

# MICHIGAN FARMER

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## THE HOUSEHOLD---Supplement.

### THIS LIFE IS WHAT WE MAKE IT.

Let's oftener talk of noble deeds  
And rarer of the bad ones,  
And sing about our happy days,  
And not about the sad ones.  
We were not made to fret and sigh,  
And when grief sleeps to wake it,  
Bright happiness is standing by—  
This life is what we make it.  
Let's find the sunny side of men,  
Or be believers in it;  
A light there is in every soul  
That takes the pains to win it.  
Oh! there's a slumbering good in all,  
And we perchance may wake it;  
Our hands contain the magic wand;  
This life is what we make it.  
Then here's to those whose loving hearts  
Shed light and joy about them!  
Thanks be to them for countless gems  
We ne'er had known without them.  
Oh! this should be a happy world  
To all who may partake it;  
The fault's our own if it is not—  
This life is what we make it.

### OUR PROBATE LAWS.

One of our Household contributors seems to bring, by implication, the charge of injustice against our present probate laws as enunciated by statute; and puts a number of "whys" relating to a wife's rights in her deceased husband's property which might afford food for thought to our Lansing legislators. Yet I think that in the main our probate laws are just and reasonable. The exceptions are the proviso by which the widow has the *use only* of a third of the real estate of which her husband died possessed, whereas it should be hers absolutely, to dispose of as she sees fit; and the further restriction which permits the husband's relatives to take from the childless widow a portion of the property she has helped accumulate, and which in simple justice should belong to her alone.

The widow can claim \$250 worth of household furniture and \$200 worth of personal property, and her husband's wearing apparel and ornaments. This she can claim even if there is more indebtedness than the estate can pay. She can take one-third of the personal property after the debts are paid; and if there be no children, or but one, she can claim one-half of it; the other half, if there are no children, going to her husband's relatives; if there are none reverting to herself. If the wife owns property in her own right this ruling is reversed; the husband takes one-third if there are children; if there are none, or but one, he is

entitled to one-half, the remainder falling to the wife's relatives. If she owns real estate it descends to her children, the husband having no right except to its use till the children are twenty-one years of age. The wife can make a will and dispose of her property as she chooses, whereas many a modern trial has shown that the husband is a pretty smart man if he can make a will leaving her out, or inadequately providing for her, which the law cannot set aside and her legal rights be granted her.

The property given to the widow by law, belongs to her alone. She is not compelled to support her children out of her portion of the estate; their maintenance can be charged against the property they inherit. She can remain on the farm with her children if she so elects, and receive one third of the rent or profits. As I understand the law, her dower right takes precedence of other claims; and she may bar the disposal of her dower in lands jointly mortgaged by herself and husband. Nor can she be divested of her dower right even if her husband's lands are sold to satisfy a judgment against him. The injustice done her, as I have said, is in making her a life pensioner upon her husband's estate. Some months ago A. L. L. gave a practical instance of this injustice, where an aged woman holding a dower right in a small piece of real estate, the income from which was insufficient to support her, was dependent upon private charity for maintenance, because she could not sell the land which would bring her comforts and necessities in her old age. I believe the attention of our lawmakers has but to be called to this defect to have it remedied.

A good many women make a mistake in the choice of an administrator. On an ordinary farm, where the business is neither extensive or complicated, it is for the widow's interest to be appointed administrator, and guardian of her children if necessary. In this way she can continue her husband's business and keep administrator's fees in the family, and her familiarity with her husband's personal matters renders her the most fitting person to take charge of them after his death, always providing she is not one of the helpless women who can do nothing but fold their hands and cry in an emergency. It was under such a supposition that the initial letter on "Widows" was written, and the subject was suggested by mention in a State paper of the sale by administrator of a nice little farm of eighty acres

for a trifle more than the value of the buildings upon it.

I do not think it expedient that the wife should inherit everything when there are children. True, she has helped earn the property, but should she take all and leave the children unprovided for, or dependent upon her? There are mothers whose unselfish hearts would do justice and more than justice to the children, and there are mothers who would not, except at the law's behest. And I think that when the wife dies the law should recognize the right her children have in the common property, as it does when death takes the husband. There are a great many husbands, however, who would not like the shoe to fit on that foot.

The Probate Court is, in my estimation, one of the most dignified and important of our departments of justice. Yet I have heard it condemned by very good people, who consider themselves capable of "settling up their own business," without reflecting that other men's business may be a thousand times more intricate and involved than their simple affairs, and that what is law for one must be law for all. They consider a probate court unnecessary, and an unjust tax upon a dead man's assets; yet it is easy to see that were there no legal formalities to be observed the estate might become the prey of the designing and unscrupulous, and the widow and the fatherless be defrauded. Were there no restraints creditors might take everything, leaving the survivors penniless; or the heirs might conspire to cheat the creditors. And how many families are there in a township where an estate could be settled harmoniously and satisfactorily to all, without the intervention of "the law?" People will quarrel over "dead men's shoes" who might otherwise have lived in good will all their days. The advantages of a legal settlement are that legal justice is done to all parties concerned; fraudulent claims against the estate are thrown out, the rapacity of creditors restrained; and the law, by taking cognizance of a man's death and disposing of the claims against his property, establishes the right of succession, so that a purchaser obtains that without which he will not purchase—a clear title.

Great progress has been made in the matter of woman's legal rights within the past three-quarters of a century. In old times husband and wife were one, and the husband was *the one*. Everything was his, the wife's rights existing by sufferance.



She could be put off with "the second best bed," as was Shakespeare's wife, or with no bed at all. More and more the law recognizes individual rights, and places the two partners in the marriage relation more nearly on an equality. And this is simply justice, for what is law for one ought to be for the other. Equal rights and equal responsibilities to the family before the law, would do justice to all. At present, in some respects the law favors man, in others the woman. The wife now has absolute ownership of property owned by her before marriage, or which may be afterward inherited. She is not responsible for her husband's debts, nor can her property be attached to pay them, whereas he is legally compelled to pay debts of her contracting, unless he publishes to the world that he will not. She has many rights and privileges her *foremothers* did not enjoy, among which we may name the right to retain her own personal belongings. I have read somewhere of a woman who, years ago, worked out as a servant till she had earned money to buy a set of silver teaspoons, then quite a valuable possession, for her "setting out," to use the ancient phrase. In a few years her husband died, and the spoons by law passed to her husband's heirs. She begged to be allowed to retain them, proving they were hers before marriage, but only obtained the privilege of *buying them back*. She went out to work until she had enough to pay for them again. She married the second time and was soon widowed. Again the husband's heirs claimed the silver, and for the third time this persistent woman earned and paid for her spoons. History records no further marriage, so it is fair to suppose she was at last permitted undisturbed ownership of the costly teaspoons. Happily for woman, modern civilization has brought justice, and law recognizes woman's individual rights and privileges.

BEATRIX.

### MARRIAGE.

A *Westminster Review* of recent date says the assumption that marriage offers to woman the highest development is open to question, and in support of its position points to the drawbacks that wifehood and motherhood must exert on industrial, professional and public life.

In order to controvert or substantiate the position taken, the first requisite is a definition of "highest development." Woman is capable of development in many directions. If the position to be taken is that such relations are hindrances to the highest development of woman in industrial, professional or public life, that might be granted, and yet the gravamen of the article be seriously questioned. For it might be asserted that the highest development of woman that could possibly be reached in those matters might work to her and the human race incalculable injury. There are certain employments and studies that are by all thinking persons admitted to be disastrous to the finer feelings and instincts of humanity. And say who will to the

contrary, it is difficult, if not impossible to conceive of anything purer, higher, nobler, than the instincts and sentiment, principles and action of true wifehood and motherhood.

It is assumed by the author of the *Review* article that the highest development of which woman is capable, lies in either or all of the following phases: Art, philanthropy, professional, public or industrial life. May there not be a development more worthy of her highest efforts than either or all of them? Let it first be shown that her development needs or necessitates either, or a majority of them, understanding those terms in their usual sense.

Woman's development must bend to the universal law that only in accord with the nature of the material is there, or can there be, any true development at all. Not only is this true, but when there are many possibilities and leanings in different directions, and some appear to be contrary, one to the other, that is the true development that seizes on the more natural and most numerous of those possibilities and leads them to their best uses. So it may be safely asserted that any development that omits what is *prima facie* the most material facts in woman's nature, viz., that without wifehood, no motherhood ought to exist, and that without motherhood no humanity is possible; and the further facts that her best and purest relationship, her noblest sentiments and tenderest instincts all are found clustering round those two primal conditions of her existence; it may be safely asserted of any scheme that omits, or denies, or ignores, or makes possible even a general condition of abandonment of those fundamental facts, that it is utterly unworthy of consideration, much less of adoption.

Unless creative power so misunderstood the dual nature of humanity as to make the correlative duties of the sexes interchangeable, ambiguous, or contradictory, their highest development may be in entirely different and uninterchangeable planes, and yet be entirely and exactly complementary. To assume that they are in the same plane, and then to argue that only in woman does marriage demand that every thought, talent and project be subordinated to its overwhelming duties, while in man marriage may confer gain and impetus that makes his development to a higher plane an irresistible conclusion, may be rhetorical, but certainly is not a logical course. Nor is it logical to assume that married life does not afford woman elements of health equally with unmarried life. In the present plan of social economies this is a question of vital statistics, unsolved. The correct statement of the question is, "What would woman be if from childhood her physical development was properly directed in the way of her future wifely and motherly character?" Is it not the experience of every practical physician, that his female patients have been studiously developed away from, and kept ignorant of, the simplest and most universal features of their future woman-

hood? Again, to assume that unwifehood and unmotherhood enables a woman to command for herself conditions of healthy development superior to those of her married sisters, is to accuse the Creator of ordering an unjustifiable institution; giving the disobedient the rewards of obedience, and making the perpetuity of humanity a curse to her who obeys the injunction of both her nature and her God. "Multiply and replenish the earth," was God's first command. That too many act as though it was the only one, could scarcely be fairly charged to our present American civilization. That the number of unmarried women increases voluntarily is no more an argument against wife and motherhood, than that criminals increase in the same manner is against good morals and uprightness. The argument against immorality and crime drawn from the rights and necessities of society can never be so strong as the argument against unwifehood and unmotherhood, drawn from the very existence of that society. That the duties and trammels of marriage are gain and impetus to a man, but necessitate injury and restriction to woman, is in the highest degree fallacious. It is only the lawful obedience to the Creator's behests that brings peace, happiness, and the conditions where upward development is possible.

There is a cultivation like that practised by Chinese horticulturists, that dwarfs and mimifies, and alters the courses of nature; but whoever wants a development like that, or would even dignify it by that name? The oak or the pine that grows toweringly above our heads is developed; the stunted twisted growth that is but a stumbling block, a snare to the feet, is a dwarfed and blasted specimen of a noble relationship. If nature did not intend that wifehood and motherhood should be the primal order and fact of woman's life, it did make all life hinge upon that fact and order.

Can it be possible that obedience to the law of her womanhood, to the supremest instincts of a noble motherhood, can do her a wrong by hindering her highest development? Society may pet that perverted, dwarfed, hardened, unwomanly nature that has smothered her instincts, hardened her heart, crushed the hopes of her early life, changed herself as much as possible into the likeness of the "man around town," and call that childless dwarf, that from choice and education is out of God's order, a developed woman. The lover of his kind will call her a monstrosity. Such things occur in nature, but to what end? It may be that there is a moral beauty to me unseen in the childless arms of a loveless old maid, or the lonesome life of a withered old bachelor. If unmarried womanhood is brought into fashion, bachelorhood, its twin monstrosity, must keep pace with it. Admit that the tastes of the single woman are various and refined, and superior opportunities for culture are hers above her married sister, then let all, like good sensible women, covet earnestly the best gifts of single life, and try the experiment fo



one half century. Let every woman-child from this first of January be thus developed into a higher, free, untrammelled life, a society life, an art life, public life, professional life, industrial life or any other life you please but the wife and mother life, and then what?

The final argument of the writer of the article is that such a being developed out of her sex, into a lover of art and philanthropy, of trade and public life, of professional success and industrial achievements might protect the weak and defend the poor; and from the stronghold of her own happiness fill the empty place in the world's history, of a loving and tender woman, armed with official power to redress the wrongs of women and the injuries inflicted upon children. Having manufactured his nondescript, for no woman ever made her, and put it into official place and power, let us see how now the case stands. Axioms are not confined to the pure mathematics. "He who would do good must himself be good." "Who keeps fat oxen should himself be fat," is only a parody on an admitted fact. She who would make good wives of others should herself be wed. He who in his actions and teaching brought to man the greatest remedial power, the purest light and the grandest example, whose presence blessed the marriage rites and confirmed the institution by his decree "what God has joined together let no man put asunder," is represented to us as able to succor and help suffering man, because "He himself was tempted in all points like unto themselves." But here is a woman educated to a higher plane, unblest with children, who feels the anxieties and care of maternal love, a spinster who knows nothing of the joys or sorrow of wifedom, who is to be the adjuster of wifely wrongs. Like the protection the poor get from the selfishly rich, would be the guardianship wifedom and childhood might expect from a sister developed so highly above them.

NEWAYGO.

#### A HOUSEKEEPING REFORM NEEDED.

Aunt Bessie asks: "Shall I treat my friends with apparent coldness, or urge them to visit me when I know that I cannot have my house in order, or the desired amount of pie and cake in my cupboard?" If they are friends they will probably enjoy their visit, even though the cook-stove is unblackened, the zinc unwashed, and the baby's playthings are scattered over the floor. They will relish their simple meal, if it is well cooked, with never a sigh for mince-pie or fruit-cake; much preferring the meal gotten up with the least possible break in the conversation, to the one that would keep their hostess all the time rushing around to cook something extra for the occasion. If instead of friends they are merely acquaintances, who come more to "spy out the land," and see how you keep your house and how much of a meal you are capable of preparing on short notice, they will probably go away saying

"Just as I told you! school-teachers don't make very good housekeepers." Or, as a neighbor of mine said to me once: "No woman who reads any ever makes a good housekeeper." This is her honest opinion, as it is that of many women whose aim in life is to be called "housekeepers." This name covers more sins than charity in their estimation, and indeed they use little charity in their judgment of others, and condemn all who are found wanting in house or larder. But because of my neighbor's freely expressed opinion, it does not follow that I should give up my books and papers that I may have time to clean up my paint just so often, or keep pie and cake in my cupboard. So long as I supply my family with plain, wholesome food, and keep things clean enough to make them comfortable, I decline to enter the list of model housekeepers. "It takes all sorts of people to make up the world," so I may as well be of the class that suits me best. I think housekeeping is something in which there is much room for reform. Women wear out their bodies, and starve and dwarf their minds in the endless struggle with dirt and the desire to set as good a table as their neighbors, and what is gained? Are their husbands more comfortable, or their children as healthy as if they sat down to a dinner of well cooked meat and vegetable, good bread and butter, a very simple pudding or, better still, fruit, fresh or canned? I think all would enjoy such meals, especially as they would be more likely to have the wife and mother in good spirits and good temper. The woman does far better who keeps herself fresh and strong, who takes the time for the full enjoyment of home and family, even though her sheets are never ironed, or her paint not washed oftener than once in three months; better than she who cultivates an "eye for dirt" and spends her life fighting it.

We have had reform movements of many kinds; cannot some in the ranks of intelligent women start a table reform? Let us have such a reform that we may venture to invite a friend or two to tea, or to spend the day, without feeling it necessary to spend all the time we can get for two days beforehand in cooking. As things now are, we are usually so tired and worn out by the time our visitor arrives, as to wish her safely at home while we retire to a lounge or easy chair to read and knit instead of trying to be polite and entertaining. But the editor will consign me to oblivion and the waste basket if I talk longer, so I will close with the hope of hearing the opinion of others on this subject.

Kewanee, Illinois.

#### REMEDY FOR CATARRH.

I have been a silent listener in the Household for a long time, gleaning the good things that have appeared from week to week, and being strengthened and encouraged by "words in season." I now come to the front to respond to Angeline, as I have been a sufferer from catarrh for nearly thirty years, and tried remedies

recommended by kind and sympathizing friends, but have recently decided that for me there is no lasting benefit except in a strict diet. For breakfast and dinner eat sparingly of bread, or toast and butter and vegetables (I would except onions and cabbages,) and little or no animal food; drink very little or nothing. Omit the supper entirely, and just before going to bed drink copiously of hot water, a cup or more if you can without producing nausea. The water may be sweetened if preferred; I like it better without. Please try this one week, and if it relieves you perhaps you may be encouraged to persevere until a permanent cure is effected. You may use local remedies, but they only afford a temporary relief; they do not strike at the "root of the matter."

In regard to the education of our girls, a paragraph in a recent number of the *Youth's Companion* attracted my attention, and I thought it worth repeating in the Household for fear that it might escape the notice of many good mothers; "How many of our girl readers of fifteen can make bread or cake which anybody could eat? Do they know how to make their own beds, or lay a table properly?" Here is food for thought. HOPE.

HILLSDALE.

#### IN FAVOR OF RAG CARPETS.

The question of rag carpets has been discussed some time, and I do not like to have them abused. A. H. J. thinks it is time and toil thrown away to make one, but I do not agree with her. If we tear up a garment when worn out, and sew the rags, put the ball away in a bag hung in the garret, and keep doing so until we wish to make a carpet, we will be astonished to see how many rags we have, and wonder when we sewed them. As for the dyeing of rags, we can get good dyes at any drug store that will not be much trouble, if the directions which are printed on the wrapper are followed to the letter.

That friend of A. H. J.'s, who went visiting without her wash-rag, had better put her thinking cap on next time and take one with her.

The ingrain carpet she speaks of must have been made of better material than the most of them, or else laid in the spare room, to last twenty years and be "good for many more." I can find none that wear like it.

I am much pleased with the Household and find many things that help.

Will some one please send the Household a lace pattern that will be nice to trim a cambric dress, as I should like one. If this does not find the waste basket I will come again. ZIP.

SALINE.

#### SUNDRY ITEMS.

It seems that the "Household Baby," is of an inquiring turn of mind, and can already ask questions very difficult to answer. Is the later comer, who has disjoined her nose, of the same persuasion, and is this one, too, donated to the Household? There is a little "Robert John



stone," grandson of the late lamented chief editor, whom I propose for membership. Who will say "aye?" No "noes" will be counted. If received, as of course he will be, we will call upon Beatrix for a word painting of the darling, and instruct her to keep us all posted on his advancement and achievements.

I have pleasant out-door parlors; we sometimes serve lunch there, but when it comes to tea we surrender to the predatory fly and retire behind the friendly screen. The "gude mon" sometimes essays a nap there on a fine summer day, but it generally ends in a sneeze, as some adventurous insect undertakes to explore the nasal cavity or aural orifice.

If my little boy should "dip the kitty clear to the tip of his tail" in a pail of water, I think if I was near, he would have the experience to the tip of his toes, if it caused him a sob in place of a laugh. I think such good-natured but practical teachings of "how good it feels," would improve his manners and teach him duty in a manner he would not soon forget. Practice, I find, is better than precept. Obedience is the first and best lesson, taught with love.

A. L. L.

INGLESIDE.

#### POOR SCHOOL WORK.

Said a teacher in one of our schools not long since of a new pupil from out of town who had just entered her classes: "I asked her how far advanced she was in arithmetic; and she said she had been 'clean through' —'s arithmetic; in grammar, and she had been 'clean through' —'s grammar; in spelling, and she had been 'clean through' the speller." Yet when I came to examine her in respect to actual attainments, I found it necessary to send her to a far lower grade than she had expected to enter, much to her disappointment. She had been over the ground times enough, but with such want of thoroughness that it must all be gone over again." This is the one serious charge brought against our district schools. *They are not thorough.* Educational progress in any direction is barred without due understanding of fundamental principles. As well build a house on shifting sands as get an education without thorough knowledge of primary principles. Most of our country schools attempt only elementary branches; it really seems as if proficiency and thoroughness might be attained. Great good might be secured if teachers of country schools were informed of the methods and requirements of higher schools, and herein lies one great advantage of securing teachers, who have been educated for their work. It is wofully disheartening to pupils who go away from home to school, expecting to take up new and advanced studies, to be obliged to go over the old text-books, in which they believed themselves proficient, because they have not been well and thoroughly taught. It is discouraging to parents who are making sacrifices and practicing self denial, if not going into debt, to give their children an education, to pay a round

sum for board and tuition while the children are being taught what they should by right have learned in the little old schoolhouse at home. There is no royal road in learning, and ambitious young people are reminded that when they enter a foreign school their examination will begin at the simple elementary branches, and that correct spelling and grammar and legible penmanship, with ready and accurate knowledge of first principles will set them further up in percent of scholarship that to have been "clean through" many text-books, with but inaccurate knowledge of their "true inwardness."

B.

#### THE FARMER SEWING MACHINE.

One more Christmas has come and gone. How rapidly time flies! Looking back to the last Christmas it seems but such a short time. What changes the year has brought to many; what changes there may be to us before another year comes is hard to tell. What a blessing that we are ignorant of the future; our troubles come fast enough without our being warned beforehand; or meeting them part way.

I have seen one answer to L. F.'s inquiry about the FARMER sewing machine. have one; got it one year ago, (a New Year's present from my husband,) and I'm happy to say it has given the best of satisfaction. Every one who has seen it, (some have tried it,) thinks it such a bargain. To all wanting a sewing machine, I do say I don't think they can do better; and as for the MICHIGAN FARMER, I know they can't. We have taken it for many years, in fact, ever since the *Western Rural* left Detroit, so I know of what I speak.

MINNIE M.

WHITE LAKE.

#### HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

A LADY writes to the *Gardeners' Monthly* that having a large quantity of small onions to prepare for pickling, she avoided the pain and discomfort arising from their pungent odor, by peeling them under water. She filled her dishpan with water, took one onion at a time into it, leaving the debris in the water till incommoded by its quantity, and found what is usually most unpleasant work, no trouble at all.

THERE are many ladies who are troubled with corns, bunions and chilblains to an extent which makes it almost impossible for them to bear the restraint of a leather boot. When they sit down to rest it is not rest unless the boots can be slipped off and then some is sure to want something that only mother can get "right away, quick," and she goes in stocking feet and likely enough catches cold. A pair of cloth moccasins are a great comfort in such cases. Take some pieces of heavy, strong cloth, cut a sole the size and shape of the shoe sole, a "front" modeled after the front part of the shoe, cut to come well up across the instep, the back of the moccasin being a straight

strip. Bind the top with a bit of braid. They cost only the trouble of making, and are very easy on the feet; not particularly handsome, but comfortable.

#### Contributed Recipes.

FRIED CAKES.—Two cups sugar, two eggs, two cups buttermilk, one cup sour cream, two teaspoonfuls soda, a pinch of salt, half a teaspoonful of allspice. Mix soft. They are splendid.

SALINE.

ZIP.

FRIED CAKES.—One cup sugar, one cup cream, one cup buttermilk, three eggs, one teaspoonful of soda, a little salt; fry in hot lard. If you have no cream, use another cup of buttermilk and five tablespoonfuls of melted butter or lard.

Mrs. R. D. P.

BROOKLYN.

SOFT GINGER CAKE.—One large cup molasses, one egg, about two-thirds of a cup sour cream (not too thick,) one even teaspoonful of soda and same quantity of ginger. Stir a little stiffer than for sponge cake. Bake quick. The same cake with cloves, allspice, cinnamon and nutmeg if you wish makes a good dark part for "marble cake," and the light part is called

SNOWBALL CAKE.—One cup white sugar, whites of three egg, half cup butter, half cup sweet milk, two teaspoonfuls cream tartar, and one of soda, or the same amount of baking powder, flour to make just right.

HOPE.

HILLSDALE.

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