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Jeanette Dekker, '30, Says

Indian Girls Have Home Management...

By Bernice Borgman

MISS JEANETTE DEKKER, who graduated from Iowa State College in 1930 and in the same year began teaching home economics in the mission school on the Jicarilla-Apache Indian Reservation at Dulce, N. M., soon realized that her students needed some place in which to practice the principles which she was teaching them. She could not give them home work because they seldom went home. When they did they found it very difficult to apply their knowledge because of the exceedingly poor living conditions of their families.

The stolid, pitifully ignorant Apache Indians live in tepees in summer and in poorly constructed one-room huts in winter, eking an existence from sandy, sage-covered valleys between jagged peaks of the Rockies of northern New Mexico. The men and boys tend with a small degree of care the sheep which the government has given them. The women perform a few household tasks and probably weave baskets or do beading. All work is done with an indifference incomprehensible to the busybody American.

IN EARLY August school opens. Indians from every valley drift into Dulce during the first week of school. Men and boys jog along on lean Indian ponies, and whole families ride in low wagons drawn by searney horses and accompanied by packs of woolly-haired dogs. Every member of the family is dressed in gaudy colors and bedecked with beads and jewelry. The children are taken to the mission school, where they remain 9 months except for an occasional short visit to their homes.

Among the school buildings is a tiny house made of adobe. Three years ago Miss Dekker asked for the use of this small two-room house, which until that time had been the living quarters for Indian and Mexico employes at the mission. It was given to her.

Miss Dekker and her classes turned it into a home management house for the home economics students. Here the girls could learn how to make the best of their home situations and apply home economic principles toward the creation of a better home life.

THE cottage was in very poor condition when they took it over. Everything was dirty and the walls, woodwork and floors pleaded for paint. The furnishings consisted of an almost worn-

out cook stove, a cot with a mattress and two small tables.

The girls added to their supply of furniture by constructing from large shipping boxes two tables, some stools and a cupboard for utensils and supplies. The cupboard doors were made of wall-board and screen and attached with leather hinges cut from old shoes.

Next came the delightful task of beautifying the house. The storage room at the main school building was raided for left-overs of paint. Mixing dabs of this and that, the girls supplied themselves with sufficient paint of the desired colors. They eagerly applied it to walls, woodwork, floors and furniture.

Flour sacks were dyed and with scraps of print were made into kitchen curtains. The windows of the combined living room and bedroom were hung with curtains made from a remnant of material and decorated in crayola with Indian designs. For the doorway of the small closet which had no door the girls made an attractive hanging from a piece of burlap which they had washed, starched, ironed and embroidered with yarn.

A colorful and interesting piece quilt was made for a cot. Each girl designed and made her own quilt block. The blocks were set together with a washable fabric of medium blue and faced with the same. The quilt was



padded with a worn outing-flannel blanket quilted together so that it might be easily laundered.

Pillows with decorative pillow tops were also made for the cot.

THE eager young homemakers added finishing touches by hanging pictures which had been cut out and mounted. They made lamp shades from oiled wrapping paper pasted over frames of clothes-line wire. The shades were decorated with original Indian designs.

From time to time new things have been added as they were needed and available. Last year a new cooking

range was secured. It is a small inexpensive type like those in several Indian homes. This fall two of the girls replaced the worn front steps with new ones made from some left-over planks. Two others made a towel rack for the kitchen. More stools and a larger and better built cupboard have also been added.

The ages of the home economics students in the school range from 11 to 19 years. All share in the work at the cottage, the older ones doing more than the younger group.

When a class has finished a foods unit two or three members have the opportunity of preparing a meal at the home management house, while the others work in the classroom. When the meal is ready the entire class is invited to eat at the cottage.

Last year at the close of a child development unit one of the older classes invited a group of pre-school children from the orphanage to the cottage for dinner.

THE meals which are prepared are extremely simple and suited to their home situations. Indian bread is sometimes prepared. It is made from a leavened dough patted into thin cakes and fried in deep fat. Canned milk is usually used. Very few Indians on the reservation have cows. Some own goats.

Work is done at the cottage just as the girls would be obliged to do it at home. They must carry in the wood and coal and their supply of water.

Various barriers must be overcome when the girls first enter school. The Indians are a very superstitious race. Many of their superstitions regard food habits which are far from the ideals of proper nutrition. It is also difficult to make the girls realize at first that the chief diet of their homes—bread, meat and coffee three times a day—is inadequate.

The Indian school girls greatly enjoy their home economics work, and some are trying to do in their homes the things they have done at the school. Many of them encounter parental opposition. The older Indians resent any kind of progress.

Miss Dekker tries in her work in the schoolroom and in the cottage to instill in the girls a progressive spirit. Because each generation of Indians is too easily content to travel the same rut that the forefathers did the youth must be stimu-

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House Plants Will Grow . . .

By Ruth Cook

Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?

THAT'S the way the old nursery rhyme had it. For the 1934 college girl's version, scratch out the "quite contrary" and "garden" and substitute "clever very" and "house-plant"—

Mary, Mary, clever very,
How does your house-plant grow?

If Mary really is "clever very" about her plants they will be doing very nicely, thank you! Most of us aren't gifted that way though, and we do well with our cleverness to have plants at all.

Plants are nice, any coed will tell you, but they freeze up on us, or they get brown and shrivel away, or they go to stalk and never bloom. Poor little plants! The minute they get inside a dormitory their death rate seems to go up about 100 percent.

E. C. Volz, professor of horticulture, suggests that plants don't grow in dormitories because they don't get the proper temperature and moisture conditions.

Girls on the campus who have had failures lay their bad luck in the majority of cases to lack of sunlight. The exception to this rule is the still greater number of plants which freeze to death. Many a plant has lost its tender life when it was left to itself in a vacant room by its mistress during vacation. Opening the window too far at night without in some way protecting the plant has the same disastrous results.

Not all of them die, however. Some of the hardier plants have lived through to downright senility. The favorites seem to be ivy, wandering jew, geranium and a large percentage of bulbous plants. Two roommates had between them this long list—begonias, ice-plants, foliage, geraniums, wandering jew and moss. Perhaps the most ingenious plant was one that twins had in their room—a sweet potato which took root and its vines clambered up even to the ceiling.

THESE successes are encouraging. At least keeping plants in college rooms can be done. Perhaps you watered the geranium too often, or you kept your room too warm or too dry for it, or your soil mixture was not good. None of these mistakes are hard to remedy.

For your next adventure into the plant growing world, Professor Volz makes these suggestions in his book, "Home Flower Growing."

The first requisite is good soil. The next time you have the opportunity supply yourself with some rich black Iowa dirt. To three parts of the loam add one part of well-rotted manure and one part of clean sand. A little bone-meal in addition will give plant food in the form

of phosphorus and nitrogen. There is no need for extra fertilizer.

Mr. Volz does not recommend the use of fertilizer during the sluggish autumn and early winter; those are the plants' rest days. There will be time enough when the buds begin to appear. The little boost that fertilizer can give, may give increased foliage and stem development then. As a safe fertilizer, Mr. Volz recommends two teaspoons of nitrate of soda or ammonium sulphate dissolved in three gallons of water.

Unglazed, unpainted flower pots are best. Be sure that there is a hole in the bottom for drainage. The pot should be just large enough to contain the root system without crowding. Too large a pot means danger of overwatering and does not allow the roots to get a foothold along the sides of the pot.

THE temperature should average 65 or 70 degrees during the day and about 10 degrees colder at night.

The relative humidity is generally far too low. It is usually 20 or 30 percent in houses, while the green-house has a 75 to 80 percent humidity. A little more moisture in the air would be healthier for humans as well as plants. Mr. Volz suggests that this difficulty may be overcome by water pans which hook over the wall side of the radiator. But if this is impracticable, water may be vaporized from a pan under the radiator, or by wringing turkish towels out of water and placing them over the radiator.

Plants usually get too much rather than not enough water. When the surface soil becomes dry, it is usually necessary to water them.

Do Formals Bore?

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A corn-fed lass asked if we didn't think it would be interesting to have exchange formals?

Unanimous in their approval, the dormitory girls are anxiously awaiting the answer to the new question, "When is the next formal going to be?"

Indian Girls

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lated to make advancements. Miss Dekker tries never to have every detail complete but always leaves some problem for the girls to solve. Only when they can be made to feel a desire for self-improvement will they learn to enjoy better living conditions. Toward this end Miss Dekker is working with the future homemakers of the Apache Indians.