

About the House

SOUP BY INSPIRATION.

I was once accused of making soup by inspiration. It is my conviction that good soup is a dish which must be more the result of good taste and judgment in combining ingredients, than of any closely followed receipt. Indeed, soup ought to appear frequently on all dinner tables and it is something that any housewife, whether rich or poor, ought to be able to make for herself, without a cook book, which may list a number of ingredients that are not on hand.

For instance, on my morning visit to the ice box, I found these left-overs: one small cupful of stewed tomatoes, half a cupful of cooked cabbage, two fried sausages, some scraps of beef-steak with a good-sized steak bone, and some outer stalks of a bunch of celery.

I cut the sausages and celery into pieces and placed them with the other ingredients in the soup-kettle. To them I added two onions sliced, four small potatoes sliced, salt and pepper to taste, a pinch of poultry seasoning and about two quarts of cold water, according to conditions.

I covered the kettle closely, let the soup come to a boil and placed it to simmer gently for six hours. A fireless cooker is ideal for preparing these inexpensive soups.

When sufficiently cooked, I put the soup through a rather coarse colander, using a fork to press through some of the very tender vegetables for thickening. The soup was then set away in a cold place so that the fat that would harden on top could be removed. The basis of the soup was then ready and might be finished and served in several ways. Cooked rice, macaroni or noodles could be added, or a small teacupful of tomato catsup to make a variety of tomato soup, or it might be merely reheated and served with crisp crackers.

Any housekeeper will have other left-overs as good or better than those I used. If there had been no tomato on hand, a little chili sauce might have been substituted, after the straining and skimming. When celery fails, there is always celery salt, seed or the dried and pulverized leaves. If there is no meat, a tablespoonful of beef extract (added after skimming) or a scant tablespoonful of melted fat can take its place.

This is the true secret of the famous French soups, a secret worth its weight in gold to all housewives. It all lies in knowing how to combine the minute bits of good food that otherwise might be thrown away and seasoning them so lightly that the flavor is delicate rather than pronounced. Too strong seasoning spoils soup for most persons.

Still another secret in making inspiration soup is a discreet use of vinegar, lemon juice and even a pinch of sugar. By the wise addition of one or another of these valuable aids, the flat taste often noticed in homemade soups is lost. One needs to be very carefully in the use and be sure of one's own tasting power for a very small amount of any of them goes a long way. Soup to be good must be tasted again and again and seasoned to taste until just right.

For the proper seasoning of all soups these supplies should be kept on hand: Herbs such as celery (the home-dried leaves rubbed to a powder and kept in a covered tin) thyme, sage, savory, sweet marjoram, bay leaves and parsley; spices such as whole cloves, allspice, mustard seeds, celery seed, nutmeg, red pepper and stick cinnamon; tomato catsup, walnut catsup and any commercial flavoring.

Rice, barley, macaroni, split peas, navy beans and other cereals and lentils are all useful.

Here is a roughly prepared list of ingredients which have appeared or rather disappeared in soups of mine that have received high praise.

Baked apples, lemon peel, cooked oatmeal and various cereals, scraps of bread, crackers and toast, mashed turnips, gravies (either thick or thin), left-over portions of hash, stew, cold meat, ham bones, sausage, bacon or salt pork, cooked vegetables, potatoes prepared in any form, liquor left from cooking meat, vegetables or poultry.

In short, with a little practice, almost anything that is clean and wholesome may be added to the soup pot, with benefit to the family health and great saving to the family purse.

Wartime Recipes.

Golden-Corn Tea Rolls.—Sift together one cupful of cornmeal with one cupful of white flour, four teaspoonfuls of baking powder and one teaspoon of salt. Work in three table-spoons of lard or vegetable shortening with the finger tips. Add enough milk and water in equal parts—from three-quarters of a cupful to one cupful—to make a biscuit dough. Turn out on a floured board, make into rolls, lay on greased tins and let stand for fifteen minutes in a cool place. Brush over with milk or melted butter and bake in a hot oven for twenty minutes.

War Cake.—2 cups brown sugar, 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, 2 cups hot water, 1 teaspoon ground cloves, 4 table-spoons lard, 1 cup raisins, 1 teaspoon salt. Boil together for five minutes. Then cool and add 3 cups of flour, and 2 teaspoon soda dissolved in 1 teaspoon of hot water. Bake in two loaves in slow oven an hour and a quarter.

Boiled Haddock.—Wash and scale thoroughly, wipe the inside, and fasten the tail in the mouth with a skewer. Put 2 oz. salt into ½ gal. water, and when it is dissolved, put in the fish. Bring the water to a boil, remove the scum, then simmer gently (about ½ hour), until the flesh leaves the bones easily. Take it up as soon as it is sufficiently cooked or it will be hard and tasteless. Garnish with parsley, and serve with melted butter.

Barley Scones.—1 cup barley meal, 1 cup whole-wheat flour, ¾ teaspoon salt, 2 teaspoon baking powder, 2 table-spoons fat, ¼ cup sour milk, 1-3 teaspoon soda. Sift flour, barley meal, salt, baking powder and soda together and work in fat with tips of fingers or two knives. Combine flour mixture and sour milk to form a soft dough. Turn out on a well-floured board, knead slightly, roll to one-half inch thickness; cut in diamond shapes and bake in a hot oven.

Rice and Cornmeal Griddle Cakes.—1 cup cold soft-boiled rice, 1 cup cornmeal, 1 cup of milk, ½ cup flour, 1 egg, 4 teaspoon baking powder, 1 teaspoon salt, 2 table-spoons brown sugar. Put the rice and milk into a bowl and mix well; add the rest of ingredients and the well-beaten egg. If it is too thick, add a little more milk; last of all add the baking powder and mix well. Bake very brown on a hot griddle.

Lima Bean Roast.—2 cups dried Lima beans, 1 cup peanuts, 1 cup stale bread crumbs, 1 teaspoon onion juice, 1 teaspoon salt, pepper. Soak beans twelve hours. Cover with water and boil until tender. Press through a colander. Put peanuts through a meat grinder. Mix with bean pulp. Add onion juice, salt, pepper and bread crumbs.

AT THE LITTLE TOWN OF EVIAN.

Where the French Exiles Return to Their Native Land.

Twice a day the little town of Evian on the Swiss border of France is the scene of one of the most moving and dramatic spectacles in the world. Twice a day a train comes into Evian bearing its load of French people who, since the early days of the war, have been in the power of the Germans, and who now, because they are too sick or too feeble to be useful to the invaders and because they have mouths to be fed, are being released by their captors and repatriated. At the station the Red Cross ambulances wait to remove such passengers as are too ill to walk. Often they receive the bodies of travellers who have died on the journey.

The poor fugitives swarm out of the train, dazed, helpless. The mayor of Evian, in silk hat, frock coat and white gloves, escorts them to the town hall. There they sit down to a feast that is awaiting them—the first good meal, perhaps, that they have eaten in three years. When they have finished, the mayor rises and makes always the same speech—yet always with as much earnestness and emotion as if the words had been prepared for the special occasion. "Beloved fellow citizens," he begins; and he welcomes them back to France, and assures them that now their sufferings are past and that henceforth they are among friends.

Then, always, the poor people begin to weep; the words of kindness and sympathy, following upon an act of kindness and sympathy, reach their hearts.

And what are these people like who are thus released to freedom? They are faded women, little children and old or broken men. Boys, young men, young girls never descend from the train at Evian. The Germans can make use of those. And the mother who is told by the German official that her turn has come and that she is now to go back to France, but that her sixteen-year-old daughter and her fourteen-year-old son will remain—vain is her pleading. "She must go and" they must stay—and she should be more grateful for her good fortune!

So always at the feast at Evian there is misery and suffering that neither the words of the kindly mayor nor the ministrations of the friendly townspeople can alleviate. And if deaths occur frequently on the trains that pass through Switzerland to Evian, who can wonder?

KEEP LITTLE ONES WELL IN WINTER

Winter is a dangerous season for the little ones. The days are so changeable—one bright, the next cold and stormy, that the mother is afraid to take the children out for the fresh air and exercise they need so much. In consequence they are often cooped up in overheated, badly ventilated rooms and are soon seized with colds or gripe. What is needed to keep the little ones well is Baby's Own Tablets. They will regulate the stomach and bowels and drive out colds and by their use the baby will be able to get over the winter season in perfect safety. The Tablets are sold by medicine dealers or by mail at 25 cents a box from The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

STOPPING HOUSEHOLD FIRES.

Rules if Put Into Practice Would Save Lives and Property.

A wet broom forms an effective fire extinguisher for all small household fires. If the curtain blows over the gas jet or lamp and blazes up, use a broom. Wet it in pail of water or at a faucet. One can throw a solid sheet of water or just as a spray with this from a pail. It is almost as good as a hose. It is possible to beat out a fire with a wet broom or pull down a blazing curtain or portiere. On discovering flames in any room close the door and window, also, if possible, to stop the draught, and then run for the broom and pail.

If the bed catches fire, beat out the fire with a wet broom. If the fire spreads to the mattress get the man of the family to roll it up and throw it out of the window. If this cannot be done make him upset the bed and throw the mattress on the floor, it will burn slower there and the broom and water can be used to advantage.

Never try to extinguish burning grease by throwing water on the blaze, as this only spreads it. Such fires must be smothered. Put flour, salt, sand, or even baking powder on the flames. It is, often best to let a pan of grease burn itself out and simply see that it sets nothing else on fire. Don't throw the flour or salt on it, as this will make the burning fat splash in all directions. Use a long stick or poker to mix the flour or other substance with the burning grease. This will quickly put out the fire.

If a lamp or oil heater takes fire



The Son of a Soldier.

Eric Porter's father was a soldier, and Eric had no doubt that he was the finest officer in all the army, for no one else in the crowd at the railway station seemed so straight or so tall or so handsome. Eric and his mother were saying good-by to him, and they knew that they would not see him for long months, perhaps not for years.

With his cheek pressed close against the soft sleeve of his father's coat, Eric listened to his mother saying good-by. For a moment he hid his eyes against the khaki and left two tears that had welled up in spite of him. But his eyes were clear and smiling when he looked up, and neither his father nor his mother guessed that the tears had been there only a moment before.

"Well, Eric," said his father, "you'll take care of mother, won't you? Don't let anything happen to her—not the least little thing. She's very precious to me."

Almost before Eric knew it the good-bys were over and the train was pulling out of the station. When it was gone Eric and his mother hurried to another train, for they, too, were going away. They were going to Cedar Tavern, at the foot of White Patch Mountain. There they would spend a week in snowshoeing and sleigh riding. Father said that it would put the color back into mother's cheeks.

All the way to the mountain—on the train and in the sleigh that carried them to the low-roofed tavern—Eric made believe that he was his father: he handed his mother's ticket to the conductor, tucked the robes about her in the sleigh and tried to make her forget that there had been any good-bys.

"See how deep the snow is!" she cried. "We shall have to go for a long tramp to-morrow."

They did go snowshoeing the next day; but it was afternoon when they started, for mother said that she could not go until she had written a long, long letter to the finest officer in the army. Eric wrote one, too; but it was pretty short, for it took him a long time to make some of the words. At the end he wrote, "I'm taking care of her all the time."

"Now we're off!" cried mother, when at last they had fastened their snowshoes on and had set out toward the mountain. "Let's go into the deep woods, and when we get ready to come home we'll just turn round and follow our tracks back to the tavern."

Eric shouted to hear the echo, and the cliffs of White Patch threw back his happy voice. His snowshoes were a foot shorter than his mother's, and they had little tassels of red yarn all up and down the sides. What could be better fun, he thought, than to go on and on through the woods, pushing aside snow-laden branches, running down little slopes, leaping from the tops of snowbanks—and all the while to have your mother laughing and happy, too, doing the same things you are doing, while her cheeks glow rosily like maple leaves in autumn.

There seemed to be no such thing as danger then, but suddenly mother stopped in a little open glade and looked up at the sky. Snow was floating lazily down, and while they stood silent they could hear the whisper of the flakes among the branches of the trees.

"Turn round, Eric," said mother. "We must go back before the snow covers our tracks."

They ran through the darkening forest, following the marks of their

snowshoes. Once they lost the way for a few moments, and after that they went more slowly.

"We must watch carefully," said mother; and Eric thought that there was worry in her voice.

Fifteen minutes later they both stopped and peered at the snow ahead.

"They're not there," said Eric. "I can't see a single track. The snow has covered them all up."

"Well, let's go straight ahead," said mother; and so they tramped on through the snowstorm, while the woods grew darker and darker.

"Keep close behind me and don't be afraid," said mother, when night had shut down upon them.

"Of course I'm not afraid," said Eric, thinking of what his father had said; and the words were no more than across his lips when something happened that brought to him the greatest fear of his life.

He saw his mother pitch forward as if her foot had suddenly caught in something, and heard her strike heavily against a tree trunk. She did not answer when he called. Huddled in the snow she lay, and made no motion when Eric put his arm beneath her head and tried to lift her up.

Again and again Eric called her; again and again he stroked her face. It was of no use. He almost seemed to hear his father saying, "She's very, very precious to me, Eric," and he wanted to cry; but that, he knew, would do no good, and so he shouted for help instead.

The storm brought back no reply. Finally he gave it up.

There was only one thing to do, and he must do it quickly. If he could not bring help by calling, he must go for it. He took off his coat and put it over his mother to shelter her from the falling snow, and then with a great lump in his throat hurried away. Sometimes he stumbled against trees and fell, but he always scrambled up and ran on.

He was beginning to despair when through the darkness ahead he thought he saw a gleam of light. A moment later he was sure of it. Running forward, he came upon a rough-looking cabin, and, looking through the window, he saw a short, swarthy-faced man cooking something over the red coals in a stone fireplace.

"My mother's out there in the snow; help me get her!" cried Eric, opening the door and rushing in.

The man jumped round and stared at Eric as if he were a snow sprite.

"You mother?" he said. "Out dere in snow? I come quick!"

In ten seconds he had a lantern lighted and was out in the storm with Eric, following the marks of the little snowshoes. They found her at the foot of the tree where she had fallen, and the swarthy-faced man picked her up gently and plodded back toward the cabin, with Eric at his heels.

No sooner had they reached the warm glow of the fireplace than his mother opened her eyes and looked round. "Why, where are we?" she cried and held out her arms to Eric. "Dis my cabin," said the swarthy-faced man. "Me Bateese Duchane, trapper. You bump you head on tree. Now you safe. Bimeby I tak' you back Cedar Tavern."

Later, Eric's mother sat bundled in a great red blanket, drinking tea and feeling comfortable. Eric sat at her feet, toasting his toes on the hearth and thinking of the long letter that he would write to his father as soon as they got back to Cedar Tavern. He would say, "I did take care of her," and he would sign it "Eric, the son of a soldier."—Youth's Companion.

Fixed Prices for Bran and Shorts.

The Food Controller has fixed the prices for bran and shorts at \$24.50 and \$29.50 respectively, per ton in bulk, f.o.b., Fort William. The prices for feed at Western points will be the fixed prices less freight to Fort William. At places west of the points of milling, the prices will be the Fort William fixed prices less freight from the mills to Fort William, plus freight from the point of milling to destination. At Eastern points the prices will be the fixed prices, plus freight from Fort William. The cost in bags will be about \$6.30 per ton higher in each case.

Hyacinths and other bulbs that have been kept in the cellar or other dark, cool place may now be brought into the light, provided the pots are filled with roots. If not well rooted select the best and let the others remain until ready.

Sweets made from honey should be as far as possible encouraged.

"INVISIBLE WRITING."

Spies Employ This Means of Conveying Military Information.

When men and women travellers are stripped and their skins tested with lemon juice and chemicals to make sure that no invisible writing exists thereon, spy precautions may, as in Germany, be regarded as carried to the ultimate extreme.

There is nothing new, of course, about invisible writing. On the contrary, it is very old. So-called "sympathetic inks," used for the purpose, date back to the early middle ages and perhaps beyond.

Letters written with certain of these inks show nothing but blank paper until the latter is exposed to heat. Thus in a movie play or on the stage a conspirator will hold a document to the fire or close to a candle as a pre-

liminary to reading the message or information that it carries, yet conceals.

Anybody may make an ink of this kind by mixing chloride of cobalt with a little gum arabic. It should be used with a quill pen. The writing made with it is pink in color, but disappears when dry. When exposed to heat, however, it reappears quite legibly, assuming a green hue.

A letter written with a solution of iodide of starch in water is perfectly legible for a few days. It is not, properly speaking, in the "invisible" category—at all events, for a while. But writing thus made has the advantage that after a week or two it fades out and vanishes forever, leaving no evidence that can be used against its author.

Ordinary rice water, used instead of ink, cannot be seen when dry, but turns blue when iodine is applied to it. There are many other recipes for sympathetic inks, the number and variety of which make very difficult the problem of detecting the spies who, it is said, are now employing this means extensively for conveying information of military value to the Germans.

