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AUNT DAISY'S MAIL-BAG

THIS week, in her mail-bag, Aunt Daisy discovers the existence of coke stoves, and after doing some research work, writes enthusiastically on the subject. The cooking of sugar peas, and methods for dealing with a musty wardrobe, are other topics dealt with.

"If I Were King"

Dear Aunt Daisy,—I have never heard you over the air, but I read you in the "Radio Record," and I am alarmed at your casual reference and admitted ignorance of coke stoves, when writing about the kitchen in the golf club at Dalmahoy. Aunt Daisy, do learn all about them at once, and tell your listeners about them, for you will be bringing glad tidings to many out-back women if you do. They are wonderful for women



like me who have had to go back to the shed in my old age to milk cows! I felt I couldn't bear it—not that I don't like the cows and the work—but to come back to the kitchen after milking and have to set to work on a cold stove to get breakfast! Also the continual nagging at an overworked husband for stove wood!

So I took the bull by the horns and got a coke stove on time payment. And it's wonderful. The only trouble is the price—advertised in England at £32, and over £100 here—extras bringing it up to say £120.

Couldn't you start a campaign with the Government to have this reduced or subsidised so that it would be possible—nay compulsory—for every farm woman who hadn't electric supply in her district to have one of these? If I were King, that's what I would do. Can you?—"Backblocks."

Roused To Action

That is a very stimulating and sensible letter, and it roused me to immediate action. I found out the agent in Wellington for these coke stoves; and as soon as their show-rooms reopened after the holidays, went up to learn all about them. Talk about a "boon and a blessing!" They are absolutely wonderful! Fancy a stove that is always hot, day and night, without any extra cost, or extra work, or anything—just always ready! The ordinary-size stove for a moderate household (with two ovens, which I will describe in a moment) burns exactly two tons of coke in 12 months, and NO MORE! You can't "make up a good fire" or "let the fire down"—it is always the same, and regulates itself by means of a patent valve.

You feed the stove night and morning with its proper "ration," using a special scuttle, which fits the opening of the stove, and makes no mess in pouring the coke in; and the stove does the rest. Waste is impossible. Even if you did put in more coke than is necessary at a single stoking, the stove wouldn't burn it or "alter its pace." It has a fixed maximum of fuel consumption, and the heat is always the same.

Think of the convenience in sickness—a kettle always boiling, food like gruel always hot in the "simmering oven." Yes, just as there are two extremely large hot plates on the top of the stove—a fast one for boiling, grilling and such things, as well as a "simmering" plate for slow cooking (like stew)—so there are two ovens, one above the other, the top one for roasting and pastry (and what grand bread this oven bakes, too!) and the lower one for slow cooking,

like Christmas cakes, or a "whole dinner menu" which you pack in the oven and go out for the afternoon, leaving it cooking.

This "simmering oven" is good for preserving fruit in, too; and for leaving the porridge in overnight, to find it beautifully creamy and soft in the morning. You can make sauces in advance, and keep them in the simmering oven without their getting a skin on top, which is very useful. Most people steam their vegetables in the simmering oven, just boil them a few minutes first on the hot plate, then empty away nearly all the water, put the lid properly on, and pop them in this lower oven.

I made inquiries about cleaning, of course. The stove is enamelled white, with black enamel on top, so needs only a wipe over with a damp rag for the whole of the outside; and the fire takes only five minutes once a month! The man told me that there will be only about a "couple of table-spoonfuls" of soot. The "riddling" of the grate part is just done morning and evening, when you give the stove its ration of coke. It won't burn anything but coke, I believe, or anthracite, which we don't get here.

I found out, too, that these coke stoves are quite well known in New Zealand, and that at least 500 of them are in use—some of the larger ones (with four ovens) in hospitals and hotels, and big sheep stations; and smaller ones in other homes and homesteads, in such places as Taupo, Motueka, Piriiki, Te Anau and Marlborough Sounds, as well as bigger places like Dunedin, Palmerston, Napier, and even Wellington. Their great appeal lies in their economy and their being "ever ready" (like the Boy Scouts!).

We can now see how this stove simply altered the whole aspect of

GENTLE REBUKE

Those Buns Were Cookies!

FROM one who had read Aunt Daisy's account of having tea in the tea room at Edinburgh Castle after visiting the shrine, came a picture postcard of the castle, with New Year greetings from Ohura, and this pithy comment:—

"Not BUNS, my dear Aunt Daisy; not BUNS! COOKIES! A Scotch bun, 'od warrant us, is a thing of naught."
(Signed) "The McShooshook."

"I expect many another Scot had noticed my un-Scottish word," comments Aunt Daisy. "I'll remember. I had thought of 'cookies' as American, but they were evidently Scottish first!"

life for the lady who wrote. I don't quite see how I can get the Government to arrange for our struggling farmers' wives to have them; but if I were in that position myself, I would write to the Prime Minister and ask him to help me! I feel sure that if he got enough letters to convince him of the need, he would certainly try to do something about it.

As a matter of fact, the price of the ordinary sized model at home is £47/10/-. Then there is the freight and the packing, the exchange and the duty. By the time that the installation costs and the men's fares and so on have been paid, and a reasonable profit allowed for, of course the cost is fairly high. But against that must be set the cheapness of its upkeep. If coke is £3 per ton, it cannot possibly cost you more than £6 per year for fuel, because it can only burn two tons; and think of the warmth and comfort of it—always at the same heat. However, if you want to know any more about them, write to me and I will put you in touch with the agent. Just fancy not having to be economical with the stove! I forgot to say that a set of very special and very good pots, pans, grillers, kettles, and so on, are supplied with the stove.

Cooking Sugar Peas

Dear Aunt Daisy,—I have listened with great profit and pleasure to your daily talks. Now I want you to do me a favour, please. Do you, or any of your listeners, know how to cook "sugar peas"? I was told that they would not need shelling, but that is all I know. They cannot be cut like beans, as the peas would escape. If I cook them just in the pods, they are stringy,

even when I string them like beans before cooking.—"Mrs. E.N.I." (Christchurch).

Here again, I had to seek the help of the faithful Daisy Chain. I've never cooked these peas myself, but I got replies from all over New Zealand. Here are some of them:

Dear Aunt Daisy,—I have just heard you asking how to cook sugar peas. Years ago, we had some and they were very nice.

We always cut them up, as we do french beans, and cooked them in the same way. They did not take long to cook—about 20 minutes, I think. Don't boil them too hard.

Do you think the lady who has them would tell me where I could



procure some. We were given the seeds we had, and have never been able to procure any since. I would be very glad if I could get some again.—"F.K." (Blenheim).

Another View

Have you tried to get the seeds from the well known reliable seed firms? Here is another reply, and a very interesting one.

Dear Aunt Daisy,—Re your inquiry this morning about sugar peas, and their being stringy when cooked. I am afraid your friend hasn't got sugar peas at all. Sugar peas when growing have a curl in the skin, as if one side is short, and the skin has no inner skin, but is very crisp. The flowers are a purple colour, and the seed can be purchased from any reliable seed company. You just slice them and cook them the same as you cook french beans.—"L.E." of Shannon.

And last, but not least, here is another letter about them:

Dear Aunt Daisy.—In response to your SOS re sugar peas (asparagus peas, I presume?)—if so, we have grown and used these for years, until just recently. The following may be of use—pick the peas very young, and do not wait until the peas are fully grown, or they will be stringy. The pods should be of a very light green, and puffed, and the peas quite small—they never get very large, anyhow.

Wash them quickly, and put them in just enough boiling water to cover them, with 1 teaspoon of sugar, and butter, and a good piece of mint—the top leaves are more tender. Do not put any soda. Cook quickly from ten to fifteen minutes. Add a little salt when nearly cooked (I do not add any at all!).

Season the sauce made from the liquor in which they have been boiled, for this is very nutritious, and has vitamin content. Or use the liquor (to which a little powdered gelatine has been added) to make individual moulds. Add carrot, tomato, peas, or any vegetable; or little cubes of chicken, veal, ham, or tender mutton. Serve on crisp lettuce leaves, and decorate as desired. Cubes of mint jelly, or tomato slices, beet-root, etc., make quite a nice luncheon dish, or "high tea" dish, and children love its delicious flavour.

Do not keep them more than a day after setting, in the hot weather, as peas, beans and starchy foods do not keep too well, unless you are one of the lucky ones who have refrigerators. —"Capricornia" (Parnell)