1923

The Sport of Amateur Housekeeping

Anna Jacobson
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker

Part of the Home Economics Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol3/iss8/13

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Homemaker by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
I feel properly apologetic for venturing to introduce the Amateur Homemaker to her sister professionals; for, quite candidly, the amateur is not highly regarded by the finished artist. It is much as if the first-reader class should call on Professor Noble to give him some pointers on literature. Still, there may be a place in some corner for the amateur also, when she scrupulously refrains from encroaching on the preserves of the professional, and contented herself with housekeeping as a sport.

Now, a sport should not be tainted with professionalism. The game is the thing. It should have an element of chance, and not be taken too seriously. The amateur is a free lance. She has no standard to maintain. She may admirably and candidly admit that standardization is one of the front wheels of progress, and yet have her little fling at standardized diets, color-schemes, and kitchens. Let the amateur stalk forth blithely to her improvisation, her irresponsible, adventurous housekeeping. It is a good, sane, homely game, if you take it that way.

Only, you must shut your ears to the everlasting Hallelujah chorus of the betwixt-and-between folks who have no strong predilections or brilliant accomplishments to lend gayety to more efficiency, or you are lost.

The sedentary worker, and you have some­thing to do with the kitchen, and a few hundred expert cooks will cater to the million consumers. All the more reason to enjoy the fragrant, spacy hours and cook into the kitchen while you have a chance. Try one of "Bettina's salada," or "1000 ways to please a husband" (even if you haven't any to please!). Kitchen literature is full of delights if one chooses judiciously. There is a real thrill when you come across "Living on $500 a year," and if you yearn for the pencil-figure, take courage; you may "Eat, and grow thin." There are other thrills, too, for cooking, like aeroplaning, has its little explosions and sudden falls.

It is a mistake to regard the kitchen as devoid of romance because it deals with primitive elemental wants. To scrub, to cook, to bake, to plow, to sow—all the plain, hard manual tasks—bring one to close contacts with the earth's starkest and simplest. That, indeed, is the inmost charm of housekeeping, as it is of farming. Do you remember the sowing of the seed in Hansum's "Growth of the Soil"? That is the epic of the farm, but there is a humble epic of the kitchen, too. Not that the kitchen is a "literary" place—Heaven forbid! But for all that, it has an honored place in literature, from Theocritus to Rupert Brooke.

Everyone knows what an inimitable Roast Pig came out of Charles Lamb's kitchen, but Carlyle's and Emerson's amusing correspondence on cornmeal and Johnny-cake is less well known. Characteristically, Carlyle ends with a ditty-ramb on the transatlantic Johnny-cake:

"It is really a small contribution towards world history, this small act of yours and ours. * * * How beautiful to think of lean, tough Yankee settlers, tough as gutta percha, with most occult, unanalyzable fire, who were baking over the western mountains to annihilate the jungle, and bring bacon and corn out of it for the posterity of Adam. The pigs in about a year eat up all the rattlesnakes for miles around, a most judicious function on the part of the pigs. Behind the pigs comes Jonathan, with his all-con­quering ploughshare-glory to God! Oh, if we were not such a set of cant-ridden blockheads there is no Athenian or Herakles equal to this fact:—which will find real "Posto" some day or other!"

You may not be one who can sing the song of the Johnny-cake and its relations; but when the all-too-short day of housekeeping comes to a close, you view your handwork and declare it good. Now comes the reward of your toil. In this closet space of time you savor life, happy, indeed, if you have a beloved guest to share with you the lowly, homely things in quiet companionship.

"Filled may thy mouth be with honey, Thyrsis, and filled with honeycomb; and the sweet dried fig mayst thou eat of Aegleus, for thou vanquished the cicada in song! Lo, here is thy cup: see, my friend, of how pleasant a savour! Thou wilt think it has been dipped in the wellness of hours."

An Interview With Scottish Hockey Coach

(Continued from page 5) are built for sports—and they go out for them. I refer not only to college women, but all. They have much greater endurance. I have seldom seen an English hockey player ‘winded.’ They may play for 30, 60, or 90 minutes and never show signs of fatigue. "American girls as a whole do not enter sports so whole-heartedly, consequently they never attain the endurance which the girls of Great Britain. However, they are very apt, and I only regret that I cannot remain longer to produce a championships team here at Iowa State College."