FOR THE HOME

Recipes for the Kitchen. Hygiene and Other Notes for the Housekeeper.

THE APPLE IN COOKERY.

The average cook needs to be taught the different treatment of sour and sweet apples, although for general all-round use in cooking, a sub-acid apple is the best choice where one cannot have several kinds. The sweet apple requires longer and slower cooking ; it has more fiber or cellulose, and keeps its form better than the acid fruit after cooking, resembling in this respect the quince. For this reason sweet apples are often used in quince preserve and jams,—"to make it go further," as the economical woman says. It dilutes the strong flavor of the quince without materially changing the consistency or appearance of the sauce.

Hard sweet apples should be cooked slowly a long time, but mellow sour or mild apples should be dropped into boiling syrup and taken up on a wire spoon as soon as tender. The syrup may then be boiled to a thicker consistency.

Baked apples may be dried, shriveled and tasteless, or the reverse. To have them at their best, pare and core without cutting; butter an earthen dish and sprinkle with sugar. Place the apples in it close together, and sprinkle lightly with sugar. Most apples will be better if covered the first 10 or 15 minutes ; this keeps the juice from evaporating. Baked apples are better for being basted with the syrup which forms in the dish. Bake sweet apples cored, pared or not as preferred, and covered with a syrup made from brown sugar or molasses and water. Cover the dish and cook a long time. A bean pot is an excellent place for baking apples.

Late in the season apples are sometimes almost entirely lacking in flavor. In this case a few raisins or the grated peel and the juice of a lemon give a distinct taste ; but whenever fruit has flavor of its own, it should not be smothered in sugar, or overcome by flavoring extracts. Our delicacy of taste needs cultivating, not blunting by strong flavors made from chemicals.

Dried apple pies and sauce have been ridiculed even in doggerel, but the cook (not the fruit) should be the subject of flippancy. Dried apple or other dried fruit should be rinsed in cold water and then soaked in cold water enough to a little more than cover, for several hours. It will then have absorbed the moisture which it lost in drying. It should be cooked in the water in which it was soaked, because some of its juices have become dissolved and would be wasted if poured off, leaving the fruit tasteless. Cooked without stirring, it will closely resemble fresh apple.

The acid of apples is needed and relished with fat meats like roast pork or roast goose. Our forefathers served fried apples with their fried salt pork, and it was a good combination.

As the apple has considerable pectose and gum in its composition, even the amateur succeeds in making jelly from it. Waste apples will furnish a half dozen glasses at a time with little work and give a pure article for the table in preference to the turnips and glucose of commercial jellies.

In fact, the apple is a most adaptable fruit in cookery. Its possible uses extend from salad to desert ; it comes on with the cereal at breakfast and with the roast at dinner. In the sick room the invalid is refreshed with apple tea, and in early convalescence is allowed a baked apple.

Any skilled cook who understands principles and combinations can evolve a long succession of desserts from apples, because they combine well with the starch of rice, tapioca, corn flour and similar preparations, also with eggs, milk or cream, and with batters and doughs from flour and all kinds of meal. The possibilities with gelatine in fancy molds and garnishes is also large. Probably the worst way to cook apples is inclosed in a dough tied in a bag and boiled, or in a pie with a sodden undercrust.

The pie that comes to the modern dinner table is a different affair from those that grandmother used to make. Of a well-made apple pie it is proper to remember that :

All new dishes fade, the newest oft the fleetest ;
Of all pies ever made, the apple's still the sweetest.

This of course means a freshly baked, juicy pie, seasoned mildly and with a light, flaky crust. The apple pie deteriorates with keeping. Serve it fresh and not quite cold. It is well to make it sometimes without top crust, cover with a meringue or with whipped cream. Give it the frills and furbelows that are granted to oranges, lemons and bananas when they are cooked, and the result will show that the apple responds to this treatment. In fact, is there another fruit that can be treated so abominably by cooks and yet furnish something eatable ?

WINTER CLOTHING.

To put away winter clothing select a sunny, windy day. Put everything out on the line to air, turn pockets inside out, whip free from dust, brush, and clean off all spots with ammonia and water, or with benzine, but have no fire near if you use the latter. If benzine is used it must be used out of doors, not in the house. Do not leave any dirty spots, for they are what moths revel in.

Blankets, if soiled, should be washed in suds as hot as you can bear your hands in, made with a good laundry soap, and with borax or ammonia in it. Rinse in water of the same temperature, wring flat through a wringer, hang on the line and shake and snap often while drying to raise the nap. Do not put all of them away ; keep one out of each bed in case of cold, rainy weather, or sickness through the summer. They may be safely kept if wrapped in newspapers or laid smoothly between the mattresses.

Wrap the smaller articles in fresh newspapers. There is something in printers' ink that moths dislike, perhaps because it is often used in telling how to circumvent them. Tie up and label all articles and pack away in chests and drawers, putting a list of them on top.

Hang dresses, waists and skirts smoothly on dress-hangers, then line an old sheet with newspapers, pinned or basted on, and pin tightly around them and hang up. They will come out in the spring fresh as when hung up.

In folding men's garments use great care to prevent wrinkles. Place newspapers, folded flat the entire length of trousers and sleeves, and wrap in newspapers. The best winter suit had better be treated like your dress, hung on a wire hanger inside of a paper-lined sheet. No ill-smelling camphor balls are necessary if these directions are followed.

HOME HINTS.

Put the forced bulbs from the window garden in the ground with a layer of sand about them to guard against rot.

When a steel gets rusty cover it with sweet oil well rubbed on ; next day rub again with finely-powdered unslaked lime until all rust disappears.

Bring the plants out of the cellar and get them ready for their summer's work. The lengthening hours of sunshine will color up the yellow leaves and bring out new ones.

Chicken-pox and scarlet fever both greatly affect the eyes of a patient, so great care should be taken during and after an attack either to shield the eyes from strong light and to avoid straining them, or weak eyes through life may result.

The best cure for intestinal troubles is twenty-four hours of starvation. Do not eat till the tongue grows clean. Quench thirst by drinking all the hot water you can and wrap the bowels lightly in bandages of hot flannel.

An ideal bedroom is provided only with the essentials for healthy sleep and for the air to be kept as pure as possible. The windows are arranged to open at top and bottom, the floors are bare and the rugs used on them so small they can readily be taken out of doors for cleaning and airing. Everything should be washable, the mattress not too soft and the room contain none but necessary furniture.

Save all soot from chimneys where wood has been used and apply it to the peonies at any time of the year, though fall is best. The effect will be seen in the rank growth of the plants and the immense size of the blossoms. It is also useful to sprinkle over squash and cucumber vines to drive away the small striped beetle.

Wherever there is a spring or running water, or even an overflowing water trough, watercress will grow. Sow the seeds and the plants will take care of themselves. Mint will thrive in any rich, moist spot, but must be grown from roots by transplanting from some brookside. Both these plants afford a refreshing and wholesome addition to a meal.

An excellent way to grow early garden plants of kinds such as cucumbers is to plant them in the house in cups made by hollowing out large potatoes. Fill the potato shell with rich earth. When the weather becomes warm enough set plant and cup in the ground. The latter will decay in time to make room for expanding roots.

A seed is a delicate thing. Think of the millions nature uses to raise the plants she needs, and you will not wonder that they do not sprout in the house where the water comes in a deluge, the heat is like that of a furnace and Jack Frost comes stealing in at night to nip the "instinct within it, that reaches and towers."

DANGERS OF CELLULOID.

A heated curling iron will readily start the evolution of dense and highly inflammable fumes if brought in contact with a celluloid comb or hairpin, says the London Lancet. The proximity of a naked light adds to the danger enormously, for the fumes of celluloid will ignite fiercely at some considerable distance from the flame. The manufacturers of these dangerous articles should be compelled to stamp plainly upon them the words "highly inflammable." The danger is no imaginary one. A gentleman with a lighted cigar in his mouth was playing upon an "American organ" furnished with celluloid keys. When some red-hot ash dropped upon the keys they instantly burst into fumes and flame, which could only be extinguished with the greatest difficulty.

FOR FARMERS

Seasonable and Profitable Hints for the Busy Tillers of the Soil.

SEEDBED FOR CORN.

The depth to plow varies with the nature of the soil the season of year and the character of previous crop. In general, a coarse, loose, sandy soil should be plowed shallow and a finely divided heavy clay soil deep. The loose soil needs packing in order to furnish the conditions of germination, while the heavy soil must be opened up to the action of the atmosphere and sun.

The plant food in the soil is liberated, for the use by the plants through the agency of soil organisms. These organisms require oxygen in their process of development. Therefore the air must circulate freely in the soil in order that there organisms may carry on their work. In the germination of the seed, oxygen is absolutely necessary so that air must be present for the first process of germination to begin. For instance, it frequently happens that directly after the planting on a clay soil, a heavy dashing rain pacus the surface soil so that little air can enter. The seed will germinate very imperfectly, even though the other conditions of germination be supplied perfectly.

DEPTH OF PLOWING.

It is never advisable, even in the heavy clay soils, to greatly vary the depth of plowing in any one season. If the soil has been turned to a certain depth during its previous cultivation, and then some one season is plowed several inches deeper than ordinary, a layer of cold soil will be turned up for the young plants to feed upon. If this is done in the fall the action of the weather in freezing and thawing corrects the mechanical condition and puts the plant food in usable form before a crop is grown. However, if this deep plowing is done in the spring, the young plants are unable to use the plant food in this layer of soil and are consequently checked in their growth. This frequently results in an almost complete failure of the crop.

Many of the harmful insects which infest the corn fields live over the winter safely housed in the soil. By fall plowing, their homes are broken up, the insect forms are thrown upon the surface of the soil, where they are subject to the winter weather, and most of them are thus destroyed. So in the case of noxious weed seeds which are brought to the surface by fall plowing. The vitality is weakened or lost by the freezing and thawing, and if the vitality is not impaired by such means, the weeds placed where they germinate the first thing in the spring, to be destroyed by the early disking and cultivation of the seedbed.

PLOWING FOR SEEDBED.

In the care of spring plowing very great progress has been made in the last few years in the methods of handling the soil in order to get the best results. Briefly, the most important points are as follows: Immediately after plowing the soil should be floated. This should be done at the end of every day's work. A convenient and very successful float can be made by splitting an 8 or 10 inch pole 12 feet long. Place the halves two feet apart as split and mortise so that they will be held firmly in place. Arrange a box for weight about the middle of the float and weight as heavily as found desirable. A longer float for two horses can be made in the same manner and the driver can stand on the float. The ordinary plank drags are also used successfully for this purpose. By running the float over the surface of the ground the clods are easily crushed and the top of the seedbed fined so as to make a perfect mulch. This mulch will prevent the excessive evaporation of water and still allow a free circulation of air.

Plowing under stalks, straw or manure has come to be necessary to the successful culture of corn. In the days of the first cultivation of prairie and other rich soils, the fertility was abundant. Humus was plentiful, and it was not necessary to look to the conservation of soil fertility or to the mechanical texture of the soil. As a result of these conditions stalks were burned, and corn grew year after year on the same fields, as the most profitable rotation of crops. This condition does not now exist. Soils that were thought to be inexhaustible in fertility produce less and less, until the returns are no longer as profitable. It has become necessary to consider the waste in corn culture and to conserve this carefully for future crops.

TIME OF PLOWING.

One of the points in the preparation of the seedbed above all others is to plow the ground when it is in proper condition. If a heavy soil, and too wet, it runs together, and when the seedbed dries out, is injurious to the roots of the corn plant and will not retain soil moisture. The more fully divided the soil the more moisture it is capable of conserving. If the seedbed is caked by wet plowing only a small amount of plant food can be used by the plants and not enough moisture retained for the growth of the crop.

When the soil is too dry, and breaks up in clods and large lumps, a great amount of preparation is needed to get such a field into condition for planting, and by the time the cultivation is finished, the tilth of the seedbed will have been destroyed. There is usually a time in every season when the plowing will leave the field in splendid condition. It is important to wait until that time, as it always results in a saving of time and money and a better prepared seedbed.

THE BROOD SOW.

I advocated a liberal feeding of the brood sow, writes Mr. H. L. Sweet. If she is thin in flesh, a judicious mixture of corn as a part of her ration; if she is excessively fat, I would give her no corn, but would feed her liberally during that time on ground oats, millstuff, etc., and I come now to what I conceive to be a serious problem confronting the breeders of pure-bred Poland-China hogs, who are engaged in the business of selling brood sows at public auction. The buyer's tasee seems to demand that these animals, when sold, shall be in high flesh, practically in show condition.

There is no grain which will produce that result so quickly, cheaply and thoroughly as corn. Therefore, a majority of the breeders feed the brood sows which they are feeding for sale into a condition so that they would be classified readily in the stock yards as choice heavy, but are certainly in anything but a condition favorable for the production of healthy, vigorous pigs. A majority of these sows are sold less than 60 days before the time when they are due to farrow, and one cannot hope, by however judicious dieting, to overcome in that time the effects of the heavy and long continued feeding on a corn diet.

But if you cannot sell your sows if they are thin, what will you do? I answer, deny to yourself, if necessary, perhaps so large a margin of profit, and taking a longer time for preparing your sows for sale, feed them more liberally upon soft feeds. A brood sow can be made to look very well upon a diet composed of one-quarter to one-third corn, and two-thirds to three quarters ground oats, mill stuff, etc., moderately fed for a considerable time; while as a breeder she will be infinitely more profitable to the purchaser and of much more lasting benefit to your trade, than to feed a much shorter time upon the heavier diet.

POULTRY YARD.

Let the coops face the south.

If your broilers weigh three pounds per pair they are just right, provided they are plump and fat. Buyers don't want heavy stock now.

It is not best as soon as you hear a "peep" in the nest, to raise the hen to take a peep. She may proceed to smother the "peep" by putting her foot on the peeper's neck.

In picking ducklings and broiler chicks have a damp cloth, and when the feathers are off dip the cloth in dry salt and rub the carcass with it. Takes off the down and small feathers.

If the hen fly over the poultry yard fence, clip the flight feathers of the left wing next the body. We don't like the idea of mutilating three-day-old chicks by clipping off the first joint of one wing as recommended by some.

Hens will dig. They are born that way. They know no difference between the flowers and the vegetables and the weeds growing wild. Then provide fences around the gardens and preserve your soul in patience. The hen which does not scratch somewhere brings in no eggs.

Variety is all right in many things but when it comes to a mixture of colors in a flock of poultry it is neither advisable nor desirable. A flock of hens of the same color of the breed most desired is more pleasure to the owner and receives more favorable comment than one of a variety of colors.

A STATESMAN'S COMMENTS.

Lord Palmerston Liked Plain Writing and Black Ink.

Lord Palmetston's minutes or memoranda upon public papers were often very amusing. Whenever they were intended to convey a rebuke they were satirical rather than severe, and often then contained a flavor so innocent-seeming that it was difficult to tell whether it was not intended to be humorous.

A minor South African official once made, in a despatch, certain suggestions of which Lord Palmerston disapproved, and which were filed with the written comment, "Goose! goose! goose!"

Again the statesman sent a letter to an undersecretary, with this instruction for a reply:

"Civil answer, meaning nothing."

Handwriting was his hobby. Several times he sent circulars to ministers and consuls abroad, asking them to write round, legible hands, and to use black ink.

On one badly-written despatch he left the comment:

"Reading Mr. R.'s handwriting is like running penknives into one's eyes."

"He had the greatest objection to "backhand," and when a paper written in that style was sent up for his signature, he returned it with the minute:

"Has the writer of this letter lost the use of his right hand? If not, why does he make all his letters slope backward, like the raking masts of an American schooner?"

Next in importance to handwriting and ink was punctuation. He held a great objection to persons who had the habit of "sowing commas" and still more to those who used no stops whatever. This was his comment on a batch of papers which had not been properly punctuated:

"Write to the stationery office for a sufficient supply of full stops, semicolons and commas, for the use of the copying clerks of this office. I furnish these things out of my own private stores when I have time to look over despatches for signature; but I am not always sufficiently at leisure to supply these deficiencies."

Pins for the purpose of fastening papers together seemed to him an abomination, and this was a minute concerning them:

"I desire that all the pins in this office be immediately made over to the female branch of the establishment,"

STRAIGHT TO THE POINT.

The London street Arab is essentially a practical-minded youth. With him there is no beating about the bush, no wasting of time in fulsome compliments or excessive politeness.

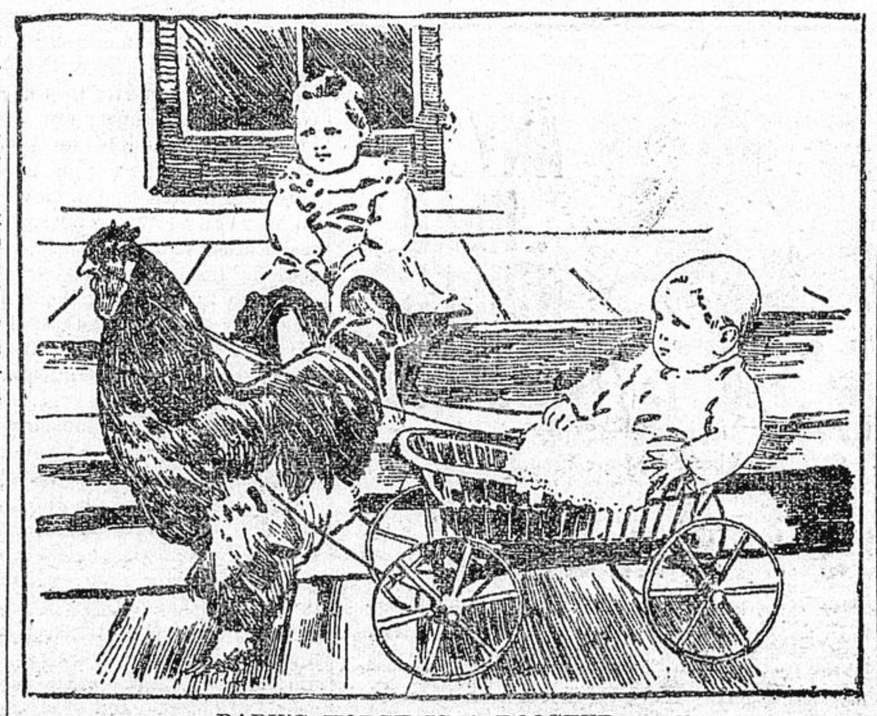
A short while since a number of East-end gamins were being entertained at tea, and a bevy of charitably-disposed ladies were assembled to do the honors. One of these amateur waitresses armed herself with a huge plate of bread and butter, and approached a hungry-looking small boy.

"Will you have some bread and butter, dear ?" she inquired, in dulcet tones.

"No !" said the lad.

" 'No,' what ?" she replied, in mild remonstrance at his lack of manners.

"No bloomin' fear, not wen there's plum cyke abart," was the retort.



BABY'S HORSE IS A ROOSTER.

Dogs and cats have been employed to draw baby carriages, but using a rooster for such a purpose is a new idea. Mr. O. J. Plomesen, of Luverne, Iowa, has a flock of Cochin China fowls, among them a rooster that is a giant in the feathered kingdom. On account of his size and breed he is a pet in the family, and has become very tame.

Mr. Plomesen conceived the plan of training him to draw the baby carriage in which his daughter takes her exercise in the air. He made a light harness, and after a few weens taught him to pull the vehicle along the dooryard path without difficulty.

The little one, of course cannot drive, but her sister sometimes gets into the carriage and guides the feathered "horse" about the yard.

The eight muscles of the human jaw exert a force of about 500lb.

Doctor (who has been sent for at 2 a.m.)—"Madam, pray send at once for the clergyman, and, if you want to make your will, for the lawyer." Madam (horrified)—"Good gracious ! is it so dangerous, doctor ?" Doctor—"Not a bit of it ; but I don't want to be the only one who has been disturbed in his sleep for nothing."