

Across the Editor's Desk

NOT long ago I was entertained in a charming Philadelphia home. The man of the house works hard all day. Whenever he has spare time he hunts or plays golf. He is a broad-shouldered fellow, more than 6 feet tall, and weighs at least 225 pounds. "What a corking football player he must have been," is a natural thought when you meet him.

He had come home with a quart of fine, fresh oysters and announced that he was going to get dinner. He did just that, making the most delicious stew you could imagine.

This man is more than an incidental character in America today. He is a genuine symbol. We are rapidly getting rid of a foolish old taboo—a tradition that is as silly as any the South Sea Islanders ever had. That taboo, in the past, prescribed that men should keep out of the kitchen and garden, and leave the interests and activities there to their wives. Nothing to it but superstition.

Did you ever stop to think of this fact: Under the developing economic conditions, the home is bound to become more and more the center of living, as the office, shop, or workroom yield some of the hours they have hitherto demanded.

This means that more time will be spent in the home by the man of the house. He is becoming more and more a homemaker, a guide, and a co-worker in rearing a family. Men now know infinitely more about nutrition, vitamins, calories, and other phases of cookery than they used to know. They know more about flowers and shrubs and trees and Nature in general. They know more about child psychology and the health-training of their youngsters. The foolish, antiquated, and entirely unreasonable taboo has been lifted. It is just as masculine to cook a stew or divide perennials as it is to write something on a piece of paper or sell merchandise.

The man who is to be thoroly up-to-date in 1940 should know a lot about domestic and family affairs. He should be a thoro gardener. He should be adjusted to the new age, which unquestionably calls for greater and more serious attention to the development of home and the things of the home and garden and outdoor interests.

Meredith Publishing Company

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Editorial Offices: 1714 Locust Street, Des Moines, Iowa. Manuscripts submitted to the magazine must be accompanied by postage for their return, else we cannot be responsible for them. Letters to The Junior Garden Clubs of America, which organization is sponsored by *Better Homes & Gardens*, should also be sent to this address.

Advertising Branch Offices: New York City, 122 East Forty-second St.; Philadelphia, 133 So. Twelfth St.; Chicago, 919 No. Michigan Ave.; St. Louis, 1411 Syndicate Bldg.; Minneapolis, 535 Palace Bldg.; San Francisco, 530 Russ Bldg.

Subscription: 60 cents a year; two years, \$1.15. At news stands, \$2 a year; other countries, \$1.50. Entered as second-class matter at the post office in Des Moines, Iowa, under act of Congress, March 3, 1879. Copyrighted by the Meredith Publishing Company, 1934. United States and Canada. Trademarks for *Better Homes & Gardens* have been registered in the United States and Canada.

BETTER HOMES & GARDENS, April, 1934

PROCRASTINATION stealthily and clandestinely abstracts our precious time to our unutterable ultimate discomfiture and disgruntlement as we nonchalantly perambulate and promenade along the diminishing dimensions of our mundane transience; in other words, if we put things off too long, it gums up the works. The answer to this puzzle is on page 74.

YOU have always shown interest in the "inside news" from this office, so I am going to tell you that we are now putting large sums of additional money into paper, improving the quality without bringing about the glare to which some people object. How does it strike you?

AND here comes a letter from Arthur Brisbane, well-known editor, who says, "I agree with you that interest in flowers is an indication of civilization." Gradually the scene changes. More and more we all realize that the things of the home are the most important, in an economic as well as in a social and spiritual sense.

YOU know this is written several weeks ahead of publication date. But even now, with occasional snow-flakes flying, I find myself making eyes at the garden, wondering how that new hoe will work, and how it would look to move the iris border to another place.

When I come home at night I smell the pleasant, pungent odor of burning dead grass, the result of some of the neighbors' forethought. The hardy cardinals whistle and seem to wait for a robin's answer. There is a faint stir of life in the sod and in the sheltered places under the trees. Young boys at quiet dusk call to each other with that peculiar falsetto yodel which, perhaps because of some primitive urge, is heard only in the early months. All Nature seems poised for the curtain signal in that greatest of Nature's dramas—the coming of spring. Everywhere are the quiet, mystical calls and the living symbolism of Easter.

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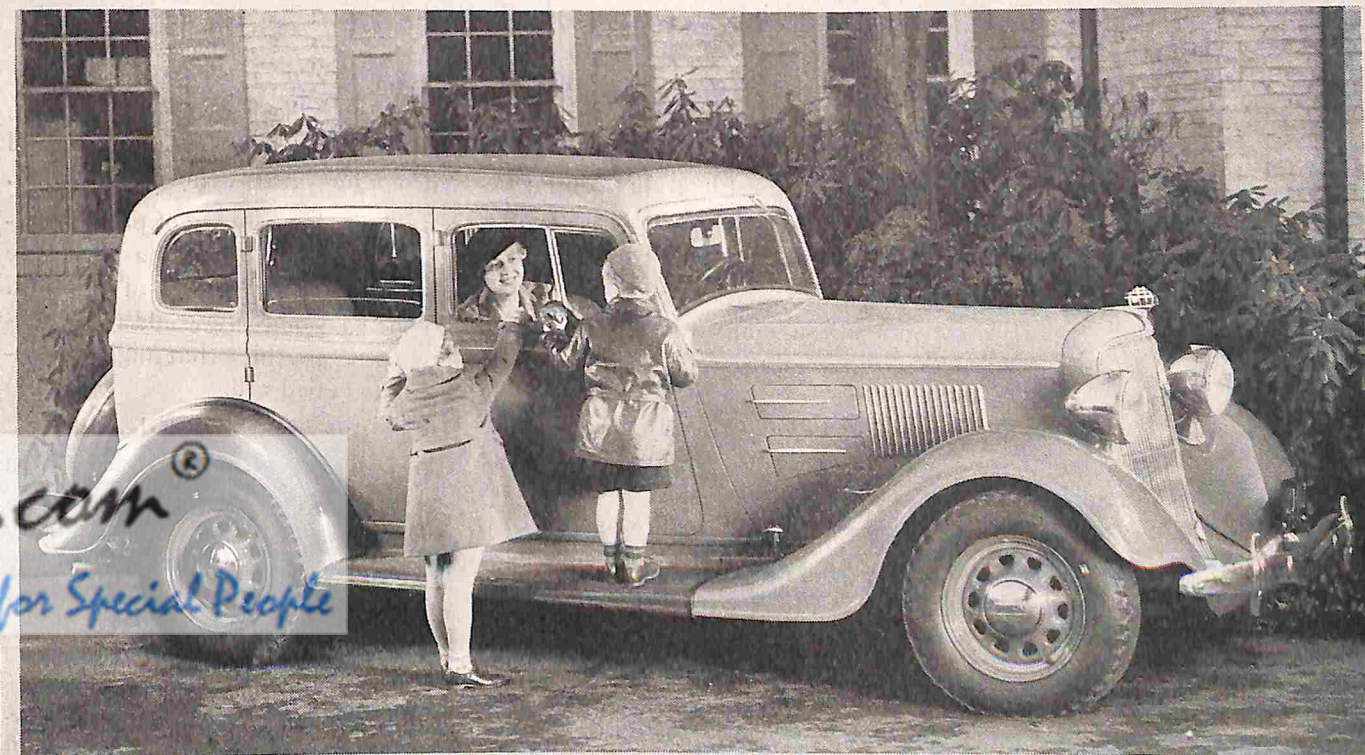
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