

*I knew a girl who was so pure  
She couldn't say the word "manure."  
Indeed her modesty was such  
She wouldn't pass a rabbit hutch.  
And butterflies upon the wing  
Would make her blush like anything.*

*That lady is a gardener now  
And all her views have changed somehow.  
She squashes green fly with her thumb  
And knows how little snow-drops come.  
In fact the garden she has got  
Has broadened out her mind a lot.*  
—REG. ARKELL

## FOOD HABIT

THE Food Habit of different countries is rather interesting. If you travel in one or another you are impressed by this and that difference—that meat and vegetables go together in England, for instance, but are served, in France, as a separate course. That in the matter of drink, certain tastes are outstanding—in England, beer; in Spain, wine; in America, coffee; in New Zealand, tea.

The famous Australian breakfast is steak or chops; the almost universal English one, bacon and eggs.

Someone remarked once that our New Zealand national food was sponge cake. It's true, I believe, that we eat far more of what is sweet and what is soft than other nations. Which no doubt accounts for another remark which I have heard often enough (and statistics prove it)—that "New Zealand is the dentist's paradise."

Another interesting point is the manner of service. An informal meal in England is set on a table or board at one side of the room and you, more or less, help yourself. Here we are the proud possessors of a tea-waggon or trolley which we wheel into the midst of the conversation, laden to the gunwale. The stranger to our shores has found that rather startling.

Americans, on the other hand, or at least Californians, present a central table on which a positively astonishing variety of dishes is displayed. Guests are given a napkin and a huge plate. The rounds are made by the hostess with each dish in turn and you are expected to take not only what you wish at the moment but what you are likely to fancy later. There's no second chance.

Every country, also, likes to put a "patent" on one or another food invention and make it particularly its own. High among the American "national" dishes ranks the sandwich. Generally it attempts to be what it says—elaborated, perhaps, out of all recognition with layer upon layer of this and that—hot as well as cold—but nevertheless beginning and ending with a slice of bread.

But this is not always interesting to even the most American customer who may, occasionally, revert to more plebeian tastes. This bothers nobody—except maybe the stranger. He may ask for a sandwich of a certain name on the menu and receive a meal as like his British one as he could wish for. A plate is brought with small compartments. In the centre one repose meat with gravy. In others two, or even three vegetables, and in yet another a sweet soufflé, trifle or slice of meringue pie. Only perhaps when all else is finished will you find any evidence of your "sandwich"—a small slice of gravy-soaked bread at the bottom of your meat dish.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### A Spirited Person

"My small girl is a very spirited person and, though only four years old, very dictatorial and high-handed. It is not in either her father's character or mine and we have tried hard not to spoil her. We have sent her to a good school, but even there her attitude of superiority makes her an unpopular child.—G.K.H."

*(Your child needs wider and more human contacts. It might be a successful experiment if you made it convenient to take her every day to a free kindergarten to meet children of many differing types and shed superficial values. She would have of necessity to choose her friends among them and would soon respect their worth.)*

### Love or Romance?

"Do you feel it is right to marry when you are still in love with someone else? The boy I loved lied endlessly and couldn't really have cared. Anyhow it is all over now and he is married in Australia. I have met a man I would like to marry, too, except that I cannot feel as I felt before.—V.H."

*(It would be strange if we could feel the same feeling for everyone—or even two different individuals. Why do you expect it? I suspect you are very young; are you? And probably what you miss now is the romance of your first affair. Those reactions*

*were part of your youth and not to be recovered. You will find with later years that later love can be just as worth while. Be glad you've loved the first way, but don't refuse the second. Looking backwards is not wise. Get on with living.)*

*Ann Slade*

### Pigs Might Fly

In this 1940 world they might indeed!

In Russia recently 10,000 sheep were taken by aeroplane across the Kara Kurn desert. The three-hour air journey was proved to be less expensive than the 325 mile foot trek. We'd better begin getting at least Australia's sheep air-minded!

### When Pain Is Acute

It is reported that doctors have come to a decision: we do our acutest suffering at midday and at midnight.

Investigations were made with hundreds of patients and a great variety of complaints. It was discovered that at 6 p.m. there is less sensitivity than at any other time. The re-organising of the patients' routine, therefore, can avoid a good deal of unnecessary suffering.

## WHILE THE KETTLE BOILS

Dear Friends,

The last bell of the old year has tolled—and already 1940 is a few days old. He is a lusty infant. He was welcomed in with song and rejoicing, and the strains of Auld Lang Syne mingled with the popping of ceremonial corks and the clink of glasses.

For you who are Scots the New Year celebrations hold a special significance. It is your Day—and I know that here, as well as in Scotland, the old traditions were maintained.

One Scots lady I know was out in the garden the first thing on New Year's morning. She solemnly turned over a little green leaf that lay on the ground.

"Just turning over a new leaf for the New Year," she declared.

All of us are doing the same thing mentally in one way or another. We make New Year resolutions—and then we break them. We mean so well, too. The old year lies behind us with all its mistakes and misjudgments—before us is a bright, clean slate on which all of us must write our destiny. We are so anxious that it shall be a good record. We are filled with new enthusiasms, new plans, new ambitions. The coming year is going to be different! But, somehow, it never really is. A few valiant weeks, and then habit claims us again, and we find that this is just the same as any other year—yet not such a bad one at that. And somehow we jog along. That is life.

And what of circumstances that lie beyond our personal destinies? What will this New Year bring us? An added courage, I know, to meet and face the world's catastrophe. A deeper understanding and a wider sympathy. In any great tribulation it is an instinct of human nature to draw together, and out of all this bitterness, something worthwhile will be born.

Talking of courage, I met a little lady the other day who, for the past four years, has been attached to a ship's company travelling to and fro from England. Despite the war, she is still on her job—and she would not exchange it.

She is a little slip of a thing, but behind her femininity is a determined philosophy and a calm acceptance of life. She feels that this is her work, and no war is going to do her out of it. She told me of the conditions travelling to and fro to England since the outbreak of war, not dramatically, but as a matter-of-fact subject of conversation. Most of the passengers accepted the altered travelling conditions philosophically, though some show strain. The moonless nights are the worst, she said, when all one can do is sit in pitch darkness on the decks. To strike even a match is forbidden. The doors entering the lounges operate an electric light switch and turn on and off automatically as the hinges open and close. The port-holes of the cabins are sealed, and every passenger has a little bag packed in readiness for emergency—together with a gas-mask and life-belt. Yet notwithstanding all this, the passengers manage to extract enjoyment during their trips to and fro. This little lady I am talking about finds it a good life. She is cheerfully prepared for the best—or the worst.

All around us we see examples like this, of people who are shouldering their jobs in the same courageous spirit. Our own jobs might appear mundane in comparison; devoid of heroics or any reflected glory, but not one of them lacks value or importance. Together we form the pattern of a whole—and that pattern can be traced in the life of the community.

Maybe, that is our best resolution for 1940—To keep on with our job!

All the best of luck,

Yours cordially,

*Synthia*