

Vegetable foods, also, must be gathered or dug, perhaps packed, displayed for sale, and transported to their destination before they are handled in the kitchen.

Meanwhile, foodstuffs pass through many hands, not always of the cleanest; they may be exposed to burning heat, certainly to dust and dirt (the ingredients of which include the droppings of animals, men's spit, hairs, shreds of skin, pus from uncovered wounds, and other unsavoury substances). Furthermore, they are bruised by rough handling and bad packing; so that moulds and the germs which cause food to taint and decay can gain an entrance to the flesh of fish or meat, or to the pulp of fruit and vegetables; consequently, cleansing is a first and most important part of the cooking process.

#### WORK FOR THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTES.

More harm is wrought in this world by want of thought than from any other one cause. In the interests of health, such want of thought in connection with a nation's food must be firmly and intelligently checked. It is just the piece of work which could and should be undertaken locally by Women's Institutes. Through the co-operation of their members, the standard of cleanliness in markets and shops can be raised and the careful handling of foods be enforced.

#### WHERE SUCH WORK HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED.

It is a great credit to the women of Indianapolis and of Portland, U.S.A., that, since learning these things, they have worked with so much perseverance and tact that the markets of their cities and the handling of their foodstuffs are now reported to be object-lessons to other places.

#### THE PREPARATION OF FOOD IN THE KITCHEN.

Even when food has reached the kitchen it undergoes many forms of preparation other than roasting, boiling, baking, or stewing. Meat, for instance, is minced, bread is "crumbed," eggs are beaten, cheese is grated, cream is whisked. Why? The answer to this question will be found among the following reasons why food is cooked.

#### FOOD IS COOKED:

- (1.) To make it more palatable and attractive;
- (2.) To increase its digestibility;
- (3.) To afford wholesome variety and to increase nutritive value;
- (4.) To economize heat and energy to the body;
- (5.) To postpone decay and to destroy parasites;
- (6.) To promote cleanliness;
- (7.) To economize expense;

#### REASON (1).—TO MAKE FOOD MORE PALATABLE AND ATTRACTIVE.

This reason is too obvious to call for much illustration. We have only to compare the taste of raw meat with that of a well-roasted joint, or of uncooked with well-fried fish.

Consider, also, the improvement in the appearance of cold meat or of butter when garnished with parsley or fern; or the pleasant variety imparted to the