



The Home Department

Conducted by
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"Begin It Today"

Although it takes so many months
To make a single year,
Yet far more quickly than you think
The months will disappear.
The very centuries have wings;
New years grow old and gray;
The work which you intend to do—
Begin it now—today.

Within a single, fleeting hour
How many minutes lie!
But even as you wait to count
The sixty minutes fly.
If you've a tender word to say,
A kindly deed to do,
Suppose you do it now—today!
I would, if I were you.

—H. A. B., in Philanthropist.

Some Good Christmas Presents

Several have asked suggestions for "something out of the ordinary" as a Christmas present for the housewife. My experience with the housewives is that they are "just like other folks," and will appreciate one of the tools of their trade in the way of improved kitchen or household conveniences. Three circulars have just been laid on my desk, and as I have used the articles advertised, I can assure you, any one of them will please the house-mother. The first is for a coffee percolator, and the use of it insures good, wholesome coffee beverage that will "set well" on almost any stomach. The price of the article is not less than \$2 for a four-cup size, but one large enough for a good sized family will cost \$3, and it is worth it. There are imitations, and cheaper vessels; but it pays to get the good one and then care for it. Another is a "complete house-cleaning machine," with which the floor may be scrubbed without getting down on one's knees, the mop wrung out and the floor dried without twisting by the hands, and it can be used for dusting and cleaning walls and ceilings, brushing or wiping the dirt off, cleaning the wood work, and in many ways saving the strength of the worker. The price is \$1.50, and if you don't like it after a month's trial, your money will be refunded. For cutting vegetables or hard fruits in fancy forms, the corrugated-bladed knife, or any one of dozens of cutting devices, may be had at a cost of 25 cents up. For this purpose, the French fried potato cutter is especially desirable, and is higher priced.

The shops swarm with household helps, but one should use common sense in their purchases. A first rate way would be to give the amount to be spent to the housewife, and let her select her own devices. What one would like, another would have no use for, and refuse to use it, if brought in the house. Even housewives have their idiosyncracies, which may not be understood by another.

Comforts of Cold Weather

One of our housewives writes me, "I always enjoy a cold or a rainy day, for then it is a real pleasure to get up a good dinner, and I always try to have something studied out that will require long, slow cooking, so I can use the fire that must be kept up in the kitchen." Especially should the soup kettle be in requisition on such days, and with its use a very appetizing and wholesome dinner can be made of the "scraps"

usually fed to the chickens by the housewife. It is well to feed the chickens; but it is a little extravagant to feed high-priced cooked foods to them, when they can be fed to the family at a saving. While soup may not be a very heavy nourisher, it is a stimulant and an appetizer, and has a very important place in the home diet. In the cities, the meat is trimmed very closely from the bone, but enough meat is left to give a very good flavor to the stock made by boiling the bone, and many scraps of left-over foods, a few vegetables, and some seasoning will often make a satisfactory and most economical meal for the whole family. All scraps and broken bits of bread can be used with soup, and nearly all kinds of vegetables can be put to good use in the boiling water. Where the farmer kills his own beef and mutton, there are many scraps that should go into the soup kettle instead of the chicken feed. Bones from poultry, turkeys, chickens, or game, can be used; bits of ham, or boiled ham bones are good. Most of leg bones are rich in gelatin. The bones or meat should be put on in cold water, and brought to a boil, then set where it will simmer for hours; it is best strained and set away until the next day, but can be used at once. The water should be strained to remove all bones or strings, before adding the vegetables, and the vegetables should be allowed to cook until perfectly soft, rubbed through a sieve or colander, and added to the soup liquid. The seasoning may be very simple, or may be a mixture of many things blended. When the boys and men come in from a day's work in the cold, they can comfortably put away a lot of well-made soup, with grateful thanks to the cook.

Ripened Meats

People accustomed to fowl and other meats bought in the markets are apt to be disappointed in the quality of the poultry they raise with such care and expectation in their home yards. They find it not so tender, and of less delicate flavor, and pleasant anticipations of the delights of suburban life are often thus ruthlessly crushed. The principle reason of this is, the unripe condition in which the home-dressed fowls are invariably cooked. Caterers who give the greatest pleasure to their customers do not serve them with fowls just slaughtered; all meats are better when kept as long as possible without being actually tainted. An old fowl well ripened will furnish a far more savory dish than the finest chicken just killed. The toughness of meats is very often solely due to the fact that it has not hung long enough, and it is claimed that in one famous chop-house, orders for a meal are given six weeks ahead so that the meat may be absolutely perfect. This is one reason why western-dressed meats are crowding out the home-slaughtered. The family butcher does not give his meats time to ripen, while the meats on the market are improved by time. Meats used for foods the same day the animal is killed are unfit for foods except for the savage appetite.

Cleaning the Meat Barrel

One of the most frequent causes of spoiled meat is the fact that sour,

unclean barrels are used. The barrel should be washed as clean as hot water and a scrubbing brush can make them, then filled with clean, sweet hay, and a boilerful or more boiling water poured over the hay; cover the barrel closely with an old clean blanket or piece of carpet, and leave until the water is cold. Then empty and refill with fresh hay and fresh water, a second time. When cold and emptied, the barrel should be sweet and clean.

For the Toilet

The winter season is always a terror to the woman who likes to look well, and is willing to take a little trouble to keep the looks. Wherever coal fires are used, whether in one's own house, or in factories, or other smoke-making places, the air is always charged with particles of soot, and soot is by no means helpful to the ordinary person's skin. If the skin is allowed to roughen or chap, it seems almost impossible to get it clean, and soap and hot water should not be used. An excellent thing for cleaning the face is the bran bag—a little bag of muslin filled with four or five tablespoonfuls of wheat bran, or oat meal, used as you would soap. It is cleansing and healing. Where the hands must be washed many times a day, as in the housework, these bags should be used freely. In washing the face, neck and ears, the cleansing should be done at night. Warm (not hot) water, a mild soap, and plenty of cold cream are necessary. To remove the grime, apply a coating of cold cream, leave on ten minutes, then rub off with soft, clean old cloths. You will be astonished at the dirt the cream will loosen. Then wash the face and neck with the soap and water, and after the cleansing, use plenty of warm, clear water to rinse off the soap. A dash of cold water to close the pores should be used. An astringent to use after the soap may be a spoonful of vinegar, toilet water, cologne, or witch hazel. After this apply a little more cold cream, gently rubbing it in, to restore the oil taken away by the soap. The rinsing to remove any particle of soap must be thorough, using several waters, if need be. The drying should be done with a warm, soft towel. There are many recipes for cleansing creams that are inexpensive, and better than that on sale at the druggists, as there will not be either benzoin or alcohol used to prevent it becoming rancid. Make in small quantities.

Good Candies

M. R. asks for a marsh mallow candy recipe. Get of the druggist four ounces of best gum arabic, and put it into a cup of cold water until dissolved; strain, and add half a cup of powdered sugar, and set over a slow fire to cook, stirring constantly until the mixture is like honey; have ready the stiffly-beaten whites of two eggs, and stir in gradually; flavor with rose, lemon, or vanilla to taste; pour into pans that have been dusted with corn starch. When cold, cut in small cubes and roll in cornstarch. Put in tin boxes, and they will keep—until used.

Mrs. S. asks for a method of making uncooked candies, given some years ago in our department. Here it is:

French Cream Candies (un-

cooked).—Mix whites of two eggs and their bulk in cold water in a large bowl—that is, equal quantities by measure of egg-white and water; beat very well, add a dessert-spoonful of extract of vanilla and about two pounds of "XXX" confectioner's sugar (finest grade of powdered sugar), well sifted; beat the mixture well and the paste is ready. Take one half pound of fine dates, remove the stones, put in the space a piece of the candy paste and roll each one in fine granulated sugar. For fig candy, split one-half pound of figs and place a layer of the paste on a board well sprinkled with powdered sugar to prevent sticking, then a layer of the split figs, then a layer of the paste; press gently together and cut into squares. Nuts of any kind may be rolled and spread between layers of the paste in the same way. Nut candy may be made by using the kernels for the foundation, or inside of little balls of the paste, rolled in sugar and set away to harden. Coconut candy may be made by rolling out a portion of the paste on the sugared board, sprinkle with shredded or grated coconut, rolled a few times with the roller and cut into squares. Coconut and other nuts may be used together. Walnut candy is made of English walnut meats; shape little dabs of the paste into round, flat balls, press on each half a nut meat, and set to harden. Other nuts may be used in the same way—pecan, hickory, etc. A dollar's worth of all the ingredients together will make many pounds of the finest candies.

Some Requested Information

The proportion of salt used in cooking vegetables is a tablespoonful to the gallon of water; a piece of red pepper, the size of a dime, dropped into the vegetables when started to cooking, aids in overcoming the disagreeable odor many give out, and will not be noticeable in the flavor.

"White sauce" is nothing more than the old-time "milk gravy" of our childhood. It is made by stirring a tablespoonful of flour into a couple of tablespoonfuls of nice drippings or butter, stirring until perfectly blended, and cooked, but not browned; then, turn into the skillet two cups of hot milk, or milk and water, stirring constantly until smooth, let boil up for a minute, then add a little salt, and pour out into the gravy bowl. It can be made with water alone; but part milk improves it wonderfully.

Bread that will not stand up, but spread, in the dough state, over the pan, has been made with grown or sprouted wheat flour, and is hopeless used with yeast. The rest of the flour should be used for griddle cakes and pastry. For using compressed yeast, to one quart of lukewarm liquid (half water and half milk is preferred), use two half-ounce cakes of compressed yeast, stirring until completely dissolved; add one tablespoonful of salt and three of sugar. When salt and sugar are dissolved, stir in well-sifted flour until a dough sufficiently stiff to be turned out from the mixing bowl to the molding board in a mass, is formed; knead well, adding a little flour now and then until the mass becomes smooth and elastic and ceases to stick to fingers or board; put into a well-greased bowl, brush lightly with butter or drippings, cover with a cloth and set to rise in a warm place until light—about two hours. As soon as light, knead well again, put back into the bowl, and set in warm place for one hour; when light again, form into loaves with little kneading, brush with drippings, let rise again to double the size of original loaf, and then bake. After molding into loaves, it will re-