

BETTY'S DIARY

SUNDAY:

As it is our Anniversary next Thursday, Jim asked me where I would like to go to-day as a little celebration. Bill-Jim said—"Zoo!" As it is as much his celebration as ours, we decided it would be—Zoo! Packed a hamper, collected Julia, and set out. . . . Ours is such a nice, friendly, intimate little Zoo. The lions and tigers yawn at you in the most disarming manner, the monkeys crowd and chatter, the elephant regards you with a motherly eye—the bears look as if they would exchange a friendly hug.

MONDAY:

Mother came over to-day and transformed the colour of Blue Monday. Told me an amusing incident about an elderly squatter living in the South Island. Some time back loneliness urged him to advertise for a wife. From many replies he selected one young woman, and they corresponded for several weeks. Finally it was arranged she should pay him a visit, and the lass arrived in due course, accompanied by her aunt as a chaperone. At the end of the fortnight there were dramatic developments. The squatter proposed to the aunt—and was accepted—while a disappointed young woman journeyed back to the city. . . .

TUESDAY:

Jim took a half-holiday to-day and went off fishing with John Mitchell. Came home frozen, with a roaring appetite—and with two eels in his bag. Told him to throw the nasty things away, but Ellen indignantly rescued them. Skinned and cleaned them and left to soak in salt and water and a tablespoon of vinegar overnight. Hope for the best. To-night collected the pile of orange and lemon skins I have been drying out, and put a half pound in two paper bags. Have always hated the smell of moth balls in a wardrobe, and the dried citrus skins are not only an effective killer of moths, but give a lovely, pungent odour like orange blossoms. . . .

WEDNESDAY:

Ellen served eels for breakfast. I closed my eyes to eat—and discovered a delicious surprise. Couldn't believe such nasty looking things would taste so good. Ellen rolled them in flour, dipped them in egg and breadcrumbs, and fried in hot fat.

To-day kept busy at the door with miscellaneous peddlars. Toward dinner time the last one called. He was white-faced and looked beaten and defeated. I visualised his long, cruel day of refusals and doors shut in his face. What a life! So sorry for this poor chap that I made him come in, drink a cup of tea and smoke a cigarette. Jim arrived home in the middle of it all and I shooed him into the lounge and told him not to ask questions. My poor pedlar departed, his shoulders a little more erect, the colour back in his face.

THURSDAY:

Bill-Jim woke me up at 5.30 this morning to wish me "a happy anniversary, Mummy, darling!" Jim followed up with an envelope containing a cheque for ten pounds—and strict instructions I was to put it all on my back. Other similar gifts have always gone into the house. I promised—and rang up Grace to meet me for a shopping orgy in town. Arrived home foot-sore but triumphant.

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Got a lovely new autumn outfit. Chose an expensively simple black wool-de-chene frock—to wear over it a bold black and white checked wool coat with a black leather belt—and, as a finishing touch, a black Russian astrakan toque.

FRIDAY:

To-day discovered my good supper cloth that Ellen had damped, put away and forgotten. Result—a bad case of

mildew. Rang Mother, and she told me to saturate it in kerosene, roll up tight, leave for 24 hours, then wash in warm suds. The mildew will disappear. This off my mind, finished off my book, "Doctor's Office," by a medico called Toothill. This book is worth while reading for the first chapter alone, which is priceless. It describes an amusing procession of natives passing through the doctor's surgery in Trinidad.

SATURDAY:

Saw "Gulliver's Travels" to-night, and for an hour we were kids again, revelling in the fairy story of the little people and that great, striding sailor-man, Gulliver, whom the producers manage to make peculiarly gentle and lovable. Gabby, the tiny town-crier, practically steals the picture. As we came out his name was on everyone's lips.