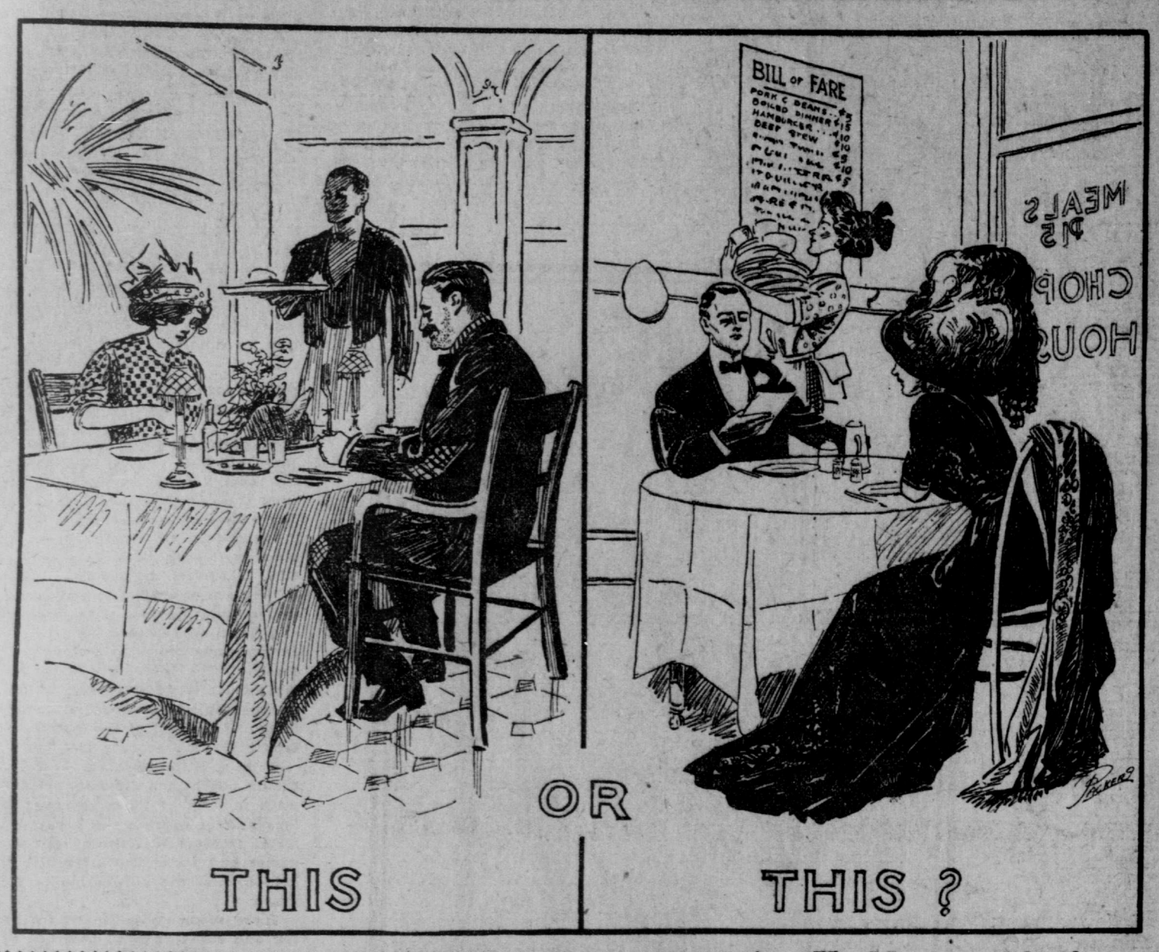
California Women Who Think

Where Shall We Skimp---In the Food or in the Clothing?



WHERE SHALL WE SKIMP—IN THE FOOD OR IN THE CLOTHING?

Do you skimp?

Very well, then, where?

Are you a well fed skimper with rundown heels or a well dressed skimper on an empty stomach? There are two ways of making ends meet. Which do you stand for?

The manner of skimping, like everything else, depends—depends to a great extent on the nature of the person who skimps. The skimper with an abnormal share of pride will go to any extreme of hunger rather than allow appearances to tell of his misfortunes, while the practical skimper will argue that without the proper nourishment his body can not perform its functions, and, in consequence, will eat at the expense of his personal appearance. Which is right?

There may be some readers of The Sunday Call who have never had to skimp. In that case, play a little game of imagination. Suppose you were forced suddenly to retrench on your expenditures. Just where would you start to cut down expenses? Would you be willing to do without certain wearing apparel or would you prefer to skimp a bit on the eating?

This is surely a question upon which every one can express a view. And in return for the two best views each week The Sunday Call is awarding two pieces of silverware. Just a few minutes with pen and ink may make you a prize winner. Isn't it worth while? Try it and see.

All communications should be addressed to the Symposium Editor, The Call, San Francisco.

AWARDED A SILVER OLIVE SPOON

Never Stint the Table

B. A. R., Richmond, California

Where shall we skimp—in clothes or in food? It seems a hard question to decide, usually, but for me I know what is right and best, or so I believe.

First of all, I believe in plenty of food, and good food, not luxuries, though occasionally they are permissible. Nourish the body with good, wholesome food in sufficient quantity and there is a happy and contented feeling and sufficient blood of good quality. Stint the body and the blood grows thin and impoverished, the mind more or less warped and the outlook upon life dull and dismal.

On the other hand, though your clothes may be few and plain, they may be warm and neat and tasteful and your body suffer not in the least.

Sometimes, I admit, it takes courage to meet people whom you have known when you were better dressed; but if your character is worth calling a character you can put your pride behind you and think only of the pleasure of the meeting and the exchange of news of old friends and schoolmates. And if they are people who really care for you and the good that is in you, for what every true woman is meant in some degree to be, they will not look at your clothes unless to approve your strong common sense and good taste in living within your means.

Many, many times have I had to count every nickel I spent in order to keep from debt, and just as many times have had to deny myself a pretty waist or other inexpensive articles of dress such as my sister wore that gave that little touch of daintiness or style I admired so much.

When I have thought of my husband working hard all day and coming home tired and so hungry because of the light breakfast and cold lunch, I have not had the heart to put some unpalatable or stinted dinner before him, for I know that his health—and also our food and clothing, our very bed and a roof over our heads—depended upon his ability to keep his body strong and his brain clear. So we have had our tender, juicy porterhouse or crisp, juicy roast and the freshest of vegetables and good fruit, with the best of butter and home made bread.

When we have needed clothes we have needed them badly, and yet I think we have never made a bad appearance, unless in our working clothes, and then, when I have felt I did not look well, I have many times been told that I always looked nice. I keep my hair as neat as possible, keep buttons sewed on and rips sewed up and so am neat and whole.

Always on buying ready made garments, underwear or otherwise, I resew the buttons, work over the buttonholes and always darn the thin places in socks and stockings, so that the holes seldom are large and always easy to mend, though the whole foot of a sock may finally be made up of darning.

When buying a suit or hat I never buy the latest fad, but something in good taste, plain and inconspicuous in color and style, and of the best possible grade within a certain limit—$25 for a suit and $5 or $6 for a hat, and always pay cash for everything.

I have worn a suit for three years and once I wore one four years and have not been conspicuously old fashioned.

I buy my clothes and hats, not at the beginning of a season, but when the season is well advanced, and so get a better grade for my money, for the price is cut on nearly all such goods after the first rush of the season.

My husband loves his home and his children, enjoys his meals and does not say, "That is not as good as mother's," but "Mother can't cook a steak like that," without any disrespect to her or lack of love and loyalty, but because he is well fed and contented. My children are healthy and happy and I am more than pleased and love my husband, my children and my home. We are always glad to get back home again after even the shortest visit.

AWARDED A SILVER PICKLE FORK

Heart Ache or Stomach Ache?

M. K. A., Ukiah

Where shall we skimp—in food or clothing? When we were married we talked the financial matter over and decided that if we were ever to come to an easy, comfortable old age we must begin to save at once. We decided to sacrifice a certain amount of social standing rather than economize on our table. We lived in the city and husband and I were always well dressed for church and street occasions, but never aspired to any social prestige because we could not. When our little girl was born we spared no pains or expense to give her the best food attainable. We wanted her to be physically perfect, for we knew that with a fine physique, mental qualities would develop in proportion. Once our family physician was called in to see her and when he inquired about her diet I remarked I was giving her meat broths and meat juices two or three times a week. "Yes," he said, "that's good. She's well nourished. One can see that. Our baby should have those things, too, but we just can't afford it. Gas and meats are so very high we can't do it." That week his wife incidentally remarked to me that her new fall hat cost $15. Jack and I were horrified that one could deny the baby things she needed and be so extravagant in dress. We would never, never do such a thing. We would never let our children be bowlegged, pale faced little creatures and us animated fashion plates! Alas for our delusions!

Five years passed and Jennie was old enough to enter Sunday school. We got her new cloak, hat and shoes and one dress for "best." She loved her Sunday school teacher and Sunday was Jennie's one day of all. She attended regularly for six weeks. Then our air castles fell. She came home one day crying as if her heart were broken. After much coaxing we got from her "that a girl at Sunday school had said we must be very, very poor, for she had worn the same dress to Sunday school for six weeks." This remark was made by a girl of ten years, who wore a silk dress and a diamond ring and other equally foolish and extravagant accessories. Of course, we knew this child of 10 had never thought that out. Some one in her home had made a remark like that and the child had passed the idea on. But we never could convince little 5 year old Jennie of this. She only saw her own humiliation and no amount of coaxing would induce her to go back to Sunday school. Fortunately we moved from the city and she has forgotten it. She goes to Sunday school now and dresses better than we can afford to dress her at the expense of our table. We decided it would be hunger-ache or heartache and so chose the former.

The Happy Medium

By Doralinda

Where shall we skimp—in the food or in the clothing? As Samantha Allen often said, "Be megum." We hear a good deal of talk about the high cost of living, or, as the Vest Pocket Essay man so tritely puts it, "the high cost of high living." Now, that's just it, isn't it? Aren't we living too high? Do the plain, every day articles of food cost too much, or do we sigh for the best cuts of meat, the expensive frills and extras that tickle the palate, but do not provide as much noutishment to our bodies as the plain pot of stew, the bread and butter and good, rich milk? Did you ever hear of the Ralston Health club? The writer of those books has coined a word. He calls it "temperation" and he advises sensible people to be temperate in all things. These excellent books point out the road to perfect health through right living, simplicity in dress and diet. They teach the realative food values, and, above all, counsel one not to go to extremes in anything. If the credit system did not exist to tempt one to extravagance, many families would live within their income. It seems to me that if we avoid extremes of fashion in dressing, if we give up cheerfully when we have not the price of a willow plume, and if we follow some of the excellent recipes given in The Call (I've sent in some myself), we can avoid waste in the kitchen, we can acquire better health and be happier than if we demanded the dainties for our daily portion and the most expensive clothing when we sally forth to buy a can of fresh oysters, a crab and some French pastry for supper. There is a German saying, which I won't promise to translate literally, but the meaning of it is something like this: "Today we live high, tomorrow we starve." Now, that's a poor method. Rather let us live plainly until by dint of saving, if only a nickel at a time, we can honestly afford something better. Let's dress within our means at all times, and we can still be well dressed and not conspicuous by our shabbiness. Many do this every day and are far happier than those who live beyond their means, and are consequently brought to a place where they have to skimp.

To Eat or to Wear

A. K. B.

Every question may have two sides, but these sides may not always balance. In this instance my observations lead me to favor "skimping" in clothing rather than eating.

Clothes may be—and are—a very valuable asset in business, but they fail materially when it comes to paying the inevitable doctor bills that follow resultant illness from lack of proper nutrition. They fail also in regaining positions lost through this cause.

Furthermore, since taste and quick wittedness seem the birthright of the average American girl, she is generally able to present a very pleasing appearance without expending an undue amount of money on her clothes. She is frequently her own dressmaker and milliner and any one who has tried it knows what charming effects have sometimes been created from almost nothing.

On the other hand, a woman of limited means must exercise the greatest care in the selection of her meals. She must plan for plain, nutritious foods and learn to do without the "frilly" dishes so dear to the feminine heart.

Summed up, my solution is this: Eat the most nutritious food your purse permits; select your clothing with an eye to utility as well as style and then take the most scrupulous care of your wardrobe. The result will be that you will suffer neither in appearance nor health.

Food Is the All Important Item

Mrs. M. G. Fritz, 142 sixth street, Ashland, Ore.

Where shall we "skimp?" In the pantry or the wardrobe? Under the peculiar conditions of tremendous prosperity and too much money (one of the reasons given for the present high prices) it would seem that in order to "keep up with the procession" and out of debt—a minor consideration with most people, by the way—we must do one or the other. The country is abnormally prosperous. We were told so only last month by the highest authority in the land. Yes, the country is prosperous, for "he himself"—and many others—"has said it," and we are forbidden to dispute the official dictum on peril of incurring the real estate man's curse. In the meanwhile, however, groceries and other things continue to do up to date aviation "stunts" and we of moderate means (somehow "too much" money never comes our way) find ourselves confronted with two horns of the dilemma. Like the organ grinder's monkey:

"Sometimes I feel I could eat more,
But, then, reflection says, 'You can't
Because you are very poor.'"

or else we are compelled to wear our last year's hats and dresses while the show windows are full of the latest styles and accommodating merchants are all running big display ads imploring us not to miss this opportunity to get a first class $25 "tailor made" for $24.98. The choice is not an easy one by any means. Of course, we may say, as did the ragged darkey who was carrying a side of bacon and was accosted by an officious person who inquired why he did not buy himself a shirt instead of the bacon: "Massa, when I ask my back fer credit it gibs it, but when I talk to my stummick it calls fer de cash." Undoubtedly, though, such philosophy as this is rare, especially in this enlightened age, wherein everybody is his neighbor's keeper and feels it a matter of conscience and duty to see that everybody else keeps up with the procession or suffers for not doing so.

We are assured that poverty is no disgrace, but from the way that the person who courageously endeavors to live within his means and answers openly and honestly when brought to account for his economies, "I am too poor to do otherwise," is treated, one would think that, compared with his offense, a wholesale smashing of the Decalogue would be pardonable. No one believes him. He is set down as "stingy, mean, unprogressive," or, at least, by the most charitable, as a "poor manager." His family suffers, too. If his wife sensibly follows his lead she feels the effect of the same general opinion in the attitude of her female associates. If she, as too sadly often happens, does not approve of her husband's course she gets a lot of very unwise sympathy. As for making an effort to raise children along lines of freedom from debt and display, that can not be tolerated for a moment. Poor things! They are not to blame for being here. They must have their "chance." The world not only owes them a living, but an easy one and some one must pay for it.

This that I write is no exaggeration. I have been through it myself and have known others who have. So I state that it is not easy to choose between social ostracism—it almost amounts to that; in fact, does amount to it—to a sensitive person, and the game of "follow your leader," which is merely another name for the worship of the great god, Appearances.

Our national assertion, "I am as good as you are," has been changed to, "I must look as good as you do," if to do so I must starve myself or live beyond my means. No, it is not exactly starvation. We have plenty of a sort. "Plain living and high thinking" and all that, don't you know. Oh, yes, it is all very well for a time. The stenographer can live on crackers, pale blue milk and cheap, or perhaps expensive, bonbons in order to pay for the latest creation of the milliner and mantua maker, getting her reward in the thrill of delight that runs through her when she hears herself described as "that stylish girl who works for Blank & Co.," but suffering daily aches and pains which she vaguely ascribes to "nerves" and temporarily relieves with "headache" powders and frequent, ill afforded vacations until those same "nerves" become so insistent that she is of no further use to her employers and she finds out in a very disagreeable and uncompromising manner that she is not hired merely for her looks.

Had she contented herself with plain, neat and, above all, suitable attire for her work—I have no patience with the idea that a person must be in the extreme of style to avoid being slouchy—plentiful wholesome food at regular and not too short intervals, simple pleasures and early hours, these same troublesome nerves would probably have allowed her to do her work with increasing, instead of decreasing, efficiency and the matter of "appearance" would adjust itself.

The same reasoning may apply to the young couple just married. Jack's salary is small, but they love each other and so they are married and go to housekeeping in a dear little bird's nest of a flat, where everything is new. Ethel is sure that she can keep house and make a brave show besides, because she has all the up to date ideas on housekeeping, saving, sanitation and economy at her fingers' ends. To be sure she has never actually done all the things that go to the making of a home. Her self-denying, short sighted mother has done all the hard, dirty, disagreeable tasks and probably all the economies, too, in order that Ethel should have her "chance." Of course mother has been very old fashioned (that unpardonable crime) in her methods. Ethel can do much better. The world has gone forward and the little bride is determined that she will catch up and even go ahead of it. Her mind is full of dainty menus at a moderate cost. There was one in a Thanksgiving magazine just published in which "turkey, $1.25," was the principal item. Where the turkey was purchased for the small amount I and many others would like to know and perhaps we can get one for Christmas.

Oh, she'll get along. Never fear! But, alas! and once again, alas! Those same menus somehow do not materialize as they read, and there are a thousand things—she thinks, sometimes, that a million would be a conservative estimate—that are always coming up that she never dreamed of. If she runs a bill it is always "a good deal more than she expected," especially if they entertained a little, which, of course, they must do to show what a good housekeeper Ethel is and her new wedding silver. It is quite likely to take so much of Jack's pay check to settle that "horried bill" that there is little left for the other necessaries of life, clothes, amusement, etc. If she tries to pay cash she seems to be always paying for something to eat and never has a cent for anything else. She must economize in some way and if she is not very level headed she will be likely to try it on their long suffering stomachs. A diet of trashy, though well advertised, breakfast foods and often unwholesome, but highly spiced canned goods, together with the always easily obtained sweets, will undoubtedly be cheaper and certainly more easily prepared than three good, wholesome meals of plain nourishing food per day, and more will be left for outside appearances—but is it worth while? I must say that I do not believe that it is, taking everything into consideration, including the social aspect of the case and the difficulty of making an uphill fight in the face of popular disapproval. The fighting strength of an army, industrial or other wise, depends on the commissary, and when it is necessary to economize, and that is generally always, it is short sighted to do so on food. A person may think that he suffers more from being ill clothed (I use the term in the sense of unfashionable) than he would if he were half starved, and I suppose he does in what he will refer to as his "feelings," which of course, means the higher and more esthetic part of him; but when I hear of one of those supersensitive persons who suffers untold agonies because his attire is not quite up to date, though it may be both becoming and suitable (and when I say "him" I mean "her" as well), I feel like answering as the mine owner did who had the difficult problem of reconciling to "overalls and jumper" the broken down young "sport" who had spent his patrimony "not wisely," but too soon, and was now up against the proposition of earning a living. "If my friends should see me in these clothes," wailed the heart broken subject, "it would hurt my feelings." "Indeed," queried the heartless wretch who was giving the booby the chance to be a man once more. "Oh, well, give your feelings time and they will get over it." Sooner, he might have added, than his physical system would recover from the abuse he had heaped on it.

There is one more thought in this symposium which I do not flatter myself will meet the approval of the majority of The Call readers, but did you ever take it into consideration that there is a great satisfaction in a good meal, while you can never quite get through trying to keep up appearances? Some one can always make a greater show that you can, and while there is some satisfaction in matching your brains against others, and oft winning even with the handicap of small means, yet we can not keep it up indefinitely without suffering for it, and I think that the best plan if we have to economize is to do it in the dry goods line.

We can be cleanly and suitably attired even if our clothing is of the inconspicuous variety and not quite in the latest style. Then, if we go our way serenely and think as little as possible of the consequences of our choice, I believe that we will live longer, have better health and in the long run be happier and more successful, even in business, than if we waste our time, strength and money in trying to keep up the pace set by those who are richer or less prudent than ourselves.

A Man in Need of a Wife

Harry Wallace, Ellis and Leavenworth streets, San Francisco.

I, too, have chewed the cud of discontent and duly swallowed in time upon time only to find that my economic forces were a heavy drag on my real self. So I chastised them as I would a child, and now I am myself again.

When I skimped on food I always left the table rather reluctantly and already wishing for the meal to follow. And all the time between meals my mind lacked that contentment which only a satisfied stomach enjoys.

I had saved enough money to take a vacation, and I did. But after only one week's stay on one of our southern rivers I contracted malaria fever and was layed up four weeks in a sanitarium. This misfortune cost me just four times the amount I had saved by skimping on fuel for the inner man. The doctor said I was suffering from impoverished blood, primarily due to improper feeding; hence easily susceptible to disease.

During the time of this nightmare of economy I also allowed my wardrobe to wane, and in consequence I could not present a "good front" when I left the sanitarium. This caused me no little apprehension in applying for a new position. Finally I was forced to apply to a friend for a financial loan wherewith to replenish my depleted wardrobe, and just three hours after I had a good position offered me, and ten days after a better one was thrust upon me.

I have arrived at one conclusion: Good food makes the man inwardly and good clothes make the man outwardly.

I have learned to economize in a better way. I have joined a hospital association and have taken out an insurance policy. Now I am safe both ways. And in order to stave off the inevitable as far as possible I live well in both food and dress. And for these two essentials I spend my dollars like a king. Why? Because I feel like one.

Tell me, patient reader, what is better than a good dinner? Next to food and clothing comes your habitation. I believe that a cheerful room is conducive to good health.

Now, let's get down to business. I kept account for one month and found that I was spending two-thirds of my salary on booze and tobacco, with four and five theaters a week, and saved nothing but my vacation money, and that at the expense of my body for lack of proper food and clothing.

In the past five months I have quit the use of booze and tobacco, also cut my theater visits to twice a week, and I find myself well fed, well clothed, well housed, with a clear head to think and steady nerves to do my work. That is not all. I have also saved in the past five months one-third of my salary. And I am happy, but not contented. I need a good wife to help enjoy my new found happiness.

Our Spanish Lesson

DUODECIMA LECCIÓN DE ESPAÑOL

(Twelfth Lesson in Spanish.)

Buenos dias queridos lectors. ¿Como están Vdes. hoy?

Today I am going to give you several new words, which in Spanish are called "adjetives posesivos," but in English are named "possessive pronouns." Examples:

MASCULINE	FEMININE	PLURAL
mi libro	mi casa	mis libros
su libro	su casa	sus libros
nuestro libro	nuestra casa	nuestras casas
vuestro libro	vuestra casa	vuestras casas

The pronoun "su" is always the same, whether it belongs to the masculine or the feminine gender. Examples: "Su libro," "su casa."

The plural of many masculine or feminine nouns and adjectives is just the same as the singular. Add "s" to the singular.

LOS COLORES—THE COLORS

ENGLISH	MASCULINE	FEMININE	PRONUNCIATION
blue	azul	azul	ah-thool
white	blanco	blanca	blang-ko—blang-ka
red	rojo	roja	ro-ho—ro-ha
yellow	amarillo	amarilla	ah-mah-ree-ee-oh—ah
pink	rosado	rosada	roh-sah-doh—dah
black	negro	negra	nay-groh—nay-grah
purple	violeta	violeta	vee-oh-let-ta
green	verde	verde	vayr-day
brown	pardo	parda	parr-doh—dah
gray	gris	gris	grees

Exercise to copy several times:

La rosa es rosada.	The rose is pink.
La violeta es violeta.	The violet is purple.
Mi vestido es rosado.	My dress is pink.
La margarita es blanca.	The daisy is white.
Su vestido es blanco	Her dress is white.
Su corbata es violeta.	His necktie is purple.
Su pluma es roja.	Her feather is red.
Nuestra bandera es azul, blanca y roja.	Our flag is blue, white and red.
Su sombrero es grís.	Your hat is gray.

VERBO "TENER"—VERB "TO HAVE"

PRESENT TENSE

Spanish	Pronunciation	English
yo tengo	io teng-go	I have
él (ella) tiene	el (eya) tee-ay-nay	he (she) has
nosotros tenemos	nosotross tay-nay-moss	we have
ustedes tienen	ooss-tay-dess tee-ay-nenn	you have
ellos (ellas) tienen	eyos (eyas)tee-ay-nenn	they have
PAST TENSE		
yo he tenido	io ay tay-nee-doh	I have had
el (ella) ha tenido	el (eya) ay tay-nee-doh	he (she) has had
nosotros hemos tenido	nosotros ay-moss tay-nee-doh	we have had
ustedes han tenido	ooss-tay-dess hang tay-nee-doh	you have had
ellos (ellas) han tenido	eyos (eyas) hang tay-nee-doh	they have had
FUTURE TENSE		
yo tendré	io tang-dray	I shall have
él (ella) tendrá	ell (eya) tang-drah	he (she) shall have
nosotros tendremos	nosotross tang-dray-moss	we shall have
ustedes tendrán	ooss-tay-dess tang-drann	you shall have
ellos (ellas) tendrán	eyos (eyas) tang-drann	they shall have
¿Tiene Vd.?	tee-ay-nay ooss-taid?	have you?
¿Ha tenido Vd.?	ha tay-nee-doh ooss-taid?	have you had?

CONVERSATION

Tenemos algunas rosas y algunas violetas en nuestro jardin.
Nuestra casa es pequeña, nuestro jardin es grande.
¿Donde está vuestra casa?
Nuestra casa está en New York.
¿De qué color es vuestra casa?
Nuestra casa es blanca.
¿De qué color es la bandera americana?
La bandera americana es roja, blanca y azul.
La bandera española es roja y amarilla.

RECAPITULATION

Spanish	Pronunciation	English
colores	coh-loh-rayss	colors
la rosa	lah roh-sah	the rose
margarita	mar-gua-ree-tah	daisy
violeta	vee-o-lay-tah	violet
sombrero	som-bray-roh	hat
bandera	bang-day-rah	flag
mi	mee	my
su	soo	his or her
nuestro	noo-ayss-troh	our (with masc.)
vuestro	voo-ayss-troh	your (with masc.)
nuestra	noo-ayss-trah	our (with fem.)
vuestra	voo-ayss-trah	your (with fem.)
mis	meess	my (with plural)
de que	day kay	of what
sus	soos	his or hers (with plu.)
nuestros	noo-ayss-tross	our (with masc. plu.)
nuestras	noo-ays-trass	our (with fem. plu.)
vuestros	voo-ayss-tross	your (with masc. plu.)
vuestras	voo-ayss-tras	your (with fem. plu.)
jardin	har-ding	garden
corbata	cor-bah-tah	necktie
veintiseis	vahng-ty-say-eece	twenty-six
veintisiete	vahng-ty-see-ay-tay	twenty-seven
veintiocho	vahng-ty-ho-cho	twenty-eight
veintinueve	vahng-ty-noo-ay-vay	twenty-nine
treinta	trang-ta	thirty
duodecima	doo-oh-day-cee-mah	twelfth

Adios queridos lectores.

SUZANE GODARD.