

FROM BASKET TO JAR

Interesting Account of how Fruit is made into Jam, Preserves and Syrups

By ANNA LAKE

THE sun-kissed ripeness of harvest abundance, the aroma of luscious fruits, and the fragrance of distilled summer are all fused in the first September days in the Niagara peninsula. The early tang of autumn in the country, that is surely "God's own," wafts a sharpness and clearness through the atmosphere, while everything partakes of a new fascination. The miracle of spring is lost sight of in autumn's fulfilment of promise. Emotional delight in color and intoxicating perfumes, takes on a more material appreciation by indulgence in the luscious ripeness.

"HEART OF NATURE'S ABUNDANCE."—Some primitive element is aroused and takes possession of the conventional town person. The prosaic car on the radial that is carrying one into the very heart of nature's abundance, becomes a thanksgiving chariot. Modern mural harvest decorations get mixed with realities, in the mind that is simply rioting in excess of delight over it all.

Only the very commonplace tones of the conductor in calling out stations brings one back to the present. By no illusion of the mind's eye could his natty blue suit and brass buttons be merged into the flowing lines the fresco chariot followers are usually arrayed in.



A "far away" glance that comes from much inward thought, reveals a nondescript collection of passengers, possibly more interested in the practical aspect of conditions than joining in any unconventional display of enthusiasm.

"HARVEST PROBLEMS."—However, this jarring return to the world, at intervals acts like a weight to reason, and as miles after miles are passed a saner feeling becomes uppermost, and the detached attitude of luxurious enjoyment in the scene, and the early exultation, give way to an intimate and more homely appreciation. Domestic duties and the daily labor, which so much abundance entails, in the caring for are to be noted on every side, and the more practical problem of gathering in obtrudes itself.

The pungent sharpness of new wood in basket and crate penetrates the air and suggests thoughts of the modern method in conveyance. Though not so picturesque as great heaps of mellow colors this is infinitely more desirable from the consumer's standpoint. The practical thought that heeds the consumer's viewpoint also lingers over the ultimate disposal of such harvest bounties.

Possibly the housekeeping instincts, which every woman possesses to a certain degree, may be aroused to think of all the kitchens given over to preserving operations, or again it may be due to the intention of visiting the fruit and jam factories of Mr. E. D. Smith, at Winona.

"THE BIG PRESERVING PLACE."—One was scarcely so benighted as not to know something about the place and what it stood for, and was prepared to meet with unusual and sanitary conditions. But to find it surrounded by orchards and vineyards, and the towering mountain behind, with no prevailing evidence of the usual factory's presence, was to suggest the thought that possibly one might find some underlying principles in the building up of such a business beyond the even vital one of pure food standards.

To appreciate and understand fully the value of purity in foodstuffs and to have a conscientious desire to adhere to a standard of excellence indicates that a man is concerned to do business in a spirit beyond that aroused through the mere competition of trade. Such a man may go even farther in building a business, and consider his place in the community, his obligation to his employes, and the moral responsibility that attaches to his word and name. Such depressing thoughts do not usually come to one when on merely critical inspection intent. But the affinity between the location and source of supply, the beautiful countryside, and the principle involved, inspire thoughts beyond the mercenary ones of business.

"LOCATION AND SUPPLY."—The location also suggests a choiceness of quality in selection, which is later found to be justified. The cheery greeting of drivers arriving with their loads of fruit, all hand-picked and carefully arranged in spotless baskets, does not partake of a buying and selling proceeding. Incidentally one notes they receive several cents more than the market price, which accounts for the choiceness of quality and good humor.

A sweeping glance that attempts to take in the scene of buildings and surroundings includes much foliage on tree and shrub, mellow tones of brick and stone, and a picturesque adjustment of architecture that has evidently been the outcome of requirement, not an attempt to aggressively dominate the landscape.

Quaint stone buildings, some of the pioneer homes have been left on the original foundations, with interiors devoted to various uses. Their presence hints of a respect and appreciation that a newcomer could scarcely feel.

One is not surprised later to hear that Mr. Smith was born on a mountain farm overlooking the neighborhood.

A large stone house almost buried beneath great locusts and ancient pear trees, at the foot of the mountain, is discovered to have been his late home for twenty-four years. This was only vacated a short time ago, when a very handsome one was erected on the beautiful grounds adjoining the business buildings. A very large office building is in course of erection, and will no doubt be finished according to the good taste which has so far been displayed.

"RESULTS AND HOW ARRIVED AT."—A man looks at results and commends them, but a woman wants to know how they have been arrived at, if they pertain to home needs. Thinking people who consider the pure food question and how it affects the community, recognize the fact that even home preparation may be frequently lacking in a certain choiceness, and a manufactured product contain little of desired quality.

A carelessness in home preparation or the use of inferior qualities may be attended with as disastrous results as products manufactured with no regard to pure food standards. Only a thorough understanding of what constitutes pure food, and the

sanitary preservation makes it possible to place such within the reach of others.

"PURE FOOD STANDARDS."—The neatness and cleanliness characterizing the grounds and platforms, on which the incoming fruit is received, prepares one to a certain extent for the interiors, but scarcely for the reality.

This made it possible to follow the fruit from the time of entry, through all the various stages of handling, until, in airtight receptacles it was placed in crates for shipping. Never once was it necessary to gather one's skirt in a protecting way, or to abstain from minute inspection of methods on account of mussiness. The best tailor-made came through the ordeal without spot or injury, and of how many kitchens could one say the same during preserving time? The choiceness of the fruit caused little accumulations to occur from the careful sorting and the washings, peelings and stemmings, were rapidly carried away by machinery. The standard of cleanliness enforced, was found to extend to even white caps. These completely covered the heads of the women and girls employed. Large aprons enveloped them, and the men wore special suits.

"INTELLIGENT AND COMPETENT LABOR."—Every fruit requires different handling and attention, consequently the very important factor of help—intelligent and competent—has to be considered. During strawberry season, one was informed, the process of hulling called for the services of many which later were not required for the fruits, such as plums. To overcome this difficulty, a large building had been erected at some distance and at certain periods was used as a boarding house for the additional women required. Ordinarily the majority of employes belong to families and are domiciled in comfortable cottages. It was an interesting sight to watch them at noon time. In groups and with gay chatter they made off to the cottages for lunch. Attractive homes overrun with vines and flowers, situated along the roadway, are occupied by the various managers and superintendents.

"ECONOMIC UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES."—One is reminded of old country institutions in looking this over. The economic utilization of resources seems to have been the inspiration rather than a grasping of business possibilities. The development and experience that have come with the years have evidently tended toward a worthier desire to build something that would be more than the substantial evidence of business success.

Such thoughts do not come upon one suddenly; they are the result of a day's observation, and now they drift in to interrupt the more practical trend that should be concerned with operation.

Such a sign as this: "Notices to Employes—I expect the active assistance of every employe in maintaining strict cleanliness in every particular in the factory. No carelessness in this respect will be tolerated. All articles put up are for human food, and I aim to furnish it pure, clean and wholesome. To do so I must have your co-operation and assistance.—E. D. SMITH," when frequently happened on impresses the visitor as it must the worker. With not only a sense of personal responsibility, but is a constant reminder that no carelessness will be tolerated.

"CLEANLY AND SANITARY OPERATIONS."—The prepared fruit is weighed and quickly taken to the preserving room by men, where the expert in charge weighs the sugar in "pound for pound" proportion, and places in large copper kettles. Down one side of the room, which is now all white cement and will later be more completely finished by white tiling, are steam pipes coiled to hold these great kettles and fitted with all necessary adjuncts for the increasing or moderating of the heat. A man stands at attention beside each kettle with a long wooden paddle to stir with, and ascertain the consistency. Small cars in charge of men are rolled back and forth, conveying the kettles with fruit and sugar to the heat, or those of the required boiling richness to an adjoining room, where the bottling is done. This is accomplished with great dispatch and deftness, by women who use large copper mugs of a size corresponding to the vessel for filling. Other women clap on a flat cover and immediately pass it on to a young man seated at a machine which fits into the long table.



"AN AIRTIGHT COVERING."—A shallow cavity, adjusted to the size of the can, holds it in place, while a descending piece of machinery clamps the tin cover down in an airtight overlapping finish. As no preservatives are used in the formula of preparation, it is most essential that this part of the process be carefully attended to. After a thorough wiping off, the cans are taken to the storage tables for cooling and an additional cover. This is provided for the consumer, who may not use the contents immediately after opening. The cutting through of the airtight cover leaves the jam exposed to the air. The outer cover then provides sanitary protection. Even this small item illustrates what a careful supervision is maintained, and also how materially the disposal of the products differs from that of the careful housekeeper. She places her preserves and jam on the shelves of a press until required, a more far-reaching problem must be considered in this business. It is not sufficient to put up absolutely pure jam of a home-made excellence. It must be conveyed to the consumer at any distance in an attractive condition. Rough handling during the passage and atmospheric changes must all be considered in making use of material for conveyancing. Thus it was that one found out the reason for the thin gold lacquer on the inside of the tins. This effectually prevents any discoloration that might result from the action of the fruit on the tin.

"THOSE IN GOOD HEALTH EMPLOYED."—One carefully noted the excellent physical condition of all the employes. In the preparation of pure foods it is absolutely essential that only those in perfect health should be employed, so the scrutiny was very searching throughout every department. It was a great privilege to be allowed to visit the place, but one was under no obligations to be other than critically observant.

The enthusiasm that apparently runs away with one at

