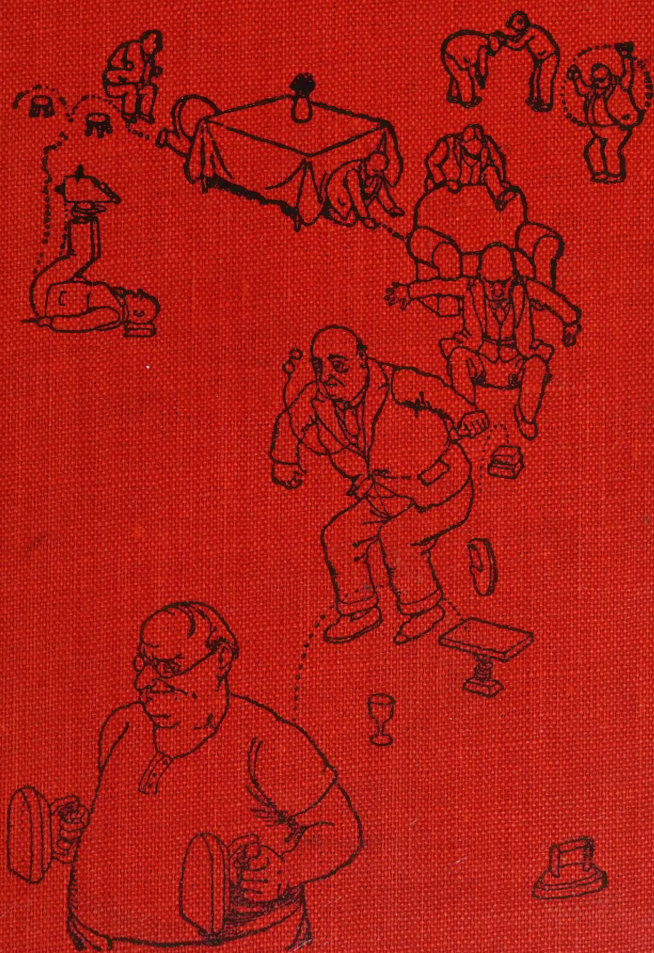


# HOW TO RUN A COMMUNAL HOME

W. HEATH ROBINSON  
& CECIL HUNT

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To Edie with our best love

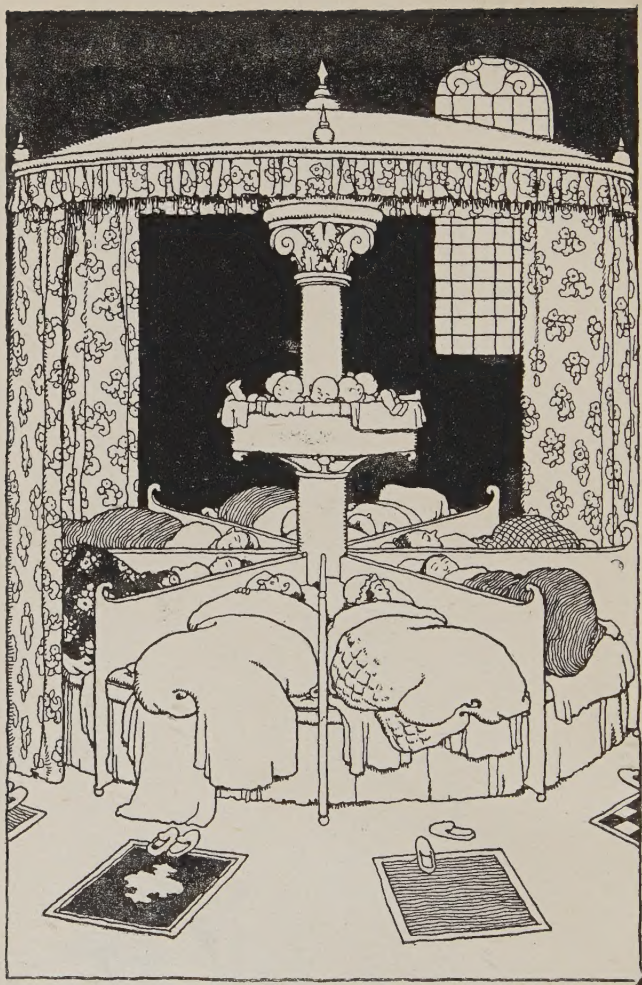
Jill & Richard

Christmas 1943:



# How to Run a Communal Home





*The Community Bed De Luxe*

# How to Run a Communal Home

*by*

W. Heath Robinson and Cecil Hunt



*A Communal Birds' Nest*

HUTCHINSON & CO. (Publishers) LTD.  
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*Also by Heath Robinson and Cecil Hunt*

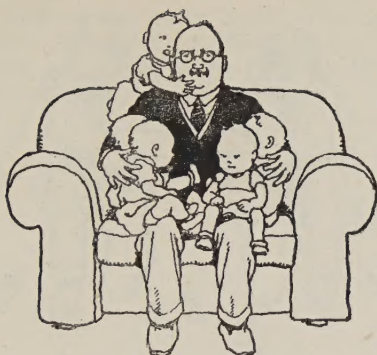
HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF THINGS

HOW TO BUILD A NEW WORLD



*For Silent Practice in a Communal Home*

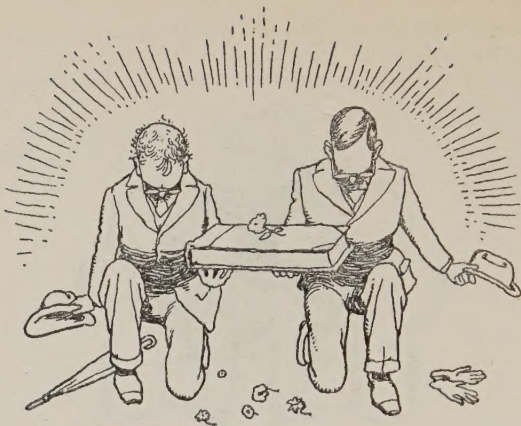




# *The Communal Pop*

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DEDICATION  
TO  
THE ARCHITECTS OF THE NEW WORLD

IN the absence of a free copy of the resounding Beveridge Report, our reading of it has been confined to sideways glances in Tubes and a perusal of pieces found in the salvage sack on our main drive gates.

There was an occasion when the Stationery Office displayed a closed copy in their window, but it caused such congestion that people seeking genuine amusement were apt to queue there instead of at the theatre opposite. And frankly, we haven't time for such frivolities.

However, we are adepts at assimilation and reading by proxy and we have absorbed enough of this best-seller to know that it reveals a study of our previous works and a wholesale appropriation of views we promulgated in *How To Make The Best Of Things* and *How To Build A New World*.

We are not too sure of "promulgated" (our part-share in a dictionary being liquidated years ago, along with a tallboy, to help pay for the Relief of Mafeking), but it is clear to us that wise men are coming to our way of thinking. We have waited long for this official recognition, but we are by nature patient. They are on the right road. Their progress, if not easy, is now possible.

When, as is inevitable, they are given more power (or a peerage and less power) we shall always be at their service. We are prepared and eager to sit on any Royal Commission or Committee, on Lady Astor's lap or any other comfortable and distinguished seat. We feel that our record justifies this confidence.

It is up to you, Architects of the New World; we can take it, and results would undoubtedly surprise you.



*Making Room for Uncle*



*The Proposal Screen for Making  
Proposals in Crowded Rooms*





*Interesting Instance of Communal Co-operation by the  
Californian Tree Snake*

## INTRODUCTION

"ONE touch of nature makes the whole world kin," said Shakespeare as he led Rosalind up the Arden path. Which, of course, is accepted as profound, coming from the Swan of Avon. Yet it is really what Heath and I, the Gulls of Highgate and Hampstead, have been propounding for centuries.

We make no apology for sending our readers back again and again to Mother Nature. Her bosom is infinite (as we realize anew every time we face the allotment), and her wisdom transcendent. She has always practised, preached and prolifically propagated the communal spirit. Consider the lilies if you like, but to get down to the point, examine the bee. What more perfect example of the communal life and a honeyed existence? The ant, you say? It hasn't escaped us, but it requires more stooping.

The beehive is a life study in the ordered communal existence and anyone who is sufficiently interested to explore its intricacies is assured of the warmest reception. In fact human intelligence has not yet perfected any welcome quite so enveloping as a swarm

of bees, nor produced a mother half as single-minded as the queen bee.

So, too, with the birds. It is only the depredations of ill-advised schoolboys that have made it necessary for birds to nest separately and lay eggs inaccessibly. In the early communal days, before the rhythm of nature was jazzed up by blundering humanity, the communal nest was as frequent and as edifying a sight as the communal cowslip. And by the intelligent it was as carefully avoided. It was the inadvertent landing of a tongue-tied Commando upon such a nest that caused Napoleon to exclaim with passion: "You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs."

It is one of the richest dividends of the communal life that no one need feel the yolk upon his shoulders. If proof were needed, contemplate the turtles. No amount of mocking can hide the



*Intelligent Co-operation Among Turtles  
in their Search for Food*

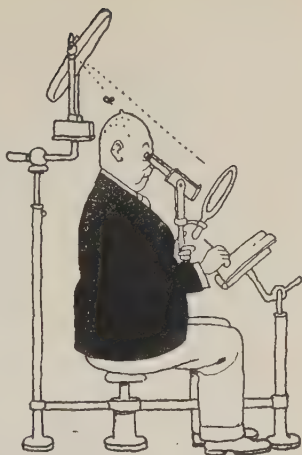
fact that they are past masters of co-operation. Trained observers in the swamps of Mulligatawny have come back with data and malaria from which Mr. Heath Robinson has drawn the adjoining inspiring picture. The original has already been purchased by the Royal Society and will be hung with gravity alongside the Society's silhouette of Sir Isaac Newton snipped on the pier at Putney.

All of which proves that intelligent people are only too ready to recognize the fundamental, age-old principle of the communal life as exhibited by nature.

But like all good things, this life rhythm has an enemy. It is inherent in our frail nature that we do not appreciate any of the bounties of life unless they are occasionally menaced. Their benefits are made more conspicuous by contrast. We could have proved this argument by examining the functions of prigs, pimples or prunes in excess. But we preferred, being benevolent by income, to cite the case of the mosquito. If ever there were an unsocial, predatory, and pernicious pest, it is the mosquito. It is individual in the selfish extreme. It is no respecter of property, invading the Queen's quarters and the homes of the humblest better-halves with equal point. It has no civic or moral sense, for it penetrates mayoral dignity with abandon and persists in puncturing the most lyrical passion with an ill-timed intimate intrusion. It is now generally admitted by historians that Henry VIII would have been game for three more wives if a mosquito had not stung him to the quick.

No monarch had the communal spirit more highly developed, and his cruelly cramped career should be an abiding example to all forward-looking citizens.

To them we address this book with confidence. It does not mean that they pay their rates in advance; no plan so unsocial would ever come from our pens. But it does mean that we support Cleopatra, Rosalind and an aged niece in Tierra del Fuego in insisting that the communal life is mankind's destiny. As Public



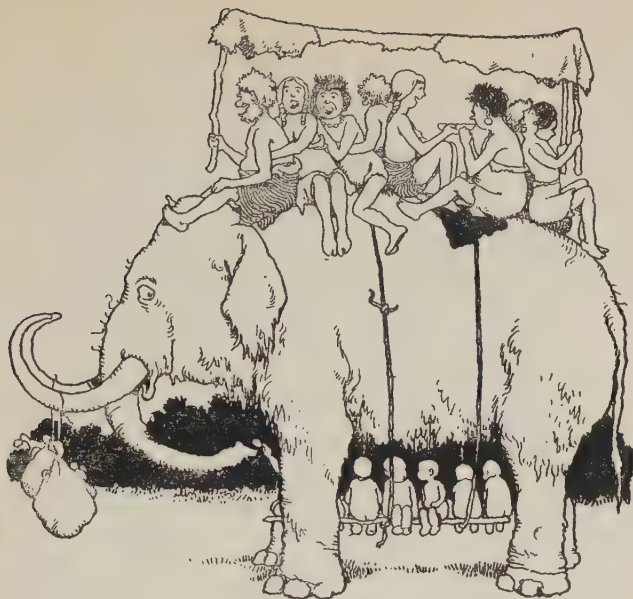
*Studying the Unsocial and  
Predatory Habits of the  
Mosquito*

Relations Officers for Destiny, we are conscious of our high office and our dropped arches. As Juliet said to Romeo, "It is a far, far better thing we do than ever has been done before." And the fiery-footed steeds galloped apace and fell like a jewel in an Ethiope's beer. Or was it the pard's beard? Maybe it doesn't matter all that much. Like Juliet, it fell. We are concerned with larger issues; we P.R.O.D.s have a sense of vocation. We do not expect gratitude, but if it comes we undertake to put it with the stuffed coyote and Aunt Fanny's spare dentures in the colander behind the harmonium.



*How the First Communist got the Idea*





*The Communal Spirit of Piltdown Man*

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE COMMUNAL SPIRIT

SPEAKING communally, this is easy meat. We once had a friend who said at his wedding that when he first wooed his future wife it was like trying to sell a vacuum-cleaner to a woman who did not believe in carpets!

We have no such opposition; in fact it is our privilege not to sell a new proposition but to draw your attention to age-old principles that have occasionally been lamentably overlooked. Only the ignorant or thoughtless regard the communal spirit as a synthetic vodka, and only the vindictive serve it in anything less than flagons. It is, of course, not a product of any of the Marx Brothers. It was *vieux jeu* long before they found the milk in The Coconuts.

There is reinforced concrete evidence that the brontosaurus had it deeply embedded in his bump of benevolence and the



*The Communal Cold Cure*

Piltdown Man wore trousers that, like many a more modern seat, had countless communal initials carved upon them.

It was an unwritten law in the times of woad and whatnots that the communal spirit over-rode everything. After all, a pelt was a pelt in those days and there was no made-to-measure. If you couldn't wear the tribe's scanty-panties and poke a pretty finger into the communal woad, there was no alternative but dishonour. There ought to have been more alternatives, but that was a pioneer age.

There was transparent progress in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve didn't need a Brains' Trust to teach them how to run a communal home. They took to it naturally. Solomon, too, was a past-master with his seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. He even took up temple building as a hobby, which just shows how the communal spirit can encourage the arts.

There is no record that in Solomon's household there was even quarrelling over pin-money. So, too, in the ark. Not that they had need of pin-money there; everything was kept up by water. But the principle was the same. The elephant and the earwig, the clothes-moth and the crocodile, all leaned over the same rail and gave their utmost in rhythmic unison.

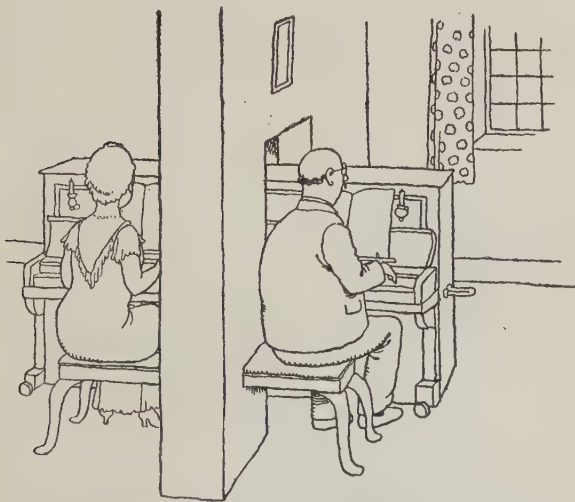
All of which proves our point that we are not attempting to convert you to new doctrines or dogma. We are satisfied that the principles of the communal home are not just as old as the hills; they were prehistoric before the hills even became upish.

What is more important, they are natural, pleasurable and exciting.

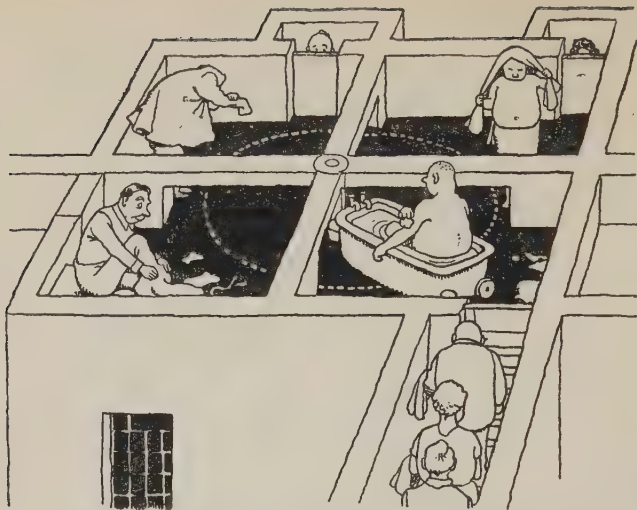
It was Cleopatra who, while polishing her burnished poop, said that joys shared were joys doubled. Joys shared communally are much more than doubled; they are a riot. But of course that is speaking figuratively; there are no riots in the communal home; the energy is sublimated to the common weal.

As G. B. Shaw, the great naturalist, has said in a still unrecorded statement: "The common weal is a web-footed and well-beloved native of the new world. It is amphibious, existing in water and living on beer. It is nocturnal in habit. It mates at Michaelmas and produces its young inadvertently. Its tail feathers are excellent pipe-cleaners and its ambitions will hold up any well-made dental plate."

So you see that Mr. Heath Robinson and I have once again put our fingers on a vital spot. It is a pleasant spot, for our public is so tenderly responsive. We once actually touched a man with one of our books, but he was being led away quietly. So instinctively we turned to the curate's baby, feeling that he should have less original sin than most. We were able to make it smile ecstatically, merely by showing it the carbon copy of our



*The Community Piano—for Duets with Next-Door Neighbours*



*Explaining the Use of the Communal Bath*

last script. It was a communal consolation of the first water. But as its Mother explained, it had taken a lot of wind. How right she was. Its laughter was never the same after the relief of its mafficking.

Creative art has its moments of evanescent regret, but the communal spirit is unquenchable. Its manifestations are innumerable and never embarrassing. To start freshly and fragrantly with the communal bath. As ardent flat dwellers, we have always thought that close-nestling neighbours should draw their bath-water while our own cistern was filling. That should provide, except in the case of gross wallowers, for an almost simultaneous exhaust. It must be admitted that the succulent music derived from placing one's big toe in the plug hole is never quite the same thing when it is heard continually in the distance.

All such difficulties are dissolved and a more genial atmosphere generated by the communal bath, here depicted after exhaustive research at the Heath-Hunt Research Institute, Little Loofah. It provides economy in fuel, labour and bath-salts. It offers a new diversity of ablution that has to be tasted to be believed. To bath after a dazzling blonde, for instance, is to realize anew the depths of Shakespeare's lines "Come unto these yellow sands".





*Communal Dominoes*

The principle can also be used by the enterprising for dignified self-advancement. There was, for instance, the young clerk who, one Saturday, contrived, with a friend's collusion, to bath immediately before his snappy secretary. He plugged an amorous inquiry conspicuously in the hot water tap and let the bath take its course. Unfortunately, the secretary, with natural grace, had surrendered her turn to the chairman, who was on a week-end visit. He, with equally characteristic chivalry, read and destroyed the note, doubled the man's salary and posted him to the sub-branch in the Khyber Pass as from the following Monday.

*The  
Communal  
Spirit  
in  
the  
Park*

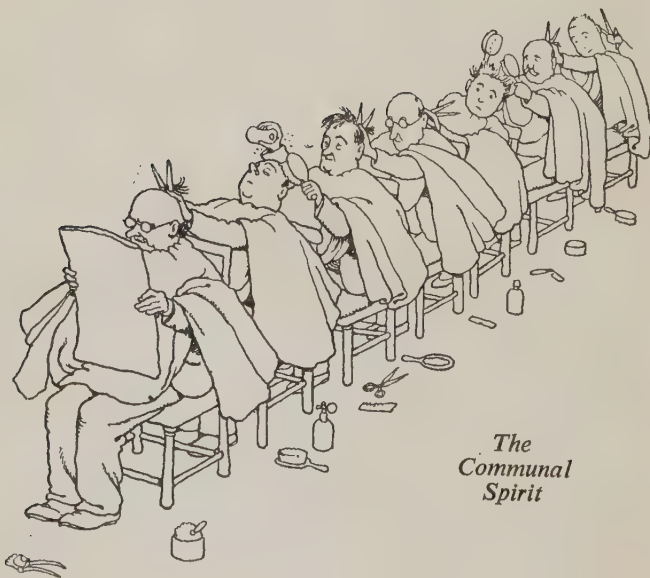


Thus naturally, and in accordance with age-old principles, does the communal spirit manifest itself. It is only a question of giving it breathing space.

Communal dominoes has all the excitements of the Totalizator, for a long arm can sweep in half a dozen double sixes and a neighbour's hand may now be overlooked, no longer furtively, but with open pleasure.

The delights of communal hair-dressing provide a definite increase in the nation's ecstasy. To have one's hair dressed and at the same time to dress the hair of the man in front is to add the satisfaction of service to the sensuous delights of the caressing comb and the lingering lock.

This is an acme of bliss that can only be compared with that of the early Fathers in the desert when they removed a cactus from between their toes and placed it in a sinner's bed.



*The  
Communal  
Spirit*



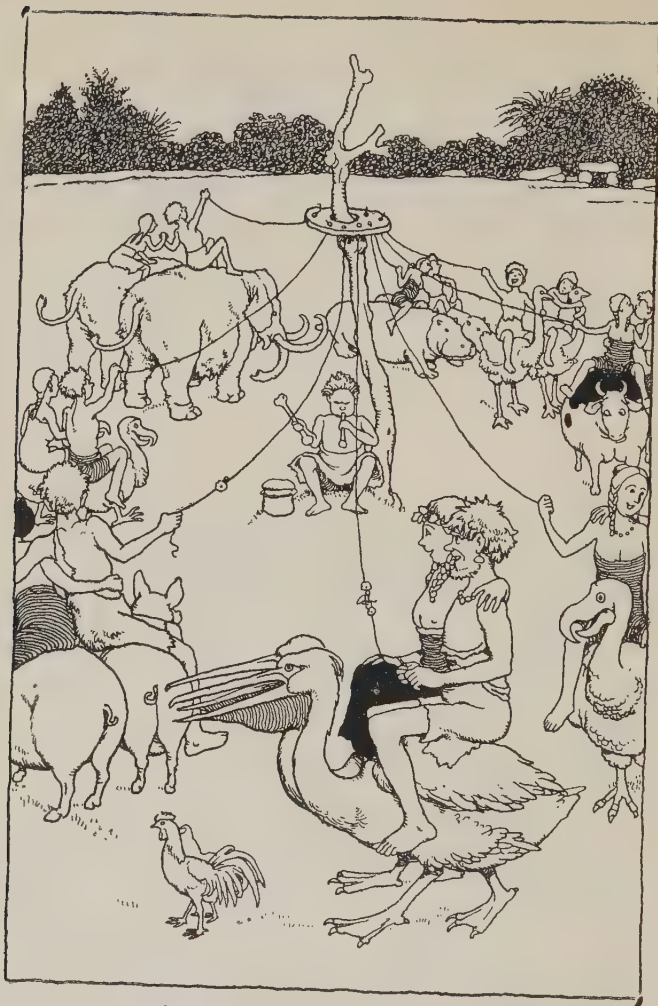
### *Community Hairdressing*

The harvest of communal hair-dressing is, of course, considerable. Whereas a thousand shops might formerly have allowed their trimmings to waste upon the desert air, the collective effort demands constructive thought. Owing to its variety of colours and its *pot pourri* of perfumes it is fast gaining ground as a breakfast cereal and as a top dressing for non-recurring radishes. In both instances, as the marketing firms advertise, results are most likely to exceed expectations.

There is also, of course, an æsthetic harvest to be gleaned, for the communal spirit is never concerned entirely with material ends.

The sight of a long line of communal hair cutters snipping in two-four (and one aft) dance rhythm has inspired many a poet to renew his licence and the setting sun on a group of fringed pates has had international repercussions on landscape gardening design.

So, too, with the original roundabout. The communal spirit is at last getting into our blood stream and we realize anew the sterility of recent amusements. Back to nature is not retrogression; it is instinct triumphant. No one who has cavorted on the back of a wart-encrusted mammoth would countenance the modern roundabout with its chromium exclusiveness and its pseudo-animal noises. There is no sanitary reason why they



*Communal Joys in the Stone Age :  
Origin of the Roundabout*



should. In the more natural, communal world for which we work, entertainment will have an engaging simplicity. The uncommunal man will be a public sight; a subject of opprobrium, to be banished to the roof-tops while his more intelligent neighbours relax in bliss in a communal deck-chair. It need hardly be pointed out that a communal deck-chair acquires an impressive



*The Uncommunist*

character. Nay more, it would be fair to say that this obvious invention has given a new zest to the devout habit of turning the other cheek. We have always been in favour of interpreting this Biblical injunction in the broadest sense, and the communal deck-chair may fairly be said to encourage the basic family spread. With such progress even we can rest content.

Or rather we should say *could* rest content, for obviously Public Relation Officers for Destiny never rest in the reprehensible sense. Relax perhaps occasionally in creative soliloquy, but that is a different matter; the difference between vegetation and fermentation. Which remind us that trouble is brewing if we do not put in an official appearance at Much Guffaw, where an uncommunist has been seen nesting in the blasted oak and needs to be dislodged before he gets broody.



*Communal Deck-Chairs*



*The Perfect Type*

## CHAPTER TWO

### MATING

EVEN those who are darkly suspicious of the communal cradle are generally agreed that the cradle of communal life should be the home. But there is many a discrepancy between the shopping-list and the eventual purchase, as every insolvent husband knows. And there is nothing more destructive of communal bliss than an ill-chosen mate.

Hitherto, husbands have sucked comfort from the poet's



*Inoffensive Method of Choosing by Weight*

dictum that no man can be wise and in love at the same time. But it runs dry after the first few years and the husbands of the fair future will approach their penance more scientifically. Not that they expect marriage to be more predictable than the Derby, but they like to see the colours and know the weights. They have also decided that the contacts of courtship may not necessarily be a fair guide to eventual long-windedness. After all, it's common sense; one studies the specification of any other expensive domestic fitting before purchase.

So wives will be assessed, by the secret methods of height and weight observation, girth gathering and lung power prediction here portrayed.

The value of such tests lies, of course, in the girl's innocence. The merest suspicion of male design has been known to reduce weight by half and to change the most limpid lung action into a rhapsodic rhythm. So, too, with the apparatus for testing reaction to noise. It is essential that the maiden should not be allowed to suspect falling coals, otherwise she will be more conditioned for domesticity than romance and her calory reading may be misleadingly erratic.

But any man with the wit to survive marriage will have no difficulty in achieving acid tests after a careful study of these drawings. Only one word of warning is necessary. The aid of the chromium lung-testing apparatus should be enlisted before you take her out to a low supper or a high tea. There is on record the case of Pansy Patella who received a proposal from a cathedral organist almost before she was comfortably settled. It proved to be on the score of abdominal rumblings which, as the Americans so poetically put it, were entirely off the record. He married her swiftly as a potential source of inspiration for fugues, only to find that she had a rift in the lute. But the system cannot be undermined by the momentary instability of Pansy's interior. If the organist hadn't been deep in a "Two No Trump" hand



*Choosing a Mate—Surreptitious  
and Cautious Measurement before  
Initial Approach*





*Testing Fiancée's Reaction to Shock*

when the immortal melodies came through, he might have added a classic Voluntary to contemporary organ music. It is a digestive thought.

But marriage has its inherent melodies and hitherto, as the poet wrote, those unheard have been sweetest. Those, for instance, of the communal bed or bath have hitherto been lost



*Disguised Chromium Lung Test*



*Courtship :  
Synchronising  
Heart-beats*

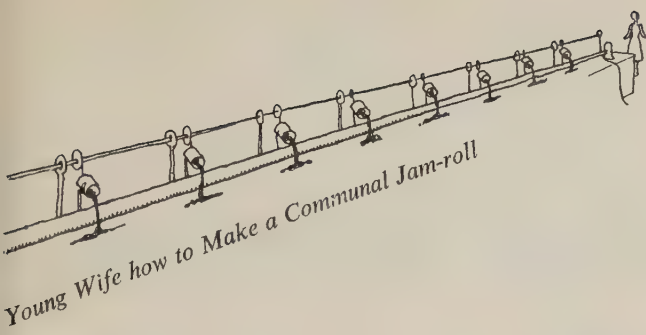
to posterity. Like Pan, they have petered out in selfish solitude.

The communal bed, depicted on page ii in a natty, retroussé style, ensures that nasal nocturnes are no longer self-indulgences but an encouragement and a challenge to others. The com-



munal bath, while removing the flattering resonance that has launched too many singers upon long-suffering humanity, offers instead the joys of bubbling glees and gives a new meaning to Water Music.

The welling up of these harmonies before breakfast has its inevitable effect upon the women folk. The manifestations are varied, but experience shows that they are most likely to result

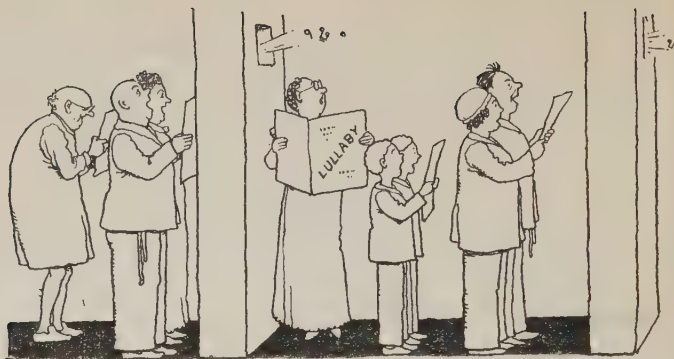


*Young Wife how to Make a Communal Jam-roll*

in an improved standard of maternity or cooking. In either case, strict discipline is necessary and the full course of Mr. Heath Robinson's training in these delicate matters can obviously only be obtained under sealed cover. He should be addressed c/o The Ministry of Liberty, Equality, and Maternity, Little Whoopee, Wilts. Applications should be accompanied by certificates of sanity, marriage and any diplomas in bee-keeping. A positional chart of all moles and other blemishes should



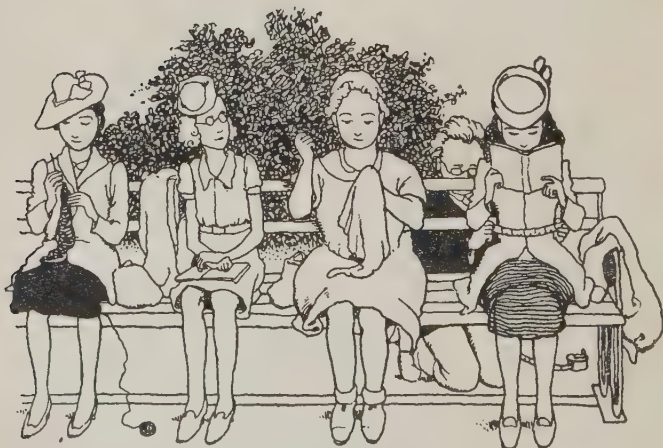
*Prospective Housewife Training Herself to Make a Little go a Long Way*



*Neighbourly Collaboration*

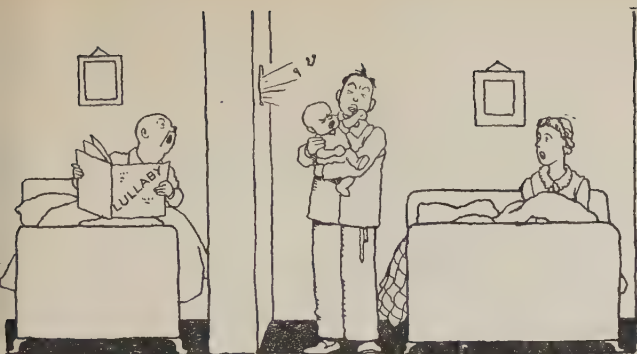
also be sent in duplicate. One copy will be returned in due course and the other forwarded to the Royal Ordnance Survey.

Without endangering innocent minds, or the safety of our



*Selecting a Mate—Which shall it be ?*

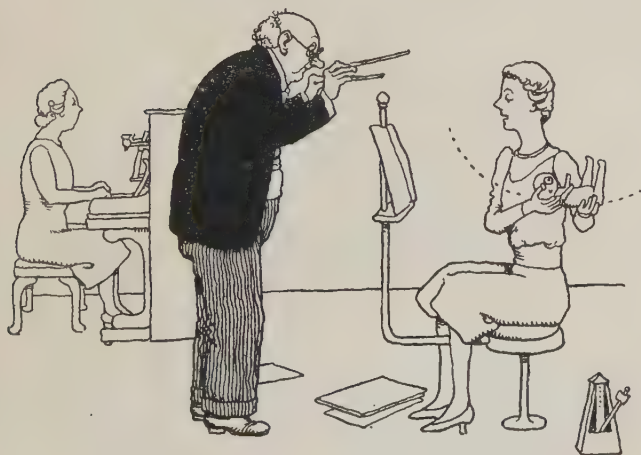




*In Soothing the Baby*

fishing fleet, Mr. Heath Robinson can give a foretaste of the lines his courses follow in the communal jam-roll instruction and the Spanking Machine (Telegraphic Address: Hot-Bot, Herts).

It is a thought we leave with you until the family arrives,

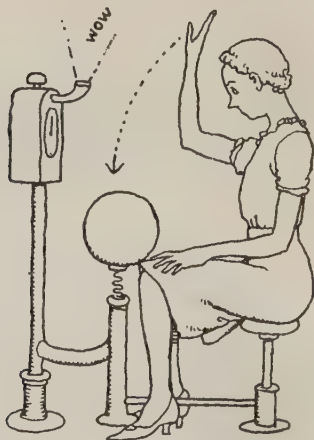


*Cultivating the Perfect Lullaby Rhythm*

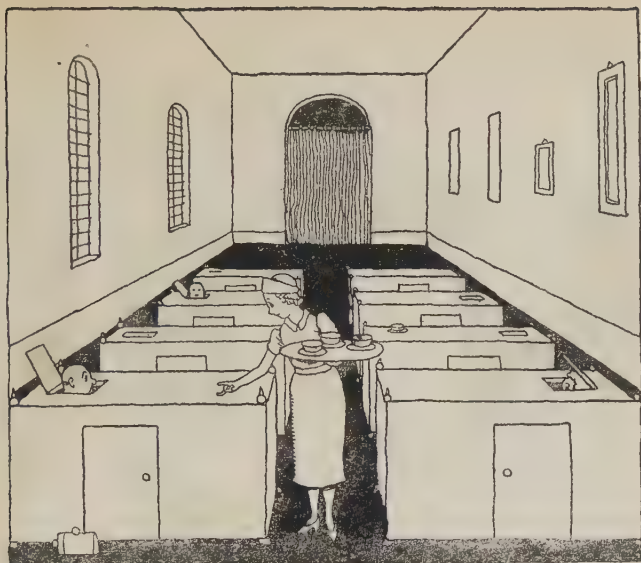
with admirable precision, in the next chapter. It is worth contemplation now; there will be no time then. Take it from us, if there is one subject on which we are qualified to talk, it is child welfare. Dr. Barnardo was one of our star pupils and Henry VIII enrolled but didn't stay the course.

But then he never really gave his mind to it. What with composing pieces by day and playing them at night, he was not a typical citizen.

Things are different now, with Double Summer Time and the discovery of the saxophone. No one with normal tendencies need be intimidated by the course and all those with abnormal tendencies will be seen privately. We are all for the personal touch, even if we are Government servants.



*For Testing the Vigour of  
the Smack Before Assuming  
Responsibilities of Mother-  
hood*



*Modesty Beds in a Communal Bedroom*

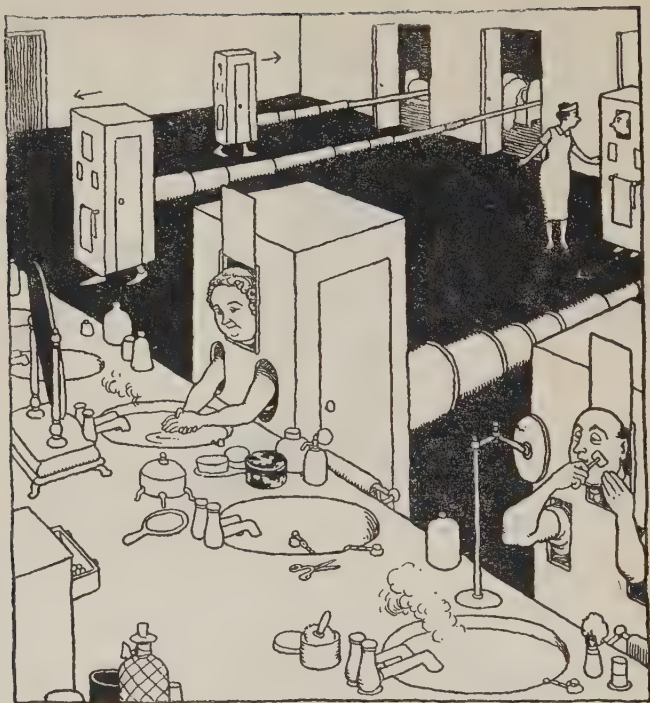
### CHAPTER THREE

## HOUSEHOLD ARRANGEMENTS

IN the minds of the uninformed, there is one objection to communal life so deep-rooted that it might almost be called coniferous.

Many think that in the communal life one's P's and Q's will become public property. Which is nonsense. If it were so, how could our glamour output be maintained for export? It may be that you will dot your I's and cross your T's in good fellowship, but P's and Q's, never.

Observe, in proof, the design for the communal bedroom. It is more neuter than a newt, less feminine than a fandango, less masculine than a cut chin. And contemplate the joys of such sleeping, the element of surprise which even intelligent doctors insist is a tonic to the system. It will be no longer a question of "Am I my brother's keeper?" but "Who was I with last night?"—which is artistic and cultural progression.



*Modesty Toilet Boxes for those who Share a Communal Dressing-room*

The super-sensitive, too, can take heart from the modesty toilet boxes designed for communal dressing-rooms. There are some to whom the loiter in the *negligée* and the oft-tried bathroom door are the spice of life, but there are others who never wash without a backward glance, who creep to and from the bathroom as if they were the King's Proctor. All psychologically wrong, of course, and blighting to a rosy life.

The telescoping toilet boxes remove at one waddle more exhibitions, inhibitions and extraditions than even Mr. C. B. Cochran has ever staged.

And inhibitions, complexes and pink elephants are all deplorable modern inventions. There were no such restrictive influences in the first, carefree communal days. The Piltdown lad and his lass didn't care a fig-leaf for Freud or the specific gravity of beer. Their mammoths were not pink, but of the proper wart-encrusted variety who could be counted upon to carry the family, tread the crops and sit on any eggs that the hens overlooked. Something of the endearing elasticity of the mammoth's back can still be obtained—in the expando fireside settee. This is the essence of the communal spirit and is much sought after by courting couples, who, by the simplest of movements, can make room for Mother alongside—and Father, too, if finances make it expedient.

Those who prefer solitude can, of course, take a turn at the winches of the revolving fireside settee. To many, who have hitherto only glimpsed a fire from a distance, or suffered roasted toes and chilblains on the neck, this human invention offers a



*The Expando Fireside Settee*

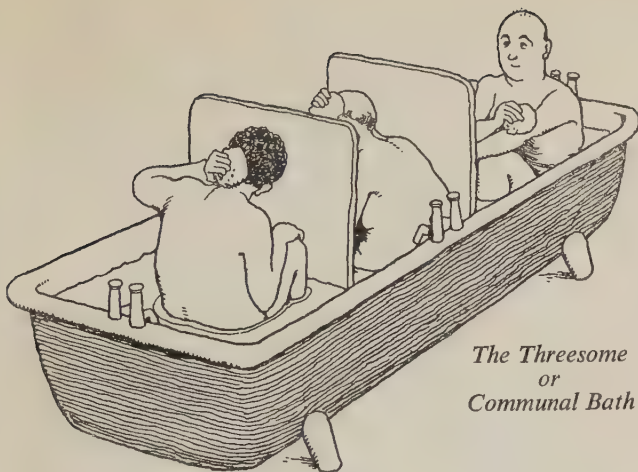




*A Fair Share of the Fire for Everyone on Chilly Evenings*

new and fuller life. It is fool-proof, for those who inadvertently miss the fire as they pass, or are slow absorbers of radiant heat, can always go below and take a turn at the winch to get warm.



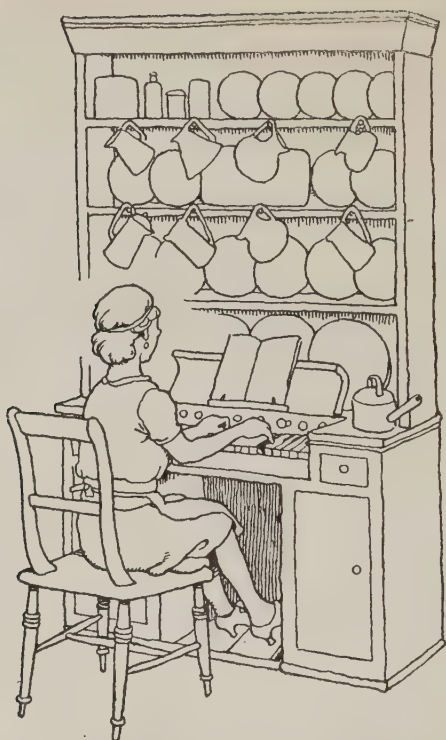


*The Threesome  
or  
Communal Bath*

In the summer months the height of hospitality is the communal supper party. The height naturally depends to some extent upon the floor throwing the party, and how carefully it is thrown, but it is true to say that even in the basement the happy spirit of such functions has risen to such heights as to make the chimney-sweep superfluous.



*Supper Party*



*The Harmonic Dresser  
For Relieving Kitchen Toil*

Besides, the system gives housewives so much more time for cultural activity. Think of the hours normally spent in scanning the neighbours' activities, in estimating his capacity by the number of returned empties, in calculating her credit by the demeanour of her tradesmen. Nowadays, this good old British pastime can be enjoyed openly. The pulley table, which can be used for airing, and may be used by birds, can be brought up to scratch at any hour and the festive board carried across the

entire front of the building. It is even possible, where the communal spirit has not so much spread as run, to have extensions across the street. By this means a wider range of eating is secured and incidental hospitality can be showered on passing transport with prodigal abandon.

Obviously it adds a new effervescence to life to have your drink poured out by a neighbour who has hitherto been no more intimate than to take in your laundry. Your neighbour's roast, which previously you have always smelt just when you could only muster cold meat, is now at your disposal and can be attacked with zest. It means that without any effort you can command a menu as varied as it is unexpected.

Of course, some planning is necessary. There was an occasion when thirty-nine flats in a row all produced Shepherd's Pie on the same evening.

The occasion was treated with hilarity and imagination. Residents agreed that they should each eat from the pie of the seventeenth neighbour on their left. The rhythmic pattern of the passing plates was so impressive that the clerk to the gas works, who was passing, went straight to his own gasometer and composed a commemorative tone poem.



*The Multi-Piano*



*Admirably Suited for Croquet Hoops*

It was printed on the back of the next quarter's gas bill and was variously assumed to be *a*, notice to quit, *b*, a printer's wayzgoose, *c*, instruction on the cooking of meters.

As such it was consistently ignored, until one consumer with a soul above money, attempted to play it on the multi-piano. The remaining seats were swiftly occupied by friends who were anxious to share the emotional experience. At the time of going to press three players are still in position and the relatives of the fourth have been advised to assemble.

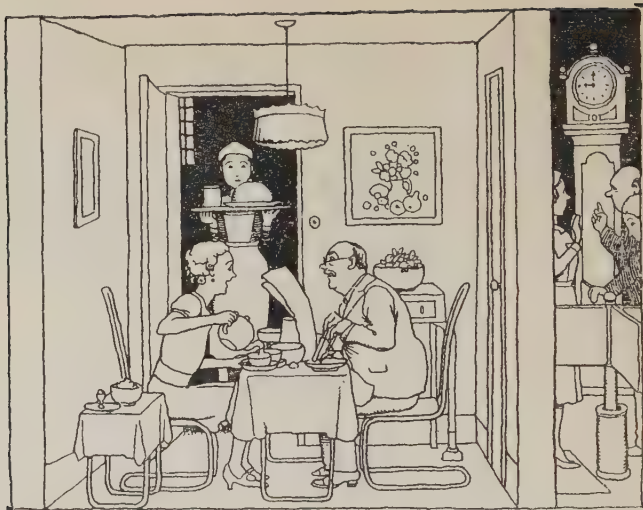
It is an undisputed fact that the constant foregathering at such communal meals and music days engender a tenderness in the seats of emotion. They, in their turn, flower in new world courtesies. No longer, for instance, do house parties descend via the baronial bannisters but are careful to leave such expeditious transport to those to whom speed is imperative—such as hungry infants and waterproofed nurses.

The more mature guests are careful to use the stairs and to avoid wearing the communal stair-carpet, as indicated in the picture on page 33. Like all gestures that spring from a courteous motive, this practice has supplementary advantages. Such a method of progression not only saves the carpet, but it wears a part of the sole not worn by respectable walking, thereby releasing much leather for the common weal. It also makes the walkers admirably suited for croquet hoops if the party should exceed the equipment provided.



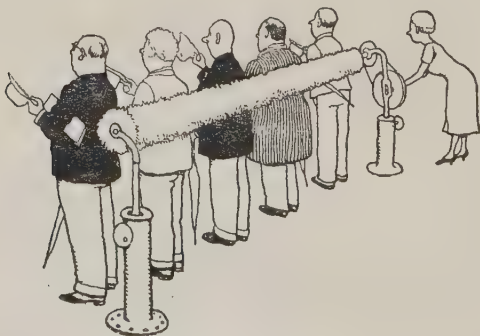


*Simple Precautions to Save Wear and Tear on the Stair Carpet when in Constant Use*

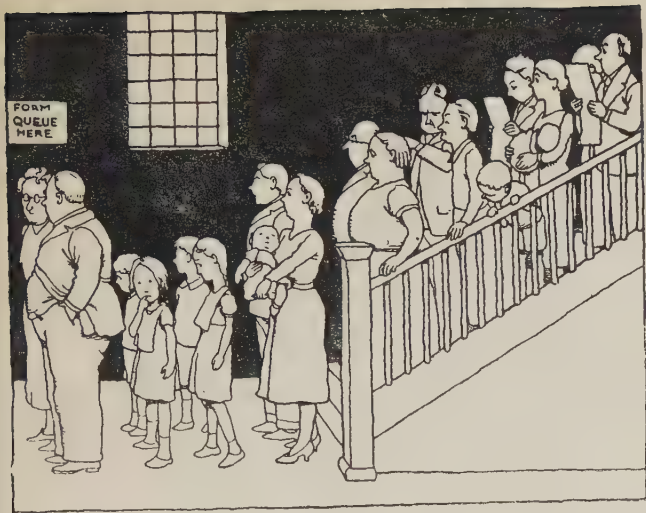


*Queueing up*

After such an invigorating descent the breakfast queue is a beneficent experience. A gentle rhythm is acquired while the day is young and the one-time dyspeptic rush for transport that has already departed is eliminated. Instead, the departing men lean luxuriously against the communal roller brush that will span



*The Morning Brush before going to the Office*



### *for Breakfast*

any spickness. There is often a joyous and chivalrous chivvy for position as it is an old tradition that the man who secures the place next to the wench on the winch is entitled to purr while he is being stroked.

There is unmistakable evidence that this matutinal massage has a poignant effect upon the nation's finance. Even the "bulls" and "bears" of the Stock Exchange become kittenish under the treatment and the effect upon the dear old souls of Billingsgate has been sufficient to transform the plaice.

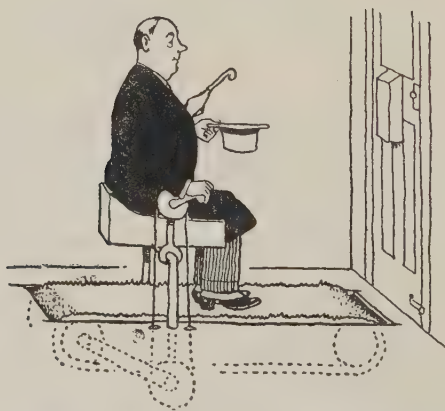
It is additional proof, if proof were needed, that if Heath Robinson and I had been called into the pattern of progress earlier on—say, just after Esau had made a mess of his pottage—life would have been very different.

But there is still time for the intelligent to catch up with us. Busy as we are on the word's redemption, we are prepared to pause for a seeker after communal truth, especially if she is good looking.

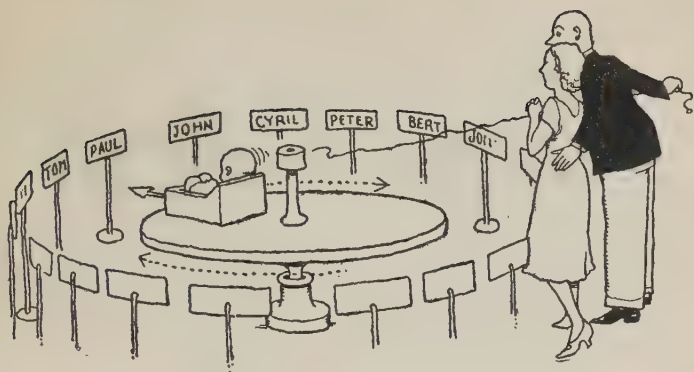
Prepared, and, of course, equipped, for the joy of imbibing the communal spirit from the fountain head, so to say (infinitely more artistic than "the horse's mouth"), is an indelible experience.

It has been declared to be as fundamental as taking a basic salt from Epsom or taking a Lunn off the original Sally. One burgess, indeed, described it as like battling with the Roaring Forties, but she was detained for medical examination and proved to be a free thinker well past that latitude, and therefore an unreliable witness.

We may have much to learn from burgesses, but no one in their senses would say we were as innocent as that.



*For Wiping the Shoes on Muddy Days*



*How to Choose a Name for the Baby*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### BABYCRAFT

EUCLID, interviewed after crossing the *Pons Asinorum*, delivered himself of two hiccoughs and a profound remark. It is the latter to which, by nature, we prefer to draw attention.

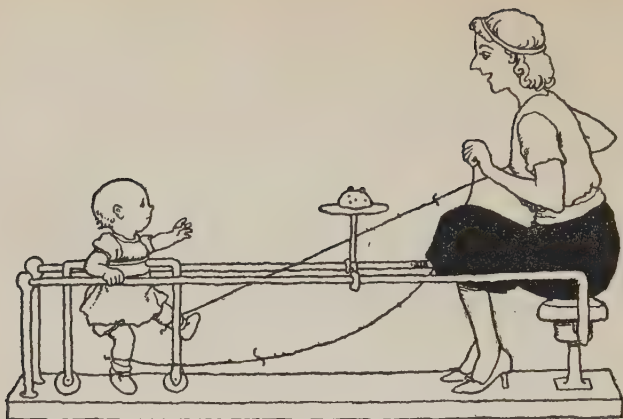
He said, while toying with his Isosceles triangle, "The future depends upon the young. You should have more of them before they get old."

After which epigram he was borne in triumph to the Capitol where he saw the programme through twice on one ticket.

But like all profundities, his remark has survived even the twilight of the gods and comes down to us as gleaming as on the early closing day when it was first minted.

It is our privilege to underline the old twister's wisdom and to indicate not only how essential are children to the contented communal life but how transcendantly satisfying they can be to all concerned. Any suggestions to the contrary are confessions of a mis-spent youth.

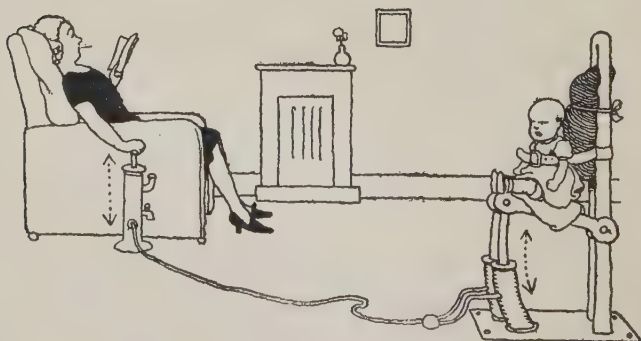




*Teaching the Baby to Walk*

We do say that with confidence, for we were both remarkable babies, winners of beauty prizes with impudent regularity, and on more than one occasion I was placed by mistake among the prize marrows around the harvest font.

Further, it seems less than no time since we were teaching our own children the rudiments of communal table manners, as depicted herein. When the lesson is well learned, the system has obvious advantages for the parent. Indeed, the chief

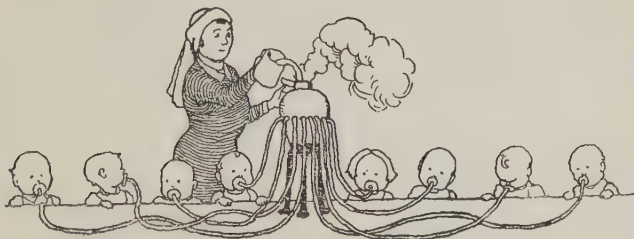


*The Hydraulic Lap*

joy of children handled on intelligent communal lines is that their parents can be blissfully unconscious of them for most of the day and night.

By means of the hydraulic lap, for instance, the most mewling and puking infant can be dandled indefinitely without danger to frock, figure, or intellectual nourishment. So, too, with the communal cradle and the get-together breakfast for the toothless. The former (of which only the six-tier model is illustrated owing to depth of the page), requires one wife only to be on duty for the household, road or village and the others are free to graze in intellectual pastures till the cows come home.

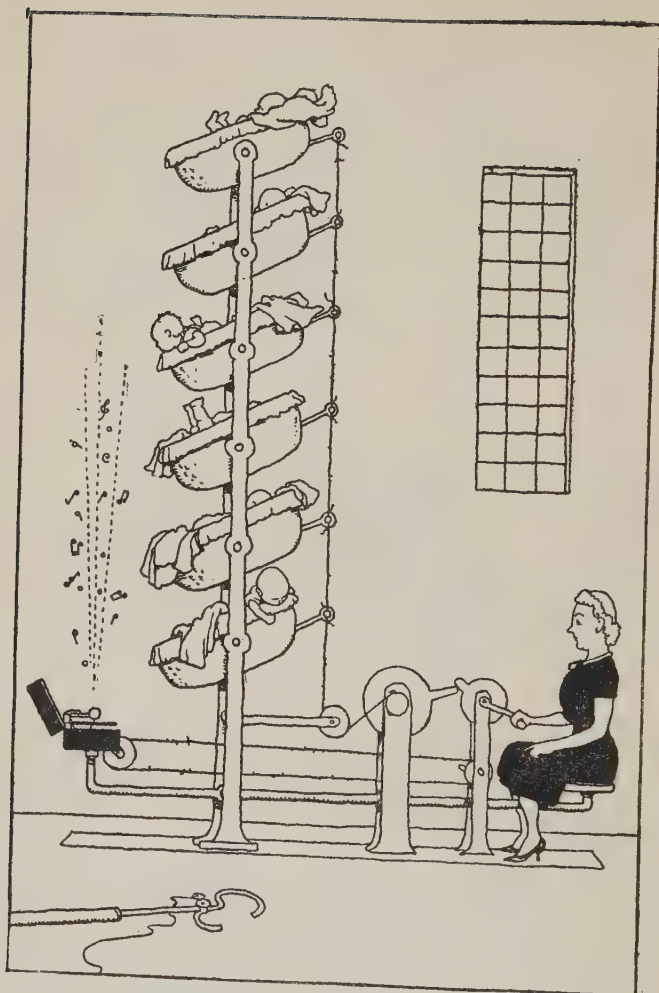
It has also been proved by the Royal Academy of Music that this early introduction to lullabies is responsible for many startling careers in later life. Viola Catgut, for instance, who habitually showed such overbalancing interest in the cradle



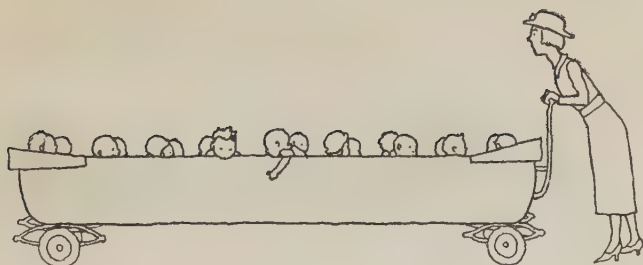
*A Communal Breakfast for the Young*

music that she was withdrawn from the gramophone needle three times in one week, eventually became a tatooist of distinction. Dr. Freud, who took a pointed interest in the case, is emphatic that but for the communal cradle she would have been a normal child.

The communal feeding machine has not, to date, produced any results of comparable national importance, but many a nurse in charge has testified to the spirit of comradeship induced by the apparatus. It is quite usual for toddlers to say, "What'll you have?" or, "This is on me," as they are lifted into their feeding-seats. Moreover, the system is thought so highly of abroad that Prince Pilch of Nether Nappia took back with him for the Maternal Museum the length of tubing on to which he was weaned.



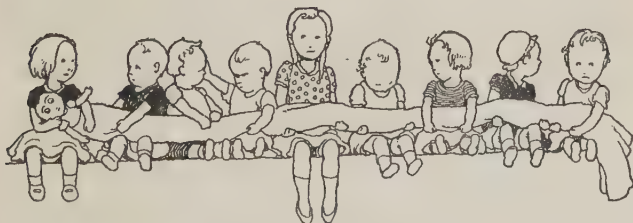
*The Six-Tier Communal Cradle*



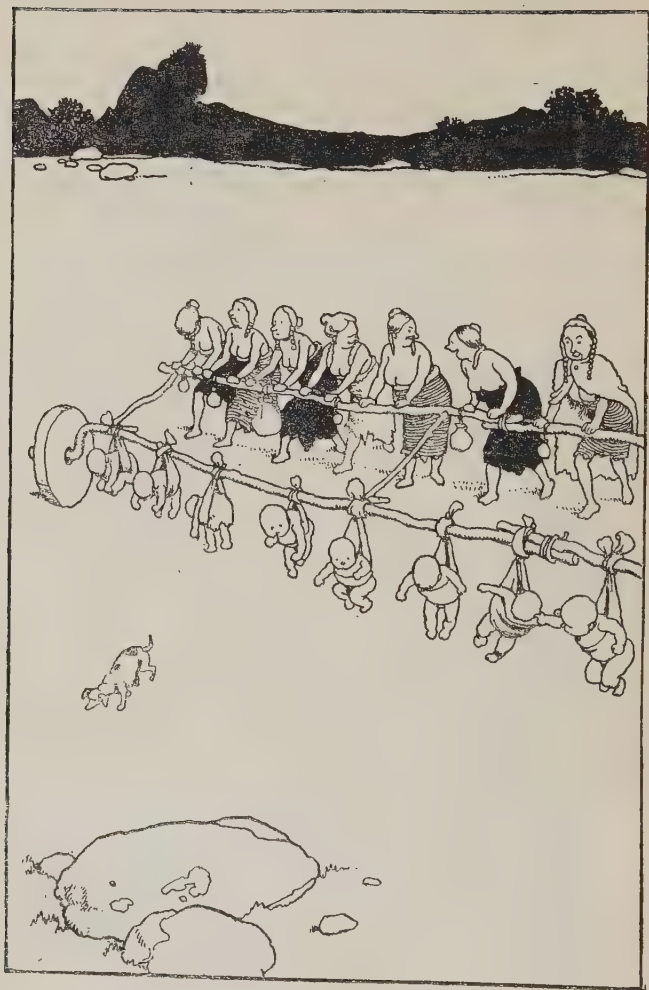
*The Public Spirited Pram*

There is, of course, no need to advertise the communal pram. It has an eternal quality about it, like heartburn and pigheadedness. But of recent years there has been a tendency to segregate young life. Faith, Hope and Marmaduke Stalin have been given separate prams, thereby implanting vicious class distinction at an impressionable age. The communal home progresses by looking back—an admirable habit, for all except the stiff necked.

A backward glance reveals the essential wisdom of the Neanderthal pram. The Solomon, Nappie 13, Underslung Tourer here depicted is obviously the pattern of perfection. Known familiarly by Cain and Abel as "The Rake's Progress", this pram not only encourages amity in parents and offspring, but can be used for marking out pastry or as a pergola. There are no modern prams of which this can be said with truth.



*The Communal Doll*

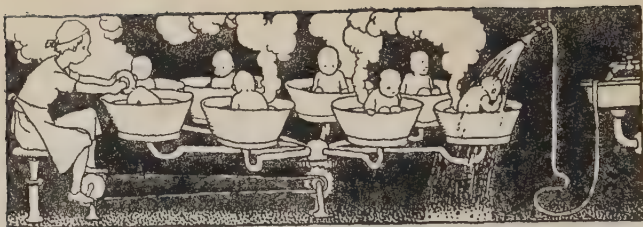


*An Interesting Manifestation of the Communal*



*Spirit in the Days of Neanderthal Woman*





*How to Bath more than One Child at a Time*

Bathing the baby has always been part of the ritual of rearing that has delighted mothers so much that they are even eager for fathers to share the ecstasy. Under the communal system the rapture can be multiplied indefinitely and by means of the carefully geared pedal propulsion it is possible to wash nineteen babies behind the ears in forty seconds. As is well known, Keats wrote his "Ode to a Grecian Urn" while being washed behind the ears, so there is no limit to the amount of poetic licence that may now be released by such communal ablutions. Keats did, of course, write other good urners, but none quite as hygienic.



*Dental Inspection  
with no Fuss*

It would be a major mistake to imagine that the communal spirit is only a home product. Like charity, it begins at home, but it also flourishes abroad.

Fathers, when they emerge from the collective good-bye, face their business day confident that their offspring will be aired, exercised and entertained in exemplary fashion. The morning walk may be accomplished by means of the "Mother-me-round" baby carrier depicted on page 116. This has advantages so obvious that they need not be underlined. The fitting is also an admirable cure for dyspepsia and is so constructed that if the straps should break, the load is restricting to the wearer's ankles and cannot possibly be overlooked.

The communal prams are available in several models. Their beneficial qualities are so evident that the tractor-driven

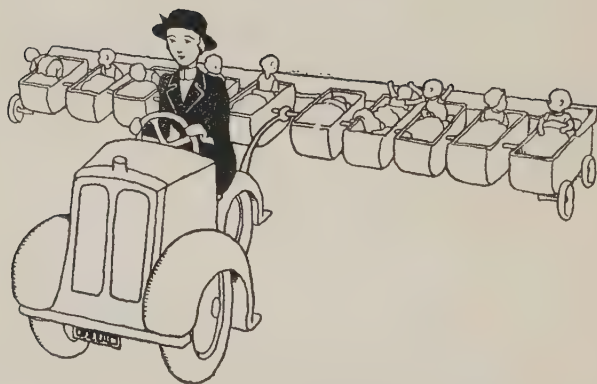


*How to Cook the Dinner while minding Baby*



*Collective Good-bye to the Children when off to the Office in the Morning*

model requires no driver's licence. Indeed, a farseeing Ministry of Transport has agreed that owners of such vehicles can dispense with the usual bells, horns, and other warnings of approach. This concession has already a material effect upon the birth rate in the West Riding, but not so much in the North, probably owing to the wind.



*Another Communal Pram*



*Learning Communal Table Manners :  
an Exercise in Self-Restraint*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### EDUCATION

AND now for education, a subject on which, of course, we have positive views.

Oscar Wilde may have claimed that the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it, but we are made of more enduring mettle. We know that empires have been wrecked by the infantile habit of picking and stealing, and in our view the communal or higher life can only be achieved by rigid self-control and a social sense.

These virtues, we find from experiments on guinea pigs and other commercial phenomena, can be best inculcated by the tethered tart machine, depicted on page 48. Educationalists agree that an ability to resist its lure after a six-hour fast is equivalent in training to five years at Harrow or a month's private tutoring.



*Inculcating the Communal Virtues : Resisting Temptation*

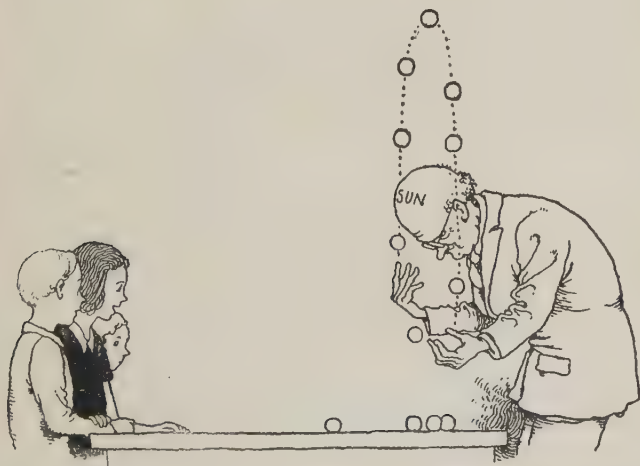
It is not too much to claim that the teaching of this tart, together with lessons alongside the geographical cow, have brought a new light to a hitherto bewildered humanity. A European cow is here depicted, one of the experimental models, but nature, always receptive to our ideas, is already producing world outlines. Further, cartographers, by careful breeding, now ensure that twins are seldom born which do not present the northern and southern hemispheres respectively.

The planetary system, never completely understood by the teachers and seldom even taken seriously by the pupils, dissolves into delight when tackled in the shrewd Heath Robinson manner pictured on page 49. It combines humour with learning and



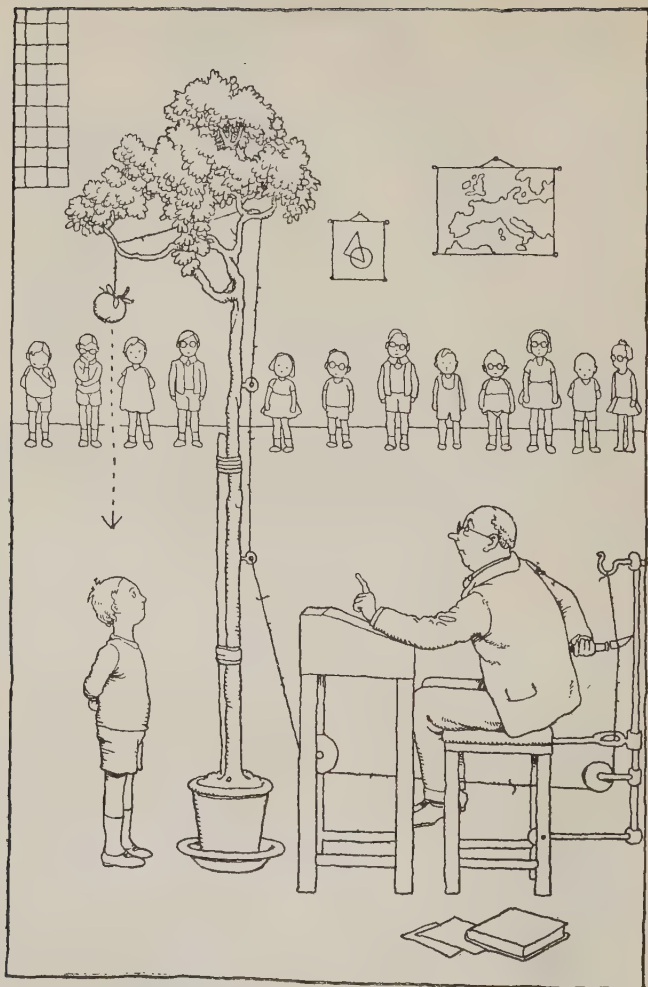
*Teaching Geography : an Opportunity not to be Missed*

as a result many more know without asking what makes the world go round, and bald-headed Geography Masters, instead of suffering from an inferiority complex and a cold in the head, are now at a premium.



*An Amusing Method of Explaining the Planetary System to the Young*





*Forcibly Impressing on the Juvenile Mind the Soundness of  
Newton's Laws*

Indeed, the personal touch in education, hitherto largely restricted to fee extraction, is one of the distinguishing marks of the communal mind. Whereas in the old days a master had to bolster up his prestige with a degree, gown, or merely an open book, now his superiority is instinctive. Even Freud admits readily that the Geometry Master who can demonstrate the triangle by standing on his head, without losing his dignity or his small change, has indeed found his vocation.

But in communal instruction imagination must supplement personality. The master's dignity is at the service of the pupil's progress. Newton's laws, for instance, are impressed by methods that even William Tell would have been glad to learn by correspondence.

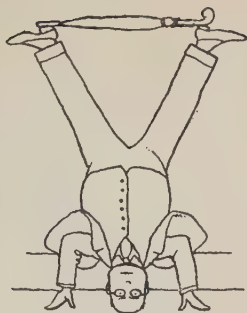
It is proved beyond question that many a child's future has been completely changed by the impact of the apple upon its head. Further, Careers Masters, watching this novel instruction in gravity, have been able to predict future careers, even at this early stage.

When the Worcester Pearmain fell on Freddie Fadoodle and bounced fourteen yards, the experts were unerringly right in transferring him forthwith to the Diplomatic Service. The saving in time and temper, two precious national assets, is obvious.

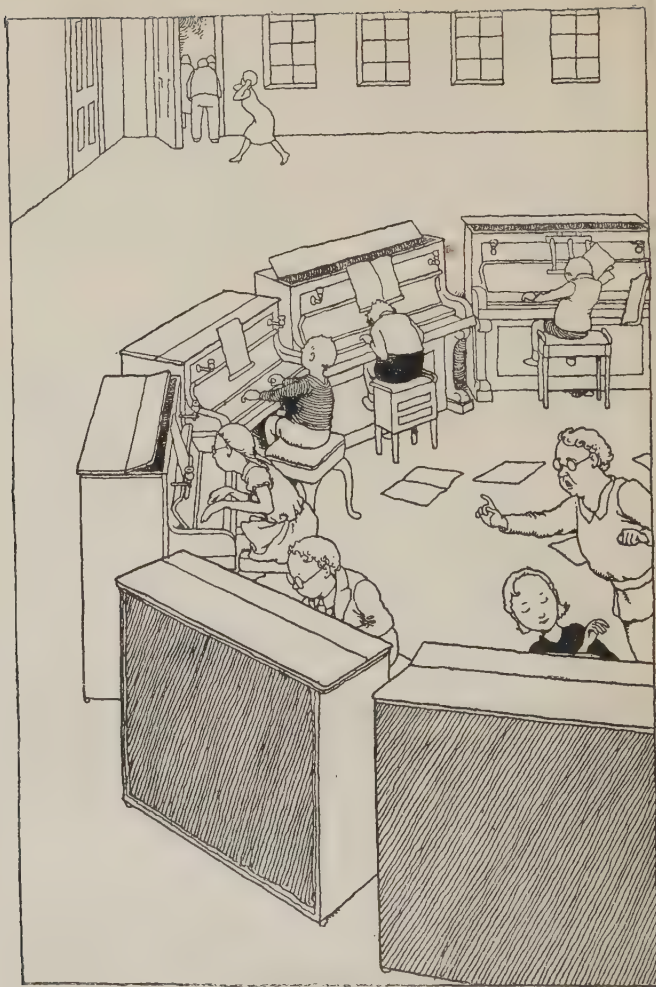
Mass piano instruction is another example of the joys of enlightened education. It has long been felt by the parents of budding pianists that the joys of practising should be isolated, along with scarlet fever and other passing scourges. The musical instructional circles, such as are pictured overleaf, achieve this desirable end. What is more, aspirants derive infinite encouragement from each other and the inadvertent dischords (so destructive of individual morale) are lost in the celestial harmonies.

Statistics prove also that by this means the wear and tear on music mistresses is reduced by two quavers in the bar and the serenity of civic life is less frequently disturbed.

But, of course, mere knowledge is useless without manners.



*Interesting Method of  
Teaching Elementary  
Geometry*



*Mass Piano Instruction in*



*a Communal Establishment*

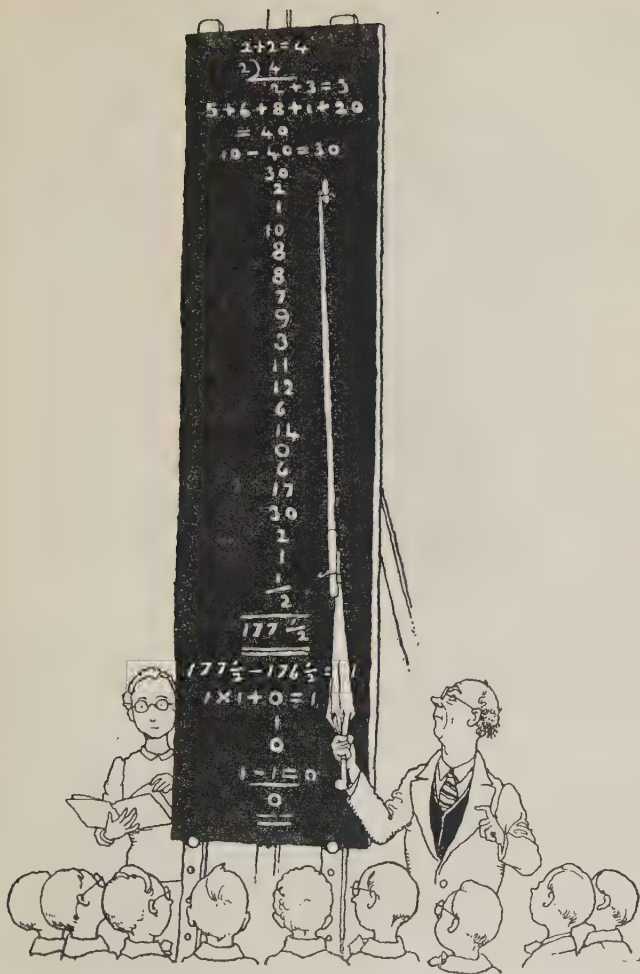


*A Useful Drill to Teach Young People to give up their Seats to their Elders*

A whole book could be written by us on communal manners (and may be, if we can persuade the publishers to commission it), but we cannot help feeling that the quintessence of manners is to pay respect to your elders and know a lady when you see one and to act accordingly. The more thought you give that dictum, the more profound it appears. Quite rightly, for women, if not ladies, are involved in everything—morals, manners, money, lack of it, etiquette, *dulce* and *decorum*.

So, taking the long view, we have confined ourselves here to one instance of education in communal manners. But, as you see, it gets to the root of things, or perhaps we should say the seat of the trouble. The drill for ensuring the recognition of one's elders and a graceful rising in consequence, is not only effective but relished by the participants.

But then, that is the whole theme song of the communal life—relish. Why should Yorkshire have the monopoly of it? We are all for wholehearted sharing; we could do with a free bottle or two ourselves.



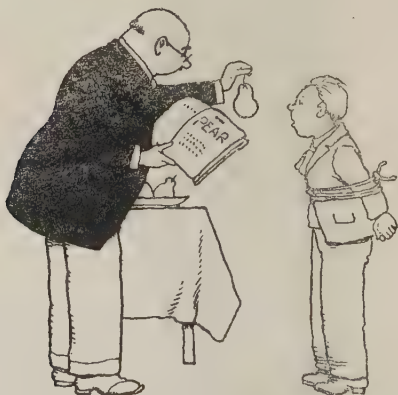
*Higher Mathematics*



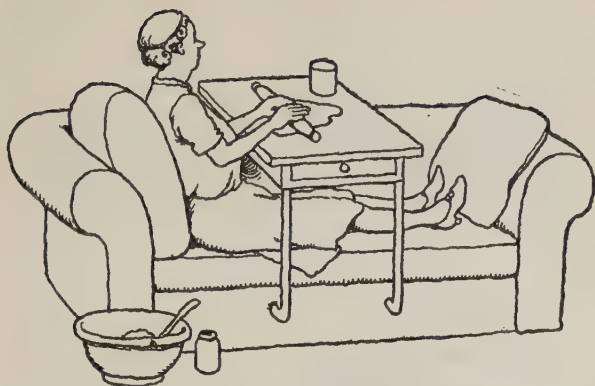
So, too, with higher mathematics. This tender subject has all too frequently in the past been handicapped by the shortness of teachers or the limitations of the cheap blackboard.

Such brakes on the nation's spiritual development are indefensible. They have been frequently deplored but never remedied—until we gave our ripe minds to the problem.

In the communal life, as will be seen, one simple sum lifts mathematics from the eternal two and two, right through the realms of logarithms, square roots and the binomial theory, back and beyond the *status quo* in a mere six foot ten inches. If the ceiling is not high enough the board can easily be tilted out of the window. It is the child's mind that matters.



*The Botany Lesson : Taking no Chances*



*Kitchen Comfort*

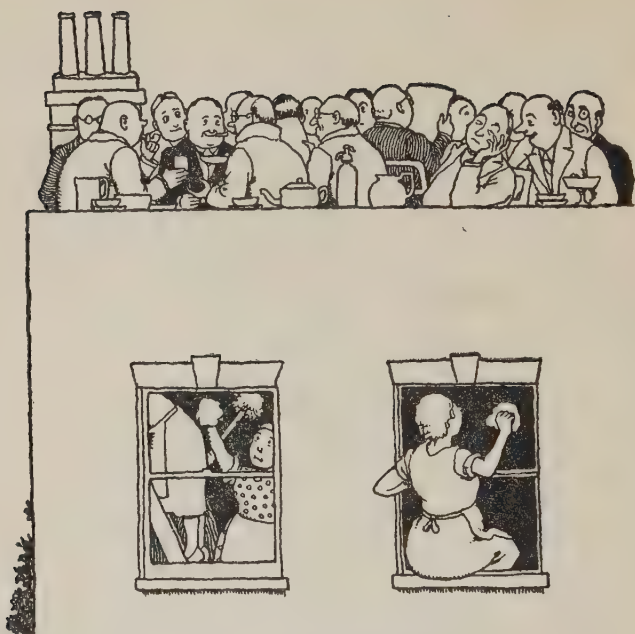
## CHAPTER SIX

### HOUSEKEEPING

THE woman who declared that the way to a man's heart was through his stomach was, of course, a fool. Why drag the heart into it? But, seriously, housekeeping has always exercised the nation's finest brains. We speak with knowledge and it is astonishing and gratifying how we purveyors of eternal truth find our advice being continually reflected by the past. It confirms our belief that there is nothing new, but what is eternally new is the ability to see facts. In that capacity we have frequently been proved and found brilliant.

For instance, I was recently turning out our rabbit hutches and came across some correspondence with Rehoboam. Someone had written him a line of condolence on Solomon's death and congratulated him on reigning in his stead.

As a sociologist, conscious of his duty to the world, the correspondent (one Dr. Hi-De-Ho) had taken the opportunity to ask Rehoboam whether he had found any comments on matrimony in his father's files. If so, he felt they should be given to the world.



*Communal Spring-Cleaning*

Appropriately, the lad replied on the back of a free pass to the Coliseum. It must have been a family outing, for all the stalls were reserved for Solomon's concubines and the whole of the gallery for his wives.

But what interested me most, and what underlines the fundamental truth of this book, were the old boy's comments on Cleopatra.

She was, as Rehoboam admits, a wow. Neither age nor custom had then made any attempt to wither her, and Solomon responded whole-heartedly to her spice, approved the pedigree of her camels and gave her full marks for oomph. She knew all the answers—except one.

He asked: "Did she approve of spring-cleaning?" and she answered: "Yes."

She got the bowler hat and a free travelling voucher immediately, because if there was one thing that got Solomon's goat, it was being spring-cleaned by seven hundred wives and three hundred diversions. Oh, the wisdom of Solomon! He—at least in this respect—epitomises all mankind. It is fundamentally wrong that spring-cleaning should be regarded as the acme of domestic tyranny. In the communal home it should be the mainspring of domestic felicity.

This simple problem Heath and I have solved in our own homes long ago. We gladly pass on our recipes now that the Government have made it worth our while.

We are, of course, essentially practical. We realize that no woman gets any kick out of spring-cleaning an unoccupied room, any more than a woman has hysterics alone.

But the sensation of chaos can be achieved by suggestion and what was once a furtive exploitation of the family can now become a big-hearted and open-handed social occasion.

This change, the leading alienists confirm, has a profound effect upon a woman's metabolism. Even the most cynical observer must admit after a casual glance at the illustrations to this chapter, that the system is ingenious and artistic.

For many years our roof parties during the spring-cleaning of the upper stories have been the talk of the neighbourhood and a godsend to migratory birds. If we may tender a little advice, such fêtes are best planned for February because then a genial warmth can be counted on from the adjacent chimney-stack. The system has also done much to encourage the comity of nations because during the spring-cleaning season exchange of guests and hospitality is as natural as the air.



*Arrival of Sweep during Breakfast Time*



*Bridge as Usual*

Spring-cleaning of the lower rooms, in a communal establishment, becomes a major feast, to which the menfolk not only come with pleasure but for which business absences are arranged by all enlightened employers.

It is not long before participants in such jollities demand an extension of the privilege and we have shown in these pages how the principle can be extended to house decoration and the visit of the sweep. There is now not the slightest need for breakfast to be interrupted. Indeed, under the sheet food can be enjoyed and papers read with no fear of outside interruptions. There is now competition for the services of the latter during the early hours and keen rivalry for the role of major prophet depicted in the drawing. Experience has proved that this role of signpost is best left to Father, or someone equally well acquainted

with the layout of the house and creaking stairs. It is on record that one father, while the family were making muffled whoopee under the blanket, lost his sense of direction and guided the short-sighted sweep right round the table and out again.

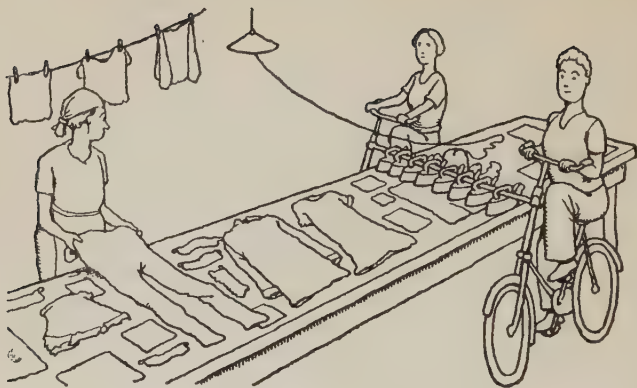
When the family came up for breath he was found kneeling before the gas-meter cupboard earnestly trying to get his brush through the framed portrait of the stag at bay.

But he was easily and instantly reconciled by an invitation to join the bridge-as-usual party in the adjoining lounge. He approached with deference, being clearly moved by the courage and ingenuity that had contrived so interesting a solution of what were once overwhelming domestic difficulties. Then, after walking the plank in the interests of national security, he played as pretty a "Four No Trumps" with Aunt Fanny as has been seen on the home ground for many a month. Indeed, he responded to her footsignals as quickly as if he had been playing with her for months, which, as she insisted, is as good a tribute to elementary education as one could wish for.



*Carrying on in the Dining-Room during Spring-Cleaning in  
a Communal Establishment*





*Quick Electric Ironing*

And Aunt Fanny is no mean authority. It must be forty years since she took two bumps from Brazenose and a couple of sly digs from the Torpids. You can't teach her much.

After all, education does lie at the root of things communal—Education and the overcoming of atavistic prejudices. There is not a housewife, for instance, who has not felt when she pushed the toe of her iron into the parental pants, that these joys could be shared and turned into a communal ecstasy. To think that in almost every home on a Monday night, irons were being poked into parental pants is an admission of the sterility of individualism. After all, if cars can be thrown together on a moving conveyer and can hold together until the guarantee is expired, how much more can cookery and kitchen craft respond to team work?

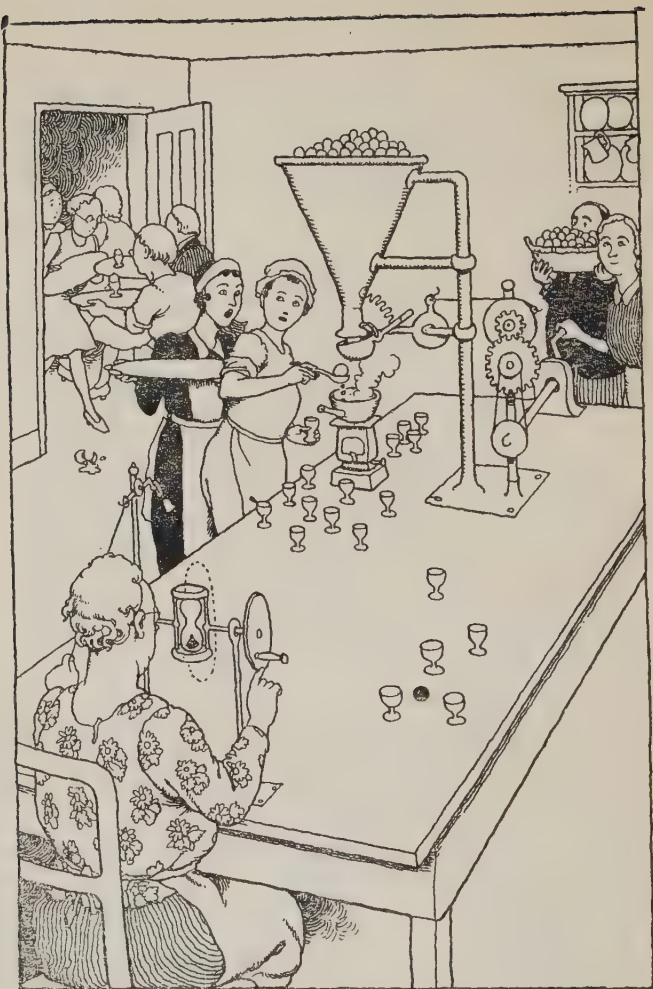
Contemplate, for instance, how electric ironing can be speeded up as here depicted. Contemplate, too, the decorous and health-giving bicycle alongside the communal ironing-board, and there is nothing more conducive to retaining one's seat than the knowledge that the irons are at that moment lingering upon one's own lingerie.

It is the spirit that matters, just as it does in more mundane but equally necessary operations, such as sweeping the carpet in the occupied lounge and as it did when you toasted the twins while you stirred the porridge and Milton profoundly stirred you.

Such multifarious duties are inevitable, but the intelligent use of mechanization can turn drudgery into delight. Breakfast in bed, for instance, has always been theoretically a pleasure but actually a pain in the neck to all but the consumer. Now the



*Sweeping the Carpet in the Lounge without Disturbing the Occupants*



*A New Machine for Speeding up the Breakfast Egg in a Communal Kitchen*

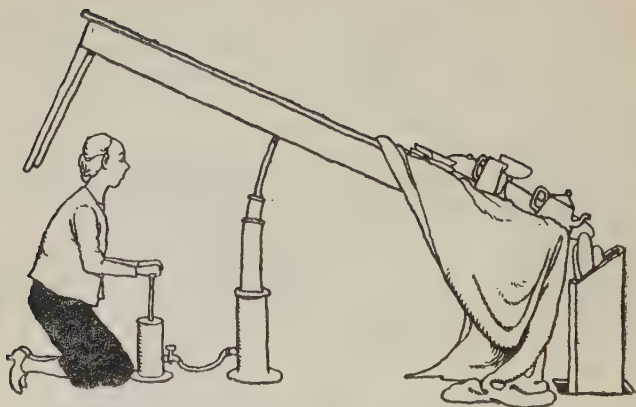
bedside gas cooker, here depicted, is not only a godsend to hardworked housewives, but invaluable to husbands who have now nothing more to do than to approve from a sleepy distance.

Fortified by this early appetiser the housewife descends to supervise the communal breakfast egg machine. Its intelligence is obvious and its speed remarkable. Gone are the days when the condition of one's breakfast egg depended upon the cook's remembering whether she had sung two or *three* verses of "Stop yer tickling, Jock". This machine assures a constant stream of eggs to leave the kitchen, coddled, cabined or confined, with the minimum delay and with complete abandon. It releases the serving staff from all but mechanical movements, thereby affording infinite time for meditation and intellectual uplift.

After breakfast, when the soul is ready to rise to sublime heights, there is in the individual establishment the very mundane necessity of clearing away and doing the chores. It is impossible to assess how much literature has been lost to the world by this rude impingement of necessity upon rhapsody.



*The Bedside Gas Cooker—Breakfast in Bed for the Hard-worked Housewife*



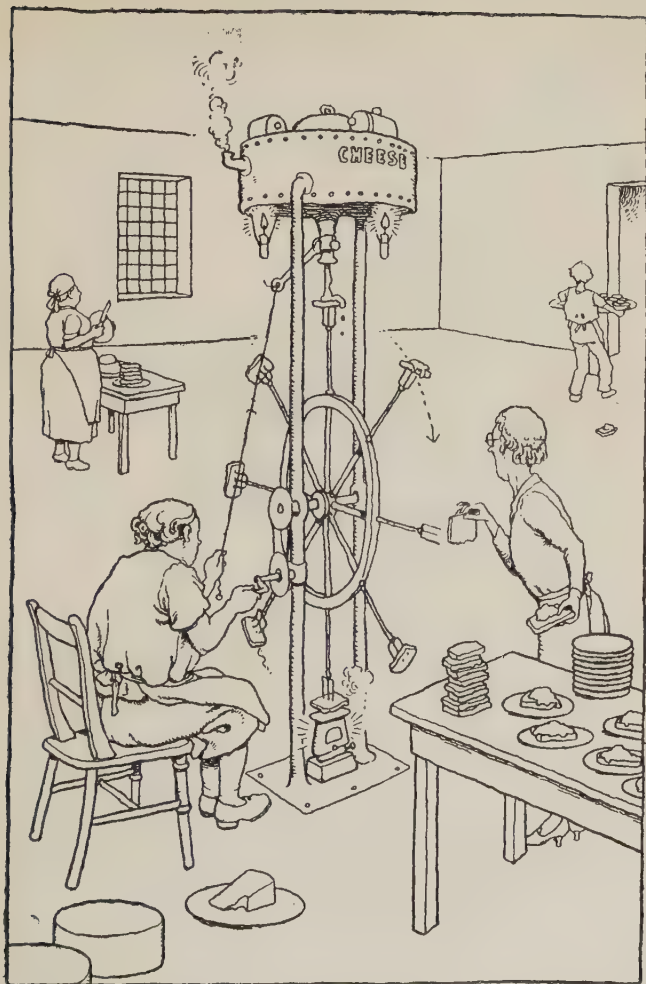
*For Quickly Clearing Away the Breakfast Things*

Not so in the communal life; a simple hydraulic pump, keenly sensitive to poetic rhythm, will dispose of all the table laying with one swift and satisfying slide. As will be seen, the things depart with the effacement of a batman out first ball.

This system has also the estimable advantage of breaking down the inhibitions of aristocratic china. In the past there has always been sufficient free spirit for a Wedgwood to call a Spode a Spode, but a certain uppishness has often been detected in Dresden moustache cups. Under the new system relations are no longer strained.

Thus ordered, the day passes as a dream and instead of *ennui* by supper time there is keen competition to work the welsh rabbit machine. Indeed its efficiency is one of the assets of modern flats now advertised by agents. The best students of psychology put details of its pedigree even before "h. & c. and the usual offices".

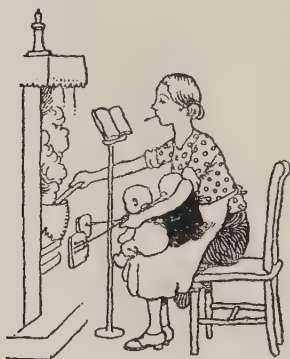
Which only shows how communal living lays the accent on the most appetising things of life.



*The Welsh Rarebit Machine*



Its working is so simple that only genius could have contrived it. Not without reason did the Post Office order several thousand identical machines for sealing registered parcels. It is as sublimely adaptable as that. By it we should not be ashamed to be remembered.



*Doing More Than One  
Thing at a Time*



*A Safe Way of Celebrating November 5th in Crowded Households*

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### rites and ceremonies

It has long been felt by expert psychologists that the centre of the communal existence must be the revival of its instinctive rites and ceremonies.

Just as the essence of Parliament is symbolized by Guy Fawkes Day, so the vigorous family life only revealed itself, and must again reveal itself, in those treasured rites of embroidering the antimacassar, stirring the pudding, cracking the first flea, and changing into winter woollies on All Saints' Day. Other time-old rites, such as mowing Mother's mole, had a national significance far transcending their surface attractions.

We are quite clear in our minds that such ceremonies must be revived and enlarged in the full life. By so doing even the most mundane matters can be invested with a memorable significance.

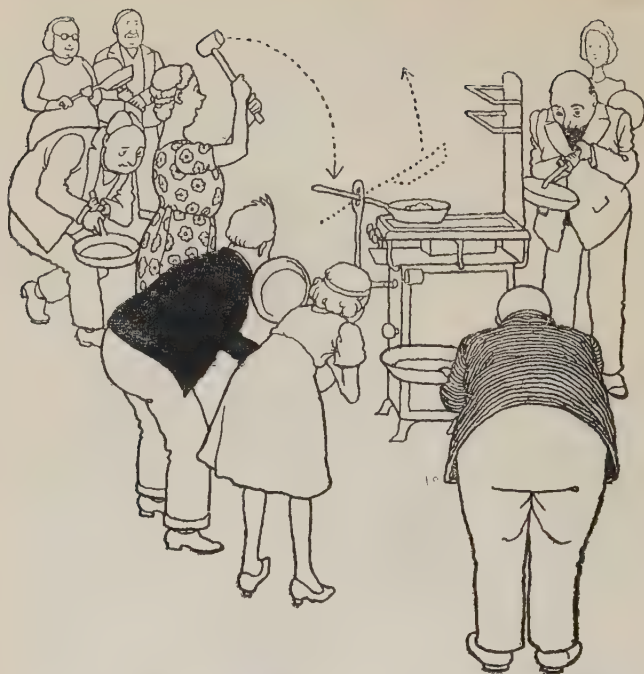
How often in the past have individual, and even national, destinies turned upon an unlicensed liver? Consider the unmitigated advantages of the pick-me-up parade, whereby hang-overs can be dissipated not only without effort but with the obvious encouragement of communal participation.



*The Early Morning Pick-Me-Up Parade in*



*the Hangover Lobby of a Communal Establishment*



*Revival of the Time-Honoured Rite of Tossing the Pancake  
on Shrove Tuesday*

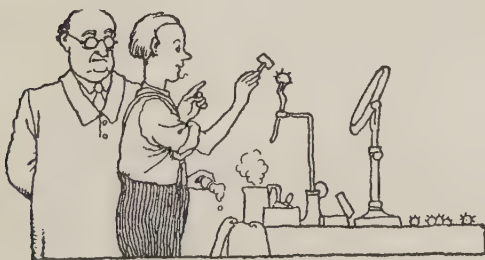
Observe in the picture on page 70 how subtly individual treatment is secured without any diminution of speed. Indeed, instead of being a hang-dog, furtive experience, it is now a daily delight, comparable in ecstasy and *élan* with plucking the parson's nose and keeping the stiff upper lip.

And touching on lips (as Heath Robinson and I are always prepared to do) how much more poetic and yet practical is our proposal for the first shave. In the unenlightened days this was the occasion for furtive passes in an atmosphere too often of misplaced lather and blasphemy. Now, at work on the trial gooseberry, the novice can not only turn his energy to constructive ends, but the shaven gooseberry can be used as a bath plug until sufficiently stewed for serving.

We hesitate to mention it, but in the absence of outside tributes we feel impelled to underline anew our national service in releasing the real rhythm of life. It really puts us in the same class as Einstein, Epstein and Glauber Salts as one of the most moving forces in the universe.

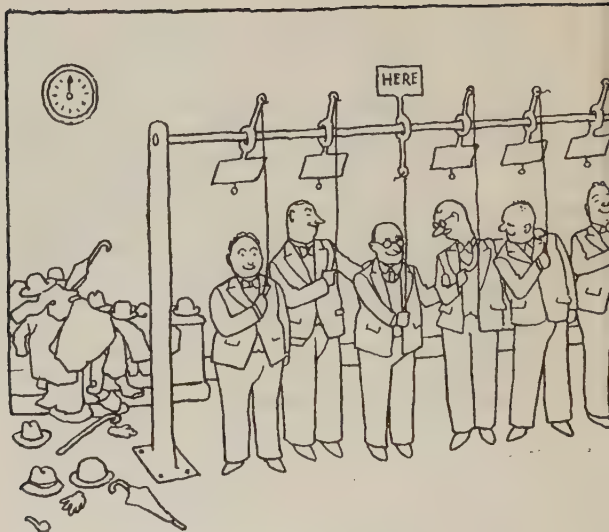
Who, but Heath Robinson and I, for instance, would have thought of the hubby's midnight roll-call (page 74), which lets fresh air and laughter into what was once a sinister, shoes-off crawl? Those who miss or evade the roll-call by mistake or malice aforethought nowadays avail themselves of the sponge shoe silencers (page 77) for late enterers. We think of everything.

That's what we like about ourselves (among the printable things); we turn inhibitions into exhibitions, and get no rake-off on the entertainment tax. And, of course, the roll-call is so psychologically sound. Those wives who are secretly thwarted by the dutiful return of their own spouses have always the hope and often the satisfaction of seeing other husbands default. And if there is one thing more satisfying to a woman than having her own mate to scold, it is to claim virtue in the face of other people's vice. That, as Eve said when she aired the winter fig-leaves, is having the best of both worlds.



*The First Shave  
Practising on a Gooseberry*





*The Hubbies' Midnight Roll-*

And that, of course, is one of the dividends of the communal existence. Another is epitomised in the signing of the house-keeping cheque. By its use regularity is assured, meanness is eliminated by the public inspection and all the illicit joys of other people's incomes can be explored to the full. What more can be fairly asked of mundane but necessary financial matters—unless it be that the cheques shall be honoured?

But to return to the heart of the family—banks can always be trusted to look after themselves—let us consider the red-letter days that have been allowed to lapse into pale pink and the others that have invariably blushed unseen—November 5th, Shrove Tuesday, the Festival of the first Bottle (and its vigil, a parental fast), and the day of the First Strawberry and Cream.



### *er a Round of Local Visits*

The list is infinite. Ours but to suggest and to show how much more sensible it is to concentrate upon such things than upon rent days, the income-tax assessment and the time when the barber says "Getting thin on top, sir."

Yet we suggest with confidence, for we have felt for a long time that passing the port, lifting the elbow, warming the posterior and rattling the bathroom door should not be the only acknowledged ceremonies in a well-ordered existence.

With the new intelligent, communal approach even the weaning period takes on a new bloom—which, of course, is the origin of the famous saying "New blooms sweep wean" (Aristotle's Wisecracks, Canto XIV, translated from the vulgar Greek by Dr. C. E. M. Joad).



*An Interesting Ceremony in a Communal Home : Signing the Housekeeping Cheque on Saturday Morning*



*Sponge Shoe-Silencers for Returning Jollificators*

We, of course, acquired a distinctive bloom long before that stage and are continually gathering new high-lights. But then, we make no claim to normality. It wouldn't be admitted if we did.

Many a young life has been permanently impressed by the songs sung at the presentation of the first bottle with the appropriate dignities pictured on page 80. The choice of the songs, of course, and the number of candles can be left to the imagination and the financial standing of the parents, but in response to several requests we offer diffidently a few suggestions for the former: "Shall we Gather at the River?", "Drink to me only with Thine Eyes", and "Where the Bee sucks, there suck I".

The decorations on the high chair are a matter for individual preference, but Cowslips, Love-in-a-Mist and the Purple Pilch have obvious claims for consideration by high-minded parents.

Suggestions are scarcely necessary for the inauguration of the Strawberry and Cream season. The times when Phillistines have dismissed this national glory with a hurried hiccough must be too numerous and painful to recall. In the communal life these pagan selfishnesses are eradicated and the joys of the palate are not one whit lessened, but rather enhanced, by colourful festal rites. If a haggis can be played in by pipes, after which it speaks for itself, the first strawberry can surely be graced by an appropriate retinue, complete with maids of honour. After all, we know many a man who returns to his wife each spring with less ardour than he embraces each season's strawberries. And if there is one aspect of the communal life that is consistent, it is a fair distribution of favours.

And in the distribution of favours it is the approach that matters: as the Sphinx was heard muttering to the East wind.

But then, the Sphinx could not by any stretch of imagination be called communally minded. For our part, we think he can take his wind as it comes. Our approach is far less self-centred.

That is why the Saint Valentine's Day accoutrement has been



*Inauguration of the Strawberries and Cream*

so universally acclaimed by the manufacturers, wearers and other alienists. Outside the stationery trade there has been a deplorable diffidence about St. Valentine's Day. The trouble has been that senders and receivers, borne upon the high tide of tremulous passion, are apt to reveal their feelings at the first meeting. And, even worse, recipients are prone to make wrong guesses about senders



*Season. Bringing in the First Strawberry*



and to embarrass innocent parties by their come-hither look. All of which produces an emotional tension on the morning of the Feast which is destructive of digestion and, in the case of the female, calculated to produce distressing oscillation in the patella. In the case of the female the symptoms are less easily described but no less profound in their disturbance.

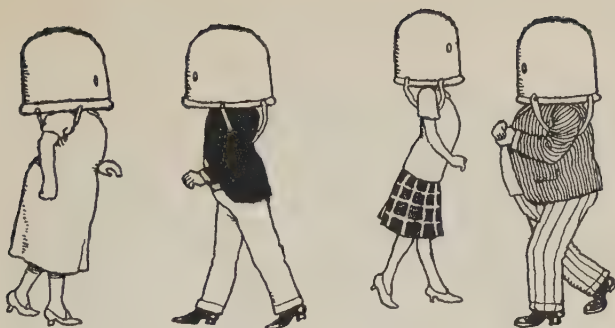
The use of the apparatus depicted on page 81 removes all embarrassment and gives an added zest to February 14th which lingers through the whole month.

The classic severity of the design, of course, has a purpose. It accentuates communal equality and prevents any wayward spirits from choosing designs that, far from hiding their identity, would, in fact, subtly underline it.

As with all our contributions to the communal ecstasy, the apparatus is dual-purposed. In the more spacious areas it can be used as a shopping basket and in the communal flat it can be used as a fly-catcher. The fly should be carefully placed on a level surface and the St. Valentine helmet lowered gently over it. The eye apertures can be used to ascertain whether the fly is in need of aid or is making its mark upon the day's delight without assistance.

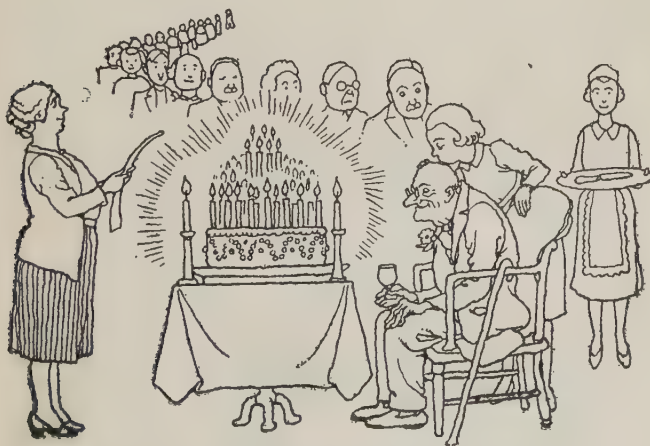


*The Ancient Ceremony of the First Bottle*



*To Avoid Temptation and Embarrassing Situations on St.  
Valentine's Morn*

It is little wonder that in such a genial existence the expectation of life is considerably extended and that crabbed age is a thing of the past.



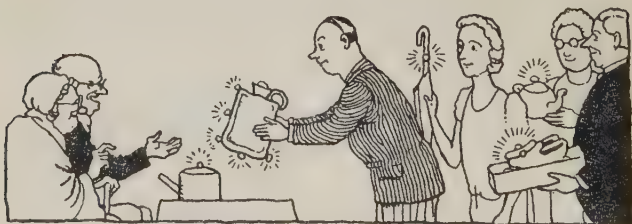
*Another Revival of an Old Ceremony.  
The Birthday Kiss*



*Drawing Lots for the Next Bath*

Hitherto it has been the habit to regale old age with little more than veneration and other insidious, lack-lustre compliments. The phrase "past his prime" has been almost damning in its deprivations. In the communal home, age is no deterrent, rather the reverse. Ripeness is all and the birthday kiss is no longer youth's passionate perquisite but a life-long rapture. Age, indeed, gives the ceremony an openness that is fragrant in itself.

The bestowal of a kiss upon a patriarchal dome is stimulating to the recipient and an inspiration to the young. There is a mystic link between the first mallet blow upon the christening-cake and the kissing and cutting of the centenarian's candle-



*The Diamond Wedding. Useful Presents*

strewn contraption. In between, as any sensitive soul can perceive, can come all the joys that great-grandfather experienced and all the ecstasies he thought about but was prevented from enjoying by sciatica or the fettered, non-communal age in which he grew up.

All this, and more, may rise from the loving lips to the receptive brain at the instant of kissing. It lifts the casual habit into the realms of delectable art; one of the glories of the communal existence.

What is more to our liking, it gives the lie direct to our School Song which, with an old-world obstinacy, still talks about:

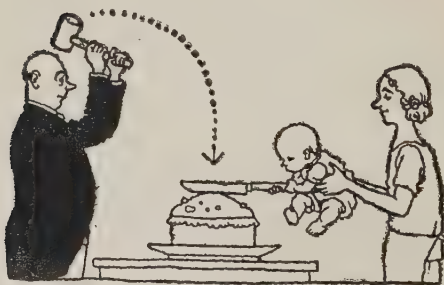
*"Feeble of foot and rheumatic of shoulder,  
What will it help you that once you were young?"*

It helps a great deal in the communal home. Indeed, Heath and I came to the conclusion, since endorsed for us by the Prime Minister, that you cannot be old, or even middle-aged, without being young first.



*Welcome Home from the Office in the Evening*

But as the communal spirit gains momentum, we have faith that even Harrow may see the light. We may even be asked to rewrite her school song. The request, if the fees were adequate, would not find us unprepared. We wrote several additional verses for private circulation soon after the match against Eton in '61 in which Heath bowled a lob into square leg's stomach and I made 54 not out during the lunch interval.\* Hail and fair do's, as we Old Harrovians mutter whenever we see a deserted waist from the top of the Hill.



*Cutting the Christening Cake*

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\* Note by the Artist : Through one of those temporary lapses to which we are all prone on our bad days, Cecil Hunt has made a slight error. It was he who bowled the lob. The score was placed to my credit.—W. H. R.



*Useful Communal Sport. The Potato Peeling Race*

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### FUN AND GAMES

IF there is one thing on which all thinking men and beautiful women are agreed, it is that civilization has tended to complicate and obscure innocent fun and games.

In the Garden of Eden, for instance, which soured men think of so unfairly as the fount of all misfortune, they took their pleasures not only gladly, but simply, finding a wealth of opportunity in the very bare essentials.

So, too, in the communal existence. Here fun and games have rightly a homely hilarity that is more infectious than measles and needs no bedside manner. Indeed, the quintessence of communal relaxation is the general thoughtfulness that is engendered and the investing of the gentle arts of domesticity with a new and moving significance.

Consider, for instance, pill-and-spoon cricket. Ever since Queen Elizabeth staged the Reformation in favour of cricket, pills have receded from the sporting picture. A pity because, of course, before Elizabeth got tetchy, pills had played a great part in Papal bulls, especially in the long distance kind exported to Britain.





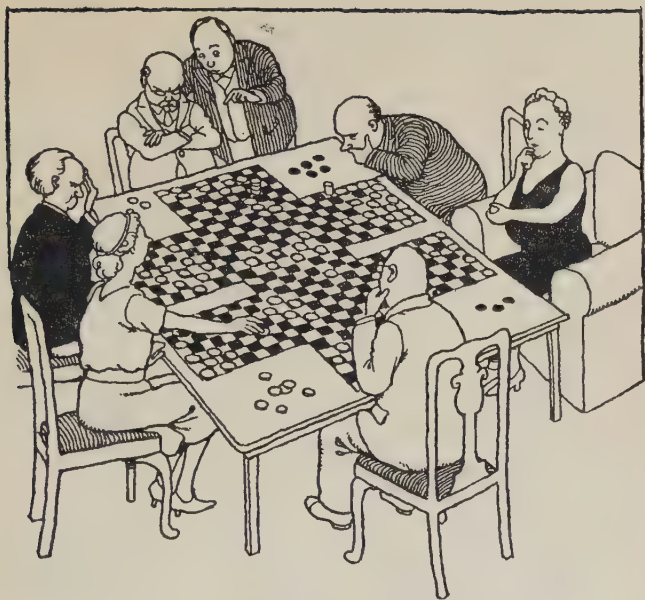
*Pill-and-Spoon Cricket for Winter Evenings*

And now they are restored to favour in the communal playing-fields. Pill-and-spoon cricket (see above) brings all the excitements of Lord's and quite a number of commoners into every well-run home. There is no subtlety of cricket that is omitted. The counterpart of the sticky wicket can be achieved by the use of soup-spoons and fast bowling with a Number 9 has an exhilaration that can be seen and heard by the most distant spectator. But of course no one is really distant or out in the cold in communal games. Nor in the draughts which, in less enlightened days, were so prone to produce a neuralgic isolation.

Six-handed draughts, depicted on page 87, is an example in black and white. Here the former selfish concentration and silence are lost in the ecstasy of abandon as the game approaches its zenith. Draughts, once a game for station waiting-rooms and complimentary seats at the theatre, is now a pastime in which age, sex and individual temperaments disappear. When six



*Healthy Sport for the Aged in a Communal Home*



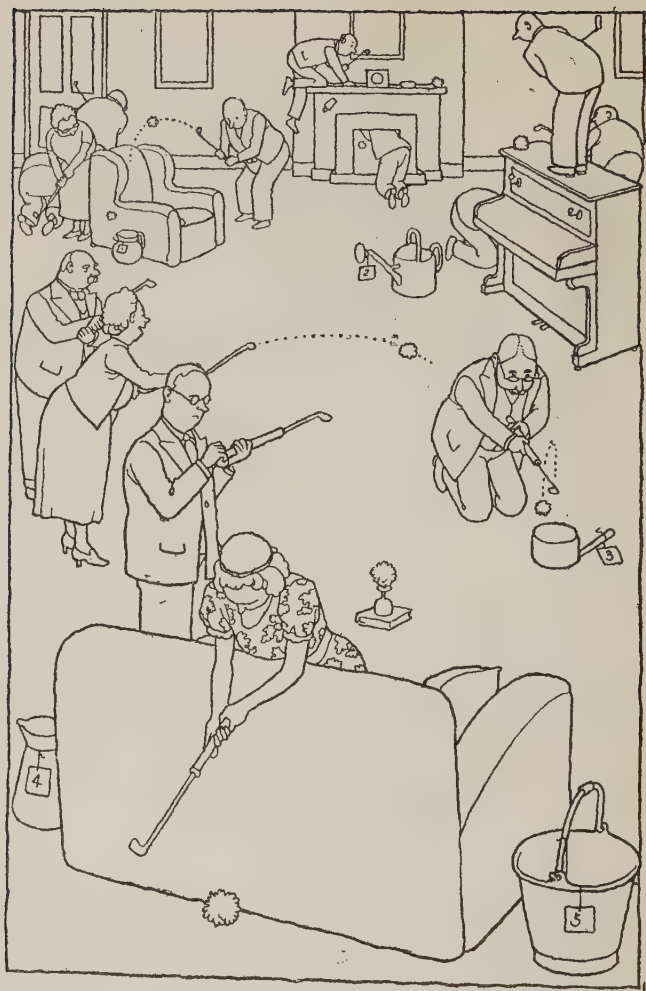
*Six-Handed Draughts*

people are wholeheartedly huffing in the middle reaches, relaxation achieves its most beneficial stage and a new meaning is given to Shelley's hitherto inexplicable lines:

*Nothing in the world is single;  
All things by a law divine  
In one another's being mingle.  
Why not I with thine?*

Such a pastime can be followed admirably by a game of parlour golf. The outdoor game has its pints—pardon, points—and these can still be kept polished, but it is inevitably exclusive. It necessitates open spaces and cannot be practised without inspection by the curious and often singularly unappreciative. Parlour golf is at once more friendly and can be confined to the course.

There is nothing more tantalizing than playing an approach shot to the fourth, only to find that one has gone in off the red on



*Parlour Golf*

the eleventh. It is a cross that Christians need not be called upon to bear. Such torments are not known in parlour golf, which is far more controlled and sober. The skittish woollen ball lacks none of the incentive to invective, but it is always within call. What is lacking in distance is compensated for by the added romance. To be able to drive from the bass end of the upright grand into the second water-can is comparable with winning the President's guinea at St. Andrew's, or the Express Dairy Cup in the Lyons den.

The variety, of course, is infinite. Any domestic receptacles are eligible as holes (and each has its peculiar hazards), and the adjustable clubs make any room eligible as a course. Indeed, championship golf can be learned in the airing cupboard and more than one internationally famous stroke-player has learned his craft in the larder with a couple of blancmanges and a dish of prunes as natural hazards.

The delicacy of touch thus acquired comes in more than useful for egg croquet (page 92), which can be played in any drawing-room without let or hindrance. Connoisseurs of the game prefer to match the eggs with the period of the furniture, but this is an inessential refinement and many an exciting match has been played with Sheraton eggs and Chippendale chairs. It is the spirit that matters, plus a little Fullers earth to cover up the omelettes of the amateurs.

It will be observed, even by the myopic, that a happy feature of these communal games is the equal participation of both sexes. Hitherto, women have been officially excluded from some male sports, such as all-in wrestling, although it has been freely indulged in the bargain basements. But now, unhandicapped and indeed welcome, men can participate in potato-peeling races and women can enjoy the double delights of combined billiards and table tennis. It has always been a maiden's complaint that in billiards too much time is wasted in replacing the tankard, while men



*Eurhythmics. An Exercise in Poise and Grace*



*The Combined Snooker*



*and Ping-Pong Table*





*The Delicate Technique of Egg Croquet*

assert that in table tennis women squander precious hours in retrieving the ball from under the mangle. Now both sides are content together and the marker has more opportunity for exercise and less chance to hear the latest Stock Exchange story. Which, of course, is undisputed progress.

We make no excuse for facilitating the revival of the grand old game of conkers. Indeed we know that many a bishop has longed to have a knock in Convocation but has lacked courage to pull out his string. Now we have given it our *imprimatur* and Sir William Beveridge has included conkers among the automatic benefits without points, everyone is playing again and our twine shares have gone up three balls and a reef knot since Michaelmas. Which only goes to prove what Sir William Beveridge has tried to obscure in 250,000 words—namely, that the higher you go, the fewer, and it's a long worm that has no turning.

But to return to our *moutons*, what could be more elemental or inspiring than cat's cradle or the game of casting the first clout?



*Resuscitating an Old Friend: the Game of Conkers*

The former has all the ingredients of the perfect pastime and was indeed played by Lot while his wife was joining the board of Cerebos and by Hitler and Mussolini on the Brenner Pass. It offers rhythmic exercise, gives a kindling of romance in the touch of hands, and is a test of physical and intellectual stamina second only to reading the *Daily Mirror*.



*Music While You Work*





*on the First of June*

The latter is an instance of the many family rites hitherto selfishly indulged in private session which are now open to general enjoyment and edification. Here again, it is the principle that matters, whether it be catching the early worm, keeping the stiff upper lip, or casting the first clout when May is out (pages 94-5); everything should, and now can, contribute to the common weal. The rapture of clout casting on June 1 yields an unexcelled opportunity for masculine competition. It has more point than the Braemar Games and far less inducement to drinking. And, of course, it is classical in its antiquity. The Roman Toga was specifically designed for casting (like the horse shoe), so that the revival of the ceremony has an historic and aesthetic significance comparable with Mr. Churchill's hats and the offices of the *Daily Express*.

But that, as you will have seen by this time, is the very essence of communal fun and games—all things work together for good, even among courting couples. A distinct advantage, because car parking and petting had placed a stigma upon courting. It is now no longer a question of drawn blinds and the difficulty of avoiding the self-starter; it has returned to its original healthy place in the family life. Only at the climax of the proposal (see page viii), when time stands still and fingers cannot, need the screen be drawn in the most crowded room. Even then, with a subtle arrangement of the lighting, privacy is secured and the guests can still see all that the lovers see—and often more.

This is truly a reaffirmation of the value of the communal system. It shineth not like a good deed in a naughty world, for there is no furtive naughtiness in the communal world—which gives imagination infinitely more play. And that, in itself, is a testimonial to our quality as its arch-advocates. Other testimonials are on file at the Bodleian and at the deep end of Southend's main sluice.

It should be invidious to mention them, but in the communal life one leaves nothing to chance. It is for the common good that visionaries in general, and ourselves in particular, should be encouraged and sustained. It was one of the two weak spots in the Beveridge Report, which we studied at its birth. The other was the binding, which proved singularly spiteful when we tried to tear it up for shaving paper.



*Mutual Massage for Lumbago Epidemics*

## CHAPTER NINE

### ANNO DOMINI

IF you have followed us thus far, we take your intelligence for granted and we need do no more in this chapter than underline artistically that which to lower intellects might not be apparent. We refer, of course, to the fact that the communal life pays little attention to time in the ageing sense. It bestows its honours, not upon years, but upon fulfilment.

But we are concerned at the moment not so much with the famous as with the happy masses (there are hardly enough famous to make the book profitable). Under the communal régime these gloriously happy masses can contemplate something more than social security as they advance to, and pass, maturity.

The communal way of life rightly recognizes that whereas youth has its instinctive passions and second childhood its peculiar pleasantries, the autumn-crocus period has been sadly neglected in previous designs for living.

The new life outlook is altogether more percipient. It makes the timid anonymous poet who wrote:

*Crabbed Age and Youth cannot live together*





*The Monthly Overhaul*

look silly. More than silly; ignorant when he adds :

*Youth is wild and Age is tame,  
Age, I do abhor thee . . .*

But we have progressed since those days, and it is our high privilege to interpret those progressions. The communal constitution lays down that if ripeness is not all, it is a very great deal and qualifies its possessors for deference without any restriction of delights.

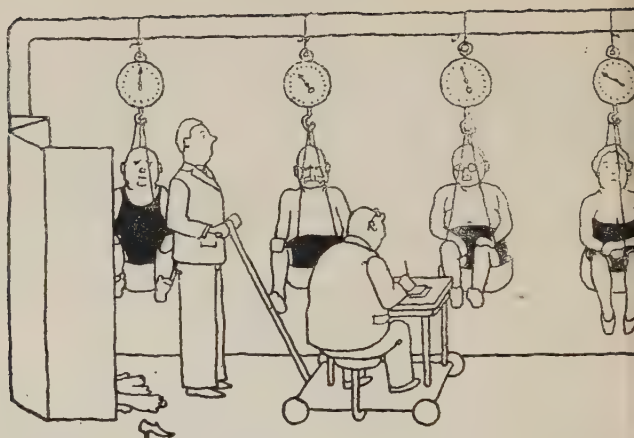
Indeed, subject to the monthly overhaul and the weekly weigh, to which the middle-aged accede readily, life can retain its flavour and its innocent fun right to the last.

*Life's autumn is a lovesome thing,  
God wot,  
My lot,  
Choice spot,  
Why not?  
The very spice  
Of life's still nice—and yet the fool,  
Contented that it is not,  
What rot, in autumn when the blood is cool  
Nay, but you can read the sign;  
'Tis very sure joy walks in mine . . .*

Which is how I put it neatly to Heath when we walked among the autumnal leaves that strowed the brooks in Vallombrosa. And we agreed that life is still sweet, brother, and the winds on the Heath, brother, and you can tread on a cowslip as readily at seventy as at seventeen, and with far less disintegration of rectitude.

It all comes back to the spirit of the thing, and that, as I have already indicated, depends in turn upon the monthly overhaul and the weekly weigh (pages 98 and 100).

The monthly overhaul is a masterpiece of efficiency and organization. The apertures not only facilitate speed but put the examination upon a purely impersonal plane. Just as Florence Nightingale insisted upon capes for nurses so that their feminine figure might not retard the recovery of those to whom they ministered, so the apertured screen prevents the doctor's diagnosis from being influenced by the symmetry of a lady's ankle or the luscious lines of the merry widow. The screen indeed acts not only as cape but as shield, buckler, cummerbund, and Uncle Tom Cobbleigh and all. Truly we think of everything—even if we do not record all our thoughts.



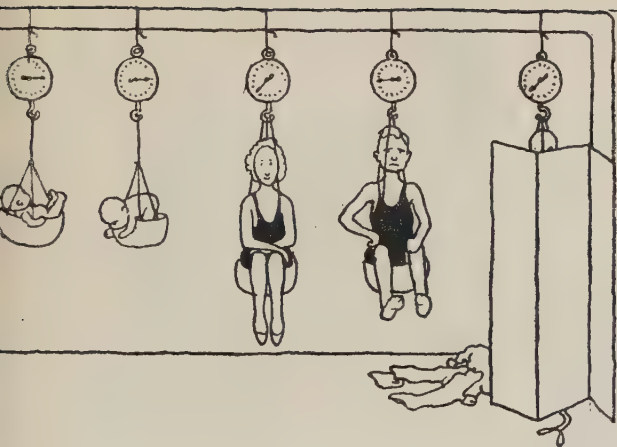
*The Wee*

But obviously corrective treatment in these conditions, and with such prospect of reward, is an eagerly sought delight and the weekly weigh, made simple and with the example of strapping youngsters alongside, is nothing more or less than an outing.

After the weekly weigh (though of course there is no compulsion in the communal life), the general tendency is to indulge in games for sustaining the suppleness of joints. Like all communal activities, it utilizes things close at hand, such as the piano, the dining-table, digestion, love and the flat iron.

An obstacle race for the mellow-minded and comfortable-bodied is a far more edifying sight than any other race and it has no ill effects upon finance—unless, of course, the participants are so absent-minded as to do the legs-raise-exercise-with-the-coal-scuttle without transferring their loose cash.

But in our enthusiasm for the deeper delights of the day we are anticipating ourselves. New every morning is the love that is engendered by a night in the special bed designed for sleeping in the open air (page 102). The President of the Royal Academy has testified not only to its hygienic value (of which he knows



eight

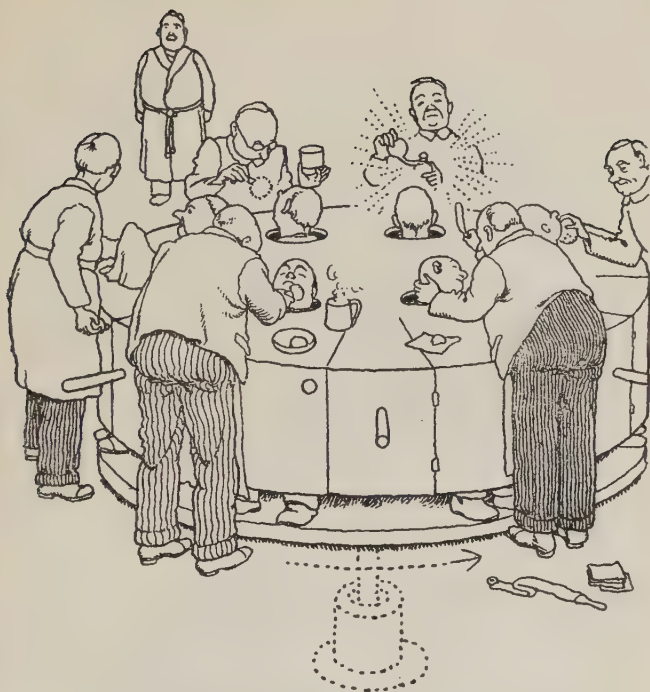
little but assumes much), but to its inherent artistic possibilities. To be awakened by a bird, either in person or by, shall we say, inference, is to release new artistic urges in the system which colour the whole day.



*The Exciting Game of Multiple Noughts and Crosses for the Older Members of the Community*



*For Sleeping in the Fresh Air*



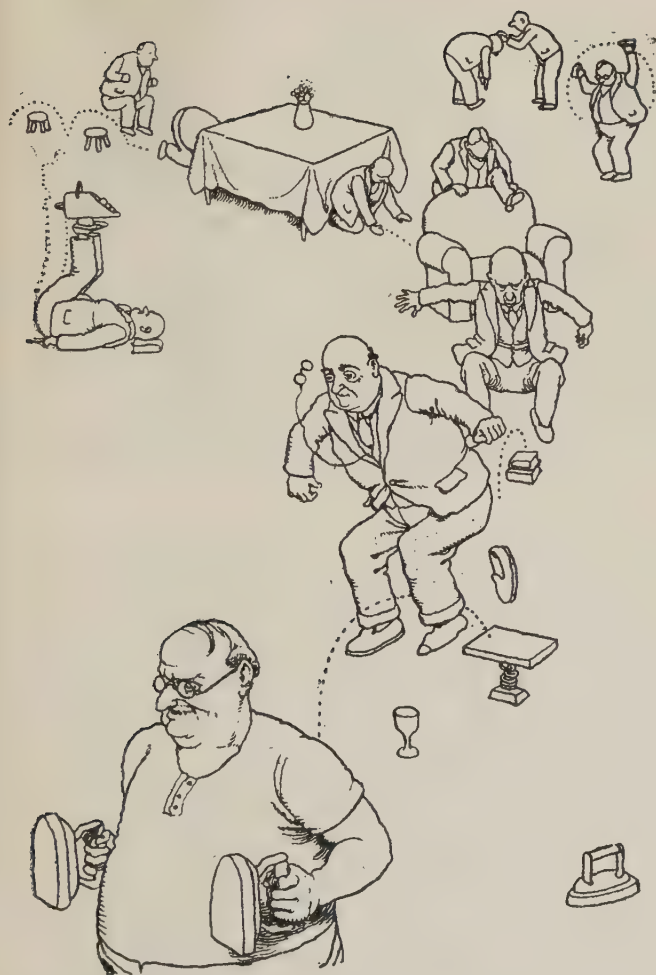
*Quick Shaving Machine in a Communal Home*

The quick shaving machine is another boon and blessing to men which should have come long ago if barbers had not been antagonistic to the industrial revolution. In a few minutes a man can go full circle in the same chair and step out of it rejuvenated, perfumed and ready once again for the full life. Some there may be (for our Empire must still be Poona-ed, even in the communal existence), who need a little massage for lumbago. But whereas in the past this massage has been a hidden, furtive expedient in splendid isolation, now it becomes a mutual manipulation (page 97) which soon develops a rhythm of its own and generates a friendly feeling that never quite evaporates if wool is worn next to the skin.

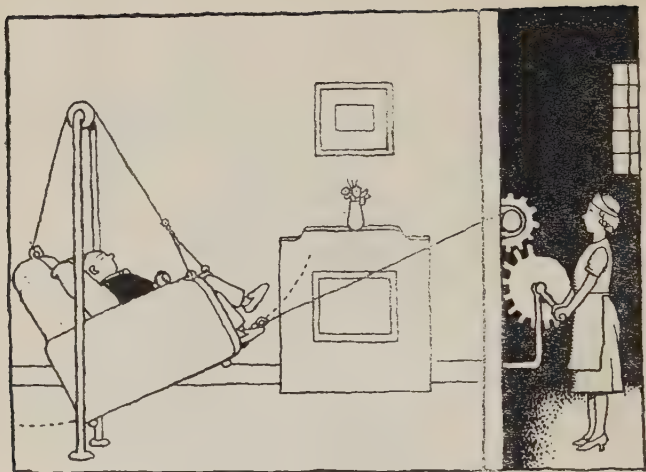




*Simple Exercises for Regaining the Suppleness*



*of Youth and Warding off Anno Domini*



*To Induce the After-Dinner Snooze*

It takes men in a natural brotherhood to the multiple noughts and crosses settee where a healthy antagonism, shot through with Christian forbearance, works up an appetite for dinner.

After dinner, fifty winks, far from being thought an occasion for secrecy or even lying, is comfortably encouraged. The slung snooze-chair for autumnal inhabitants is not only effective but simply and ingeniously constructed so that the maid also enjoys a soothing rhythm and an opportunity for post-prandial meditation.

One of the perquisites of middle age is that an egg for tea is not only permissible but encouraged. Its appearance can, however, take on the glamour of an occasion if a male kitchen party for the cooking thereof is encouraged (page 107). Occasionally an unenlightened cook will take umbrage but most intelligent housewives will not only take many tips from the performance but all loose match-boxes from within male reach.

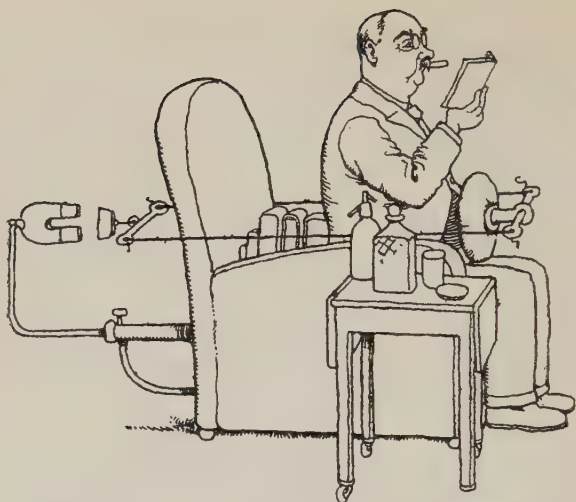
Of course, while middle age need, as we have made clear, necessitate no diminution of communal pleasure, it is a time when legitimate space may be given to individual requirements.

Sometimes it is forced upon one and figure preservation becomes, if not a matter for the National Trust, an occasion for individual mistrust and laudable amendment.

There are too many machines specifically designed for dealing with this natural phenomenon, but a description of one will suffice to indicate that the subject has been dealt with constructively and with imagination in the communal régime. We illustrate on page 108 the magnetic figure preserver which has not only the vocal support of the medical profession but is largely used by them. It embodies the best principles of science, astrology and pathology. The significant principles are, of course, the leaning towards literature (indicated by the provision of books which need not be read—indeed cannot—while treatment is being taken), and the magnetic power which is so much more imaginative and sympathetic than mere mechanics. It is true to say that the magnet responds not only to individual requirements but to the mood and temperament of the guest. It is susceptible to whisky and other emotions and responds to the individual whim with the faithfulness of a Clumber spaniel or a well-tuned bodybelt.



*Helping in the Kitchen: Cooking an Egg*



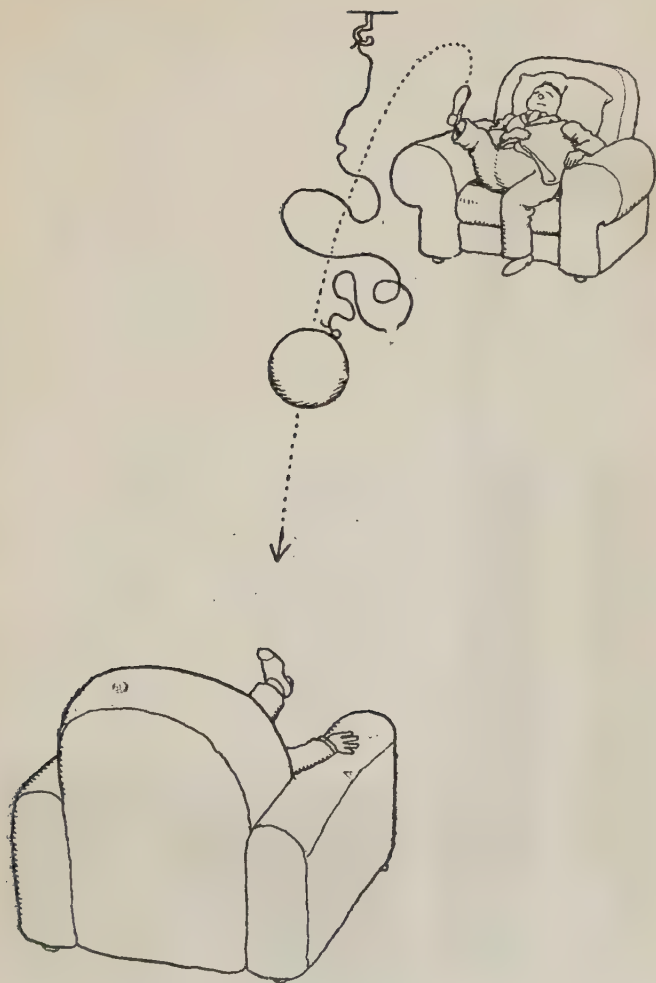
*The Magnetic Figure Preserver for the Middle-Aged*

The poets may write idylls about the arms of Morpheus, but the middle-aged know that her embraces have nothing on the caress of the magnetic figure-preserver and there is no come-back, hangover or hereditament whatsoever. Truly a beneficent invention.

After an hour in it a frolic with the suspended play-ball will loosen up the most procrastinating patella. Then a couple of sets at the solo badminton machine, ably propelled thereto and held in play by a glamorous attendant, is enough to fit any man for bed and dreamless sleep.

But of course the snag in the past has always been getting up the stairs.

In the communal world there are no snags, just as there are no flies without ointment. By the simple co-operation of the kitchen tap the cosiest armchair lift ascends slowly and serenely (page 110) to the level of the bedroom. And as every man knows, to reach the bedroom on the level is half way to victory. A victory to which genial exercise and our creative genius have almost equally contributed.

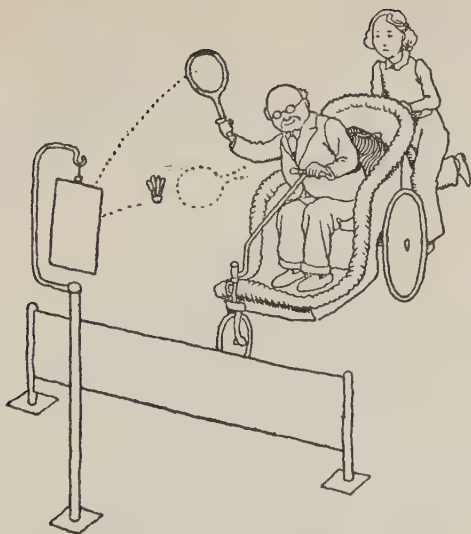


*For Checking that Growing Stiffness of the Joints*





*And So To Bed*



*Solo Badminton for the Over Seventies*

In the days of classical snobbery lots of nonsense was talked about the twilight of the gods. As though they deserved—or required, for that matter—any special dispensation in the dusk!

In the communal home all men feel like gods and all women—well, they look like goddesses, anyway. Heath and I have lived too long as husbands to say what we do not mean; or mean what we do not say.

We are never quite sure which it is, but one or the other ought to cover us; and what does it matter in a mellow world?

It is the end of a perfect day. Days and moments quickly flying, even when ripeness is all. There still remain the fragrant minutes before childlike slumber intervenes. The bedside book is an essential attribute to civilization; the choice is instinctive, but to save us the final blush our publisher has printed the titles of our previous books on this jacket.

*Hic jacket* would seem to be the obvious bedtime kiss to imprint upon your brow.

We do so, deeply moved. There are times when even strong men can be legitimately moved, as more than one bailiff has told us from the back step.



**THE END**



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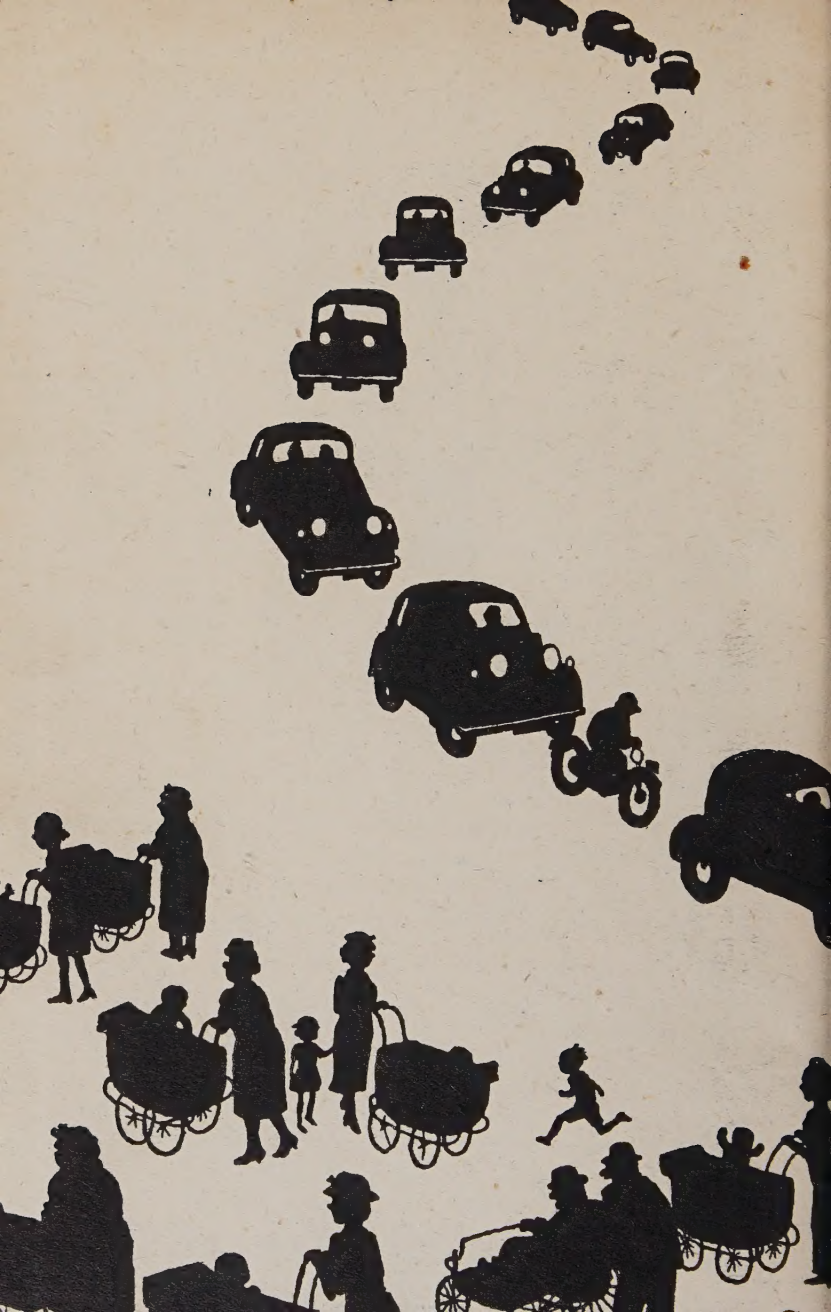
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