

Fresh Grapes all Winter.

My father, who was an ardent lover of the "fruit of the vine" always reserved so goodly a supply of grapes for winter that "we children" scarcely regarded them as more of a luxury than we did apples, as we had them for almost daily eating. His method for keeping them fresh and wholesome, was so simple that I wonder it has not been generally adopted, especially when I read recipes for packing grapes in bran, oats, cotton, etc., etc. This was his method: The grapes after being picked, were carefully assorted, only unbroken clusters being selected for winter. In a large iron spoon beeswax was melted, and the end of the stem of the cluster which was broken from the vine dipped in the melted beeswax, forming a seal over the end, so helping to prevent the escape of freshness in it. As fast as the clusters were so sealed they were carefully laid in a basket, the inside of which had been lined with paper (newspapers were frequently used). The bunches were laid side by side in the bottom of the basket, and when the layer was completed a paper was laid over the top, and so on, a layer of grapes and a layer of paper, until the top of the basket was reached, when paper was laid on the top. So with all the baskets, when they were stored in the cool, well ventilated room until freezing weather came, when they were removed to the cellar, which was a dry one. In this way the grapes kept nicely until spring. The chief thing to be observed was to handle the bunches carefully, so that none of the grapes were broken or loosened from the stem; the next to keep them dry and cool, but entirely free from frost.

Gathering and Keeping Fruit.

We have learned by experience that early-gathered winter apples keep the best. As soon as fruit has attained its full size, we advise that it be picked. In Central Illinois this will occur by the last of September; further north, a little earlier. A few days' neglect of this important duty may cause the premature ripening of the crop.

Apples gathered early do keep best, but it is at the expense of flavor. Our late varieties, especially the Newtown Pippin, should not be removed from the tree so long as they can safely remain without danger from frost. We have printed paragraphs about keeping fruit in sand, and here is another experience to the same effect, recorded in *The London Garden*, as occurring in England. The closing paragraph is undoubtedly true:—

He keeps fruit in this way all the year round. He has had French crabs two years old. The Catillac pear has remained sound twelve months. The fruit must be sound when stored, and the sand must be quite dry. The chief advantage of packing in sand are, the exclusion of air currents, the preservation from changes of temperature, and the absorption of moisture, which favors decay. Much will depend on the apartment in which the experiment is tried, a dry or cool one being best.

There is nothing new in the subjoined hints from an English orchardist, but they are sound and practical:—

Clean thoroughly and whitewash the fruit-room in advance of the harvest season, and allow the fresh air to purify it. Be careful not to house any imperfect specimens. Pick only when quite dry and do not handle carelessly. Never place the fruit more than two layers deep on the shelves—(we should say one layer would be preferable). Use no straw for the fruit to rest on—not any whatever. Admit plenty of air, except in severely cold weather. Avoid handling until the fruit is wanted for the table.

We might supplement the above with the remark that to ripen fruit handsomely and evenly it may be covered from air and light, though of course this does not help to preserve it. The Rev. E. P. Roe gives the following as his simple method of keeping grapes till New Year's, or later, as fresh and unchanged as the hour they were picked:—

I leave the clusters on the vines as late in the season as immunity from frost will permit, then provide myself with large earthen crocks or pots, and stiff brown or straw paper. In the middle of the day, when the berries are perfectly dry, fill the pots with thin layers of clusters, and a thickness of paper between them. Let them stand in some dry, cool place for three days uncovered; then put the covers on the pots, and paste thin brown paper over the covers, so as to keep them from the air.

Select a dry knoll, and bury the pots in the earth below all danger of frost; lay a broad board over the top of the pots and cover with earth, mounding the soil upon them so as to turn the water in every direction. When the ground begins to freeze hard it would be well to cover the mound with leaves or straw, so that the pots could be dug out more easily in severe weather.

We close with a remark made by a speaker at the Chatham Farmers' Club, as repeated in *The Courier*, of that town:—

If you want apples to keep they should be picked as soon as they get their growth, and picked carefully, without being bruised or scratched. There is a natural wax or bloom upon the fruit, which if bruised or scratched off, the fruit will spoil. He advised the use of new barrels to all such as were about to send fruit to market—it pays largely. An inferior fruit will look better in a new barrel than good fruit in an old barrel.

Chinese Oysters.

ODDITIES IN THEIR BREEDING AND PRESERVATION.

Like so many peculiar things in the Celestial Empire, the system of breeding the above-named bivalve differs widely from that pursued in Europe or America. In the southern parts of China "collectors" of bamboo are placed in the oyster-beds, much after the same fashion as the elaborate tiles and "hives" employed in France. Those oyster-catchers are, however, prepared in a curious manner. The cans are exposed for about two months to the rays of the sun, and then placed for a similar period in salt water, after which they are again dried for several days, the object being to preserve them from decay and prevent the twisting or wrapping of the bamboo. Notches are then cut in the canes, into which empty oyster shells are fixed, like so many cups, and thus prepared they are driven into the seashore between high and low water mark, and left standing to catch the young spat. Those localities are considered the best where the rise and fall of the tide is the greatest, so that the bivalves may be alternately covered by the flood and exposed to the air on the ebb. There the young oysters thrive well and develop rapidly, and are quite ready for the market when they are two years old. A large trade is carried on by the persons who pursue the calling, and who have many thousands of these collectors planted in favorable situations, and some successful breeders have been known to realize large fortunes. In China large quantities of the oyster are dried instead of being eaten in a fresh state. For that purpose they are taken from the shells, simply plunged into boiling water, and then removed at once, after which process they are exposed to the rays of the sun until every particle of moisture has evaporated. In that style they will keep for a length of time, and are said to preserve all the delicacies of their flavor. The finest and fattest bivalves, bred and fed on the leaves and cuttings of the bamboo, are selected for preparation by that method, those taken from the natural beds being inferior in quality, and not sufficiently plump to stand the operation.

Butter Stores in Paris.

While waiting for our breakfast one morning in a *cremerie* in Paris much frequented by foreigners, my friend Madame B— said, "I can point you out every American breakfasting here."

I looked around at the people seated at the different tables, and wondered if she were speaking seriously. In these days when fashion reduces costume and coiffure to such uniformity, and when the blood of every civilized race is mixed to a great extent with that of every other, distinguishing nationality at sight appeared to me impossible. I asked my friend her secret.

"Oh, it is no secret," she replied, smiling. "I don't pretend to tell except when they are taking breakfast. They all put salt on their butter."

"Your acuteness applies only to breakfast, then," I said. "At dinner it would not serve you, I suppose." I said this in a kind of savagery way, having the common weakness that makes all people abroad defend their countrymen.

"No," she said; "we never put butter on the dinner table"—a fact I had at the moment forgotten.

It is true that the only salted butter you ever find in Paris is the American butter (*beurre americain*), but there this is used only for cooking, and is never sold in butter stores, but in groceries. It

is our common tub butter. The French butter, the finest possible product of its kind, is sold in the butter stores scattered all over the city, which furnish nothing but dairy products and eggs. These stores are generally models of order and neatness. Young girls or women in snowy caps and aprons, courteous and obliging, serve the customers, while a responsible-looking matron sits at the desk, supervising the business and keeping the books. In Paris women seem to have monopolized the occupation of book-keeping.

One of the butter stores of Paris I remember especially, and will briefly describe it. It was near the grand market (La Halle). The large window on the right of the entrance always contained a large loosely arranged bouquet of fresh flowers, apparently gathered from some rural garden. There was nothing else in the window except a glass-covered stand containing Bondon cheese and the *double creme suisse*. Inside, there was a long horse-shoe counter or table, where eggs and cheese were sold, and on either side marble tables, each containing about four huge masses of butter, shaped like an inverted butter firkin. Over each mass was hung a delicate silver wire about two feet long, both ends terminating in a piece of cork. With this wire the sales-woman would cut, almost always exactly, any amount ordered, from a *demi-quart* (half a quarter) to a pound. It being a costly product, and always purchased daily, small quantities are the rule. To separate the quantity ordered, lay it on a square of delicate white paper on the little scales, weigh it, pinch the corners of the paper together, and place it on the cool lettuce in your basket, is the work of a very few seconds with these expert sales-women. Lettuces you would be sure to have in your basket, for no one goes to market in Paris without buying them, they are so crisp and fresh; and naturally you would purchase butter after everything else, that it might reach home in the freshest possible state. —MARIE HOWLAND, in *Harper's Magazine* for October.

Dusting.

Florence Nightingale says that dusting in these days is nothing but flapping dust from one part of a room to another, and says that she cannot imagine why it is done. A duster should be well shaken out of the window every few minutes, but if one be in too great a hurry to take the number of steps necessary for this, or if it be impossible to keep the window open while one is dusting, it is possible to rid the furniture of every atom of dust by using two cloths, one very slightly dampened and the other dry. The former will remove the dust, and the latter the slight moisture left by the former. Do not wet a duster which you mean to use in this way. Sprinkle it and roll it up over night as if you meant to iron it, and when you have done using it, dry it thoroughly, shake it out, plunge it in cold water, and dry it again. It is better to use bright-colored cloths if you can; they do not look quite so ugly when drying, and it is sometimes necessary to have them in sight during the process.

Nothing makes a woman age more rapidly than overwork; the reason, probably, that American women fade so soon. Sunshine, music, work and sleep are the greatest medicines for women, who need more sleep than men. Their nerves are more sensitive, and they are not so strong, and exhaustion from labor or pleasure takes place sooner with them than with men. Never permit yourself to be roused out of a deep sleep in the morning. In fact, one should never be awakened. The body rouses of itself when its demands are satisfied. Take a warm bath occasionally before going to bed—at least once a week. Retire as soon as you feel sleepy in the evening. Don't rouse yourself and go to work. You need rest then, and will pay for the trespass on your physical nature the next day if you disobey.

Baking Powder.

In this class of goods the "COOK'S FRIEND" has, by its uniformly excellent quality, taken the first place. It is as useful in the kitchen as the jar of salt—it saves time, temper and money, and is very healthy.

McLaren's Cook's Friend Baking Powder is retailed everywhere. It is protected by a trademark on every package, without which none is genuine.