

T was a small country townshop did not open till 10.30 a.m. I sat in the sun and waited until the van arrived, a van that in the afternoon hours became a perambulating shop to the district. I also watched the driver, a woman, alight, open the van back and the shop front and disappear into the shop.

"Bother!" I thought. "Butcher not arrived. That means more waiting." However, by this time quite a large queue had collected and I moved along at the

Inside the shop, things were already busy. The woman, neat and trim in a spotless white overall with a big butcher's apron round her waist, was apparently the butcher for the day.

"Leg o' mutton? Right." She approached a carcase and swung the chopper with precision. A few more chops and trimmings and a neat leg lay ready in its wrapper.

"Next, please? Sirloin? Rolled? Right." And with admirable deftness the meat was neatly detached from the bone and rolled and trimmed.

"Brains? Yes, you can have one set." Up she went to the carcase and with a chop removed the head; another chop, and the brains were neatly laid bare. "Just the thing for the baby," she said as she extracted them with a hook of her fingers. "Not cooked them before? Oh yes, I can tell you how to do them. Young George had an allegory when he was a baby; couldn't take eggs, so we had to give him brains and tripe and things like that. Soak them half-an-hour in salt and water and then put in boiling water for five minutes-not more, and then . . .

So each in turn was served.

"Have you always run the shop?" I asked in an awed voice.

She looked a little shocked. "Run the shop? No, it's my husband runs the shop. He is the butcher and it's been his shop and his father's before him, but the truth is-" She leant over confidentially, reluctant with information that could be imparted more readily to a stranger than a local—"he has never really had the stomach for butchering. He's not strong and he never could bring his mind to the business properly. Can't touch a

SHE CARVES TO CONQUER

bit of meat at home, not even when it's I must be back when the kiddies get would never have thought of coming to the shop like this if it hadn't been for the war. He always has an assistant who could do the carrying and a lot of the cutting. At first I came down just to help with the books and then I gradually got nice and tender. They've been hung just to doing more and more."

From Cash to Cutlets

"Did it take you a long time to learn how to handle the meat and cut it up, and so on?" I asked.

"I used to be at the cash counter in a big butcher's shop when I was a girl and would watch the boys whenever I wasn't busy, and I often felt I'd like to have a go at the chopping myself. Now ship, more of a holiday resort I find it quite easy and very interesting than a township, so that it was work. You'd be surprised at the pleasure not surprising that the butcher's I get from carving up a carcase neatly. Of course, my husband does it, too, but he prefers doing the books and he takes round the van in the afternoon because

done up ever so nicely. All the same, I home from school. It fits in beautifully and I feel I'm doing a real war job and helping my husband too. My George is picking it up now and is a real help in the holidays.

"Veal cutlets? These should be very right and I'll beat them for you. You could grill these fine or do them in breadcrumbs. . . Oh, no! I'm not the only woman butcher. There are quite a few in the shops now. You've never seen them doing the chopping? Well, maybe not. It's not all husbands that like it and not all wives either. Anyhow, I'm only helping my husband out."

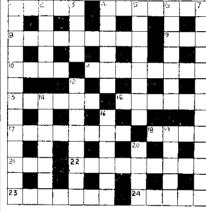
"And after the war?" I queried, "Knitting and sewing and mothers' meetings again?"

"Yes, back to the home again." she said (I thought a little bleakly) "I never was much of a hand at knitting and sewing. But I'm a rare hand at chopping wood," she added with a smile.

—S.S.

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

(No. 147: Constructed by R.W.C.)



Clues Across

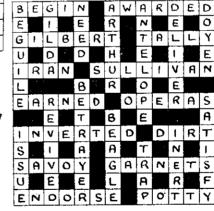
- Here you see us with an ace,
- Frequently turned over (3, 4).
- An unwelcome fruit to be given. Abbreviated conjunction found in 7
- Seat in a different order,
- Cram into (anag.),
- Bookish form of sloven. Fed and ate, but the result is loss.
- Some lass! (anag.).
- Post to a certain place
- Conserve found in 1 down.

- 22 With concealed identity.
- Singers are 2 down here, Catches breath.

Clues Down

- Or a German jest, found in the army.
- It's us, pet, but we're a little put out.
- Declines.
- Ran backwards over the row.
- Foot-slogger
- Give claim.
 In fact, I-I stole! (anag.).
 Sing half (anag.).
 These books contain a mouse.
- Not to be jumped before you come to
- 19. This is a snip!
 20. On the look out.

(Answer to No. 146)







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