

MY FRIEND FLICKA

by MARY OHARA



THE STORY SO FAR: Ten-year-old Ken McLaughlin, given an opportunity to choose any yearling on his family's Wyoming ranch, picks the filly of a "lacy" mare named Rocket. His choice merely adds to his father's anger, which is already aroused by the fact that Ken has failed his school work and has shown no sense of responsibility. Flicka, the filly, is badly hurt trying to jump the corral fence, but even Captain McLaughlin has to admit that she may not be loco after all. While Ken is with Flicka in the pasture he hears cries of pain and finds a neighbor's cow caught in a wire fence. He hurries back to the house to get his wire cutters.

Now continue with the story.

down around the end of the house. "Dad, Flicka—" "Ken, I'm proud of you." They were standing on the terrace, and Ken, looking up with his mouth open in surprise, saw his father's face, tired, but showing his big white teeth in a smile of pride.

Ken stared.

"Crosby's cow," said McLaughlin. "We stopped at Tie Siding on the way home for the mail. Crosby was there getting his mail. He told me how you had cut his cow loose from the wire when her udder was caught, and that Gus rode over and told him."

Flicka stood calmly in the center of the group, and when Ken went to her head and put his hands on either side of her face, she remained quiet.

"Nothing wrong with her back," said McLaughlin. "It's her leg. That right hind leg. She couldn't use it to push with, and, lying on the left side, she couldn't get up without it."

"But she's been using it, Dad," said Ken anxiously.

"Yes. It was all healed up, but look at it now. It's swollen. That means infection, and it hurts her worse than it did at first. Look, she's not bearing any weight on it."

Ken's face was distraught when he noticed the swelling above the joint. Everyone knew that the worst danger of wire cuts was the infection that so often followed. "What do you do for an infection, when it's a horse?" he faltered.

Nell answered cheerfully, "Just what you'd do if it was a person. Wet dressings; poultices, so that it will open and drain."

Flicka showed no sign of fear or nervousness. When Ken petted her and smoothed her neck, she looked at him with trust and gratitude.

"Now that she'll let us get close to her," continued Nell, automatically stroking her cat, "there won't be any trouble about it."

"Why does she let us, Dad?" asked Ken.

"Well," said McLaughlin grimly, "she's only got three legs—she can't run away, can she?"

He walked off, Howard after him. Ken knew that his father couldn't bear to look at a sick animal. But his mother said, "We'll get that cleared up in no time, Ken. I'll help you."

A load fell from Ken's shoulders. At least Flicka wasn't going to die. At least her back was not broken. He went back to the house with his mother, and she boiled some meal and put it in a linen bag, and mixed a disinfectant wash and put it in a bucket for Ken to carry down.

When Flicka saw them coming, though Ken carried a bucket and Nell a basin with the poultices and bandages—enough to frighten even a well-broken horse—she showed no fear.

"She has got sense, hasn't she, Mother?" muttered Ken, as they prepared the poultice. "She knows we're helping her, doesn't she?"

"Looks like it," said Nell, preoccupied with the bandages. "Now you stand at her head, Ken—she's more used to you—while I do this—"

Flicka raised her leg off the ground while Nell bathed it and bandaged on the poultice. It made a comical-looking white knob above the hock.

Ken's nights were no longer dreamless. There was no peace for the boy. By day his new responsibility, his passionate hope, his meticulous care of Flicka; and by night a procession of dream-adventures, sometimes terrible ones. Often his mutterings and cries brought his mother or father to his bedside. Something was ever—and ferociously—at his heels.

It was an agony; and his appearance changed in a way that was noticeable. Both boys usually grew taller during the summer vacations, and put on weight too, but Ken had gained no weight this summer, only height; and his face was strained and anxious.

But through the agony ran a thread of something so exciting that he was strung like a taut bow. There was the first, thrilling whiff of real achievement. It was not only his hands that had changed. All the listlessness of the day-dreamer, the sliding away from reality, had gone. He looked, stood, moved, eagerly and with determination. He was in love. He was in the very core of life, and he wrestled with it as Jacob wrestled with the angel.

The achievement was Flicka and the winning of her friendship. He had a horse now. He had her in the same intimate sense that Howard had Highbow. He couldn't ride her yet, but she was his because she had given herself to him.

While she stood eating her oats, his hands smoothed the satin-soft skin under her mane. It had a nap as deep as push. He played with her long, cream-colored tresses; arranged her forelock neatly between her eyes. She was a bit dish-faced, like an Arab, with eyes set far apart. Ken kept a curry-comb and brush in the crotch of the cottonwood tree, and lightly groomed and brushed her. Flicka enjoyed this. As he moved about her, first on one side, then the other, kneeling down to brush her legs and polish her small hoofs which had the color and sheen of cream-colored marble, she turned her head to him, and always, if she could rested her muzzle on him. Ken grew used to the feel of the warm, moist lips against his shoulder or back, and his mother complained of all the polo shirts he dirtied tending to Flicka.

He spoiled her. Soon she would not step to the stream to drink but he must hold a bucket for her. And she would drink, then lift her dripping muzzle, rest it on his shoulder, her golden eyes dreaming off into the distance, then daintily dip her mouth and drink again.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

CHAPTER XIII

Ken could hear the sound of the trans-continental traffic. A horn tooting, a car changing gears. The light changed. The shadows fell lengthwise on the grass... he had the feeling of going off into a day-dream and his eyes wandered... he pulled himself back. Flicka... and the cow... he was caught into the mesh of things... he couldn't leave them. Way off on the road there was a little black speck—Gus! plodding along, his arms swinging from his wide, bowed shoulders, walking as if his shoes hurt him.

Ken leaped off his rock and shot down the road to meet him. He couldn't stand the lonely waiting another minute.

Ken wanted Gus to examine Flicka immediately, but nothing could deter the Swede from getting back to the bunk house and extricating himself from his city clothes without a moment's delay.

As they walked up the road together Ken told of his day—the terrible things that had happened, Flicka down and hurt somehow, and Crosby's cow with her udder torn to pieces, and how he thought at first the wildcat had attacked her. As he talked he kept looking up at the face of the big foreman. Gus' pale blue eyes, with pupils as small as pin points, were always full of light.

Ken got supper in the bunk house, and when Gus returned, they ate it together up there; cold beefsteak, boiled potatoes, apple sauce with thick yellow cream.

Gus washed the dishes and Ken wiped them and put them away. Then Gus took out his pipe and lit it, put his old, torn felt hat on his head, and they walked down through the pasture to see Flicka.

Ken carried a can of oats with him, and, halfway down the path, began to call the filly's name and to whistle to her.

Suddenly he clutched Gus' arm and stopped walking. He called again—there was an answering nicker!

"Oh, Gus—she's calling to me!" "Yee whiz!" said the Swede, his lips turning up in a smile, "she sure is, Kenzie."

Ken ran ahead, loping down the path and calling, "Flicka—Flicka—Flicka—" and an eager whinny came again from the little mare.

When Gus reached the nursery, the filly was sitting up, eating the oats which Ken had poured into her feed box.

"Dot's funny ting," said the man slowly, standing over her. "She's got good appetite. Don't seem sick or hurt."

He sat down on the bank, comfortable again, and glad to be home, and drew peace into his soul with long quiet puffs of his pipe.

"What do you think it is, Gus?" asked Ken anxiously. "Should we try to make her stand up?"

Gus shook his head. "Better wait till your fadder come home. It might be her back, but sittin' up like dot—eatin her oats—I don't know."

Ken brought a bucket of water and Flicka put her nose in and drank.

"Ay tink dot smart little filly," said the Swede.

The family did not get home until after ten. Gus had gone to bed long since, but Ken was waiting for the car on the hill behind the house—he and the two dogs watching the empty road. The sky was crowded with stars, and the Milky Way so brilliant that it shed a soft light over woods and fields and stream.

When Ken saw the headlights of the car, a happy glow went through him. Chaps began to bark, and both dogs got up and moved around restlessly, wagging their tails and nipping at each other.

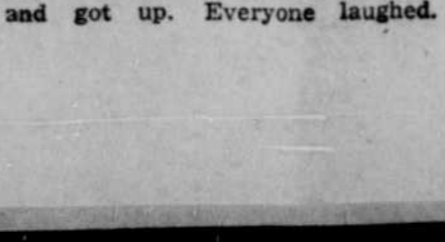
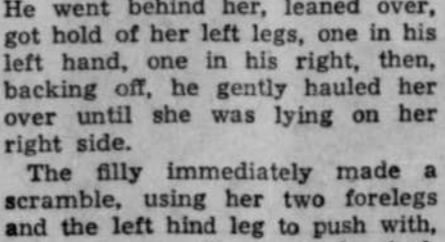
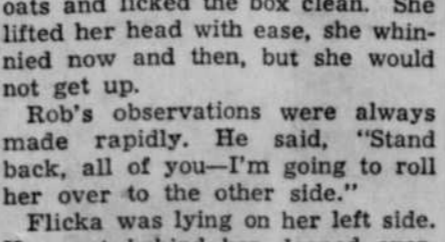
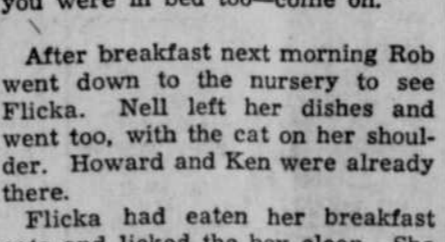
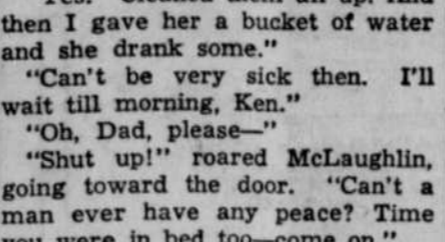
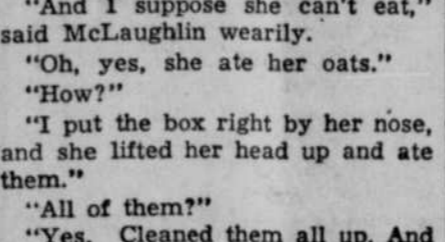
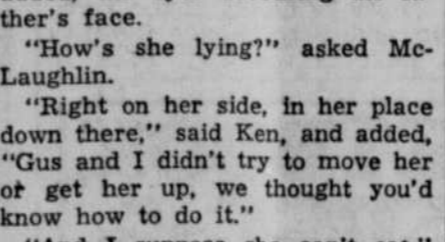
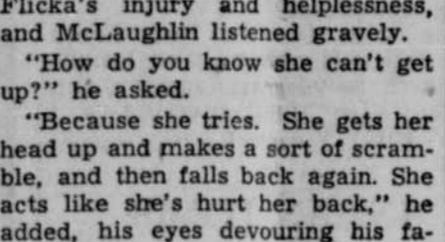
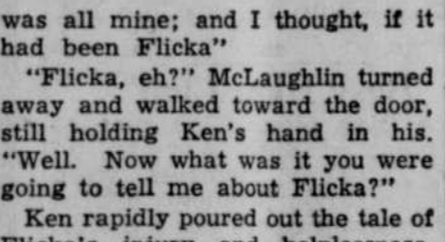
The car roared up the hill, circled around, came to a stop, and Ken jumped on the running board and stuck his head in the front window.

His mother's face was right there, smiling at him from under her green turban, and everyone spoke at once. She said, "Hello, darling, here we are—were you lonesome?" while Howard yelled from the back seat, "Gee, you missed it! You oughta seen the wild horse race—three Indians fell off." And his father was looking over the seat, handing Tim the keys of the car, and telling him to open up the back and unload the sacks of potatoes and onions.

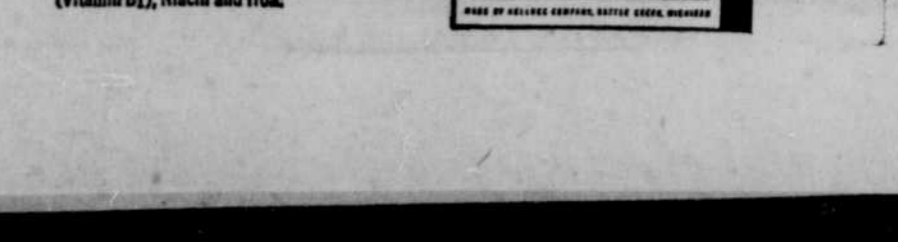
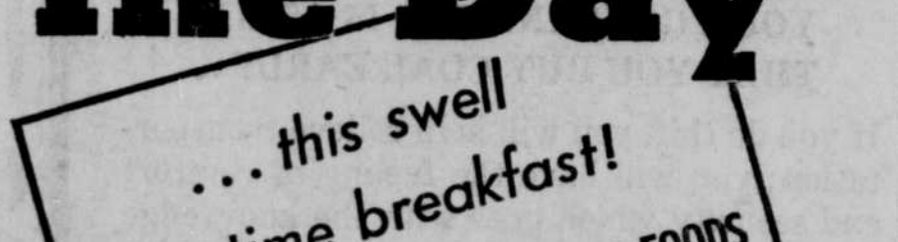
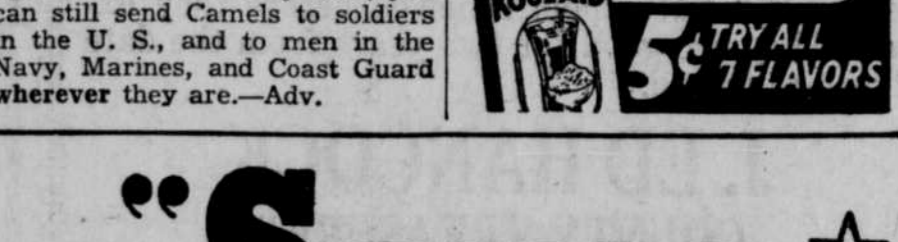
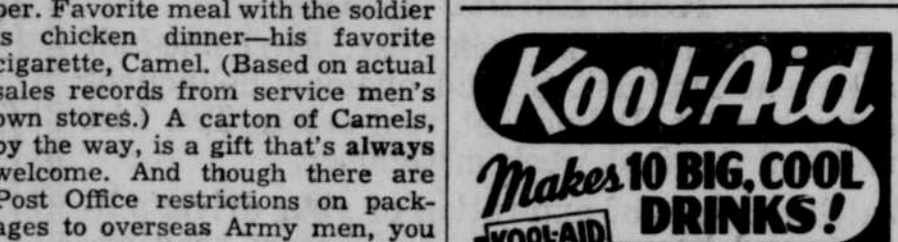
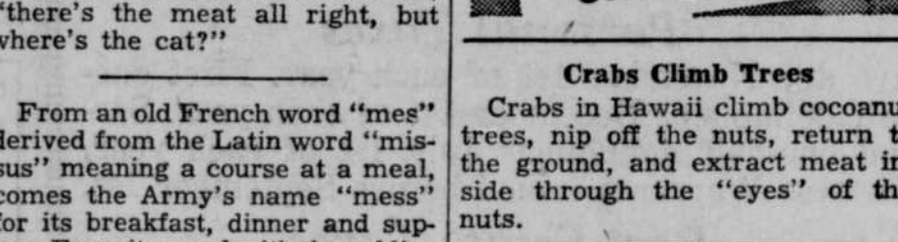
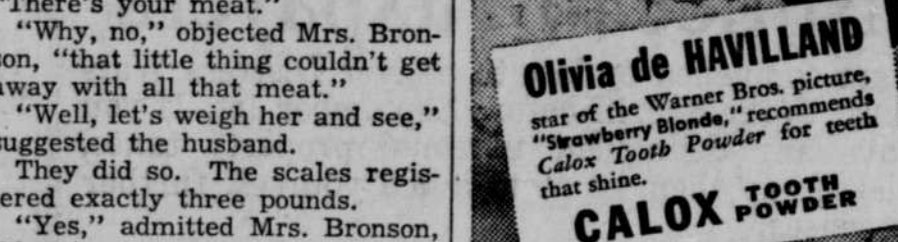
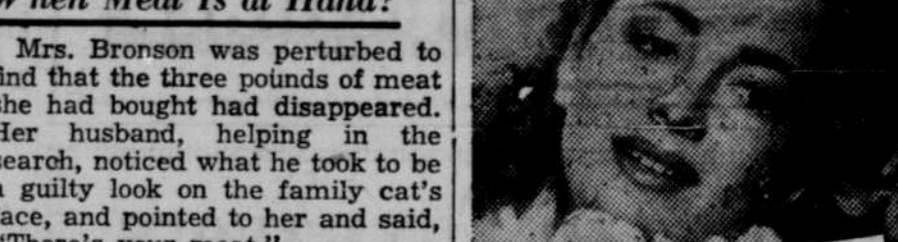
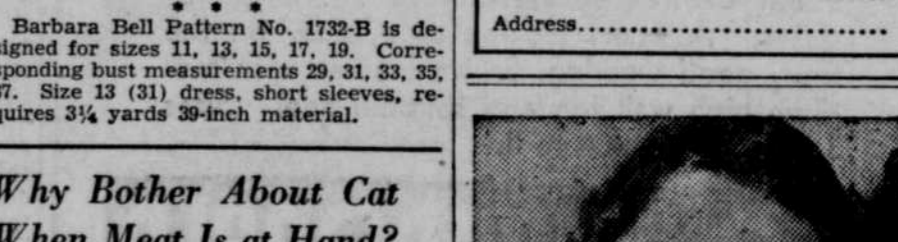
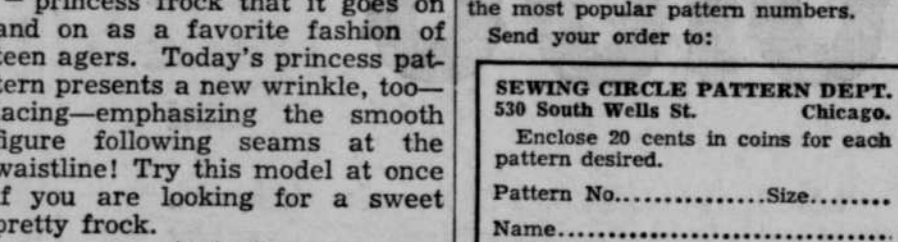
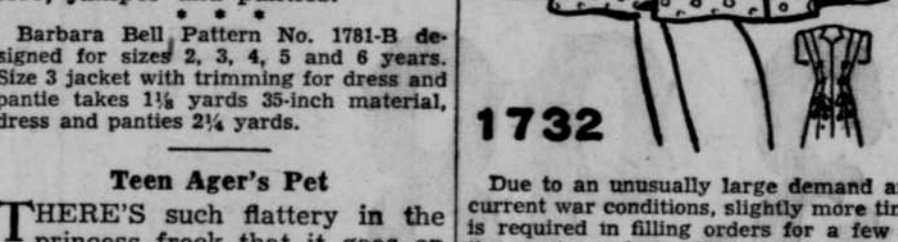
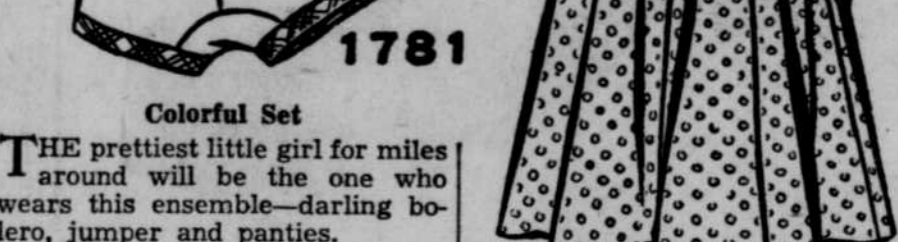
"Howard, you help Tim unload and put away the provisions," he added; then turned to Ken. "Ken I want to see you."

"Dad, Flicka—" It was the third time Ken had said it.

"Come on." His father's hand fell on his shoulder and pushed him

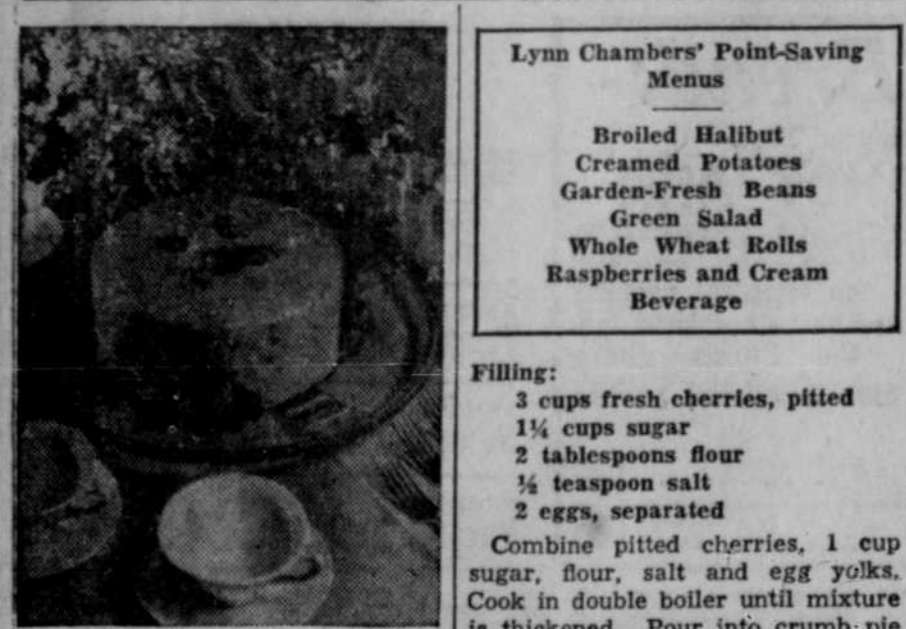


PATTERNS SEWING CIRCLE



HOUSEHOLD MEMOS

by Lynn Chambers



Lynn Chambers' Point-Saving Menus

Broiled Halibut
Creamed Potatoes
Garden-Fresh Beans
Green Salad
Whole Wheat Rolls
Raspberries and Cream Beverage

Filling:
3 cups fresh cherries, pitted
1 1/2 cups sugar
2 tablespoons flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 eggs, separated

Combine pitted cherries, 1 cup sugar, flour, salt and egg yolks. Cook in double boiler until mixture is thickened. Pour into crumb pie shell. Beat egg whites until stiff. Gradually beat in remaining 1/2 cup sugar. Spread meringue over pie. Bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees) 12 to 15 minutes until meringue is browned.

Orange Ice Cream.
1 pint scalded milk
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 eggs, separated
Grated rind of 2 oranges
Grated rind of 1/2 lemon
Juice of 4 large oranges
1 quart light cream

Make a custard of the first four ingredients as follows: Mix flour, sugar, salt, and add milk gradually. Cook over hot water for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Take from fire and pour over well-beaten egg yolks, and add grated lemon and orange rind. Return to double boiler and cook until mixture coats the spoon. Strain and cool, then add orange juice, cream and beaten whites of eggs. Freeze. If desired, serve with candied orange peel.

Sliced Pears in Orange Juice.
(Serves 6 to 8)
2 1/2 cups fresh orange juice
2 tablespoons powdered sugar
6 to 8 pears, sliced thin

Sweeten orange juice with powdered sugar and chill well. Fifteen minutes before serving, peel pears, slice thin, and sweeten. Pour juice over the pears, and serve with cookies.

Angel Food Cake.
1 cup sifted cake flour
1 1/4 cups sifted granulated sugar
1 1/4 cups egg whites (10 to 12 egg whites)
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 teaspoons cream of tartar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 teaspoon almond extract

Sift flour once, measure, add 1/2 cup sugar, and sift together four times. Beat egg whites and salt with rotary beater or flat wire whisk. When foamy, add cream of tartar and continue beating until eggs are stiff enough to hold in peaks, but not dry. Add remaining sugar, 2 tablespoons at a time, beating after each addition until sugar is blended. Fold in flavoring. Then sift in about 1/4 of the flour and fold in lightly. Repeat until all is used. Turn into an ungreased 10-inch angel food cake pan. Cut gently through batter with knife to remove bubbles. Bake in a slow (325-degree) oven, 1 hour or until done. Remove from oven and invert pan 1 hour. Cover with fruit or berry icing.

Cherry Meringue Pie.

Crust:
3 cups oven-popped rice cereal
4 tablespoons sugar
1/2 cup butter, melted

Roll cereal into fine crumbs; combine with butter and sugar, mixing well. Press mixture evenly and firmly around sides and bottom of pie tin. Bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees) for about 8 minutes. Cool before adding filling.

Lynn Says:

Point Wisdom: If you're parting with more red stamps a month than you should, check up on yourself.

Don't buy meat and neglect other red stamp foods. Space out the stamps just as carefully as you figure out the financial end of things.

Study point values and learn to understand how the system works instead of having the busy butcher explain it to you every time you buy.

Family likes and dislikes are out of place in a wartime budget. Serve low point meats appetizingly cooked.

Buy meats and fats sensibly—as you need them. Buying too much or carelessly storing what you have is sabotage on the home front.

If you have a canning problem, write to Miss Lynn Chambers, Western Newspaper Union, 210 South Desplaines Street, Chicago, Ill. Please enclose a self-addressed envelope for your reply. Released by Western Newspaper Union.

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Why Bother About Cat When Meat Is at Hand?

Mrs. Bronson was perturbed to find that the three pounds of meat she had bought had disappeared. Her husband, helping in the search, noticed what he took to be a guilty look on the family cat's face, and pointed to her and said, "There's your meat."

"Why, no," objected Mrs. Bronson, "that little thing couldn't get away with all that meat."

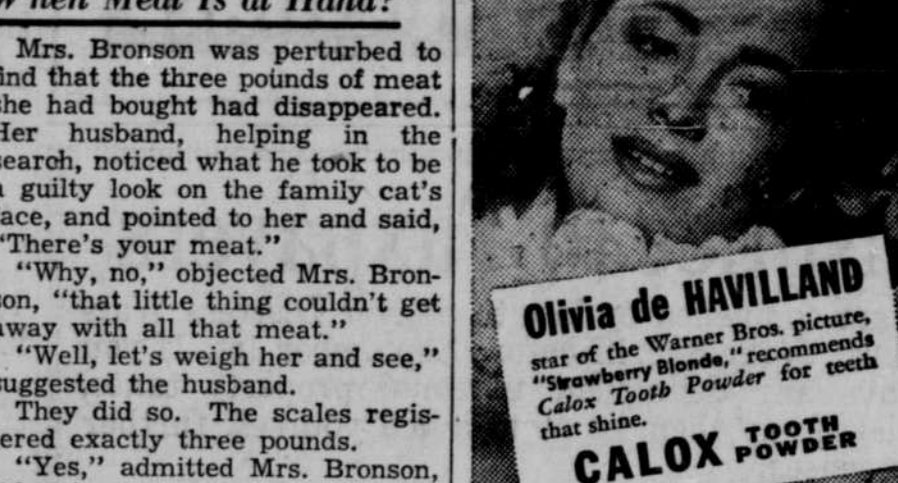
"Well, let's weigh her and see," suggested the husband.

They did so. The scales registered exactly three pounds.

"Yes," admitted Mrs. Bronson, "there's the meat all right, but where's the cat?"

Crabs Climb Trees

Crabs in Hawaii climb coconut trees, nip off the nuts, return to the ground, and extract meat inside through the "eyes" of the nuts.



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