

Household Suggestions.

THE PICNIC BASKET.

By Sophie K. Underwood.

Don't start on a picnic unless you are taking a good lunch and plenty of it. Plan a day beforehand, if you are one of those unlucky creatures who are possessed of a short memory, and make a little list of what you will need for the occasion, for verily to be ten miles from home and to discover that you have forgotten the lemonade is enough to turn a festive occasion into a most unpleasant one.

The sandwich is the picnic stand-by, of course, and unusually good ones can be made by baking a pan of little round rolls, cutting the tops nearly off when they are cold, scooping out some of the crumb, and filling them with chicken chopped and reduced to a stiff paste with cream. They must be seasoned, mixed with mayonnaise, pepper, and celery salt if liked.

For a simpler sandwich, butter white bread thinly, and place between two slices a thin slice of cold chicken and a thin slice of cold ham.

A streamed brown-bread loaf a day old, cut in slices, and spread with a mixture of Neufchatel cheese and chopped stuffed olives, makes sandwiches which never satisfy the demand for more.

If you are going to build a camp-fire, take some thin slices of bacon or a dozen frankfurters, and toast them over the fire. These will necessitate preparing some long rolls, split and lightly buttered, and for the frankfurters one needs also a little wide-mouthed bottle of prepared mustard.

All of these sandwiches and rolls may be kept fresh and moist by wrapping in paraffin paper, or if this is not at hand, in an old napkin or tea-towel wrung as dry as possible out of very hot water. Cream the butter used in spreading the sandwiches, and see that the bread of which they are made is twenty-four hours old.

Those Delicious Stuffed Eggs.

Stuffed eggs are a most agreeable addition to the picnic lunch and may be prepared in a variety of ways. The eggs must be boiled hard, dropped at once into cold water, and when cool, shelled. The whites are then cut off in lengthwise halves, the yolks mashed and seasoned, mixed with mayonnaise, shaped into balls, and replaced in the whites.

For stuffed eggs with meat, add to the yolks half the quantity of finely-chopped ham or the same quantity of finely-chopped chicken. Cream or melted butter may be used to moisten the mixture if preferred to mayonnaise. Salt, pepper, lemon-juice and cayenne are the seasonings to use.

Saratoga chips may be either bought or made. For the benefit of those who are far from the delicatessen store, here is a good recipe: Pare, and slice very thin medium-sized potatoes. Let the slices stand in very cold water for an hour and a half. Drain on a towel. Fry in deep fat until delicately browned, remove to brown paper to absorb the superfluous fat, and sprinkle with salt.

Don't Forget the Cake.

Of course you will want to take some cake for dessert. A good devil's-food cake with a nice white icing makes a splendid cake for a picnic. Try this recipe: Melt four squares of chocolate over hot water, add one half cupful of sugar and one half cupful of sweet milk; add the yolk of one egg, and cook until the mixture thickens. Let cool, and in the meantime cream one fourth of a cupful of butter, add one half cupful of sugar, one egg well beaten, one fourth of a cupful of sour milk and one and one eighth cupfuls of flour with which has been sifted one half teaspoonful of soda. Combine the two mixtures and add one half teaspoonful of vanilla. Bake in a sheet, and frost with boiled icing in

which one fourth of a cupful of seeded and chopped raisins has been mixed.

A few bottles of grape-juice of some concentrated sort which is to be diluted with water makes a good drink, or one may take a bottle of lemon-syrup and make lemonade "all in a minute." Boil one cupful of sugar and two cupfuls of water twelve minutes. Add one third of a cupful of lemon-juice, cool, and pour into a wide-necked bottle. It may be diluted according to the individual taste.

Now about the little things. Have a big sheet of heavy brown paper, folded to fit the top of the basket. It is to be the table-cloth. A supply of paper napkins is better than taking linen ones. A few wooden plates, some drinking-cups, a few knives, forks and spoons and little pepper and salt shakers will set the table sufficiently. Fill in the chinks of the basket with bottles of olives—little ones—bottles of pickles, a box of sardines and two or three of crackers if there are children in the party. If you have a number of discarded cracker-boxes, fill them with the various sorts of sandwiches, one kind in each box.

Fruit Punch.

Pour a pint of water over a pound of sugar, add the juice of one orange and the juice and grated rind of one lemon, blend thoroughly, and boil for about five minutes. When cooked sufficiently, remove the syrup from the fire; strain it carefully, and, while still warm, add half a tumblerful of currant jelly. Stir until the latter has dissolved, and set by the ice to cool. When about to be used, pour the syrup into a punch-bowl, pack ice all around it, and add the juice of two lemons and two oranges, half a pint of grape-juice, and a quart of carbonated water. If desirable, the flavor of this punch may be changed occasionally by the addition of cold tea.

The Larder.

In warm weather the larder needs a little extra attention. There should be a daily inspection, did you know? a daily inspection each morning, and any food put away on plates or dishes will keep better if removed on to clean ones. The breadpan should be emptied, wiped out, and the bread replaced. All gravies and soups that have been left should be boiled up and poured into clean basins. All fish and meat should be kept covered over with wire covers or with a piece of muslin to keep off the flies. A simple butter-cooler is made by wrapping a porous flower-pot in a wet cloth. If possible, let the milk be kept in a place away from the other food; an outside safe, in the shade, is the best for this. In summer it is advisable to scald the milk as soon as it is delivered; place it in a clean, shallow basin, and throw a piece of clean muslin over the top to protect the contents from dust. It is a good plan, too, where possible, to store pastry in a separate cupboard to preserve its crispness, as when kept in the larder it is liable to become damp and heavy. If the larder has a stone floor, use it for the storage of greens, lettuce, etc. Twice a week the larder should be thoroughly cleaned and scrubbed out.

Mosquito Bites.

The simplest and most effective remedy for mosquito bites is ordinary soap. When in the country, or at any time when one is liable to meet those pests, a small piece of soap should be carried in the pocket, and when bitten a lather should be made over the affected part and left to dry on. The soap at once relieves the irritation. If, however, it should return, a second application is all that is necessary.

Give the Window-Screens a Cold Sponge Bath

occasionally in summer and you will keep cool much heat and dust. A small

basin of cold water and an old sponge may be easily carried from one window to another, and it takes but a few minutes to sponge off the screens. During a hot wave, or whenever there is sickness in the house, dampen the screens frequently.

To Drive Flies Away from a Screen Door

rub the door with a cloth dipped in kerosene oil. Oil of peppermint, or oil of lavender, put in an atomizer with water and sprayed around the porch, will sometimes keep them off. It is said that the common house-fly does not like the odor of sweet peas, and will not go where there are any bouquets of these flowers.

Does the Sewing Machine Need Cleaning?

Empty the oil-can, fill with gasoline, flood every oiling place on the machine, run it rapidly, repeat process if necessary; then oil with best machine oil, and wonder, in your surprise at the result, why you did not do it sooner.

How to Wash Dishes.

Have plenty of hot water, clean, dry wiping-towels, and the dishes arranged in order on the table before beginning. I first wash tumblers and all glassware in hot suds, rolling the tumblers and dipping other pieces in the hot, rinsing water, using a brush for cut-glass China I do not pour boiling water over, but dip the pieces in the rinsing water. After washing the glassware, I wash the silver, pouring boiling water over it to rinse it. Porcelain dishes can be piled on something that will allow them to drain in the rinsing-pan, and boiling water poured over them. When the available space is filled, put the clean dishes away, making room for more. Sticky dishes that have been used for mixing batters, etc., I fill with water as soon as I have finished using them. Greasy kettles and skillets I pour boiling water into and add some good washing-powder, then set on the stove and let them boil a while; this loosens the grease. I turn out the water, wash the utensils in hot soapsuds, scour well, rinse in hot water, dry, and set on the back of the stove or expose to the air a while before putting away, to prevent rust.

To wash colored dresses successfully, soak ten or fifteen minutes in middling strong salt water to set the color. Then rinse out and wash in lukewarm suds made with white soap. Rinse immediately after they are washed, turn inside out, and put them through good clear starch that has been strained, or stiffen them by putting them through a thin gum-arabic water, and dry as soon as possible. When dry, sprinkle, roll up a short time, and iron on the wrong side over a thick ironing-cloth.

If there are any spots, such as grease, fruit, or ink stains, on the dresses, they should be taken out before the dresses are washed. Remove all stains before they are dry.

To Keep Ice Cream Left Over from Dinner

put it into a fruit-jar, being careful to pack it down hard with a spoon; then put a piece of paper over the top and screw on the cover as tight as you can. Place the jar back in the pail with the ice and salt. If this plan is followed you will find the ice cream firm several hours later, no matter how soft it was when put into the jar; provided, of course, the pail has plenty of ice left in it.

His Mother's Corn Bread.

Young Mrs. Gillmore watched her husband anxiously as he cut into a smoking pan of corn bread.

"I do hope you'll like it, dear! I made it myself."

"It looks very good," replied Gillmore, as he helped himself liberally and shoved the pan toward her. "Last time we had it I thought it was a little too short."

"I know you did, and yet I was sure

that Katie put in the right quantity of shortening."

"It crumbled all to pieces when it was cut. But it was better than the one we had Friday morning. That was soggy."

"That's the reason I was so particular about having plenty of shortening in the last one."

"You should learn not to go to extremes," said Gillmore. He had often thought that if he had not been a practical business man, he might have become a philosopher.

"Why, Martha," he exclaimed, after swallowing his first bite of the corn bread, "I do believe that you put sugar in it!"

"Of course, Byron. It was only yesterday morning that you told me that your mother put some sweetening into her famous corn bread."

"I said that mother used just a suspicion of sugar. This is really as sweet as cake, and I think you must have left out the salt. Mother often said, 'Spare the salt and spoil the food!'"

"She must have been a remarkable cook," sighed Mrs. Gillmore.

"Indeed she was."

"I sometimes wonder," continued Mrs. Gillmore, gently, "if our boyish appetite did not have something to do with your relish for your mother's cooking."

"That boyish appetite explanation is getting pretty stale, Martha. I guess I always knew palatable food when I tasted it, even in my early youth. Mother was an expert."

"I heartily wish that she had bequeathed her receipts to your wife."

"It's one thing to be funny," Gillmore retorted, "but it's another to excel in cooking. Martha, do you put any white flour with the corn-meal?"

"Yes, some."

"Well, that's the trouble. It destroys the flavor of the corn."

"But, Byron, you have told me a number of times that your mother always mixed a little spring wheat flour with the corn-meal."

"Of course, I suppose a little is necessary, but you must use discretion."

"I don't seem to have any," murmured Mrs. Gillmore, wearily.

"Well, mother often said that some women were born cooks and some weren't." Gillmore took the last piece of corn bread in the pan.

One night, a week later, Mr. Gillmore handed her an evening paper, opened at the household department page.

She glanced at a paragraph he had marked and read aloud, "Will some one kindly tell Martha, who is troubled with many things, how her husband's mother made corn bread? M. G., 1000 Blank St."

"So they really printed it," she said, much amused. Gillmore joined in her laugh somewhat weakly.

Every day for two weeks the post-man brought Mrs. Gillmore at least one letter, and sometimes half a dozen, from other housewives who had long been struggling to reach that height of perfection in cooking which their husband's mothers were said to have attained. They wrote in a spirit of sympathy for a fellow sufferer.

"Martha," remarked Gillmore, after listening with the air of a martyr to a dozen of the communications which Mrs. Gillmore had read him gleefully, notes to me, "I'll never say corn bread 'if you'll stop reading those ridiculous to you again.'"

"Just one more, Byron, that you must hear. It's from your sister Lucy. She says she laughed till she cried when she saw my letter in the paper."

"Why? It didn't strike me as so wonderfully amusing. Read me what she says, please."

"Poor, dear, busy mother," began Mrs. Gillmore, in a tone that she tried to make inexpressive, "never was much of a cook. She had too much to do to bring up her hungry brood to be very particular about the cooking. I well remember how father used to fuss about her corn bread. She never could reach his ideal of that dish. He wanted it just as his mother had made it."