

Her Furnace of Affliction.

Henri Dupuis went down to the house for a whetstone to sharpen his scythe. He had been cutting buckwheat beyond the back pasture, in a field that was flooded till the end of June and made late seeding and late harvesting.

It was a lovely September day, and he walked through the little bush, at peace with himself and the world. Least of all did he feel like quarrelling with his young wife, Marie Louise, who lived in their whitewashed cottage near the gate. It was an old house, but his grandfather had lived there, and his father, so it was good enough for him, though the small French windows and the little lean-to kitchen were very primitive.

The soft gabble of a baby's voice and its cooing laughter caused him to turn his steps towards the oven, built in the side of the hill, many years ago, by one of his ancestors and still used to bake their bread.

The child looked up as he came near, and then became busy again playing with a piece of dough his mother had given him, covering first one toe and then another on his little, fat, bare feet.

But Marie Louise did not turn round till the last loaf was set into the capacious oven by the aid of a long-handled shovel.

"What's the matter, Marie?" he questioned, and without changing her attitude she said: "I suppose I shall have to fight with this old oven all my life, just because your grandpere built it when there were no ranges. I'm just sick of the bother and ashes, and having to clean it out and watch it all the time. Why can't we have things like other people?"

"But, ma cherie, said the young husband in dismay, "it makes such sweet-flavored bread; none of the iron, oven-dried bread tastes the same. Even the cure stops to get a nub-end as he goes past, because of the baking. But for the buckwheat I would have cleaned it of the ashes, dear heart, but it shall not happen again."

He spoke quietly, but the little woman was not convinced, and no reasoning could prove to her that the old-fashioned oven could equal the tidy range. Then the story came out:

"O ma cousin Elsie came by just now, and she scoffed at me and said: 'Marie, did you do the baking for Nosh in that old oven?'"

Henri laughed and said: "That is the trouble, little wife, is it? Did she tell you she threw away her yesterday's baking? Her husband told me they could not eat it."

"She told me the flour your brother-in-law at the store sold her was not good," apologized the wife."

"It is the same you are using," said the farmer, "and your loaves are light and white as sea foam; it is the making more than the oven—the cleverness of those white little hands."

The baby had divided his dough and covered with a small piece of it each of his toes; then, holding his feet up for his parents' inspection, began calling for admiration of the funny caps. But Marie was not ready for a return to material duties with the vexed question unsettled.

"Henri," she said, "you do not try to keep up with the times. If your great grandpere sowed buckwheat, you do the same, though you might grow your own wheat and be sure that it was good. He had rail fences, so you keep to the old tumble-down rails, and because he had this mean old oven, you must needs keep it up and have me trudge here, rain or shine, to get my bread baked."

The young man sighed and proceeded to sharpen his scythe. "If I stay here all day there will not be anything to buy bread with. Ta, ta, baba," he called out, striding up the hill, a type of rural manhood in shirt sleeves and top boots, but with a puzzled frown between his brows. Madame Dupuis picked up the long-headed youngster, shook the dough from his chubby toes and went into the house, where, on a small, old-fashioned stove, simmered the pot that contained a savory stew for dinner—and nowhere out of place can such appetizing ragouts and stews be concocted as in rural Quebec, where the instinct of the born cook seems to teach its votaries to put together just the proper ingredients and simmer them to the right consistency, with the needed spices and condiments.

As she set the table for their simple meal and prepared the potatoes and milk for the baba's dinner, the good wife nursed her grievance against Henri's old-fashioned method. Was the bread really nicer cooked in this way? She would just like to be sure.

There was a knock at the door. A carriage stood close by, and a lady and gentleman were alighting—doubtless husband and wife—well on in years, gray-haired, gentle in voice and manner.

"Pardon, Madame," said the lady, "I am Mrs. Simmers, and this is my husband. We have been staying at the big hotel up the road, and I have got my courage up to ask if you will sell me some of your bread. There was such a delicious smell from that dear old oven, it brought tears to my eyes, for when I was a young girl we had one at home, and the first time my husband ever saw me, I was taking bread out of it." She turned to

him with a smile as the housewife stood silent, with her hand upon the door, and the baby clamored for dinner. "Would you let me have bread every day?" she said. "I will send for it every evening, if you will only promise. It will be such a treat to get that sweet, old-time bread that is so unadulterated and baked in that delightful oven."

So the bargain was made, and when Henri came in to dinner he was surprised to see such a changed face and to get the news of the baking. "You can have the range, cherie," he said a few days later, as money began to come in and others demanded the bread, so that the big hotel was glad to bargain for a supply.

Often Mrs. Simmers came to the cottage to see the bread taken out and to recall her youth with the old-time smell of the crisp, fresh loaves. "We girls called them 'boots,'" she said, "because of the shape, and there is not any bread can taste like the top nubbin from one of those loaves, with a bit of fresh butter on it."

One day Mrs. Simmers, who was interested in Women's Institutes, brought a class to see a demonstration of Madame Dupuis' baking, which was both pleasant and profitable, till the little woman began to have a respect for the grandpere's oven and its results.

When the days grew shorter, and hotel guests departed, there was enough money to buy a range, and some to spare after paying for the flour. "And well do you deserve," said Henri; but the wife shook her head.

"Nay," she said, "if you had not kept the oven clean and chopped the wood, and put in the loaves, and taken them out, it would never have been accomplished. Besides, it was all the grandpere's oven did it. No range for me! Take the money and buy a mowing machine, so that I may not see you cutting grain with the old scythe any more."

"But the oven—" he ventured.

"I would not give it up," she answered, "for it brought me luck and a new friend. Take yourself the money." And she had her way.—Annie L. Jack, in Canadian Good Housekeeping.

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In the Reign of Isabel II.

"What's the news from Isabel, Mrs. Birch?" asked an interested neighbor.

"There is no news from my daughter Isabel. The only way I know she is still in existence, since that baby was born, is that I can recognize the handwriting as hers. It's a great mistake for a young mother to lose her identity, the way Isabel's doing. I've lectured her about it in my letters, but I can't get a word of reply. Now when I wrote last week, I asked Isabel six direct questions about herself, her own health, her summer wardrobe, and so forth. Her answer was eight pages—all about names for the baby! She discussed the pros and cons of every name under the sun, and then put on a 'P S.' to say:

"Leslie says this letter is all wasted; he has settled it that the baby is to have my name."

"There's one thing I insist on, though—they'll have to call that child 'Belle' or 'Izzie' when they stop staying 'Baby.' Isabel certainly has the first right to her own name."

"This was only one of a long series of like questions, with like answers, as the months went by."

"Tell us something about Isabel," was the frequent refrain of friends and relatives.

"Well, let me see," Isabel's mother would answer, quizzically. "She thinks there's no prepared food on earth like a certain brand of condensed milk. And she's going to put baby into short clothes two whole weeks earlier than her neighbors advise, because baby is so advanced for her age. Oh, yes, and she is going to leave the ruffles off the baby's pillow cases after this, because baby will chew them. That's all I know about Isabel."

"Won't you read me a scrap of that letter from Isabel, Mrs. Birch?" begged a girl friend one day. "I'm hungry to know some thing about her."

"Certainly," agreed Mrs. Birch. Then she read:

"Precious mother. I write in haste to ask whether two clusters of tucks and two rows of insertion will be too elaborate for baby's best short dress this summer. Mrs. Lamb thinks it will, but her baby is a boy, and that makes a difference, doesn't it? Of course I'm going to featherstitch above the tucks. Please answer at once."

Your Own Isabel.

"Now, my dear," added Mrs. Birch, as she folded the letter, "I'm going out to visit Isabel myself this fall, and probably I can bring you some news when I come back."

She went. She was away six weeks, and every minute of that visit was so precious that her letters home were few and hurried. The news would have to wait until she came back, she wrote.

When at last she returned, Isabel's favorite brother met his mother at the train.

"Well, mother," he cried, eagerly, "how did you leave Isabel?"

"Isabel!" exclaimed Grandmother Birch, exclaimed rapturous enthusiasm. "John, she is certainly a wonder! She's begun to put two words together!"

Damp Salt.

One of the petty annoyances of the table is damp salt, and housekeepers who are solicitous and particular about everything else seem to be singularly obtuse in this matter. Aside from the dampness of the salt, little attention is paid to the quality. It seems to be taken for granted that salt is salt, without any degrees of excellence. Nothing should be used but prepared table salt, which can always be got, and little trouble is now experienced in getting salt so prepared that it will shake out freely.

In any case, the difficulty can always be overcome by heating the saltcellars before each meal, or by mixing cornstarch with the salt in the proportion of one part of cornstarch to ten of salt. This proportion should be carefully preserved, as too much cornstarch detracts from the seasoning properties of the salt.

The heating of the salt vessels is the preferred method. The same observations to some extent apply to pepper. Keep the boxes dry by heating before use.

Not an Easy Chair.

The newspaper editor's chair has not been an easy one during the present senatorial and gubernatorial campaign, not by a long shot. Between country-town correspondents who cannot be induced to write impartially, letter writers who want to discuss the merits or demerits of candidates, pressure from the active friends of candidates to publish this or that, kicks because of alleged partiality when no partiality is shown, the newspaper editor feels as if he is between the devil and the deep sea. One correspondent says 5,000 people heard Taylor or Carmack at Dog Hollow. Immediately up jumps another fellow, moved by partisan bias, and shouts, "It's a lie." Then there is the fellow who shakes his finger at the editor and says he printed more about Cox at Bungtown than he did about Patterson when he spoke there, and, therefore, he is running a Cox paper. And so it goes. The editor is between the millstones, with both sides grinding, and the day finally comes when he wishes all the politicians and their crazy supporters were at the bottom of the deep blue sea.—Nashville American.

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6.10 A MIXED—For Houlton, McAdam Jct. M St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Fredericton, St. John and points East; Vanceboro, Bangor, Portland and Boston; Pullman Parlor Car McAdam Junction to Boston; Palace Sleeper, McAdam Junction to Halifax; Dining Car, McAdam to Truro.

9.50 A MIXED—For Aroostook Junction, and intermediate points.

11.35 A EXPRESS—For all points North; Presque Isle, Edmundston, Riviere du Loup and Quebec.

2.50 P MIXED—For Perth Junction, Plaster Rock, intermediate points.

4.35 P MIXED—For Fredericton, etc., via Gibson Branch.

5.35 P EXPRESS—For Houlton, St. Stephen, M St. Andrews after July 1st, Fredericton, St. John, and East; Vanceboro, Sherbrooke, Montreal and all points West, and Northwest, and on Pacific Coast, Bangor, Portland, Boston, etc.; Palace Sleepers, McAdam Junction to Montreal; Pullman Sleepers, McAdam to Boston; Pullman Parlor Car, McAdam to St. John.

ARRIVALS.

11.35 A. M.—EXPRESS—From St. John and East; St. Stephen, (St. Andrews after July 1st), Boston, Montreal and West.

12.15 P. M.—MIXED—From Fredericton, etc via Gibson Branch.

12.35 P. M.—MIXED—From Perth Junction and Plaster Rock.

5.35 P. M.—EXPRESS—From Fort Fairfield, Caribou, Presque Isle, Grand Falls, Edmundston and Riviere du Loup.

4.10 P. M.—MIXED—From Aroostook Junction.

11.00 P. M.—EXPRESS—From Fredericton, St. John and East; St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Houlton, Vanceboro, Bangor, Portland, Boston, etc.

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