

THE HOUSEHOLD.

MY WORK-TABLE.

I have often wished I could afford one of those tempting cooking-tables illustrated in advertising pages, but \$14.50 for such a piece of furniture seemed as unattainable as a slice of the moon. I longed for it for months, as I walked up and down and around my kitchen, gathering together the material for some simple compound; and yet had I purchased it I fear I should have been haunted with the fear that I had been extravagant.

We women never think a man extravagant when he buys a machine, though the season for its use may be only a few days each year. Why, then, I have often wondered, do we not feel justified in furnishing ourselves with conveniences for daily or at least weekly use, especially as all combined would not cost so much as a single one for outdoor use.

To be sure, a man must have good tools in order to compete with his working neighbor; "his time is worth too much to do without." A woman is supposed to be able to compete with her rivals with few, if any, advances over the outfit of her mother; and as patent helps for household labor are as yet rather scarce, we are, perhaps, as equally matched as the men in that respect. As for our time the general opinion seems to be that a woman's time is elastic and will, if properly manipulated, stretch out unlimitedly as her work increases. Or that her time not being worth as much in the market as is a man's, hour for hour, it may be used without regard to quantity.

It is also a common opinion, among the "reasoning" sex, that as our work does not require as great an expenditure of strength in a given time as does the average man's, we may keep going indefinitely without any danger of over-fatigue. I sometimes wonder if the coming woman, whom I love to picture as so capable and useful, as well as accomplished and cultured, will not as universally have her kitchen stocked with patent helps as is her husband's farm or workshop. But I am a present woman, and—alas I fear, far different, both in person and condition from that cherished ideal.

We have not had fifteen dollars in cash on hand at any one time since our pork was sold last fall, and the proceeds turned over to pay the interest on the mortgage; so you will see that it was not because my husband was in any way in fault that I found it impossible to obtain the money to purchase the table which I longed for.

After some study I determined to have a work-table, and it has proved so convenient and helpful that I give the details of its construction that some other woman may build likewise.

I took two boxes, each from twenty-eight to thirty inches high when turned on end, about two feet wide and a foot and a half deep, and as I am not a carpenter I decided not to attempt drawers, which would also require more material. I put one shelf in the left-hand one, and two in the right hand, at equal distances from top, bottom, and each other, on good strong cleats as they were to hold jars of lard, sugar, etc., on the one side, and kettles and ironware on the other. These boxes were set face to face not quite three feet apart. Boards knocked from the sides of a long bootbox were then put across and nailed firmly at each end, thus making the space occupied about five and a half feet in length and two in width. I turned a crackerbox on end, put in three shelves, put the cover on as a door with hinges, and set this on the left-hand box, against the wall. On one shelf were put recipe books and a box, in which I drop such clippings as I think may be worth testing, previous to their being placed in my scrapbook. On another, small glass cans containing candied lemon and orange peel and citron, boxes of whole and ground cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg, bottles of flavoring, lemon, vanilla, etc. On the third, baking powder, yeast cakes, soda, cream tartar, mustard, etc. Everything is labelled with ink in large letters.

On the right hand side another crackerbox was placed for a flour bin. This was lined with thick, smooth paper, the back half covered with a board, to which another was hinged for a lid. Three feet above the table I had a shelf put of the same length

and width as the table, and two narrow shelves between that and the table, on which are kept tea and coffee pots, canisters, quart-measures, pie and cake tins, etc. On the side of the spice cupboard, over the table, hang egg-beater, mixing spoons, etc.; on the wall gem-pans, chopping-knife, sad-iron handle and stand, and wire dish-cloth and other small articles, making a fine display as grouped here, but looking "littery" and out of place if scattered around on the wall promiscuously.

Under the table, in the open space, is ample room for the kerosene can, a basket which the children fill with the dinner vegetables before going to school, and a pail in which I put my refuse as I make it, that I may not have to run to the door to the original "swill-pail" so often. There is also room for my work-stool when not wanted. This is a box high enough for me to sit and work comfortably while ironing, washing dishes, fixing vegetables, etc. It has castors in the bottom and a nail on the inside on which I hang a work-apron for use over the other when about dishes and vegetables. The mold-board hangs on a hook put in the side of the flour-bin, which comes just flush with the box on which it sets, the boards making the table coming clear up to it on the other side.

For finish, although we agreed the table looked a very convenient and appropriate piece of kitchen furniture, the boxes, spice cupboard, shelves and wall were painted to match the room. Had the boxes been rough, or had there been cracks in them, I should have papered them like the walls. Screw eyes were put in the corners of the shelf above, a piece of fence wire put through and a dark calico curtain hung on it, reaching to within a half inch of the table top. At the ends it was nailed to the shelf at the top. Oilcloth was cut to fit the table top, turning up an inch on the side of the flour-bin, the wall and the spice cupboard, and coming over the front edge, to be tacked on the under side. Below the table another curtain of like material was stretched from box to box on the stiff fence wire, thus shutting all beneath out of sight if wished. On the upper shelf stand my shining milk pails, cans and pans.

—Frank Laurel, in *The Housekeeper*.

MIXING AND BAKING PANCAKES.

Whatever receipt for pancakes you may follow, one rule always holds good: Mix all the liquids together in one bowl, and the dry in another, then stir the liquid into the dry, and there will never be any danger of lumping.

FLANNEL CAKES.—Sift two teaspoonfuls of baking powder and one of salt with a quart of flour. In another bowl beat three eggs, add one and a half pints of milk and two ounces of melted butter; pour this mixture into the flour, beating vigorously the while.

INDIAN CAKES.—Put a pint of Indian meal into a bowl, and scald it with rapidly boiling water. Just enough water must be poured on to make a moist, crumbly mass. While this is cooling beat three eggs, add a pint of milk and stir this into a cupful of wheat flour sifted with two teaspoonfuls of baking powder and one of salt; then turn this batter into the scalded Indian, beating until it is a smooth mass.

OATMEAL CAKES.—The cold oatmeal left from breakfast mixed with an equal measurement of flour—that is, one cupful of flour to one of cooked oatmeal, with one beaten egg, half a cupful of milk and a spoonful of baking powder, will make very nice pancakes.

SWEDISH PANCAKES.—It is quite essential that these be spelled with a "k," says Octave Thanet, and still more essential that the following directions be followed exactly: Measure one pint of flour after sifting, as unsifted flour has a greater bulk than sifted. Put two teaspoonfuls of baking powder into this flour, and sift again twice. This will obviate streaks and ragged holes. Beat into this enough milk to make a stiff batter. Some flour takes more milk than others, but a cupful will be as near as I can come to the right quantity without knowing your brand of flour. If you can drop a spoonful of this batter back into the bowl and it lies for a moment on the surface and then sinks gradually, it is of the right consistency; but if it lies in a heap and has stiff, ragged edges, it needs more wetting. Now add half a teaspoon-

ful of salt and two teaspoonfuls of cream or one of melted butter, and lastly the white of an egg beaten to a stiff froth.

Whoever has tried to initiate a "green" girl into the mysteries of pancakes, knows that the battle is only half won when she has thoroughly mastered the art of mixing the batter. If you use a soapstone griddle, the baking is a simple matter, but in the majority of homes the old-fashioned iron griddle still reigns—as it is, indeed, more suited to the majority of stoves. A soapstone griddle requires a very regular, steady heat, such as can best be given by an oil or gas stove.

To produce the ideal pancake you need a hot, smooth griddle, that will send the cakes up, raising them lightly and baking them a golden brown. If the griddle is heated directly over the fire, it is apt to scorch. It is best to have the stove so hot that the covers can remain on. Some ingenious woman has invented a patent griddle-greaser, but a rag wound about a stick will answer very well. Drippings made by trying out the fat of beef and pork can be used, but if you are obliged to substitute lard, have a second greaser, and give a quick, light brush over the griddle with this, which should be saturated with melted butter. This will prevent any suspicion of the taste of lard clinging to the pancakes. As soon as little holes appear over the upper side of a pancake, it is time to turn it. It is better to pour the batter from a pitcher than to ladle it out with a spoon. When done, transfer them at once to a hot plate, and never pile more than three, one atop of another; indeed, if they could be sent to the table singly it would be better, but this is quite impossible when a busy mother is baking for a tableful of hungry children. It is a good plan to let the children learn to bake, and take turns in baking and serving. I have somewhere read a legend of a good bishop, who was not so spiritual but that he was fond of good living, who left a nice little legacy to a farmer's wife who once seated him beside her kitchen fire and plied him with delicate, golden-brown pancakes slipped directly from her griddle to his plate.—*Country Gentleman*.

NUTRITIOUS AND ECONOMICAL FOOD.

With small means the choicer cuts of fresh meats are out of the question, but the tougher and cheaper parts can be used braised, stewed, made into soups, or used in any of the savory dishes that only require long, slow cooking to make them tender and appetizing. Eggs, when the price is reasonable, are a most satisfactory and economical kind of food. When there is no objection to pork, on the score of creed or health, it can be used in combination with many kinds of fish, vegetables and cereals to give them savoriness and the element they lack—fat. Macaroni, when cooked and served with a sauce, is nutritious, healthful and cheap. Peas, barley and beans, when made into stews, purees and soups, make highly nutritious and very cheap food; and beans are good and substantial when baked. Home-made bread is essential to healthful and cheap living. Chocolate and cocoa, made with milk, and served with good bread, are a nutritious and pleasing combination. Simple desserts are economical and healthful. Stewed fruits, with good bread, are much to be preferred, both on the score of economy and health, to pastry, an article both unhealthy and expensive.

TO KEEP REFRIGERATORS SWEET.

This is one of the most important duties of the housekeeper. No matter how many servants she may keep she should give this matter her personal supervision once a week. The refrigerator should be in perfect condition. If the lining be broken in any part, so that the water soaks into the wood, attend to the relining at once; or, if the refrigerator be not worth that, discard it wholly. When possible, avoid having the drain pipe connected with the plumbing in the house. Have the refrigerator placed where it can be flooded with air and light whenever necessary, but, of course, in as cool a place as possible. Once a week have everything removed from it. Take out the shelves and wash them in hot soap-suds; then pour boiling

water over them. Place them in the sun; or, if that fails, by the range, that they may be perfectly dried. Now take out the rice rack and wash and scald in the same way, except that, as there are grooves or wires in this, the greatest care must be used to get out every particle of dirt that may have lodged there. Next wash out the ice compartment, running a flexible wire rod down the pipe, that nothing shall lodge there. Put two tablespoonfuls of washing-soda into a quart of boiling water and on the fire. When this boils, pour it into the ice compartment; follow this with a kettle full of boiling water, and wipe dry. Now wash the other parts of the refrigerator with hot soap-suds and wipe perfectly dry. Be careful to get the doors and ledges clean and dry. Leave the refrigerator open for an hour and then return the ice and food to it. Should you, after this care, still have trouble do not use the refrigerator. It will be far better to get along without the comfort it affords than to endanger health and life by using a contaminated article. Food should never be put in a refrigerator while warm, because it absorbs the flavors of other foods and also heats the refrigerator.—*Ladies' Home Journal*.

AVOID DUST CATCHERS.

Plainly furnished bedrooms are the best for health. Dust catchers of every kind should be banished from the sleeping room, woollen carpets, large or heavy rugs, thick draperies from the windows, and scarfs from over pictures. The furniture should be of willow or cane and not upholstered. A sleeping room furnished in this way and thoroughly aired every day, has none of the stuffiness of the ordinary bedroom. Its freshness and cleanliness invite to sound healthy sleep.

SAVING in the kitchen tells upon the income and makes the bank account heavier, but there is one saving that exceeds even these, it is that the wife and mother save herself.—*Good Housekeeping*.

SELECTED RECIPES.

MUTTON STEW FOR TWO.—Two mutton chops, cut from near the shoulder. Put them in a shallow pan having a tight cover. Pour on boiling water to the depth of one inch, cover and simmer one hour; add more water as it boils away, using only enough to keep the meat from burning. Add two slices of French turnip, two small onions whole, and when the meat and turnip are nearly tender add two common-sized potatoes, having first soaked and scalded them. Add one teaspoonful of salt and a little pepper. Remove the vegetables without breaking; let the water boil nearly away, leaving enough for a gravy. Remove the fat, thicken the gravy with flour, and, if needed, add salt and tomato catsup. Pour it over the meat.

TO REMOVE INK STAINS.—Ink stains may be taken out of boards by the use of strong muriatic acid or spirits of salts, applied with a piece of cloth, and afterwards washed well with water.

DAINTY LININGS.—There are various materials used for lining bureau drawers. The simplest is a folded sheet of white shelving paper; but of late years it has been the fashion to make inexpensive sachets, which will cover the bottom of the drawers. This may be made of a layer of cotton batting, through which a little violet-orris powder has been scattered, and covered with cheese-cloth, in any dainty color the maker may fancy. These sachets are then tufted down with knots and embroidery silk. More expensive drawer sachets, which do not become so easily soiled as cotton, are made of glaze or of India silks in rose, blue, lavender or any dainty color. Rose-colored sachets are very often perfumed with dried rose-leaves or rose sachet powder and caught down with little knots of rose-colored ribbon. Lavender sachets are perfumed with lavender flowers.

POTATO CROQUERS.—One pint mashed potatoes or about five medium-sized potatoes. One tablespoon butter, one-half saltspoon of white pepper, a pinch of cayenne, one-half teaspoon salt, one fourth teaspoon celery-salt, a few drops of onion juice, and the yolk of one egg. Mix all together except the egg, and beat until quite light, add the egg to this when it is slightly cool, and mix thoroughly, then add one teaspoon of chopped parsley. Shape the mixture into round balls first, and then roll these out long and flatten at each end. Roll them in fine bread crumbs, then dip into a beaten egg that has had two tablespoonfuls of water added to it, then dip again in the crumbs and fry in smoking hot lard one minute, and drain.

MEAT, when used for soup, should be put on to cook in cold water; also any salted meat, like ham or corned beef; but where it is intended to be used as boiled meat it should be put on in boiling hot water, so as to harden the fibre and confine the juices of the meat. The meat should, in all cases, be kept under the water. Turn it frequently, so it may cook on all sides. It should boil only gently. A pod of red pepper added to the pot will keep the odor of boiling from filling the house. Remove all scum as it rises. Allow twenty minutes to a pound.

GARNISH means to add to meat, poultry or salads a trimming. In dishing up roast meat lay a spoonful of jelly or gooseberries just on the slice to be served to one person. Poultry, trim the edges of the dishes upon which it is served. Celery and parsley leaves, hard-boiled eggs, water-cresses, lettuce and jellies are the principal articles used.