

The Electric Kitchen Banishes the Drudgery of Housekeeping



HERE is an element of tragedy in the lives of many women burdened beyond their strength by the care of a household, of which the preparing of meals forms so large a part. What the all-electric kitchen can mean to such, is a vision constantly before my mind. I long to see every woman enjoy the comfort, the easing of the constant effort to catch up with the daily routine, the sense of freedom from the overwhelming necessity to be always cleaning in the kitchen, the release from anxious watch over cooking foods which the use of an electric range so surely means. A household must be fed, and someone must spend considerable time attending to the matter, but the task need not make cruel demands on any woman's energy and time, if she is able to make the electric range her servant.

Women in the past have often entertained a more or less secret sense of personal degradation when they were obliged to attend to their own kitchen work. It was the disagreeable dirt and general messiness which invariably accompanied cooking with a fuel stove which gave so many women this idea. The feeling became less troublesome with the advent of gas, but can be entirely non-existent to any woman now in the wholly electric kitchen. Granted a woman has the home-making instinct and takes some measure of pride in attending to the needs of her family, she should be able to enjoy a happy, refining sense of emancipation from drudgery. Cooking done by electricity can be brought to a fine art. Anything which is done exquisitely well becomes an art, and the art of cooking can be brought to a point of perfection when electricity is the cooking medium. An ideal electric kitchen can be a delightful place, where every minute spent is filled with pleasure; the surroundings themselves induce a sense of pride and joyous effort, and a continual improvement in the daily kitchen work.

Much can be said about the arrangements of the kitchen appointments. I have in mind the proximity of the cooking table or bench to the cupboards containing the stores and utensils. In many up-to-date kitchens, cupboards are built into the walls where everything can be tidily stowed away. These cupboards are not, however, always so situated that the things to be used when cooking are directly to hand when standing in front of the table. This means everything which will be required must be gathered together beforehand if the work is to be carried out with dispatch. To be in a position to reach each article as required, and to replace it again immediately when finished with, saves a great amount of time, all litter and confusion about the food, and can quite eliminate the fussiness and bother which often makes a person feel peeved at the mere thought of starting to cook.

To organise affairs so that there is absence of confusion when cooking is one of the very first steps toward the

In this article Mrs. Barrington, a prominent demonstrator and cookery expert, describes the kitchen of the modern home. She tells how electricity has come to the aid of the housewife who has been handicapped by the dull routine of housekeeping. Her long practical experience has enabled her to give some valuable information for operating electrical devices economically.

day when the prospect of an hour's baking will arouse only pleasant thoughts and anticipations. Many a time one might mix a cake when stored heat was going to waste, if relieved of the cleaning-up business which can be so tiresome. When cupboards are to one side of the cooking table, with the goods and utensils conveniently placed, and the sink on the other, there can be very little about cooking matters to be a nuisance.

To derive a full measure of happiness from the use of an electric range, the mind should be free from anxiety regarding running expenses. It is by the unnecessary expenditure of electricity that the startling accounts are raised. Thought and a certain watchfulness must be exercised at all times as a safeguard against the needless consumption of power. Even so, I do not think anyone need make so great an effort in this direction that their comfort and convenience be diminished, or their pleasure in the use of the range checked by continual anxiety. There should be a real, happy interest in the various ways in which economy can be effected, and all the cooking for a household can be done with an easy mind, if the user of the range concentrates sufficiently on the business in hand to avoid these periods of waste.

Waste is occasioned by allowing the oven to overheat, neglecting to turn the elements low or off when required; by not having goods ready for the oven when the temperature has risen sufficiently; or by using utensils which do not contact the boiling elements correctly; by placing more water on to boil than will be required; by heating up the oven for a short period of cooking which could have been done previously on stored heat. In such ways as these electricity is squandered, and someone has to pay for it afterwards. On the other hand, if it is desirable that some cold dish be heated up and no other cooking is being done at the time, pop it into the oven without worrying over it; the range is there for your convenience and wellbeing, and the idea is obvious; every comfort, but no waste; it is waste that hurts.

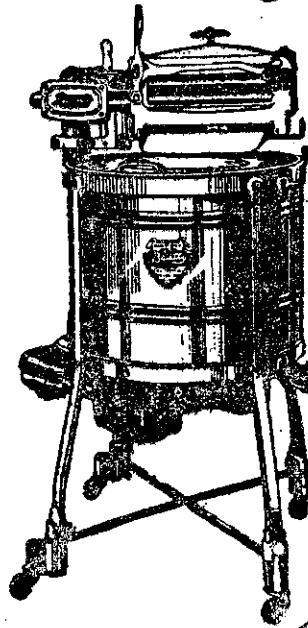
To learn to use an electric range without trouble is mostly a matter of commonsense. Many women begin with a preconceived idea that it must prove a difficult matter and some seem to think they will have to learn cooking all over again. Most of the women I have met who really fell into difficulties were those who suffered

actual fear of the range, but they are only isolated examples. On the other hand, hundreds of women throughout New Zealand, undisturbed by thoughts of possible failure, go straight ahead from the offset and enjoy complete success in every way. It appears to be largely a matter of temperament. It is delightfully easy to cook with an electric range, yet it is well to obtain some information from those experienced in their use. It saves time which might otherwise be spent puzzling out the various tem-

peratures required for different kinds of foods and the placements of the shelves. The more experience I gather, and question users of electric ranges, the more amazed I become at the diversity of habits evolved. No two experts seem to follow the same procedure throughout in heat regulation, etc., so the only thing for the beginner in the art of electric cooking, is to adopt the advice of some experienced person until feeling quite at home with her range, then to work out a system to suit individual habits and taste. Some people like goods browned more than others, some are inclined to be forgetful, and others, again, are too busy to give all the attention they wish to cooking matters, but, what ever the mind or condition, the regulation of heat can be so accurately managed, and every requirement met. In these times every woman within the reach of electricity can enjoy her kitchen work.

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