

the apples and blackberries using half and half, sieve and thicken as before, and add a pound of sugar to each pint of the pulp. Boil until it sets.

DAMSON CHEESE. Cook with a little water, then rub through sieve and thicken. A pound of sugar to each pint of the purée. Add a few blanched kernels of the stones if you like.

DAMSON AND APPLE CHEESE. Make what proportion you like, and cook as above.

Other mixtures will at once spring to the mind, for example our old friend, Plum and Apple, and for a very special apple cheese, the addition of a little quince. But the procedure in all of them is the same, and discretion will be used in the amount of sugar to be added.

BLACKBERRY VINEGAR makes a cheap and cooling drink in summer when mixed with water. If the sugar can be obtained, here is a recipe. Wash two pounds of blackberries, put them into a large bowl and pour over them two quarts of white wine vinegar. Let them stand for four days, then strain through a hair sieve without pressure. Put another two pounds of blackberries into the bowl, and pour over them the strained blackberry vinegar. Leave for another four days, and strain as before. Do the same with two more pounds of blackberries, and then measure the liquid. Allow fourteen ounces of sugar to each pint of the liquid, bring to the boil when the sugar has dissolved, and simmer gently for five minutes. Skim it, and when it is quite cold, bottle it.

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WITH THE EXODUS OF COUNTLESS CHILDREN FROM London and other of our cities, a number of householders suddenly found themselves faced by a problem which they had only vaguely considered before. And this problem may arise at any time during a war, when perhaps owing to air-raids or other considerations, the families of friends or relatives may be billeted upon us.

When a small family becomes swelled by a number of other people, the simple task of ordering and preparing meals begins to assume the horrid name and aspect of 'catering'. This is not, of course, true in most cases, where only two or three children have been received; but it is serious enough to make one alter one's whole ideas of what getting a meal means.

In the first place, the chances are that the children will be homesick and off their food. This will not last as they settle down; but then comes a further problem in the fact that they don't like, and probably won't eat without enormous persuasion, food which is unfamiliar. Children are highly conservative where their food is concerned, and it is little trouble to find out what the little strangers are used to. I am not referring to exceptional cases as that illustrated in the now classic story of the two London children who complained about their supper because it did not consist of beer and chips; but any children of the same class may find the food of one household entirely different from that in their own home. In any case,

children's tastes are generally for plain and undisguised fare, although a little attractive deception in the matter of garnishes, etc., may be overlooked by them. Indeed, one of the most important tasks of the housewife in this respect is to make the food look as appetising as possible, and the child's (and indeed the adult's) reaction in this connection is the very reverse of the saying that 'what the eye doesn't see the heart doesn't long for!'

Another pitfall for the earnest embryo caterer is to confuse ordinary healthy feeding with what is known as dieting. She flies at once to lists of vitamin and caloric values, and worries herself to death with temperatures, fractions and decimals. Good ordinary plain food is what is wanted, and without going into the question of proteins, fats and carbohydrates (an exposition of which can be found in any manual, and a short note at the end of this book) most people generally find in the long run that they have known all along in their hearts (or should I say in the stomachs?) exactly what these things were, without having discovered their scientific names; that is to say, the sensible among us soon find out for themselves what is good for them, and for others too. The main thing is to devise a wholesome and substantial diet (not a dietary), to vary it as much as possible, and to use economy in buying and preparing it.

One of the wisest things I remember reading in a book or article during the last war was the advice that instead of first choosing your menu and then going out and buying it, the menu should be suited

to the market. This, of course, is what our French friends have been doing for generations, and it is one of the secrets of their economical cooking. This does not mean that you cannot plan from day to day ahead, as you should, but it does mean that when you have to start, as it were, with a new cycle, you should consult the shops before deciding what those meals shall be. Something or other may be particularly cheap or good on a certain day, which may lead to certain modifications in your original ideas. And this, of course, presupposes that you will do your own shopping. The Government's discouragement of the too frequent use of the telephone except for urgent messages may very likely turn out to be a blessing in disguise to those who care about their food, for it will send their wives to the shops instead of to the telephone, and that dreadfully bad habit, the standing order, will be abolished! In other spheres of economy careful cooking and carving will take their place and earn their own reward, for few things are more extravagant than overcooking, and pounds of meat can be 'lost' in a week by unskilful carving. Care in this direction, too, should lessen the amount of 'left-overs' there are; these always afford a problem to the housewife for some reason or other, and in any case dishes prepared from them are generally unsuitable for children. Hashes (except those made with fresh meat) should by now be a thing of the past. If meat must be warmed up, then it is best to put the thin slices on a dish, pour the hot sauce or gravy over them, and let them warm well through, not cook,

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in it. Fritters, in which the meat is fried quickly in its batter case, and is not actually cooked again, are also suitable for the older children.

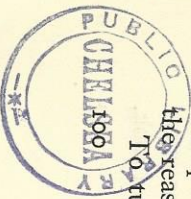
Another very important thing to remember is to watch your larder. The careless housekeeper can be detected by the state of her larder or refrigerator. In it you will find all manner of odds and ends which she 'hopes' to use somehow or other,—but probably never will. A careful daily inspection will be found one of the greatest aids to economy possible. To keep the larder as empty as possible, so as to be able to order fresh food from day to day, is a sure sign of a good cook. (And here I should like to say that much as I admire the perfection which the modern refrigerator has attained, it should never be allowed where possible to take the place of a larder. Certain things can be kept with excellent results in a refrigerator, but for others a larder is essential. The tendency of those using a refrigerator is often to keep things far too long, with the result that all the benefits of refrigeration are lost.) As for tinned food, unless it is deliberately used in the general menu, there is no need for more than a few tins to be kept in stock, against an unexpected emergency. This daily checking of the larder will not only ensure that all left-overs are used up immediately, but will also offer a guide as to the correct amount of a certain foodstuff to be ordered next time, unless there is some special reason (for example the illness of one of the family) which explains the reason for the remains.

To turn to some hints on the practical side, the

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housewife should see that each child is ordered at the very least a pint of milk a day. Children require a great deal of milk, the more the better, and it is, of course, used in many ways. It may save some trouble to remember that milk when drunk by itself should be drunk slowly and not gulped down. This is a special warning to country families where town children have been received, for many tempers have been spoiled by giving a thirsty child a glass of milk. Cream will be found too expensive on the whole, but it is worth noting that while butter is unrationed (and possibly when it is if a large enough ration is provided), cream made with a machine from milk and butter is more wholesome and actually cheaper in the long run than milk and custard powder. Cheese dishes, provided that the cheese is grated and mixed with a sauce as in macaroni cheese, are good for children and often very much liked, but lumps of cheese and dishes like Welsh Rabbit should be discouraged as being indigestible. As for butter or margarine, allow at least one ounce per head beside what is used in cooking (if you can). Butter is perhaps better when eaten plain, but margarine has lost the ill-name it had during the last war, and is excellent in every way for cooking, certain brands too, when raw, being almost indistinguishable from butter.

Vegetables should be given every day, as well as fresh fruit, and if the children will eat them, green salads. Tomatoes are admirable in every way, and even when tinned lose little of their nutritive value. Vegetable dishes should be encouraged as a separate



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course, and variety arranged as much as possible. A selection of vegetable dishes of this kind will be found in Chapter Three. Even the best child in the world might rebel in the end against cabbage every day!

Just one word about meat. If the weekly menus include plenty of milk, cheese and eggs, not a great deal of meat will be needed, but, when it is, then it will be false economy to buy inferior sorts. All use should be made of bones from the joints, and it must not be forgotten that excellent soup can be made from the water in which a fowl has been boiled, and from the water in which most vegetables, except the strongest-flavoured, have been cooked. The carcass of a roast chicken, too, will make quite good stock for sauces and soups.

One last word. Fruit juices in the morning are excellent for children, and delicious too. Orange, lemon or grapefruit juice with a little water (cold or warm) and a little sugar added make an extremely pleasant and valuable pre-breakfast drink. But if this is too much for time or expense, then an apple, or part of one, *after* breakfast will be even better.

Chapter Ten RATIONING

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

I DO NOT THINK MYSELF, IN SPITE OF THE DISMAL Jimmies, we shall have to worry a *very* great deal about Rations. When rationing was imposed during the last war, the U-boat menace came upon us at a time when all our resources were strained to the utmost and we had already passed through three years of war. It came more or less as a surprise; and it caught us napping. This time we have had the chance to be prepared. We have been able to build up stocks of food in the country, and it seems likely that any rationing scheme embarked upon by the Government will take the form of a wise precaution in conserving our stocks rather than a measure to cope with a sudden and serious situation.

I take it, then, that the embarrassments which fell on the heads of our housewives in 1917 will not be repeated now. I do not anticipate any sudden and stringent cutting-down of our normal supplies. Commodities will no doubt be somewhat more scarce, but not enough to make us despair or, as I hope, send us rushing to those lists which I have perforce given in the next chapter. I have every respect for the dietician; but I don't like his methods. Most people, as I have said before, have a pretty good idea what sort of meals are good for them—most sensible people, at any rate,—and I think that if you were to cast up your present menus in terms of protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and all the