

HOME STUDIES

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Home studies by Rebecca A. Upton

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REBECCA A. UPTON

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"In every form of government the enduring element is in the cultivation of the soil." — *Quarterly Review*, Vol. XLIV, No. II, Art. VIII.

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P R E F A C E .

THE present volume is made up from the gleanings of a lifetime. Whenever facts and every-day phenomena have forced themselves on my attention, whether in books or actual experience, I have noted them down in a commonplace-book. These gleanings have nothing but plain language and practical usefulness to recommend them, verbal nicety and literary ornament being no way suited to my purpose.

My principal objects have been to bring into the compass of one small volume such information as may be useful to both housekeeper and gardener, whether residing in village, country, or city, and to keep in mind through the whole work the various fortunes of the American woman, whose life is often partly spent in cities, partly on Western prairies, and partly on Southern plantations, — perhaps begun in affluence, to be finally shorn of all but health, hands, and unflinching courage.

The receipts I have given I know to be good. Almost all are original, that is, of family origin, — not taken from books. A few have been given me by friends.

If the work should have any influence, however small, on the tendencies of the present day, not only to increase the

number of manual employments, but also to widen the horizon of observation, for woman, I shall be happy. The imaginations and feelings of women are sufficiently cultivated; but perhaps common sense is less so, because it finds less stimulus for action in the present partial education and cramped position of women. Novels, poetry, and excitement-meetings may all be very well as occasional mental condiments, but when offered as the only diet to the sex whose nervous constitution is proverbially sensitive, it may lead the physician and philanthropist to doubt whether these kinds of mental dietetics do not produce much of that nervousness, insanity, and hopeless hypochondriasis, which cause humanity to war with itself both within and without.

R. A. UPTON.

HOME STUDIES.

ACATER, n. An old English word. A provider, caterer, or purchaser of provisions. An acater, to understand his or her business, should know which meats and vegetables best consort with certain seasons; how to choose young chickens, by trying the flesh under the wing, seeing if the breast-bone yields to the touch, if the scales on the leg be smooth, and the spurs scarcely budded, and the claws tender and short; how to select healthy meats, by rejecting such as show a yellow, diseased appearance in the fatty portions, or a spotted, unequal surface, as if indifferently bled, or coarse, loose fibre, indicating poor feed. A good acater should make himself familiar with the most reliable brands for flour; the choicest varieties of apples for dessert, and also for culinary preparations; the difference between dry, unadulterated sugar, and that which is the refuse of the sugar-factory, — between acid and fermenting molasses, and rich, wholesome sirup. In short, a good acater and caterer should have good sense, nice observation, be something of a chemist, and a little of a Yankee.

ACCOMPANIMENT, n. That which accompanies. (*Worcester.*) This word seems to be principally devoted to the musical and culinary arts. One axiom with the house-keeper is never to have insipid meats accompanied with

insipid vegetables. Veal is, therefore, relieved by lemon, horseradish, pungent salads, pickles, and piquant condiments. Young onions, cabbage salad, water-cresses, and lettuce, owing to their bitter properties, are desirable accompaniments for veal. This acrimonious property should, however, be mitigated, by soaking such vegetables, before cooking, about half an hour in cold water.

A Boiled Leg of Mutton should be accompanied by mashed turnips and caper sauce.

Roasted Mutton and Venison require currant or grape jelly.

Mutton stuffed and baked, or stewed, should have tomato sauce.

Roasted Turkey is usually served accompanied by a slice of boiled smoked tongue, celery, and cranberry jelly. Mushrooms and mushroom sauce are always desirable with roasted poultry and game.

Boiled Turkey, with oyster sauce; cauliflower, if in season.

Roasted Goose, with apple sauce and onions.

Roasted Chicken, with stewed tomatoes, summer-squash, salsify fritters, and rice croquets. If out of season for summer-squash and salsify, rice croquets, onions, and tomatoes are all desirable accompaniments. Tomatoes are easily preserved in tin canisters, kept air-tight, through the winter. Celery should, if possible, always be on the table with roasted chicken; asparagus, if in season.

Boiled Chicken, with egg sauce or oyster sauce, or parsley sauce. A small bit of sweet, young pork boiled with it. Asparagus, if in season.

Roast Beef, with macaroni, hominy, boiled rice, if in winter, squash; tomatoes.

Boiled Beef, with carrots, cabbage, parsnips.

Roasted Duck and Game, with currant jelly, mushroom sauce, and onions.

Boiled Salt Codfish is accompanied with carrots, beets, and onions, with egg sauce and melted pork gravy, commonly known as dip.

Tongues and Sounds are served with the same vegetables and sauces.

Fried Fish are mostly served with crisped parsley.

Baked Fish, with anchovy sauce; pickles and lemons being always on the table.

Boiled Salmon, with caper sauce, egg sauce, and anchovy sauce.

Potatoes and artichokes are served, in their various ways, with most dishes, though with plain boiled dishes mashed or fried potatoes would be an anomaly. They are simply boiled whole for such dishes.

Of course, these are merely suggestions; and offered principally to the young housekeeper as inducements for her to look for and adhere, whenever compatible, to palatable affinities.

ACCOUNT-BOOK. A book containing accounts. Every housekeeper will find herself repaid for her trouble if she allow her register of personal and household expenses to expand into a kind of commonplace-book. For example, if she live in the country, under the head of Animals, let her register facts with regard to her poultry, cows, &c., reserving several blank pages to be filled up as occasion may offer. Under the head of Plants, reserving the blank pages as before, set down all reliable facts and observations with regard to soil suitable to a certain class of plants, and the habits of such plants as she may be cultivating; what class of insects infest them, and by what means they are best destroyed. If she be a mother, let her make an entry, under the general head of Disease, of the rise, progress, and departure of different diseases, as experienced by her children.