TRAVEL IN RURAL CHINA

IT IS ATTENDED WITH MANY UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES.

Foreign Guests Are Unwelcome at the Inns and Are Treated Rudely—Must Carry Their Own Food.

Correspondence of the Indianapolis Journal.

PEKING, Nov. 20.—The traveler in China who leaves the cities and penetrates the comparatively unfamiliar regions in the interior cannot but be impressed with the tireless, silent industry of the people. The Japanese are also constantly at work, but they are far less mechanical and more vivacious than their Chinese neighbors. They work, too, like the ant and the bee, which never seem to soil thir coats; the Chinese are like the stolid beetle that one sees in the road, covered with dust and trundling before it a ball of that substance which fertilizes the whole of China, from one end to the other, and of which one never loses the sight or smell. At this season the crops have all been harvested and the fields—baked, like the floor of a brick-yard, with four months' unbroken drought—are being ploughed for the fall planting. The plough is of the ancient Oriental pattern—a wooden beam, pointed at one end, sometimes shod with iron; the cow, horse or donkey, harnessed with a rope to the beam and guided by the voice. In many of the fields where broom corn has been raised the stalks have been cut to within twelve or fifteen inches of the ground; these stubs are left standing. The Chinese waste nothing that can be utilized in any possible way as food, fuel or clothing. These short stalks are dug out of the ground by men, women and children, who use small, narrow-bladed hoes. The earth is shaken from the roots and they are collected in bundles to be burned through the winter; grass and weeds are used in the same way, and, under the rows of willows which have been planted here and there, women and children may be seen raking the leaves as they fall, which are also added to the store of twigs, grass and "fall grain" roots. Fuel, indeed, is one of the most serious questions with which the Chinese farmer has to deal—and this in the vicinity of the richest coal mines on the globe. The country, except in certain portions in the northeast, west and southwest, is almost treeless. A few willows, ash and aspen trees have been planted, but they do not attain great size. Wood, if it is to be used as fuel, is sold by the pound, and in Peking dressed timber is brought from a great distance and sawed into lumber by hand. Brick, either kiln-dried or sun-dried, is utilized for every purpose for which it can be made available.

THE IMPERIAL YELLOW.

All the native houses, even those of the wealthy, are one story, of kiln-dried brick, roofed with gray tiles. The imperial palaces conform to the same rule, though there are terraces which correspond to stories, and the tiles in the palaces of the Forbidden City are imperial yellow, while those in the palaces occupied by princes of the blood, within the imperial city, are green. None but the imperial family can use yellow tiles, and none but princes can dwell under roofs tiled with green. Much of the charcoal, which is compartively cheap, is brought from the forests of Siberia on the backs of camels. The use of charcoal, however, is not always safe, and deaths by asphyxiation are frequent. A few days ago the cook at one of the legations failed to appear when he was wanted and upon inquiry being made by his mistress one of the house servants informed her that "he was not very well." The delay continuing, the matter was investigated and the cook was found to be in a state of unconsciousness, while the scullion wits sitting near him, dead.

To a Westerner a Chinese house is far from comfortable. The brick floors are very cold; the brick bed, the k'ang, which extends across the entire end of the sleeping apartment, is as hard as the pavement, which it much resembles, and which the straw matting placed between this and the mattress or wadden comforter upon which the family sleeps does not appreciably soften. The stove is a square hole in the floor, with pipes running under the k'ahn, in which there are holes at either end to allow the gas and smoke to escape—which it does—into the room. Charcoal is the common fuel, and it is used very sparingly, the fire not being considered safe or wholesome until it has "burned red." In most of the houses paper window panes are still in general use, and the windows so papered extend the entire width of a room; they are protected somewhat by the wide, over-hanging eaves, but they break into holes and hang in rags and tatters in a short time. The best quality is very tough white paper made in Corea, of which large quantities are imported into China. Glass window panes are slowly coming into use; in the towns and cities adjacent to the ports they are quite common, and are to be seen in country inns where foreigners are occasionally entertained. The entire window is not glazed with glass, but there will be one or two large panes in the center, surrounded with paper. In one wretched place I saw two tiny glass panes in a lower corner of the sash, conspicuously outlined with red cloth, lest they should be overlooked. There was nothing else in the sash, the paper having been punched into peeping holes by inquisitive fingers or torn into shreds by the wind and rain. Fortunately, since the window was opposite the k'ang, we did not have to spend the night there, in which event we must have curtained the window, red bordered panes and all, with our heavy traveling rugs to exclude the cold.

DISCOMFORTS OF TRAVEL.

The terrible roads, heavy with sand and dust and tortuous with stones in dry weather, bottomless sloughs in the rainy season, with the absence of anything approaching comfort in the native inns, makes travel in the interior of China exceedingly hard. The rooms, which are really rows of low, connected houses, ranged round an open court of the usual gray brick, roofed with gray tile, can be had separately or in suites of three, a reception and two bedrooms on either side, with a door leading to the stone walk elevated above the court-yard only from the reception room. In this apartment the furniture consists of a tall, square table, one or two long-legged stools, a narrow form or bench without a back, and one or two high, uncomfortable chairs. There is nothing in the bedrooms except the k'ang and a chair or stool—no place to hang anything, and neither shelf nor cupboard in which to bestow so much as a small parcel. The reception room may be heated with a charcoal brazier or a Chinese stove, or there may be a low fire under the k'ang.

Chinese innkeepers do not care greatly for foreign patronage; first, because it is hardly profitable, for a reason that I will presently explain, and, second, because there is still more or less disrepute attached to entertaining foreigners. They are far from being liked or respected, and while this disfavor seldom reaches open and active hostility, it exists. The charge for one room is about 5 cents a day, and the innkeepers depend for their profit upon the food that is ordered from the kitchen. When Chinese officials or men of standing, merchants or commercial agents, are received, they usually travel with a large retinue that must not only be lodged, but fed, as well, and for this reason they are cordially welcomed. But the foreigner travels with comparatively few servants—the smallest number he can take with him—and he carries his own bedding and food. The latter is cooked in his rooms, which are very grudgingly placed at his disposal, and he requires nothing from the kitchen except hot water, which is also unwillingly furnished. Many Americans obviate the difficulty—or partially obviate it—by ordering Chinese food, which they do not eat, of course. This is an affront, also, whether it is left untouched or divided among the servants; either course is a reproach to the Chinese chef and the cuisine. And they generally find it out, if either alternative has been resorted to.

CHINESE COOKERY.

Foreigners do not always willingly offend, for to the western taste almost all Chinese food is unpalatable. Missionaries who frequently attempt to live upon it break down in a short time and acquire a species of indigestion that is nearly impossible to cure. Rice, chickens, ducks and fresh eggs may be had almost every place, and all are excellent. Chinese rice is especially delicious, and Chinese fowls are fat and tender, and the beef and mutton are unsurpassed. In the matter of meat of all sorts the Chinese do not discriminate; it is cut in shapeless lumps, and good, bad and indifferent, the tenderloin and neck, are sold for the same money; all is fish, literally, that comes to the Chinese net. The pork is not so good; pigs pick up a precarious living as they can and are seldom well fed. They are upon terms of the utmost intimacy with the family, walking in and out of the houses at will, and sharing the doorstep with the dog, but they are thin, slab-sided and wretched looking.

Wheat flour, while it is dark, is also very sweet and palatable, and corn meal and buckwheat are also largely used in the north, at least. Corn cakes are a staple, molded in thick discs or in large cones, and steamed. Corn meal also is sweet and palatable, with a strong flavor of the fresh grain. During a recent journey to Chang-p'ing-Chow my friend's carter took from the bosom of his frock, where it had reposed against his naked chest, a fat corn cake, a part of which he hospitalbly urged her to accept. As a rule, Chinese cooking is too greasy for the western taste, and so many unusual and positively repulsive ingredients are used that it is difficult to eat it, even at a feast where common politeness makes it urgently necessary to taste of every dish before one. Chestnuts are cooked in many palatable ways—roasted evenly and thoroughly in kettles of burning hot sand, boiled with meat and vegetables, with fowls or in soup. But, as I have said, the foreign traveler who puts up at native inns—as he must do, unless he is so fortunate as to obtain shelter in a country mission—must carry with him his own flour, cocoa, coffee, bread and potted or cold meats. It is usual to cook meat partially and then boil or stew it on these excursions. At this season of the year the tart, appetizing "red fruit," whose botanical name I have been unable to learn, and the luscious Chinese persimmon may be had everywhere, from strolling venders by the roadside, among the fields, in the towns and villages. The persimmon is about eight or ten inches in circumference, with a thick, glossy skin of the deepest orange red; within it is full of rich, sweet pulp, and touched with frost loses its astringent quality—like the dwarf species which grow in the United States. The Chinese, however, are really most skillful cooks, excelling in two chief essentials—thoroughly seasoning and cooking their food until it is done. One does not watch the process too closely, however, as their work is largely done in the open air, in clouds of dust, in vessels that are seldom cleaned, and with hands that, though of another color, recall the lamentation of Lady Macbeth.

THE INSECT PEST.

In warm weather Chinese inns swarm with every known species of vermin that can crawl, jump or bite. When it grows cold they become torpid, and that is another urgent reason for postponing journeys into the country, aside from the condition of the roads, until the autumn. By that time their numbers have either been decreased, or, they are at least, disabled by the cold. Unless worn out by many days of continuous riding in a cart or on a donkey, it is difficult to sleep in these primitive places, leaving vermin and the adamantive K'ang out of the question. For, while the houses along one side of the open court are reserved for guests, on the opposite side are open stalls for the animals, and here donkeys and mules munch and bray all night, mingling their stamping with that of tired and impatient horses. It will be seen, therefore, that traveling away from the coast and the waterways is still difficult and fatiguing, and, in spite of the cheapness of servants, carts and lodging, it is very expensive in the end. So much impedimenta must be carried for even a few days' absence that the traveler looks as if he were equiped and provisioned for a journey across the empire—carters, donkey boys, a cook and ordinary servants being considered indispensable for a very ordinary degree of comfort.

I have spoken of reluctant innkeeprs; we encountered one such specimen. Upon our first arrival, at nightfall, after having crossed a stretch of country known to be overrun by a dangerous band of robbers, we were unwillingly permitted to stay all night. The court was filled with carts and animals, and it was evident that the man told the truth when he said the inn was crowded. He gave us shelter for the night, however, although he insisted that our staff of carters and servants should occupy one of the rooms of the suite—a plan which we immediately vetoed, and to which they themselves, with the never-failing sense of Chinese propriety, also strongly objected. Upon our return we were met at the gate and refused admittance. The forward mule attached to my litter, recognizing the inn, as a Chinese mule does instantly, and usually with a joyous bray, plunged into the entrance to the courtyard, notwithstanding this prohibition, and it required the innkeeper and four stout assistants to back him out, the animal violently, and noisily protesting, to the delight of a large audience which immediately assembled.

My friend—for we were two lone women—had preceded me by some hours, and she investigated the next place. This proved to be a dark, dirty place, with a heap of filth piled up beside the door of the room in which we would have taken our luncheon. We had been on the road since 6 o'clock, and carters and mules were both very tired. The carter begged to stay, but Mrs. G—— replied:

"For myself I should not care; I am used to it"—as, after twenty years' residence in China, she certainly was. "But," she craftily added, appealing to the Chinese sense of pride, "I could not bring a traveler from 'the west' into such a place as this; she is not used to it. She could not eat in a smell like this."

Whereupon the carter turned to the expectant innkeeper and said succinctly: "She despises your smell."

The innkeeper in turn, with characteristic Chinese independence, replied: "Then let her go somewhere else."

CURIOSITY OF THE NATIVES.

We at last found refuge in a camel inn—dilapidated and dirty beyond all imagining. But we could rest on the K'ahu—the inhabitants hibernating—and we had some tea and such food as remained from our depleted stores. The audience that gathers on such occasions might embarrass one not inured to their close inspection. As the lunch-baskets were unpacked one man remarked—the language being perfectly intelligible to Mrs. G——, who spoke it fluently.

"I know what comes next—the butter"—the foreigner's love of butter being to the Chinese as inexplicable as most other western tastes and habits.

He then explained to his less enlightened friends that he had seen foreigners eat before "up at the Wall"—the Great Wall.

"Every one has a plate to himself," he continued, "and they take out a clean white cloth and spread it on the ground. Every one has a white cloth, too—a smaller one—and everything is terribly clean."

The cleanliness of foreign houses and belongings is something of which the Chinese always speak with a sort of admiring awe; for they do admire it in—others. My companion was a missionary, and the man asked her "if the other woman preached, too?"

"Oh, no," he was told, "she is a writer"—a much greater distinction in semi-civilized China than it is in the west—"and she will write of what she sees and it will be published. If you are polite she will write of that; if you are impolite she will write of that also."

This made quite an impression on the uninvited company, who knew well that they were discourteous in gathering about the door to watch strangers eat. They talked together a few moments, and then asking "how far it was to my honorable country," they quietly withdrew, and we closed the door and fastened it by propping a stool against it, a very common method of "locking up" for the night in a Chinese inn.

During this journey we visited a number of Chinese houses, and in every one, without a single exception, we found two western inventions—clocks and kerosene lamps, at least two of each. The clocks did not keep time, being evidently for ornament and not for use. In two places we saw the advertisement of American patent medicines tacked on the wall among Chinese mottoes from Confucius, and in one house a small sewing machine. Se, even in the remote interior of China, western ideas are penetrating, and western inventions are being utilized.

MARY H. KROUT.

FEATHER FARMS.

Some of the Eccentricities of South Africa's Foolish Bird.

London Mail.

The ostrich is one of the treasures South Africa possesses. But perhaps he is at his best in the north of the dark continent, for a Barbary bird is an edition de luxe compared with the Cape variety. Also, he is less valuable than once he was, when the incubator was an unknown resource and hatching out chicks a more hazardous undertaking than it is now. Though in the old days £500 passed hands often for a first rate pair of birds, which now £15 will purchase, and a "plucking" will go for £1 10s that in palmy times would have fetched £25, ostrich farming is not a played-out profession. No stock farm can be a greater disappointment and anxiety to its owner than one devoted to ostriches—the most extraordinarily "pernickety" birds imaginable, the most willful and the most obstinate. Anyone who fancies that because the creatures can digest such things as gimlets, soap and old gloves, and in consequence argues that they are the hardy brutes they may appear to be, is very wrong indeed. The birds suffer from mysterious ills in extreme childhood that carry them off by flocks, and in adult age are so quarrelsome of temper and brittle of leg that the amalgamation is all too frequently the cause of an untimely end.

Little Hottentots are employed to herd the chicks and feed them when they are ready to go out of doors, and these custodians being of the same lazy nature as their elders are a dreadful trouble to the farmers. One of their vagaries is to neglect their charges, another to kill them because they are troublesome.

When the chicks grow up, as they speedily do, they take their revenge upon their whilom guardians. They steal their food, they scare them, and would maim and kill them if the children did not carefully keep out of their way and wield the "tackey" when they encounter the irate birds. This is a weapon without which the most valiant man is as a babe before an ostrich that is a "quei"—in other words, vicious. It is simply a branch of the mimosa, with the prickles left on the end of it. When the ostrich runs amuck the "tackey" is brandished in his face; he shuts his eyes instinctively to avoid the long prickles, and the attacked victim promptly dodges him as he proceeds on his headlong and infuriated rush.

Tender-hearted women who are trying to stamp out the destruction of rare and beautiful birds, because of the sacrifice of their lives for the sake of their feathers, do not object to ostrich plumes, because the life of the bird is not forfeited; neither, they are persuaded, is the process of plucking a severely painful one. They are right.

Though the birds when they are driven into the box that cabins them while they are deprived of their feathers, exhibit intense and foolish alarm, and would wreak no end of vengeance on one another and the "hands" engaged in plucking them if they had the opportunity, no sooner are they out of the box than they dance off, apparently much more frightened than hurt. They behave, indeed, precisely like sheep brought into the shearing shed. Like sheep, too, they are branded.

After the plucking the feathers have all to be sorted and tied up, a piece of work ordinarily performed by professional sorters. Again the services of the farmer's wife, who plays an active part in an ostrich farm, may be called into requisition to wash those plumes that are badly soiled. In each wing there are a couple of dozen long white handsome feathers.

The ostrich is on such a big scale all around that he is a most formidable creature to deal with in peace or "quei." Twenty-four hen's eggs go to the one that incloses him as a chick, so that before he is hatched he is a handful. His height is huge, with his two-toed feet he can stamp and kick with tremendous force; he runs as swiftly as a horse, and his stupidity is colossal.

Mean Christmas Trick.

Chicago Post.

Sufficient time having elapsed so that the full effect of the various Christmas presents had become apparent, one parent said feelingly to the other:

"I'll tell you what I'll do! I'll enter into an agreement with you not to give any horns or drums to your boy next Christmas if you will promise not to give any to mine."

"Mine didn't get any this Christmas," was the reply.

"What?" exclaimed the aggrieved one.

"Not a one. Of course, your boy brought a nice big horn over to the house for mine, but he seemed to prize it so highly himself I thought it a shame to deprive him of it, and so I persuaded him to take it home again. You've been listening to your own horn."

Thus the treaty of peace was abrogated even before it was formally adopted.

A Soul in Exile.

It is within my heart I hear
A sweet and jocund tone—
Sweet woodland voices, far and near,
Singing the song of June.

It is within my heart I feel
The longing to arise
And, loosed from gnawing fetters, steal
To my lost Paradise.

It is within my heart I know
That June must call in vain!
Through ripening fields I shall not go
With love, and her, again.

O life that will not end! O heart
That beats so hotly yet!
How shalt thou learn to bear thy part
Until thou canst forget?

—Pall Mall Gazette.

FOR FEMININE READERS

WOMEN WHO FOLLOW THE FASHIONS ARE STUDYING NEW STYLES.

Tact One of the Most Desirable of Social Possessions—Working for Clubs—Various Sugestions.

The present phase of fashion as it appears in the shops is as incongruous as a feverish dream, a sort of whirlwind of winter furs and diaphanous things for summer combined, but all the more attractive for the striking contrast it affords, says a writer in the New York Sun. It is like a promise of spring in midwinter to see the dainty lawns, embroidered Swiss ginghams and colored piques spread out for inspection, and women are on the outlook for everything and anything new in the way of fashions for summer dress. However much a woman may protest against her sex's reputed love of new clothes, it is all there if she is a true woman, and it really does not matter so much whether the clothes are for present use or for six months hence, so long as she can only buy new things and get ahead of herself in the accumulation of a summer outfit.

Something pretty for waists, and entire dresses, if you can afford the extravagance, is an all-over exquisitely embroidered batiste in the pale biscuit tints. It comes in charming lace-like patterns, in double width, with beautiful insertions to match. Other novelties in batiste are the robe dresses of white embroidered with pale colors in a bowknot pattern with scalloped ruffles for a finish. Colored batistes are embroidered with white in the same pattern.

The special fad of the moment is the taffeta and China silk squares for separate waists. They come in Persian designs in an indescribable variety of colors, but some of the most effective are in mixtures of gray, black and white on different colored plain grounds, which show in a border around the edge fringed fully one inch wide. In taffeta the squares are large, two being required for a waist, and are used in combination with plain taffeta in black, white or a color to match the ground. This is used for a plaited vest, from which the fringed corners turn back in soft revers, and sometimes for sleeves with a cap of the figured silk at the top. In the China silk squares three are required for a bodice, and they are not fringed. The pastel tints in the taffeta squares are exquisitely soft, while the China silks show a brighter coloring.

Something very charming among the new materials is the figured crepe de chine all in one color. Large flowers overlapping one another in conventional disorder have the appearance of being pressed into the surface, giving a very pretty effect without the help of any variation in coloring. This stuff costs $7 a yard, but it is double width and very durable, so it is not so costly as it seems.

Some of the details of dress which will characterize the coming fashions are the continued use of plaits and tucks in every conceivable form, and the cape effect around the shoulders, which will materialize in various ways. The prettiest form of the cape effect is a deep collar of heavy lace falling just a bit over the points of the shoulders to give the broad look which the new close-fitting sleeve does not supply. A little cape or deep collar, made of a series of shaped folds of cloth, each edged with narrow lace applique, rows of stitching, or very narrow fringe which matches the cloth in color, is another edition of this idea which may be anticipated for the new spring gowns. These cape collars and the short boleros are evidently manifestations of fashion to which we can pin our faith, as there are no violent revolutions in sight within the limits of what is refined, elegant and stylish. Conspicuous and bizarre things are never in good taste no matter what the modes may be, and this is one of the few periods in dress when fashions can be adapted to the individuality of the wearer without sacrificing any style or forfeiting any desirable feature.

All the latest models in dressy gowns are very much trimmed on the bodice with intricate embroideries of gold and silver thread, silk and chenille and various applique designs of velvet, lace and silk. There is just as much fine tucking with the open work hemstitching between the groups as ever, and no doubt this sort of decoration will be carried over into the summer campaign of dress. Extremely simple gowns are not under consideration just at present, even though some gowns have the appearance of being comparatively plain. Interminable rows of stitching decorate the skirts and fancy vests, yokes and revers are the leading features of the bodice, while the more dressy gowns absorb every kind of decoration in the list. Laces, jeweled trimmings, hand embroidery, bands of fur and the daintiest plaitings of chiffon make up the decoration of the fashionable cloth gown. Six or seven tucks or folds around the hips, beginning five or six inches below the waist line, are seen on some of the new skirt models, while others show the lengthwise box plaits laid underneath so that the edges meet on the outside where they are either stitched down within ten or twelve inches of the hem or caught down with a silk cord laced across. Side plaits all around turning toward the back from either side of the front are another variation of the plaited skirt, and the plaits are confined by rows of stitching in scalloped lines running around arranged in groups with wide spaces between, three being sufficient.

The Chaperone Discusses Tact.

New York Commercial Advertiser.

A woman of social position, who has introduced more than one young woman to the "right people," was complaining the other day of the average girl's lack of diplomacy. "I can't do more than introduce her, advise her and push her ahead," she said, "and when she fails to become a fixed star, through inability to observe the simplest rules of common sense, why, I call it downright ingratitude. Most girls are social failures through their own faults. They may be ugly and stupid and even poor, but there are ugly, stupid and poor women in New York who have enviable social positions. On the other hand, a girl may have friends and clothes and books, and be an uncertain quantity socially just for want of tact. It makes me particularly indignant just at this season, when smart balls are being given and house parties are being organized. Why, some of the women invited to them are hopelessly dull, just the sort of persons not to have in a country house or a smart dance. Why are they asked? Because they have wit; not humor, or repartee, or conversational powers, but mother wit that warns them what to say and when, and what not to say and to whom. No calling requires greater skill or tact than that of guest, and no calling brings greater compensation. Why, being a guest at a certain house brings a social position for life in some instances, not to speak of the pleasures and privileges of being a guest in these luxurious days.

"Mrs. Blank is an ideal guest. She is a clever little witch, but most people think she is an angel. No wonder she is welcome everywhere. If she goes to visit Mrs. Van Orden Brown, whose beauty and belleship are things of the past, Mrs. Blank talks not of the success of the season's beauties. She may speak disparagingly of 'beauty, that flower which lasts but an hour,' except in some exceptional cases, and she may make a point of alluding to the sons and daughters of young and pretty Mrs. De Smythe, of whom the fading Mrs. Brown is jealous. The sons and daughters, to be sure, are still in the nursery, but to mention them in the most casual way makes them seem quite grown up and their mother quite aged. In this way she gives her hostess the impression that her guest thinks she—Mrs. Brown—and young Mrs. De Smythe are of the same age, which is just what the faded beauty is trying to make herself and every one else believe. Now, Margaret D—— is just the other kind of a girl. Last autumn she visited the Links, a family that prides itself on its sporting proclivities. Well, would you believe it, that short-sighted Margaret, whose social position is anything but secure, had the gaucherie to beat Mr. Link in a game of golf the very first day she played with him. She was elated, too, and wrote me about it. I sent a severe epistle, as you can imagine, telling her I was amazed and disappointed at her lack of common sense. I wouldn't call it tact; it was so obvious. I advised her to wait until she had played half a dozen games of billiards with her hostess before permitting herself to win. Then, when she did win, attributing it entirely to her hostess's tuition. I also implored her not to fail to skate awkwardly and to be sure to come in last or fall off her horse if she rode 'cross-country. She took my scolding in good part, and Mr. Link's spirits revived when she had let him beat her every morning for a week, and the result is she has been invited to go to Crossroads again.

"Another stupid girl is Ethel Van Schaick. She hasn't a penny in the world, and her only hope of ever being even fairly well off is to marry well. Young Midas, whose father made his money in shoe-polish—the only polish in the family, by the way—is devoted to her, but the stupid child will never get him, as she seems to make it a point to talk of lineage and Knickerbocker stock and blue blood and other incongruous things to Mrs. Midas, whose family history is so obscure that, like the girl in the comic song, she 'don't know who she are.' Now, what is one to do with such undiplomatic girls? They are no more able to look out for their own interests than babes unborn. It really seems a pity with such a fine chance as they have. But what can I do? Yes, two lumps of sugar, please."

Wasted Energy.

New York Evening Sun.

"For the past fifteen years," said the woman of not immoderate means, "I've been an earnest worker in nearly all the clubs and charities that my suburb boasts. I've been president of two or three organizations and chairman of the executive committee of two or three more, and I seem to be a perpetual treasurer for two or three others. Once a treasurer, always a treasurer, where women's societies are considered, you know. So few women have a talent for business that when one is discovered who has the least leaning that way she is to be made much of, not to say worked to death, by her sisters in organization. I have managed the accounts and invested the moneys for so many societies that whenever a new club starts the first thing it does is to appoint me treasurer. In addition to official duties I have unofficially bestowed much energy and interest upon the various bodies of which I am a member. I have worked for them and with them and by them; I have at all times and seasons held their interests close at heart and have furthered their interests in every possible way. So long and so hard a service cannot fail to have its effect upon me, as well as upon the clubs, however, and I am now thinking of giving up my work, perpetual treasurerships and all, to other and younger hands, while I retire to rest. But in looking back at it all I am struck by one thing: Had half the time and energy lavished upon my club work been put into some personal enterprise I would to-day have been a rich woman. The ingredients for any kind of business success were all there; the prosperity of the organizations I have worked for proves it. It's some comfort, of course, to know that I may have been of use to others, but with a not unlimited purse must come the thought that one's first duty is to herself. Here I am, in my old age, as poor as I was in my youth, while various societies are the richer for my efforts. It's too late now to embark on a personal venture; all my energy and youth have been consumed by fifteen years of club work. I know that there's a prejudice against married women engaging in business enterprises; many wives felt it, most husbands express it, and the other day the Postoffice Department decided officially that it can no longer retain married women in its service. But why are women endowed with business ability if it isn't for use? And why should marriage be an impediment to the employment of business ability? But with club work railed at on all sides and with those of us who take it most seriously not any too sure of its filling a long-felt want, it is a question to what uses a woman may put a natural talent for work. In my own case I can only say that had I served myself as I have served my clubs I might to-day have been a rich woman."

Fashions and Seasons.

New York Times.

A party of women were inspecting a display of gowns and summer fabrics at one of the largest stores yesterday, and one of them showed a disposition to purchase then and there a gown that happened to strike her fancy and fit her most becomingly. "Don't do it," whispered one of her companions. "Like as not they will not be in fashion when summer comes around, and then how you will feel with a gown of last summer's cut on. They must be last summer's cut, for how can these people know what the fashion is going to be next summer right here in midwinter?" That argument was a clincher and the party left the store thoroughly convinced that they had narrowly escaped being made the victims of one of New York's bunco games. They met their husbands at luncheon time at one of the big hotels and were telling the escape they had had from being "taken in." Then there was a chorus of laughter from "those horrid men," who, upon demand, made their explanation that even men knew that the fashions for both men and women for next summer were decided upon a year or so ago, the goods all made up, and the patterns sent broadcast over the world at about the time that women were engaged in buying their winter outfit, and that now the mills are all engaged in making heavy goods for next winter's wear. It was altogether too much for the women to believe, and they decided that the husbands were making fun of them, and no statement to the contrary would be believed. Nor were they convinced until one of them, who had an acquaintance with the superintendent of one of the big department stores appealed to him as an authority to settle the question. He, of course, informed her that her husband was in the right, and pointed out the impossibility of manufacturing cloths and making up gowns on the moment at any time of the year to suit that particular instant. That same superintendent said there was probably not one woman in a thousand who knew or would believe that all the styles of the summer of 1900 were prepared in the spring and summer of 1899.

Necessities of designing, manufacturing, and getting the goods first into the hands of the jobbers and then of the retailers months in advance of the time of their use are things that seem beyond the comprehension of womankind," said he, "and if women did know it all right, they would wait until the very last moment before buying what they think they want, so as to get the advantage of the 'very latest thing.' Yet there is not a tailor, dressmaker or milliner of the fashionable sort but has now in his or her workrooms the patterns for the styles that will be in vogue at Newport, Narragansett Pier, Lenox or any other fashionable resort the coming summer and fall, and many of them could even tell, if they would, what will probably be the style of garments in the winter of 1900-1901."

The New Shirt Waists.

New York Sun.

Flannel shirt waists, never more necessary to comfort and general usefulness than they are at the present moment, are already ousted from their allotted space in the shops to make room for the most summery cotton substitutes. Dainty fine white lawn waists, with hemstitched tucks in varying widths, waists striped up and down with lace and embroidered insertions and groups of tucks, waists of embroidered lawn and all sorts of plaid, striped and figured shirtings in colors are to be seen. The one feature which stamps them as new and far prettier than the old shirt waist is the entire absence of any yokes in the back. The only yoke which is stylish at all is the one which is trimmed and applied to the shoulders, forming a little epaulet over the sleeves. The backs are tucked and plaited to correspond with the front, as many of them were made last season, and they are altogether a vast improvement on the yoke back prototypes. There are stiff linen cuffs with rounded corners and detachable collars which can be discarded altogether for the more becoming stocks, and long silk scarfs tied twice around the neck.

Table Covers.

The Criterion.

All sorts and kinds of table coverings, from the tiny doily to the lunch cover, are exhibited in the "white sales" which mark the return of January. The delicate center of linen forms a base of operations from which the eye is draw to the exquisite termination of renaissance or other lace, differing in pattern and fineness to suit every taste and every income. The lunch covers are particularly beautiful for the highly polished tables which the lace overspreads but does not conceal. Some of these covers have only a tiny bit of linen in the center for the fernery or vase of cut flowers, and one can obtain any form desired, round, square, oval and even octagonal. Some of them have wide bands of lace inserted, and others have queer-shaped pieces of the lace set in with appliqued bits about the edges. The application of colored embroideries to these lace covers adds another beauty to that of the pattern and fineness of material. Big gorgeously colored flowers are embroidered on both linen and lace, bunches of violets, orchids in delicate tints—a most effective novelty. From Paris comes the embroidered flower, orphaned from its usual home, stem, leaves, petals complete, in most exquisite shades and workamnship. It is designed to take the place of the flower which is embroidered on the material, and is to be applied by a few stitches, giving an effect in bas-relief, and has the appearance of the natural flower laid on the cover with negligent grace. The loose natural flower, placed here and there has been a favorite table decoration, and doubtless the artist who designed this latest attraction was led to his choice by this feminine fancy. Whatever the motive, the result is all that could be desired.

The Woman Who Is Not Clever.

Harper's Bazar.

A woman who entertains a great deal tells me that she is heart, brain, nerve and soul weary of clever people, and she longs to know somebody who neither writes, sings, recites, toots, fiddles, nor even has ideas. She even proposes a toast to the stupid people who do not intrude, and to those who, while not stupid, often pretend they are, for the sake of the quiet and peace they know you will appreciate. Cleverness runs in families nowadays. Even the household baby is hauled out at deadly night hours to do his little turn, and the grandmother of the family is clever. Ah, a rare and satisfying person to meet is the family woman who is not clever; who makes no pretensions to cleverness; who has not prepared a paper on any of the burning questions of the hour. For the sake of the workers in the great world downtown, let me quaff the cup to the health of the woman who is satisfied to stay at home and mend the stockings and make pie and doughnuts and jelly-cake—make anything, in fact, provided she is contented while she is doing it. Probably she doesn't talk a great deal, and doesn't mind if you do not, and doesn't cherish it up against you if you do not hear what she is saying, even if you seem to be listening and are looking right at her. What a dear, restful soul she is! She knows good old tried-and-true remedies for ailments, and she doesn't even ask whether you want specifics for your ills or not, but she just claps them on, or pours them in and bustles around and hangs up things and tells you that you'll be better in the morning, and, sure enough, you are, dear, unselfish prophet that she is!

Odds and Ends.

Kilts, plaits, tucking, and folds will be used in the spring on every garment to which they can possibly be applied.

To reduce your double chin take away your pillow at night, skip your midday luncheon, and massage the throat with firm upward strokes fifteen minutes each day. It will take months.

Oyster cakes are made by chopping one quart of oysters into small pieces and seasoning them with pepper and salt then adding the liquor, two well beaten eggs, and rolled cracker crumbs to make a stiff mixture. Drop by the tablespoonful into hot butter and cook until well browned.

The latest fiat of fashion allows the bride to omit gloves on completing the minor accessories of her wedding toilet. At one time when elbow sleeves were in greater vogue this would have seemed a very singular omission. Now, however, the wrist portion of the sleeve extends so far over the hand that the absence of gloves is hardly noticeable.

Crocheted beaded silk bags are unearthed again in great numbers, says a New York paper, and the old-fashioned shapes are copied despite the fact that they have been relegated to the treasure chest so long. They are silver or gold mounted with a chain and hook to fasten them at the side of the belt. Silver, gold and steel beads are used and the silk is either gray or black.

An artistic maker of frocks bewails the fact that the gathered skirt is gathered in the back and at the sides while the front is left perfectly plain; the bodice on the other hand is full and slightly pouched in front, but plain and close fitting at the back. The artistic maker of frocks says that this is contrary to all rules of grace and beauty, as the fulness of the skirt should be, at least in appearance, continued on the bodice, and vice versa.

Ribbon work is at present somewhat popular with those who like fancy work. It is done mostly on satin because the soft and filmy ribbons used show to better advantage against the glossy surface. A sofa cushion of rich creamy white has a design upon it of wisteria and heliotrope. The trails of wisteria are made of ribbon in mauve shades. The long stalks are of chenille and the leaves are embroidered in green floss. The heliotrope is made of chenille, twisted over the needle once.

An egg cocktail, like its companion, that made from oysters, has a spirituous sound, but is entirely free from any alcoholic mixture. Allow for each person a half teaspoonful of vinegar, a tablespoonful of lemon juice, a few drops of Tobasco sauce, and half a teaspoonful each of horse radish and tomato catsup; to this, lightly mixed together, is added one beaten egg. Egg cocktails are served in tall glasses and are sipped out with a long-handled spoon. They are an excellent appetizer for even a simple home dinner.

"White stockings are coming into fashion for house wear," says a fashion note, that may be true or that may be false according as women themselves decide. If it be true, it is right along the line of an authority who says that the color of clothing is by no means a matter of indifference. White and light-colored clothing reflect the heat, while black absorbs it, and therefore white is the best clothing for both summer and winter. "Let those who are troubled with cold feet, and who wear dark stockings, change to white ones and see, if the difficulty is not in part or wholly removed."

Popular evening sleeves are made of finest Mauresque lace or sequined net arranged with straps of velvet ribbon, revealing the entire curve of the shoulder, and appearing as if the sleeve had slipped down, leaving the top of the arm uncovered, and dropping down on the lower portion, so that more than half of the hand is covered. Underneath the fall of lace or the point of the wrist cuff a tin loop of ribbon is fastened, and this is slipped over the little finger in order to keep the lower sleeve exactly in place. These long sleeves are used on corsages cut very low and draped around the top in Recamier or Victorian style.

JANUARY

Clearance : Sale

The Gotthelf Stock of Men's and Boys' Clothing now on Sale

At 50 Cents On the Dollar

Men's Finest Overcoats of Black Kerseys, Beavers and Tan Coverts, Gotthelf's wholesale prices $10 and $12.50; also choice of the Finest Overcoats out of our own immense stock, now **$5.00**

Men's Fine Ulsters, wholesaled by Gotthelf at $5.60, and choice of any Man's Ulster from our entire stock, now **$2.98**

Boys' Double-breasted Heavy Winter Suits, Black Cheviots and Brown Mixtures, sizes 8 to 15, worth $2, for **$1.00**

Young Men's three-piece Wool Cassimere Suits, sizes 13 to 19, in fancy stripes and checks, New York wholesale price $5.00; our sale price **$2.98**

Men's Fine Cassimere Suits, neat checks and plaids, New York wholesale price $7.50; sale **$3.98**

Men's Fine Dress Pants, in Cassimeres, Cheviots and Tweeds, Gotthelf's wholesale price was $2.00; sale price **75c**

Fine Worsted Knee Pants, regular $1.00 values **65c**

Dress Goods Selling Extraordinary

39c black all-wool Henrietta, 36 inches wide..........
39c black all-wool Ladies' Cloth, 36 inches wide..........
49c silk and wool Plaids, 40 inches wide..........
50c silk and wool Novelties, 40 inches wide..........
39c Henrietta Cloth, black and colors, 38 inches wide..
At a Yard 25c

75c Cheviots, all wool, extra heavy, 50 inches wide ....
$1.00 Plain Granite Cloths, 50 inches wide..........
$1.00 Illuminated Empress Cloth, 44 inches wide..........
75c Black Brilliantine, 48 inches wide..........
At a Yard 49c

Bargain Counter

Half-Price Sale

15c double-width Jacquards..........
15c double-width Serges, all colors..........
15c double-width Plaids..........
At a Yard 7½c

Silks Sale

59c corded striped Taffetas, good colors, a yard **39c**
75c black corded striped Taffetas, special **48c**
$1 black Satin Duchesse, 27 inches wide, a yard **75c**
$1 black Peau de Soie, 20 inches wide, a yard **69c**
Clearance Prices on All Silks.

Lining Sale

10c black Taffeta Skirt Lining.......... **5c**
10c Skirt Facing Canvas.......... **5c**
25c Silk Cloth for lining, looks like silk, all the new shades, double width, only, a yard.......... **15c**

Curtain Sale

Nottingham Lace Curtains, 3½ yards long, 54 to 58 inches wide, taped and overlocked edges, white and ecru, plain net centers, fish-net patterns and floral designs, worth $1.50, special **98c**

Ladies' Jackets Reduced

Lot 1 at $2.98
Includes black and colored all-wool Beaver, light tan Venetian and Meltons, nearly all lined, worth up to $6.98.

Lot 2 at $3.98
Includes black, tan and gray Kerseys, Oxford Cheviots, tan Venetians, Wide Wales and English Curls, worth $8.00.

Lot 3 at $6.48
Includes the greatest bargains in Jackets we have ever offered, including beautiful Taffeta and satin-lined Kerseys, in black, tan, mode and gray.

The Star Store

360 to 370 W. Wash. St. 3 Squares West of Ill. St.

WALTER BAKER & CO.'S

Breakfast Cocoa

Costs less than One Cent a cup.

Be sure that the Package bears our Trade-Mark.

A Perfect Food. Pure, Nutritious, Delicious.

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