

## CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH



### MODERN METHODS OF CANNING

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WE do well to take a lesson from the bees and in the long summer days store up food for the winter. If we can kill bacteria in food and then seal tightly, it will keep indefinitely. This we do in canning. The growth of bacteria in the food is prevented by sterilization and is kept sterile by hermetically sealed jars.

With the whole country calling for economy as well as increased food production, it becomes a problem of national importance to prevent the wastage of food. This may be done by canning and thus put to profitable use the surplus products of vegetable gardens and orchards and in this way insure a supply of fruits and vegetables for a time when the fresh products are not available. It gives the much needed variety to the winter menu and very materially reduces the high cost of living.

It is natural for the thrifty person in prosperous times to give some thought to a possible time of need and thus preparation is made for the future. Winter's diet need no longer be distinguished by lack of fruit and vegetables. Not only has nature been persuaded to prolong her period of production, but also ways have been perfected for the preservation of the perishable crops of summer. Preservation of food in the home, particularly in the farm home, is a very important part of the housekeeper's responsibilities. The thrifty housekeeper will make a greater effort than usual this year to have her shelves well stocked with provisions of many kinds for the coming winter. Prices that soared to a dizzy height last year will again soar; also, now it is a patriotic demand that the garden surplus be canned, thus releasing other foodstuffs for consumption overseas.

Many of the important factors of food preservation were known years ago, and food was kept by drying, salting, smoking and by a low temperature. It has been left to civilization and to the advance of science to give reasons and perfect methods.

Our grandmothers believed that air caused foods to spoil, for they learned by experience that when fruit was cooked and put away in sealed jars from which all air was excluded, it seemed to keep fairly well; if food spoiled after such careful treatment it was believed to be owing to some failure to exclude air. We know now that merely removing air will not secure the keeping qualities of foods. When the canned foods of olden times kept, it was not because air had been removed, but because all life processes had been destroyed in the cooking and further entrance of more organisms had been prevented by keeping the food in air-tight jars. The presence of air in a jar will not cause food to spoil, provided the air is sterile, that is, provided it has been freed from all living organisms.