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THE HOME CIRCLE.

THE WEATHER.

US FARMERS in the country, as the seasons go and come, Is purty much like other folks—we're apt to grumble some! The spring's too back'ard fer us, er too for'ard—ary one— We'll jaw about it anyhow, and have our way er none! The thaw's set in too suddent; er the frost's stayed in the soil Too long to give the wheat a chance, and crops is bound to spoil. The weather's eether most too mild, er too outrageous rough, And altogether too much rain, er not half rain enough!

Now what I'd like and what you'd like is plane enuff to see: It's jest to have old Providence drop round on you me And ast us what our views is first, regardin' shine er rain, And post 'im when to shet her off, er let her on again! And yet I'd ruther, after all—considern other chores I' got on hand, a-tendin' both to my affares and yours— I'd ruther miss the blame I'd git, a-ruling things up thare, And spend my extry time in praise and gratitude and prayer.

—James Whitcomb Riley.

JELLIES AND PRESERVES.

Why So Many Failures Are Made With These Delicious Food Products—Healthfulness of Properly Made Fruit Sweets—How to Insure Good Jelly, and How to Care for It When Made.

By Mrs. F. L. Stevens.

MRS. Alice Freeman Palmer, a talented and successful college president, a writer and lecturer of universal charm, when asked what she considered her greatest achievement promptly replied: "Currant jelly." Mrs. Palmer's spontaneous answer illustrates a universal fact in the life of woman-kind, that while circumstances now and again may remove her from the direct processes of the home, business or professional ambitions may claim her time and effort, yet underneath it all there remains an instinctive love and pride in the housewifely art. In this response also, we read triumph, possibly, after repeated failure.

We Need to Eat More Sweets.

If I were to call attention to a particular and almost universal lack in the food combination upon the tables of our country homes I should say it is the absence of sugar in the dietary. The desire for sweets seems to be universal and the fact that children crave them seems to be an indication that sugar is needed in the diet. The fact that children in the country do not, as a rule, get their full quota of sweets in the alluring and oftentimes unhealthy forms offered to the children of the town, where highly colored cheap candies are sold under all sorts of disguises at every street corner, to be eaten at proper or improper intervals, as the chance may be, offers opportunity for a substitution of sweets in other more hygienic forms.

Because sugar is a highly concentrated food, it is best fitted for assimilation by the body when it is served with other foods. Since sweets should be taken at regular meal times, not between meals, jellies, preserves, and marmalades afford in an acceptable way the necessary requirement.

In canning and preserving fruits, sugar syrups of greater or less density are essential. Canned fruits are highly improved in quality, flavor and appearance by the addition of sugar. In fruits of high sugar ratio the proportion may be one to six—that is, one pint of sugar to six pints of raw fruit, in lower sugar content, a proportion of one to eight is desirable. In preserving, equal parts of fruit and sugar is considered the correct sugar content, although we find good results are obtainable with a somewhat less sugar proportion,

varying again with the quality of the fruit.

The fruits best adapted for preserving are strawberries, figs, cherries, plums, quinces. The marmalades require less sugar, one-half the amount used in preserves. More care in cooking is necessary since no water is added to the fruit and sugar. The seeds should be removed from berries, by pressing them through a sieve, and the fruit pulp and sugar given long, slow cooking.

Some Notes on Jelly Making.

Housekeepers who succeed with canned and preserved products repeatedly fail with jellies, so it is to this province that we wish to direct our most painstaking effort. As to the jelly-making process two questions are constantly asked. "Why does not my jelly harden?" "What causes my jelly to candy?" It is easy to answer, that too much or too little sugar was used; that the juice was cooked for too long or too short a time. These explanations do not help the housekeeper, for she remembers that at other times, the same proportion of sugar and time of cooking gave perfect jelly. To another source, then, must be traced the cause of success at one time and failure at another.

In all fruits when ripe or nearly so, there is a substance which the chemist calls "pectin." It is somewhat similar to starch in its properties. It is due to this substance, therefore, that fruit juices, by means of heat, may be converted into jelly. It is important that the jelly maker should understand when this jelly-making element is at its best. When the fruit is barely ripe, or even a trifle under-ripe, the pectin is at the height of its efficiency as a jelly-producing agent.

Fruits vary as to the quantities of pectin, sugar, acid and gums in their composition, which again renders the process uncertain. An acid fruit is the most suitable for jelly-making, though a few acid fruits, as the strawberry, have so little of the jelly-making pectin present that it is difficult to overcome its absence. The very best fruits for jelly are currant, crab apple, apple, quince, grape, blackberry, raspberry, peach. It requires more skill to make jelly from fruits to which water must be added, such as apples, quince, pear, than from the more juicy fruits, the

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