

WOMAN'S CHIEF BUSINESS

"Love of home and of what the home stands for converts the drudgery of daily routine into a high order of social service"
Ellen Richards.

By MARY ALDEN HOPKINS.

THE French are naming the home fields now "the trench." The men in this trench are all women. And this trench gives forth not death, but life.

Just as the government gives honors to the men who spread death widest on the battlefield, so the Société des Agriculteurs de France is giving public honor to the women reported by the local branches for raising the largest crops on the farm fields.

So it is in France, so it is in Germany, Austria and England. The men are sowing and reaping death; the women are feeding the people.

Yet there is nothing new in women being farmers. Have you ever known a farm without a woman on it? A merchant, a lawyer, or a doctor can carry on his business without a wife, but a farmer must have a female partner or the farm is only half-manned.

The new phase of the matter is that women working on farms are recognizing the dignity and importance of their work. They are no longer content to be simply the farmer's wife or the farmer's daughter. They are assuming individualities. They are demanding scientific training. They are organizing societies. The work that women have for generations performed in a slipshod, dutiful fashion they are now learning to perform in an efficient and satisfying manner.

An excellent system of agricultural and horticultural education is at the service of women of this country. This is the agricultural department of the state universities. Most of the universities offer not only a four-year course, but also shorter courses, special courses, summer courses and correspondence courses. The widespread extension service which brings the college to the farm has shown women the way by means of meetings, demonstrations, lectures and personal calls of expert advisers.

The University of Wisconsin records the occupations of some of its women graduates as homesteading, landscape gardening, fruit ranching, bee keeping and farming. At the University of Maine, I was told that many women availed themselves of the shorter courses, and occasionally one stayed four years.

And now the Women's National Agricultural and Horticultural Association will hold its annual conference in Boston, May 18, in connection with the Women's Educational and Industrial Union. This agricultural society has some 1,200 members, distributed from California to Maine, and from Florida to Michigan. The greatest number live in the East and Middle West.

A GIRL WHO IS MAKING GOOD.
Letty Dinsmore is a good illustration of the

WOMEN FARMERS COMPETING WITH MEN

In France They Man the "Trenches of Life" That the Trenches of Death May Be Held—In Other Countries Farming Is Recognized as a Profession for Women.



Gathering a Nova Scotian Harvest.



Stable Girls at an English Farm School.



Pruning the grapevines, School of Horticulture for Women at Ambler.

type of girl who is beginning to take up farming in the East. The Dinsmore farm has been in the family since the time when the ragged yellow tile deeds were freshly created. Its two hundred acres, plaided off with fences and stone walls and patched in stretches of red ploughed earth, green meadows and woodlots, stretch down a gentle slope to a swift blue river.

Father Dinsmore died, leaving a widow and five daughters. Letty is the oldest. The neighbors said that, of course, the farm would have to be sold, as there was no son to carry it on. Letty said she was as good as a boy. That fall she entered the State Agricultural College to learn how to carry on that farm and take care of the family.

The first months it took courage to remain. She was the only girl, and the boys thought she was a joke. After the mid-year examinations they looked at her soberly. She had led the class. At the end of the year they were used to her. The second year they liked her. Now they boast of her.

Letty is learning to put the goodness back into her worn-out acres. She analyzes specimens of soil from her own fields in the chemistry laboratory. She designs buildings for her own barnyard in the drafting room. She attends cattle judgments with the hill pasture in mind. She is paying particular attention to the renovation of old orchards. The Dinsmore

farm is going to bloom under Letty's hands as it has not bloomed for a hundred years.

The Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women at Ambler, Penn., eighteen miles from Philadelphia, offers both theory and practice in fruit raising, market gardening,

farm accounting, greenhouse work, poultry, bee farming and other branches.

One damsel, who was keen on getting to the land, is reported to have learned to run a greenhouse at one of the large women's colleges, where the pursuit of abstract knowledge

is conscientiously guarded from the taint of commercialism. Jessica Sloane majored in botany. But she found that she was more interested in making flowers grow than in learning their pedigrees. She hung about the college hothouses until she was almost a nuisance. While she dissected dead flowers under erudite professors she learned about live ones from the gardener. Now she lives by raising violets for florists instead of teaching roots and leaves to children in a classroom. Which proves that one can learn if one wants to—even at college.

When I asked Dean Merrill of the University of Maine what he thought of women taking up farming, he recommended poultry raising. A gleam of amusement flickered in his eyes as he said:

"They will probably beat the men at poultry when they really get at it, for the women keep accounts."

Then he showed me great blue-lined, red-ruled sheets of foolscap where every cent expended must be entered and balanced against the intake. Chickens are a very different matter now from what they were in the good old days when one flung a few handfuls of corn out the back door between dish washing and sweeping. It seemed to me when I looked at that large checked page that a woman who could keep books like that knew a great deal—almost enough to vote.

European women went in for farming and gardening more keenly than American women even before the war threw all the agricultural work on their shoulders. In 1913 I attended the Tenth International Agricultural Congress, held that year in Ghent. Although this was primarily a men's congress, yet several hundred women were present from France, Germany, the United States, England and the English colonies. They followed the extremely technical discussions of rural finance, transportation, stock raising and agriculture with the closest attention. Later I visited the Horticultural College at Swanley, Kent, to learn more about English and colonial prospects for women farmers.

At Swanley they told that there was an increasing demand for women gardeners. These gardeners must be capable, well-trained and reasonably strong, with a preference for outdoor life, ready for hard work, willing to go out in all weather, and able to get on with few holidays.

After years of experience, if she no longer wishes to work as head gardener, she can run a nursery, become a teacher or work as a landscape gardener. I met one graduate of the school who now has her own nursery and is also landscape gardener for the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association of London.

With the position of head gardener usually goes a cottage and a salary of perhaps thirty shillings a week, with vegetables and milk.

Some of the farming graduates of the school stay in England. A few English women farm from three hundred to seven hundred acres. Others breed cattle. The largest number have a few acres for dairy, poultry fruit, or bees. Many take pupils.

But a very large number of them "go out." They emigrate to South Africa, New Zealand or British Columbia. Some go to join relatives, while others with a small capital are soldiers of fortune.

The Canadian Pacific Railroad offers a special "ready-made" farm, on which the soil has been broken, the land fenced and a house and barn built, at a minimum cost. The company advertises a cordial welcome to women or groups of women who will take them up. Of course a small capital and a large experience are absolutely necessary.

The South African Colonization Society writes fairy tales like a suburban real estate dealer about fruit-packing in Cape Colony, positions in Natal and farming in Rhodesia. Australia and New Zealand offer chances to raise lucerne, maize, millet and other crops with names that a poet loves.

The letters which come back home from those who have taken the plunge are packed with enthusiasm, but they all end: "You must have experience first."

FRESH CHICKENS IN MAY-TIME

By JEANNETTE YOUNG NORTON.
THE selection in freshly killed poultry in the May markets is very limited, unless one is willing to use cold storage birds. Capon freshly killed is in its prime at this time, and though it is a bit expensive it is



The capon has some feathers left; the fowl is unadorned; the squabs in death are not divided.

usable in so many different ways that not a scrap goes to waste.

In roasting any large bird it is better to roast it on its breast, giving it, if need be, an extra pair of skewer legs as a balance. Done in this way it will be much better eating. In this position all of the juices, instead of dripping away into the pan, run into the breast meat as it cooks, making it very juicy and rich. Just before the bird is done it may be turned upon its back long enough to brown the breast delicately.

One should always have at hand sheets of asbestos paper to lay over a fowl, or anything cooking in the oven, as it is likely to brown too quickly, often before it is cooked through. Also, it is well to have a ball of asbestos string for trussing.

The next choice of chicken in the May market, after the capon, is the fowl for fricassee use, which is also prime at this season. A large bird is always the cheapest in the end, and a short, thick fowl, with a deep breast, is

the bird to choose. It should be carefully singed, drawn and thoroughly wiped out with a linen cloth. Then, after the sinews are drawn from the legs, it should be jointed and cut up the same as for smothering.

Place the jointed chicken in a saucepan with a very thinly sliced onion and a stalk of celery, adding enough water to cover. Allow it to reach the boiling point, then set the pan back and simmer from an hour to an hour and a half, or until the meat is thoroughly tender, letting the water cook almost out.

Remove the chicken when done, add a pint of rich milk and seasoning to what is left of the boiling liquor in the pan, thickening it to the consistency of honey with a little browned flour rubbed to a cream with a little butter; strain the gravy over the chicken, sprinkle with a tablespoon of chopped parsley, garnish with rice croquettes and hard boiled egg rings.

The next appearance of the fowl, if too great inroads have not already been made upon it, is in the form of a ramequin dish. To prepare the dish strip the meat from the bones, which in turn are added to the stock pot, and cut the meat in small pieces. Add to it a cup of button mushrooms that have been coarsely chopped, a cup of dried bread crumbs, seasoning all with a cup of freshly made cream sauce or drawn butter. Fill buttered ramequins with the mixture, dusting a little grated cheese over the top of each, and bake them in the oven for fifteen minutes.

The next choice of the May birds is the jumbo squab. These usually travel in pairs. Their slender legs are tied together with bows of red tape, which give them a gala day appearance. They are so plump, fair-skinned and inviting in appearance that they win the marketer's approval instantly. These birds are usually cleaned, split down the back and broiled, or they may be stuffed and roasted, or smothered in the frying pan. But done in casserole they are delicious, and one bird apiece makes a satisfying meat portion.

THE PERFECT FOOD PELLET.



IF SOME one should offer the world a pellet containing every food element needed by the body in exactly the right proportions and in the most readily assimilable form, how we would grasp at it and what a price we would be willing to pay!

Yet nature offers us practically such a pellet, and because we are used to it we pass it by as a thing of comparatively small account.

Wrapped up in the wheat berry we have 14 per cent of protein, or tissue building material, to repair waste and promote growth. And this building material is presented to us in the best possible form for building purposes.

Then we have 2 per cent of minerals, useful for promoting the body processes, and about 70 per cent of the starches that furnish us warmth and energy for carrying on the body's work.

This is very nearly a perfect ration as the scientists have figured out the body's needs.

While we cannot sit about chewing wheat or even live on bread alone—for a monotonous ration is never a good one—we can give this perfect food a large and important part in the body's intake.

On milk and fruit and whole wheat one could live happily and well indefinitely. The trouble is we know these foods so well that it is difficult to get up any enthusiasm over them. If they were sold in a handsome bottle with an alluring label and a fancy name our enthusiasm over "Wheat Pellets, the Perfect Food," would know no bounds.

To cook the birds en casserole stuff and truss them the same as is done for roasting, laying a thin strip of sliced bacon on each plump breast. Fit them into the buttered casserole dish, filling in the centre space with a cup of green peas, a half cup of fresh mushrooms and a cup of little potato balls. Dust them with a saltspoon of pepper and a half teaspoon of salt and pour in a gill of melted butter and a cup of white stock. Bake in the oven from one hour to an hour and a half. Just before they are done remove the cover and add a gill of hot cream. Serve hot in the casserole dish in which they were cooked. If by chance there should be any of the birds left, the meat may be taken from the bones and warmed in a small quantity of cream sauce, then turned over slices of toast and garnished with teaspoonfuls of currant jelly.

The dressings for large birds may follow any of the usual recipes; the sage and onion dressing being standard, while the chestnut, oyster and other fancy dressings depend upon the season. The mashed potato dressing is a Pennsylvania favorite, but is rather heavy for anything but the Christmas goose, and if it is not made in just the right way is soggy and unhappy eating. With a new preparation of chestnuts prepared in glass jars all ready to add to dressings, the labor of using them is very much lightened, and they are really just as good as the freshly prepared nuts.

For small birds the dressing should be very dainty and light; usually it is made of dried

bread crumbs, seasoning and soft butter. The butter may be used freely in the case of small birds, as they have not the interlining of fatty grease that big birds have. This fact is demonstrated by the use of an old recipe for steeping quail in butter, the operation requiring three pounds and a half of butter for a dozen quail. The birds, when done, drained and served, are the most delicious eating that can be imagined. The butter, strained and clarified, may be used again for other cooking purposes, so the recipe is not as extravagant as it sounds. But, unfortunately, as nearly all the game birds in our markets are imported from England, we do not have the opportunity of using the quail recipe as often as we would like.

All the rest of the chickens, as well as the popular guinea fowls, are cold storage birds this month. While they are good and even wholesome, they lack the flavor of the freshly killed birds in season. When these birds thaw out in the oven during the cooking their flesh sags and never holds up naturally after it is cooked.

There is no positive rule for telling a cold storage bird, and one must trust to the honesty of the dealer. A cold storage bird should be cooked immediately it is purchased, for one cannot afford to take chances with them.

This seasonable poultry condition will remain the same until the advent of the ever welcome spring chicken, or broiler, which comes into its own early in July. Before this

RECIPES FOR SPRING GREENS

By VIRGINIA CARTER LEE.

WE ARE all acquainted with that tired feeling that comes with the first sultry spring days, when we crave something cold, crisp and green to eat. This is natural, for in the first green vegetables, although the nutritive value is small, there is a tonic quality both invigorating and healthful.

Of all the greens perhaps spinach is the most healthful. The English appreciate this fact more than we do, as one of the most famous physicians has declared that "it is the broom of the stomach." It should be eaten at least twice a week during the months when it is plentiful and not costly, and once a week even when out of season.

Its value can only be obtained by proper cooking in a very small quantity of water and in an uncovered kettle for about twenty minutes. It will then be in color a beautiful green. Be sure, however, that the water is actively boiling before placing the greens in it, as this is a prime requisite not only in cooking spinach but all other spring greens, such as dandelions, beet tops, etc.

Early home grown vegetables are scarce in our Northern climate and those from the South are often too high-priced for the modest pocketbook. Dandelion greens, however, are delicious, healthful and inexpensive. They contain the valuable properties of potash and salts and grow freely in our fields and often where not wanted—on our lawns. They are now cultivated like any other garden vegetable. In cooking the water should be changed once and a tiny pinch of baking soda added to the first water to eliminate a possible bitter taste that they sometimes have. They are very quickly cooked, requiring only about ten minutes' active boiling.

Fresh dandelion leaves give a delicious salad as well. After gathering the greens place them in a large pan of cold water and wash them thoroughly. Then shake off all the moisture and set in a very cold place.

To prepare the salad lay the crisp, dried leaves in a chilled salad bowl, cover with chopped hard boiled egg and minced, peeled radishes and dress with a French dressing, mixing it as in lettuce salad.

The cultivated dandelion is broad-leaved, crisp and tender and when planted in the home garden in rich soil yields an abundance

of wide, long leaves. This is also an accommodating plant to grow, as the seeds can be tucked in almost anywhere in the garden—along the edge of the walks, fences or back of the shrubbery. Once the seeds are sown you need take no further thought of them, as they care for themselves; although if you want an extra early supply sow the seeds by the south side of the house or barn.

They are also very prolific, and after the housewife cuts off the leaves from the plant the roots will send up a fresh supply and keep you in fresh greens all summer. A small plot three feet square probably will furnish all that an average sized family will require.

Watercress may also be used as a salad; but, unlike other greens mentioned, it will serve as an attractive garnish for many dishes. It is also delicious and appetizing for a sandwich filling in place of the customary lettuce.

To dress a watercress salad mix together a teaspoonful of celery salt, a saltspoonful of white pepper, a pinch of cayenne and one tablespoonful of lime juice. Then stir in gradually four tablespoonfuls of olive oil and two more of lime juice alternately. After blending well add a spoonful of chopped chives and an equal amount of fresh tarragon leaves.

When the tiny green onions appear in the market, try cooking them as you would asparagus. Wash them well, tie in bunches, drop in boiling salted water and cook for ten minutes (this period of time is for very young, fresh vegetables, about the size of lead pencils). Drain, place on toast and pour over them a hot cream sauce flavored with a little chopped parsley. These will be found delicious and do not retain the strong onion flavor to which so many persons object.

These same onions are also excellent to use in connection with almost all spring salads and are especially recommended with fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, etc.

Lettuce, endive and romaine are all good salad greens. The two former may be cooked in several attractive forms. The stalks of endive are cooked as asparagus, served with a Hollandaise sauce, and the lettuce as the basis of cream of lettuce soup or boiled and chopped like spinach and enriched with a piquant savory sauce.

Every housekeeper knows the value and tonic properties of salads, particularly during the late spring and early summer, and a salad of some variety should appear at least once daily in every well planned list of menus.

Have these salads of the simplest description and mainly of the greens themselves, although a combination of two or three varieties of vegetables is permissible. Avoid, however, at this season the rich mayonnaise dressing and substitute the piquant French variety in dressing these simple and wholesome salads.

Small birds should never be cleaned until just before cooking or they dry out and lose their flavor. A capon may be cleaned, stuffed and put in a cool place in the morning if it is to be roasted in the afternoon, often an economy in the time of a busy woman.

date the chickens are hardly heavy enough to be worth while.

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