TABLE TALKS

by Jane Andrews.

As many of you know, packaged dry mixes for biscuits, muffins and cakes—that is to say mixes to which only liquid and perhaps an egg need be added—are becoming more popular every day, especially among city dwellers who haven't the room or facilities for extensive cookery.

So perhaps you may be interested to know—as I was—that the United States Department of Agriculture is advocating "home-made" dry mixes of various kinds. By using such mixes, it is said that food values are greatly increased. In fact, one noted home economist, comparing biscuits made with the mix with some done according to standard recipes, found the former 50 per cent. richer in protein and at least 300 per cent. higher in calcium and riboflavin—both very important to health.

So first I'm giving you the basic biscuit mix, together with a couple of suggestions for its use. It can also be used for meat-pie toppings and in countless other different ways.

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Basic Biscuit Mix

8 Cups sifted enriched flour
1 cup non-fat (skim) dry milk
¼ cup baking powder
3 teaspoons salt
1 cup fat—any kind not needing refrigeration.

Method: Sift dry ingredients together three times. Cut or rub in fat 'til thoroughly mixed. Lift mix lightly into glass jars or tin cans without packing. Close tightly and store on shelf.

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Biscuits (From Mix)

Method: Add to a cup of the above mix enough fluid milk (approximately one-third cup) to make a soft dough. Knead, cut and bake as usual. Yield: Six biscuits.

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Meat-Vegetable Twists (from Mix)

Method: Prepare enough biscuit batter for about 12 biscuits (use two cups of mix). Turn out on a lightly floured board and knead gently a half minute. Roll out to a quarter-inch in thickness. Cut individual biscuits of 3x4 inches.

Put a half-cup meat-vegetable filling on one-half of the biscuit. On the other half, cut quarter-inch strips from edge of dough toward filling, using knife or pastry wheel. Fold these strips over meat mixture, twisting strips across meat. Pinch strip to edge of meat-covered daugh.

Put individual twists on baking sheet and bake at 375° F. for 25 to 30 minutes. Yield: Six servings of two biscuits each. For filling, use any well-seasoned combination of ground cooked meat and cooked vegetables, held together with medium white sauce.

The muffin mix, which comes from the same source, produces muffins that are considerably superior in protein and calcium to those baked according to most standard recipes. This mix may be used, as well, for waffles and griddle cakes.

Basic Muffin Mix

6 cups sifted enriched flour
1 cup dry non-fat (skim) milk
¼ cup baking powder
2 teaspoons salt
½ cup sugar
¾ cup fat—any kind not needing refrigeration.

Method: Sift dry ingredients together three times. Cut or rub in fat 'til thoroughly mixed. Lift mix lightly into glass jars or tins without packing. Close tightly and store on shelf.

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Muffins (From Mix)

Method: Use a third cup of milk and a beaten egg to one cup above mix for five small muffins. Mix and bake as usual. For "meat muffins" stir into batter a little chopped salami, hard-cooked egg and dash of horseradish.

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Waffles (From Mix)

Method: Use three-quarters cup of milk and one beaten egg to one cup above mix for two big waffles. Mix; bake as usual.

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Griddle Cakes (From Mix)

Method: Use two-thirds to one cup milk and a beaten egg to one cup above mix for six or seven pancakes. Mix and bake as usual.

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Now, to conclude, here's a recipe that doesn't use any prepared "mixes," but which does make use—and in a very delightful way—of what old Bishop Boteler said was undoubtedly the finest berry God ever made. Whether you fully agree with the good bishop's statement or not, I'm sure you'll like this:

Strawberry Cake

1⅔ cups sifted pastry flour, or
1½ cups sifted hard-wheat flour
2 tsps. Magic Baking Powder
¼ cup cold water
1½ tsps. vanilla
½ tsp. salt
4 eggs, separated
1 cup fine granulated sugar.

Method: Sft flour, baking powder and salt together three times. Beat egg yolks thick and light; gradually beat in the cold water and ⅔ cup of the sugar; beat constantly for four minutes. Beat egg whites until stiff, but not dry; gradually beat in remaining ⅓ cup sugar, beating after each addition until mixture stands in peaks. Add flour mixture to yolk mixture about a quarter at a time, folding lightly after each addition just until flour is incorporated; fold in vanilla. Add meringue to yolk mixture and fold gently until combined. Turn into two ungreased 8-inch round cake pans. Bake in moderate oven, 350°, 25 to 30 minutes. Immediately the cakes are baked, invert pans and allow cakes to hang, suspended, until cold (to "hang" cakes, rest rim of inverted pan on three inverted egg cups or coffee cups). Put cold cakes together with sweetened, crushed strawberries; top with lightly sweetened and flavored whipped cream and garnish with whole strawberries.

No Use

A new jockey mounted a long-shot in the paddock just before the race. Once in the saddle he looked for his whip. He turned to the trainer.

"Do you mind getting my whip?" he requested. "It's over there in the corner."

The trainer didn't budge.

"Whip?" he echoed.

The jockey frowned.

"Stop acting silly," he growled. "I said whip."

The trainer shook his head.

"What's the good of a whip?" he said. "The last jockey threatened this horse with a gun and even that didn't do any good!"

A BELLE ISLE, Mich., man came to the conclusion that the rain was getting too heavy when his wiper failed to keep water off the windshield. He stepped out to see for himself and had to swim ashore from the ten-foot lagoon into which he had driven.

Batting The Bull—President Truman pats a prize-winning bull on the nose as its owner, Ed Riser, smiles proudly. The President took time out from his whirlwind "whistle-stop" tour to award blue ribbons to junior livestock exhibitors.

Twins Vie For "Queen" Title—Students at Green Mountain Junior College faced a tough decision in choosing the queen of their traditional May Fete. Both Eileen, left, and Doris Sievers, 20-year-old identical twins were candidates for the honor. If the judging narrows down to this rare pair, the question seems to be, "which winsome twin will win?"

The SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By Rev. R. B. Warren, B.A., B.D.

Habakkuk Teaches Trust In God

Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12, 13; 2:1-4; 3:17-19.

Golden Text:— Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.—Habakkuk 3:18.

The Chaldean kingdom had become the dominating power in the world when Habakkuk uttered his prophecy. He was perplexed. Why was there so much injustice in the world? Why were the wicked permitted to catch the righteous in their net and devour them? Why didn't God do something about it? Many of us have asked the same question.

God enlarged the vision of Habakkuk. He saw that "The just shall live by faith," and God will ultimately execute judgment in the earth. "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters over the sea." Meanwhile, woes are pronounced upon the wicked. Woe to him that coveteth with an evil covetousness—woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness." God will permit no evil which He can wisely prevent. But man is free to choose whether or not he will obey God.

Habakkuk say something of the greatness of God. "His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise." He was then content to live by faith in the service of such a Great One. No matter how fearful are the circumstances he will rejoice. Let the faith expressed in his conclusion be ours, too. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Wonder Fruit Of The Tropics

Coconuts will play a large part in supplying the 100,000 tons of vegetable oil which Britain needs so badly this year. At the same time, plantation owners stand to reap considerable financial reward.

The price of copra (the dried kernel of the nut) has rocketed from the pre-war figure of $60 to $350 a ton.

Fortunately, coconuts are easy to cultivate. They flourish along the coasts of tropical islands, including the smallest coral islets.

The reason for their abundance is not difficult to find. As the nuts ripen they drop off, and many inevitably roll into the sea. Their fibrous husks and leathery skins render them seaworthy, and the tide and currents carry them across the ocean and cast them up on distant shores, where they soon take root.

It takes from seven to eight years for the palms to attain full maturity and bear fruit. Then they produce four crops annually for some seventy years.

A thousand coconuts give approximately 500 lb. of copra, from which twenty-five gallons of oil can be obtained. This oil is chiefly used in the manufacture of margarine, soap, and cattle food. Tasty confectionery can also be made from it.

To the natives of the islands on which they grow the coconut palm is a universal provider. Its tall, slender trunk is used in the building of their homes. The broad leaves are used for roofing.

The white flesh of the nut itself is used as food, while the sweet juice it holds is drunk. The fibres which cover the nut are weaved into mats. Nothing is wasted.

Scots To Raise Reindeer For Meat

It is interesting to learn that a plan is under consideration by the Department of Agriculture in Scotland to introduce reindeer into the Highlands. Reindeer meat is said to be more tender, less dry than venison.

The plan has been put forward by Mr. Mikel Utsi, owner of large herds in North Sweden. Mr. Utsi has found that crofters whom he has approached welcome his plan. He is ready to provide an initial herd of 25 animals. He would pay for their transport and look after them himself, and would train crofters to do the herding during a trial period. And he would pay the rent for suitable pasturage.

The Department of Agriculture for Scotland is considering the possibility of a trial herd on one of the islands off the Scottish coast. There the animals could be studied at close range, and the likelihood of disease investigated. But there has been no disease among the vast Scandinavian herds for over fifty years.

When the trial herd has undergone such a period of quarantine, the department might consider the further possibility of establishing a herd in some remote part of the mainland where there would be no interference with the maintenance of cattle and sheep, or even red deer.

In any event, reindeer live chiefly on lichens, which are to be found among heather stalks. Mr. Utsi has discovered what the herdsmen call "reindeer moss" among potentially suitable areas which he has visited—especially in large tracts of Sutherland and Cairngorms. Indeed, it is pointed out that reindeer could thrive in districts at present valued only as of interest for tourists.

Undoubtedly there would be a ready market, too, for the hides. Up to the outbreak of war, reindeer skins of quality—for the manufacture of gloves and handbags—were brought from Alaska, being products of the offspring of herds originally imported from Scandinavia.

The animal can maintain a speed of nine or 10 miles an hour for a long time, and can easily draw a weight of 200 pounds besides a sled. Almost every part of a dead animal is used in some way.

Actually, the import of reindeer into Great Britain would be a return home.

Reindeer roamed the forests of Scotland up to the twelfth century. And it was the destruction of these forests by fire that presumably prevented reindeer from being still as much at home in the Highlands of Scotland as in Scandinavia.

Other Women Found These Hints Useful

Instead of planting our window boxes each summer season, we simply set potted flowers into them. These can be easily shifted when they stop blooming and other blossoming plants set into their places. We enjoy the continual color this gives our home.

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I find the pilot light in my oven is useful for a number of things. I set my bread in the oven to rise and the pilot keeps it just the right temperature, even in the coldest weather. When crackers or potato chips become limp, I put them into the oven overnight and the next day they are peppy and fresh for serving. I also dry corn, apples, peaches, pears, and aprocots in the oven by using only the pilot light.

* * *

Put three or four marbles in the bottom half of the double boiler before putting it on the fire. When the water gets low, they will bounce about noisily, warning you that it needs refilling. This idea has lengthened the life of my double boiler, to say nothing of saving my temper, time, and food.

* * *

I save extra housework steps with my large-pocket cleaning apron. When I find a small article out of place or needing repair, I tuck it into the right-hand pocket. Odd papers, threads, and scraps to be thrown away are put into the left pocket for emptying when I pass a handy waste-basket. The misplaced items are restored to their proper places when I reach them during cleaning.

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To cut angel cake without having it crumble, use a silk thread stretched tautly between your hands.

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Time was when my husband came in from the day's work with his trouser cuffs full of seeds and bits of straw and dirt which clung to the carpet as he walked. I solved this extra cleaning problem by stitching all work-clothes cuffs with the sewing machine.

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Make a handy barber-pole container for used razor blades by enamelling a condensed milk can with red and white candy stripes. Cut a slot in one end large enough for blades to slip through. Keep this on the bathroom shelf with the shaving materials.

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Slipping seldom-used dishes into paper or plastic bags, when you store them, will protect them from gathering dust.

* * *

A wastebasket is right by the kitchen sink where I need it, thanks to this easy idea. Without any complicated carpentry work, I attached an oval metal basket to the door of the cupboard beneath the sink. I punched two holes about 5 inches apart, just below the rolled rim. Then, holding the basket against the door, I marked through the holes and inserted two cup hooks on the dots made. With the hooks opened a little so that the basket can lift on and off easily, it was ready for handy use.

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To keep the knobs on cupboards and dresser drawers from working loose, use washers of fine sandpaper. Cut the washer to fit knob, make a hole in the middle of the washer, and slip it over the bolt or screw between knob and drawer. Put the abrasive side next to drawer. Then, when the nut is tightened, the knob will not work loose.

* * *

My children have as much fun picking up their "clutter" as they had scattering it in the first place. Equipped with a wooden peach lug (any small wooden box will do) to which we've fastened a broom handle, they trot around the house picking up toys, paper, and what-have-you, feeling important and busy.

The GREEN THUMB

by Gordon Smith

A Run For Your Money

One can grow an amazing lot of vegetables in even a tiny plot of ground. A vegetable garden 10 feet by 20, with a little planning and double cropping, will yield many meals. In the very small vegetable garden one is wise to forget those bulky or spreading sort of things like potatoes, corn, squash, or pease. One should concentrate on beans, carrots, beets, spinach, radish, lettuce, possibly a half-dozen staked tomatoes and perhaps a hill or two of cucumbers trained over the boundary fence. None of these vegetables can take up much room. Beans, beets and carrots, for instance, can be grown in rows only a foot apart, and 10 feet of any of them will produce many meals for the average family. With some of the very early things like lettuce, radish and spinach double cropping can be practised. Plant these in rows, say, 18 inches apart, with rows of the later things—beets, beans, carrots, parsnips, etc.,—in between.

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Building Up A Garden

There are few soils or locations in Canada where a garden is not possible. Even if the soil is very heavy, wet, sticky clay and as flat as a pancake, with a little patience and planning it can be turned into a fair garden. It may be necessary and profitable to have it tile-drained so that it will get rid of surface water quickly. In most cases a few open drains, or merely a furrow or two, will be sufficient. Both heavy and very light soil too will be vastly improved by digging or plowing in manure and green materials like a cover crop of oats, peas, rye, clover, etc. Even a good crop of weeds will help if dug under. All waste matter like pea pods, carrot tops, corn stalks, etc., should be saved and dug in or piled up just in a compost heap to rot and then spread over the garden. The rotted vegetables refuse dug in adds what is technically known as humus, puts some body into the soil so it will hold moisture better.

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Paths and Driveways

A winding path adds interest to any garden, even where it may not be absolutely necessary. But it should not be too obvious, and if one wants a curve or two then there should be some excuse for that curve, such as a tree or group of shrubbery. What the path will be made of will depend upon how much traffic and what materials are available. Good firm sod will take some wear and if dry will even carry a car. For more permanent results and heavier traffic, flag stones, bricks, crushed cinders or well packed gravel are all suitable. Where these act as driveways as well and carry heavy traffic some foundation and drainage are advisable. Coarse gravel or cinders or crushed stone will do very well.

To keep down weeds in driveways there are many good weed killers on the market. To lay the dust common salt and old car oil can be used and they have the additionad advantages of binding the gravel or cinder and discouraging frost.

WHEN A MOTORIST returned to his car after reporting that it was stalled on a highway near Muskegon, Mich., he discovered that thieves had removed a can of oil, two spark plugs, five tires, skid chains, a tow rope, a lantern, a tool-box, a pair of driving gloves, two auto robes, the heater, a pint of brake fluid, two sideview mirrors, the defroster fans and the radio aerial.

Scotland Wails Over Mired Whales—Two Scottish boys at East Lothian, John and James McCallum, look over some of the 147 whales stranded on the beach. Washed in during a strong when it went out. And East Lothian was lefttide, the sea monsters were left high and dry with a whale of a problem.