

THE HOUSEHOLD.

DANGER IN THE KITCHEN.

Mrs. C. F. Wilder, the vice-president of the Kansas National Household Economic Association, says in a recent paper:

I have been reading, lately, that interesting book, 'Ptomaines and Leucomaines,' by Vaughan and Novy, and I have been struck with the number of instances cited where poison crept into the milk. One case is given where a whole family was poisoned from milk kept in the pantry of an old house with rotten timbers and no cellar. Under the house was a place for collecting rain-water. The floor was of unjointed boards, and every time the tidy housewife swept, scoured, or washed her floor, the filth went through the crevices and remained beneath ready for putrefactive changes. In the pantry, where the milk was kept, the floor, from more frequent scrubbing, had rotted away, and a second layer of boards had been placed over the original floor. The house-mother spent her days in keeping this home clean and comfortable for her family, but the more she scoured and scrubbed the more harm she was doing. The father, a healthy farmer about fifty years of age, his wife, his son, eighteen, and daughter, sixteen, were all sick with nausea and vomiting, and three of the family died in great agony of tyrotoxin formed in the milk kept in that old pantry. Other poison was obtained from the same source, and given to a kitten, which died in great agony.

When one's attention is attracted to any given subject the world seems to be full of that subject. In yesterday's paper was an account of slow poisoning from using milk where bacteria were present, coming from the hands of the milkster. Many a babe has died from a neglected nursing-tube on its milk bottle. Daily cleansing, in warm suds, of the bottle, and discarding the long tube, is the child's only salvation. Soda water freely poured on what rubber is used, and thorough washing at each time of using, is an absolute necessity.

Did you ever taste the cream for your coffee after it had been all night next a platter of raw steak in a refrigerator that was poorly ventilated? Did you know that milk drawn in the evening and put in a cool place during the night will keep longer than the morning's milk that is shut at once in cans for delivery? Early cooling to a low temperature is the best way to keep milk sweet.

We have so far advanced in knowledge that typhus fever is beginning to be a thing of the past. We are learning that sewer-gas, filth and decay mean death and destruction. We are learning how to prepare our food, what to prepare, what to put in the refrigerator, and what to keep from ice if we would preserve the delicate flavor. We have learned what direct sunlight does toward destroying bacteria, and our sleeping rooms and our living rooms are daily opened to the fresh air and the bright sunshine.

Prof. Marshall Ward made an interesting report not so very long ago to the Royal Society of England. He exposed a flask of water, containing thousands of anthrax spores, to the light of the sun for several days. The spores were all killed. He then put spores on gelatine plates and covered with a sort of stencil-plate and exposed them to the sun from two to six hours. The plate was then put into an incubator, and, when afterwards held up to the light, a transparent marking could be seen where the sun struck the gelatine and the spores were destroyed on an otherwise opaque plate.

The different dangers in our homes differ in quantity and quality. Selmi, the Italian toxicologist, found ptomaines, that gave reactions similar to those of strychnine, in decomposed corn-meal. Other chemists have found in decomposed corn-meal, in mouldy corn-bread, poisons that pro-

duced paralysis; have found ptomaines that produced symptoms of nicotine poisoning.

Fish, eels, ham, canned meats and bread, in certain conditions, have been found to contain bacterial poisons. Beef broth, soups, stews and roasts, under certain conditions, have been found to contain leucomaines. One Saturday, in my own home, the cook wished to be away over Sunday. She prepared the chickens for Sunday's dinner, covered them while warm, and put them away in the refrigerator. Sunday afternoon each member of the family was ill. The cause of illness was laid to the chickens, and the weekly order for the usual supply countermanded. I did not know at that time that the hidden danger crept in after the chickens were cooked. My ignorance might have killed my family.—'Zion's Herald.'

HEALTH ON THE FARM.

(By Mrs. M. P. A. Crozier.)

One might naturally suppose that people who live on a farm would be very healthy, and perhaps, as a rule, farmers are longer-lived than most people, yet cases of severe sickness often occur. When a person is sick we may know that some law of nature has been violated or broken.

Now, it is one law of nature that people must breathe good air. If they do not they get sick. One would think that country people might have good air. The fresh breezes of heaven blow all around them. Yet it is a fact that country people often breathe very bad air. In some places there are marshes, or other lands, where vegetation is all the while decaying, and what is called malaria fills the atmosphere, and people breathe it and get fever and ague and other diseases. Then again, people let their cellars get dirty, instead of keeping them, as they should be, sweet and clean. The walls are damp and mouldy; old boxes and barrels are there; apples and potatoes and onions and cabbages decay in them, and from all these things arise bad, unhealthy smells, filling the rooms above, and so people breathe the bad air and get ill, and perhaps have diphtheria or some other terrible sickness.

Again, the sink drain is neglected, and bad air comes into the house; or filthy outhouses and yards send forth their unhealthy odors and help in the sad work.

But it is not bad air alone that makes people sick. Bad water is a cause of disease. People are sometimes careless about the water they drink and with which they cook. The well or cistern may not be clean. The water may seem clean and yet be very impure. The barnyard or some other filthy place may be so near that the water in the well is made bad by impurities draining into it from those sources. Cases of typhoid fever have resulted from such a cause. Probably any decaying animal matter in water, if there is enough of it, is likely to cause fever. I remember an article entitled 'Death in the Dish-cloth,' in which the writer expressed the opinion that typhoid fever in a certain family was caused by dirty dish-cloths. See that these be kept sweet and clean. Especially if the dish-water used contains milk is it necessary to be particular.

Again, farmers often overwork. They do not take time enough to rest. Our bodies are not made to endure constant labor very long. They wear out as other machinery does, and, although nature is a good hand to repair damages, her laws must be obeyed or man must suffer.

Then, too, some farmers try to get rich too fast, and for this reason, or others, worry and fret a good deal, which is always bad for health. It even wears people out faster, perhaps, than work.

Again, to be clean is a great help towards being well, and some farm-

ers—must I say it?—are not always clean in their persons.

But this is not all. Of all persons who have the means to live well, none, probably, are more careless about the healthfulness of their food than some farmers' families are; and although in this respect nature is as kind as she can be, and pay-day does not always seem to come immediately, it comes surely, and men break down with dyspepsia or some other disease, and die. Other farmers are too careless about taking cold; so consumption and pneumonia come. Then many farmers use tobacco, which is a poison; and still others, even the worse poison, alcohol. For all these reasons, not to mention others, country people sicken and die.

Now, to keep well, it is necessary to be careful regarding these things. Having clean houses, clean yards, clean bodies, pure air, pure water, good food and drink, plenty of rest and sleep, leading a pure, calm, wholesome and happy life, keeping a good conscience and a sweet trust in God, the farmer may hope that his days will be long in the land which the Lord his God has given him.—'Morning Star.'

THE CELLAR STAIRS.

'If I never accomplish another thing,' said a woman architect, who is a great enthusiast in her line, 'I hope to revolutionize the prevailing ideas on cellar stairs. If it is important for the members of the household to have easy, comfortable stairs to go to the second story, it is a thousand times more important to be able to get up and down cellar without the tremendous wear and tear incident on the use of the cellar stairs in most houses that I know of. I think one of the reasons why basements are so much disliked, and why people think their lives are worn out in coming and going from basement to dining-room, is because the stairs are so badly managed. They generally occupy some angle that seems of little use for anything else, and are as steep as they can be with any degree of regard for good sense. What I want to do is to make the cellar stairs the easiest of any in the house. I want them to start at some agreeable angle, go up about four steps, and furnish a broad landing with a folding-shelf in one corner—a shelf that may be thrown up against the wall and hooked entirely out of the way when not needed. Then I should approve of a rise of five or six steps more and another landing.

It is all very well to say that this would take up too much space; that really has nothing to do with the ease. If there is not room enough, make it, for there is no place where it is so much needed as here. The two landings, which should be broad and roomy, break the distance and let the woman get a fresh start to finish the ascent. All women know that they can go up three or four steps and keep their skirts out of the way, but when it comes to a dozen or fifteen, this is out of the question. At the top of the stairs I should like to have room for three or four deep shelves either at one side or the other. The lower one may be reached from the wide landing. On this what things are needed from the cellar may be placed, involving about half the labor of bringing up the articles for a meal. When things must be put away, they can be taken to the lower shelf; from there they are reachable again from the landing and can easily be set down on the folding shelf described.

It goes without saying that men have been building cellars all these years, and men do not wear petticoats and are not supposed to realize the strain and weariness of poking a lot of cloth from under one's feet every time it is necessary to go up some steps. When I have my way I shall still further modify the arrangement by building a small dumb-waiter just sufficient to take the food articles downstairs. This, of course, is meant for houses where the dining-room is on the main floor, but base-

ment and cellar stairs alike are the most wearisome things that I know of about the house. They are arranged with no idea of saving strength, but seem to be put in as an absolute necessity to be gotten through with in the smallest space and with the least expenditure of time and labor that can be imagined.

I verily believe that half of the dread of housework and meal-getting would be removed if one had stairs that were not so killing to go up and down. It is an excellent idea to have an old carpet on the cellar stairs, or a piece of canvas. This keeps the skirts from getting soiled, and is much more agreeable for the feet. When I build a house I am going to have everything easy, convenient and labor-saving about the kitchen. The rest of the dwelling, where people idle and do not exert themselves, will be entirely secondary.—New York 'Ledger.'

IN JACKETS OR OUT?

(By Helen Campbell.)

While the potato in Ireland—where it is the principal food—is considered uncreatable if cooked without its jacket, and while England is inclined to the same view, the American resents its appearance in this form as an evidence of poor housekeeping, and a token that the cook has been too lazy to do her work properly. The epicure demands a potato in its skin, and, though he may not know why the flavor is better in this state, insists that thus and thus only shall it come before him. Now comes the scientific man to confirm his verdict and to give the reasons why those who are not epicures, but simply people with fair appetites which they prefer to have satisfied in their own fashion, should overcome ancient prejudice and restore to the potato its former rights.

The 'Popular Science Monthly' reprinted the essays of W. Mattieu Williams on the 'Chemistry of Cookery,' and for all who have a limited supply of fruits or vegetables his statement has a special importance, the paragraph quoted being really merely a new presentation of the statements made by the best authorities on dietetics.

'Should potatoes be peeled before cooking, or should they be boiled in their jackets? I say most decidedly in jackets, and will state my reasons. From fifty-three to fifty-six percent of the saline constituents of the potato is potash, and potash is an important constituent of the blood—so important that in Norway, where scurvy once prevailed very seriously, it has been banished since the introduction of the potato, and according to Lang and other good authorities it is owing to the use of this vegetable by a people who formerly were insufficiently supplied with saline vegetable food. Potash salts are freely soluble in water; and I find that the water in which potatoes have been boiled contains potash, as may be proved by boiling it down to concentrate, then filtering, and adding the usual potash test, platinum chloride. It is evident that the skin of the potato must resist this passage of the potash into the water, though it may not fully prevent it. The bursting of the skin only occurs at quite the latter stage of the cookery.'

The travelled American has accepted jackets as the proper state for the potato of fashionable society. The well-to-do American, with his profusion of vegetables to choose from, may cleave to old ways if he will, but the poor, or the many in our farming communities who, strangely enough, have small sense of how much the farm could yield in addition to its standard crops, and confine themselves summer and winter to salt food—pork or beef—have special need of all that their few vegetables can do for them, and will, it is hoped, carefully follow the new-old fashion of jackets on.—'The Christian Work.'