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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, March 5, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Paper for Kitchen Jobs." Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

"If the time ever comes when we all wear paper clothes, I'll be a happy mortal," announced my Next-Door Neighbor. She was mending a large tear in the front of Betty Jane's frock. "Not that I mind sewing, Aunt Sammy. You know I quite enjoy it. But I do think it would save a great deal of time if Betty Jane's dresses could be thrown in the waste basket as soon as they are soiled, worn, or torn, and a brand new one taken out each time. Just like a new sheet of writing paper when you've made a blot. Think of all the mending and laundering it would save. Betty Jane could climb trees, play Indian, swing from her heels in the barn or ride the bannisters -- all without caring whether she tore her dress or not. Whenever an accident occurred she could simply discard the old dress and put on a new one. As for me, if paper clothes were in style, think of the number I could own! A new dress for every party and then some. Why, instead of figuring out my clothing budget carefully each season, I'd buy my clothes in lots of fifty or a hundred. Perhaps some day paper may be as useful in the wardrobe as it is in the kitchen."

There was no mistaking the look in my neighbor's eye as she talked. I knew she had an idea for my next radio chat and was longing to tell me about it.

"There now," I said to her, "why not tell me at once? I know you have a lot of ideas concealed in the back of your head this morning. What's the subject today? From your conversation as far I gather it is something about paper. I know you are a farsighted person, always seeing good things before anyone else and living ahead of your time, so perhaps in the next century or two we'll all be wearing paper. But just now isn't it after all a little previous to be preaching paper?"

My neighbor laughed. She has a delightful way of laughing and fortunately for her family and her friends, she indulges often.

"All right, Aunt Sammy," she said. "If you don't want to preach paper rompers or paper sunsuits, all right. But do say a few words about using paper to save work in the kitchen. It's only recently, since I've been thinking so seriously about kitchen comfort, that I've come to realize how convenient and useful paper is. Are you interested, Aunt Sammy?"

"Very. Please go on."

"First I want to tell you the different kinds of paper that are particularly useful in the kitchen. I hardly need to mention the paper in the loose-leaf notebook where I jot down menus and grocery orders. It saves time to have a loose-leaf book because it's so easy then to discard pages or rearrange them. Then, of course, there are the cards in my file of recipes and the folders that hold my clippings from magazines, and so forth.

"Paper is a wonderful help in keeping the kitchen tidy and preventing what my husband calls 'messiness.' My stand-by is newspaper. It does so many jobs, all without expense, of course, since old newspapers are really just waste materials around the house. To think that the time was when I thought the only use for newspaper was to start the fire. Now I use it for so many things. When I'm washing dishes, I spread newspaper on the floor around the sink to protect my new linoleum and save time and energy in mopping or wiping up any dish-water that may have splashed over. When I'm frying or preserving, newspaper goes on the floor around the stove to prevent grease spots or fruit stains. And it protects table tops, too, when fruit is being prepared. So many fruits make dreadful stains on tables, stains that are often impossible to remove. The best part of using newspapers in all these cases is that when the job is done, the paper can simply be gathered together and burned up, stains and all. Speaking of messy jobs, there is the garbage problem. If the garbage pail is lined with newspaper or with one of those big paper bags now being sold for the purpose, it is no trouble at all to empty the waste and wash the pail. Or the garbage can be wrapped in paper each time before it is put in the pail. Paper prevents the pail from rusting and makes washing a simple task. In summer, keeping all garbage well-covered with paper helps prevent flies."

"All very true."

"Paper towels also save a lot of work and lighten many disagreeable tasks. You have no idea how useful a roll of paper towels is in the kitchen, and how they save laundry. I haven't yet tried them for drying dishes, but I do use them for drying my hands and for wiping up wet surfaces on floors, tables or shelves. Whenever some food is spilled on the floor, I blot it up with a paper towel. I use paper towels also for scraping off dishes before washing, for cleaning the grease from the broiler pan or skillet, and even for cleaning an untidy sink. This saves having a lot of old cloths around the kitchen for different purposes, and having to keep them all clean. Paper can always be burned up or thrown away when the job is done. Of course, newspapers are useful for many of these jobs, but wherever blotting is needed, the towels are more efficient."

"At this rate," I suggested, "you'll be ready to write a sonnet on the virtues of paper any minute."

"Don't stop me yet, Aunt Sammy, because I'm not half through telling you about it. I know I may sound too enthusiastic but this paper idea is a recent discovery of mine and you know how I am when I've discovered something that is new to me in the housekeeping line."

"Let me guess what you were going to suggest next. Was it using paper to drain any extra fat from doughnuts, croquettes or bacon as soon as they are cooked? That is what one of my friends always does. Or was it using pieces of white blotting paper under the fabric when you are removing a grease spot or stain? The blotter will often absorb a great deal of the dirt."

"You are going too fast for me, Aunt Sammy. I hadn't even thought of those two good uses. My mind was on paper cups for school lunches. Those waxed paper cups with tight fitting covers, Aunt Sammy, I've found are just the things to use for the children's lunch boxes. They will hold salads, diced fruit, custards or other milk puddings. They are also useful for jellies and jams."

"I'm surprised that you haven't mentioned waxed paper before this."

"Wait a minute. I was just coming to that. How do I use waxed paper? In any number of ways. Anytime I want to keep any food either from absorbing moisture or drying out, I wrap it in waxed paper. For example, to protect cut oranges, grapefruit, melon or other fruit from drying out in the refrigerator, I lay a piece of waxed paper over the cut surface. Sometimes I use it to keep lettuce, parsley or other greens fresh and crisp in the refrigerator. A tight dish or jar is generally better for this purpose, however. But for wrapping up sandwiches to keep the moisture in or for wrapping up crackers to keep the moisture out, waxed paper is the thing. When I'm making fruit cake I always line the pan with waxed paper to protect the cake from getting too brown. Speaking of sandwiches and cake makes me think of picnics, Aunt Sammy -- those jolly picnics we used to have last summer on warm evenings down by the river. Think of how useful paper was in packing our picnic baskets and --- But it's too early to think about that yet. March winds, April showers and May flowers all have to arrive before it's picnic time again. But if you remind me about paper some time next July, then I'll tell you all my ideas about paper for picnics."

Friday: "A Chicken Pie Dinner."

