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If the mistress of the house is only willing to take sufficient care and trouble to teach her properly, there is no reason in the world why the maid of all work should not be able to cook an appetizing meal in the course of a week or two, no matter how "green" she may be when she first arrives. Of course, a great deal depends on the intelligence of the "girl." If she is bright and quick-witted little difficulty will be experienced in teaching her to prepare simple but well-cooked dishes,

but even with the stupidest emigrant much may be done with a little kindness, firmness and, above all, perseverance.

When dealing with an untrained servant, the mistress should first carefully show her how easy it is to make even the plainest dishes dainty and appetizing by preparing them in the proper manner. She should be careful, however, not to do too much herself, or the young cook will soon become accustomed to depend upon her mistress instead of upon herself. Constant supervision will in all probability be required for some little time, and a judicious amount of encouragement is very necessary so that the girl may not be disheartened at her failures, for failures there are sure to be. The surest way of remedying matters, and eventually arriving at perfection, is to take the first opportunity which offers and have the dish again and again, until there is no longer any reason to find fault with it.

From my own experience I have found it a good plan, when teaching a young cook, who is able to read English, to write down in a fair-sized note-book every recipe in simple and concise terms as she tries it, such as potato soup, clear soup; fish cakes; a savory hash; veal cutlets; omelet; lemon sponge; scrambled eggs; batter for frying; how to boil rice; apple sauce; drawn-butter, etc. With such a book at hand the merest novice should find it comparatively easy, after a trial or two, to carry out the simple recipes thoroughly well, and as time goes on, and she becomes more interested in her work, she will take pleasure in the preparation of more elaborate dishes.

When preparing sauces, soups, forcemeats, puddings, etc., the young cook should be taught that she must avoid a pre-dominance of any particular flavoring. How often a maid will ruin what might otherwise be a dainty dish by a too liberal addition of onion, strong herbs, or spices. In the case of puddings and sweet sauces the flavorings can hardly be too delicate. In order to arrive at a satisfactory result it is essential to taste what ever is being prepared from time to time, and with this object in view a saucer and a teaspoon should always be at hand to prevent the objectionable practice adopted by some cooks of testing anything direct from the spoon she is using. Next in importance to the flavor of the various dishes is the way in which they are sent to table, for they must please the eye as well as the palate.

The "green" cook must be trained to pay proper attention to the serving of the plainest fare, so that every dish when it leaves her hands is neatly arranged and well garnished. The mashed potato should be molded into a cone-shaped mound, and the Irish stew instead of being poured from the stewpan into the dish should be arranged as follows: The vegetables, neatly cut into shapes, should be heaped up in the middle of the dish, and the meat, which has been trimmed prior to cooking, arranged around them, whole potatoes forming an outer circle; the gravy, after being boiled up, freed from grease and thickened with a little flour, must be strained over the vegetables, and the latter and the potatoes should be sprinkled with very finely-chopped parsley. To keep the potatoes whole, let them be added to the stew only long enough before it is ready to finish cooking them.

It is absolutely necessary for the comfort of the household that punctuality and method, both in the arrangement of work and the preparation of meals, are insisted upon from the first.

A great item of economy in the kitchen is the wise use of "left overs" or remnants of food remaining from one meal to another.

The remains of the last meal in the refrigerator may not at first sight present anything very promising, and the cold leg of mutton does not,

begin with, convey any suggestion beyond a hash or stew, both dishes which may be excellent in their way, yet apt to become a rather wearisome if repeated too often. But a little time devoted to the study of recipes, of which every good housewife should have her own private collection, will teach us many other far more attractive ways of re-serving the cold meat, and a little care in giving the special recipe to the cook and making it clearly understood that the directions are to be followed exactly, will probably result in a far more attractive dish than the hash with which many of us are too painfully familiar.

The economical housewife who wishes to make a little money go a long way should look well to the following items.

First, the accounts—pay cash for everything when possible, or if this is impossible pay all bills weekly or monthly.

The next thing is to look after the supplies when they are purchased, to see that they arrive in good condition, are of the quality ordered and paid for, and that the dry groceries are properly cared for by being put in their especial boxes. If sugar, tea, flour and butter are bought by the quantity, they should not on that account be used carelessly.

Another wise way of the housewife who feeds her family well on a limited income is to buy different fruits, vegetables and poultry that are in season, and beware of anything-out of season as it is usually high priced and unsatisfactory.

The housewife who wishes to be economical and yet have a good table should learn how to go to market, and above all how to buy meat. A butcher and his men soon discover whether a customer knows anything about what is good and what is poor meat. Of course, they try to dispose of the inferior pieces to those who seem to think one piece as good as another. If they see from your looks or words that you are "posted," they will rarely offer you poor stuff.

You should understand the anatomy of a beast, how it is divided, and cut up into specific parts, their names and how to recognize them at sight. You should first learn what is a "loin" of beef; next, what part is a "sirloin"; then what part of it gives the "porterhouse steak," and what the "sirloin steak," and where the "round steak" comes from. The "fore-ribs," "middle-ribs," "brisket," etc., are parts that are good enough when they are wanted, and every housekeeper should be able to call them by name, and know them when seen.

When you can make a choice of beef, which you can always do in a market, choose that which has a loose grain, with bright red lean, and yellowish fat, which is pretty sure to be ox beef. Good cow beef has a little firmer flesh, with a whitish fat, and meat not quite so red. The beef of poorly fed or old cattle may be recognized by its dark red color, and hard, skinny fat, with more or less horny gristle running through it.

And now before I close, just a few words about the servant again. Try to remember that the maid of all work has feelings as well as yourself. When her work is well done give her a word of praise so that she may see that you appreciate her efforts and feel encouraged to do even better the next time.

R. M.

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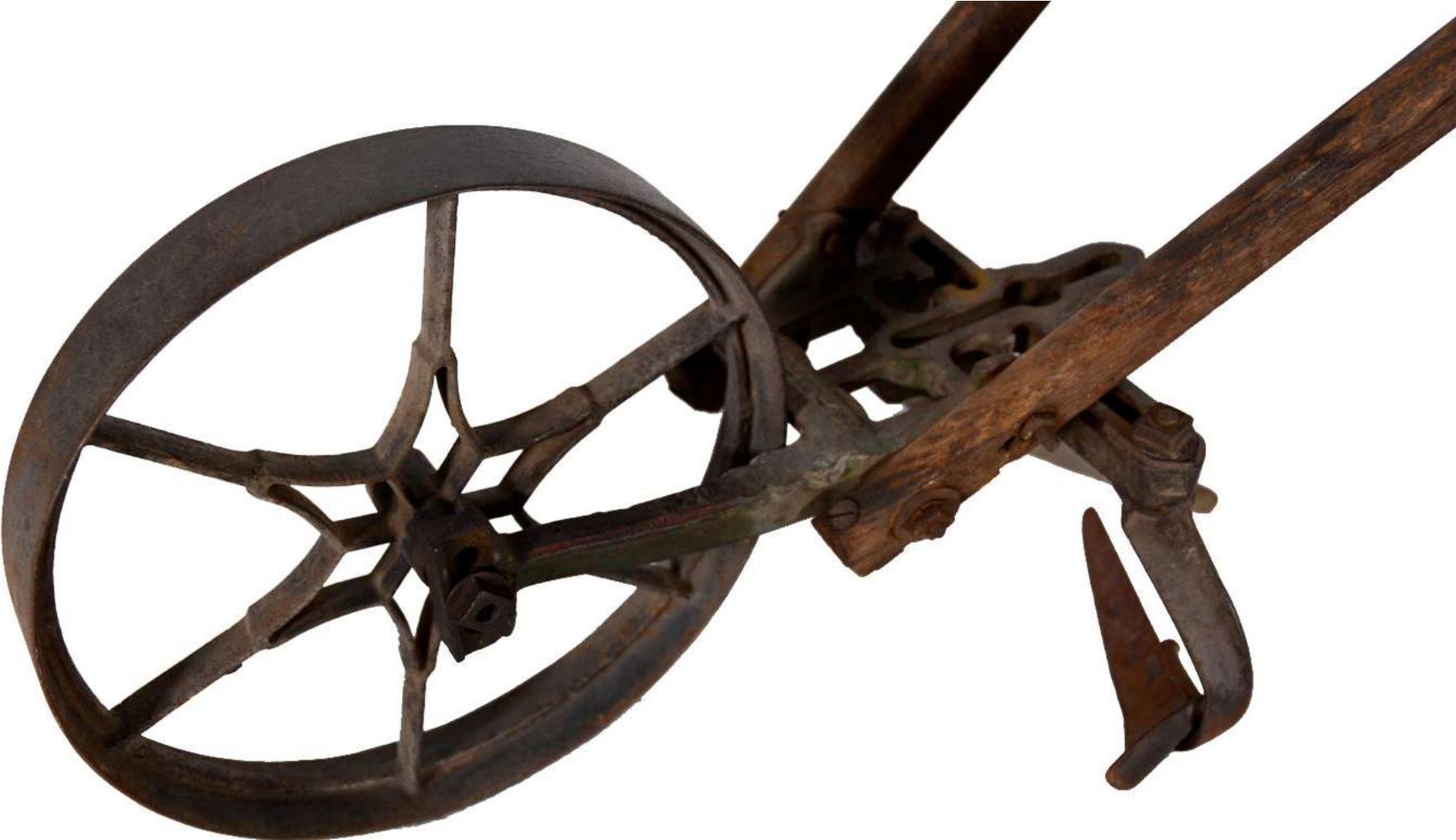
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State Teachers Certificate

FIRST GRADE



DES MOINES, IOWA, July 15, 1926.

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