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# MEAT FOR MAMMON

(Written for "The Listener" by "PATSY")

"YOU know me, Gladys," said Mrs. Spencerman with indulgent dismissal of her own folly. "I am not one to be interested in food."

Truth would have denied the soft impeachment but Gladys wisely refrained.

"But," went on Mrs. Spencerman firmly, "there are times when a woman needs a good square meal—a meat meal—and particularly in times of emotional stress."

Gladys cluck-clucked sympathetically. Mrs. Spencerman, socially adequate

Mrs. Spencerman, having extracted her tribute of stunning silence, went on.

"Picture me, Gladys, alone in that great empty echoing house with only 4 eggs and a small loaf of stale bread."

Gladys pictured it. Fearing that the image might be too harrowing for one of Gladys's tender susceptibilities, Mrs. Spencerman proceeded to tone it down a little.

"Fortunately I had a whole pound of butter, but then I'd got it on Tuesday, and you can never tell with butter this hot weather. And I had a quarter of a pound of cheese. They say cheese is very nourishing. I must confess I have never found it so."



"Harold was riding round on a tricycle . . . reviewing troops"

even in moments like this, took from her purse the lace-edged handkerchief given her that very Christmas by Gladys, and blew vigorously.

"Of course I knew Harold would be going away sometime, but it was all so unexpected."

Gladys cluck-clucked again. After all it was only Harold's fourth final leave, and he could just as logically have been spared till the sixth or seventh.

"And then to go like that just before New Year. It did seem hard, Gladys."

Gladys nodded, she hoped sympathetically. Another cluck would have been unnecessarily repetitive.

"Well, Harold went on Thursday. I didn't somehow feel like eating much on Friday, so I just opened a tin of tongues I happened to have in the house. I thought I'd go on Saturday and stock up for the week-end. Well, I went on Saturday. And do you know, Gladys, not a single shop was open. Not even a dairy!"

Mrs. Spencerman paused impressively. Gladys waited open-mouthed for the climax.

"I had forgotten it was New Year's Day."

"Well, there was nothing to do but manage as best I could till Tuesday, when the butchers opened. Fortunately dairies opened on Monday and I was able to get some more bread (very stale) and some fruit."

"I was up the road very early yesterday because I didn't want to risk the butcher being sold out. I had spent quite a lot of the week-end working out what I wanted. I toyed with the idea of a small sirloin of beef with the bone in (Yorkshire pudding and baked potatoes and pumpkin) but then I decided it was hardly worth while for one. For a long time I couldn't decide between rump steak and veal cutlets, but by Tuesday morning I had definitely made up my mind in favour of lamb chops."

"Fortunately the butcher had some. I got three. I also bought a pound and a half of peas. Then I came home and dug a root of potatoes and made some mint sauce. I always like it to stand for a while, don't you? It brings out the flavour."

"I think I could have been forgiven for disposing of those chops at midday

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