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## The Making of a Successful Husband

By CASPAR S. YOST.

In Spite of the More or Less Popular Belief That Married Women Work Too Hard, the Fact Remains That There Is No Real Happiness Without Occupation.

(Copyright, 1917 by C. S. Yost.)  
**M**Y DEAR JOHN—Your letter reminds me of a German woman who lived in the little town of Missouri where I was raised. She was a cheerful individual of the Mrs. Wiggs type, and she had a laugh that would roll across the village like a peal of spring thunder. Its reverberations were infectious, and, no matter how worn and tired, no matter how troubled, my fellow citizens would be, they would echo a smile, and peace and contentment would settle down upon the whole community. Why, I've seen town meetings of the most violent character turned into love feasts by the influence of that laugh poured through the open windows of the city hall. But that isn't what I wanted to tell you about. Mrs. Schreider believed in the prospect of work. She was never idle. From sunrise to sunset and after she was busy. Everything about her little house shone like new silver from the repeated scrubbing and polishing she gave it. She assaulted dirt with the vehemence of an American and the thoroughness of a Tenton. Rest was a luxury she disclaimed, and yet she was always healthy and always happy.

"How is it, Mrs. Schreider," she was often asked, "that you are so happy all the time?"  
"Ach, Gott!" she would exclaim, with that irresistible laugh. "I haf no time for anyt'ings odder."

**Sounds Very Well Indeed.**  
You say your wife "shall never work if you can help it." That sounds quite heroic and looks very well on paper, but it's ridiculous if you can't mean it and a serious mistake if you do. It isn't original with you. I have heard it a great many times in my life. Some of the men who said it did their best to live up to it, and some of them succeeded, to the sorrow of their wives, but there were several who afterward made their wives work like slaves and occasionally beat them. Between the pampered and miserable doll and the persecuted and equally miserable household slave there is a happy medium, and it isn't hard to find it.

There is an old axiom that "there is no excellence without great labor," and it is equally true that there is no happiness without occupation. Work of some description is as necessary to our mental as food to our physical well being. We somehow cherish the delusion that well financed idleness is the acme of earthly bliss, and yet when we get a two weeks' vacation, no matter how well filled our pockets, we begin to feel weary of it at the end of the first week and are impatient to get back into the harness before our time is up. Some can stand it longer than others, but there are mighty few who can contentedly do nothing for any considerable period of time.

"Oh, but you're talking about men," I hear you say. "Women are different." That's just where you're wrong, my boy. Women in this respect are

not different. They must have something to do, and the man who imposes a life of idleness upon his wife, believing he is thereby contributing to her happiness, is making a blunder that he will pay well for in after years. I grant that his intentions are good, but they are of the same character as those used in certain quarters for paving material, and unless the wife is an invalid or is exceptionally constituted his object, prompted by love as it may be, will not be attained, because nature has implanted in every normal human mind a strong and overwhelming desire for action. The world must be kept moving, and it's up to us to turn the crank. The labor of woman is as necessary to progress as is that of man, and it doesn't matter whether it is your wife or my wife or the hodcarrier's wife—each has a definite duty to perform and will find her greatest happiness in its performance.

Now, don't go off half cocked. I don't want to see your wife scrubbing the front steps, although if it is necessary even that probably would do her no harm. I wouldn't have her do anything but that which she is physically able to do and wants to do. Mind what I say now—wants to do. The fact that so many women are useless dolls is mainly due to foolish young husbands like yourself who force their wives to a life of inaction. If given their own way they would choose labor of some character, and 90 per cent of them

impelled by a divinely given instinct, would say housekeeping.

**But Not Drudgery.**  
Among my acquaintances is a young man who has your idea very deeply impressed. When he was married, three or four years ago, he took his beautiful wife to a boarding house and has kept her there ever since. She pleaded for a home, but he would not have her soil her hands. The inactivity of a boarding house was to her unbearable. She has a very fine voice and rare dramatic talent. He reluctantly consented to allow her to give music lessons. Now her income is larger than his own a brilliant future is open to her, and yet she continues to plead for a home, just a little flat where she could do all the work herself, where he and she would be all in all to each other. She just had to do something, but she would infinitely prefer the labors of a home, with its cares and its joys, to the triumphs of her profession.

The home is the best place for the development and exercise of a woman's talents for numerous reasons, most of which are entirely obvious. Whether it is an original gift to the sex or the result of the training of thousands of years is immaterial. The fact remains that she shines with greatest brilliancy in the domestic atmosphere, and here she should be allowed to sparkle unshaded. The majority of women realize their duties and responsibilities and desire to fulfill them. They know that they can best be fulfilled in the home, and if let alone they will derive the greatest amount of satisfaction and contentment from the performance of the tasks which home service brings to them.

I don't believe that a woman should be a drudge. I don't believe that she should be required or allowed to do more than she wants to do. When her work ceases to be a pleasure, then it has passed the limit of expediency and defeats its most important object. Where the line should be drawn depends entirely upon her temperament and her physical strength. Some women can do joyfully and with benefit to themselves an amount of labor that would destroy others, and there are some women, like some men, whose excess energy carries them far beyond their physical powers. Too much work is as bad as idleness. There is a golden mean, and instead of trying to prevent Anna May from doing any work at all you should exercise your authority or your influence, whichever you please

to call it, to keep her from doing too much. I say this because I've got an idea that she's a hustler, and, while hustlers are admirable people as a rule, they need a little restraint exercised for their own good. However, there are not many women who need a check-rein in the matter of work. They are a good deal like us men in that respect. Most of us believe in temperance when it comes to labor, and some of us are total abstainers. But, whether men or women, we are all better off if we perform a reasonable amount of good, honest work every day, and fortunately the ones of either sex who are content to do nothing are comparatively few.

**Idleness a Menace.**  
Your wife must have something to do, and your silly pride should not stand in the way of the doing. Idleness provides more cases for the divorce courts than any other single agency. It doesn't usually appear in the evidence under that name, but it's responsible just the same. Most frequently it is disguised as incompatibility of temperament, which means that Mrs. Jones has sat in an easy chair and lolled away her happiness. Discontent invariably accompanies inaction, and in its train are the other mental and physical ills which make life unbearable to herself and bring misery to her mate. Yet if that same woman were given something to do, something that she felt compelled to do, either by duty or from the sheer love of it, the mere occupation would remove the shadows from her mind, bring the blood coursing through her veins, redden her cheeks and brighten her eyes, substitute a smile for a frown and give that zest to life and love which is the mainspring of happiness.

**You choose a winding road, where curves bring new vistas into view.**  
No, my boy, let Anna May do whatever she wants to do within the bounds of her capacity. If she takes pleasure in housework, don't hinder her. There is nothing degrading about it. On the contrary, there is no more honorable employment for a wife, and there is none by which she can add so much to the peace and contentment of the home and to the happiness of her husband, her children and herself. Talk as the "advanced woman" may about the en-

largement of woman's sphere, she can not get away from the fact that nature's inexorable laws have given her a field peculiarly her own, a field in which she has no rival, in which she can and does do her greatest work for humanity, and that field is bounded by the four walls of the home. It is true that housework has its cares, its myriad annoyances, that often bring tears of vexation or discouragement, but no method of life has been yet discovered that does not have a few kinks in it, and there never will be. It would be a doggoned monotonous existence anyhow. It's the kinks in life that make existence really worth while, and they are as necessary to the making of a woman's character as of a man's, provided, of course, there are not too many of them. When you start out for a drive you don't care for a straight road unless your only object is the exhilaration of motion. If you want to get the greatest possible enjoyment, you choose a winding road, where curves bring new vistas into view at every turn, and so in life. But, here, if I keep on in this strain I'll be writing poetry in a minute, and of all things on earth deliver me from amateur poetry, particularly when it's maudlin.

**Happiest Woman in the World.**  
As I was saying, the housewife has her troubles, great bunches of 'em, but the woman who pounds a typewriter or who stands up behind a counter and murmurs "Cash!" can never know the joys that mingle with and overshadow the cares of the wife who looks after her own household. Why, my boy, there never was a happier woman than your mother, and she has worked, worked hard, all her married life, not because she had to, for I've always made enough to take care of her without it, but because she wanted to, because she would have been unhappy otherwise, and I dare you to say that your Anna May is any better than my wife—I just dare you! No, John; let her work; let her do just as much as she pleases to do in reason. It won't hurt her—there is no better exercise in the world than housework—and it will make her a better wife and, please God, a better mother when the time comes.

It is true there are some women—and it pains me to see the number growing larger all the time—who have a strong aversion to domestic labor. I don't believe Anna May is one of them; but, if she is, let her follow her bent if it does not destroy your domestic relations. There is no more pitiable object on earth than a woman of energy and talent compelled to live a life of inaction because her little tin god of a husband would consider himself disgraced if she were to do a little honorable work on her own account. Don't be that kind of a chump. It's pure and unadulterated selfishness. That's all there is to it. If you love your wife, give her freedom. Let her do the work that pleases her best, for therein lies her greatest happiness. But keep her at home; keep her at home! I draw the line there. If her ambition takes her beyond the portal for her labor, employ a housekeeper, but preserve the home. It is her haven and yours. There is no satisfactory substitute for it. It attains its highest glory when the wife is its head and directing force, when her life is mainly devoted to its welfare; but, whether or no, it is home, and nothing else will serve. Your affectionate dad,  
JOHN SNEED

**Some of us are total abstainers.**  
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