

### THE FIRELESS COOKER

The fireless cooker has now become so generally recognized as a saver of material and energy in cooking that a little treatment of the subject will not be out of place in a discussion of kitchen equipment. We may choose from a range, including the home-made to the most elaborate manufactured article, but, in any case, the saving of time and labor will amply repay the effort or cost.

The principle of the cooker is the retention of heat; it follows that the article to be cooked must first be heated to boiling point, or perhaps cooked for some time (depending on the article to be cooked) before being put in the cooker, or, in the case of those fitted with soap-stones, the soap-stones have first to be heated very hot, placed in the cooker and the article put in to cook. The degree to which the soap-stones are heated can be so great that any of the processes of cooking, baking, roasting, etc., can be carried on. The soap-stone cooker is more expensive but has the advantage of being available for more general use and there is no upholstery—it is very sanitary. Many of the cheaper kinds have upholstery and care must be taken to keep them well ventilated.

Prices for the manufactured article range from ten dollars upward, depending, too, upon size and make. It is the kind that can be made at home that shall be considered here.

For the purpose, a convenient sized packing-box or an old steamer trunk, can be utilized.

(1) To make.—See that there are no cracks or holes of any kind in the box; if so, have them filled up. Everything must be done to prevent escape of heat.

(2) In the case of a box—get a well fitting lid, secure it with strong hinges. It can be fastened down firmly when in use with hooks or other strong fasteners. With a trunk the question of a practically air-tight lid is settled.

(3) Line the box and lid with a layer of asbestos sheeting which can be easily obtained at a very slight cost. If not convenient to get sheets of paper (newspapers or any other kind) will answer the purpose. Use twenty to twenty-five layers of the paper, being careful not to join at the corners.

(4) For packing, use hay, excelsior, shavings or any light loose material. The packing should be put in closely but not too solidly and vests made to accommodate the cooking utensils. In this way it can be changed frequently.

(5) If a more permanent and neater sort of padding is desired, the packing may be kept in place with heavy denim, cotton or ticking. To do this—

(a) Cut a piece of cloth the size of the top of box, allowing an inch more on all sides for lapping, etc.