

## 7. Woman's Sphere.

By One of the Sex.

### The Food We Eat.

We have spoken somewhat of the preparation of meats, and now let us talk a little about the cooking of vegetables. There is one important rule, never to be neglected, never to be slighted, in the cooking of any vegetable. There is one exception only to this rule, and that makes it the more a rule. This rule is, never pour anything but boiling water over vegetables. No matter what they are or how they are to be prepared, when you put them on put boiling water over them. Even in the parboiling of beans, it is better to put boiling water over them, and then throw that off, for this practice keeps the real flavor of the vegetable in itself, instead of dissipating it in the water. Be sure the water is boiling, not merely hot, nor warm; it must be boiling. The exception to this rule is in the cooking of potatoes, either very old ones or very new ones. If you put them on in cold water, so some cooks maintain, they will be better in flavor and in mealiness. However, our potatoes, even now this late in the spring, are always put on in boiling water, and they taste quite as well as other people's, and I think a great deal better than most of potatoes. You can try this for yourself. There is an accompanying rule to this one I have given you, and it is quite as important, and must never be neglected. This is, to drain the vegetable off the moment it is done. There is nothing so tasteless as water-soaked potatoes or any sort of vegetables, and if they remain one moment, I might almost say one second, too long in the water after they are done they become water-soaked, and no amount of seasoning will replace the delicate and nutritious flavor which has been thrown away. So look to it that your careless girl does not ruin every vegetable by the breaking of one or both of these rules. Some cooks recommend the soaking of some kinds of vegetables in cold water for some hours before cooking, especially if the vegetable be old, strong, or wilted. In the latter case, it is certainly better to soak them in ice cold water for some time, until they have freshened and lost their wiltness.

The potato is the most common and the most useful vegetable we have. I am aware that some over critical people say that the potato has little or no nourishment, but it is none the less useful for that, as it supplies the bulk required by the stomach, without overcrowding with heavy food material. Can you boil potatoes with their skins or without, so that they are succulent, firm and full of flavor? If you can, I shall say you possess the elements of a good cook, for care in this particular indicates care in others, and I feel sure you are on the watchtowers of your kitchen continually. After your potatoes are boiled and the water turned off, cover them with a clean folded dishcloth instead of the tin cover, and let them stand on the back of the stove until wanted. If you mash them, do be sure the lumps are all out, and that you put enough cream and butter in them to make them soft and moist. Then beat them with a big fork, until they are as light as foam; in dishing

them, be a little particular about smoothing them off with a knife and make successive curves with the blade, and put a bit of butter on top, and pepper well; and your potatoes will taste much better for looking so tempting.

### The Clothes We Wear.

There is no doubt that the cut of skirts is undergoing a radical change. I dare say that we will all adopt the new styles, with sufficient moderation to be sensible, for it would seem ridiculous for a few women to go about with the tight, belt fitting skirt which has been popular so long while the rest wore gored and flaring petticoats. I can endure to make my skirts a little wider for the comfort the new style brings in making the edge of the skirt at least two inches from the ground and in some cases, where a woman has a pretty foot and wants to show it, even three or four inches from the ground. You remember the old gored skirt, with the front and side breadths very narrow at the top and sloping outward to the bottom of the skirt in a deep angle. Well, that is the way the new style flares out the new skirt. The bottom has to be stiffened, and that is the worst feature of the whole thing, for this makes a very heavy weight to carry around on the hips. Dressmakers run a sort of cord of horsehair around the facing, and that gives the appearance of small hoops. Of course some sort of stiff lining has to be used, else the skirt would flap around the ankles with anything but a graceful look. Now, I want to beg all my friends who are determined to adopt the new fashion to add a grain of sense to their folly, and insist on the dressmaker sewing that heavy skirt on to a low necked underwaist. If you cared to do so, your dress could be made in the princess shape, and trimmed to simulate a basque, and this would take the weight off the hips. In any case, be sure, as you value your life and health, to see to it that your skirt hangs from the shoulders and that not one pound is dependent from your hips.

Sleeves are still abnormally large, and the fullness drops instead of standing upright as it has done. Trimming around the bottom of skirts is put on in lines, or ruffles. Full bias ruffles will appear on many dresses. Likewise bands of velvet and lace ruffles.

Hats will be a medley for color, and the prevailing colors are green and violet. But for goodness sake don't try to combine these colors yourself; if it is not done for you by a really artistic milliner, let them alone. Twisted shapes and broad brims are the rule. There are some poke bonnets seen, and the tiny bonnet is tinier still. Some hats and bonnets have no crowns at all, are as it were just a wreath of flowers on the head.

The outdoor wraps are also decidedly strange looking, with great flaring skirts half way down to the feet, and with all sorts of big sleeves and flaring plastrons on the shoulders. Lace is used to trim spring wraps. The trim little fichu style of wraps seems to be coming in.

I saw a very neat, pretty costume in an eastern paper, which had not too wide a skirt half way down there was added what looked like a very deep yet not too wide ruffle. It looked to me like the old fashioned "cut-skirt" which you remember takes little cloth, fits nicely

over the hips and is withal very becoming to all figures. Calico dresses made in this style will be neat and pretty.

### Our Children.

The question of what shall be given to the baby who has to be raised by hand is quite an important one and should receive careful consideration. I have never had the experience of rearing a child from birth on prepared food, but have begun to feed at three months and have been extremely successful. None of the babies I have so fed have suffered with the colic, and not one has ever had the summer complaint nor have they ever been constipated. If they were sick at all, and that was rarely, and usually when cutting a tooth, it came in the shape of a cough, or a slight fever. I know of mothers and relatives who have reared babies from the birth on a bottle, or with spoon food. And I have studied these different cases as closely as I could. I propose to give you the result of my investigations. Some mothers have used oatmeal gruel, some graham, and some have used milk and water alone. I am inclined to think that the very best diet for a child who gets to be three months old before beginning to feed is graham gruel, cooked in the following manner: Take three tablespoonfuls of the flour after the fine flour has been sifted out of it, tie it up in a thin rag, and boil it for three hours in a quart of water. A half teacup of this gruel, with four tablespoonfuls of new milk, not cream, and a little honey to sweeten it, will make a palatable and nutritious food for baby. I should use the same thing for a new born infant, only make the gruel thinner, that is, use less flour and use less milk. I know of two babies that have been most successfully raised on this diet, and I strongly recommend it. Oatmeal is too rich, and too heating for the blood. After the child is four months old you can begin to use a little brown bread, fixed in this way: Break up your bread, which should never be too fresh, in a tin cup, pour just enough boiling water over it to moisten it, and after it has soaked pour into it some good milk. Don't sweeten this, as baby will soon grow fond of the simple bread and milk, and it is hard to get a sweetening material that is so harmless as that in the mother's milk. Never use cane or beet sugar, I implore you. It will give the babe colds, sore throats, boils, and every little trouble that comes from overrich blood. Honey, or even maple sugar, is far better. You can get a milk sugar in the drug stores, but it is expensive. As soon as possible, train the child to eat its food without sweetening of any kind. These two foods I have mentioned are quite sufficient for any child until the teeth are all through. You can add a bit of bread and butter after the child is a year old, and ripe strawberries and other fruits can be safely used, if you are only careful to feed the child at regular, strictly regular intervals, and not too often at that. Summer complaint is not caused by fruit, it is caused by overfeeding and diseased bowels. Fruit may irritate diseased bowels, but if you keep the laws of life for your baby, never fear fruit for it. But beware how you allow it to eat meat. That I charge you. No child under three years old has any need for meat. Eggs after it is a year old. And now, as a parting admonition, remember what has been said about