

Lessons in Cooking

Course of Practical Instruction in the Science of Preparing Three Meals a Day

By Edith Charlton-Salisbury

Not many days ago I heard a woman lay a complaint against the usual run of articles, on cooking and serving meals, that are published in our periodicals. This woman is a good housekeeper, an excellent cook and thoroughly interested in the business of homemaking so her attention to the above-mentioned articles had considerable weight with me, because her opinion may be that of many other women. She said directions for cooking and recipes published in most periodicals are too complicated for the average housekeeper. "The writers who are often experienced teachers and know a great deal about the subject—or think they do—usually write over the heads of their readers and give us recipes for ordinary every-day meals which if we followed them would keep us in the kitchen more hours than we spend there now."

In defense of myself and others who may occasionally air their ideas on cooking in the press I told this accusing housekeeper that the common opinion among us is, that as we generally write for experienced housekeepers we had formed the idea that if we did not give them something new and startling in the culinary art we would not be able to hold their interest and so would fail to make the editors see the importance of our special work.

"You're wrong," she said, "what we don't know and what we want is principles and simple, practical directions for making, in the very best way, those common everyday dishes that we all like better than we like fancy cooking."

And right there I made a promise to myself, which was to the effect, that the very next time I wrote on cooking I would begin at the very beginning and point out all the little things which mean either success or failure; try to make plain all the whys and wherefores and clear away, if possible, some of the bug-a-boos that cause some women to dislike cooking. As this is the "very next time" we will start at "first principles" and follow them right through the science and art of cooking until no one who reads this page in the Canadian Thresherman and Farmer can say directions and formulae have been too elaborate for common use.

The cooking of meals, and the selection and combination of foods, is about the most important work a woman has to do in her home but it should not require all her time for there are other things in life besides cooking and eating. I propose to give a few lessons in cooking through these pages, suggesting simple menus that will be practicable in Western Canada, and giving, as clearly as possible, directions for preparing and serving the different dishes, especially the first time the dish appears in a menu. Of course I shall be very glad at all times to receive suggestions and contributions of tested recipes from any member of a home economics society or any reader of this paper.

Good Tools are Essential

In the first place I want to point out one big reason why some women do not like to cook. It is because they do not have their kitchens conveniently arranged for work and very often do not have enough, or the right kind of tools to work with. I have seen lots of homes beautifully furnished and well equipped in every department but the kitchen and then there was a dearth of even the essentials in the way of cooking utensils. I am not making a plea for an elaborate assortment or for stinking one's kitchen with all the fads in the way of labor-saving devices; lots of them are excellent and should be procured as soon as they can be afforded, lots more of them are not worth

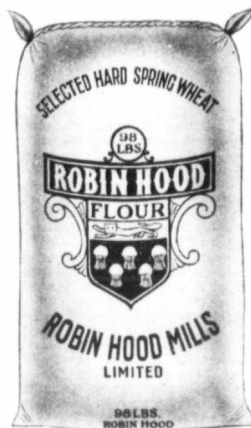
the price asked for them nor the space they occupy in the kitchen.

Let us make an inventory of the cooking utensils and find out if essentials are included in the list. Besides the big things such as tea kettle, dish pan, frying pans, dripping pans, bread board, rolling pin, meat chopper, and several sizes of good saucepans, there should be one or two standard measuring cups, a couple of standard tablespoons and teaspoons, No. 930, a wooden or granite mixing spoon, a couple of egg beaters, one a wire whip, the other a Dover, a double boiler or rice cooker, a couple of sieves of different sizes, enamel or granite baking dishes,

bread pans, cake tins and a steamer and frying kettle. All these articles to be of the size and number to suit the requirements of the family. Having these things the next thing is to learn their special use, and knowing it, form the habit of always using them in the right place. The sooner the matter of handling certain utensils and doing certain tasks becomes automatic the sooner will you become an expert cook and enjoy the reward of success.

For instance, when stirring or mixing anything always make a point of using the wooden or granite spoon, the wooden is preferable, because in stirring over the

fire the handle will never get hot. The stirring spoon, however, is not to be used for measuring. The standard measuring cups and spoons are to be used because all good and reliable recipes are constructed by them and accuracy in measurement is one of the essentials to success in cooking. The double boiler is necessary for it provides a way in which to cook custards, sauces and various other dishes which should always be cooked below the boiling point. A double boiler may be improvised by putting one saucepan inside a larger one, having boiling water in the outer vessel and the article to be cooked in the inner one. But this is in-



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