mashes to make, calf feed to prepare, and dairy utensils to wash and scald, you can't have too much hot water. Get a range as plain as possible. Much nickeling, curlicues, scrolls and gingerbread work generally are a pest to keep clean and are often, from an artistic standpoint, atrocities. A plain surface is easier to black and to clean.

Warming ovens come on all the good ranges and are indispensable. The door of the baking oven should have glass, and of course a thermometer. Without it your baking is guesswork. "Good luck" or "bad luck" with your bread, your cake or pies is the sheerest superstition. Right conditions always bring right results. Do not guess—know how hot your oven is!

A pressure system of waterworks you cannot put in now. But the sink with the gravity waste pipe you must have, also one in the men's washroom—that is, the laundry.

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Of course you will have drain boards on both ends of your sinks. The placing of the sink at exactly the right height is a matter of vital importance. Do not let the sink be fastened till you discover just what that right height is. For a woman of your height, experience has fixed on thirty inches, as the proper figure. For a shorter woman, of course, it must be lower, and for a taller one higher. Even the tables that have been worked out as standard for women of various heights need personal test—

ing, for two women of the same height have different length arms. Experiment for yourself till you get the "Just right". Barbers and dentists have chairs that shift up or down easily to get the comfortable place for work, why should not women care as much for their ^{own} comfort?

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Do not have the sinks enclosed underneath. Keep that space always open for you want access to the gooseneck below the sink if at any time there should be a stoppage. But the space just above the sink can well be utilized. Have a hard wood strip placed there well filled with hooks to hold all the tools one would naturally use when working at a sink. Such an arrangement saves many steps. The farm woman has none to waste.

The water front for your range with the connection pipes and the metal tank do not cost very much and can be bought and put in now, and later will be used as a part of the permanent waterworks system that ought to be installed in every farm home.

A Tank for the Water

The same tank will do for both kitchen and laundry. The bottom of it must be high enough above the sink for the tank to empty itself by gravity. That will necessitate laying it down horizontally, so that the men can pour the water into it. Have it fitted with a funnel for this purpose, and later when you have pressure it can be set up vertically in a corner, out of the way. When Ben and the hired men are round see that they fill up the tank. "Watchful waiting" must be your policy—never lug any water yourself, but wait till you can catch Ben or one of the men. See that the last thing at night someone fills it for the morning.

I know you will smile at the next suggestion, dear Janet, but it is a good one. Provide two wooden stools, a high one and a low one, and a low, light rocking-chair. You see, I want you to take it easy while you work. This advice, the best I shall ever give you, my dear niece, "Take it easy while you

work" is a slogan that ought to be hung in the kitchen of every farm woman. Experiment till the higher stool is just the right

height for you to sit on at your worktable. ~~You are short.~~ Women are shorter as a class than men, so it usually happens that men who make the tables, sinks, chairs and work shelves get them too high.

Never stand at your work when you can just as well sit down. When you are not using your high stool a shove of the foot will put it under the table out of the way. Your low stool is for lap work. When you sit down with a pan of apples or potatoes to pare, or a dish of raisins to snip, you do not want the pan or dish slipping off your lap. My low stool is thirteen inches from the floor. Try various heights; a low box with a cushion on, and then off, will soon find your fit to a T.

The little rocking-chair back in the corner, out of the way most of the time, is a wonderful comfort as you do a little mending or are waiting for your baking to finish.

through
faucets
into ei-
ther
sink.

These little snatches of rest, when you get your weight off your feet, are life-savers, and should be sown in during the day's work, always long on a farm, like commas sprinkled over the printed page. Many farm women become inefficient because the rest intervals are too far apart. A jaded worker is always an inferior worker. To stop hustling, to sit down quietly and do a little more planning, gets more work "turned off" than does incessant toil. When I began to study elimination I was shocked to discover the needless exertion the average housekeeper puts forth every day.

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Why stand when you might just as well sit down. You weigh one hundred and forty pounds. It wears you to carry that weight when you are working. It does not weary your chair or stool to support it. Work your chair whenever you can. On the same principle, never sit when you can just as well lie down. When you do lie down relax every nerve and muscle and let ^{be} there/not the lifting of an ounce in your limp body, voluntarily or involuntarily. Many people do not know how to rest even when they have the chance. Never hold your self bolt upright when the back of the chair is right there in waiting to bear the load. The high backed rocking chair that will support the head as you let go and lean back is almost as good as a couch for a weary woman, who can catch a moment's relaxation between tasks. Your stools, Janet, high and low, your little rocker, and your couch will be the best "Conservationists" I know. Work them for all they are worth.

I would get a three-compartment fireless cooker. It can be kept under your work-shelf out of the way. A bread mixer is a necessity. Make a list of the things you used—actually used—at home in your practice work, while you were taking your course in cooking. Do not confuse this with what you saw or used only a little in the kitchen laboratory. You will be surprised how short the list is of utensils used in actual practice. Your purse as well as your success is searching for the few right things.

The things you use most put in the handiest place, and the tools used infrequently farther off. You should have your most convenient shelf made narrower than the shelf above or below it, and along its edge put in a row of good hooks. On these hooks will be hung the egg beater, stirring spoons, can opener, shears, strainer, and so on. Put your scales on that shelf. This puts the commonest tools in plain sight and avoids searching in a drawer where one thing covers another. When work is done, your door hides them all at once, with but one motion. Your sharp knives, plenty of them, ought to be kept in the upper drawer of the kitchen cabinet.

In a box on an upper shelf keep a good nail hammer with claws, a few nails of different sizes, tack hammer, pinchers, screw driver, box of tacks, ball of fine twine, ball of coarse twine, and a spool of fine wire. As you begin to get accustomed to the use of tools and feel the joy of being independent of men's help I know you will add other light tools. Have a carborundum or emery wheel for fast sharpening and a fine gritted whetstone to finish the edge. It is real fun to work with razorlike knives.

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I have seen women haggle off a piece ^{of tough meat} with a dull knife wasting more patience and strength twice over than would be required to make ^{the knife} ~~it~~ keen. Go into a market and watch a good meat cutter at work. His steel hangs at his belt, he always is giving his blade a few strokes on the steel before he begins to cut your order, though his knife never gets as dull as the sharpest knife most housewives ever had in their hands. He can work much with his knife, because he works much on his knife.

Over your worktable keep a tablet with a pencil tied to it. Beside your scales keep your four measuring cups—two of glass and two of tin or aluminum. Get the weighing habit. You have learned to measure, but often it takes less time to weigh. Like an engineer, always have one eye on the clock, and I will guarantee that you will be punctual with your meals. *Kitchen*

A thermometer you will have on your oven door. Do not buy any others, for I will send you two and Ben one. The short glass one is for cream, the long one for cooking. Have Ben hang his outdoors, but on the casing where you can see it through the window. In addition to your dish pans buy a good, large dish drainer. Instead of wiping plates, cups and saucers and large vegetable dishes, scald them well, put them in the drainer and set in the edge of the oven to dry. This is a real time saver.

Kerosene lamps you will have to use for some time, but you can get very good results with the right lamp put in the right place. A glass lamp with a broad flat wick, while not the greatest light yielder, is handy. Several in holders attached to the wall, with reflectors, in places where they are most needed will serve you well. Lamps against the wall are out of the way and less likely to be hit. Be careful not to place them so high that they will smoke the ceiling.

Put your refrigerator in the laundry. The cream separator will stand there also till the day comes when you have a dairy. The laundry utensils will stay there all the time—also the stepladder, ice-cream freezer, garbage pails, milk pails, and the like. Never doubt that the laundry will be utilized; in fact, you will be continually compelled to make the men clear their things out of there

save a few essentials. A good, ~~two~~
~~board~~ shelf round three sides of
it high enough up to be out of
the way, will furnish lots of
storage. In the laundry Ben
will cut up meat, make sausage,
churn and do a lot of things
which would hinder in the kitchen.
en.

Have plenty of strong hooks
here for your clothes lines in
wet weather. My choice of a
washing machine would be one on
the pneumatic principle. Get the
hotel size. The cost is but little
more and with a man to run
it you can double the output in
the same time. You must have two
wringers, ball bearing.

The telephone is a most essential
part of the kitchen equipment,
but on a farm I have found ^{it} ~~best~~ ^{to} have it near the
kitchen - not in it, for the hired
~~and~~ men, the neighbors, cattle buyers,
peddlers, in fact all sorts and
conditions - will be crowding
into your kitchen to phone. Uncle
Eben put the phone in the worst

place I ever saw - just inside of the front door, in the front hall, where a woman if she could hear it at all, would have to journey clear across the house to answer it. Why is it that just as something is boiling over on the kitchen stove the phone rings? I would put the phone just inside the laundry door; that is the nearest place to the kitchen where Ben and the men can most conveniently accommodate themselves. This is bad for your city visitors, but for the greatest good to the greatest number, I believe it is the best place.

We must not end the discussion of the kitchen, without a few words on the store room, like the laundry, an essential part of your kitchen. Unlike the city woman, the farm woman cannot phone for any thing any time she wants it from the grocery, bakery, or delicatessen and have the delivery boy come with it on the run, nor can she in a pinch send the family

for their meals to the restaurant just around the corner, so she must keep plenty of provisions on hand all the time. A store room of considerable capacity, and right at hand is indispensable. There must be no cupboards, closets, bins or cubby holes in the store room. What shelves there are must not come down very near to the floor, for the function of the store room is to hold the big, bulky, or heavy things, you do not want to lift up onto shelves, or hooks. Here you will set in on the floor hundred pound sacks of sugar, purchased at the time of year when sugar is cheapest. Here you will put sacks of flour on the floor, your ninety pound bag of oatmeal, a sack of calf meal perhaps, "baby chick" food, your vinegar jug, and on the shelves some canned fruit and vegetables. There is a rather wavy and indefinite line between what

belongs logically in the cellar and what belongs in the store room, but give the store room the benefit of the doubt, and whatever will neither spoil there, nor spoil anything else, put there; for you want to make the fewest trips possible to the cellar and back, especially when lugging a load. It is heart breaking to see the way some farm women who have neither ~~ther~~, store room nor ice box, must climb up and down cellar stairs, with one or both hands loaded. It is

cruelly unnecessary. I am glad you won't have to do that,
your affectionate
Aunt Nellie

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THE WAY TO A GOOD CELLAR



Let In the Light and Air and Clean Up All the Dark Corners

DEAR JANET: Your letter about the cellar made me laugh; Ben's made me laugh still more. "Uncle Eben's dungeon," Ben's pat phrase, fits the cellar exactly.

It was scandalous that the retiring tenant left his decaying vegetables and rubbish for you to carry out. That you had to carry them out through the house was a shame, too; but that is always the case when there is no outside hatchway. Tens of thousands of cellars have been built just that way.

To answer your two letters in two sentences, I would say: "Get the rats and mice out of your cellar. Let the light and air into your cellar." First give my thanks to Ben for his measurements and his excellent diagram. Why is it that the cellar, the first thing to be made when we begin to build a home, is the last thing to be planned, if it is planned at all? Too often it is nothing but a hole in the ground.

In reality the farm cellar often is green grocery, dairy, meat market, fruit stand, laundry, warehouse and cold-storage plant for family and farm, and if it be unsanitary the results are apt to be deadly. It is quite evident, Janet, from your rather frenzied letter, that you do not now begin to appreciate what your cellar is going to be worth to you. So cheer up and quit having "the shivers" every time, candle in hand, you go into "its gloomy and cavernous depths." Even now begin to dream of the paragon it will prove to be when you and Ben have done your best with it.

To begin with, it is big; that is a real asset, for storage is always at a premium on a farm that is producing. Second, it is deep, and that is a blessing, for some day you can put in a furnace and have plenty of pitch for the hot-air pipes; and last, it is well drained, which is a godsend, for a damp cellar is an abomination. Actually, Janet, I have seen homes on flat ground where in a rainy time the cellar would be half full of water. I have seen walls so clammy from a wet cellar that the paper would peel off. Your home on that beautiful knoll, in a soil naturally well drained, gives you the chance for a strictly first-class cellar.

But you will have to do a lot of wise planning, plenty of hard work, and spend some money—not, I am glad to say, as much as you had feared; for a dollar spent on the cellar will bring better results than on any other part of the house. Unskilled labor, wisely directed, will do the work. In fact, Ben and the hired man can do most of it at slack times. The hauling of sand and gravel, lime and cement, can be done in the winter when the team has little to do.

Knock Out Windows on the Sides

The first rainy day the men can go into the cellar with crowbar, sledge hammer and cold chisel, and knock out

spaces for a row of windows on the North and South sides, there should be three on a side anyway, and better four, with a couple in the front end, and the rear wall reserved for a hatchway:

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a cellar window is but half a window, for it is but one sash high. In one day you will have the light and air problem solved.

Had I been rash enough to give such advice in a farmers' institute, old farmers would rise indignantly all over the hall to protest: "So many useless windows will make your cellar freeze, sure as shooting." Never fear, but tell Ben to knock out that stone and mortar and let in the light and air; they cost nothing and are invaluable.

Uncle Eben had just two little stingy windows, with three ten by twelve lights, in that great cellar, and five months in the year they were banked with straw or cornstalks. A "dungeon" it was, indeed! It did not freeze, but fruit and vegetables decayed in it because it was so close and steamy, and germs of all sorts fattened there in the absence of sunlight, that death-dealer to most germs.

A cellar window should have an inner and an outer sash, with a dead-air space between as thick as the stone wall. Less cold will penetrate such a dead-air space than will go through the stone wall itself. Do not be afraid of a cold cellar—that is just what you want; cold, pure air will

make fruit and vegetables keep in a wonderful way. But that farmer bobs up with "Yes, but what about freezing?"

Uncle Eben built his chimney from the cellar up, for which you should give thanks, and when Ben with cold chisel cuts a stovepipe hole in it and you put a small stove in the cellar and put a thermometer in the coldest corner on the floor—on the floor, remember; do not suspend it from the ceiling, for cold air settles—you can with very little trouble hold the temperature just above the freezing point during the bitterest cold snap.

I keep my cellar much of the time at thirty-six degrees. In fact, my cellar is a kind of cold-storage plant. Last Thanksgiving I cooked potatoes that had been put in sixty weeks before. Shriveled? Yes, they were as wrinkled as the Witch of Endor, but they had not decayed and had been sprouted but once, and when cooked up made very fair eating.

I do dislike to hear a farmer's wife say: "We had no luck with our potatoes and apples last winter, they rotted so in the cellar." Cold, pure air would have kept them, and with a stove and thermometer and a little watchfulness there would be no loss from freezing. A chunk of wood put in the cellar stove, with draft and damper closed tightly, will shed a little heat for hours, and that is all that is wanted.

So tell Ben not to be afraid of plenty of windows in the cellar, for there is where they are most needed. Great care, though, must be taken to have a tight joint between the masonry and the window casing. A little cement or mortar will close the cracks tightly.

The cellar sash and the casings must make good tight joints; also, Hang the sashes with hinges at the top, so that they will swing in and upward. The inner sash will hook up to the joists of the floor above, and so be secure and out of danger's way. The inner sash does not go into the casing, to swell with the moisture and become immovable; it simply butts snugly against the casing. A button at the bottom will hold it firmly in place. This construction will give you a cellar window that will open and shut easily.

The outer sash must swing within the casing and so must be made to fit very loosely, for cellar sashes are bound to shrink and swell from time to time. The casing does also. However, just within the outer end of the casing nail four cleats or stops for the outer sash to butt against, and you will get a good tight joint for both inner and outer sash and so a real dead-air space. Good pine sash painted or, better, sash of cypress will stand the dampness for years without decaying. Sometimes the outer sash is merely screwed to the casing and then removed and stored when cold weather is over, but I like better the permanent swinging sash always in place.

Now, Janet, with light and air you will have the heart to give that old cellar such a cleaning as it never had before. Use the Government recipe for making whitewash, and turn Ben loose some rainy day. Make him work as hard as Tom Sawyer did the boys who helped whitewash his fence. Whitewash is cheap and a glorious sweetener and cleanser. It is a death-wash for all sorts of vermin. Coat the ceiling and walls with prodigal hand, and if a lot lands on the earth floor so much the better, for "Uncle Eben's dungeon" can never be too white.

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When the first coat is thoroughly dry and hard give it another. By this time your "nightmare of that horrid cellar" will have changed into such a delight that you will be showing it proudly to all the neighbors. Half a dozen traps, well baited, will be a good investment. Shut the kitty in there for a few nights and her crying will make a stampe.

All this, you notice, calls for a very small outlay of money. The labor bill is the big item, and Ben and his man must take care of that. Have them sprinkle sparsely on the floor a little air-slaked lime. It will make even

the earth floor smell sweet, but boards must be laid down where you want to walk, for it is bad stuff to track upstairs into the house. In a few days I would sweep it all up and carry it out—that is, the excess not taken up by the earth. A couple of buckets of this will be enough. Now your cellar will be light, airy, sweet-smelling, sanitary.

The next great improvement that costs practically nothing is an entrance from the outside. A good covered hatchway with solid masonry costs but the hole through the wall, and that will cost you nothing but some labor. Ben and the hired man have by this time become handy with the crowbar, the sledge hammer and the cold chisel. Locate the hatchway where you can back up a wagon to it conveniently for loading and unloading heavy stuff that has to be stored in the cellar. Spade out an incline wide enough and deep enough to reach the level of the cellar floor just outside the wall; then knock out the wall.

This need not be done till fall, but ought to be done in time for storing the potatoes, apples, rutabagas, cabbage, and other bulky stuff you do not want lugged in through the house. When the cellar is filled, and just before bitter weather sets in, Ben should set up some two-by-fours, board them up roughly and fill in the hole with straw or cornstalks. It will prove a wonderful convenience and costs no money. You may not get round, with all the expenses you have in getting started, to concrete the cellar bottom for some time, but make the hole for the hatchway by this fall at the latest.

A Dark Cupboard for Canned Fruit.

One thing you must have right away, and that is the dark cupboard for your canned fruit. All through the summer you will be doing some canning, beginning with rhubarb. This cupboard can be homemade, of rough boards, but must be plumb and strong, for canned fruit is heavy.

The shelving should be of not less than inch stuff, and a foot deep, allowing for three quart cans deep, or two two-quart cans deep. Do not make the shelves deeper, for it is a nuisance to be shifting so many cans to read the labels of those behind. A shelf a foot deep will take in a three-gallon stone jar, and that is as heavy as should be put upon a shelf anyway.

Ben should discard those old, deep bins, which were made solid, thus shutting out the air and making things decay. Slatted bins that permit a circulation of air are what he wants. Make the slats not over five or six inches wide and the cracks between wide enough to stick his thumb in easily. The bins may be made very deep if he likes, and I would advise it. Then by shoving boards through the cracks he can make the bins of two or three stories and still get air through the whole mass.

Set a row of bins under each row of windows. By sticking a chute through the cellar window the potatoes may be rolled right from the wagon to the bins with the least possible labor. A slant-bottomed bin with a door on the side permits the vegetables to roll out into the basket and saves a lot of handling. Plenty of twenty-penny nails driven into the joists are handy to hang stuff on; and you will want shelving.

After these elemental and inexpensive things are done you must pull for a concrete cellar bottom as soon as Ben can make it, for rats will always be burrowing through, and an earth floor is not sanitary without a good deal of attention, nor can stuff be heaped on it as on the clean cement floor.

Be in no hurry about the furnace; many a woman has found her troubles just beginning when she got a furnace. With Ben out of the house so much of the time you will take care of a stove upstairs with less bother.

I want to make some suggestions for your dining room in my next letter.

Your affectionate

Aunt Nellie

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avoid that.

THE DINING ROOM

Of All Rooms This Must be Light and Cheery

DEAR JANET:— Please say to Ben that his last letter delighted me more than I can tell. It is not

By Nellie Kedzie Jones

Drawings by H. I. Drucklieb

often that a man, even a young one, will so fully and freely discuss his money affairs with another. He is convinced that you are straining every nerve to start as cheaply as possible, and yet lay real foundations for the home. A shoddy beginning, that means early renewals, is no economy. The things you are now getting will last, and the alterations in the house are fitting into a plan that may not be worked out completely for some years, but every bit of work done now is to be permanent. The fact that Ben sees ten places on the farm for every dollar he can get his hands on makes him loud in your praise, that you are still keeping within the amount you two had apportioned for the house and its furnishing.

A little kitchen is the right thing on a farm, but you must have a large dining room, for often you will have to feed a crew of men. After consulting the carpenter, Ben is surprised to learn how little it is going to cost to pull out the partition and throw that little south bedroom into the dining room. It was too small for a bedroom anyway, and tucked in so close to kitchen and dining room it was always out of place.



Get a Good Center Lamp for Your Table

Really what you are after is a south exposure for the old dining room. Of all rooms in the house, especially with our long and often gloomy winters, the dining room must be light and cheery. With only its north exposure your dining room would always remain gloomy. That south bedroom window is too small and must come out, to be replaced by two windows in one large casing. They will flood your dining room with light. Throwing that little bedroom and the dining room together by removing the partition gives you fewer rooms, but not less room. It gives you a cozy corner in the south end where you may have a lounge on one side and Ben his desk on the other. The wide, long window sill would be fine for plants. A low bookcase under the window takes practically no space and is very convenient. This will probably be your living room in the winter. This arrangement, while not ideal, is the best for you, as it saves you much labor and saves fuel. There will be room also in that end for a small rug and a couple of rocking chairs.

Yellow Lapender Sunbottle

As the floor is much less worn than that old one was in the kitchen, and is much less used anyway, a good filler for the cracks and three good coats of paint will fix you up finely. Take plenty of time between coats to let the paint get hard and thoroughly dry. The whitewashed ceiling must be cleaned, sized and papered. Remember that paper will not stick to whitewash. Of course that horrid paper on the walls with the great bouquets must come off. I think it quite the worst I ever saw.

the walls

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(I don't like the pipe in the man's mouth, N.K.J.)

I would suggest a pattern in two tones of yellow. Get a good paper, but of last year's pattern. It will be so much cheaper, and no one but a dealer in wall paper, for that matter, knows one year's pattern from another. Get what you personally like, for you are the one who sees it oftenest. I suggest yellow, for the room is long and relatively narrow, so that the yellow will make it seem larger, and you know the north end is gloomy. Nothing is more cheery than yellow, for it is the color of sunshine. I have a dear friend who had her guest room in yellow and called it "the sunshine room."

Get a heating stove with a large door that will take in a big chunk, and you will have no trouble in holding fire all night. In the morning just throw in a little fine stuff and you will have a warm dining room by the time you can get breakfast ready. Really this means less wood and work than a furnace. A shovelful of coals from the heater makes a quick fire in your kitchen range.

What little cooking you have done has been with gas; one of your very first jobs is to learn to be a good firewoman

with wood. Remember that double window in one casing makes a window sill of double length, and with your all-night fire you have a fine chance for some plants. There you can have your box of parsley, and in the late winter you will start some flats with tomato plants and pepper plants, and perhaps a few early flowers for your garden. On the sides of the window casing Ben can screw up a couple of brackets, just the thing for some potted plants.

That old-fashioned china closet, a real relic of the past, is all right for your good linen and your best dishes, for it will save buying a sideboard, always a debatable "convenience"; but what possible reason led the builder to put it on the side of the dining room farthest from the kitchen I never could discover. What could he have been thinking of?

What you want built in between kitchen and dining room is what I sometimes jokingly call a "Janus" cupboard; that is, a cupboard like the god Janus, facing both ways. Cut out part of the partition between kitchen and dining room and build in some shelves. This will cost some more money, and I know how hard you are trying to keep down expenditure, but for your everyday dishes you simply must have this arrangement. Now put a front door and a back door on Janus, the front door opening into the dining room and the back door into the kitchen, and you have one of the greatest conveniences that was ever devised for a woman who does her own work. When, in the kitchen, you put a dish onto the cupboard shelf it has already made half the journey to the dining-room table; in fact, it is always on "the main line of travel" between kitchen sink and dining-room table. It never gets sidetracked into some cupboard in some far corner of the dining room.

Now, Janet, brace yourself for another expenditure, but it is a small one and will be a real saver of your time and strength. I refer to a swinging door between kitchen and dining room. Take the door that is now there for one of the doors of your Janus cupboard and buy a new swinging door with a glass in it. Be sure to have a glass, for you do not want Ben to swing it against you some day and bump a tureen of hot soup all over you. The hinges are so fixed that the door will swing either way, but always comes to rest in the right position. Put a rubber pad on it where you push it with your foot or knee.

So much for the fixtures! Now for some furnishings: A wheel table with two shelves will save a lot of lifting and lugging. If it is compactly loaded, usually one trip will carry about all that needs to go from kitchen to dining-room table, or from dining-room table to kitchen.

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Get a dining-room table with square ends. There is a reason for this. When you have a crew to feed you must bring in what I call the "annex" table, simply a table top made of pine boards resting on a pair of horses. Make the annex the same width the dining table is, and have the horses the right height. Make the table top of good boards, white pine or basswood, and have cleats at the ends and in the middle, fastened with little screws instead of nails.

This portable annex table you will find will be one of the handiest things you will have on the farm. It is fine to cut up meat on, and for various other things. When you want to serve on the porch the annex is there in a jiffy. It comes in just right for the "country cafeteria"; but that is worth a whole letter later. You will have, of course, an extension table, but that will not be long enough without the annex. Have the legs of the horses well braced so that a light construction will be strong enough. You alone will have no trouble in setting



Put Away Your Haviland

up, and taking down, and carrying where you want it, this annex top, and its horses.

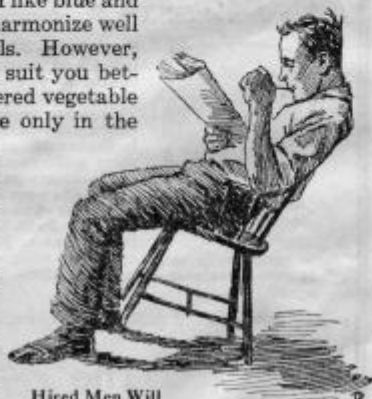
The dining-room chairs are a real problem, but do not buy till you find the right thing. Remember that nine out of ten hired men will tilt back on the hind legs of a chair and in no time a graceful spindle-legged chair is out of commission. I would get an all-wood—hardwood of course—chair with not a very high back, otherwise it is too heavy to handle easily.

Look well to the legs. I have heard horsemen say, "No leg, no horse." It is as true of a chair. The legs should be sturdy and well braced, but that does not mean clumsy, or ugly in appearance. A dozen will be enough; when you have more than a dozen to feed, it becomes a picnic anyway; and then bring in your benches—a couple should be built at the time you have your annex table made. The fact is, the woman who has the conveniences and begins the right kind of cooking early enough can handle a big crowd of farmers at table with but one woman helper. With the food once cooked and on the table, the men prefer to wait on themselves. The speed with which they will stow away an enormous amount of food will be one of the big surprises awaiting you as a farmer's wife.

Dishes of Open-Stock Pattern

By this time you are asking, "But what about the right kind of dishes for the farm?" Have plenty, but just now buy only what you need for the usual household. Threshers will not come till next fall. Your Haviland and the cut glass put away promptly; you certainly did have some lovely wedding gifts, and then there is Aunt Susan's set; but put them all away and get some dishes of an inexpensive open-stock pattern. I like blue and white. That would harmonize well with the yellow walls. However, green and white may suit you better. Do not buy covered vegetable dishes; the covers are only in the way on your table, and double your work to wash and wipe. Double the number of vegetable dishes and have one of each kind on each end of the table.

There are many solutions offered for lighting in the country, and electric lights or some system



Hired Men Will Tilt Back

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The pipe is all right in this picture

of gas lighting is not in the distant future for you; but now the inexpensive thing and probably the most practical is bracket oil lamps with reflectors. Get them high enough to be out of everybody's way and low enough so that the ceiling is not endangered. Have a protector above each lamp to keep smoke from your ceiling paper.

Then get a good broad-based lamp for your dining-room table. A mantle lamp sheds a pure white light and is economical. On a lamp that is not carried about I have known a mantle to last a year. Provide your center lamp with a shade. This will be your reading lamp in the evening when you and Ben sit in the "cozy end."

"Decorations" I hear you demanding, but I have craftily reserved them till the end of my letter, for, like snakes in Ireland, "there are none," that is, almost none. With the books and the lamp and the plants in the cozy end and those simplest white curtains at the window, have you not enough anyway, Janet, especially as that room has its wall areas so broken up with casings? Of course there will be a bowl of flowers on your dining-room table all summer, and in the winter you can have a choice plant from that big south window. The dining room is where the social life, and I may say the family life also, comes to its climax; so I have insisted on a cheery room, and that means sunshine, and more sunshine. Even with your big double window there will be gloomy days, and then, dear Janet, you must do your own shining. I want to write next about your living room and bedrooms.

Affectionately,

Aunt Nellie

Living Room and Bedrooms

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I Preach and Practice That the Room to be Used Most by the Family Must be the Best Room of All

DEAR JANET: Your last letter, which you labeled "A Chapter of Accidents," had the genuine ring of reality. That is just the way it goes on a farm. Learn to expect the unexpected. Irregularities are always occurring on a farm. Ben will find that managing a farm is like maneuvering an army: something not in the program always bobs up; but the best farmer is like the best general—one can never surprise him.

What is true of the farmer must be even more true of his wife, so cheer up, dear Janet, and never let anything take the wind out of your sails. The weather and the workmen have treated you abominably, I grant you, but we must go right on planning for the rest of the house now that your workshop—kitchen, laundry, storeroom, cellar and dining room—is getting well under way.

The thing next in importance is the living room. Those two large front rooms, one on each side of the hall, are fine in that Uncle Eben had a door from each directly into the dining room. Without any alteration whatever you can take the old parlor for your bedroom—you do not want a parlor anyway—and the old sitting room for your living room. I

never could understand why people who could as well as not have a downstairs bedroom would persist in climbing stairs!

I said these two rooms need no alteration whatever; that is, strictly speaking, true, but the downstairs bedroom will need an addition, namely, a wardrobe built of that wallboard I mentioned earlier.



When the Hired Man Wants to Shave He Will Appreciate a Chance in His Own Room

Let it reach to the ceiling and have no door, only a curtain.

In losing your parlor you will lose nothing, for the old parlor idea was dead wrong. Our grandmothers took the "front room" for a parlor, and because the blinds were kept tightly closed the room was always dark and the carpet, therefore, did not fade so soon. It was to be opened, of course, for weddings and funerals, when the minister called, and on only a few other special occasions. Woe to the boy caught in there with top or marbles! By some strange perversion of thrift the best room was least used. I preach and practice that the room to be used most by the family must be the best room of all.

But getting back to the living room—the old sitting room is ideal. During the coldest three months of the year the “cozy end” of the dining room will be your living room to save you much hard work and to save fuel, for that large front room would heat very slowly and take a great deal of wood which ought not to be wasted; but nine months in the year heating will not trouble.

The living room ought to be bright, so put it on the sunny side of the house. Your idea of a paper I like. The soft green would be very good. It is restful. An all-wise Father chose it for the color of His landscape for the greater part of the year. Plain paper, though, would show spots and faded places, but a two-toned paper largely overcomes these defects. Have your ceiling paper well covered with some inconspicuous figure. Get a good paper for the ceiling as well as for the side wall. That ceiling must be fixed carefully, as it had poor patching the last time I saw it.

Someone had left an upstairs window open and the water during a great storm ran through and large patches of plaster came down.

You have a glorious asset in the old sitting room for your new living room; I refer to the fireplace that was boarded up and papered over more than twenty years ago. Well do I remember when one of Uncle Eben's tenants perpetrated that crime against good cheer.

Ben will be doing clearing every now and then, for there are plenty of stumps left in the back pastures and along the edge of the wood lot. Whenever he blasts a pine stump or an oak one, tell him not to throw the fragments on the brush pile to be burnt up, but save them for the fireplace. A pine root full of fat pitch in a fireplace is my ideal of “one hundred per cent plus.” But alas! That routs the chimney swallows.

A large rug in the center of that well-painted floor is enough. Both those rooms and the hall should be painted at the same time. I like a gray green for a floor, with as much gray as you dare, for the darker the floor the more it shows dust. Have your window curtains plain white, reaching only to the window sill. I am glad you have only a few pictures. Unity is more restful than variety. Do not hang them too high. Try your bookcases in different places till you find the very best place. I would buy little furniture and then only a piece at a time as it is absolutely needed. I am hoping that you will not be beguiled by handsome upholstery, displayed by a clever salesman. Stick to wood or wood and leather. Look out for unwieldy chairs. Wicker is so light and so comfortable too. Ben's grandmother told me she was going to send you her old sofa. That will be enough heavy furniture for a start.

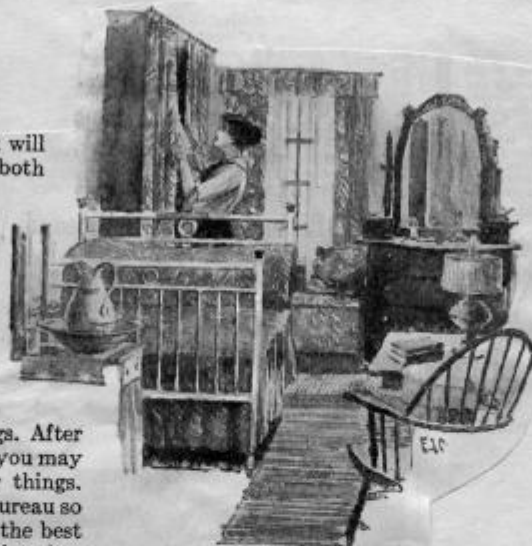
I am glad you are to take the old parlor for your bedroom. I should hate to think of you after a hard day's work climbing the stairs at night when it really was not necessary. I have already spoken of the roomy wardrobe built of wall board with no door, but a wide opening in which will hang two cretonne curtains with rings that will slip easily on a rod. This same cretonne will make your window curtains and the cushions for your chairs, the counterpane for your bed and the cover for your dress box. Buy it at the same time you get your wall paper. It may be of similar pattern and color; or, if you prefer variety, something different but harmonious.

Your heavy bedroom set I would put upstairs in the guest room. For your own use have a rather lightweight brass or enamel bed. It is easier to move. I would strongly advise a medium-sized air-tight stove so that you may have a little fire whenever you feel the least bit chilly. Wood on that farm certainly is cheaper than human vitality.

Three yards of oilcloth and a collapsible rubber bathtub, though not the equal of a city bathroom, will afford a lot of comfort when put down near your stove. They can be brought in and taken out with very little effort, or, easier still, condensed in a corner. Many farmers' wives go to bed and shiver. You want a warm bed to get into, but you ought not to sleep in a warm room. An air-tight stove can be dampered down so effectually that with an opened window one can soon have a cool room.

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As to bedroom crockery, you will have no trouble in finding sets both pretty and serviceable. Avoid bright colors and striking patterns. Year in and year out you will find plain white with gilt bands satisfactory. Here proportion and symmetry mean so much more than decoration. Be sure to get a large pitcher and slop jar. I do not think of much else now that you will really need, besides some small rugs. After you have tried it a few months you may find that you really need other things. Let me add, be sure to get the bureau so placed that its mirror will have the best possible light, for when you run in, after you have got a meal on the table, to smooth your hair, I want you to be sure to see that smutch on the side of your nose!



Build a Wardrobe Out of Wall Board With No Door; Hang Two Cretonne Curtains With Rings That Will Slip Easily on a Rod

Do not try to furnish all of that great upstairs—one guest room is enough for now. In my judgment the south room, the one over your living room, is the best. This also will need a stove. Even a summer guest arriving in a rainstorm will find a little warmth most grateful. Have a good-sized wood box always well filled with kindling and fine wood. Let me suggest that when you paper the guest room you paper this wood box also. A table with writing materials is essential. As I remember it, the closet in that room is not overly large, so do not make the mistake, a common one, of hanging your own good clothes there. There are other rooms, and I would suggest that you take one of the smallest for your clothes—"Sunday-go-to-meeting"—and other things of occasional use such as trunks and satchels. Have a rod put across the room upon which



Once Get the Open-Air Habit and You Will be Astonished to See How Much of Your Time Will be Spent There

plenty of coat hangers may be put, and remember, when you are having the rods and hangers placed in your wardrobe downstairs, to have the same kind put in the guest-room closet. I would give each room a number and then mark all my bedroom linen with the proper number. This is a very great saving and convenience, for the hired girl you will have to have now and then probably would mix the linen of the guest room and that of the hired man's room. Bear in mind in the winter to empty the water pitchers as soon as a guest leaves a room or they may freeze and break. Extra bedding should be kept in the closet, for some guests require an astonishing amount.

Comfort for the Help

Ben will always have a hired man or two. Take that large room over the kitchen and put a stove in it. It is handy to the back stairs and that makes it convenient for the hired man. I would have iron beds and I would furnish a washstand. Usually he will wash downstairs, but when he cleans up on Sunday, or wants to shave, he will appreciate a chance in his own room.

While you are planning to do your own work, there will be times when you will have to have help, so I would take that little south room over the dining room for a hired girl's room. An iron bed is essential, a stove if she is with you in the winter, and a well-furnished washstand. The white-enamel ware such as they use in hospitals is nice, convenient and unbreakable. All the bedding for these two rooms should be easily washed. Ever have a searching eye on the beds.

Be so interested in the hired girl's room, encourage her so much to keep it nice, that she will take as much pride in it as in any other work she does for you. Let her decorate it according to her own taste. If she wants advertising chromos and colored postals galore, all well and good. It is her room, not yours.

This whole problem of the hired help is a knotty one. Any combination you can make has its drawbacks, but for the present you must have your helpers under your roof and at your table. In time you will have a tenant house with a good farmer and family in it, but that is several years ahead. For the

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present remember the hired man is largely what you make him. Ben will see to it that the hired man has his bath regularly, and you will see to it that his room is clean and always comfortable. Most men respond gratefully to such treatment, the man who does not you do not want. Inasmuch as the hired man must board and lodge with you for the present, make up your mind to pay about top wages and get the best to be had. In the long run ^p this will be a real economy. You not only get more work but far better work.

My letter is getting too long, but I must not close it without at least a paragraph on the living room outside, namely, your porch. Once get the open air habit and you will be astonished to see how much of your time will be spent there. Here is a little hint; learn to keep in the sun and out of the wind. A handy little canvas wind-break turns the trick. Plenty of hooks or rings in walls and posts, yes, even rings in the floor, to which you may hitch the guy cords of your canvas will permit you in early Spring, and late Autumn to stay out and read or work in comfort.

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You need not put a stove on the porch, though I seem to have advised it in every other possible place. The fundamental thing in both living rooms and sleeping rooms is comfort, and in a cold climate, you cannot get away from the necessity of a stove. However, the sheet iron stove made air tight with damper and draught, does the business perfectly, and is so inexpensive, and so light to set up and take down-I have done it often myself single handed- that is is senseless to shiver. In conclusion I want to exhort you to make comfort your goal. If you do, and if you succeed in reaching it, your family and your friends will rise up and call you blessed.

Your affectionate Aunt Nellie



PLANNING THE DAY'S WORK

An Ounce of Brain is Worth a Pound of Brawn

By Nellie Kedzie Jones

DECORATIONS BY H. I. DRUCKLIEB

DEAR JANET: "Swamped" I counted four times on one page in your last letter. My dear girl, don't let your work drive you—drive it. Just as soon as you begin to feel driven, sit right down or, better, lie down and take account of stock. Remember that you can do more with your head than you can with your hands. Beginning and ending your day, as I know you do, with the upward look that always brings strength and repose, it is your right to live throughout its long hours unfretted by your work. The great-souled woman learns sooner or later to rest even under her load.

You are looking at the years ahead; I am looking back. Judging the future by the past I can assure you right now that your load will never be less. But your strength, your skill, your ability to plan every hour in the day to the best advantage, will keep on developing when once you are well settled in the harness of homemaking.

The true philosophy of living is not a prayer for less work but a prayer for more strength. No matter how heavy the load, if there is a margin of strength above and beyond you will reach the goal of the day like a racer still running fresh and strong.

In building we are always more anxious to get the right architect than to get the right builder; there are many workers but few real planners. Every night if you will sit down and review the day you will discover where you might have saved a lot of time and strength, had your plan been better. Really, Janet, you are an architect. Your day is a temple resting on twenty-four columns, the twenty-four hours; as you arrange these twenty-four pillars well or ill, so will the structure of your day's living be beautiful or deformed.

You asked me to make a schedule for your day, week and season. That would be presumptuous indeed. It is your day, not mine; it is your ideal, not mine, that is being wrought into your shrine—that is, your home. Life is so sacredly individual, for no two souls were ever alike, that I fear we older people, whether teachers, preachers or writers, are often helping the beginner to suppress rather than express the unique self. Our "system" of education gives me many deep questionings. Every stream naturally runs somewhere, but we are forever damming up and diverting into foreign channels. Often a good suggestion snuffs out an inspiration. If only we had the patience to wait and the faith to believe that every personality is a wonder world!

Make Your Schedule Kinetic

Therefore, Janet, please regard anything I may write as merely suggestive, only a point of departure, just a peg, as it were, upon which to hang a day's routine, until out of your own experience you can better what I may have to offer. Imitation would grieve me; inspiration, even in small degree, would gladden me, proving the effort of these letters worth while.

Really the housewife's day begins yesterday. ^{through} A man's day begins shortly before breakfast. That means you must do as much of the breakfast work as possible the night before. I would suggest, therefore, that plenty of good kindling and fine wood, seasoned wood, must be in the box before you are in bed. To be sure, you will not get it; but you will see that the right person does not forget it. Eternities have been wasted by women waiting on slow fires. Your cereal must rest all night in the fireless cooker snug and warm. Your potatoes were cooked and the table set the evening before. Ben or the hired man will make your fire, so that steam will be generating while the engineer of the day is dressing herself.

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Of course you will aim to have your meals right on the dot, but don't fret when you fail, as you sometimes will. Interruptions are not booked ahead, and, anyway, cooking different dishes on different days, it is almost impossible to time their finish exactly; but you will approximate it pretty well if you know exactly what you are trying for, and with more practice will approach punctuality near enough. I would add while

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on that subject that the wise thing to do is to plan to have all the food cooked a little ahead of time, as a margin of safety; it will fret you less to wait a little than to have the hungry men sitting round waiting for you. Ben will have more trouble, you will find, in timing his arrival at meals than you will in serving promptly. However, start at once the habit of letting each other know, as soon as may be, when any interruption occurs, so that as little time as possible will have to be wasted in waiting for each other.

The first thing in planning the day's work is to determine the rest period. Two half days are not nearly so long as a whole day. Experience has proved that as soon as may be after the midday meal is the time for a little rest, a little nap if possible. In midsummer we get sixteen hours of daylight and in winter the farmer works both ends of his day with the lantern, while his wife's day is usually longer. Therefore, unless your day is to be inhuman, it must be broken somewhere. In the morning you are fresher than in the afternoon, and the forenoon could be a little longer in time; but I would divide the day about in the middle, putting the heavy jobs in the forenoon and saving the easier work for afternoon, when your stock of strength is running low.

Your daily time-table may become a taskmaster. I would not live in bondage to it. There are numerous occasions when it is wise to depart from the schedule, especially on a farm. The time to make hay and a lot of other things

is when the sun shines, and we have no control over that. But in the long run you will find that it pays to stick pretty closely to the time-table. Indeed I would be a stickler for getting to bed on time! Sleep is the best known conditioner, and efficiency is in its last analysis a matter of good or bad condition. The way "to turn off a big day's work," using an old New England phrase, is to "turn in" early the night before.

Not social convention but the appetites of your horses and cows, your pigs and chickens, will determine when your farm establishment must start the day's work. It will be not long after sunrise; but getting-up time, in turn, determines going-to-bed time. Your average ought to be about nine in the evening and five in the morning, allowing you eight hours in bed, little enough for a woman who will have to work as hard as you do. In the city that means about eleven and seven, which you are used to.

In the long summer day, with its rush of work and its heat, the temptation will be to make the night too short; you will want to read a little or get some writing done and cut the time for it out of your sleep. Do not do it. I want

to repeat that: Do not do it. If I were to vary from the schedule it would be on the side of more rather than less sleep.

Here comes a bit of advice, Janet, that seems so self-evident I am ashamed to write it to a sensible girl like you; but I will, for I have been caught unawares myself so often I fear you may too: Do not let two great big jobs land on you in the same day. Do not be caught so that you will have to bake on the same day that Ben has extra hired men on hand for you to cook for. He must let you know in time. Do not let your butter run low so that you must churn on wash day. Do not begin some hard job in the forenoon that will take far more time and strength than you had supposed, when guests are coming in the afternoon. In other words, look several days ahead and keep such close tabs on what Ben is going to be doing that you can steer the hard jobs and the extras into different days.

When an extra hard task is on hand, time it so that you can get a lift from Ben. Many a woman dives headfirst into a congestion of hard jobs, as courageous as a lion, and lands in bed, a wreck for the rest of the day, at about four P. M. Here strategy is even better than courage. Do not be afraid to call loud and long for a man's strength. A man feels flattered every time he gets a chance to display his prowess before a woman, and your "guld mon" is no exception. Use him. He likes it.

Plan for a few "time-fillers" to be always on hand. Neither you nor Ben can so exactly time your work that you will connect on the dot like two express trains at a junction. You will have to do a little waiting for him often, and in cooking you will have to wait for things in the oven to finish, so have within reach, but out of the way, sundry little jobs that will fill in the chinks of time. I have a pad and pencil handy. In the course of a week I sometimes get a good many pages written in what would otherwise be waste time. Sometimes I sharpen up some of my knives while I am watching a dish on the stove; snipping raisins or shelling walnuts can begin and end any time—I do mine while waiting for something in the oven to get done. There are miscellaneous little jobs I would not waste solid time on; save them for broken time.

A batch of unbaked bread buried in the far corner of the garden may be a good investment. By that I mean, be ready to sacrifice the less for the greater. Ben may be suddenly called to town, and comes in and begs you to go with him just when your bread ought to go into the oven.

Knead the bredd down quickly, put it into a cold earthenware crock, ^{COVER} and set it away, in either the ice box or on the cellar bottom. Probably it will be all right to make into loaves when you get home, but if it is not, do not cry over spilled milk. You can make muffins if you have to.

Two or three hours together in the open air, measured in health, happiness and mutual planning for farm and home, might have results worth many batches of bread. Some women are so busy with little things they do not recognize a big thing when it stares them in the face. ~~Buy some bread in town, or make muffins when you get home.~~

Get the timing habit and then you will not be overloading your day. I find that when I get interested in my work the flight of time simply does not exist for me. Keep timing various processes—doing your dishes, making your beds, preparing the day's vegetables, and so on—until you know the required time about as well as a school-teacher knows the various lengths of her recitation periods. What would you think of a school-teacher that arrived at four o'clock with several of her classes still unheard?

Don't hurry at your meals. You will have to hurry to get them, but eat them at leisure. I have been in farm homes where the meals were devoured in record time and all hands stampeded. I could think only of the well-filled trough, licked clean in a jiffy and deserted. Whatever the weather outside, Ben is entitled to three seasons of sunshine a day—your smiling face!

How to shuffle the days of the week I will take up in my next letter to you.

Always affectionately,

Aunt Nellie



Monday

PLANNING THE WEEK

DEAR JANET:—"She has no calculation" was said pityingly of one of my drudging neighbors. I was alarmed when I heard that, though only a little girl: whether the missing "calculation" affected liver or lungs I knew not, but anyway I regarded a woman with "no

calculation" as a physiological phenomenon. I have since learned that "no calculation" affects both liver and lungs, as well as head, heart and heels, and keeps the hands moving to poor advantage. An attack of "no calculation" may occur in acute form once in a great while in even a good homemaker, but chronic "no calculation" is inexcusable. There are but seven days in a week, and the weeks roll round rapidly; therefore, put into operation a week's plan at once. Study the work to be done, apportion to each day its share, and try the schedule. If it works well you are to be congratulated; if it does not, then find out what is the matter and mend it; but a poor schedule is better than no schedule. The trouble with my "no calculation" neighbor was she never had even a poor schedule. All of her operations were hit-or-miss, and mostly miss.

Our grandmothers divided their week well: Monday, wash; Tuesday, iron; Wednesday, bake; Thursday, sew; Friday, clean; Saturday, bake; Sunday, rest and worship. For a week's program that was a very good arrangement. Many still follow it, though peculiar situations often change it to advantage. I know one good housekeeper who does her washing on Saturday, when her daughters are home from high school.

Personally, I think you will get better results by planning a two-weeks schedule than a weekly cycle of work. I think it a waste of time to wash every week. Probably a shortage of clothes was the origin of so frequent washing. With a good washing machine and a man or a strong woman to help, a two-weeks wash ought to be put through handily between breakfast and noon. A two-weeks ironing would be too heavy for the next day, to be sure; but I hope you will be sensible enough to eliminate a great deal of ironing, and much of what is left can be used as a time-filler, working it off in easy installments during several succeeding days. I do some ironing between other tasks, an hour or two at a time, and before long it is done, without the extreme weariness that comes from ironing hour after hour steadily till a big wash is disposed of.

The great advantage of washing only once in two weeks is two full free days in the alternate week that can be used for extras. Furthermore, a two-weeks routine is more flexible, allowing a little shifting back and forth to accommodate special events. For example, suppose something special comes on Friday or Saturday; then the work of those days could be done, a part ahead of time, and the rest postponed until the following free Monday and Tuesday very conveniently.

Flexible Week Day Schedule

By Nellie Kedzie Jones

DECORATIONS BY KATHARINE R. WIREMAN



Wednesday

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Marking up your calendar ahead, you may discover that the thing you are most desirous of attending comes in the wash week. Very well; change the rotation by washing two weeks in succession, or even by—this is *sub rosa*—washing only once in three weeks. I hear the shades of your grandmother, Janet, indignantly protesting; yes, I know keeping soiled clothes for so long a time is not ideal, but you are setting out to do all your own work and you have only so much strength. The purpose of these letters, Janet, is to show how to make the very most of one lone woman's limited time and strength. My dear,



Saturday

you must keep your eye on the thing practical for you, rather than the ideal thing under ideal conditions. Conditions never have been ideal on Uncle Eben's old farm and it will be some time yet before they are.

But getting back to a possible three-weeks wash, of course you would not pack soiled clothes in a hamper for three weeks; but hung up where the air can circulate freely, clothes can be kept sanitary a long time.

I see daylight ahead on this wash-day bondage. The cooperative laundry run by the cheese factory or the creamery can care for the whole neighborhood very cheaply indeed, assassinating at last that old man of the sea, the wash-day bogey—bad luck to him! For the present, dear Janet, you must wash and Ben or the hired man must help you. I wish it could be burnt into the consciousness of every man and every woman that washing under average farm conditions is a man's work, not a woman's, measured by expenditure of strength. The man riding a modern mowing machine on a smooth and airy meadow is having a far easier time than his wife, sweating over a steaming washtub in a stuffy kitchen, near a hot stove. You see now, Janet, why I so strongly urged a laundry for you in my first letter.

Ben should begin right now campaigning for a cooperative laundry at your cheese factory. Transportation of the washing to and from would cost practically nothing, for the milk wagon has to go every day anyway. The water supply, the steam-heating plant, and the engine are already installed in the modern cheese factory or creamery. Why not add the washing machinery and get at it? This is no dream. Such a rural laundry is in actual operation. With a mangle for the flat work at least, home washing and ironing would drop out almost as completely as home spinning and weaving have done. Why not? Your grandmother used to have a big time spring and fall making soap, but you, Janet, will never have any more occasion to make soap than to make carpet tacks or gunpowder.

Alternate Tuesdays you will iron, but do not think that you must have it all done that night. The men want three meals on Tuesday just the same as on other days. My rule on ironing is to eliminate, eliminate, and then eliminate some more. Ironing has been the farm woman's *bête*

noir. At best it is hard, hot work. While washing machines are common on farms, mangles are rare. Whether they are not very practical, or whether we farm women are neglecting a good helper, I cannot say, but this I do know: not ironing at all is even easier than a mangle. The need of ironing certain kinds of garments is traditional, not actual. Does the hired man care a fig whether his underwear is ironed or not? Yet I have known an



Friday

ultra housekeeper to insist stoutly that everything in the wash had to be ironed, socks and all. She forgot the old proverb, "It's a poor foot that can't shape its own sock."

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Said a dear little homemaker to me, "I think it is much better to take my sheets right fresh from the sunshine and spread them on my beds than to rub an old hot iron over them." She was delicate, did her own work and had six children, but her home nevertheless was cozy and dainty. She had "calculation." For the muscle and time invested she got the best returns I know of. She knew an essential from a nonessential every time. It is only fair to add that she got some work out of the older children and that her husband helped a good deal whenever he could be in the house.

Take pains in putting the clothes on the line. It pays to have plenty of good taut line so there will be room enough to stretch out the clothes smoothly, letting each piece hang down as far as possible. When wet, a garment's own weight will take the wrinkles out. Fluttering in wind and sun, it will dry flat and smooth. Take down, fold evenly and put away. Hosiery, underwear, sheets, hand towels and dish towels you need not iron, and perhaps you can find other things to save on. I admit that ironed clothes, with the nap polished down, will keep clean a little longer than a fuzzy fabric, but when it's your arms

and shoulders, dear Janet, that are paying the piper, I say again "Eliminate all the ironing you can." Piecing in ironing spells here and there in broken time, you can save a good deal of your time and strength on Tuesday, even in ironing week, for things more important.

Following Grandma's week, you will clean on Friday. In view of what is bound to get crowded into the end of the week and the baking that must be done before Sunday, I regard Friday as the best day for the cleaning. Here again is a chance for a two-weeks schedule. Your house is big, you are little. Do not start your housekeeping with the idea that every room must be cleaned every week, *volens volens*. KEEPING CLEAN BEATS KEEP CLEANING.

A Doormat Saves the Mop

Your guest room, for instance, will stand idle for weeks at a time. Only clean that room when it needs it. You are not running a hotel. Usually you know when your guests will arrive. Of course you will keep it in such condition that a few minutes' notice will find it presentable.

In a home like yours, where there are no children to track in mud, I consider it a waste of time to carry out



Thursday

the rugs and wipe up the floors every week, especially in good weather. A good stub broom at every door, and an iron foot scraper with a stiff scrubbing brush nailed up edgewise on either side of it, will clean soles and sides of boots and shoes, even in muddy times, so well that lots of dirt and dust will never get into the house that otherwise would. When I first began housekeeping I mopped my kitchen floor every day, but I soon found that my strength was failing for things more important. Then I discovered that wiping up a spot right at the time it appeared would keep my floor in

good condition, though unmopped for several days. So, too, with windows—wash them only when they need it.

In dividing up the week, be sure to plan at least one play period. Have no set time for this. A surprise for Ben, bumping the old farm routine in a new place, is half the fun. I am emphatically against a two-weeks schedule for the fun. Have some every week. Exuberance of spirits is not a farmer's failing. The fun may be a picnic lunch up in the back pasture where Ben is cutting brush, or phoning a neighbor to come over to supper, you and Ben taking her home afterward, or having the teacher spend Sunday with you—don't make company of her.

Starting a little earlier and working a little faster, you will get time for an evening lecture or concert in town now and then. Even taking the hired help to the circus is well worth while. Keeping your eye upstream, you can spot the fun before it floats past. Yes, have a schedule, but keep it so flexible that it will open and shut like an accordion, most anywhere, to accommodate the fun as it comes along.

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The two baking days, Wednesday and Saturday will find your range oven hot from morning till afternoon, on Saturday that heat might last till night. On Wednesday I like in addition to the bread to bake a big batch of drop cookies, and in Winter time, and crock full of doughnuts. There ought to be enough bread dough to make a few cinnamon rolls. Saturday is a good pie day, although pies once in two weeks will do very well as they take too much time. Whatever cake you will need for the week can be baked Saturday morning, before the bread is ready to go in. I find if I bake the layers for several cakes on Saturday, I can fill one for use Sunday, then put the others away with oil paper between them covering tightly in an earthenware crock, and so keep them nicely into the next week. Putting these "aged" layers together with warm filling renews their youth wonderfully, giving practically a fresh cake.

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Probably every Saturday or every other Saturday afternoon you will have baked beans and brown bread in your oven. At the same time bake a good sized "Injun" pudding. When ever you get ready to make up your steamed suet pudding do so on a baking day, for you will have to stay all the morning anyway and so can watch your steamer as well as not

In closing, dear Janet, let me say that Sunday must be the climax of your week. Devote that day to home and heaven. By that I mean do not let miscellaneous persons and things crowd in, to the exclusion of rest and worship. Make domestic rather than social joys its goal. Seek intellectual and spiritual uplift, rather than recreation. Autoing friends, even casual acquaintances, would make your home into a Sunday round-up with very little encouragement. Stop it before it begins. If you are ever to devote yourselves to each other and the higher ends of living, it will be on Sunday. When you lose your Sunday these will go with it. But if, during the week, you plan your work and work your plan, you will come up to Sunday so fresh and strong, with the home in such a state of preparedness, that, like Sir Galahad of old, you will sing "My strength is as the strength of ten."

Always your affectionate

Aunt Nellie



Sunday

PLANNING BY SEASONS

*It is the Long Look Ahead That Wins
Homemaker—By Nellie Kedzie Jones*

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES S. CHAPMAN



DEAR JANET:
The heaven is working, I see, for your last letter is peppered with questions. The longer you keep house the more questions you will ask and the more intelligent they will

be. There! That does not sound right, but you know what I mean. The longer you live with your problems, the more sharply are they focused in your own mind. But I shall not take the lid off your question box right now, for, like Pandora's box, we should never get the cover on again.

In this letter I want to help you plan your work by the seasons. The farmer plans his work by the season, why should not his wife do the same, dovetailing the two lines together? You can wash dishes any time of year, but you can preserve your strawberries only in strawberry time. Many young housekeepers have not quite grasped the rotation of the seasons, which are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and so they always find themselves too late. The only time of the year in which to do a particular work comes and goes before they wake up.

You and Ben must plan your work together. His heavy time is in summer. Therefore, make your busy season in winter. Why? In summer you must subordinate yourself and your work to his. In our letters hitherto, both you and I have very generously laid out work for Ben. I have every week been expecting the dear fellow to file a demurrer. When he is hardest driven and making longest days you must stand ready to help all you can. Seed-time and harvest he must stretch out his day at both ends. It is the true wife's deepest joy to be right on hand when her husband most needs help.

—Plan for Some Winter Reading—

Your trips to the city to shop, your visiting and entertaining, your neighborhood social work, your reading, especially that which you and Ben ought to do together, your sewing, and the most of your correspondence should be put in the winter—to say nothing of the care of the meat, the making of sausage, mincemeat and numerous other things—Ben can help you with a lot of things in the winter that he could not possibly touch in the rest of the year. All winter you must help him plan for next summer, and all summer he must help you plan for next winter. Pleasures shared are multiplied; sorrows shared are divided. Pulling together is ten times more fun than going it alone.

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Ben will begin his year with the calendar, taking account of stock just like any other business man. You and he must put in the early part of January together, inventorying, figuring costs, and making the annual budget. A good deal of correspondence will naturally come in laying out the year's work on the farm, finding the materials, the machinery and the like that will be used "next season." You ought to have some good systematic reading together—serious, informing, vocational reading; for example, "Farm Management,"

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"Principles of Agriculture," "Stock Raising," and the like.

Among farmers, what social life there is must mostly come in the winter. Leaving the hired man to do the chores, the farmer and his family can get off to "spend the day," which means getting over to the host's farmstead about the middle of the forenoon, having a good dinner shortly after noon, having a good time till about four o'clock and getting home in time for chores. Some of the very best visits of my life have been "spending the day" on a neighbor's farm. The children romp in the haymow, the women compare notes, and the men look the stock over and discuss the crops. It is a simple, sweet, wholesome kind of pleasure and profit combined, and no one loses a minute's sleep over the social function. You will plan for several such days next winter.

In January you and Ben must get to the city, combining business and pleasure, and you can do the bulk of your year's shopping then. The clearance sales of the year are on and you can get more for your money than at any other time. You can collect the materials for the rest of the winter's sewing. In fact, late winter and early spring is the best time for the farm woman to sew. Farm operations then are at the lowest ebb, company is not coming, roads are bad and you do not want to go anywhere. The days are lengthening; so, Janet, plan to do the major part of your sewing in late winter and early spring.

Late in February and March you will want to make your orange marmalade. Then oranges are likely to be best and cheapest. Before long come the rhubarb, strawberries, and so on, a regular succession of fruits and vegetables—if you want to can vegetables—till late fall, so that you will be canning, pickling and preserving eight or nine months in the year at least. Watch your markets, and in the very height of the season, when a slump in price almost always comes, dropping away below zero, buy.

Can Your Apples Green

I say "buy," but only for a year or two, till you get your own small fruits well under way. Apples, all you can use, you now have, but Uncle Eben's tenants—always short-timers—wasted no money or labor in putting out small fruits on their landlord's farm. As your earliest apples, say, along about harvest, begin to fall, begin to can and put them away in that dark cupboard in the cellar. I am glad your last letter reports that Ben has already finished it.

every day or two take a stroll through the orchard and as a mere time filler pick up some apples to can in odd

Paste a list on

2

Mark Time in the Dog Days

"Beware the Ides of March" we have changed to "Beware the dangers of dog days." Overheated and overworked in haying and harvest, many a farmer's wife collapses. The days are long and there is extra help to feed, and the man is too busy in the field to assist even a little with the heavy tasks. So I very earnestly urge you, Janet, to get ready for the mid-summer heat and work as much in advance as you can. If you ever hire a woman hire her then. If you ever send away your washing send it then.

Do not let your house fill up at that time with city friends. Ben cannot entertain them nor help you do it, either. Some city people seem to think when it gets so hot in town housekeeping becomes unendurable, that is just the time their farm friends are pining to see them. You are not running a summer resort. Of course there are some friends so intimate and some relatives so helpful that their presence is a reinforcement. They have the good sense to help far more than they hinder. For such the latch-string is always out.

Working as little and as easily as you can during dog days you will be ready to take hold with vim when it begins to get a little cooler. Try to get your pickling done before frosts come, instead of after. The materials are better and, anyway, winter always overtakes farm folks like a thief in the night. Getting the home ready for winter need not be done all at once. Begin early and take it gradually. Do only a room at a time. "Fall house cleaning" like "spring house cleaning," in the sense of a general housewrecking process in which everything from cellar to garret is turned upside down, carried out, scrubbed, scoured, sunned, and shuffled back into the house in a new place, is an abomination of desolation. It breaks women's backs and causes men to break the ten commandments.

With cold weather make a lot of mincemeat and can a good supply to be used next spring and summer, even when

1 most people would never think of having mince pies. Farm men are heartier eaters than professional men and an easy way to get a heavy meal and save on meat is to give them mince pie. Butchering comes with cold weather and will make you a lot of work. A year's lard is to be rendered and stored. You will want to make a lot of sausage. I have yet to see the farmer who was shy when buckwheat cakes and sausage piping hot gladdened the winter breakfast table.

You must cure a big supply of hams, shoulders and bacon. Remember, country-cured ham and eggs galore are always at a premium and mean many easy meals for you. I recommend a good dry cure. You will not do the work yourself, but you must be responsible and see that it is done in season and done thoroughly.

Get your stoves up early. It must be done anyway, so get at it and have it over with. In our northern climate the evenings are very chilly at times, even in early fall. Stoves, like



umbrellas, are necessary evils. Like the cowboy with his gun, "when you want one you want it bad." Set out to keep ahead of the season. Maybe you will be fortunate enough to keep up. Like the dry-goods merchant, you will make four seasons in the year with your clothing. Winter clothes must be gotten out and again put away; so, too, with summer clothes. Furs and woolens must be protected against moths.

Chart the Year in a Diary

Have plenty of trunks or good boxes, and as you put away, paste a list on the top of the box. The garment on the top of the list is on the bottom of the box. It is so much easier reading labels than rummaging through a series of trunks to find some garment. Do not trust your memory, but make the list and paste it on then and there. It will save your time and temper later.

It is the long look ahead that wins for the homemaker as truly as for the statesman or the financier. The woman who lives six months ahead of the calendar is never caught off her guard. Just as soon as diaries for the ensuing year are put on sale get one, a good sizable one that has a full page for every day in the year, and begin charting next year's work. Birthdays, anniversaries, institutes, the fair, the short course, your commencement, club dates and the like, you know months ahead, like seedtime and harvest, and you can schedule them at once. There, before you know it, the framework of a year is outlined!

Being always ahead is just a habit, like being always behind. Right here is the difference between success and failure. The politicians are right, "preparedness costs," but unpreparedness costs the homemaker tenfold more.

I hope to take up some food problems in my next letter.

Always affectionately,

Aunt Nellie

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PLANNING THE FARM



*Balance Your Ration With Your Bank Book
in View—By Nellie Kedzie Jones*

DEAR JANET: How many letters we have exchanged already, and now we are just getting to the matter of the farm food. This delay is due not to the unimportance but to the very great importance of the food policy you inaugurate in your new home. Feed your family right, Janet, and at one stroke you will cut off a whole swarm of evils that flesh is heir to.

You have been asking for recipes, but policies, food policies, Janet, are what you must deal with first. I want you to start right on this vastly important thing. There are cookbooks galore. They will take care of your need for recipes at present. Later, if you will remind me, I will copy out of your grandmother's old book some of the good things that are being forgotten nowadays.

Farmers have long hours at hard labor in the open air. They are necessarily heavy eaters of hearty food. Your first policy must do with quantity. You must be a generous provider, Janet. Have on hand all you will need and then get some more. You have lived in town all your life and are familiar with the way business and professional men eat. The city man's meal would be an acceptable sample for the farmer, who having eaten it, would pronounce it all right and tell you to bring in the meal itself.

With hired men at your table, make up your mind to three hearty meals every day in the year. I know the prospect is appalling to one who is doing her own work, as you are; but face the fact, prepare for the worst, and any respite you may get later count as pure gain. Most of the writing of recipes, the estimates of quantities for families of various sizes, and marketing directions, have been done by Home-Economics experts who have gotten their data from colleges, public institutions, city homes and city eating places, but not from farms. They are too small for farm conditions. Add about fifty per cent to the usual standard recipe, or even double it and you will not be far off. From the hired man's point of view a short ration is the unpardonable sin. He believes that a pie ought not to be cut into more than four pieces. I get round that difficulty, though, by often serving easy puddings.

~~Meat, Meat, Meat~~

Meat, meat and more meat is what you will have to provide, and it will cost you a lot of money. This is wrong; we are, in town and country, eating altogether too much meat, but I am trying not to substitute in these letters the ideal for the real. You want to know actual country conditions, and I reply by saying that Ben will not be able to keep his hired men unless you provide them all the meat they want. And what a lot that will look like to you! However, by raising your own meat and learning how to cook appetizingly the poorer cuts, you can usually work up the whole animal and so help keep down your meat bill.

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The American hired man has always had all the meat he can eat, and therefore must continue to have it. The European peasant has never had much meat, and therefore he must have all he can eat; for has he not come to a land of fabulous plenty where "the common man lives better than the lord back in the old country"? He knows that he can go any day to a lumber camp or the railroad construction camp, and get it, and so the farmer must meet the competition.

The European farm laborer, especially from the north of Europe, is a large-boned,

heavily muscled man capable of making a very long day at heavy labor, and yet he is grown and maintained on a diet of very little meat. Usually he eats meat only once a week, as a sort of Sunday treat. Plenty of vegetables, rye bread, beans and pea soup nourish him. We have been reading in the papers lately many disparaging things about what it costs our Government to keep a soldier, and what the European countries do it for in times of peace. Go to one of our army posts and visit the mess hall, and then visit a European barracks, and you will see where we spend a lot of the additional money. Really for health, efficiency, and especially economy, the European diet excels ours.

Provide potatoes three times a day to go with the meat, and plenty of white bread. Don't try to reform the men at first. Give them what they want and gradually work toward a more rational diet. You and Ben will be eating temperately all the time, using fruits, cereals and a moderate amount of meat. By example as much as by precept you will be teaching those at your table a more excellent way to efficient nourishment.

I find a great deal of indigestion among those farmers who eat too much and too fast. If farmers were to lead a sedentary life and keep up their customary diet many of them would die before the year was up. Many want black coffee three times a day. Few care for cocoa, but I would try to work toward coffee only once a day in hot weather. Here separated milk on the table as a drink will help.

Milk—Your Stand-By

As a rule, oatmeal is the cereal they care most for. If it is well cooked in a fireless cooker and served with sugar and milk, most of them will eat it. You see I am putting a lot of emphasis on quantity, for I know you well enough to know you will keep up on quality.

Milk you will produce on your farm cheaply, therefore give it a large place in your dietary. The more milk you work into the food the more readily can you wean them from an excessive use of meat. All the bone-and-muscle-forming elements are left in the separated milk. Never apologize for it. Make all your gravies with separated milk instead of water. Make your cocoa wholly of separated milk and not half water, as is usual. Good hot cocoa can be worked in as a substitute for strong coffee. When you cook rice use separated milk instead of water. This gives extra proteins. The farm accountants give a credit of only twenty or thirty cents a hundred pounds to separated milk, or half a cent a quart, which is the most preposterously cheap food I ever heard of. However, a word of caution right here. The man who eats a full meal of solid food and washes it down with a number of glasses of milk as a beverage will have in

short order to face the serious charge—and its penalty—of overeating.

Your problem is to nourish the hired man as cheaply as you can and keep him contentedly on the job. However interesting he may be as a personality, he is not primarily at your table for his company. He is a part of the farm force, and must show a credit on the right side of the farm ledger. In the matter of cheap nutrition separated milk is your trump card.

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Meat and democracy seem inseparable, but work toward vegetables. With a grand garden soil and all the free fertilizer you want right in your own barnyard, Janet, I would see that a lot of fine vegetables are grown on the farm every year, and as many served on your table as you can get eaten. They mean health and economy. Uncle Eben's great cellar will furnish you unlimited storage.

You will make but little difference between summer and winter diet, save as you get more vegetables eaten in summer. I think it good economy to have as many as three or four kinds on the table at once. So, too, I would have two kinds of bread on the table, either Graham or whole-wheat along with the white bread. When you bake it is practically no more work to make both. With the substitute always on hand you can shift the men from the exclusive use of white bread.

Pork rather than beef will be your staple meat. Your men are more used to pork; and pork is the most cheaply grown meat in our region. Moreover, a dressed pig or even a hog you can care for at home when a beef would be out of the question; it is too big. A lamb, though, you will find an acceptable change. Make an arrangement to let some neighbor have half of it when you kill, and then give you back a half when he kills. With your ice box, even in hot weather you can keep half a lamb till it is

used up. Now that telephones are so general and each year sees more and more farmers putting up ice, by arranging beforehand I think you could dispose of a small beef now and then without too much bother.

However, the wise farmer is pretty shy of much killing in hot weather. A little organization would make possible the eating of less salt meat in summer. Ben must get some butcher's tools, fit up a convenient place for slaughtering and build you a smokehouse.

Good practical bulletins on the killing and curing of meat on the farm are to be had for the asking. Drop a postal to your experiment station and ask for the information you need. Home-cured ham, bacon and shoulders can be produced better and cheaper than those you buy.

Chickens are expensive in time and money, but you will eat some for a change of meat; and, of course, when your town

friends come they will expect some of your home-grown fried chickens as a characteristic farm treat. Train your town friends to let you know a day ahead when they are coming. Many do not appreciate how much work it is to kill and dress and cook chickens.

I have already spoken of how to piece out the meat with milk; the generous use of cheese will also make the meat go farther. A pound of cheese costs less than a pound of meat and goes much farther. Use cheese with vegetables, such as potatoes, rice, cabbage and cauliflower, as well as with macaroni, or in fondues, soufflés and rarebits. Eggs, of course, are meat, and come in more convenient-sized packages. At the height of the season they are the cheapest animal food I know of except separated milk. As a rule the men relish them greatly, but half the year they are too expensive for you to use them.

There are lists of a hundred ways of cooking eggs. Probably there are a dozen or more ways practical on the farm. Keep out of ruts in cooking them, just as you must in cooking potatoes. In running it over mentally I find I am cooking potatoes at least twelve or fifteen ways every month. Having on a farm comparatively few kinds, if you are growing your own food you must study variety in preparation. Fortunately milk, eggs and potatoes, produced on nearly all farms, can be cooked in many, many ways, both singly and in combination. Plan to use plenty of eggs when they are cheap, and so save your face when you have to be stingy with them.

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Watching the Market

"Balanced ration" we have heard late and early for the last twenty-five years, till we are tempted to groan whenever we hear the well-worn phrase, even where the "balanced" is purely dietetic; but I want you, Janet, to balance your ration with your bank book in view also. Study foods, both from their nutritive and market values. It will happen now and then that what you are producing is abnormally high, while some other food equally good which you do not produce will be abnormally low. Then haul yours to town at a high price and come back loaded with good stuff bought for a song in a glutted market. Your larder will be none the poorer, and a good-sized figure on the profit side of your ledger will testify to your wisdom.

Get the habit of comparing values in your particular line. Then when the time comes to buy, buy; and when it is to your advantage to sell, sell—and don't wobble till the chance is lost. When you make a mistake don't waste any time crying over spilt milk. I see no reason why a woman should not be as clever in dealing in her own line as the shrewd business man who makes a close study of buying and selling to his own advantage. In the course of a year a good deal of money will pass through your hands, Janet, and once started on the study of markets, I believe you will be wise enough to hold your own with market men who make it a life study to deal with always a little margin in their own favor.

I would say in general that in planning your food there are three things to be kept always in mind—excellence, economy, ease. When I write again I will tell you of some of the best ways I have found for cooking for threshers.

Your affectionate

Aunt Nellie

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COOKING FOR A CREW

By Nellie Kedzie Jones



DEAR JANET: Your sitting hens ran the whole gamut of hen tragedies, but I am glad you are doing better now. You are not the girl to quit—another season you will do far better. You will not have frying chickens for threshers this fall, but no matter. In the old days it took three women three days to get ready for threshers. "I am almost as tired as though I had cooked for threshers" was a household proverb in our mothers' day.

But all that has changed, and while on the subject I might as well devote this letter to the easiest way to cook for a crew on the farm. An old thresherman said to me last fall: "We used to get so much chicken that we grew tired of it, but now we scarcely ever get it." The modern farm wife is finding out that there is an easier way to feed a big crew of hungry men than to pick, pinfeather and dress a lot of chickens.

The bonanza farming of the West warrants threshing crews so large and well-organized that the crews eat in the "cook wagons" and sleep in the "bunk wagons," but in your part of the country, where threshers stay for but three or four meals at most, the farm wife will have to feed them for some time still. And then there are silo fillers, hay balers, harvest hands, wood-sawing crews, and so on, so that you must make up your mind to cook for a crew of from five to fifteen men every now and then.

The whole secret of cooking for a crowd is to have the tools and begin early enough. With a good woman to help, you ought to do it and not be used up either. I have already written you about your "annex table," a light top set together with cleats and screws and the horses just the right height and width to add to your dining-room table, and then the wooden benches in place of so many chairs to own and store.

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I would begin my baking about three days beforehand with a big batch of drop cookies. At the same time the pie crust, if you want to use pie, can be mixed up ready for the wetting and set away in the ice box. Do the bread baking the day before. At the same time boil and bake a whole ham. This will make your cold sliced meat. A big ham ought to boil at least four hours, and bake in a slow oven two more. The night before peel "a heap" of potatoes; allow not less than four large potatoes for each man per meal and a few more for the dish. Set them away, covered with cold water.

Just as soon as you can find out when the threshers will be getting into your neighborhood, even a week or ten days beforehand, I would make up some pork cake or some other moderately rich fruit cake. If you should not need it there will be no loss, for it will keep for some time. Better have too much than too little. Ice cream is one of the easiest desserts for a crowd.

The mixing is practically nothing; one of the men will freeze it and pack it away hours before it is needed. It is easily served. This is why I insisted on what you thought such a preposterously large freezer. Make large helpings.

Hot food promptly served makes more of a hit with a crew of hungry men than something so elaborate the service is slow and the food cold. However, I would have a cold sliced meat so that everybody could begin as soon as seated, for a dozen men are not served in a minute with the hot meat. They eat no more when you have two kinds than when there is but one; all would want a second helping anyway. For the hot meat I would have a big pot roast or a braize of beef. Remember the bigger the piece of meat, the longer the time required for cooking. It is better cooked an hour ahead of time than half an hour underdone. Much so-called tough meat is simply underdone meat.

Plenty of Everything

A big dish of cabbage salad on each end of the table will be appreciated by all hands. By threshing time you will have ripe tomatoes. A big dish of these, sliced and covered with cream salad dressing, is easily prepared and there is no serving, for the men will help themselves, putting them on their plates just as they do the cabbage salad.

Put on three plates of bread and three plates of butter, allowing two slices for each man, and then watch the bread plates for further devourments. So, too, with the coffee, have plenty. Plan at least two cups for each man. A quart of coffee makes five ordinary cups. Put a cup at each plate and then go round with a large pitcher and pour the coffee. Do not try to pour the coffee in the kitchen and serve on a tray; you might get into trouble. Pour the coffee the last thing before the men take their places. Keep your eye on the cups and fill up as often as necessary.

Many a housewife, who has learned just about what her family eats, is all at sea when cooking for a crew. She gets too much of this and too little of that. Her cookery has never been a matter of weights and measures, just cut and try, and in time she gets the habit of about what her family with an extra guest or two will eat. Count noses. Learn to weigh and measure so that you never get down to the minimum. Have plenty, and learn how to work up to advantage any left-overs.

By plenty I do not mean a very great variety, but an abundance of the sorts you do serve. My experience in the country is that on special occasions there are generally too many kinds with all the unnecessary work of cooking and serving. Sauce, for example, is not at all necessary in the kind of a dinner I am describing, for that means extra dishes, whereas the salads do not.

For the supper I would use pretty much the same thing, having plenty of hot gravy,

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large

for you will have cold sliced meat, one or two kinds. To get enough hot food you can reinforce with a hot dish of Spanish rice or a hot corn pudding or a cheese fondue. In case you supply the cheese, one meat will do. For variety I sometimes make a great meat pie from what is left of the noonday meat, with biscuits on top and no bottom crust. Season this well, not forgetting a few onions. This is especially good when the crew is larger than you expected and the meat is in danger of running low.

If the crew is to stay for breakfast you will know it and can put in "a great plenty" of oatmeal. Fill up the fireless cooker, and serve good and hot in large bowls, letting each man help himself from the main dish. Of course you will have plenty of potatoes boiled the night before. If the bread is running low you can supplement with biscuits or corn bread. Do not try muffins; you will not have pans enough. Put a sauce dish of canned fruit at each place and have on the table large plates of drop cookies where the men can help themselves; they go so well with the hot coffee, of which you must have a big supply. Your home-cured ham or bacon with eggs will round out a breakfast that will make the men happy.

The threshing crew used to be the biggest of the year but the silo fillers make a good-sized crowd now, and are to be treated in the same way. The hay balers, however, when the baling is done out in the meadow some distance from the house, can be treated differently. With the dew on the hay they will start late in the morning and so will work late at night, to get in a full day. They will need a lunch at four in the afternoon.

Serving in the Field

The midday meal can be served in the field, picnic-fashion, to the real pleasure of the men, to the saving of their time and the lessening of your own work. Cook your potatoes as usual but do not take them out of the pot. Pour the gravy right into the pot of potatoes and cover tightly and you will find it good and hot after it arrives in the field. Save dishes and save heat is what you must work for in the field serving. On the same principle, do not carve the meat till you get to the men; one of the younger fellows will be glad to do it for you. I have served a mile and a half from the house and got the dinner there hot. Do not try to take bread and butter, it is too fussy. Make plenty of big bread-and-butter sandwiches. Do not wrap them as you would for a pleasure picnic. Put them into a covered kettle or bucket. A packed ice-cream freezer is very handy to transport and the cream makes the best kind of a dessert for the men. Take a milk can full of cold water. *for drinking*

Have washtubs ready in the kitchen and pack the food and what few dishes you will need so that when a man comes with the team and wagon at eleven-thirty he can

load at once. Use tin cups and tin spoons. You and the woman must go with him to keep things from upsetting and to direct the serving. Every man serves himself and you will find it a first-class frolic.

Hold the coffee pot yourself; you do not want any careless helper to scald someone. If the pot is set on the bottom of the wagon the cover will jump off and the coffee slop, so set it onto a bunch of hay or old gunny sacks, but hold onto the handle all the time just the same. If you have not a coffee pot that will hold as much as a bucket of water, then use a large-sized tea-kettle. Put your sugar and cream in glass fruit jars and securely fasten the covers. Use paper plates for the dessert. You can get about five or six of them for a cent if you buy a quantity.

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That four-o'clock lunch is very important when the men are working late. For the large and numerous sandwiches use a filler of canned salmon, mixed quite moist with cream salad dressing. Do not butter the bread. Another good filler is ground home-cured ham mixed with any cold meat or meats and made moist with the salad dressing. Chopped hard-boiled eggs will help piece out the filler stock. Take plenty of hot coffee. Hard-working men need some heat with the cold lunch.

Really this serving in the field is easier part of the time than in the house. There is no table to set and clear off, fewer dishes to wash and less serving, for when it is picnic style in the open air the men will wait on themselves more than they would in the house. The trick of it all is in getting rid of the nonessentials. Not frills but food fills the bill with the farm laborer. The men and horses can better spend the time out of a short nooning resting in the field than journeying to the house and back.

The question of suitable drinks for the men in the field in hot weather is an important one. In the old days grog aplenty was served with striking results, literally striking results, which were not at all on the program. That has mostly passed. Some like buttermilk, others could not be hired to touch it. There is oatmeal water, root beer of a harmless home brew, and so on, but I have found that canned fruit juice, properly diluted with well water—do not have ice water—and toned up with citric acid comes as near being universally acceptable as any drink that I know of. Just now citric acid is abnormally high, but ordinarily it is very inexpensive, when you consider how much farther it will go than lemons.

The next time I write I am going to tell you about some of my experiences in the easy preparation of food.

Your affectionate

Aunt Nellie

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COOKING AND SERVING

Here's Where Common Sense Counts Most

By Nellie Kedzie Jones

Illustrated by Herman L. Drucklieb



At a Picnic the Men

DEAR JANET: To read of the rebellion of the hired man when you wanted him to help you wash was really very funny. It was certainly interesting when it happened, and it made your last letter exceedingly interesting too. It read like a chapter out of my own autobiography. His final unconditional surrender stamps Janet as a diplomat of high order.

However, do not be too puffed up about it, for the fact that Ben always has done it and would have washed had he been home that day, and the really deciding factor, the absence of another hired man to ridicule him for doing "woman's work," turned the scale in your favor. Of course "he had a better time helping you wash than he would have had working alone in the field." I once had a sixteen-year-old boy as dishwasher and general helper in my kitchen. In a lumber camp he would have been called the "cookee." He had helped his mother in the city in a restaurant and was very happy working with me until the hired men began poking fun at him for doing "woman's work," and then it was all over. He was of no further use to me. I advise you to be cautious how you try to harness the hired man, but harness him if you can. We once had one who would even help with the dishes sometimes.

"Many hands make light work," but as you keep no girl, even with as good a helper as dear Ben you must bear the brunt of it alone, so you must make a close study of easy cooking and serving. After you have eliminated all you possibly can there will be times when the work will pile up mountain-high. Take it easy at such times and you will emerge mistress of the situation.

Meats and Desserts.

The easy way for you to cook your meat will be in large quantities. For example, get a big roast of beef into the oven as early in the morning as you can. The first dinner carve off the outside, the inside being too rare. The second day re-roast and serve hot. The third day for a change serve cold slices, and the fourth day make a good Irish stew, hash or croquettes.

A ham, either fresh or cured, can be treated in somewhat the same way. Roast it whole and serve hot; later serve cold slices, then make a lobscouse, and finally, in the case of a cured ham, the bits you pick from the bone will make the most delicious ham omelet, or, ground, a fine sandwich filler for the men when so far afield that they must take a lunch. It is about as easy to cook ten or twelve pounds of meat as two or three, especially as you can be doing other things while the long cooking required is going on. With plenty of cooked meat on hand the cook has such a comfortable sense of security. Even a young cook with a full larder need never feel "rattled," pardoning the term for an unpardonable state of mind.



Cook Your Meat in Large Quantities

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Now for the other end of your meals, namely, the desserts. Right here is where many women waste a lot of precious time. Do not have dessert every day, making it thus a matter of course like the rising and setting of the sun. In that case no one pays any attention to the dessert, being only disappointed when there is none. Serve one sometimes and miss sometimes, and then when the dessert does appear it is noticed and is appreciated as an extra treat. Two hearty courses are always enough on the farm. When you serve a generous salad do not have dessert.

According to the old idea, dessert was a luxury. This was natural, for then meat was cheap and sugar very high. Now meat is very high and sugar cheap comparatively. Get hold of the idea that in the handling of

desserts you have a great opportunity to do some very economical feeding. Milk, eggs, sugar and fruit, singly or in combination, will make the large ma-

majority of your desserts; all are cheap and all but sugar are home-grown. An old cook in a lumber camp told me he fed all the sugar he could get eaten. When he had a crew that liked sweets, he made a low cost record.

Cake by the big dripping-panful is easier than bread. Doughnuts and drop cookies are easy too. Sweet custards are cheap and easy. A big, hot bread pudding uses up your stale bread, and with its abundance of milk, sugar and eggs and an added bit of chocolate is most palatable, nutritious and cheap. The whole world takes on a rosy hue to the farmer full of hot pudding. Never serve pudding and cake or pudding and pie—one kind is enough, but make the serving large. No tablespoonful will do for farmers—give a plateful. Plenty of pudding helps to even up when you have had to be sparing with the meat. Now and then plenty of drop cookies with sauce or uncooked fruit can be served as a quick and easy dessert.

The double dessert is a time-saver. Take ice cream as an example. Let Ben or the man freeze it in the morning before he goes to the field. Set it away and it is all ready for your dinner and supper dessert. When you do make pies—I would not make them very often though—make enough for both dinner and supper. If someone comes in to eat unexpectedly and you happen to have no dessert but would like to honor the occasion, you can do it in a hurry by slicing some bread—stale is as good as any—and putting it into the steamer to steam while you are eating. Put a bowl of canned red raspberries in the oven to be warming, or some cherries, well sweetened. When the time comes for the dessert, butter the slices generously and spread on the fruit, then put on another slice and more fruit, shortcake fashion. I have redeemed a slim meal this way more than once. This dessert is so very easy, quick and simple that you may be afraid of it. Just try it; it is a good one and popular.



Harness Him if
You Can

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Good picture except
the pipe - that must
be cut out.

In serving dessert, as a rule do not get up from the table. Let the men pass their empty plates to you as you pass back the dessert, putting the empty plates on the lower shelf of your wheel table at your side and a little in the rear. This gets the soiled plates out of sight and saves the top shelf for the dessert and clean plates. Plan often to have a dessert that you can put on this shelf at the time when you set the table.

Remember we are not discussing a service aesthetically ideal but such a service as a woman can get through single-handed, a service that does not call for the cook and the waitress, with a butler thrown in for good measure. The trouble

with most good housekeepers who must do all their own work is this: they tackle something so ambitious that if they do get away with it it gets away with them in the end. Attempt only what you know you can do and keep up.

I recall with great pleasure once dining with a young farm couple. When it came time for the dessert that fine, tall, stalwart husband got up with easy grace and real

dignity and carried off the plates as his wife brought on the dessert. Not a word was said, for the teamwork was perfect. I admit it was an unusual proceeding and most men would have botched it; but simply as a matter of fair play between yokefellows, why not? They could not afford to have servants, yet they were too sensible

to give up the pleasure of entertaining because of a false sense of pride. There were a number of guests, the dinner was rather elaborate; under the circumstances I honored my young host for his good sense and chivalry. At a picnic the men are expected to do the brunt of the serving; why not indoors on special occasions? It is always dignified for a man's strength to supplement a woman's weakness.

Once in a while you can serve an easy meal, say on a rainy day when the men have not done much or on a Sunday occasionally,

by providing a big kettle of milk soup, or if you happen to have meat stock on hand, a vegetable soup. Do not serve it in bouillon cups but in bowls. Finish up with bread and butter and jam or with cookies and cheese. On one of those occasions when a big round of dishwashing and wiping would be the last straw that breaks the camel's back just bring out your paper plates.

Canned Soup for Emergencies

Meat and potatoes, some other kinds of vegetables and even pudding, if not too juicy, can be served on these handy and inexpensive paper plates. After the meal slip the whole batch into

the stove, bang down the lid and say: "Let us return thanks!"

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In the winter as you have time and happen now and then to have on hand soup stock, can it for future emergencies. Times always come on the farm when one wants something good and hot in a hurry. Ben may be getting back from town in a rainstorm late at night; perhaps he has to get up very early to catch a morning train; then a bowl of hot soup is a life-saver.

Canned baked beans make a good emergency dish also. Drop a can into hot water and they will be ready by the time the people are ready to sit down. Keep a little stock of canned fish on hand. It is good for chowder or can be creamed quickly. It will be a surprise to many women that even good brown pork gravy—when so well made that there is little or no free grease—makes a

pretty good soup stock, especially for a vegetable soup, when served to hungry, hearty men. Just as a modern factory keeps high-priced chemists working on the transformation of waste into valuable by-products, so you must make a close study of the

creation of good things from your left-overs. Remember the boy who said "There ain't going to be no core" as he munched his apple.

One of the great secrets of easy cooking is to keep plenty always on hand, so there will be no "last minute" scrambling. Hurried cooking is usually poor and wasteful. The hurried and therefore harried woman is very apt to make fool mistakes. Cooking means chemistry and chemistry can never be bluffed. Watch your supply of food and do not let it get too low. Know today what you will serve tomorrow. Some housekeepers have bankrupt pantries; even worse than that, some have empty storerooms and—horrors!—some have to borrow of the neighbors! Keep a generous supply of non-perishable provisions on hand.

Buying in quantities always means a lower price. Even your local retailer will make you a reduction on the unbroken package. That will mean a whole box of soap, 100 bars; canned fruit and vegetables by the case; coffee by the small keg; chocolate by the box, sugar by the sack and so on. I used to urge people to buy their sugar at the low time of the year, but of late only a juggler or a soothsayer would know when that time is, the market has cut up such high jinks.

In my judgment it will not pay you to can either peas or corn; in the great canneries with machinery the labor cost on a can of these is practically nothing. By hand they are tedious and slow to prepare. Put up at home plenty of tomatoes and string beans. They are easy, and buy by the case such peas and corn as you need. A little too much load, and you are worn out and have to hire a girl. A girl's wages, even for one week, would buy a lot of peas or corn.

With a family of children to do the hand work I would advise canning peas and corn, but not in your case. Your constant problem is to pick the thing that will yield the most returns for the labor expended. Be sparing of your labor. In the market labor may be a commodity—in your kitchen it means your own flesh and blood. Take care of yourself.

Affectionately, as always,

Aunt Nellie

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Some of Grandmother's Good Things

She Certainly Was a Born Cook—By Nellie Kedzie Jones

DEAR JANET: I am ashamed that you have had to write the fourth time for some of the good things that your grandmother was famous for. You really ought to be more interested in "general principles than in specific recipes," as is so often asserted in the classroom, but we women are all alike, I suspect. We capture a good recipe when we get a chance and do not bother our heads very much about principles.

I did not get these recipes, in approved story-book fashion, out of a hair-covered trunk studded with brass nails as I rummaged in the garret after grandma's death. No, I wormed them out of her when on a visit there, or even had to find out by watching her cook. The science of cookery has advanced with the other sciences, but do not for a moment, Janet, suppose that good cookery is a new thing. Your grandma was a born cook, and that beats a made cook every time. She was always bored when I tried to get her to write what she called "receipts," but she did help me a great deal when I started housekeeping, and I will gladly pass on some of her good things now and then to you, her granddaughter.

She was famous for her warmed-up potatoes—they were far better than when first cooked. To a quart of cold peeled potatoes she took a tablespoonful of fat, preferably bacon fat, and, seasoning well with salt and pepper, she allowed them to heat slowly as she chopped them with the edge of a tin can with holes in the bottom. When thoroughly heated—most people do not allow time enough in warming up potatoes—she added half a cupful of sour cream—sweet will do, but the flavor of sour is better. She always tasted her potatoes, the seasoning and heating being the essential factors. It takes more time than you think to warm up potatoes properly.

GRANDMOTHER'S FRIED EGGS are still talked about when we older members of the family get together. She fried her ham or bacon first, then dropped the eggs into the fat, adding immediately quarter of a cupful of boiling water, covering tightly to steam-cook the tops of the eggs. As soon as the top of the egg was cooked she transferred it to the platter and then seasoned.

Her Famous Boiled Dinners

In the fall grandmother had a "boiled dinner" about once a week, either a great treat or a great nuisance to the "kinsfolks," for no one was ever neutral on the boiled-dinner issue. In her largest cast-iron pot she put a great chunk of quite lean corned beef, not less than five or six pounds, for hash was to follow. It was set cooking very early in the morning. About half past ten a large cabbage, cut in quarters, half a dozen turnips sliced, a dozen scraped carrots, and potatoes enough for two meals for the family, were added to the boiling corned beef. In a second kettle a goodly mess of onions was boiling, while a third kettle had beets. Just before noon the beef was put on the great platter, potatoes heaped at each end, while the cabbage, turnips and carrots were ranged along the sides. Some of the beets were sliced and dropped into vinegar; the onions were creamed and served separately.



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Bread and butter completed the meal. That night for supper a vegetable hash, one part beets, two parts potatoes, chopped separately, were tossed together lightly and warmed up in butter, served with slices of cold corned beef. The following two mornings corned-beef hash was in order for breakfast. This combination furnished a maximum of eating for a minimum of cooking.

FRIED SALT PORK WITH CREAM GRAVY. Slice fat salt pork, not too thick, and put in cold water if it is to freshen overnight. In hot water an hour's time will freshen sufficiently. Dip the slices in flour which

has been well peppered, fry and turn till both sides are crisped a golden brown. For the gravy pour off the excess fat, usually about half, and add separated milk. To each cupful of milk used add a tablespoonful of flour rubbed smooth with cold milk for thickening. When boiled thoroughly, taste for seasoning. The old Yankee way was to serve this with potatoes cooked with their jackets on.

BLUEBERRY PUDDING. This is a three-fold recipe: First the dough plain makes the hot muffin that Ben was so pleased with when you were here at Easter. By adding fresh blueberries you have the blueberry muffin; and by elaborating still more you get the famous old Yankee "blueb'ry puddin'." In the low corner of Uncle Eben's south pasture we used to get great quantities of blueberries.

THE MUFFIN DOUGH is made as follows: One egg, one cupful of milk, one tablespoonful of sugar, two cupfuls of flour, four tablespoonfuls of melted butter or three tablespoonfuls of melted lard, three teaspoonfuls of baking powder and one teaspoonful of salt will make twelve muffins in those pans I gave you.

Add one and a half cupfuls of fresh blueberries to the above and bake in the same pans to make blueberry muffins.

Add a third of a cupful of sugar to the second recipe, bake in the same pans and serve with sweet sauce and you have your grandmother's famous blueberry pudding.

"INJUN PUDDIN'." Boil three cupfuls of milk; when boiling sift in one cupful of corn

meal, stirring rapidly, cook about five minutes; cool and add one beaten egg, one teaspoonful of cinnamon, two teaspoonfuls of salt, one and a half cupfuls of brown sugar, one pint of cold milk, one tablespoonful of butter; cover well, bake slowly for three hours. This pudding is greatly improved by adding one quart of sweet apples peeled and cut into eighths. Stir occasionally while baking. Serve with cream. It is especially good with ice cream.

At home as a boy Ben always had Graham bread on the table. You had better write his mother for her recipe. There are a good many different ones, but the one your grandmother worked out herself I like better than any other I have tried. When grandmother was a young woman the "Graham movement" swept the country. "Grahamites" were as thick as blackberries in some localities. Absurd claims were made for Graham bread and, as it was not a cure for all the ills human flesh is heir to, a reaction unfortunately set in. Graham bread is good, very good; due to its laxative qualities it is almost indispensable for some people, so I would plan to have it on the table most of the time, but I would use a variety of recipes and in that way get more of it eaten. Most people tire of it unless it is served in different ways.

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GRANDMOTHER'S GRAHAM BREAD. Half a cake of dry yeast, soaked in half a cupful of tepid water; into three cupfuls of hot water beat four cupfuls of white flour, one tablespoonful of sugar, one tablespoonful of salt, two tablespoonfuls of lard. Add the yeast, let rise overnight, then add four

cupfuls of Graham flour, half a cupful of sugar, one cupful of shaved nut meats. Put at once into two tins four inches by eight inches on the bottom and not less than three inches deep. Let rise till the pans are full, then bake slowly. When beginning to get stale a good way to work it off is to slice, dry thoroughly in the oven, and serve as a bread-and-milk lunch, with a little cheese on the side as a relish.

Now, Janet, I will let you into a bit of a secret. You will raise

little beef on your farm and cure still less, but you can have chipped beef with cream gravy just the same, through a little culinary magic. Take the remnants of your home-cured pork, hams and shoulders. After cooking, it is little trouble to pick all the meat from the bones. Grind only the lean meat, keeping out all the telltale pork fat. Put the ground meat into your spider, and brown it a little in butter. Pour in as much milk as you need, about half a cupful a person. For each cupful of milk add about one tablespoonful of flour rubbed up with half a tablespoonful of butter. As the meat and milk boil stir in the thickening. If you want to stir in an egg or two use a little less thickening.

Cakes to Keep on Hand

Please bear in mind, Janet, that a "spoonful" now means a level spoonful and not a heaped spoonful as in grandmother's day. However, I have worked over all these recipes and proportioned them on the level spoonful.

DROP COOKIES. The following recipe makes ten dozen cookies. They will keep a month, if you put a lock and key on them. Six eggs, one cupful of buttermilk or sour milk, four cupfuls of sugar, seven cupfuls of flour, seven teaspoonfuls of cinnamon, five teaspoonfuls of cloves, seven teaspoonfuls of salt, two teaspoonfuls of soda, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder, one and three-quarter cupfuls of melted lard, two pounds of seeded raisins, snipped. Drop a heaping teaspoonful, allowing space for it to spread. Bake in a rather quick oven. Store in a stone jar or tin bread box, packed with paper between the layers.

INEXPENSIVE FRUIT CAKE—a good keeper. Four cupfuls of sugar, six eggs, beaten together, half a cupful of molasses, three cupfuls of thirty per cent cream—if it tests higher dilute with a little milk—three teaspoonfuls of salt, six teaspoonfuls of cinnamon, three teaspoonfuls of cloves, one teaspoonful of mace, two teaspoonfuls of soda, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder, four cupfuls of seeded raisins—snipped—half a pound of citron—shaved—seven cupfuls of flour.

This recipe will make three loaves, baked in bread pans four inches by eight inches on the bottom and not less than three inches deep, or in a large round milk pan of equivalent volume. The three-inch thickness must be constant for a good bake, taking about an hour and a half in an oven of 250 to 270 degrees Fahrenheit.

Your grandmother used to make a cheese pudding of which your father is extremely fond: Two cupfuls of dry bread—diced—two and a half cupfuls of milk, yolks of four eggs, one and a half cupfuls of ground cheese, two teaspoonfuls of salt, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Beat all thoroughly together, add the stiffly beaten whites of four eggs, pour into a buttered baking dish, set into a pan of hot water, bake twenty to thirty minutes or till stiffened all through. Serve at once.

I will take up entertaining on the farm in my next letter.

Your affectionate

Aunt Nellie

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COMPANY COMING

*Entertaining is Not So Much Work
When You Get the Right Idea of It—*

DEAR JANET: Your last letter was packed full of anxiety. "Scared stiff" is a phrase I will forgive this time, for usually you are choice in the use of English. "Company coming" has scared almost into paralysis many a homemaker far more experienced than you. But why take it so hard? Entertaining is really great fun and not so much work when you get the right idea of it. Of course you were too young to remember anything about it, but we older ones were always charmed by the easy, graceful way in which your own dear mother could entertain.

Some women take two weeks to get ready for company, and a month to recover after the guests are gone. What's the use? I myself have been "entertained" on some occasions so vigorously and persistently, different members of the family relaying at the task, that finally I was entertained into a hard headache. Not a domestic upheaval, little short of an explosion, but a simple expansion of the usual family routine, making room for a plate or two more at table, is all that is really necessary. Remember the advice of the old-time photographer: "Now look natural"; so in entertaining, "live natural"; then your guests will not be burdened with the thought that they are putting you to a world of work and worry.

Sensible Kind of People

You write that Ben's oldest sister and her husband, neither of whom you have ever seen, are coming from the West on a visit. It is lovely of you to have Ben's mother and his unmarried sister come at the same time. I knew them all before you were born, Janet; they are the sensible kind of people that will have all the better time and respect you all the more if you have no "fuss and feathers" about it. Let the women help you when they want to, and let your brother-in-law go to the field a good deal with Ben. If they had to sit in the parlor in state and be "entertained" they would be bored to death. It is the special prerogative and high privilege of Ben's mother to do all she can for her boy while she is with you; so save his mending and darning for her. She will not think you have been neglecting him when you tell her you have been saving this work for her because she can do it better than you can. So with the sisters, if they can help about the house in the easy things and visit as they work, they will all be happier, for then they will not feel at all that they are burdening you. When freed from that haunting thought, the undoing of so many guests, they will have a happy time.

One summer two cousins visited me and made it an easy summer for me, for they helped far more than they hindered. Three pairs of brisk hands made quick shift with the work, and so we had our afternoons in part and all of our evenings together. It was ideal, and so it will be with you four

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Let the Women Help You When
They Want To



Have Plenty of Cooking Done in Advance,
Cooky Jar Full and Cake Box Loaded

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women. My, how rich Ben will be in "women folks"!

Have plenty of cooking done in advance, cooky jar full and cake box loaded, and then in a day or two, when the newness has worn off, have Ben's mother make some of the dishes he has been telling you about for the last year. This combination will be pleasant for everyone. The women would rather take care of their own rooms than not. They will be on their guard not to seem too forward in your home, but if you will only suggest, this and that, they will be very glad to fall in, I know. Here are a few of the things they can do for you, saving your time for the things which you only can do: Going to the orchard for the apples, gathering vegetables in the garden, picking and shelling the peas, snapping the beans and husking the corn, feeding the hens, and hunting in the hay mow for the nest of the sly hen that persists in getting out of the yard. If they will wipe the dishes and set the table, you will have plenty of time for good cooking. Some of the very best visits of my life have been while I was wiping the dishes for my hostess or while I was washing the dishes as my guest wiped. Our hearts open when our hands help.

Both of Ben's sisters are good drivers—let them take a horse and drive to town to get what you need. This saves time for you and is fun for them; going somewhere for something is always more satisfying than aimless driving. Have some of your gingham dresses ready, for you will want to go berrying and their town dresses are impossible in a blackberry patch. Try a little picnic in the berry patch, Ben and the hired man and your brother-in-law appearing about eleven o'clock; that will be in good time to make your camp fire and help fry the bacon and eggs and make the coffee. Let Ben have a couple of hours nooning and make his brother-in-law work enough to pay for it.

Of course you will not overdo the work idea as did my Norwegian neighbor who took his wife's brother out into the "slashing" and set him to grubbing stumps at six o'clock in the morning in July, and set the pace for him till twelve o'clock. Light occupation prevents that bored feeling, and is really, therefore, more restful than idleness. Light reading, too, has the same happy result. Yesterday I sent you by freight a big box of magazines and illustrated papers.

I would not get up companies; Ben's people are there solely to see Ben and get acquainted with you. While they might enjoy your neighbors, they would, after all, feel cheated to give up you for them. Relatives, especially the "in-laws," do not

want to be made company of. They must be made to feel that they are part and parcel of the family, and as proof of their full adoption the usual family routine is disturbed as little as possible. "Just among ourselves, in the family" sounds so comforting to an "in-law." However, plan to let Ben and his mother have a good deal of time together when you are not there; so too with the sisters. He was theirs before he was yours. Give him to them part of the time. It is much easier than not for mother-in-law and daughter-in-law to grow jealous of each

other. You will so manage that mother and sisters will not feel they have lost one bit of Ben, they have only gained another daughter and sister. Do this, Janet, and your entertaining of the "in-laws" will be grandly successful. Another summer, when the people from the far West who come at rare intervals will not be there, it would be well to have in the neighbors to get acquainted with Ben's mother and sister.

It never rains but it pours. Besides the family you have other guests coming later. They are city folks who will kill two birds with one stone, getting in a good visit with you and Ben and making an outing of it at the same time. You will have to proceed differently in some ways with them. The most comfortable place for them in the morning will be in bed, and that arrangement will be more comfortable for you, too. So do not have them get up to breakfast—let them sleep as long as possible. Once upon a time I thought I had to be up bright and early for that farm breakfast to avoid making trouble, and so I "cat-napped" all night lest I oversleep. I have learned wisdom. A guest in bed is the most comfortable guest I know of, and the hostess is at that time the most care free.

I have had city guests protest vigorously that they were very early risers at home, and that they would be up for breakfast with the family. A city professional man

who was one of the loudest protestants appeared very sheepishly next morning between nine and ten o'clock, declaring he had not had a night's sleep like that since he was a child. Have it understood at the start they are not to come to the early breakfast when the hired help eats. The light breakfast that city people usually eat is far less trouble to get than having them round at so early an hour, and as the time between their late breakfast and the heavy midday meal is short at best, do not bother to get much. After the second morning you will hear no protests. They will take to that extra two or three hours' sleep like a duck to water.

As to food, do not try to get them what they have at home. They will enjoy a change more. Freed from the strain of the city, sleeping every night longer than they ever thought possible, just lazing round in the open air and sunshine, the urbanite develops such an appetite that he is so wolfishly hungry he can scarcely wait from one meal till the next.

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He apologizes for the second helping, and still more so for the third, but takes it nevertheless. Feed him just good country fare; but see to it that plenty of fruit and vegetables are worked in, and there will be no danger of over-eating. Show the city guests where the cooky jar is, and where bread and butter may be found, and tell them to help themselves whenever they feel like it. During the long summer day they often feel the need of a bite between meals, but hate to bother you. If they can help themselves they will do it.

Avoid visiting too long at a stretch. That is why some people declare visiting the hardest work they ever do. Animated company means a certain brain and nerve wear, while dull company is still more of a drain. Go and have your nap after the midday meal, even if your guests "never sleep in the daytime." I have had such guests whom I have persuaded at least to lie down and rest a little without sleeping. Before long sounds of very audible slumber issued from the guest room. The reason for going to the country is to get relaxation, rest, refreshment—in a word, re-creation, and it is your business as hostess to see that they do get it.

You write that you and Ben have been debating what he ought to do when his special chum and his wife appear; should he give up work so as to devote himself to them? My advice is to plan a day's outing

for all once, maybe twice, during their stay, and shorten the afternoons a little, but otherwise keep up his work, for this is his rush season. Had Ben remained in the city as a bank clerk, and you as a teacher, your friends would not have entertained for a moment the idea that they could take you from your regular duties. The fine art of entertaining is, after all, the rare gift of having friends round who are no bother to you. It is your regular life they feel honored in being let into, and not some over-strained luxuriousness especially set up for the occasion like the made-up tragedy before the movie camera. It is only the uncultured mind that mistakes a splurge for hospitality.

Your postscript pleased me. You say there are four young couples who have entertained you and Ben, and as they are not at all likely to go home for Thanksgiving you would entertain them then, only the thought makes you "shiver" as to what kind of a Thanksgiving dinner you could cook. You can do it, Janet, if you will make it simple enough and begin soon enough. Even now take your pencil and make up the menu for a two-course dinner. Then begin practice cooking on each dish, only in smaller quantities. You will want to roast a turkey, but that is too big for your family, so get an eight or nine pound fowl instead and roast that for an experiment. Do this two or three times between now and Thanksgiving, and by allowing a little more time for the turkey, which will be larger, you will come out all right. Do not try anything at that dinner that you have not already done successfully in practice. If you care to send me the menu I would be glad to suggest what I can in the way of getting at it. Cook all you can the day before. Have the turkey ready to stuff and the dressing mixed ready for the wetting. Set the table the evening before—Ben and the hired man can eat breakfast in the kitchen. Engage a woman for the day before and that day, but if you cannot find a woman you can do it alone, for Ben will help you serve. When the dinner is over leave everything and go in and visit with your guests—the dishes can wait.

Affectionately,

Aunt Nellie

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HELPING THE HIRED

A Good Understanding at the Start Saves Friction Later—By Nellie Kedzie Jones



Plenty of Interesting Stories and Good Farm Papers Will Make the Lot of the Hired Man Happier

DEAR JANET: So there has been a flare-up and your good hired man has "quit," according to his version, and has been discharged according to Ben's report of the unfortunate affair. I am so sorry but not much surprised, for hired men are about as independent a lot as I ever had to deal with. That the "hobo harvest hand," engaged for a few days only, should have left between sundown and sunrise with Ben's best suit and watch does not surprise me either, but these things are all in the day's work on a farm. I recall overhearing a hired man say angrily: "I'll show the boss I ain't scairt of my job." With more jobs than hired men, really he holds the whip hand in an argument.

But cheer up, Janet, and tell Ben to digest the two painful experiences so as to get the most wisdom and strength out of them, for if he follows farming long he will have to deal with all sorts of men. With his high standards and his scrupulous regard for the rights of others, it may be he expected too much of his man. Don't expect too much and you will not be badly disappointed. Were there children in the family it would be vastly more difficult to get help that would satisfy you. However, this trouble with a neighboring farmer's son should be straightened out as opportunity arises to be neighborly from time to time. In the country neighbors are too few and far between to let a misunderstanding or even a positive fault turn one from an ally into an enemy. Of all men the farmer must practice the old motto: "Bear and forbear."

Getting on With Other Folks

Were Ben starting even a small factory somewhere in the city, he would run up against labor troubles the first thing. It all gets back to the age-long problem of getting on with other folks. Live and let live will win on the farm as surely as in the commercial world.

Having the help live right in the home with us is where we farmer-folks have it hard. In the city a man appears when the whistle blows and disappears when it blows again, and that is the end of it. But not so on the farm. The hired man is at the table three meals a day, unless the place is big enough to have a tenant house and a family man can be contracted for by the year. And then, oh Janet, a year is an awfully, awfully long time, when waiting to get rid of an undesirable citizen without a lawsuit.

Most of your helpers, both indoors and out, will be the children of neighboring farmers, for fortunately you live in a part of the United States where rural life is not broken into classes, landlord and tenant. The one is prosperous, the other poor; but the social distinction is even greater than the financial. You are in a democratic region of small or middle-sized farms, for the most part worked by the owners themselves, and that is the real ideal of farm life.

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When the stalwart son of a modern Cincinnati, in your part of the country, comes for the season to help Ben, he will eat at your table or he will not eat at all. For the present accept it and make the best of it, and plan to get a good tenant house built on the beautiful knoll east of the big barn, just as soon as Ben can get ahead enough to build a good comfortable house that will appeal to a man and his wife. You do not want any "shanty folks" on your farm.

The hired man is a human being. He has his likes and his dislikes, his prejudices and, I am glad to say, his ambitions. Many of our successful farmers, leading citizens in their own communities, hired out while they were saving enough money to make the start as farmers on their own account. All honor to

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such! That kind of young man is bound to leave you in a year or two, but I would rather have him for a short time and then try to get another of the same type than to have a man who has no ambition, who is content to be nothing for all time but a wage earner. Such a one will take no interest in farming or the management of stock, and will do as little as he can and not lose his place. Yes, he may be "steady," but it is the steady dead level of inferiority and inefficiency. Avoid him!

I know a farmer and his wife who have had as helpers five married couples, and all of those couples are now living in that same neighborhood on their own land, and are good neighbors too. Of these ten persons, all but one were foreigners or the children of foreign born. The native American is quite apt to have a rather exalted idea of his own importance and worth, and he is often restless, with an eye always out for a job at bigger pay. The foreigner or his son, frugal, industrious and ambitious to get "a piece of land" right in your neighborhood, makes an excellent hired man, if well treated, though in a year or two you will lose him. Tell Ben I think he had better be on the watch for that kind of helper. If he has a willing, strong wife who can help you with the heavy work when you need her, Janet, so much the better. The unmarried man is much more apt to be a "floater."

The hired man in coming to your home has no idea he is entering a school of manners and you and Ben, if you are wise—and you are—will never let him get that impression from anything you say or do; but, nevertheless, he will be daily and hourly in a very real school of manners. Once I was admiring a beautiful horse, and his proud Kentucky owner said with the enthusiasm of a boy: "That horse hasn't a vice, his manners are perfect." It certainly was not by precept that the horse acquired "perfect manners." It must have been only by association. However, alone in a friendly way, Ben can tell the man that he is to take a bath at least once a week and you must provide a place that will be thoroughly comfortable in even the coldest weather; and if you remember to have plenty of warm soft water ready at the regular time he will so enjoy it that very soon he will get the habit of bathing often.

Clean Clothes are Cheaper Than Dirty Ones

We once had a man who had never been guilty of the folly of bathing in cold weather, a "wash" after threshing being the sum total of his yearly ablutions. Soon he was coming smiling from his bath with the remark: "This bathing business is great stuff." Now he lets nothing cheat him of his daily bath. The same transformation

head of fresh clothes and takes the pains to keep them cleaner. It was his misfortune, not his fault, that he grew up in a family ignorant of the glories of the bathtub. Really it is less trouble to wash three shirts reasonably soiled than one which has been worn a whole week in hot weather until the sweat and grime are so imbedded in the very fabric of the cloth that it must be rubbed into shreds to get it decently clean.

The hired man must be encouraged to buy more clothing so that he can make several changes between washings. When you show him it is cheaper to wear clean clothes than dirty ones, he will make the slight increase in expenditure, buying several shirts and sufficient socks at a time. When we were washing only once in two weeks I discovered that a girl I had was washing her things twice a week. I told her she must quit it as she was wasting time, and then the secret was out. She had but one change, but had a commendable pride in keeping the fact to herself.

Keep His Schedule Elastic

The hired man's table manners are not as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. A good example puts a steady, though silent pressure on him for the better. Then again the friendly and tactful word from you or Ben in private will bear fruit. Again and again I have seen a raw, awkward lad, most uncouth rather than rude, for his intentions were good, responding daily to a better environment. He may lick his fork and then spear a slice of bread on the bread plate with it, but say in a kindly way, when he is in a good-natured mood and no third person is present, that it is better to take it with the fingers and you hope he will hereafter, and I have no doubt he will follow the suggestion when he can think of it. Several tellings may be needed but soon he will get the better habit. "A call-down before folks" is resented quickly enough, but once convinced of the thorough good will of the home where he is the helper for the time being, and the hired man will be responsive. It pays to help the hired man. If you win his loyalty he can and does show himself more helpful in a great variety of ways. If he gets the idea that the family is "stuck up" and is "looking down on him" he grows surly. Then the case is hopeless.

The hired man hates to have his regular routine rudely shaken. We are all creatures of habit. To do the same thing over and over in just the same way takes less thinking than a new process involves, and real thinking is what the most of us want to dodge, if we can. But in a small group like yours, Janet, it is often necessary for one to

help another, and as on special occasions you have driven on the hayrack and raked hay when a rain was coming and Ben was short-handed, and the like, so not only Ben, but the hired man also, must hold himself in readiness to help you.

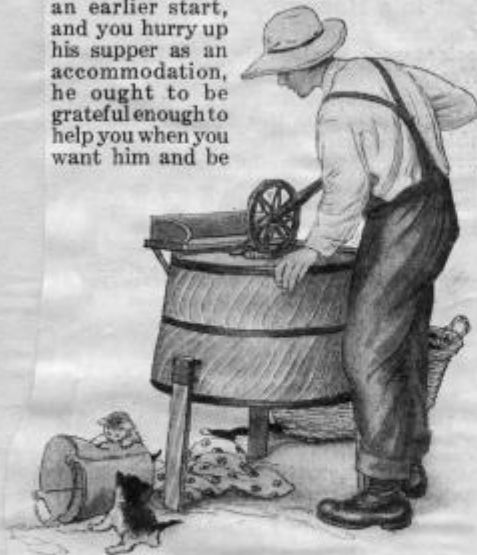
You will remember in an earlier letter I advised you even to let a batch of bread spoil and then bury it in the garden rather than lose some great big thing that collided suddenly with the baking. Well,



On Special Occasions You Have Driven on the Hayrack

some of the good homemakers have been suggesting: "Have the hired man bake it rather than let it spoil." Very good, but that means that you and the hired man have already learned to "change works."

If Ben lets the hired man off earlier now and then, sometimes even doing his chores that he may get an earlier start, and you hurry up his supper as an accommodation, he ought to be grateful enough to help you when you want him and be



The Hired Man is Your Assistant as Well as Ben's
When You Do Not Have a Girl

cheerful about it too. He has his routine, but it should be distinctly understood that he is on call; that Ben anytime and you in emergencies can vary his routine. You do not keep a girl regularly and so the hired man is your assistant as well as Ben's when you do not have a girl. A good understanding at the start saves friction later.

The Best Man Will Go Soonest

A good reading lamp, with plenty of interesting stories and good farm papers, will make the lot of the hired man happier and will at the same time make more of a man of him. Few of our hired men, though, have had the reading habit when they came to us. We have succeeded in starting some, and others we could not get to read; but I would try it pretty faithfully, for I know of nothing so interesting and valuable. The only outlay will be another good reading lamp. Books, papers and magazines you already have in abundance. The easiest thing is the personals in the local paper. He knows the towns and many of the persons mentioned and from that as a stepping-stone he may be moved on to stories and more serious reading.

You and Ben must brace yourselves for this—the better the hired man is, the surer you are to lose him; for the young fellow with the right kind of stuff in him will want "to go for himself" sooner or later. As soon as he is prepared, help launch him, though that cuts you out of a good man a season sooner than might have happened if you had selfishly held onto him. The golden rule always wins in the end. He will steer his younger brother to your farm instead of the city at bigger wages. Later I will write of the hired girl.

Affectionately,

Aunt Nellie

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HELPING THE HIRE

How to Get Her Confidence and Keep Her



Help Her Plan Her Clothes

DEAR JANET:
Umpiring when a man and his wife have had an argument is not the rôle I covet, but in this case I am doing it; and, Janet dear, "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now," for I am finding for Ben. Really you both have flattered me by leaving so important a matter to my decision.

You say, Janet, you cannot afford a hired girl this fall and anyway you don't want one round. Ben says he cannot afford not to have a hired girl, for all the long, hot summer you had to stick close to that cook-stove. You are growing thin, and he does not want to lose even a little of you. He has boiled the arguments down to this on the money—he will have to hire a second man to get the fall work done in time unless you get a girl so that you can come out into the open and help him. A girl's wages are considerably less than a man's. Surely his reasoning is sound there.

Now for the health end of it: a lot of time out in the open with Ben, engaged in the lighter kinds of farm work, will put you in fine fettle for the long, cold winter ahead, when you must be shut in so much of the time. Ben is right again; so, Janet, just surrender gracefully and let the neighbor girl come as Ben has planned, even if she is not very efficient. I know her manners will mend fast enough in sympathetic association with you.

You Shall Turn Cowboy

Now I must expose Ben as a double-dealer, for he tampered with the jury when I saw him last week in the city. He showed me a number of ways you could be especially helpful to him outside this fall. I, too, suggested some ways you could save him if you had a girl. He must keep the cows in the south pasture this fall, and taking them in the morning to pasture delays him; and so in the afternoon—he has to leave the field early to get the cows.

You are to take the pony and turn cowboy. I am sending you my saddle; I have used it very little, late years, but you will find it easy enough. And very important are those business trips to the city which you can make in Ben's place while he is hustling the work along on the farm. Yes, it would be poor economy in purse and in health and happiness for you not to have the hired girl come this fall.

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In one of my letters last spring we discussed the girl's room, and I suggested that you let her follow her own taste in decorating it. Allow chromos, picture advertisements, colored postals galore, anything, for it is her room, not yours; but see to it that it is kept as scrupulously neat as your own room. Maybe right there she is laying the foundation of her own future housekeeping. While she is your helper, I want you to be every day her helper in the numberless ways a woman of your advantages is prepared to be. Every woman, no matter what her station in life may be, ought to plan for a home of her own some day. You do not know how long this particular girl will stay, but the time will soon come when you ought to

keep a girl all the time. Even in a short time you can give a girl a strong impulse for good housekeeping and good cookery.

Set the girl to cooking at once. Stand over her till she cooks it your way. This may take more time right at the start than to do it yourself, but the sooner she masters the commoner dishes, the sooner will you be liberated from the kitchen. Give her a reason for what you do, and in turn expect her to reason about her work. Even a very ordinary girl, when she once puts her mind on her work, will make excellent progress. If she dawdles along, her mind woolgathering, jar her out of that habit at once. Possibly some things may be done mechanically, but cooking never. Most women prefer to cook, dodging the dishwashing and wiping; but play fair with the hired girl, helping with the dishes. Some women, very efficient and executive, do all the important things and so keep their girls inefficient. Push the girl ahead just as fast as you can.

Give Her Some Rest

Big wages I would not pay. Give just the "going wage" of that neighborhood, such as the other farmers are paying; but in services as instructor, inspirer and sympathetic associate I would try to make it well worth her while to stay with you. To pay above the market is bad business, and the beneficiaries of that bad business are tempted to try to take advantage of you whenever they can. You do not want the reputation of being an "easy mark." However, every day, I would do my best to make her worth "big wages," should she want to go to the city as a domestic. I had one girl who, when she could do a little simple cookery, said: "I now can cook; I get me by the city a job." I was very glad to have her leave, for that had been her attitude all along; but a girl with the right kind of stuff will want to stay with you when she is getting real advantages of a personal nature. I have had girls who, when they felt the time had come for them to seek a place with more pay, have begged me to let a younger sister or a personal friend have the place. That I think was creditable to us both.

You will take a real interest in her family and make her feel that if she wants her younger brothers and sisters to visit her, they are very welcome. A sandwich will always make a hit with the youngsters. She may have a beau, and will want to tell you the whole story. Very well; a real love story at short range may be as interesting as a manufactured one in a book.



A Hired Girl is Entitled to Her Fun

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At any rate I would take pains to be interested, for it is more wholesome to have her confidential than secretive. She had better come to you for advice than go where she might be badly advised. If she wants her sweetheart to visit her at your house, give her a place

where she may receive him. However, I would not be imposed on by too frequent visits.

If she would like to have your advice, help her plan her clothes. A real interest here will warm a girl's heart sooner than anything I know. I even knew one woman who cut out the shirt waists for her girl and helped her with the making. The glad and grateful girl on her part more than made it up in increased interest and vim in her household duties, thus making reciprocity a reality. An inexperienced girl does not know what to buy nor where to buy. She wastes her money. She is grateful for the kindly interest and help of an older woman who has had a wide experience.

A nap in the afternoon is as much appreciated and as much needed by the maid as by the mistress. The day on the farm is long at both ends. Give her at least an hour to herself, but with the understanding that part of it is for a nap. Never plan to "keep a girl busy," to "fill her time," meaning that as soon as one job is done another stands in line waiting for her. That sort of a program makes a drudge and a dawdler. "What on earth is the sense of hurrying up if I am never to be done anyway?" she reasons, and she is right in such a conclusion. Set a reasonable amount of work as her task, encourage her to concentrate her mind on her work, speeding up her hands that she may get through and rest or do something that she considers a treat.

Hustling a Job

Just as the mower or the cream separator must be speeded up to a certain number of revolutions per minute to work at all, so must we get up a certain momentum to do our best work; but this momentum means rest periods at stated intervals. Get up so much steam that woolgathering and castle-building in Spain will be impossible. The ability and the habit of hustling a job through are two of the finest things you can drill into your hired girl. She will not be long in her own home without rising up to call you blessed. So make sharp, definite tasks, and periods short enough so that she may maintain real momentum while "working" and then do her resting with a clear conscience.

A hired girl is entitled to her fun as much as a city "servant" is to hers. The town girl gets a chance to have some fun every night in the week. On the farm there are no movies; the parks and beaches, if there are any, are too thinly populated to be any fun; so on "The Fourth," "County Fair Week" or when the circus comes along, if she does not get an outside invitation to go, then you and Ben had better go and take her. Once there she will find some of her friends, while you and Ben do whatever you want. Part of the time, "having fun on the farm" means getting away from it.

Don't let the girl waste food. Often choice food is scraped into the garbage pail because the girl is too lazy to cover it securely and take it to the cellar or find a place for it in the ice box. She must save everything that can be worked up into something nice for the table.

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Show her how to work miracles and make the left-over into something better than it was when it first saw the table. When she has made a good stroke in utilizing some remnants, concocting a dish wholly original as far as she is concerned, compliment her and let the others know who made it. I simply would not have waste in my kitchen.

I know a city woman who made this arrangement with her cook: When the monthly bills fell below a

certain mark, the cook got a bonus above her wages, the bonus growing the more she lowered the bill. Thus the cook had a cash interest in the family living expenses. She saved on coal, gas, groceries, laundry and meat. That homemaker had a real business head. Measuring motives once more, why should the cook bother herself to save when she gets just as much for wasting? On a farm where you raise so large a part of the provisions, it would be impossible to follow this woman's plan exactly. However, I would try to make it profitable for the hired girl to make herself extra work to save for you. Share the saving with her in some way. Frankly, Janet, I have not solved this; but I want you to be thinking about it, and when you get any practical idea on the subject, please share it with me.

If the girl likes hens it might be well to let her care for them, giving her a share above the cost of keep. This would initiate her into some simple accounting, a most valuable lesson. "Figures won't lie"—I add, "Liars won't figure,"



Stand Over Her Till She Cooks it Your Way

but all honest people ought to keep a few accounts to see that everyone gets his due. Give her a little account book and pencil. It will please her. Show her how you keep yours. Encourage her to figure up every month to find out where her money has gone. Praise her when she shows a saving.

Upon rereading this letter, Janet, it seems very formal, almost pharisaic, but you know what I mean. We are not trying to be conscience for others, we are only trying to help the girls who help us in our homes.

Always affectionately,

Aunt Nellie

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Getting On With the Neighbor

If a Man Would Have Friends He Must be Friendly—

DEAR JANET: Deacon Simms snoring peacefully in the corner of his pew, with his wig askew over one ear, seemed to be too much for your risibilities. Nor was it conducive to a worshipful mood to have to sit in the wake of a bonnet "that must have come out of the ark." Perhaps, as you suggest, I saw that very bonnet when as a girl I went there to church. Farther on in your spicy letter you record the rumors of neighborhood rows, the feud that has developed in the school district, while still farther on you mention some of the peculiarities of the neighbors.

I am glad, indeed, that you write me so fully just what is in your mind. While I know, Janet dear, there is not one particle of censoriousness in all this, I almost wish you had not written at all about the neighbors, for putting such things down in black and white will so crystallize them in your mind that you will find it very hard to forget them. But forget them you must, if you are to get on happily in the new neighborhood where you and Ben have permanently cast your lot.

From our neighbors, like our shadows, we can never escape, so make the most of them. Paint them graceful, never grotesque. Old Robinson Crusoe, on his desert island, doting on his dog and parrot, almost starved to death for neighbors till the black savage, Friday, came. Then a fundamental human want was filled. He and Friday neighbored. Life was normal once more. There was somebody to talk to, somebody to talk about.

Now you and Ben have moved onto Uncle Eben's old farm with the determination of making it your permanent home. You appreciate that from now on the bigger part of your social intercourse must be with your country neighbors. You have come prepared to meet them halfway in friendliness and helpfulness. I want to say at the outset that while these country neighbors are quite different externally from the city people you have always associated with they are quite as good. In fact I wish that city people averaged as high in the sterling qualities that make for character. Many a fine gentleman in top-boots and overalls have I been privileged to know.

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Relieved from the pressure of the mass, that reduces humanity to the likeness of peas from the same pod, the country man develops in his own way. The rural community is full of people who are "characters," it is true, but they have traits of unsuspected strength. The more you know your country neighbors, Janet, the more interesting they will be and the more you will like them; so forget the things that now seem peculiar.

Forget that you are newcomers. Hypnotize yourself into the firm belief that you have always lived on Uncle Eben's farm and that you always will live there. Learn to say "We," "Our," "Us," whenever speaking of neighborhood concerns. I have known people after living for years in a place to be in the habit of saying "Back home," "You people," frequently prefacing their remarks with "If we stay here"

or "If we don't sell," and the like. Such foolish aloofness is resented by the people loyal to the neighborhood in which they live and believe.

Their resentment reasons: "If you persist in feeling distinct from us, very well; we will take you at your word and regard you as an alien, with us but not of us." No woman ought to live in a neighborhood that she cannot whole-heartedly adopt, and in turn she has the right to be cordially adopted by the neighborhood. Identify yourself at the very start with your neighborhood. Do it unreservedly, otherwise you are in exile.

Nothing in holy writ is truer in the country than this: If a man would have friends he must show himself friendly. You and Ben could not be otherwise than friendly if you tried, but friendliness in city and country has different ways of showing itself. Catch onto the country code as soon as you can. For one thing, it is good form in the country to borrow and lend, for there is no store just round the corner to be phoned to, with a delivery wagon waiting at the door. Do not be surprised to have a neighbor phone Ben to bring along his spading fork and throw it off at the gate as he goes to the factory. If Ben has to use his fork himself he will say so and the neighbor will take no offense. But the chances are nine out of ten he will not need it and so he will gladly take it along. Ben will return the compliment in a few days by phoning his neighbor to bring along his two-inch auger and leave it at the gate as he goes to town. This is not "nervy" in the country, just neighborly. It shows a real desire to be accepted as a friend.

Be on borrowing and lending terms. Of course you will not overwork it. Within bounds it makes for neighborliness and is sound in principle. The sausage grinder is idle 360 days in the year, so is the cherry stoner. You can buy one and your next neighbor the other and exchange. That is "coöperation," to use the word in everybody's mouth nowadays, but, after all, what is it but old-fashioned neighborliness? Coöperation is simply neighborliness in the large.

Remember you are not in the country to reform your neighbors. They are wedded to their own ways. They resent having a change forced upon them. That impeaches their former conduct. Now I confidently expect that your presence there will improve things, but the less you say about

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improving things, the better. It never pays to hunt rabbits with a brass band.

Comparisons are always odious. People prating about how much better things were "in the country we come from" usually have little influence. The old French diplomat put his finger on a very human motive when he called a young diplomat a fool for trying to make people think well of himself, when he should have made them think well of themselves. In every community there are things that are commendable. I believe you have the eye to see. In every person there is something good if we have the discernment to discover it.

The rule in the country is cordiality and hospitality. From what you have written in other letters, I know your neighbors have already adopted you. Be sure to accept invitations to break bread, even though the time is often inconvenient. When men happen round to see Ben near mealtime, see to it that they get a hearty and repeated in-

invitation to eat. In some sections it is not regarded as polite to accept on the first invitation.

The neighbor children! They should be your first conquest. Country children are not so forward as town children, but win your way through the shy-

ness and there are none dearer. The children can make or break your popularity. It is not necessary to remind you never to call a little girl "Sis" or a boy "Bub" or "Little man." The child has a name and feels as flattered to be remembered and called by it as a grown-up does. The child resents being called by the name of a younger brother. He never mixes you up with Mrs. Brown or Mrs. Smith, and why you should mix him up with his brothers and sisters he cannot understand.

On the same principle when you are sending over some holiday candy of your own making—I know how good yours is—do not send a lot just for the children, but put it up in packages labeling each with a name. This may seem trivial but not to the child you want to win.

Along the same line, it is wise to get on good terms with the family dog. If he gets

a grudge against you, you will fare badly at that household. There is a lot of truth in the old saying "Love me, love my dog."

So, too, even the neighbor horses should be known. Often the

neighbor is so bundled up in his fur coat that he can scarcely be distinguished from a polar bear, but if you

know the team you are safe in making a friendly greeting as you drive past him.

When a little chap is trudging home from school through the mud or deep snow with books and dinner pail be sure to take him up for a ride. He may forget to thank you, but that night at the supper table he will announce to his family that you are "all right."

Being neighborly does not consist in doing for others all the time. Far from it! A gift means a giver and a getter. You must play fair and be getter fully one-half of the time. Do for others and expect others to do for you. Give them a chance. Some people are so foolishly sensitive about not being what they term "under obligation" that their friends can take no comfort in doing for them, since it means a prompt comeback with something a little better. Soon the pace becomes burdensome. When someone remembers you, accept it, rejoice in it, and forget whose turn it is next.

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Whenever you have something nice, like that good orange marmalade, just send along a glass. How good the marmalade is, and how sweet it is to have a friend who wants to do something for a neighbor! Some people think they are benevolent, they think themselves neighborly, when they are selfishly playing patron all the time. They want to luxuriate grandiosely in their own magnanimity. When the supposed recipients balk at that sort of a program they talk of ingratitude. "Let the other fellow play Santa Claus part of the time" is a good rule in getting on with the neighbors.

To ask a neighbor now and then to take a step to save you ten is good form in the country. The other day our phone rang and an anxious voice said: "Our new cattle have broken out and bolted for their old home, eight miles from here. Can't you hustle out and head them off while I go to the pasture to get a horse?" Gladly the hired girl and I hurried out to the road with brooms just in the nick of time to head off the homesick cows. How foolish of our neighbor it would have been to take a sixteen-mile round trip rather than ask so little of us!

While on the subject of stock, Ben knows that good line fences make good neighbors. It is wise to take time to cool off before discussing fences. Make them as good as you can and then "bear and forbear."

Take a look in the glass, now and then, Janet, to see whether the corners of your mouth tend to turn up or down. The neighbors do not want to hear a tale of woe, but they want to see your shining face. A chronic smile is almost as painful as a scowl, but a mouth that will naturally turn up at the corners if you let go of it is a great asset. A face to match will do so much shining that in its presence neighborliness will have to bloom.

Affectionately,

Aunt Nellie

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THE RIGHT HOBBY

Look for a Side Line in the Open When the Kitchen Walls Begin to Close In—By Nellie Kedzie Jones

DEAR JANET: A hobby is what you need—neither parrots, poodles nor postage stamps, but something really worth while. For some time now I have suspected that you were having lonely spells, and when Ben dropped in on me unexpectedly last week I asked him point-blank. He said he had been away so much lately that he feared it, but you have always been so brave and cheerful he could not tell. You have been housekeeping long enough for the novelty to wear off and you are feeling the rub of the endless routine. Here is where the hobby gets in its good work. Everybody needs a hobby. Women need them more than men do, and especially the farm woman, for she has less company and more monotony than other women.

Many a time have I advised a farm woman to get something, *anything*, to do, only it must be quite unlike the regular routine. We must think of something else, at least part of the time. It is as easy to cut a rut in the mind as into a dirt road during a rainy spell. Life is one long fight against growing stale. How many women are girl-hearted at fifty, or even forty? It is good business to work at something not our business. An avocation "puts the ginger" into the vocation. Letting our business alone part of the time is the best way to tend to business.

We are all too prone to talk shop. A hobby, like a salad, gives spice and variety, making the sweets taste all the sweeter. Now, Janet, I would not have a hobby that was not worth riding pretty hard and often. Otherwise it is not worth stable room. It is a wise saying that we can all afford to be cranks on one thing; it is only when we become cranks on two things that they have to shut us up.

A Brief for the Birds

A side line, as business men call it, is what you need—but what shall it be? If possible, get something that Ben can enjoy too. Fortunately you have no pronounced and overpowering bent, so you can sit down and pick, as a matter of cool calculation, the side line that will do you the most good from the most points of view. I have no patience with the idea that a boy is "a natural-born genius" for just one thing only and can do nothing else. Geniuses are sporadic and usually ill-balanced. The well-balanced mind, when applied, can get pleasure and profit from any one of forty different things.

The more one knows about a subject the more interesting it is. I went to school with

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A Bird House Well Out of the Reach of Cats

a country girl who got interested in ferns. She put plenty of brains and enthusiasm into their study. In time she became such an authority on the ferns of her state that scientists were glad to consult her.

Women have made good as beekeepers, raisers of poultry, dogs—all kinds of livestock, in fact. White turkeys for breeders was the hobby of one of my friends. Another specializes on peonies for market. A Western woman has made a great hit, and money too, with Indian Runner ducks. Unfortunately too many farm women are putting their spare time on tatting, crocheting, embroidery, drawn work and the like, distinctively feminine fads in which the rest of the family cannot join. You must bar them all at a stroke, for they keep you indoors and use up your precious eyesight that you must save for your books.

You have always been a book-lover, Janet; I have no fears that you will neglect books, but I am afraid that you are not getting out of doors enough. A hobby that must be ridden out in the open summer and winter is what we are looking for. A charming farm woman who botanizes with her children tells me it takes her out and the children enjoy it too, hugely. I know a father who studies insects with his youngsters, girls as well as boys. But the flowers and the bugs are mostly snowed under in our severe northern winter for half the year.

I believe, Janet, I have the thing that will suit your taste and fit your situation exactly. Ben would join in heartily. With hobbies, as with politics, the more the merrier. After so much discussion I fear you are impatiently demanding "Well, what is it?" As well as though it happened yesterday do I remember the time I took you, a motherless child, to the house of that woman who lived beyond the car shops, to buy a canary. The birds were loose in the room, nesting in bushes growing in pots and tubs. You were wild with delight when you picked out Yellow Dick with the dark crest on his head. How my heart ached to take you out into God's open, full of free birds soaring and singing at their own sweet will! Maybe the yearning of nearly twenty years ago is to be satisfied now.

Let us play that I hold a brief for the birds. You will not have to hunt them up, like the wild flowers or the geological specimens. They are right at your door. Give them half a welcome and they will come and bring the family and stay all summer.

A bird book and a good pair of field glasses are all that you need to buy. To put a snuffer on the bird-killing cats will be no trial to such dog lovers as you and Ben. A few homemade boxes and the right



Beekeeping is Fascinating Work



Many Women Have Made Good With Poultry

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kinds of food will bring to your very door a happy crowd, some of them scalawags, to be sure—like the jays—but nevertheless a happy crowd that will cheer you up all the year round. When summer comes there will be no counting your visitors, if only protection is guaranteed.

Your hundred and sixty acres, Janet, has great possibilities as a bird refuge. More's the pity that we have to use that word "refuge," but we do in these days of destruction. The Government bird census shows alarming decreases over wide regions. You have an ample woodlot, plenty of brush and briars along the brooks,

there are stretches of meadow and pasture, with some water, and best of all, close to the house are the orchard and some fine old trees about your buildings. Vines and shrubbery you have not—thanks to Uncle Eben's tenant system—but shrubs and vines take only a year or two. Most any kind of hole will do for a bird's nest. One day

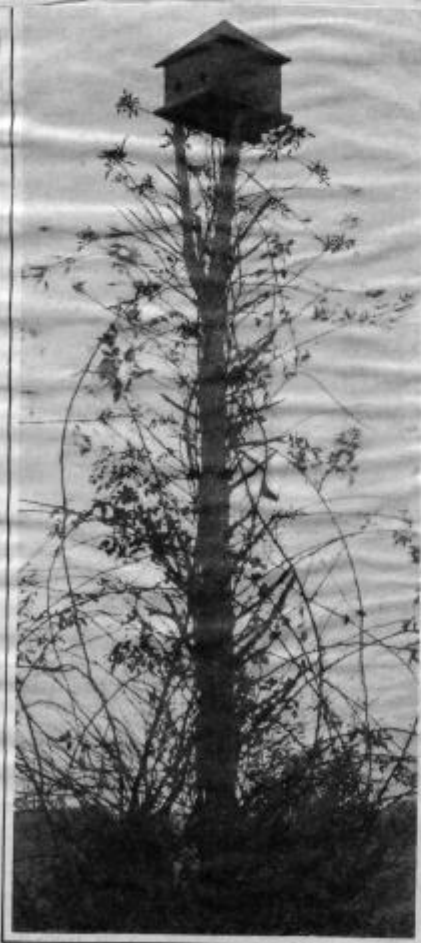
I kept pumping sticks and strings out of the pump into my water pail. I could not understand it, till I caught a saucy little wren lugging such stuff into the spout for her nest. A cigar box nailed to the pillar of the porch was promptly accepted as a compromise.

That little hollow or ravine just north of the road gate has been a worthless eyesore for the last forty years. The tenants cut out all the big trees, and the brush and briars have held the fort ever since. I have just ached to get hold of that. If Ben will run a woven-wire fence round that to keep out the stock that break down the young trees and destroy the vines, and to exclude the dogs, foxes, skunks and other prowlers, it will make a charming bird refuge. It will cost but a little, as there is only about half

an acre in it. I will pay for the wire and the posts if Ben will do the work. A few trees ought to be planted on the north side as a windbreak and to furnish more nest room. Soon it will be a thicket, a regular labyrinth. Once interlaced with vines, the smaller birds will have no trouble in eluding there the hawks and owls. The spring in the lower end never goes dry. The thicket will swarm with songsters the year round.

The beauty of a bird hobby is this—you can get not only your family into it but your neighbors as well. With the slaughter of the birds which has been going on so ruthlessly for the last three generations our insect enemies have so increased that fruit, field crops, and even our forests are in peril. The average farmer is getting alarmed. He is ready to follow, if only someone will lead off. At first you will have a pretty sharp controversy with trespassers, but here your neighbors will

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Climbing Vines Decorate This High Post Support

back you up, for they too are getting sick and tired of lawless hunters and their dogs; nor is there any love lost on marauding berry pickers. Tom, Dick and Harry must be made to get off and keep off. A farm is as much private property as a city lawn is. In some of the older sections that fact has been burnt in, but not in our section. With shelters made and signs posted and your neighbors to help, you will soon win when once trespassers find out you mean business. What is more heart-breaking than to watch a flock of quails keeping near the house all summer and growing more neighborly, only to have some city stranger come in some Sunday while you are at church and pot the whole flock? We farmers ourselves are to blame for permitting such outrages. They don't happen where neighbors are banded together in strong defence against marauders.

Sometimes the state game warden is willing to coöperate by furnishing a few quails or prairie chickens, on rare occasions pheasants even, to those who will provide shelters, protection and, in case of ice storms, a little food. The song birds and the birds of plumage will come of themselves, but these must be guarded from cats and those busy-bodies, the squirrels.

The Friends You Will Make

Hobby riders are the most interesting people in the world, provided they are riding your kind of hobby. It makes such good-fellowship to talk it over with an enthusiast. You always get something new and interesting and you have something to give that is gladly accepted. There is a great literature on this, and bird men and bird women, too, are to be found in every nook and corner of the land. In taking up birds, Janet, you are getting into a great confraternity of scientists, nature-lovers, poets and farmers. Men and women, boys and girls, town and country will make up the fellowship. Is not that a big enough hobby for a broad-gauged woman?

Often it is the hobby rather than the business that brings one renown as well as satisfaction purely personal. Schliemann shines as archaeologist recovering the lost treasures of Troy. Did you know that banking was his business? Holmes we always think of as an author, but his calling was that of physician.

Your farm christened "Birdhaven" would be indeed a feathered paradise, a show place for the whole countryside. Of course I am only suggesting; the decision is yours. When your kitchen walls begin to crowd in like the walls of a dungeon the bird world, as full of love-making, fighting and excitement as a good novel, will call you out into the open, to health and happiness.

Always your affectionate,

Aunt Nellie

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The Crossroads Church

With a Little Prodding it Will Waken From its Long Nap

DEAR JANET: So you and Ben have joined the old church at the crossroads. I am delighted. Your letters for some time have been questioning about where you should make your permanent church home. You will bear me witness that I have offered very little advice, though you have given me several good openings. That old "meetinghouse" at the crossroads is a dreary-looking structure indeed, but I can remember when it looked quite different. There was a time when a great crowd worshiped there regularly. The friendly visiting of neighbors before and after service made it a real social center. There used to be a lovely grove just east of the church. In midsummer people came from miles round, having a basket

picnic in the grove at noon, visiting till the afternoon service. Nearly every tree had a team hitched to it. Even in winter those old ramshackle horse sheds—they were new then—were all filled—and teams were blanketed and tied along the road fence. Then farms were smaller and families larger, but there are still enough people within easy distance to fill the old church up once more. Even now a funeral or a wedding will make it jam full.

Ben's grandfather was a charter member. His faithfulness and enthusiasm made the old church at the crossroads a mighty power throughout the whole region. I am so glad that Ben is to take his place—a better man never lived. But after the pioneers, who struggled and sacrificed to plant that church in the wilderness, went to their reward, there came a period of criticism and contention. It was indeed a church militant, but the members fought each other with far more fury than they fought the devil. When the fires of controversy died out, due to a kindly Providence that buried some of the ringleaders and inspired others to emigrate, the church was united again; in fact, as dear old Deacon Davies said, "It was so united it was frozen together solid."

Give it a Coat of Paint

"Shun such a church as a dead issue," would have been my advice five years ago, had someone asked about joining it; but, Janet, a great change is coming over the country church. As I travel here and there in rural places, I find multiplying signs of life. Churches that seemed so long dead that burial even was deemed unnecessary are waking up. They are blossoming into social centers. "Community service" is a slogan echoing throughout the land.

You and Ben might have gone nine miles in the other direction, and joined a prosperous church at the county seat, as dozens of others have done who ought to have stood by the old church at "the corners."

Your place is only three miles from the church; with a good horse—I hope you will never keep any other kind—you can always get to the Sunday morning service, even when the bottom falls out of the road in the spring. Through Uncle Eben you have inherited Grandpa's old farm. His old church, which he loved better than the apple of his eye, you ought to accept and serve loyally. Roads and weather that would not halt the rural mail carrier for a moment will empty the church. It is easier to go regularly than once in a while. As others are too lax, it will be necessary for you to be very rigid on this, for an example of loyalty and pluck in religion is invaluable. Such a loyal family puts heart into a pastor.

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A Great Change is Coming Over the Country Church

That bare, bald, barnlike house of Uncle Eben's—who would have supposed that in little more than a year it could have become so home-like? Grandpa's old church can be made to undergo just as great a transformation. Why don't you, Janet, get your Sunday-school class of boys to paint it? About twenty-five years ago it got so shabby that they started to paint it. The first coat was on and then a deadlock ensued as to the color of the second coat. Some demanded white, some would hear to nothing but yellow. As in the Wars of the Roses, neither color would yield a peg. To make a long story short, so much bitterness was engendered that subscriptions were canceled and the poor old meetinghouse has never seen a paintbrush since. Those lively lads of yours, now numbering eleven

according to your last letter, would like nothing better than a painting bee. Women always favor repairs, so you canvass them first for the money for the priming coat. The boys will borrow the brushes in the neighborhood. As soon as the boys get the first coat on the trick is turned. By that time the men will be so ashamed—no, I mean so interested—that they will furnish the rest of the paint. You won't know it for the same old building. It was so dreary and forbidding the last time I saw it that my heart ached.

All over the country farmers are beginning to get heartily ashamed of their down-at-the-heel schools and die-away churches. Two bright enthusiastic young people like you and Ben, who have had a vision of a broad and inspiring church life, can lead off in bringing in a better day.

Only last week a man stopped me on the city street, calling me by my first name. I was more than surprised to see one of the old neighbors who now lives at the county seat, but had come up to the city for a visit. He told me of the fine work you had done in one short summer in building up your class of boys from four to eleven; you see, Janet, your light cannot help shining. Also he told of the good impression Ben had made among the men who had known his father and grandfather. With considerable feeling he continued, "We old fellows who grew up in the crossroads church, and have moved up to the county seat, refusing to sell our farms, putting tenants on them instead, don't feel very good over the way we have used the old church. We ought to have stood by her."

We were talking it over the other day—and say," he added with real enthusiasm, "if they will only get busy over there, we'll all chip in and help."

When you have raised all the paint money you can in the neighborhood, Janet, go to town and you will have no trouble in getting the balance. I am sure the men who own farms there ought to help the church. The law compels them to support the school. The moral obligation is the same in both cases, for from that community they draw their living.

They built big in the early days when they had so much good timber they really did not know how to get rid of it. Like your home, Janet, the church is big enough to house a number of good movements.

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Even now I have a vision of a re-inspired church there, that will be better than ever the old church was in its palmiest days. That old church really did "have religion." The new shall have religion plus a number of other good things. Janet, I am coming to see you pretty soon. I want you to get an old church roll from Deacon Davies and write to all the former members scattered in the surrounding towns, inviting them to an old church home day. I crave the privilege of standing up and telling them of some of the old churches reborn I have seen lately. Former members living elsewhere, but loving the church of their childhood, have often been the moving factor in the revival.

Stir Up the Sunday School

Keep pushing in the Sunday school, Janet, and let Ben work up the music side. Men of means who grew up in the old cross-roads church, but now live in neighboring towns, can be rallied to the help of the "old home guard" who have held the fort so faithfully all these years. With things warming up that way, soon the right man for a pastor will be found. For the last twenty years it has been an old folks' church. The young people with push and snap have stampeded to the larger towns and cities. Your lads will make a winning eleven, to use a football term. They will generate steam enough for a whole churchful. Radiate all the cheer you can. Ben is a master hand at that. Everything has been so somber and has had such a downward sag for so long that the young blood of the community has shunned the depressing atmosphere of the old church.

You will lose no time sitting down to sigh over the church you have left behind; you will get to work to make your "home church" what it ought to be. The railroads claim that they cannot run on a two-cent fare, but that church has been trying to run on a one-cent fare, and you see how much mileage it has made in the last twenty years. Who would want to live, who would dare to rear children, in a neighborhood with no living church, the fountain of spiritual power and social energy?

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When the Pastor Comes, Do Not Expect a Paragon of All Human Perfections

You are fortunate in having a community almost wholly English-speaking. When five or six nationalities and as many languages occur in the same school district, a get-together program is very much more difficult, but it can be worked, for it has been time and again. Men who could never agree on an elaborate theological platform are quick to see and love good character, good conduct, good citizenship—in a word, human fellowship. One frank, good man once said to me, "Really I don't know much about the creeds and doctrines of the church, they do not mean much to me; but I do know that I am always happiest when I am with good people, and so I support the church."

The country must have a place for all such. Rural life must quit splitting up, and go to splicing. The farmer, always too individualistic, too solitary by the very nature of his work, is longing for a higher unity, a fuller brotherhood. Fifty years ago the old crossroads church was filling the bill, and it can do it again.

When the pastor comes at last, do not expect a paragon of all human perfections. He will be just a man, a good man to be sure, but just a man after all. His wife and children will not make a group worthy of a stained-glass window. Be reasonable in your expectations and you will not have to waste time salving your disappointments. Even if the ministerial family is not congenial to you, be loyal just the same. Your steadfast loyalty will call out the best in them and, furthermore, will give you an influence with them that will help shape things as you think they ought to be.

Have the whole family out to spend the day with you and Ben as soon as you can, for no time must be lost in getting acquainted with your leader and yokefellows.

When they start home see that a pair of good fat hens are tucked under the buggy seat, and a lot of other good things. They are not at all in lieu of salary, but a little thrown in; for the country parson's salary, like the growing boy's trousers, is always too short. The story of the old deacon's prayer persistently keeps in circulation, "O Lord, keep our beloved pastor humble and we'll keep him poor." The pioneer plow-handle preacher belongs to the past. With the linking of rural life into larger units, better-equipped pastors are turning toward rural parishes. I hope, Janet, the pastor you find for the old crossroads church is to be a man of vision and growth.

Always affectionately,

Aunt Nellie

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