

About the House.

BAD AND GOOD FAIRIES OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

Notwithstanding all the talk about bacteria, there are still numbers of people who have the vaguest possible idea, or no idea at all, of what they are, or of what an understanding of them must mean to every housekeeper.

For many years, scientists wrestled with the question as to whether bacteria were a minute form of plant or of animal life. Of late years, they have relegated them to the plant division. Whether this classification will stand or not remains to be seen: so multitudinous are the changes in the theories of the scientific world, and so marvellous are the revelations which open up from time to time, that it is impossible to declare in regard to any pronouncement, "This shall stand for aye."

For the present, however, it may be taken that bacteria are minute parasitic plants, though endowed with the power of moving from place to place with great activity, and devoid of the green color which usually marks vegetable life. Some of them, as seen under the microscope, are globular in form, some rod-like, some spiral, yet not one, when taken individually, can be discerned by the naked eye. In this, perhaps, consists the chief danger of the more disastrous species. An invisible foe is always the worst of foes.

Wherever warmth, moisture and organic matter exist, there are bacteria, countless in number. They float about in a dry form in the summer air, ready to fly into your milk and make it sour, or to do a variety of other things more or less salutary. In the steam-laden dust that may have collected about the almost unnoticed crevices of your kitchen or milk-room, they hold high revel. Above all, where carelessness or dirt reign are they found in countless millions. Their prolificness is prodigious, and their method of reproducing themselves simple to an extreme. In their least complex form, they simply contract in the middle, then break off, and two organisms exist where there was but one before. As this process occupies only about 20 minutes (longer in some species), so long as the favorable conditions—warmth, moisture, organic matter—exist, and as it goes on indefinitely, the rapidity of increase may be vaguely evident.

Among the vicious kinds are those which emanate from and cause disease, typhoid germs, the tuberculous bacilli, etc. The sputum of a consumptive is full of these germs, hence the great care necessary to see that it is destroyed as soon as possible, and before it has time to dry, when it is likely to scatter death and destruction far and wide. And it must not be forgotten that an atom of sputum the size of a pinhead may contain thousands of bacteria.

Now, to come to the practical part of it—how to destroy or prevent these harmful organisms. In answering this question, it is absolutely necessary to remember a few facts: (1) Bacteria may be killed by extreme heat,—for which reason we sterilize sealers and help to disinfect rooms by a liberal use of boiling water, applied with a small mop. (2) They will not develop in extreme cold—a fact which has been taken advantage of in cold-storage systems, the use of refrigerators, of ice about milk cans, etc. (3) They often succumb to bright sunlight,—hence the necessity for much sunshine in our houses, and a partial accounting for the remarkable immunity from disease which attends those who live much in the open air. (4) They are not fond of excessive cleanliness. Soap, carbolic acid and other disinfectants by no means help them on in their malpractice. (5) Stagnation of the air favors them, hence the necessity for continuous ventilation. . . . It may, perhaps, be mentioned here that as bacteria are heavier than air, they are usually found in greater numbers close to the floor than at a higher altitude.

From the facts above tabulated, the alert housekeeper may deduce many conclusions which must help her in her housekeeping.

She will realize that food should never be left unnecessarily exposed, especially in a recently swept room, in which bacteria are still likely to be floating about even in greater numbers than ordinarily. She will understand why it is necessary to keep fruit, etc., air-tight, and why coverings of paraffine or paper dipped in alcohol are often recommended for the surface of fruits and jellies. Since bacteria, as well as moulds, thrive in moist rather than in dry air, she will know the advisability of keeping fruit or anything else that will spoil, in cool, dry quarters, or, if the air is at all damp, of keeping vessels of unslaked lime near to absorb the moisture.

Since she understands that dust is a harborage for microbes, she will know to wipe it up gently with a dampened cloth rather than to flip it about through the air and so scatter its powers for mischief-making to new realms.

Knowing that millions of these bad fairies may exist in the seam of a milk can, she will understand the necessity of thorough washing, followed by sterilizing with boiling water, and a sun-bath to rout any remaining intruders.

—And so it goes ad infinitum.

In closing, it may be necessary to remark that not all bacteria are harmful.

While we enjoy the benefits conferred by the good agents, may we never cease to wage war upon the evil, realizing the importance they have in regard to health, happiness and economy.

SOME RHUBARB RECIPES.

Stewed Rhubarb.—Peel and cut in short lengths, stew in a very little water, and sweeten while hot. A piece of orange peel boiled with the rhubarb will improve it.

Rhubarb Dessert.—Cook a quart of chopped rhubarb in a very little water until soft; press through colander; sweeten; flavor with lemon essence, and let get cold. Beat the white of 2 eggs stiff with 2 tablespoons powdered sugar, whisk lightly into the rhubarb, dust the top with sugar and rolled almonds, and serve.

Steamed Rhubarb Pudding.—Six stalks rhubarb, 1 cup suet, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt, 1 cup sugar, 2 cups flour. Chop the suet until fine; mix with it the salt and flour, and add enough cold water to make a dough. Roll into a sheet, and, with part of it, cover the bottom of a baking-dish. Fill with rhubarb, adding the sugar. Cover the top with the remainder of the dough, cutting a hole in the center to

stewed and sweetened rhubarb. Pour boiling water on a pint of bread crumbs, let soak until soft, and drain. Add to the crumbs, one beaten egg, a spoonful of sugar, and a little nutmeg. Turn this over the rhubarb in the cups, and bake. Serve with cream and sugar.

Rhubarb Jam.—Wash young stalks, and cut up without peeling. Allow to each pound $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. sugar. Let stand over night, bring slowly to a boil, then boil and stir well for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. Put into jelly tumblers, covered closely.

Rhubarb Custard Pie.—Stew 1 pint chopped rhubarb in a very little water, and press through a colander. Add 1 cup sugar, mixed with 1 tablespoon flour and 2 beaten eggs. Line a plate with pastry, brush over with the white of an egg, pour in the rhubarb, and bake without a top crust. Cover with stiffly-whipped cream before serving, or with a meringue of beaten white of egg and sugar.

Rhubarb and Pineapple.—Cut the rhubarb fine. Mix with an equal quantity or one-third the quantity of chopped pineapple; cover thickly with sugar, and let stand over night. Next day, simmer gently until cooked.

Rhubarb and Figs.—Take 6 lbs. chopped rhubarb, 1 lb. figs also chopped, and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. candied lemon peel cut fine. Cover with 5 lbs. sugar, and let stand over night, then cook slowly.

SOME MEAT RECIPES.

Potatoes and Bacon.—Cut the bacon into large dice, and fry until slightly colored. Drain, and mix with creamed potatoes, made in the usual way with cream or milk sauce. Sprinkle with minced parsley before serving.

Good Curry.—Slice 2 onions and 2 apples, and cook in a little butter. Add a little ginger, mace, nutmeg, and cloves. Mix 2 tablespoons curry powder with milk, add and stir, then add a cup of stock or gravy. Let boil, then add chopped meat, and simmer $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours for raw meat, $\frac{1}{2}$ hour for cooked.

Beef Loaf.—Two lbs. round steak minced finely, 4 crackers rolled, 2 onions chopped, 1 egg, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk, salt and pepper to taste. Mix and bake in a bread-pan. Let cool gradually, then set in a very cold place.

Canning Beef to Keep Through Hot Weather.—Cut up parts that you wish to can, and season to taste. Pack tightly in sealers, with enough fat to form a scum over the meat when cooked. Put lids on without rubbers, and place jars upon wooden strips in the wash-boiler, then fill with water to within one-third of the top of jars. Boil slowly for five hours, adding hot water when needed, and, when done, lift out, remove lid of jars, place rubber on, and screw down as for fruit. Set away, when cool, for summer use. Suet may be tried out and poured over the top to make the keeping doubly sure, and rubbers should be new.

THE CATTLE COUNTRY.

Up the dust-enfolded prairie,
Foot-falls soft and sly,
Velvet cushioned, wild and wary;
Then—the coyote's cry.

Rush of hoofs and roar and rattle;
Beasts of blood and breed—
Twenty thousand frightened cattle;
Then the wild stampede.

Pliant lasso, circling wider,
With the frenzied flight;
Loping horse and cursing rider
Plunging through the night.

Rim of dawn the darkness losing,
Trail of blackened loam,
Perfume of the sage brush oozing
On the air like foam.

Foothills to the Rockies lifting,
Brown, and blue and green;
Warm Alberta sunlight drifting
Over leagues between.

That's the country of the ranges,
Plain and prairie-land;
And the God who never changes,
Holds it in His hand.

—E. Pauline Johnson, in Canadian Magazine.



The Honeymoon.

"For two alone, there in the hall,
Is spread the table round and small;
Upon the polished silver shine,
The evening lamps, but, more divine,
The light of love shines over all;
Of love, that says not mine and thine,
But ours, for ours is thine and mine.

They want no guests to come between
Their tender glances like a screen,
And tell them tales of land and sea,
And whatsoever may betide
The great, forgotten world outside;
They want no guests; they needs must be
Each other's own best company."
—Longfellow.

nor is the work even of those that appear so always disastrous. The "culture" or "starter" which gives the nutty flavor to good butter, is due to the work of a salutary species; so is fermentation, and the turning of fermented liquors into vinegar.

On the other hand, even those which cause putrefaction have a good work to perform. Were it not for their power to break up the constituents of organic bodies, all dead animals would remain as they fell, a cumberance to the ground; decomposition would be a thing unknown.

We may well look upon bacteria as the good and bad fairies of the household.

let the steam escape. Place the dish in a steamer, and steam 2 hours. Serve with a sauce made of butter and sugar.

Rhubarb Gelatine Jelly.—Cut into bits, without peeling, and to each quart add a pint of water. Boil until in a mush, and strain. Reheat the juice, and make sweet. Measure, and for a pint and a half soak a good half package of gelatine in a half cup of cold water. When softened, add the hot rhubarb, pour into wet moulds, and set away in a cold place until firm. Serve with cream and sugar.

Rhubarb Cup Pudding.—Butter the cups, and into each put a large spoonful of