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Housekeepers' Chats.

Wednesday, January 21, 1931.

NOTE FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Outdoor Play on a Chilly Day." Information, including menus and recipes from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: Play Suits for Winter.

Uncle Ebenezer watched the school bus full of children go by this morning and then shook his head and began to sigh for the days when he was a boy.

"These modern youngsters, poor things, miss half the winter fun we used to enjoy. That ride to school is about all of the outdoors some of these unfortunate children get all winter. Of course, busses and trolley cars help many who live at a distance. But imagine traveling back and forth, cooped up in a bus, or an automobile, or a trolley, instead of getting out and running through the snow with the other children. Think of missing the exhilaration of active exercise in the brisk cold air. Some mothers cage their youngsters indoors to prevent their catching cold from exposure. When I was young, Aunt Sammy, we kept healthy during the cold weather by wholesome, rough-and-tumble outdoor play."

I agreed with Uncle Ebenezer that times were a bit changed. Certainly when we were small, there was plenty of snow and we knew how to enjoy it. The first sight of snowflakes in the fall sent us after sleds and mittens. We had just one desire and that was to get outdoors and frolic in the snow.

Uncle Ebenezer heaved a large sigh and said, "These poor city children hardly know what a good rollicking play in the deep snow means."

I asked what he thought the trouble was and whether modern children, living in this ultra-civilized age, were different from the children we used to be.

He shook his head. "No, I believe children are just the same as ever. It's simply the opportunity that they lack nowadays. So many of them live in apartments in cities where they have no yard to play in. And it's plain to see why the good old sport of coasting is not encouraged any more. Just read the list of accidents caused by collisions with automobiles at the foot of the best coasting hill in town. In our present-day cities and towns trolley cars and motors make sliding down hill far too dangerous."

Uncle Ebenezer began walking back and forth across the room as he talked.

"Everybody ought to know that months spent inside houses where the air is usually over-heated and too dry will encourage ailments like colds. Exercise in the clear frosty air is far more necessary than many parents realize. But just being outdoors with nothing to do is no fun for any child. If he can't coast, if there is no pond nearby where he can skate, and no expanse of snow where he can build snowmen or snow forts or play fox and goose, as we used to do, how can he amuse himself outside? The chill soon creeps through the warmest winter garments, if their small wearer is inactive."

Uncle Ebenezer stopped, but I could see that he had more to say.

Presently, he continued, "Parents ought to get together and plan some healthful, sensible recreation for their boys and girls. They really ought. I am glad to hear that some progressive towns have set aside streets for sliding down hill and traffic has been forbidden there at certain hours of day. In other places recreation playgrounds have been established with ponds for skating and slides for coasting. Those are steps in the right direction.

"And I know a few hot-house mothers, Aunt Sammy, who ought to learn that chilly weather will never hurt a child when he is properly dressed and actively playing."

This reminds me that my friends the clothing specialists believe that the right kind of play suits will do a lot toward keeping children warm, comfortable and happy while they are playing outdoors on cold days.

What! Bundle a lively child up in heavy garments so that he has trouble moving or soon is too tired to play? Never, they say. The right kind of a play suit is light and warm and allows plenty of freedom for movement. Too heavy outer garments discourage play and exercise and may even cause posture defects. A fabric that is warm, light-weight, soft, pliable, and moisture-proof is the thing. And be sure to choose garment designs that allow free movement and an even distribution of its weight.

I could tell you much more about good play suits, but all the information is right in the leaflet called, Play Suits for Winter, which is yours, you know, for the asking. The leaflet describes different kinds of suitable play clothes, not only in words, but also in pictures. Why should I say more?

Anyway, it's time for our menu. We are to have a vegetable plate dinner for children and grown-ups today. While you are finding your pencils, I might take time to say just one thing more. In wet, rainy weather a sheltered porch is a good place for the children to get their fresh air and exercise. Or, if there is no porch available, dress the children in their warm clothing and let them play in a room with all the windows open. In cloudy climates, children's health requires some substitute for the sunshine that is lacking. Codliver oil every day is recommended.

Now if you are ready I'll read the menu for today: Scalloped cabbage, spaghetti and cheese; Scalloped tomatoes; Buttered yellow squash; Banana cream pie with some filling saved out for the children.

This is a vegetable dinner, you see, planned especially with the children in mind.

Are you surprised to hear of two scalloped dishes for the main course in some meal? They may sound alike, but they taste so very different that you will find them an excellent combination. The flavors combine beautifully.

I'll read the recipe for scalloped cabbage, spaghetti and cheese. There are eight ingredients:

- 1 and 1/2 cups of spaghetti broken in small pieces.
- 3 tablespoons of flour.
- 3 tablespoons of butter or other fat.
- 2 cups of milk.
- 1 teaspoon of salt.
- 1/2 pound of American cheese.
- 1 quart of shredded cabbage.
- 1/2 cup of buttered bread crumbs.

Once more. (Repeat)

To make this dish, cook the spaghetti in boiling salted water for twenty minutes and drain. Make a sauce of the flour, fat, milk and salt. Shave up or grate the cheese, and add it to the hot sauce, stirring until it is melted. Alternate layers of the cabbage, the spaghetti and the sauce in a buttered baking dish and cover the top with the buttered bread crumbs. Bake for twenty to thirty minutes in a moderate oven.

This is another menu that makes the most of the oven and is, therefore, economical of fuel and the housewife's time. Oven meals are especially suitable for cold-weather cooking. A slow oven will do for all these baked dishes. Both the meringue on the banana cream pie and the scalloped main dish containing cheese, require a slow oven. The scalloped tomatoes can just as well be baked in a slow oven though they do not particularly require it.

For the banana pie, use the recipe for plain cream pie, found on page 64 of the green cockbook, and add sliced bananas to the custard mixture. Of course, if I find that Uncle Ebenezer has, by any chance, eaten the bananas I planned for the pie-- and he sometimes does that because he is extremely fond of bananas--- I shall change my plans for dessert and have baked custard instead, served with cookies.

Thursday: The Custard Expert.

