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Pointed Remarks About Sharp Blades

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Spotlight

Over

Washington

News from Washington has become so complicated and voluminous in the last few years that no college girl can hope to follow all of it. Accordingly, the Homemaker attempts to fill the gap by picking out the more interesting bits in its Washington Spot.

In spite of the fact that optimists proclaim that henceforth "everything is going to be rosy," there are quite a few whitecaps that need flattening before Prosperity Sea will be utterly serene.

King Cotton has struck rough weather. With sagging markets, reduced exports, a crop surplus on hand, and squabbling among the "cotton" senators, over crop control, foreign advertising, and the processing tax, settlement of the problems is still in the distance.

* * *

Believe it or not, the United States (the world's greatest farmer) imports more foodstuffs than it exports. This has been true in four out of five of the past years. Economists explain this drop in foreign trade as the result of the substitution and building up of home industries in other countries in case of war, the fact that American prices are high, that foreign buyers prefer to buy manufactured rather than farm products. Since we won't accept foreign goods in trade and European countries have run out of gold, we aren't able to effect an exchange. Two remedies have been suggested: (1) adjustment of the tariff and the accepting of goods, and (2) adjustment of industry and agriculture.

* * *

The Copeland Bill, the much talked of proposed food and drug legislation, the measure established in 1913 for the purpose of "quality in product and accuracy in advertising" and for consumer confidence, is reported out of the committee for favorable action by the senate. It has the support of the president. In charge of its administration would be the Department of Agriculture, guided by two committees. One of these would be composed of a scientific group for advice on public health, and one would be a composite body representing the public, industry and the Department of Agriculture. The bill is so stated that jealousy of punishment from false advertising would fall only on the producers of the ads.

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An end of table-top writing, gray

Pointed Remarks

About Sharp Blades

by Isabella Palmer

The last straw—the cake simply would not cut. It seemed tender, but—perhaps the knife wasn't quite sharp enough. She was entertaining—wished to make a good impression. And, of course, everything had gone wrong.

The handle had broken on the paring knife, and she had borrowed Mrs. Nabor's to complete the celery cuts. Now, to top it off, the perfectly beautiful cake with which she had taken such pains, crumbled pitifully every time she inserted the thick dull knife into its luscious goodness.

Perhaps this woman will learn after a few similar experiences that cheap cutlery never stands up under the strain of constant use in the kitchen. It is false economy to purchase paring knives from Mr. Woolworth, even if they are bright and shiny and have such adorable green handles.

After it has been through the treads a few times, the "perfectly dinky little handle" will wobble uncertainly, the small ring which holds the blade will mysteriously lose itself in the maze of soap suds, and if that doesn't disgust the user, the green paint will fall in tiny flakes all over the stew while the carrots are being sliced. Perhaps this will enhance the color scheme, but hardly the flavor.

Did you ever have tired hands after peeling an unusually large number of potatoes for a company dinner? Maybe the handle of your paring knife doesn't fit your hand.

How silly, you say, how could that make any difference?

It is surprising to note the difference in the feel of knife handles. Every hand has its own peculiarity. You will probably gasp when you are told that knives are used in the kitchen about 129 times a day. This figure was reached during a study on time and motions made in preparing the usual three meals a day for an average family. It would be well, then, to buy your knife to fit your hand. Feel it before you purchase it. Is it long enough? Is it comfortable to hold? Is it easy to manipulate? Does it have spring?

The attachment of the handle to the blade is very important. It is well to have the broad shank of the blade extend to the end of the handle. Rivets form the most lasting fastening.

The quality of the blade itself is not easy to ascertain, therefore it is wise to buy your cutlery from a reliable manufacturer. Remember that quality is the most important factor in this investment.

You should purchase a knife for a definite purpose; it should facilitate some food preparation process. Four different types of knives are found to have the most general use in the average kitchen at home: The paring knife which may have a short blade to give leverage when in action and a sharp point for removing potato eyes, the utility knife which is medium sized and has either a straight or curved cutting edge, the carving knife which should be long and pointed with a sharp blade, so that Dad can amputate the drumsticks easily for the holiday dinner without casualty to the best linen cloth and a slicing knife with a long flexible, tapering blade which will give thin slices of bread, cake or meat.

Good quality, service and comfort when in use are the principal characteristics of a good knife. Heed then the lesson of the lady who found herself in dire difficulty. Throw away the cheap, flimsy knives in your cupboards and secure quality cutlery which will make a pleasant job even out of peeling potatoes.