POOR DOCUMENT

MC2035

A Practical Housekeeper

Is The Wife of The Premier of Great Britain, Who is Interviewed On The Food Question at Romantic and Beautiful Country Home in North Wales

MRS. LLOYD GEORGE,
Wife of the Premier of Great Britain.

"Every member of a household has an equal claim on the family larder, and the institution of what practically amounts to a national larder has brought all the inhabitants of the realm into the bonds of one great family, one common brotherhood. It has placed us all on the same footing, made us realize, as we never did before, perhaps, that our interests and responsibilities are identical; that if we enjoy equal privileges we must be prepared to make equal sacrifices."
MRS. LLOYD GEORGE.

Mrs. David Lloyd George is not the kind of woman who is readily interviewed. A home-loving woman, an unfashionable woman, a woman whose chief interests are her husband, her children and her kitchen, she has no great desire to have her name appear in print. But because the food problem is so closely interwoven with the life and vitality of the nation just now, and because in war time personal likes and dislikes have to be forgotten for the sake of the common good, the wife of the great little prime minister of the British Isles consented to be interviewed on the food question by a representative of the New York Sun.

Mrs. Lloyd George was discovered in retreat at Plas Hen, which, as every Welshman knows, is the country home of the premier, situated at Criccieth, North Wales—"a very cameo of Mediterranean blue skies and golden sunlight, set in the grim Welsh hills"—as it is described. "Nestling in a secluded hollow in the heart of the Lleyn peninsula, sheltered on three sides by groves, open only to the southwesterly breezes of Carnarvon Bay, and with wide expanse of moorland bounding the horizon, this old Welsh mansion, that has inscribed over the gray stone portals the date 1607 and bears a time-worn coat-of-arms, invites rest from all the worries of public life.

"If I may be permitted to say so, our house is a difficult one to arrange for in the matter of food," said Mrs. Lloyd George to her interviewer. "We seldom know who, or how many, will be sitting at our table for breakfast, or lunch, and certainly not for dinner. Still there are compensations. For instance, our butcher's bill has been reduced to about one-half what it used to be."

Mrs. Lloyd George is the wife of a poor man—at least a comparatively poor man. Britain does not pay her premiers at the same rate as she does her music hall comedians. She learned her economy in that hardest of schools, the middle-class household, on limited means, and with a large family. There are few secrets in housekeeping that she can be taught. She understands and sympathizes thoroughly with the housewife of today. She is, in fact, enjoying the same experiences.

Asked in what other articles besides meat she had experienced a shortage, she replied immediately: "The most important, I should say, are coal and milk. We have been restricted in the use of coal since October. That made a difference in our cooking arrangements, and we had to be very economical. Then as regards milk, we have to do with only half our customary supply, and frequently to go without any at all. The morning milk is a thing of the past, our milk not being delivered until afternoon. We have now discarded milk puddings altogether, but there are plenty of recipes for tasty substitutes.

"My book of recipes?" she laughingly inquired. "I have no book. I try to shift as best I can. Every experienced householder knows how to meet the little emergencies of domestic life. It is surprising how one gets accustomed to new conditions if one makes up one's mind to make the best of things. We have all been shaken out of the old grooves, but we soon learned to accommodate ourselves to new conditions. Successful housekeeping in war-time with its limitations depends largely, as it did in times of peace and plenty, upon the exercise of forethought and system."

"And does the same apply to the scarcity of fats—butter and margarine, for instance?"

"Ah! There you touch upon what has so far been one of the housewife's greatest difficulties. The ration of these foods is small, no doubt, especially for the bulk of the families where there are children, who usually consume large quantities of bread and butter. Still, a wise mother can, even in such case, meet the difficulty—at least to a considerable extent—by providing a variety of food or dishes as substitutes. In my own case we have on occasion run short and been put to inconvenience, but things are never improved by grumbling.

"Every member of a household has an equal claim on the family larder, and the institution of what practically amounts to a national larder has brought all the inhabitants of the realm into the bonds of one great family, one common brotherhood. It has placed us all on the same footing, made us realize, as we never did before, perhaps, that our interests and responsibilities are identical; that if we enjoy equal privileges we must be prepared to make equal sacrifices.

"The national kitchen scheme is an excellent one, which should be applied to all great centres of population. It economizes time, food, labor and money. The saving in coal and gas alone must be very great. Then the food provided is better, as well as better cooked, and certainly far cheaper than is frequently the case in many working-class homes. A good and substantial meal can be obtained from the communal kitchen at, I should say, about half what it would cost at home. I have opened several of these communal kitchens in the East End of London, as well as in other areas, and I think they are very successful. A satisfying dinner of any two or three kinds of dishes—soup, meat pie, and boiling pudding—can be provided at fourpence or fivepence. The one drawback is that there is no means provided for conveying the hot food from the communal kitchen to the family dining-table, but every purchaser has to take his chance.

"However, I would not favor traveling-kitchens for the villages. You see the conditions of town and country life are essentially different. What I would like to see would be to make the school-garden in elementary schools universal. The school garden could grow all its own vegetables; the training in horticulture would be good for the boys, and the training in cookery at least equally good for the girls while the children could be supplied with a substantial meal at a cost of a penny per head. I opened a school kitchen in a country district before the war, which became self-supporting, while charging only a penny per head."

Mrs. George agrees with Lord Rhondda in discouraging the making of butter, for she says:

"Milk is essentially a children's food—and the children must be our first care, as they are our future hope. Milk for the children should be the first charge upon our dairies. If a sufficiency of milk for food can be provided, then, of course, the surplus should be utilized for butter or cheese making. I fear the children in our country villages are now being deprived of the milk they were accustomed to get, the farmers taking or sending their milk for sale to the towns. I think the children in the locality where the milk is produced should have the first claim."

Ex-Mayor Mitchel of New York will give evidence in the $100,000 libel suit brought by Mayor Hylan against the New York World.

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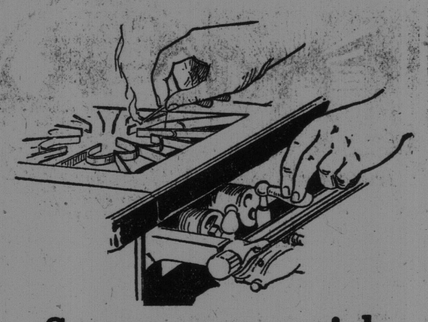

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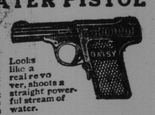

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