

## HOW THEY SAVE MONEY IN FRANCE.

THERE is a saying to the effect that a French family can live in comfort upon what another family of the same size wastes, writes Mrs. Moses P. Handy, wife of the United States Commissioner to the Paris Exhibition; and while this is a strong way of putting it, there is no doubt that in the average household many things find their way to the slop pail which in France would reappear in the guise of toothsome dishes. For example, I have eaten a delicious soup made from the water in which spinach had been boiled and the bones of a small chicken from which every particle of meat had apparently been removed. Economy is a cardinal virtue in France; and the thrifty housewife saves on everything; not a scrap of meat, of bread, or of cold vegetable, is thrown away. Dainty rechauftes, crisp croquettes, salads, etc., are all concocted from materials which many a housewife, who regards herself as a model of economy, would reject as not worth keeping. Every drop of the water in which either meat or vegetables have been boiled is kept to form the basis of soup, so exquisitely flavored that one forgets to question whether it is nourishing or not, having full evidence of its appetizing qualities. Still, the French as a rule do not season food highly, the result is chiefly accomplished by the judicious use of herbs. They use many of these to which the English cook is a stranger; for instance, the marigold, which is quite as popular in France as either sweet marjoram or summer savory is with New England housewives. No dinner, however simple, is complete without a salad, and it may be fairly said that "every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth," has its place in the French cuisine. They say in England that a French cook will make ten dishes from a nettle top, and certainly dozens of things which we regard as worthless weeds find ready sale in the markets of Paris, and a place on French tables. Of late years we have learned to value the dandelion, which, boiled green like spinach, or bleached for use as a salad, has from time immemorial been a standard dish with French epicures, who like it none the less because French physicians advise its use as second only to spinach from a medicinal standpoint. The little tongue-shaped leaf, which springs up so freely on freshly tilled ground in America that it is properly known as the corn weed, is also highly valued for food, both cooked and raw, the preference being as a salad with plain dressing, while the leaf is in its first tenderness. The peppergrass is another favorite, and the sorrel which, indigenous with us everywhere east of the Rocky Mountains, is looked upon as a harmless weed, sometimes chewed by children, is a delicacy in Paris, where it forms the foundation of one of the most delicate of cream soups, and serves also both as a salad and a garnish for meats.

The French cook accomplishes miracles with that bugbear of the housewife, stale bread. She would consider it an actual sin to throw away a single crust, and always keeps an abundant supply of bread crumbs for frying bits of meat and the numberless croquettes which are among her specialties. Bread puddings in France are as light as foam, while the flavoring and the sauce (the French excel in sauces) make them something to be remembered by the tourist who has partaken only of the heavy English puddings made from the same basis. The French man or French woman regards cooking as a science, and behaves accordingly. They cook everything and anything so that all the best qualities are brought out, and make most delicious viands of most unpromising materials. Rump steaks, as served in the restaurants of Paris, are more toothsome and tender than porter house in most other places. The French chef broils his steak over a charcoal fire, glowing red, and so manipulates it that every inch is equally broiled, turning it so dexterously that all the juices are retained. The performance resembles the feats of a prestigitateur.

It is scarcely necessary to say that not a bit of dripping is ever wasted in a French kitchen. The perfection of French

fries is due chiefly to the fact that plenty of fat is used, and that the thing fried is wholly immersed. This fat is carefully kept for the purpose, clarified as often as necessary, and used again and again.

Fuel is extremely expensive in France, and the strictest economy is observed with regard to its use. French cooking stoves are made with several holes on top, so that one, two, or half a dozen separate fires may be built, according to the number of dishes to be cooked, and the charcoal fire is extinguished as soon as its work is done.

A great aid to kitchen economy is the fact that one can buy the exact quantity of whatever article of food is required, no matter how small. Everybody does this, and the dealer is as gracious over the purchase of an ounce of flour, or a sou's worth of tea or coffee, as our grocers are in selling pounds. No one is ashamed to ask for a single slice of lemon, or for the wing or the leg of a fowl; indeed, it is quite an ordinary thing to see a French woman buying the head and feet of a chicken for soup. Fruits and vegetables are usually sold by weight, and eggs also; which is much the fairest way, both to purchaser and vendor. Large helpings at table are considered bad form. The French are an abstemious people, and children are taught that it is ill-bred to take more of anything on their plates than they are sure to eat, and the habit holds when they are men and women. It is a common affair for the hostess at a dinner party to arrange with her fruiterer to take back, when the feast is over, any fruit which is not eaten, and a millionaire host will sometimes laughingly assure his guests that they need have no scruples at partaking freely of the fruit, since it was raised in his own hothouses, and cannot be returned "on account." A single slice of canteloupe, the quarter of a pear, or the half of a peach or apple, is often served as a portion at very swell dinners; it is only fair to say that this small amount probably costs more money than the lavish helpings at American tables.

Waste of any kind is condemned; a weakness of the nouveau riche, which is disdained instead of admired. "We are taught economy as a religious duty," said the wife of a rich man who had been accustomed to wealth from her cradle; "if there is no need to save for ourselves, we should do so in order that we may give to others. The good God will not forgive us if we waste the food which should feed His poor, or the wealth which should clothe and shelter them."

Everybody saves. The millionaire does not light a fire in his office unless it is cold enough to render it necessary. The well-to-business man rides down town on the omnibus instead of calling a cab, although the cab service in Paris is good and not dear. The French woman takes excellent care of her clothes, be she rich or poor; and although Paris is the most expensive of cities to the wealthy tourist, there is no place in the world where more can be done with a little money, provided one knows how.

## AN OLD HOUSE.

RECENTLY a visit was paid by the Jewish Historical Society of England to Lincoln, which is recognized as the most interesting city in all England to students of early Jewish history in that country. The old Jew's house at the bottom of Steep Hill and the house of Aaron the Jew at the corner of Christ's Hospital Terrace, both came in for close attention and detailed examination. As Aaron died in 1186, the house cannot be less than 750 years old, and it is absolutely the oldest private dwelling house of stone in England, and probably in all Europe. Aaron, of Lincoln, was a very distinguished man in his time, being, indeed, one of the Rothschilds of the period, and when he died Henry II. seized his treasure and debts. The treasure was lost on the way to Normandy, but for many years after Aaron's death his debts were collected by a special branch of the Exchequer, two treasurers and two clerks being kept fully employed in keeping the accounts. His monetary transactions were thus obviously on an almost national scale.