

EDNAMAY'S DIARY

SUNDAY

This morning was Church morning, which comes but once in four weeks to our little community here in the back-blocks. Mr. Blank took the service instead of our regular Home Missionary. Mr. Blank is, as we say here, very narrow, but such a dear that we love him in spite of it. He asked us how we could expect God to answer our prayers when we would not turn from our sinful ways. A fair enough question! And who has no sinful ways? But the sin with which he was most troubled, it seems, was Raffles for the Red Cross. So there we sat, our pockets bulging with raffle tickets and little else. Hitherto I have looked on such tickets as donations. Who doesn't? I must thrash this matter out in my mind some day. To-day I didn't have time. Visitors to dinner (expected), visitors to tea (unexpected). Just time to sandwich in the little Sunday School for Jill and Elf. For a new hymn to-day I gave them "Gentle Jesus." Instead of "Suffer me to Come to Thee," Elf sang in angelic seriousness, "Suffer me to Come to Tea."

MONDAY

Of course I should have done the washing to-day. All good housekeepers do. But I am not a good housekeeper. Too many things prevent me. I have children, I have a husband, I have friends, I have a garden. How can I be a good housekeeper? I want to talk to my children and be their companion. I want to be a mate to my husband. I want to keep in touch with my friends and return their kindnesses. In short I want to be a good home-maker; but only a genius is a good home-maker; and a perfect housekeeper too. I am no genius. So to-day I tried to fill my depleted cake tins, and with only four eggs—the last of my preserved ones—I felt rather pleased with the results: Half quantity Sham Brides Cake, 3 eggs (to put away for a standby); Ginger sponge, 1 egg (for visitors to-night); Ginger bread, no eggs, for family use; oatmeal biscuits, no eggs, for Jill's school lunches. Only ten ounces of butter, too. Dripping doesn't taste in the ginger bread, and I use "half and half" for fruit cakes and biscuits. The ginger sponge has a filling. Jill calls it the cake with the "stuffing." From the way it disappears, I think it's the cake for stuffing.

TUESDAY

The War news has been depressing. When the thought of the impermanence of Nations weighs too heavily on one there is nothing like a little renovation in the home to make one feel more settled. So to-day I dyed some old curtains, cut them into new ones, and put them up to hide the unsightly shelves where all the odds and ends collect in the kitchen. The dye was made from onion skins—it is a nice buff, but the question is, will it fade? Onion skins remind me of Jill at the toddling stage when she liked to "undress" the onions as she called the peeling process. Washing not done yet. Shades of good housekeepers!

WEDNESDAY

To-day I did it! I didn't deserve a fine day, but I got it. It "sunned," as the children put it. While at the tubs I had a debate with myself on the raffle question. I'm just dying now for a real argument—either side; I don't mind which. To be sure, free giving must be most blessed. Suppose the donor of the prize gave its cash value and all the ticket buyers gave the price of their tickets as donations—they would not be giving more than they can afford (since presumably they can afford it or they would not be giving it anyway). Just as much is raised for the cause; no one loses though no one wins. Free giving is surely better! But then on the other hand, suppose an artist can give a picture which none of his friends can afford to buy, and he thus cannot give its cash value. If his friends subscribe, through raffle tickets, to give it as a present to one of their number, chosen by chance, surely that isn't sinful? Money is raised which would not otherwise be raised. No, maybe I am wrong there. Someone has a picture which she would not otherwise have, a thing of beauty she cannot afford to buy. It is a problem.

THURSDAY

Again it "sunned," and instead of staying inside to iron, I gardened—patriotic me, increasing production! Who says I should have stayed indoors ironing? At

tea-time Dick said to Elf: "You seem to be hungry." "No, Daddy," she replied, "I am just eating to grow big." It is the Elf's ambition to grow as big as Jill, and be five, and go to school. At present she says she is "one-year-not-old-enough."

FRIDAY

We heard the recording of the New Zealanders landing in England. What it was like for their own folk I can just imagine, for I who had no one among them, broke down and "blubbed." Not for the first time this week, either. I did the same thing when news came of Britain's offer of union with France. Yet sad happenings, tragic happenings, often don't make me weep. Sometimes they make me rage. Emotion, however, affects me in strange ways. Last year we had hilarious evenings over the "Crew of the Maude Woodcock" which I'll never forget. I laughed till I cried, and there I sat wiping away my tears, while the others laughed all the more at me!

SATURDAY

Here I am to-day trying to catch up on the ironing that didn't get done yesterday, nor the day before yesterday. What a rush on Saturday trying to do all the things that haven't got done all the rest of the week. "Serves you right," say the good housekeepers. "I know," say I, "but I can't help it." The days should have forty-eight instead of twenty-four hours. Then I'd have a chance to do all I'd like to do and all I ought to do, too. Perhaps! Anyway, daylight is so short just now. How do they get on in countries where it is shorter? Fortunately, yesterday was the shortest day.

The Cave Dwellers of Boulcott Street

(By ANNE WALLIS)

AMIDST the noise and bustle of our city of Wellington, I discovered them one sunny morning, living happily, if rather scrappily in their caves. Real caves, too! But with no steps or improvised ladders. No. My cave dwellers are far too modern for such old-fashioned methods; they have wings. In fact, they are just a community of dusty city sparrows who have taken possession of the openings in the ends of the small pipes set in the high retaining wall between the Terrace and Boulcott Street.

They have even a balcony where they sit and chatter in between their household duties. That is on fine mornings. On bleaker days every little dwelling has its tenant, sometimes two! Although "These houses might be more roomy, my dear," you are lucky to get any sort of a house in Wellington these days! Right in the city, too.

Yes, they are a busy and happy community of little cave dwellers, but one of them, at least, is no Communist.

One morning I saw them all very busy over a handful of scraps. As I approached up they flew, all but one. He bravely dragged the largest crust a little further from the danger, then up he flew too with his prize. But not to the same side of the street as his mates. No, he certainly is no Communist.



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