

A Variety in Food Desirable.

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All are agreed, that neatness and good bread are absolute necessities in housekeeping. But in some homes, faultless in order and purity, where the weekly or daily baking shows only sweet, light loaves, puffy rolls, or crisp, delicious biscuits, there may be such a dreary sameness of fare, that one wickedly grows to sympathize with the murmuring fitfuls over the everyday manna. In planning variety for the family table, the housekeeper is also studying not only the pleasure, but the health of the household for which she provides. It is not enough that wholesome food be set forth, but such is the relation between palate and stomach, between taste and digestion, that variety in foods is both agreeable and needful. Farmers, poultrymen, all stock-raisers recognize this fact in providing for the creatures under their care. Then why should house-wives set forth such monotonously unvarying, or at the best such slightly varied meals during the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year? And it is the more surprising when really, there are few work-shops in which so much variety can be brought to pass as in the kitchen. Often a sickly, waning appetite can be stimulated by some exceedingly simple change in the commonest articles of daily food. Slices of dry bread are uninteresting, but the same bread, lightly browned, with a delicately poached egg resting on the crisp toast, becomes altogether another item in the list of fare. Cold beef or mutton have become standard dishes for wash-day



ORNAMENTAL MILKING STOOL.

or other often dinners. But an arrangement of pickles for the one, and jelly for the other, makes all the difference in the world between tasteful and dull vulgar housekeeping. Oatmeal porridge is a most excellent breakfast dish, yet it is well to occasionally substitute in its place berries or other fruit, or even a change to Pearl barley, or cracked wheat, or corn-meal mush. I know there are forty different ways in which to prepare potatoes, and should not be surprised to learn that there may be fifty, yet how few are the tables, especially in the country, where one sees this vegetable except in the stereotyped boiled whole, mashed, or fried. A great variety of delightful dishes can be made with apples at all seasons of the year, whether one has fresh or canned fruit. Breakfast, dinner, or tea need not lack a beautiful refreshment of one has a dozen or so of apples within reach. I do not comment on the best of what are known as "made dishes," which can be so quickly and easily converted out of remnants. I admit, that forethought and planning are necessary in order to secure a pleasant variety for the table, and the task is not always easy, when the housekeeper is herself weary and out of appetite. But if it be our duty to cater for the appetites of others,

it is worth the trouble to set on the family table—not courses of elaborate dishes—but a wholesome, agreeable, and yet economical diversity of food.

Little Girls' Aprons.

The prettiest apron worn now by little girls of from six to twelve years of age, is so simple in design that anyone can make it without a pattern. It consists simply of two straight breadths of Nan-keen or of plain goods, gathered on a strip of muslin work, which form a little yoke. Arm-holes are cut as shown in figure 1, and strokes made of the same

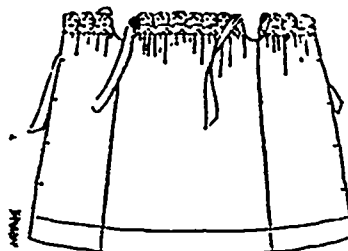


Fig. 1.—GIRL'S APRON OPEN.

material as the apron, are sewed on each side of them, and tied in bows on the shoulders, as seen in figure 2. The new material called Persian dinky, which is shaven and beautiful, looks very pretty over dark dresses, and is well adapted for this purpose. It may be purchased for twenty-eight cents a yard.

An Ornamented Milking Stool.

Who would think upon seeing a milking stool as it stands in the barnyard, that it could be made into the prettiest imaginable little seat for the parlor? Well, the change has been made, and can be made again, by any one who wishes to do so. First the legs of the stool black or gold them. Cover the seat with a piece of an old comfortable mat, then with some fabric that is bright and pretty. A bow of ribbon is fastened at the top of one of the legs; a smaller bow near the bottom of another leg, with the ribbon looped between them. A stool for ornamenting can be purchased at the agricultural warehouses for a small sum, which, after it is upholstered, will appear to be worth several dollars.

Cooking Vegetables.

SPINACH.—Spinach is the best of all greens, and what we say about this, applies to all other vegetables used as greens. Properly cooked, spinach is a most welcome vegetable in spring, but as often served, this, and other greens, are most indigestible. It is a common notion that greens of all kinds must be cooked with meat, hence they are boiled with a piece of salt pork, or of cured beef. When done the greens are taken up, leav-



Fig. 2.—GIRL'S APRON TIED.

perfectly drained, and served. Thus treated, each leaf is covered with a skin of grease, and no matter how much it may be drizzled with vinegar, is most indigestible. Spinach, and all other greens,

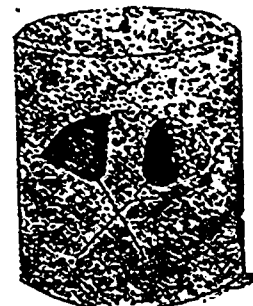
should be first thoroughly washed, and then plunged into boiling water which is slightly salted, and cooked, with the pot uncovered, until done quite tender. The covering of the pot causes the spinach to lose its green color. When done, the spinach is placed upon a colander to drain, and while there, chopped fine, unless, as some prefer, the chopping is done before it is put into the boiling water. When the spinach is well drained, and fine, place it in a sauce pan with a lump of butter, with a little salt, heat up and serve. Some add a very little nutmeg, but our own preference is to omit this.

CARROTS.—It is strange that carrots are so little used in this country as a table vegetable. Cooked in the following manner, they are always welcome upon the table of the writer. The roots are first scraped, then cut cross-wise into slices, about a quarter of an inch thick, the slices are then cut across to form small pieces or dice, which are then stewed in water until tender. A sauce is then made by adding salt, butter, sugar, and milk, sufficient to cover the pieces of carrot. A very slight addition of Cayenne, gives the sauce a piquancy acceptable to most persons. If those who have never tried carrots treated in this manner, should do so, they will be very apt to repeat it.

STEWED CELERY.—In preparing celery for the table, remove the outer stalks, and sufficiently blanched, to be eaten raw. Clean them thoroughly, and cut them into pieces half an inch long. Stew these pieces in water until quite tender. Drain off the water, add butter, a little sugar, and sufficient milk to make a sauce to cover the celery, besides salt and pepper. Heat up to boiling and serve. We should not be surprised if, after one trial of this, the entire heads of celery should be treated in the same manner.

To Keep Ice-Water.

By surrounding the pitcher with a non-conducting covering, ice-water may be kept cool for a long



COVER FOR ICE-WATER PITCHER.

time. The container here shown is made of heavy brown paper, interlined with three layers of cotton batting. A cover is made to fit around the pitcher, and a round piece fitted to the top of that. These are overlaid together. A cover is made to slip over this of a pretty pattern of cotton, some appropriate design can be selected, or it can be made of a plain color, and ornamented to suit the taste. Handles made of picture cord, are drawn through each side to lift it up by.

Some Good Recipes.

BOILED SAUCE FOR EGGS.—Beat up the yolks of six fresh-laid eggs with six heaping tablespoonsful of powdered loaf sugar; add a half pint of good cooking wine. Put the mixture in a small pitcher, place this in a saucepan full of boiling water, and heat up the sauce for about ten minutes with a slow fire.

BARTON'S FRESH PASTRY.—Beat two cups of corn meal in a quart of water till it is almost like heavy pudding. Add one tablespoonful of butter, two cups of sugar, three eggs, and sugar according to taste. Bake one hour in a slow oven.