



Magic

THE other day we took little David, aged four years, to see his Grandma. Grandma used to live in the backblocks, like us, and had wood fires and kerosene lamps and candles. Now she has a small house in town, with electricity and all conveniences. We showed David the electric iron, the stove that cooked the dinner without a fire, and turned the electric lights on and off for his benefit. He looked at everything with serious attention, said little, and seemed rather dazed. But when we got home he said, "Oh, Dad, Grandma has a lovely house—it's all full of Magic!"—"Becky."

He Acted Literally

MY neighbour's boy—a lad of the "Sissy" type—is most certainly not a budding "All Black." He came home the other day and complained that "the boys kicked me, an' it was teacher's fault." Pressed for an explanation, he said: "Well, we were practising football and teacher ordered me to 'get into the scrum,' an' when I tried to crawl in the boys all laughed and started to boot me out."—"O. W. Waireki."

Proposals—To-day and Yesterday.

A CORRESPONDENT to a London paper laments the fact that we are witnessing the rapid decay of the solemn forms in which the last generation made their proposals of marriage.

Certainly the elaborate gestures, the poetic and stately phrases with which the great novelists of the past set the standard of courtship are remote enough from present practice, if we may believe all we see and some of that we hear.

But some unbelievers will doubt whether the change is as great as it seems. Not all the characters of eighteenth and nineteenth century real life commanded the magnificence of phrase wherewith they are endowed; not all knelt before their ladies, whereas there are, maybe, romantics even to-day. If we would make a fair comparison, we would set beside to-day's confessions the recorded proposals of some actual suitors of, say, 1880. Will some of the ladies now celebrating their golden weddings and some of the recent brides of the present age take us into their confidence?—"Romantic."

Worth Reading.

"OLIVER UNTWISTED," by M. A. Payne, is a book not only for teachers and social workers, but even more for the parents of ordinary children. An extraordinary account of idealism in action, with its successes and failures convincingly set forth, it makes the heart ache, but also nerves one to fight to the bitter end for a fair deal for children. This book should be read and passed on to others to read.—"Bookworm."

CONTRIBUTIONS or original matter of general interest to women and the home, if possible, but not essentially, associated with radio, electrical equipment or home-craft in the widest field, are invited for this page. Space rates. All matter must be brief and in ink, on one side only. Name or nom de plume. Contributors must claim payment for matter published by forwarding at the end of each month clipping, together with date of publication, to our Accountant. Address contributions, "The Editor," Box 1032, Wellington.

Who Wants Accountants?

HERE is an interesting item of the way in which bakers in some districts of rural France keeps accounts with their peasant clients. Many cannot read, and hence a system of tokens is employed. To check the bread account, the baker on his rounds carries a small stick for each customer. The customer has a mate for the stick. When a loaf is delivered, the two pieces of stick are put together, and a notch cut across the joint. At the end of the month settlement is made on the basis of the joint tally. The system avoids any room for argument, because one stick cannot be notched without its mate, or else there are explanations to seek.

This habit, a friend with a historical bent tells me, is a perpetuation of the old English tally employed for accounting between the King and his county sheriffs. The two-stick system was in vogue, and they were notched in accordance with the following definite plan.

Thousands were indicated by a notch the width of a palm, hundreds by a notch the width of a thumb, scores by a notch the width of a little finger, and pounds by the breadth of a barley-corn. That was the way accounts were kept before everyone could write and book-keeping came in.—Olive.

Who Will Try It?

I NOTICE a suggestion in an Australian paper that unsalted butter is a good hair tonic, particularly as a corrective for greying locks. It is claimed that in one district in Victoria all the matrons for miles around use this recipe, with a notable absence of grey hairs and the presence of shining, attractive tresses. With the slump in butter, will this offer an alternative consuming point for our surplus tons? Can any dairy farmer's wife give practical testimony? I know that milk is good for the complexion, but it is the first time I have heard that butter-fat is good for the hair.—Mary E.

Wheels Within Wheels.

LOVERS of Dickens will remember how, in "Bleak House," Messrs. Sheen and Gloss, the London silk mercers, were in the habit of whispering to wholesale firms that they knew the ways of women and could put over anything that was desired as the coming fashion.

If that were true of the Victorian age, it seems less true of 1930, for the Messrs. Sheen and Gloss of to-day are trying desperately to put over the new long trailing skirts for day as well as evening wear, but they are meeting with a resistance from the modern woman that threatens to paralyse their efforts, as far as day-time wear is concerned.

Mr. Sheen and Mr. Gloss are both scratching their heads and upbraiding the freedom of to-day, which finds expression in opposition to the fashions laid down by the world's famous couturiers as essential. It is in vain that fashion experts, in the newspapers and elsewhere, bully and scold the women of to-day for their persistence in adhering to sensibly short skirts for day-time wear.

The effect of the new styles on the "female form divine" adds to their unpopularity, especially among the middle-aged, who, until now, could choose their own waist-line, and with a loose belt deftly conceal deficiencies, or perhaps abundances, now only too apparent on the natural waistline.—"Mannequin."