

The Home Department

Conducted by Helen Watts McVey

THE BARGAIN COUNTER

By Berton Braley

Bargains in dress goods and bargains in lace,
Bargains in garments of beauty and grace,
Here are the offerings piled in a heap,
Bargains on bargains—remarkably cheap
Wait, let's see whence these bargain goods came
E'er we plunge into the bargaining game!
Look at that exquisite waist—it was made
Down in the slums by a woman ill paid;
Glorious plume for a wonderful hat?—
Little child hands gave the beauty to that!
Bargains in goods? Why, they're bargains in brain,
Bargains in bodies and manhood, too,
Bargains in childhood here offered to you;
Bargains in hate and oppression and greed,
Bargains in hearts that must suffer and bleed,
Bargains from sweat-shops and pestilent holes,
Bargains in labor and bargains in souls,
Here on the counter together they lie.
Bargain sale! Bargain sale! Come on and buy!

The New Year

The closing of one year and the opening of another is but an arbitrary division of time, for a year closes every hour in the day, and "Every day is a new beginning." The seasons come and go, and we rush along with them; but when the sun has reached his furthest southern limit, and has turned again to make the journey to the northward, we say the year is finished. We are told that as the days lengthen, the cold strengthens, and indeed, for a short period immediately following the short days, the weather seems the sport of blizzards and blizzardous conditions, and the real winter seems to be just beginning. With January and February, the increased amount of daylight sends the spirits upward, and we face the cold with courage and optimism.

The phenomenal weather of the year just passed has given us a keener enjoyment of the crisp, frosty mornings that are now due us, and every one is beginning to look forward with pleasure to the days to come. There was much of discouragement in the twelve-month just ended; but nothing was as bad as was predicted. The shortage of

food stuffs has taught us to be more careful in using what we have, and has taught us many lessons of economy in various lines. If we only remember the lessons and apply them to our future work, the year will have been a blessing, for people, as a rule, are extravagant and wasteful in every thing. Now that the dark, cold days are with us, is a good time to look over our fields, and plan for the best outcomes for next year. Study the failures; read; think; study the successes, and balance the "books," resolved to eliminate the waste and cultivate the economical. If you have kept accounts, it will not be hard to do. If not, then count the neglect as a loss, and see that you remedy the failure as soon as possible. Make the most of every day, if you would succeed with the year.

Work a Blessing

While there is a great deal of sentiment wasted about the "poor people who have to work so hard at Christmas time," there is a common sense side to the question. These people who have to work so hard are not the ones who are complaining; they are rejoiced that they have the work, and will get the wage. True, the shop girls, delivery boys, express men, and the great army of workers are a little more tired than at other times; but they are very glad to have the work; every shop of any size hires a lot of extra help at Christmas time, and many a household fire is fed from these extra earnings. Many a family would go hungry during the holidays were it not for the extra work. They realize that they are a great deal better off than if they had nothing to do. It is a blessing that people have work, and in all businesses, trades, or professions, the heads, back, limbs, ache at times, even while the heart and mind are satisfied. These things needs must be, in all the walks of life. And after all, are there any people in the world more completely exhausted than the house-mother who spends hours hunting for something that her means can reach, for the many who claim her loving thoughtfulness. Body and brain are both taxed beyond bearing at times, and we are all glad when the holidays are over. But the shop girls are by no means the only ones who find in them the severest tax of their powers. The wage worker is glad of the work; the wages will get them many comforts; the house-mother does what she may from love of her family, sacrificing herself "without money and without price."

"When suffering comes, take it bravely, and when it's gone, you will find a blessing left behind. Not all of God's angels are clad in white; some come robed in black, with

masks on their faces; but they are all angels, doing the work appointed them. If we open our hearts to their ministry, we shall learn to say with the Psalmist, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now, I keep Thy word."

"Child Labor" Problem

Since the law against child labor was put on the statute books, the question has presented itself, as to what can be done for the child who is obliged to work or starve. There have been various expedients suggested. None of them have been found satisfactory, and the United States commissioner of education has proposed another plan. He suggests home-gardening for the child; that the school term be extended and half of each day be devoted to teaching the child to raise vegetables, chickens, cows and pigs, the instruction to be given in the home backyard; he thinks the saving effected by the work of the child would more than pay his keep. But he does not say who is to teach each child in his or her back-door school, or what the city, or tenement child who has no back yard could find to do; even a window garden is not always to be grown, as there are few vegetables, much less stock, that will make good in the clouded, sunless room that is filled with an atmosphere more or less poisoned by fumes of gas as fuel or illuminant. In even a small city, or large village, every member of a family is, at times, forced to work in order to live.

Another side of the question is, what is to be done for the boy or girl who, after school hours, has nothing to do, except learn in the wide school of the streets, and are growing up idle, irresponsible, and untaught in the most vital points that go to make a good citizen. If a child's character is formed by the time he or she is seven years old, as some contend, what of the youth of either sex who is deprived of the character-building influence of learning a trade and cultivating a sense of responsibility for the use of the time and materials going to waste now while he or she is running about the playgrounds or getting the education of the streets?

For the Home Seamstress

The January sales follow the holiday shopping, and there are many real bargains to be picked up in the way of white goods and linens. A great deal of the spring sewing can be got out of the way during the days when nothing can be done outside. The buying and making up of table and bed linens is always a joy to the housewife, and whatever the quality of the goods one is able to buy, the best of its kind should be had. It is better to buy one good article than two or three poor ones. If you cannot get the best, get the best you can afford.

There are always good colored damasks on the market, and in remnants there are often excellent qualities for reduced prices. For general use where there are many in family, or children, they are very good, and it pays to get a quality that will bear tubbing. A faded table cloth always looks dingy. The white damask of course, is the best for wearing quality, if of the same grade of linen, and if the laundry is not in question,

it pays to use it all the time; but it adds to the work of the laundry.

Table cloths should have a quarter-inch hem, and napkins should have as narrow a hem as possible. The edge should be overhanded with very fine cotton, with the stitches taken straight across, which is known as the napery stitch.

Linen for bed clothing is better than cotton, but cotton fabrics are excellent, and are more often used than not; cotton wears and launders well. Sheets should have a wide hem at the top and a narrow hem at the bottom; linen sheets are nice if hem-stitched at top, but it does not pay to hemstitch cotton. Hem by hand, if possible.

Pillow cases should be overhanded at the sides, if the single width is used; but the tube cotton is better. Inserting embroidery set in above the hem, with a ruffle or lace on the edge, is a pretty way to finish pillow slips. Hem-stitching is good for slips.

For the Toilet

Crude petroleum is one of the best applicants for thin hair, and should be rubbed on the scalp, as it is the roots of the hair which need nourishing. Vaseline is a preparation of petroleum, and is excellent for the hair. It should be rubbed directly on the scalp, through the parting of the hair, but should not be used so often as to make the hair oily. Where the hair is growing scant on the temple the vaseline will help its growth.

An excellent hair tonic is composed of tincture of cantharides, one ounce; oil of lavender, one-half dram; oil of rosemary, one-half dram; eau de cologne, eight ounces. Apply to the scalp with the finger tips every other night.

Skin that easily chaps requires oil; very hot water is bad for the hands, and so is very cold water. A little powdered borax in the water will

FRIENDLY TIP

Restored Hope and Confidence

After several years of indigestion and its attendant evil influence on the mind, it is not very surprising that one finally loses faith in things generally.

A N. Y. woman writes an interesting letter. She says:

"Three years ago I suffered from an attack of peritonitis which left me in a most miserable condition. For over two years I suffered from nervousness, weak heart, shortness of breath, could not sleep, etc.

"My appetite was ravenous but I felt starved all the time. I had plenty of food but it did not nourish me because of intestinal indigestion. Medical treatment did not seem to help. I got discouraged, stopped medicine and did not care much whether I lived or died.

"One day a friend asked me why I didn't try Grape-Nuts food, stop drinking coffee and use Postum. I had lost faith in everything, but to please my friend I began to use both and soon became very fond of them.

"It wasn't long before I got some strength, felt a decided change in my system, hope sprang up in my heart and slowly but surely I got better. I could sleep very well, the constant craving for food ceased and I have better health now than before the attack of peritonitis.

"My husband and I are still using Grape-Nuts and Postum."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.



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