

Men, We Got a Racket! Don't Take Over Chores of the Little Woman Around Home

BY OTTO E. STRUM
United Press Correspondent

New York—U.P.—Men, I hate to say this—but don't let it get around—but we've got a racket.

When the little woman murmurs "Women's work is never done" take her word for it. If she yaks "Any time you want to stay home and take care of the house and let me go to work etc. etc.," don't walk, to the nearest exit.

What gives me the authority to dish out this advice? My wife Mag's broken arm, that's what. I had some vacation coming when Mag had her mishap and decided to take it then. That was the end of 20 years of blissful ignorance of what the other half

of the marriage contract does for a living.

My housemaid's knees and dishpan hands will go away, I suppose. But will I ever be the same again? I don't know. I just don't know.

Take Carol's braids, for instance. Carol, 7, unlike Albert, 12, likes to go to school. But to go to school, she had to have her long brown hair braided.

Rope Splicer

Men, do you know what it is

to braid a little girl's hair for the first time? It's appalling, that's what it is. Unless, maybe, you happen to be a rope splicer.

Well, while Mag directed and Carol screamed and Albert laughed, I did my fumble-fingered best. The finished product, when I finally put the clips on the pigtails and breathed again, was pretty sad.

After a few days of this, and expecting a note from Carol's teacher saying something about

child neglect, I stepped into a neighborhood barber shop and said "Joe, could you cut my little girl's hair?" He could and he did and everybody was happy.

Odd Job

The braids were the most dramatic, but only a small part of my blitz education in male housewifery. Under Mag's supervision, I make breakfast, fixed the kids' lunch, drove them to school, did the dishes, picked up the kids' wreckage of the night

before, made beds (you "just pull 'em together" when in a hurry), fixed lunch, more dishes, went to stores, got the kids from school, fixed dinner, cajoled and browbeat the kids into doing their homework and taking baths, more dishes, etc.

After a few days, Mag tried working the washing machine one-handed. That added hanging wash to my accomplishments.

Extra Cleaning Days

I learned we have extra-clean-

ing days at our house every week. Thursday, the kitchen, bathroom and back porch floors are scrubbed rather than given a lick and promise. Friday is general vacuuming day when the furniture is moved and you find the apple cores and candy wrappers discarded by the kids while watching television.

I learned and learned and now I know I'll never come home again and ask airily, "What've you been doing all day, honey?"

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Is That So?

By Eugene Burns
Ranger-Naturalist

Fish are far from humdrum, their unexpected marvels startle the imagination. For example, did you know that there is a fish which shoots its victim out of the trees? Another that has a gizzard, much like a bird's? One that can walk overland? Another that breeds its young in the mouth?

To begin, the grunion along the southern California beaches is regularly caught with the bare hands—on land, yet! During the high tides of summer this fish comes out of the ocean to lay its eggs high up in the sand. The eggs remain in the moist sand until the next series of extra-high tides when they are uncovered. Then within a couple of minutes, the young hatch and are carried out to sea by the next high wave. A marvelous adjustment, and exact timing!

The striped mullet has a gizzard, very similar to that found in birds, where its plant food is ground up by the action of thick muscular walls covered inside with a horny lining. In addition, its intestine is extraordinarily long for a fish and coiled, permitting complete digestion and absorption.

The archer fish shoots down insects from branches with well-directed missiles—water bullets. Swimming near the surface, the archer sights its prey and takes careful aim and lets fly a squirt of water drops from its mouth. What's more, up to distances of four feet out of water, the archer is almost 100 per cent accurate. Large specimens, up to 10 inches long, can squirt water "bullets" up to 12 feet.

The climbing perch of South-eastern Asia can not only live out of water for a day but can also travel overland by extending their gill covers out to the side. With these, they hobble along as on crutches, covering about 300 feet in 30 minutes. As its name implies, it can climb trees . . . but seldom does so.

Consider the complicated home-life of the fish-pecked black-chinned mouth-breeder. In a courtship usually attributed to higher animals, male and female nod their heads, puff out their throats, quiver, chase, nip, slap each other with their tails—the female usually taking the aggressive.

Then as spawning approaches, a nest is scooped out of the sand. Shortly after the female lays her 50 or so large eggs, the male fertilizes them and then picks them up with his mouth. If he inclined to delay, the female nips him violently and slaps him vigorously with her tail. If he is a small male with a small mouth and eggs are left over, she will take them into her mouth. Generally the eggs hatch in a matter of five days but the young are retained in the mouth up to two weeks longer. Once they are released the cares of parenthood are over, and the adults have their first food, perhaps, in three weeks.

Off our Pacific Coast, the sea perch bears its young alive. In fact the young of the shiner sea perch are born in such an advanced state of maturity that within two days of birth the young male are courting and mating!

Most animals may pause and rest sometimes but not so the adult Atlantic mackerel. Should it stop swimming it would suffocate for it requires a continuous flow of fresh water to keep its blood supplied with oxygen. During the day, the Atlantic mackerel travels in schools numbering in thousands; during dark nights, these schools break up.

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