

COMMON SENSE in the HOME

EDITED by MARION HARLAND

IN THE HEART OF THE HEATED TERM

I DO NOT know who said first: "As a general rule of application, we get out of life what we put into it."

I do know that, as a sound truism, it holds its own in all ages and everywhere, exceptions but establishing the rule.

The book of books said it before our proverb maker was born:

"Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he reap."

Somewhere replied to my quotation of the text, that "it gives a gloomy tinge to life." That depends upon the seed one puts into the ground. So far from discouraging us who are braving the "heated term" and all it implies, it may bring comfort. I am not disputing the fact that hot weather begets irritation of temper and impatience with existing conditions of which we would be ashamed at other seasons. The dog days are recognized by magistrates and police as the carnival of crime. You see the words in flaring "scare heads" upon the outer pages of newspapers in the dull season for news. It is their trade to make the most of the fragments of sensational stuff they can pick up, but the stories have a substratum of truth. Children find it harder to "be good" when prickly heat burns the tender little like living fire and flies tickle and mosquitoes sting and the very nights are too hot for sleep. There are sections of the large cities where the stray pedestrian, driven from his bedroom by the heat, stumbles over scores of half-naked boys and girls lying prone upon sidewalks baked through by the day's sun, yet preferable to the airless ovens which are the dormitories of the very poor.

Is it strange that tortured bodies should hold desperate and maddened souls? Let me press home one thought in this connection before leaving the slums few of my respectable constituency know except from reports of the police courts—greivous reading in the hot evenings. The noblest mission that has sprung into flower and fruit within the last quarter century is the Fresh-Air Society organized in every Christian community. As a beginning in the work of keeping comfortable within and without just now, subscribe to the extent of your ability to the fund raised in your neighborhood for getting those children and their mothers into God's country for a few days of weeks. "God's country!" The phrase is never more apt than during the summer solstice. That is one sure way of putting into life what it should get out of it.

Settling down to the immediate neighborhood of each of us—our own families and homes—let us consider rational methods of keeping cool and making our little world tolerable, though torrid.

The supreme advantages of early rising are not appreciated with us as they are at the far east or in southern Europe. Tourists who have been in Naples and Rome in August are struck with the silence of the deserted thoroughfares for three or four hours of the day.

Since it is confessedly too hot to do one's best work in the scorching hours that directly precede and follow the fervid noon, find out by actual experience what excellent work one can do in the freshest part of a summer's day. If—as I regret to say is more than probable—you cannot, all at once, convert your family from the errors of late morning naps and 8 o'clock breakfasts, do not deprive yourself of the blessings attendant upon rising with or before the sun.

Have your bath at leisure, as might not be later, unless you have a bathroom for each bedroom. Dress as you will like to be dressed when the sun climbs to the zenith; have your quiet morning reading and devotions, and stay the physical inner woman with a glass of cold tea or milk and a slice of bread and butter. Never begin the daily task until you have fortified digestion against weariness and faintness. According to my calculation, based upon the experience to which I alluded just now, you have still a full hour to yourself before the uninitiated sleepers will be ready to take hold of life. One woman I know does all her "solid" reading in that hour secured as her private property. Another takes it for the family mending and other sewing. Another "does up" her correspondence, writing with freedom and heart she could get at no other time. A third—a notable housewife—puts up all her jellies and pickles before breakfast and has two hours of well-earned rest in the middle of the day.

Whether you follow my advice as to

early rising, or prefer to lie in bed until what you spoke of to me last week as "a decent hour for sensible Christians to be astir," take the rest of the working day easily. A dozen years ago I wrote a Talk to Housemothers upon "The Fine Art of Shighing." If ever this may be practiced conscientiously, it is during the heated term. As soon as the house is in order for the next twelve hours, have windows closed and shades lowered to keep for noontide uses the fresh air thus imprisoned. Air every room and hall throughout the night and until after the sun has cleared the horizon; then hoard what you have gained. Light and heat are inseparable all summer. Cleanliness, darkness and shadow are the blessed three whose presence is indispensable to a tolerable degree of comfort. Let bustle and hustle be not so much as named among you. If your cook be so far an exception to the rank and file that she will consent to use an oil stove for preparing the midday meal and let the range fire go out after the breakfast things are washed, happy are you among housemothers. If, like the great majority of otherwise exemplary hirelings, she "can't be bothered to" avail herself of the heat and worry and labor saver, don't make things worse for yourself by fretting over her stupidity and obstinacy. Convince her as little cooking done in the noon hours as is compatible with the orderly sequence of family meals. And keep out of the hot kitchen as much as you can. Give all the orders for three meals directly after breakfast. Settle in your own mind just what these shall be before you enter upon the inspection of refrigerator and pantry. Let "moderation in all things" be your watchword. Put into your daily walk and conversation what you would like to get out of it. Better be a little too easygoing while the dog star is raging than overstrut. To this end avoid heated discussions upon what-never topic. Quarrels are the chief cause of the carnival of crime. Shun and discourage, tactfully, complaints about the weather. If ever the homely saw, "What can't be cured must be endured," should be taken into hourly use, it is with regard to this same weather. Have I ever quoted here the definition of the difference between the pessimist and the optimist? The pessimist groans, "How tired I am!" The optimist sighs

upward, comment upon the grateful cool darkness of the house and congratulate yourself and companions upon the circumstances that you can stay indoors.

As a child I committed to memory Dr. Watts' "Divine Songs and Hymns for Children." Two lines of one of these used to comfort me infinitely when, toiling over my slate and long division through the August noon, I saw from the vine-draped window of the schoolroom the farm hands hoeing corn in the distant field:

It was not born a little slave
To labor in the sun.

The whole hymn is a thanksgiving for divers mercies. That one mercy appealed most powerfully to me even then. I do not blush to confess that it rings in my ears this minute as I hearken to the teasing, well-nigh maddening iteration of the seventeen-year locusts' cry in the grove nearest my window, intensifying the sense of August heats.

Look persistently at the bright side (in summer that is really the shady side) of life. First, make yourself contented. Then, study calmly "without haste, without rest," how to conduce to the comfort and bring about the contentment of others. Be thankful continually that you were not "born a little slave" and that "the bed feels no good."

Plan cold dishes for luncheon and for supper that combine nourishment with coolness. As I have said many times, do not favor meals in which there is not at least one hot dish. Preface luncheon by a cup of good soup—it be it broth or bouillon—well prepared, digestion, aided by heat, for what is to follow. Iced beverages are grateful to the system, but inordinate draughts of these render the nerves and coat of the stomach into inactivity. What follows the chill will not be readily assimilated. Now and then substitute iced tea for hot. Some persons cannot do this habitually without suffering from it. Large draughts

of iced water are a gastronomic crime. To drink iced liquids or eat frozen foods when one is heated throughout is to risk illness and death.

Impress these grave truths upon your children. Every boy appreciates the prudence of wetting his head before plunging into the water for a swim. Make him comprehend the equal prudence of drinking cold water in slow sips when he is overheated, and his throat, as he would put it, in "as dry as a gaven image." Forbid him positively explaining the need of the prohibition to gulp down ice cream soda "to cool him off" after exercise that has brought him, purple and perspiring, to the soda fountain counter. Counsel both boys and girls not to eat or drink anything when exhausted by heat and work or play. In the dog days the words often mean one and the same thing. Also to wash in warm water rather than cold while getting cool and rested enough to partake of food with safety.

It would startle some of us to learn how great a percentage of diseases supposed to be incidental to the hot weather, because of the heat, are brought on by gross neglect of precautions which one might imagine are known and observed by every person of common intelligence. We cast blame upon the mercury which should rest upon our careless selves. If we took as much pains to shield ourselves from excessive heat and to accommodate clothing, houses and habits of living to the higher temperature that we take in winter to avoid taking cold, we should cease to talk of "summer complaints."

Yet our judicious mother does not make mince pies in warm weather, and excludes pastries from the nursery menu while the thermometer spells "danger" by chronicling the nineties. Cornmeal is laxative; blackberries are slightly astringent; ripe peaches are more wholesome than summer apples; cabbage is too gross for stomachs enervated by heat; tomatoes are cooling to blood and digestive organs; all salads are not equally digestible, and new potatoes, like green apples, are poison to young stomachs and not wholesome for adults.

I could run the "line out till crack of doom" were I to try to enumerate ways and means of breaking nature's laws. The dear old stepdame is really no more inimical to humankind in the dog days than in bland, benignant and beautiful October. She will be obeyed more strictly—that is all. Perhaps her temper and moods, like ours, are a bit more fractious then.

Finally, keep cool, within and without, and give diligent heed to hot-weather advice by Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, food expert of the department of agriculture:

Don't take up any food fads.
Eat whatever you want, but don't overdo it.
Subsist on a mixed diet. All this talk about vegetables or fruits alone being a panacea makes me sick.
Don't drink ice-cold concoctions.
"Full many a youth has gone to his esophagus"
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A third—a notable housewife—puts up all her jellies and pickles before breakfast and has two hours of well-earned rest in the middle of the day.

Whether you follow my advice as to

early rising, or prefer to lie in bed until what you spoke of to me last week as "a decent hour for sensible Christians to be astir," take the rest of the working day easily. A dozen years ago I wrote a Talk to Housemothers upon "The Fine Art of Shighing." If ever this may be practiced conscientiously, it is during the heated term. As soon as the house is in order for the next twelve hours, have windows closed and shades lowered to keep for noontide uses the fresh air thus imprisoned. Air every room and hall throughout the night and until after the sun has cleared the horizon; then hoard what you have gained. Light and heat are inseparable all summer. Cleanliness, darkness and shadow are the blessed three whose presence is indispensable to a tolerable degree of comfort. Let bustle and hustle be not so much as named among you. If your cook be so far an exception to the rank and file that she will consent to use an oil stove for preparing the midday meal and let the range fire go out after the breakfast things are washed, happy are you among housemothers. If, like the great majority of otherwise exemplary hirelings, she "can't be bothered to" avail herself of the heat and worry and labor saver, don't make things worse for yourself by fretting over her stupidity and obstinacy. Convince her as little cooking done in the noon hours as is compatible with the orderly sequence of family meals. And keep out of the hot kitchen as much as you can. Give all the orders for three meals directly after breakfast. Settle in your own mind just what these shall be before you enter upon the inspection of refrigerator and pantry. Let "moderation in all things" be your watchword. Put into your daily walk and conversation what you would like to get out of it. Better be a little too easygoing while the dog star is raging than overstrut. To this end avoid heated discussions upon what-never topic. Quarrels are the chief cause of the carnival of crime. Shun and discourage, tactfully, complaints about the weather. If ever the homely saw, "What can't be cured must be endured," should be taken into hourly use, it is with regard to this same weather. Have I ever quoted here the definition of the difference between the pessimist and the optimist? The pessimist groans, "How tired I am!" The optimist sighs

upward, comment upon the grateful cool darkness of the house and congratulate yourself and companions upon the circumstances that you can stay indoors.

As a child I committed to memory Dr. Watts' "Divine Songs and Hymns for Children." Two lines of one of these used to comfort me infinitely when, toiling over my slate and long division through the August noon, I saw from the vine-draped window of the schoolroom the farm hands hoeing corn in the distant field:

It was not born a little slave
To labor in the sun.

The whole hymn is a thanksgiving for divers mercies. That one mercy appealed most powerfully to me even then. I do not blush to confess that it rings in my ears this minute as I hearken to the teasing, well-nigh maddening iteration of the seventeen-year locusts' cry in the grove nearest my window, intensifying the sense of August heats.

Look persistently at the bright side (in summer that is really the shady side) of life. First, make yourself contented. Then, study calmly "without haste, without rest," how to conduce to the comfort and bring about the contentment of others. Be thankful continually that you were not "born a little slave" and that "the bed feels no good."

Plan cold dishes for luncheon and for supper that combine nourishment with coolness. As I have said many times, do not favor meals in which there is not at least one hot dish. Preface luncheon by a cup of good soup—it be it broth or bouillon—well prepared, digestion, aided by heat, for what is to follow. Iced beverages are grateful to the system, but inordinate draughts of these render the nerves and coat of the stomach into inactivity. What follows the chill will not be readily assimilated. Now and then substitute iced tea for hot. Some persons cannot do this habitually without suffering from it. Large draughts

of iced water are a gastronomic crime. To drink iced liquids or eat frozen foods when one is heated throughout is to risk illness and death.

Impress these grave truths upon your children. Every boy appreciates the prudence of wetting his head before plunging into the water for a swim. Make him comprehend the equal prudence of drinking cold water in slow sips when he is overheated, and his throat, as he would put it, in "as dry as a gaven image." Forbid him positively explaining the need of the prohibition to gulp down ice cream soda "to cool him off" after exercise that has brought him, purple and perspiring, to the soda fountain counter. Counsel both boys and girls not to eat or drink anything when exhausted by heat and work or play. In the dog days the words often mean one and the same thing. Also to wash in warm water rather than cold while getting cool and rested enough to partake of food with safety.

It would startle some of us to learn how great a percentage of diseases supposed to be incidental to the hot weather, because of the heat, are brought on by gross neglect of precautions which one might imagine are known and observed by every person of common intelligence. We cast blame upon the mercury which should rest upon our careless selves. If we took as much pains to shield ourselves from excessive heat and to accommodate clothing, houses and habits of living to the higher temperature that we take in winter to avoid taking cold, we should cease to talk of "summer complaints."

Yet our judicious mother does not make mince pies in warm weather, and excludes pastries from the nursery menu while the