

HOME TOWN HELPS

AMERICAN TOWN AS A STUDY

Subject Well Worth the Little Time and Consideration That It Calls For.

A young writer in the Atlantic Monthly, Randolph S. Bourne, starts a line of inquiry that ought to be followed up. He chooses a suburban town, striving to retain its "soul" against the adjacent city's onslaughts, and in that, we think, he follows opportunity rather than judgment. Suburbs are not very representative. He also, we think, neglects some of the most vital features of the life of American towns. He has probably worked in some seminary subject to German influence. But his idea is a good one. Millions of Americans live in "towns" of one sort or another, and a competent account of the life of the various sorts of American towns, done with sympathy and imagination, would show us a lot about ourselves. It would have economic values. It would make many of us understand better what we care about, and how we are daily occupied, and how much better we and our neighbors might be doing. It would give definiteness to latent public spirit. It would help quite appreciably in the present vigorous but unguided endeavor of Americans to make their own lives interesting otherwise than by the mere mimetic study of the lives of other peoples.—Harper's Weekly.

HIGH IDEALS NOT REACHED

Municipal Reforms Have Yet Much to Do Before They Can Demonstrate Real Value.

For the past few years municipal government has seemed to undergo a general and thorough improvement, but in reality creating a spirit of unrest and a feeling of uncertainty quite destructive of the high ideals ostensibly striven for. Never in the history of this country have we had so many so-called municipal reforms in vogue all over the country as at the present time. In many instances the effect has been beneficial and doubtless will eventually prove valuable to all cities, for such campaigns have been educational and have awakened great interest in civic affairs on the part of even the humblest citizen. In the end when all is simmered down, the people will insist on keeping their affairs where they may be quickly and easily reached when changes are found desirable. While consolidation of city and county governments will doubtless prove economical by reason of reducing the number of officials necessary to do the work as now performed, municipal governments must give the people more and closer representation before the so-called reform wave will settle down to an enjoyable calm.—Los Angeles Times.

Devitalizing Air in Cities.

City air has amazing properties. The smoke and soot that are always in the atmosphere (there are 6,000 tons of soot hanging over London every day) contain lots of sulphur, and this sulphur when it meets certain substances forms sulphuric acid, or vitrol.

It was the vitrol in the atmosphere that brought the great roof of Charing Cross station down with a crash a few years ago. The engine smoke had eaten away the iron, which was insufficiently painted. And some years ago, before the London underground was electrified, it was a great joke at one of the stations for passengers to go and poke umbrellas into a certain iron girder, which at one point was nearly as soft as putty.

Paint is in such cases the engineer's great standby. In some ways paint is more powerful than iron.

Many city buildings might be said to be practically held together by paint, particularly railway stations.—Pearson's Weekly.

Ornamental Yards.

We still have too many people who seem to love bare ground or, slightly better, rows of corn or cabbages, rather than stretches of grass or flowering border plants. "Order is heaven's first law" and the first attempt at improvement should consist of making the yard orderly. Then plant in an orderly, dignified yet simple manner, and on a similar plan and you will not go far astray. No objection should be urged against fruit trees in the front yard, more especially if they be citrus or other evergreens. Loquats and avocados both are handsome trees and shrubs of guava, carissa and feijoa are as ornate as any non-fruit bearing plants. Any or all of them will make a decided and welcome change in any yard now a stretch of bare soil.

Four Vital City Problems.

1. How to interest children in the cult of the beautiful.
2. How town-dwellers may make their homes, small garden plots and backyards beautiful.
3. What local authorities and other public bodies may do to apply the garden city ideal to industrial centers.
4. How our towns may be made brighter and cleaner by the abatement of smoke, dust, etc.

THE LUCKY OLD RING

By JOSEPH E. SMITH.

Ithaca, N. Y., Jan. 27, 190— Dear Old Dad: We have always been such awfully good friends about everything that I thought I would tell you how it happened.

Of course it's Jim's sister. You remember Jim. He was one of the boys in the old frat back at Yale. You know we were both on the eleven for old Ell, and it made it no end jolly that when I got it for coach here he should get it for trainer, too. At first I liked Edith because she was Jim's sister. I took her to things and tried to give her a good time. Pretty soon, I got to like her for her own sake, and then finally it happened—only after I had made a thousand fools of myself.

You see, since Jim and I were such chums, I got to know Edith pretty well, and we became great friends.

If it hadn't been for the ring, it might never have happened. It was a heavy Egyptian scarab, with an engraved setting. It was a particular thing in the frat, and you know you couldn't let a girl wear it unless you were engaged. A scarab is supposed to bring luck, and mine certainly did.

One night I had come back home from taking Edith to a reception. I glanced down at my hand and saw that my ring was gone from my little finger. It upset me considerably. Not that the ring was valuable, only a fellow hates to lose anything like that. I could not see any way that I could possibly have lost it. After I had hunted everywhere I gave it up.

I was out of town for a week or so, but the next time I saw Edith, you can imagine what I felt when I saw my ring on her finger. It knocked me flat with surprise. At first I couldn't think of any way that she could have gotten it, until at last it came to me, that the night of the reception she had asked me to hold her muff for a moment. My ring must have slipped off in it then, and the next day she probably found it.

It was the fact that she wore it that gave me courage to speak at last. As long as she was Jim's sister, I knew that she must know what it meant for a girl to wear that ring, and so I was in a fool's heaven of happiness.

It was good weather for sleighing and so I took Edith out the first chance I got. Nothing seemed to come right to bring up the subject until she took her glove off, for some reason or other. It happened to be on the hand that had the ring on. I looked at it and said:

"You know what that ring means, don't you, Edith?"

She looked rather surprised.

"Of course."

We were way out in the country and I guess my happiness went to my head and made me all kinds of a presumptuous fool. She pulled her hand away with a jerk. The air had brought the color to her face, but it was not the air which made it deepen. She did not say a word, but just looked at me.

"But the ring—" I stammered.

"What has the ring got to do with—"

"Why, you know what it means, and I thought you understood."

She stared at me incredulously.

"Jack, what do you mean? I don't understand at all."

It was my turn to stare at her.

"Why, didn't you find my ring in your muff?"

"Your ring in my muff! How should it come there?"

"I lost my ring the night of the reception, and when I saw you with that on, I thought you had found it. Your wearing it gave me hope for something I had never dared dream of. You must know that I—"

Edith looked at me a moment and then she laughed.

"This ring? It has always had a fascination for me. I have tried to persuade Jim to let me wear it and he never would. So when I found it on his dresser last night I appropriated it."

Then all of a sudden it came over me what a fool I'd been. I might have known it was Jim's, but I was so ready in my conceit to think it was mine that I never stopped to consider anything else.

"I don't suppose there's anything I can say. I am sorry to have made a fool of myself and have spoiled everything."

There was a long silence after I had headed the horse around. I thought of all the things I might say, and didn't.

It must have been the courage of despair that made me ask:

"Can't we keep on being friends, only in another way?"

And then it happened. I could hardly believe that Edith could care for a fellow like me.

But, Dad, here's where I come to the-joke of the thing. The next time I had on my evening coat, it was cold and I dug my hands deep into my pockets to keep them warm. Down in a corner I felt something cold and hard. I fished it out, and what do you think? That lucky old scarab ring! It had slipped off in my pocket and been there all the time.

But I'll choke off this yarn. Send me your congratulations, Dad.

Yours as ever,
JACK.

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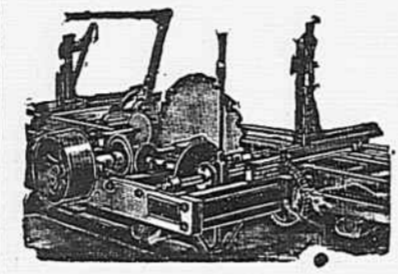


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FRENCH PASTRIES IN DEMAND

First Served by Fashionable Hotels. They Have Been Taken Up by Hostesses Who Are Up to Date.

The increase in the number of good patisserie shops where really delicious French pastries can be purchased probably accounts for the serving of French pastries for dessert at the home table just as they have been served for years in the big hotels and restaurants. There a special boy goes about with a huge silver platter filled with concoctions that make the mouth water and the purse strings open. When the diner or luncher chooses the sort he desires the boy deftly removes it with a wide bladed silver knife. Nowadays the home hostess has the maid pass French pastries at luncheon and dinner. They are passed on a big platter and naturally each guest chooses the particular sort which appeals to him.

Many of them are simply boat shaped shells of puff paste filled with fruit of some sort. Grapes, covered with rich syrup, are sometimes used for filling; and strawberries, luscious and ripe, combined with a syrup, can also be used. Some of the pastries are made in layers of puff paste with an appetizing and delicate cream or almond paste or fruit filling between.

These interesting pastries really help to solve one of the housewife's many worries, for they constitute a dessert which is easily procured and which is a welcome relief from ices and creams and the more usual sweets served.—New York Times.

GET BUSY WITH CHAFING DISH

Many Delicious Concoctions May Be Prepared for the Late or Sunday Night Supper.

A light, but fairly substantial edible, served piping hot, directly from a chafing dish, adds immensely to the informal Sunday night supper. Creamed salmon is delicious and is easy to prepare in a chafing dish. Use the hot-water pan first, brown a little butter and sprinkle crumbed bread into it, turning over until crisp. Set these crisped crumbs aside and proceed, with the blazer pan, to make a simple bechamel or cream sauce, first melting a tablespoon of butter, stirring in a tablespoon of flour and adding a scant cup of milk. Season this fairly-thick white sauce with salt, pepper and a few drops of lemon juice. Stir in a can of salmon and when steaming hot and ready to serve, shake over the top the browned crumbs. The creamed salmon may be served without the bread crumbs, but they add an appetizing flavor, suggestive of the browned crust over a hot dish prepared in the oven.

Cream of Celery.

From the Caterer we take the following recipe, and for family use each can reduce the quantities to suit. Even in using the leaves and poorer parts of one head only the recipes of the best chefs will be a good foundation for experiment and adaptation.

Remove the outside stalks from 12 heads of celery, keeping the hearts to be eaten raw. Cut up these stalks in small pieces, wash well, drain and set in a pan with a piece of butter; cover the pan and cook over a slow fire.

When the celery is nearly done, moisten with one gallon of lightly thickened chicken or veal stock, allow to cook for 15 minutes, and then rub through a fine sieve; pour the soup into a clean pan, let boil and clean from scum. Season with salt, pepper and a pinch of sugar, and before serving bind with one pint of cream, six eggs and four ounces of butter. Serve small fried crusts of bread separately.

Jelly Custards.

One scant coffee cup sugar, one-half cup acid jelly, one heaping tablespoon cornstarch, two cups sweet milk, yolks two eggs beaten light, butter the size of walnut. Sift cornstarch and sugar into a bowl, pour the milk over this, beating constantly to prevent lumping, then add the well beaten egg yolks. Place jelly and butter on stove to melt and beat them slowly into the first ingredients. Set on stove and cook until mixture begins to thicken; stir continually to prevent scorching. Pour into a baked crust and make meringue for top of whites. Set in oven for a few minutes until golden brown. It must be perfectly cold before serving.

Bolled Salmon Steak.

Boil a pint of broth or water with a small bunch of celery, half a teaspoonful of salt, quarter saltspoonful of pepper and a tablespoonful of vinegar. Cut the steaks in suitable pieces and put the fragments and bones in the boiling liquid. Place the salmon in a clean saucepan and strain the seasoned broth over it; cover and let boil briskly for ten minutes. Serve in a deep dish with the liquor instead of sauce. The full flavor and the richness of the fish are preserved in this dish.

Marmalade of Rhubarb.

Two quarts rhubarb, two pints sugar, two oranges, juice of one and grated rind of one; one cupful chopped raisins. Cut the rhubarb in pieces, cover it with sugar and let it stand over night, then add other fruit and cook until thick. It can be made without raisins.

Orange and Prune Salad.

Steam a dozen large prunes until they are puffy; then cool and remove the pits. Cut the prunes in two and mix with an equal quantity of orange pulp. When served, place a tablespoonful of tart boiled dressing, mixed with whipped cream, on each helping.

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