

# Housekeeping and Home Matters on the Canal Zone

(Copyright, 1912, by Frank G. Carpenter.)  
 NOON, Panama.—I have received many letters from the United States asking me to write of the American women at Panama. There are several thousand of them, and they come from every part of the union. They are of all classes and conditions, from the wives of the high officials, such as the commissioners, who draw their \$10,000 and upward a year, down to those of the lowest salaried clerks, who get \$100 or \$150 a month. Many of them are the wives of mechanics, of railroad engineers, of electricians, and steam-shovel men, and not a few are nurses, school teachers and the daughters of employes of all classes. In general I may say that the women here is above the average of her sex in any American city.

She has been benefited by mixing with others of her sex from all parts of the country, by her travels down to the isthmus, and by a life here under different conditions than those which prevail anywhere else. She is often good-looking, and she lacks the lines and wrinkles of worry which seem the faces of her sisters up north.

**Housekeeping on the Isthmus.**  
 In the first place she has an easier life than at home. Her housekeeping worries are less, and she has Uncle Sam for her landlord, and he charges no rent. According to the contract with the men the government furnishes the quarters, and it gives each family a home according to the salary and rank its head holds in the work. The highest officials have magnificent residences, great two-story structures, many of the rooms of which are twenty feet square and so arranged that they open one into the other like a high class Japanese residence, letting the wind blow through from all sides. These houses are equipped with bathrooms of tile. They have furniture to correspond, and are as delightful homes for entertaining as a man of that class could wish.

Further down on the salary list are homes less pretentious, the quarters declining in character until they reach the two and four family houses of the more modest clerks. All of the homes are exceedingly comfortable, and all have wide verandas running about them which are so covered with wicker netting that the mosquitoes and gnats and the insect insects cannot get in. Every house has its light on all sides, and all are surrounded by hedges of brilliant leaves and many colors, or by strange vines and tropical flowers. Uncle Sam is the gardener, and the lawns are watered and kept trimmed by West Indian negroes. The plants are to a certain extent the choice of the resident. Nearly every woman here is a flower lover, and there are wives of machinists who have collections of orchids which would cost a small fortune in dear old New York.

**A Typical Home.**  
 But let me give you some pictures of one of the well-to-do homes on the isthmus. The man who lives in it is a railroad official, not the highest nor even next to the highest. He is fairly well down in the ranks and his salary is a little above \$200 per month. His home is the ordinary house which Uncle Sam furnishes to a man of that class.

How what I describe it? It is situated on the side of a hill here at Ancon, in plain view of the rolling Pacific. Back of it there is a row of royal palms and about it a hedge of gorgeous red and green leaves. It has altogether a half dozen rooms and is surrounded by a wide porch screened in with wire and covered with vines. Inside the wire, at the front, orchids and other air plants hang from the roof, and also ferns in pots with leaves which extend from the ceiling quite down to the floor. Some of these ferns have fronds as those of the maiden-hair fern, and others have leaves which look like the horns of a deer. There are chairs on the veranda and this forms the out-of-door sitting room.

Entering the house you come into a living room, which is, I judge, eighteen feet square. At the left is a bedroom quite as large, and on the other side of the living room is a big dining room with a china closet built into the wall. There is also a drying room of about the size of an ordinary hall bedroom, which has an electric stove to keep the clothes from moulding during the wet season, and on the opposite side of this is a kitchen. The house has also a shower bath and other modern conveniences.

**The Furniture.**  
 The furniture of the house is all supplied by Uncle Sam. It is simple, as it should be in the tropics. There are wicker chairs, including rockers, lounges, tables and stools, and the beds are as good as at any first-class hotel. The kitchen has a refrigerator and an iron cook stove. It has a porcelain sink, with plenty of fresh water from the Panama water works, and a garbage can, which is emptied daily by Uncle Sam's men.

The light is electric, and costs the housekeeper nothing. The only heat in the house is that of the cook stove, and this comes from soft coal furnished free by the government, and put in without charge. One feature of the kitchen is the little pans of coal in which the legs of the refrigerator and of the kitchen table stand. These are to prevent the many kinds of ants crawling up and getting at the provisions. Ants are the chief pest of the isthmus. They are of all sizes and of every variety. Some will eat wood, and others go for vegetables and everything sweet. If a woman has plants she must keep the pots in bowls of water or the ants will eat them, and if she should leave a piece of sugar out anywhere it will be blacked with their little insects.

**Some Marketing Arrangements.**  
 I wish you could have as good a dinner today as I had in this house I am describing. It was a Sunday dinner, and perhaps a little better than the ordinary meals, but it was quite as good as any you could serve in your home. We had a soup, a fish and a roast, with an entree or so, ending with coffee, Swiss cheese, ice cream and cake for dessert.

The most of the food came from the commissary department, which is practically the only source of supply. Uncle Sam runs a big grocery store here, and he furnishes about all the food that his 25,000 employes have to eat. He has a catalogue and price list of everything, and the prices are usually far below those of the states. For instance, the roast beef we had on the table came from Chicago. It was brought down frozen stiff in cold storage, and the price delivered at the house was 20 cents a pound. You would do well to get such beef in your home market, and you would have to pay 30 cents at the least. The butter was excellent. It was not nearly so high-priced as at home, and my hostess told me that the prices of all canned vegetables are cut almost in half. This is



There are masquerade balls and many dances

especially so with articles imported from Europe. We had as a salad some German asparagus of the kind which costs 35 cents a can in the states. It is sold here for the government for 20 cents a can. We had also some delicious French peas, which cost one-third what they do at home. All things that are brought here from abroad come in free of duty, and as they are furnished at only a little more than cost they are cheaper.

**Living From Hand to Mouth.**  
 As we ate I asked the lady of the house to tell me how she is supplied. She said: "We live from hand to mouth, but in some respects we are very much better off than at home, and in others I like our home ways the better. We are, in fact, socialists, with Uncle Sam as the government stores, and it is from them that our bread, our rice, our meat and even our clothes are obtained. The ice is delivered every morning and put into the icebox. The coal is brought to the bins, the bread is left at the door, and it is the same with our clothes or anything that we order."

"Our orders are made by means of commissary books, which we have the right to buy up to 90 per cent of our salaries. We cannot get a book, however, until the salary is earned, and if we should run out of a book at the latter part of the month we have rather close forage, as you cannot buy anything from Uncle Sam except with these books. This is the only place I know of where you cannot pay money to get things. The only legal tender is one of the books."

"Well," continued the lady, "all our orders have to be made the day before they are filled. The government has its regular order man, who comes around every morning and takes note of the supplies that we need. We have to pay the order man in advance for all we order, and he leaves a copy of the order with us and takes two copies with him. One of these copies goes to the commissary store, and the other is used in keeping the accounts."

"But do you always get what you order?"  
 "As a general thing, yes; but the trouble is we cannot pick out as you could at a market, and we have to take what is sent. I may order porterhouse steak, and if the man sends me a cut from the round I have no redress. If the steak should be bad I can take it to the health officer and thus get back my money, but if it is merely of a different quality I could do nothing. I know of certain tough steak but Uncle Sam by setting it aside until it spoils. They can then take it to the health officers and recover what they have paid. As a rule, however, the supplies are excellent. The bread is fresh and good, our ice comes from distilled water and it is delivered at 40 cents per hundred. The government even cuts our kindling wood and it keeps our yards clean. Indeed, our living is much cheaper and better than we had it at home."

**The Servant Question.**  
 I asked as to servants, and the lady replied:

"The servants here are mostly Jamaican negroes. I keep but one girl and pay her \$15 good a month. She has Thursday afternoon off, but she must come back home to get dinner, and she must stay at home to get dinner Sunday. My girl is an excellent cook, and she is cheaper than ordinary. The highest officials have more servants, and the same kind of an establishment that such men would have in the states. They have their cooks, butlers and chambermaids. A good cook gets about \$23, a butler \$15 and a chambermaid \$15. As to the washing and ironing, that is often done in the house by the cook when one has but two girls, and sometimes by Jamaican negroes who come in and wash and iron for a dollar a day. We can also send our clothes to the government laundry, but that costs more, although the work is well done. Another trouble is the machines cut off the buttons."

"What are your hours for meals?"  
 "They vary in different houses. The ordinary meals are three, the first breakfast is coffee and rolls. This is served all the way from 5 until 9, according to the working hours of the man. The next about 11 or 12, and then there is a dinner at from 5 to 7. Most of the ladies have afternoon tea at 3 or 4 o'clock. The usual calling hours are from 4 until 7, and nearly every one is in bed at 10."

**Where the Clothes Come From.**  
 One of the troubles of the woman of the isthmus is to get new clothing. There are practically no dressmakers among the Panamanians and nearly everything has to be made at home and sent down. The government stores have some ready-made things, but these are mostly for men, and the women must either make their own clothes or order them from the states. I know some women who do this through the professional shoppers. They send in



Among the amusements are picnics

their measurements and the gowns and other things are supplied on approval. The woman who does the shopping in the United States gets 10 per cent on all that she buys, but this commission comes out of the merchant.

**The Woman's Club Movement.**  
 And then there are the women's auxiliaries of some of the secret order societies. We have the Daughters of Rebekah at Gorgona, the Pythian Sisters, allied to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers at Las Cascades, and the Alfarretta Council of the Degree of Pochontas at Culebra.

All of the various clubs have their representatives in the Canal Zone Federation of Women's Clubs, and most of them are working together for the bettering of the moral conditions on the isthmus. They keep their eyes on the schools, upon certain features of sanitation and upon the moral tone of the zone. Fully half of the women of the isthmus now belong to them, and altogether they have done a great deal of good.

**A Surprise for Greeley.**  
 In his younger days, while filling the humble position of printer's devil, Horace Greeley was sedulously courted by the minister's daughter. Her father did not look with favor on the young man's attentions.

One day, however, the good man was unaccountably gracious and invited the future editor to come to church the next Sabbath, as he felt sure the sermon would be of special interest to him. Sunday morning found young Horace dressed in his best, seated in the pew beside the fair object of his devotion.

Sermon time came, and his dismay may be imagined when the minister, looking straight at him, said in a low voice, as his text, "Lo! My daughter is being grievously tormented by a devil."—Lippincott's Magazine.

And this brings me to the subject of the amusements of the isthmus. The women here are socially inclined and there are a number of society sets, just as at home. There is the army set, consisting of the wives of the high officials and of the army and navy, for you know we have a regiment here and some of Uncle Sam's marines. Then there is a clerical set with divisions ranging somewhat according to salaries, and there is a society made up of the wives of the mechanics and others. All of these intermingle more or less with one another, although there are certain well established distinctions and grades.

There is considerable dinner giving and tea giving and there are masquerade balls and many dances of one kind or another. There are dances every two weeks at the Tivoli hotel, paid for by the Tivoli club, which has 700 members. These dances are the events of the month and are attended by the women from all parts of the zone.

Among the other amusements are picnics to old Panama, Fort Lorenzo, the island of Taboga and day excursions into the jungle. There are tennis games at every station, and among certain classes bridge is quite as common as it is at home.

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While there may be no perceptible harm attachable with the first few applications of the numerous so-called superfluous hair "cures" other than causing slight skin troubles and an increased growth, real danger and disfigurement lurk in their frequent use, which, if continued, will produce eczema or other serious skin diseases.

Furthermore, after each removal, the hair grows out again more rapidly, coarser and stiffer than before and eventually it will become so coarse that no preparation will be strong enough to remove it without ruining the skin.

It is surprising that these unknown and uncertain means should be employed when there is such a reliable and trustworthy preparation as DeMiracle, the only absolutely non-poisonous depilatory that dissolves hair, thereby taking the vitality out of it, consequently retarding and preventing increased growth.

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All reliable dealers sell and recommend DeMiracle, knowing it to be the best and safest depilatory. Some unprincipled ones will tell you they cannot procure it so that they may more easily influence you to purchase their own or possibly some other dangerous, worthless substitute under another label for a few cents more profit. To protect you from just such imposition, if your dealer will not supply you, mail us \$1.00 and we will send you, all charges paid, in plain, sealed wrapper, a 50-cent bottle of DeMiracle, and we will make you a present of a full size jar of DeMiracle Cream. If you are unable to procure DeMiracle, we will send you a full size jar of DeMiracle Cream, which will be mailed sealed in plain envelope. The DeMiracle Chemical Company, Dept. 52, Park Ave., 12th and 13th Sts., New York City. You can always procure DeMiracle without argument in Omaha from Sherman & McConnell Drug Co., and Loyal Pharmacy.

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## Health and Beauty Hints

**Maiden:** I am glad you value your complexion, and you avoid powder and rouge and use this spumax lotion the skin will always remain divinely fair. Put 4 ounces spumax in 1/2 pint hot water (or witch hazel) then add 2 teaspoonfuls glycerine. Apply the lotion sparingly to the skin and rub lightly until it dries. Your mother will like the spumax lotion, because it dispels that shiny, sallow condition and gives a tone and velvety softness to rough skins unknown to users of powder. The spumax lotion is invisible when on and perspiration will not spot nor streak it.

**Belle:** No glasses will not give a sparkle to dull eyes. Before you visit the oculist make up and use this harmless, inexpensive eye-tonic, and I am sure you will be saved the expense and annoyance of glasses. Dissolve on ounce of crystals in a pint of cold water. Putting 2 or 3 drops in the eyes daily will relieve the smart and ache, overcome the blood-shot condition and give to dull, expressionless eyes a fascinating charm and brilliancy.

**Mrs. Ben:** You ought not be sickly, and you won't any longer if you make up and use this tonic. Dissolve 1/2 cupful spumax in 1/2 pint alcohol, then stir in 1 ounce karene and add hot water to make a quart. The dose is a tablespoonful before each meal. A course of the karene makes rid of all impurities, cleanses the bowels, and restores the vitality of your system. Follow my suggestion and your health will soon return, and instead of a "muddy," oily, sallow skin, it will be clear and radiantly beautiful.

**Edith:** I always make it a rule never to recommend a recipe unless I know exactly what it will do and am convinced that it is quite harmless. Parotitis will dissolve your fat quickly and gently, without pain or future ill-effects. To prepare, dissolve 4 ounces parotitis in 1/2 pint hot water, and when it cools take a tablespoonful before each meal. This will remove every ounce of superfluous fat and leave the skin smooth.

**C. Q. D.:** It is distressing, I know, but if you use plain canthrox for cleansing the hair and scalp you will not be both erred. In fact, worry causes wrinkles and crow's feet. Make up and use this almonon cream-jelly and before long the wrinkles will disappear, sallowness will vanish and the skin will assume a velvety texture and that youth-tint much sought after. Into 1/2 pint cold water stir 2 teaspoonfuls glycerine, then add 1 ounce plain almonon. When thoroughly dissolved, apply freely to skin and rub in well. This cream-jelly is especially fine for removing the pimples and blackheads and reducing large pores around the nose. Used during the heated term it prevents freckles, tan and sunburn.

**May B.:** Oily, sticky hair indicates an unhealthy scalp, and to correct this condition you should use a plain quinson hair and scalp tonic made by mixing together 1/2 pint each water and alcohol and 1 ounce quinson. The use of this inexpensive tonic banishes dandruff and restores the hair to its natural color and texture, and gives to dull, faded, brittle hair a tint and rich color and silky softness truly charming.

**Nadine:** Put plain pyroxin on your eyebrows with forefinger and they will grow exactly what you will. To make stubby eyelashes grow long and curly, apply pyroxin to lash-rods with thumb and forefinger. Be careful, however, and don't get any where no hair is wanted.

**J. M.:** Those aggravating hairs can be banished for all time with one application. Apply a little of the plain almonon powdered talc and water to cover the hair not wanted, then after 2 or 3 minutes rub off, wash the skin and it will be soft, smooth and hairless.

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