

HOUSEHOLD.

Caution in Little Things.

There are for the young and inexperienced housekeeper many little things that once learned are learned forever, but a lack of the knowledge of which will always prove inconvenient and subject one to considerable loss. One beginner in the domestic realm complained frequently that the milk soured, and it tried her not a little that, when she spoke of it a few times to the milkman, he said, pleasantly, but with decision, that she was the only customer on his route who ever found the milk he furnished unsatisfactory. An aunt who visited in the family quietly remarked that the milk was left on the doorstep too long, in even cool, but muggy, weather, and that it stood altogether too long on the kitchen table after being taken in. Two extremely simple things that, it would seem, would occur to any one, yet this young lady was surprised that it was necessary to be so prompt in dealing with milk. As she still had trouble at times, however, it remained for an intelligent servant to give her a needed lesson.

'If you please, ma'am,' she said, 'you put the milk close to the salad dressing in the refrigerator and of course the sourness was catchin'.'

'Is that possible?' asked the young mistress.

'Why, for certain, ma'am,' replied the girl. 'You never must put anything sour near the milk; it's always ready to "turn" on the least excuse; and either lemon juice, vinegar, or pickles, if put too near, up gets the milk and resents it, gettin' sour for itself.'

There was but little trouble with the milk after a while.

Some one declared, one night, that the soup tasted of kerosene-oil and wasn't fit to eat. It occurred to the housewife that the soup-kettle was kept in a closet under the sink, which was always neat, but that a kerosene-oil can was also kept in a far corner of the closet. She had had misgivings more than once as to the propriety of keeping the can where it was. On speaking of it to her husband, he said: 'Never keep a can of kerosene-oil in any closet, especially one where any kind of cooking utensils are kept! Let the can stand where the strong fumes can evaporate as soon as possible. The cellar is the best place.' It would seem that common sense would teach this, but some do not think of it. We saw a package of crackers sent back to a grocer a little while ago which were impregnated through and through with the unsavory odor of kerosene. It was found that a careless clerk had allowed a barrel of the crackers to stand over night in the vicinity of an oil hogshead. It is needless to add that the entire barrel of crisp wafers was a dead loss.

A man given to make scientific experiments sniffed warily on entering his mother's kitchen. 'There's nothing here that can be spoiled,' the lady affirmed. 'Last night at dinner we had an excellent piece of roast beef; it is in the cool pantry, and I intend having it sliced for lunch.'

'Then you'll be poisoned,' rejoined her son; and, going to the pantry, he showed her that the trouble arose from having allowed the beef to stand in the reddish gravy. 'Decomposition,' he said, using plainly the distasteful word, 'will often take place in a very few hours where meat that is rare is allowed to stand in the dish gravy. Your nice meat would have been all right to-day, had you put it on another platter free from the gravy the taint of which I recognized the moment I entered the kitchen.'

Another inexperienced housekeeper was annoyed at the speed with which her bread would have a musty taste. One day, a neighbor saw her carefully washing out the tin chest in which her nice loaves were kept, and, with true neighborly kindness, being justified also by superior age, she said, laughingly:

'My dear, I'm afraid your bread will spoil.'

'Well, now, do tell me what I am doing wrong!' exclaimed the younger woman.

'My bread does spoil, and I've tried in vain to find out the reason.'

'In the first place,' the neighbor replied, 'your tin is not perfectly dry. Any moisture will produce a musty, mouldy taste in a very little while; and, then, your bread is not cool enough to put away. I see you have wrapped it cautiously about with a portion of an old table-cloth, an excellent thing to do after the loaves have cooled. I have seen cooks wrap bread up in that way while warm, where it was to be eaten immediately; but it is not the correct way to shut the steam in with a cloth. Let the bread cool, have the tin chest thoroughly dried and well aired, then wrap up the loaves in soft cloth, and it will keep moist and perfectly sweet. Don't use the cloth long without washing it. I have often eaten bread that tasted of a cloth that needed washing. Bread is unavoidably greasy on the outside, and no taste sooner communicates itself to a linen cloth than the one adhering to whatever is baked in a pan.'

'Such little things, and yet so important!' exclaimed the younger woman.

'My dear, these little things are what make up the essentials in house-keeping,' was the reply. 'They are the minor details, often omitted in the cook books, and yet our sagacious old Dinah, a colored cook, who, if she was not the person of the household, was vastly mistaken, used to toss her head and say: "De pepper an' de salt dat's in de shakers is only a sign dat means common sense, an' dat in de han's ob a pussion dat knows seasons ob de entire supply ob de fam'ly."

Dinah was right. The common sense that comes of experience becomes the pepper and salt that both seasons and preserves whatever is properly cooked, and enjoyed when it is eaten.—'Christian Work.'

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