

# "FIVE of THEM WERE WISE AND FIVE WERE FOOLISH"



ONCE upon a time there were ten housekeepers and five of them were wise and five were foolish. And the Wise Housekeepers diligently cultivated the little plots of land at their disposal, or, having no land, they obtained a share on some vacant lot, and the Foolish laughed at them and said:

"Now what do you think you can grow in your shady little back yards?"

"The idea of planting anything in a ploughed-up baseball field!"

"Leave agriculture to the farmers."

"Market gardening after office hours! What a joke!"

"Why they won't grow enough to pay for the seeds!"

So they mockingly went their way while the wise ones dug and sowed and studied, so as to be able to cultivate their ground as intelligently as possible. By and bye the seeds began to sprout. Then weeding time began and the wise ones said:

"See, we have fresh young greens to eat from the beet rows we have trimmed, and tiny succulent carrots!"

And the foolish laughed and said: "We wouldn't think of buying such immature stuff, but since you have more than you can use, give them to us."

But the Wise said:

"Not so, for winter is coming."

"Well, you won't find me stewing over a hot stove," said the Foolish Housekeepers. "Goods from the canning factory are nice enough for us."

But the Wise Housekeepers studied the best and cheapest way of preserving vegetables for the winter's use. They found that rhubarb, gooseberries and currants could be preserved without cooking or sugar, if packed in sterilized air-tight jars and covered with cold, boiled water. They discovered that fresh peas and young carrots could be preserved in a similar way by adding a teaspoonful of salt to the water and boiling the sealed jars.

"Why, it's no trouble at all!" said the Wise Housekeepers.

But the Foolish retorted: "It's infinitely more trouble than telephoning the grocer's next winter."

"Perhaps you may not have a telephone next winter. Perhaps the grocer may not have canned vegetables. The canning factories are having a dreadful time getting labour."

"Stuff and nonsense!" said the Foolish.

But the Wise Ones bought eggs in June and packed them for the winter's use.

"Perfectly ridiculous!" said the Foolish, "With eggs at 44 cents. You know those prices can't last!"

Then the Wise Housekeepers dried cherries and apples, beans and corn. They packed cucumbers in salt, or pickled them, and they preserved each fruit in its season.

"We can't afford to make jams with sugar the price it is!" said the Foolish. "It's cheaper to buy things ready-made. Besides, surely one's time is worth something!"

"Time is very valuable if you know how to use it," said the Wise.

And when winter came the Foolish said to the Wise: "Give us food, for our storerooms are empty!"

But the Wise answered, saying: "No so; lest there be not enough for us and for you; go to those that sell and buy for yourselves."

But the storerooms of those that sold were empty.

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A TRAVELLER in the interior of China remarked that in the less civilized districts a very large percentage of the peasants' conversation related to food. It would be difficult for people of any race to devote more attention to the subject than we are doing at the present day. Meatless days, wheatless days, standardized bread, prevention of the slaughter of lambs and calves, limitations on the

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manufacture of candy, what you can do without, what I can do without, what we can raise, what we can save, this great variety of subjects centres round the one thing: Food.

It is difficult to persuade people to substitute corn for wheat when the latter is cheaper and more palatable. National thrift, that taxes the pocket of each individual is questionable, and the foods that are cheapest and best depend on our mode of living, the state of our health, whether or not we have a garden or keep hens, and various other conditions. At a recent Thrift Exhibition the girls from MacDonald College showed a table labelled "Cheapest Foods" and these they had listed as follows:

"Fresh Air—(At work, in the home and when we sleep); Water (5 to 8 glasses daily); Oatmeal, cornmeal, rice, skim milk, beans, macaroni, spaghetti, cheese,



cocoa, milk, buttermilk, crusts (baked and served like breakfast food), soups."

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THE garden and the kitchen are natural allies. In the garden vegetables and fruits are produced; in the kitchen they are cooked. It would seem, therefore, desirable and proper that whoever works in the one should have some acquaintance with the other. To grow potatoes and then dig them, cook them and eat them is an ideal, though unusual, sequence.

Now we have had during the last few years a great increase in the number of school-gardens, and also in the number of schools in which cookery is taught; but—perhaps because of that tendency in elementary schools to cut up the instruction into a number of "subjects" between which there is no communication—it is very rarely found that the scholars who are taught cookery receive any instruction in gardening, or that the school-garden has any connexion with the cookery-room. Yet the educational advantages of correlation between the two are very real and important.

An experiment in this direction has been carried out in England during the last two or three years.

The position—a fairly common one—was somewhat as follows: Attached to the school there is, on the one hand,

a large school-garden, and, on the other, a cookery centre to which children are brought by tram from the congested parts of the city. Some of these children are of the poorest class; they come from the slums, and are often undersized and underfed. To these the life of a turnip begins in a shop; potatoes come from a market; rhubarb is a mystery. The suggestion was made that, instead of merely arriving at the centre and learning to cook peas, the children should themselves prepare the ground, sow the seeds, watch the growth of the plants, gather the pods, shell the peas and boil them. In this way they would acquire some little knowledge of horticulture; they would, perforce, spend certain time in the open air; they would combine the study of Nature with the study of food-preparation, and would be subjected to the suggestive influence of contact with living, growing things in constant need of attention and care. The success of the experiment was such as to lead to the conviction that wherever possible, a garden should be attached to a cookery centre. The results might be very important. It would be a gain if a liking for garden-work as a form of outdoor exercise were produced; and if, in town and country alike, working-men's wives were aware of the pleasure and profit of cultivating every bit of ground, as well as of the best ways of cooking, the economic effect in the trying times ahead of us might be appreciable. One difficulty is the idea, prevalent not only in the town suburbs but in the country, that there is something undignified in a woman's working in a kitchen garden. The wife of a clerk, who will willingly scrub saucepans, will shrink from digging a row of potatoes or setting a score of cabbage plants; this latter is not "woman's work." Can we not through our primary and secondary schools do something to get rid of this foolish way of thinking?

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WE are apt to follow in the footsteps of the mother country one year behind and the matter of Food Control is not an exception, but Germany safeguarded her resources long before that or the war would have ended in an economic victory for the Allies. An Australian lecturer in English at Berlin University who has recently arrived in England, gives an account of the way Berlin is rationed.

A list of the people who live in each house is given by the landlord to the District Bread Ticket Distribution Committee, who furnishes him with proportionate bread tickets, which are distributed monthly.

For each of the following commodities there is a separate card:—Bread (3½ lbs. a week), meat (1 lb. a week), butter (1¼ ozs.), and margarine (1 oz. a week), eggs (during the winter one a fortnight, now three a fortnight), potatoes (5 lbs. a week), sugar (¼ lb. a fortnight), milk (varies according to age, but is only allowed to children up to the age of six years and to invalids in cases where a committee of doctors decide that it is absolutely necessary).

There is an extra ticket, which enables the holder to buy certain quantities of oatmeal, barley, semolina, jam, canned vegetables, herrings, soup tablets, etc. All these good things on the grocery ticket are handed out at once. Each week a proclamation is posted up on the advertisement pillars at the street corners making known that, say, 3½ ozs., or sometimes even 7 ozs. of barley, or 7 ozs. of oatmeal, or 3½ ozs. of semolina, or perhaps, if it is a good week, 7 ozs. of barley, and 3½ ozs. of semolina, will be distributed as his weekly portion to each person applying in time. Every week brings one at least of these extras with it, and on rare occasions—three times during the whole winter—there was 1 lb. of so-called jam allotted to each person.