

COUNTRY WOMEN AND THE WAR

"Life Is Harder, Simpler—And More Comfortable"

PERHAPS townswomen are apt at times to think that they bear the brunt of the discomforts and inconveniences of war-time living. Perhaps they are apt to think with envy of the country woman who has her well-stocked garden, her fowls in the backyard ready to provide the family with eggs, and perhaps also bee-hives for honey, pigs for fresh pork, and so on. But it does not take a very long talk with a country woman to see the other side of the picture.

"Probably many of us would say that we feel the isolation more keenly than anything else," said a farmer's wife, to *The Listener*, recently. "We live like hermits now. Whereas in the country we used always to do a lot of entertaining, especially at week-ends, and thought nothing of a run to the nearest town for our shopping, now we stay at home simply because we haven't got the petrol. What petrol we have to spare we all feel should go to the younger generation, who must from time to time get about. So we older folk stay at home."

"It is, in fact, a return to the old pre-motor days?" we asked.

"Well, not exactly. In the old days we budgeted our time differently. We have now got into the habit of thinking in terms of short-term runs and visits. We haven't the time for leisurely calls and all-day trips. In the old days you might get on your horse and go visiting and it might take anything from a day to a week. In those days there would be either domestic help or a large family at home to cope with the household. Nowadays everyone in the country is equally tied, in so far as there is practically no help in the home. We have got out of the way of thinking in terms of time and leisure. We fill in our days so fully that there seems to be no time for anything extra. To some extent, our way of living is based on things that are now unobtainable. Our house, for instance, is a large, comfortable rambling country-house with something like 10 bedrooms. Normally, we would need a cook and a housemaid at least to run it, but to-day I do it alone, with the occasional help of my daughter, when she is home — and there are fowls to feed and washing to do, too!"

More Comfort, Less Luxury

"And are you longing for the day when you can again get help?"

"No, I don't think so at all. If war conditions have made any noticeable effect on our family, I should say it is for the better. We all have to work harder and have simpler food. A few years ago the whole family suffered incessantly from colds. In the last two years there has hardly been a cold in the house."

"Then we also enjoy the freedom and lack of restraint. We don't have to live up to domestics. We can have meals where we like and when we like. In fact it would be true to say we have more comfort and less luxury."

"We are also rather lucky in certain respects. The children are more or less grown up, and we still have a man or



two on the farm. The woman who has no husband at home and who has small children to look after as well as a farm is in a very different category. But the ones that I know of in our district are wonderful. One woman with two small children and her husband away, runs the farm single-handed, and she is always cheerful. The children go round with her on the cart or on her horse in all weathers, and they are as fit as you could wish. She does all the fencing, and sees to the lambing and everything else that has to be done. And there is no letting things slide or complaining about all that has to be done, either. I was thinking of her the other day when I heard some women in town all discussing how hard it was to get a Karitane nurse, and how terrible it was to manage without. And these were all women who could buy their bread and butter ready-made, and probably get their washing done, too.

Spinning and Knitting

By this time we were feeling that perhaps the town-dwellers were getting it a little in the neck. So we pointed out that most women in towns spend a good deal of time on all sorts of war activities—packing parcels, rolling bandages, knitting, or cutting out pyjamas; even making papier-maché kidney bowls.

"Country women have not the same means of getting together to do things as you have, but you would be surprised at what they do do," was the reply. "They do a good deal of Red Cross work, and in my district we do spinning and knitting. Usually we try to meet in groups if possible, because spinning and knitting is slow work, and it is much more encouraging if a number work together. We spin the wool straight from the sheep, so to speak, and then knit seamen's boots from the wool. We try to secure grey and brown fleeces, and sometimes get beautiful effects with the natural colour of the wool."

"Then another war work that is not so well known is the entertaining of servicemen. A large number of Americans and New Zealanders are invited on to farms for week-ends or longer. At one time we filled our house every week-end. We also had part of a regiment on the farm, and always had the house full of men in their off-time, and we let the men have a spare bathroom as a bath club. Again, this is much easier to do than it would be if we had help in the house who might not like the extra work."

"Then there are also Land Girls. I know one or two girls from farms round

about who are probably happier and more useful than they ever were before. A girl who grows up on a farm is not normally allowed to do much of the hard work, but now that the men are away these strong country girls are doing most excellent jobs. One girl I know is running the whole farm herself, fencing, lambing, dipping and all. She never stops working; in fact she does more than any man would do. There are many like her who are not merely helping to keep things going—but are keeping them going well."

"The new style pioneer woman, in fact?"

"Yes, perhaps that's a good description for some. The pioneer women put up with a great deal because much of their hardship was an adventure, and they felt that they were working to build a better world for their successors. To some extent, of course, a return to real hard work and hardship seems a slipping back. Farm work to-day is hardly adventurous, and there isn't much glamour about the ordinary jobs that a country woman has to do—but she is doing them all the same."



SOOTHING
AND
REFRESHING

Dr. Scholl's Bath Salts in the foot bath soothe and relieve tired, aching feet. They are also recommended for the bath in cases of rheumatism, sciatica, lumbago, gout or skin disturbances, and for softening the water for shaving, shampooing and all toilet purposes. The Scholl Mfg. Co. Ltd., Willesden St., Wellington

Dr. Scholl's
BATH SALTS
super-magnated

Strong Iron Trolley
Wheels
Price, per pair, complete with axle, 4 1/2-inch, 6/-, post 1/3; 5-inch 6/6, post 1/3. Skeates & White Ltd., 48 Fort St., Auckland.

Relieve ALL these Miseries of COLDS

...with ONE
simple
treatment!



STUFFY
NOSE



SORE
THROAT



TIGHT
CHEST
...COUGH

WHEN a deep-down cold makes your chest tight and achy, your throat sore, your nose clogged and irritated, take no chances! With one simple bedtime treatment you can ease all those miseries. Just rub throat, chest, and back with Vicks VapoRub.

HEALING VAPOURS, released by VapoRub, are inhaled with every breath. These carry soothing medication straight to the irritated air-passages—which only vapours can reach direct. They loosen phlegm, re-

lieve your cough, let you breathe more easily. At the same time... LIKE A POULTICE, VapoRub works direct on the skin, warming away tightness and pain, thus helping the vapours to break up congestion.

RELAXED AND COMFORTABLE, breathing easily, you drop off to restful sleep... while the poultice and vapour actions of VapoRub go on working for hours. By morning, usually, the worst of the cold is over.

VICKS
VAPORUB

VICKS PRODUCTS INC., 122E 42nd STREET, NEW YORK.