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In the Light of Experience

By MARCIA E. TURNER, Associate Professor of Home Economics

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER GRIEVE was afraid of "night air." It had been her experience that sleeping with her head uncovered was bad for her health. You can't discount your own experience and that's all there is to it!

Back before her time, oh years and years ago, some remote grandee would have assured you just as positively that on clear days the sun outside their cave moved right across the sky, and in all her life she had never known it to fail. Some mistake about it, eh? And she would have stiffened her spine and tightened her lips. What nonsense!

Because, you see, she had proved it in her own experience.

And I live in another time. We aren't superstitious, not a one. We live in an enlightened age.

You and I, modern women, living in this modern world, sometimes have opinions based upon our own experience, too, which we warmly defend, but which might not "hold water" if examined in the light of honest investigation?

Now then, is it perhaps conceivable that you and I, modern women, living in this modern world, sometimes have opinions based upon our own experience, too, which we warmly defend, but which might not "hold water" if examined in the light of honest investigation?

Let me give an illustration. The superintendent of a large factory which puts out a staple food product, answered my question about the difference in quality between two of his brands, said "No difference whatever, both kinds came out of the same hopper." Then he added rather slyly, "Every woman, you know, has to hunt up sea captains and persuade them to give her a brand of food. She has to have her pet brand—can't make do any other way."

He went on to tell of a grocer who keeps on hand empty containers of quality brands so that if he runs short of one kind, all he has to do is to fill the container from the "other kind."

Now, do you know I was tactless enough to tell that story once, when I thought it interesting enough to mention? But did it convince anyone? It did not. Down through the centuries came the indomitable spirit of Grandmother Cave-woman, stiffened spine and tightened lip and all, with her age-old answer: "Yes, but you see my experience has proved it."

Let's be honest with each other, you and I. Can you look a stranger in the face and give that reason for "my way" of accomplishing a piece of work or for pursuing a stated course other than "It's the way I've always done" or "It was my mother's way." Is your reason provable? Modern research has thrown light upon these "experiences" of ours, and has furnished a wealth of knowledge which helps us in our reasoning. Everyone who sews has had the experience of pressing a seam in a wool garment. It is almost impossible to press such a seam without having some mark on the right side. To avoid this ugly mark make a tube by rolling a magazine sheet and making a channel in it when you are pressing a seam you can hold the seam directly on the tube. Another way is to put a piece of paper between the seam and the cloth. Thus the marks are put on the paper and not so they will show on the right side of the material.

After you get the saving time habit you will be inventing short cuts for yourself.

Naming Canned Fruits

By KATHERINE GOEPPLINGER

N EARLY a century ago a young man in Boston, named William Underwood, was laying the foundation of a great industry. He had become interested in the newly discovered but little understood science of preserving foods, and while he was convinced that certain perishable products could be saved from deterioration in an appetizing and wholesome way, he probably never fully realized that he was the father of the great canning industry of today.

Those were hard times for William Underwood. Like all pioneers, one of his greatest obstacles was public opinion. "Sealed foods," as they were called in those days, were decidedly unpopular; people mistrusted them—simply couldn't understand how Underwood could put things up in glass jars and make them keep when they couldn't. In fact, want of a market in this country he often had to hunt up sea captains and persuade them to dispose of his "cans" in new countries overseas, where fresh provisions were scarce and where the colonists had to be thankful for whatever they could get.

This was in the year 1821, a year before the present house of Underwood was founded. A few years later Mr. Underwood planted "love apples" in his garden and was putting them up in glass. "Love apples" were considered "pizen" then. Now they are called "tomatoes," and we consume about 249 million cans a year.

Thus, little by little, Mr. Underwood, strong in the belief that there was a future for the business, perfected his processes and about 1830 high-grade canned goods were being produced. He gradually gave up glass and began to use tin "canisters."—cylinders of tin laboriously wrought and sealed by hand.

In those days typewriters duplicating processes, and stenographers were unheard of. Books and documents of all kinds were written by hand. "Canisters" proved to be too long a word to write many times, and it appeared to make the earning of a living much easier for Mr. Underwood's own hand as "Can's," then a little later as "Can's," and finally just "Cans." This is the origin of our modern word "Cans."