

All those who are interested in the welfare of country youth and who are concerned about this cityward trend should realize that part of the cause is to be found in the social condition outlined above. Such persons should encourage and assist the young people in organizing to provide for their own entertainment and recreation. This lack of social life once realized and the solution found would not only tend to a much happier and more contented rural population but also increase the prosperity of our province.

—CLIFFORD MURPHY '50

### THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

"Morgan, drive around by the lake road", Pauline Richards had ordered her chauffeur-gardener as he was driving her from her office in the city to her country home. She was leaning back dreamily in the seat with her eyes closed. When she opened them she realized that they were well past the turning-off point. Immediately her anger flared; but it was too late now to fume.

Other instances of such irregularities came to her mind: on the previous evening Morgan had shown up half-an hour late, stumbling over his apology, "Jane had some fool idea that I'd have to finish the gladiola bulbs". The executive from the soap firm, whom Mrs. Richards had brought home to dinner that evening, had begun to look rather bored when dinner was announced late. It turned out to be a humdrum affair. The little sales talk which Mrs. Richards had planned concerning the efficiency and appeal of the Richards' radio advertizing schemes, failed miserably in the face of the servant's carelessness. She had given up in despair as the conversation lagged.

As she reflected on these things, Mrs. Richards' resentment grew. It was often thus when she entertained any of her unmarried male friends. The servants would be subtly ungracious and would watch her like a jealous husband watching his wife. She suspected that they were hostile towards any probable change in her status.

But the indifference of Morgan was the straw which broke the camel's back. She realized that she must assert her independence before she was overruled by her well-meaning domestics. With a feeling of frustration, she picked up the evening paper which was lying on the seat. Her eye was caught and held by headlines announcing a trio of murders in which a society woman of her acquaintance was involved. She read the account in breathless amazement. The woman, in a fit of insanity, had poisoned her servants. Mrs. Richards thought grimly, "If I could only shake **their complacency**".



When the car arrived at the front entrance of her house, and the housekeeper met her at the door, Mrs. Richards greeted her with the inquiry, "Have you read the shocking news in the evening paper?". At the same time she guessed that the redoubtable Jane had earlier learned all the lurid details from the domestic grapevine.

"Bridget got a call to visit her family, and there's that niece of hers in the kitchen, so dinner'll be late," Jane informed her acidly; she was referring to the cook, Bridget O'Donnell, whose large family of brothers and sisters made many demands on her time and purse.

As Mrs. Richards dressed for dinner, she plotted with reckless abandon for the downfall of domestic tyranny. She was counting largely on the housekeeper's credulity. If Jane fell for her plan, she would influence the others. The thought occurred to her, "They might leave me—" and she could not imagine a greater catastrophe, for she doubted that she could maintain her beautiful home without Jane's skillful hand. Bridget's cooking, also, was nothing short of perfection when she was in the right mood.

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A few mornings later the crisis was over. An enforced truce prevailed between housekeeper and cook. "We must be very careful not to excite her," Jane had advised. "It's said that the least thing is apt to make them kind of people go right off."

Artlessly, the housekeeper had outlined their course of action. They were to spare no effort. "In fact," she said with a sniff in cook's direction, "it's about time some people were put in their proper place."

As she walked towards her car that morning, Mrs. Richards noted with approval that the lawns had already been raked clean of leaves from the windstorm of the previous night. "I notice that you have been early to work," she told Morgan in answer to his courteous greeting. As he took his place behind the wheel she said: "Call around to the druggists for this prescription. It's a mixture of poison the vet gave me for Flynn and Mick."

"Poison," he jerked out, and she got a glimpse of his frightened expression in the rear-view mirror.

"Oh, I don't intend to **poison** the setters," she said with a smile. "Just a little of it in their drinking water will make their coats clean for the dog show."

She sensed the man's startled eyes watching her until he had let her out at her office-building in the heart of the city's business section. Going up in the elevator she thought, "I must be careful not to frighten him so again. I think those gullible people really consider me a dangerous woman."



When Morgan reached home and communicated his fears to the others, panic seized them. They conferred hastily in the safety of the kitchen.

"The way she's been staying home from the office complaining of being sick, would be enough to make a body take notice," exclaimed Cook.

"An 'me knowin' she's never been sick a day in her life. Sure an' it's as if an evil curse had come on her and stolen her wits away."

"Trying to make up rhymes better than somebody else's to advertize that soap and stuff on the radio'd be enough to addle anybody's head," said Jane tartly.

For the next few weeks no rift disturbed the equanimity of the household scene. No more did she have to arbitrate in the arguments between the cook and the housekeeper. The holder of her firm's biggest account (and unmarried) was putty in her hands under the influence of Cook's delicious souffles. The flower beds were weeded almost to extinction and the chauffering was above reproach.

As she dressed carefully one evening, preparing to go out with one of the special male clients, her hand happened to light upon a clipping. Chuckling, she read it over to herself:

"Mrs. X was accused of poisoning three of her servants who had been in her employ for twenty-five years. When found by the police she was wearing a long black gown decorated with red roses from her garden, and there were red roses fastened in her long white hair. She was playing on the piano and singing. Mrs. X was reported to have been in ill health for sometime previous to the tragedy. It is believed that she must have become overwrought by the carelessness of the servants who were with her so many years."

Laughing to herself, she opened her closed door and brought out a hanger on which hung a dress—a black dress garnished lavishly with faded red roses.

"Well, I won't need you again," she said, and she carefully folded it away in the lavender-scented drawer.

—PATRICIA PENDERGAST '48