leave us suddenly, when we least think of it; we should never therefore open the door for diseases to march in.

All those habits that tend to keep up the health of the body should be carefully studied and self-enforced, such as early rising, the use of the bath and personal cleanliness, temperance in eating, exercise, fresh air, and simplicity in living.

It is, too, in the days of your youth that you should endeavour to acquire all those mental and moral habits that will constitute themselves the safeguards of your health and your life itself when you grow older. Perseverance must be cultivated; for the want of this virtue many an otherwise good life has been ruined or cut short. Let no day pass without your having learnt something good. Let no day pass without your having entered into communion with your own thoughts. Never sleep until you have done so, never get up of a morning until you have done so, and made resolves and fixed your plans for the day. Try to do better each day than you did yesterday; so shall you be happier, so shall you be healthier. Study to be respectful, courteous, and truthful in your relations with friends, and companions, and parents. Determine never to lose your temper nor be annoyed at trifles that have no real vital import, and only serve to mar the tranquillity of your mind.

Learn also to be cheerful. You must even try to be cheerful when you are dull, for if you do so—strange it is, but true—the gloom will all disappear from your mind, like the dark clouds when the moon sits behind them.

Never be idle if you would be healthy and happy. What a noble thing labour is, and what a blessing to us all, and how very beneficial it is to the health. Man's lot is to earn his living by the sweat of his brow, and if labour was ever meant in the first instance as a punishment for original sin, heaven hath mercifully made the back strong enough to bear the burden, and sweeten and bless to us even toil itself. Were it not for honest work or labour, the mind would prey upon itself and prey upon the body, and life would become to us a very wearisomeness.

I could enumerate many diseases, including *ennui*, dyspepsia, paralysis, hypochondria, melancholy, brain disease, and heart disease, that I have known to be induced by sheer idleness alone, or by idleness as the primary cause. Therefore, if you love your health, and have regard for your looks and appearances, I pray you be active.

Now, I never yet knew an idle being that was a happy being, any more than I ever knew any unhappy being who was healthy; therefore, it is evident that labour conduces to health.

Well, in this paper of mine, I have told you of a few useful seeds to sow in the garden of your mind and body, in order to be able to live healthy lives. I will only mention one or two more.

While activity is greatly to be desired in your daily labours, you must study calm withal. Avoid hurry and scurry in all your doings, for they are not only liable to lead to confusion, but they assuredly injure the nervous system, and tend to weaken the heart. Be steadfast then, and be punctual and orderly; if you are, you need never be in a state of hurry and excitement.

"Order is Heaven's first law,"

so said the poet Pope. I entreat you to remember this, for if you have neither system nor method in your labours, they will only be a plague and a worry to you, instead of what they ought to be: a blessing to yourself and to everyone around you.

PRESERVED PROVISIONS.

By PHILLIS BROWNE, Author of the "Girl's Own Cookery Book."

PRESERVED provisions have been a long time making their way amongst us, but I think that we must all acknowledge that now they have become firmly established. A few years ago they occupied a very anomalous position. Economical housekeepers appreciate them very highly, and thought they were delicious, wholesome, and excellent; the members of the family for whom economical housekeepers catered had a great scorn for them. I remember hearing an old gentleman say that he was of opinion that Australian meat constituted a most valuable article of diet, and he hoped he should never set eyes on it again. At the present day, however, the people are very few and far between who are not glad to make use of preserved provisions, and we generally find that the more experienced the cook the more acquaintance she has with the various preparations, essences, fruits, soups, jellies, vegetables, sauces, and meats which are sold under this general term. It is really wonderful what quantities of these provisions are now sold. You may go into the remotest part of the kingdom, into out-of-the-way villages where the butcher pays periodical visits only and every householder is his own greengrocer, and in the dusty window of a little shop which serves as "store" for the community, you will find tinned meats and fruits which would have excited the profoundest wonder in the bosom of our grandmothers. The good old ladies would have found it less difficult to believe that the end of the world was approaching than that their descendants would grow strong and hearty on the products of the orchards of America or the prairies of Australia.

The fact of the matter is that the food supplies of our own country are so inadequate to meet the requirements of the population that we have been compelled to use preserved provisions; and the probability is that we shall be compelled to use them much more in the future than we have done in the past. Would it not therefore be well that the girls of our class should learn what they are, and how they should be employed? If they would give a little attention to the subject, they would not only find that economy was furthered thereby, but also that many conveniences were close to their hands which would cost both time and trouble to make, but which when procured in this form are of superior quality and inexpensive.

In saying this I of course take it for granted that the goods of first-class manufacturers only have been purchased. This is a very important point. In old days housekeepers were advised to go to a highly respectable butcher if they wanted to get prime joints, or to a conscientious grocer if they did not wish to have their sugar sanded or their pepper dusted. The advice was accepted as the embodiment of wisdom and common sense. A precaution of the sort is much more imperatively needed with regard to preserved provisions, for imagination fails to give us an idea of what horrible enormities might be perpetrated by unprincipled meat preservers. There need be little fear, however, that manufacturers of established reputation will make use of any other than the best provisions, or adopt any but the best methods. Inexperienced cooks are sometimes heard to object to tinned meats, because they imagine that they are made anyhow. I fancy that if these people could go over one of the manufactories and actually see the process they would be slightly astonished. A little while ago I had sent to me a description of Armour's packing-house in Chicago, which had been written by someone who had just been over it. It was something wonderful to read. The quantities of food used were enormous. As many as 11,500 pigs and 2,300 cattle had been killed in one day; and regularly 250,000 lb. of meat, enough to fill 60,000 cans, are steamed in a day. One of the most remarkable features of the whole business is the perfect cleanliness which is maintained throughout. The cans are thoroughly washed inside and out before the meat is put into them, and through all the processes the most scrupulous cleanliness is observed. The writer made the remark that if ordinary kitchens were one quarter as clean, food as usually served would be much more appetising than it is. The fact is, the operations in manufactories of this kind are carried out on such a large scale that everything has to be systematised, and skilled workpeople have to be employed, consequently the work is well done. I have no doubt that if exact statistics could be drawn up, it would be found that in cookery as performed by average cooks there is not only far more waste, but also far less cleanliness than are to be found in these large manufactories. Let the goods, therefore, come from a good maker, and no further uneasiness may be felt. For my own part, if I see on the outside of the tin, "Moir and Son," "Bovill," "Brand," or other well-known signatures, I feel quite easy in my mind concerning the reliable character of the contents.

I suppose that in these enlightened days no one imagines that preserved provisions consist simply of tins of Australian beef or mutton. Yet I should not be at all astonished to find that the majority of people have by no means realised what a variety of preparations are now being sold under this name. Meat cooked whole forms a very small part of the provision, and to my mind it is the least satisfactory of any, although even in this particular the preserved meat of to-day is much superior to the preserved meat of twenty years ago. Preserved fruits, and preserved vegetables on the other hand, are almost perfect. The other day some preserved asparagus was served to some friends of mine, and a gentleman who was present, and who professed to be something of an epicure, pronounced it superior to the same vegetable when freshly cooked. I should scarcely have gone so far as this, but I would certainly have said that it was equal in flavour to the average fresh vegetable, and superior to any but the high-priced bundles of asparagus. When asparagus is offered for sale, they are usually bundles containing stalks of equal size, large and firm throughout. These are expensive. There are other bundles, with large stalks outside and small stalks inside. These are less costly, though still dear enough, but they are unsatisfactory, because if boiled altogether they do not cook equally, and so they have to be picked over and cooked separately—the thick stalks at one time the thin stalks at another. Last of all, there are the bundles of long, thin straggling asparagus, commonly known as sprue, which is good for soup, but not to be recommended for the table. In all tinned asparagus which I have seen the stalks have been of equal size and first-class quality. Asparagus, like other vegetables, need only to be made hot by putting the tin before it is opened into hot water, and heating it for awhile, for this is the way in which experts tell us that the tinned vegetables should be prepared. Then it may be laid on toast in the usual way, and oiled butter or Dutch sauce may be sent to table with it.

As asparagus is excellent, so also are haricots verts (which may either be heated in the tin or tossed over the fire with butter and a few drops of lemon-juice and served as a course by themselves), broad beans, Lima beans, celery in

juice, and others. What is called macédoine of vegetables is particularly useful. It consists of a mixture of vegetables cut into fancy shapes, and ready for being thrown into soup or for garnishing dishes. Sage and onions, too, is a convenient preparation for those who want a little savoury forcemeat without the trouble of getting it ready.

Next to vegetables come fruit. Tinned peaches, tinned apricots, and tinned pineapple are appreciated, and deservedly so; for since they were introduced into the market hundreds of people who never tasted peaches and apricots have learned to look upon them as frequent delicacies. This preserved fruit is very good eaten as it is for dessert, or it may be converted into various sweet dishes to great advantage. Tinned pineapple is especially delicious, and it is of course a good deal cheaper than the best fresh fruit, which is sold at prices which are prohibitive excepting for people who have very deep purses. Both pineapple and peaches may be stewed in the syrup and served with rice round them, and thus prepared they furnish a pretty and wholesome sweet. The following is an excellent recipe for a superior cold pudding made from preserved apricots:—

Apricot Pudding.—Simmer some preserved apricots in their syrup till quite soft, and rub them through a sieve. Take a quarter of a pint of the pulp thus obtained, sweeten it pleasantly, and mix it with a custard made of the yolks of three eggs and a gill of milk. Dissolve half an ounce of gelatine in water. (The girls of our class already know that gelatine should be soaked for a time in cold water, then melted over the fire.) Beat the whites of four eggs to a very stiff froth, and mix these in lightly but thoroughly last of all. A few drops of cochineal may be added to this pudding if liked. When the preparation is cold, and on the point of setting, put it into the mould which has been already soaked in cold water.

Bottled jellies are exceedingly valuable in housekeeping. They are not as cheap as the home-made article, but they are a great convenience, and often save expense by furnishing a small quantity of jelly when a small quantity only is needed—for jelly is sold in very small bottles as well as in quart bottles. If the jelly had to be made, it is almost certain that more would be prepared than was actually required, and thus the preparation would be wasted, to say nothing of the time and trouble expended over the business. It is a great point nowadays to make dishes not only taste well but look pretty, and a layer of bright-coloured jelly is a great assistance in doing this. Aspic jelly, too, is very valuable for garnishing meat dishes. If cut into cubes or dice and intermixed with beetroot or parsley in a tasteful fashion, or chopped small to imitate gold-dust and placed round tongue or pressed meats, it converts homely-looking materials into superior-looking ones, and when the aspic can be obtained by simply putting a bottle into hot water for a few minutes, no one can complain of difficulty.

Preserved soups are so popular that they scarcely need recommendation. We are learning as a nation to appreciate soups more than we did once, yet many people are afraid of them because they look upon them as very troublesome. This objection cannot be brought against tinned soups; they are all ready when wanted, and possess a delicacy of flavour which it would be difficult for an amateur cook to obtain. Some people complain that they "taste of the tin." I think this objection is very often grounded on fancy, or if it is the case with inferior brands, it certainly is without foundation so far as regards the high-class brands.

Soups should always be mixed with additional stock before being used, and if stock is not at hand, even water might be taken—it is extravagant not to do this. Experienced cooks recommend that the stock which is added should be flavoured with fresh vegetables, in order to revive the flavour of the soup, and the plan is an admirable one. Soup which has been made a day or two is always better for being boiled up with a fresh carrot or onion, in order to free it from even a suspicion of staleness. The additions should, of course, be suited to the original character of the soup—that is, the new stock which is put with the stock which was in the tin should be flavoured with the vegetables and herbs which would have been taken if the same soup had been made entirely at home.

Many people have no idea of any other than julienne tinned soup. There are, however, nearly forty varieties in the market, to my knowledge, and many of these only need to be known in order to be appreciated. Real turtle soup, tomato, purée Cressy, ox-tail, mullagatawny, and mock turtle soups are particularly good. Tinned soups are a great convenience when a little soup is wanted in a hurry. Girls who are liable to have unexpected demands made upon them should always have a supply on hand, not only of soups, but of other tinned preparations; their reputation as good managers will be considerably increased thereby.

Everyone knows what a difficult thing it is to provide varieties for breakfast. Bacon and eggs are very good in their way, very good indeed—I desire to speak of them with the highest respect; but unlimited bacon and eggs become monotonous after a time. It would seem as if tinned provisions had been specially prepared for the purpose of increasing the resources of the cook in this department, for the number of delicacies provided, suited to the occasion, is very large. There are the fish—turbot and salmon cutlets, anchovies (from which delicious sandwiches may be made), herrings, spiced and devilled—both excellent—herrings in shrimp sauce, pâtés and potted meats *ad libitum*, ox tongues, sheeps' tongues and lambs' tongues, curried fowl, curried lobster, curried rabbit and curried prawns, all of which may be converted into most satisfactory dishes by boiling a little Patna rice separately, and sending it to table at the same time. For luncheon, there are stews of various sorts—ragout of mutton, stewed kidneys, minced collops, etc. These preparations, like the vegetables, need to be made hot in the tin before the latter is opened, and they are really most appetising.

A very important detail in connection with preserved meats is the mode of dishing them. This part of the business ought to be very carefully attended to, for the appreciation of the food is considerably affected thereby. Potted meats, for example, should never be sent to table in the tin; they should be turned into a potting jar, covered with clarified butter, and garnished with a frill. Potted tongues should be wrapped in a napkin and ornamented with parsley; and fish should be turned out upon a dish and arranged prettily. If only as much pains were bestowed upon the appearance of preserved provisions as are given to provisions freshly cooked, there would not be so much prejudice against them as there is.

I must not forget to mention one or two of what may be called the numerous aids to cookery which are now sold in the form of preserved provisions, and acquaintance with which will save a cook time, trouble, and money. Amongst these are the various herbs sold separately in bottles, and the mixed herbs, the flavoured vinegars—tarragon vinegar, chilli vinegar, shalot vinegar, anchovy vinegar, used in the preparations of salads and sauces; colouring for soups, liquid browning, and pastilles de légumes, all valuable for colouring gravies, stews, etc. Flavouring essences, lemon, ratafia, ginger, vanilla, etc.; grated Parmesan in bottles, containing Parmesan cheese, ready for cauliflower au gratin, macaroni au gratin, and also for sprinkling at the last moment into various soups. Bottled fruits of all sorts, by means of which fruit pies can be had in the middle of winter. Essence of beef, invaluable where stock or beef tea are wanted in a hurry; savoury salts; essence of coffee, useful when coffee is wanted at a few minutes' notice by those who have not conveniences for preparing it; condensed milk, for infants' food and milk puddings; mushrooms in tins, for stews and sauces. Fish pastes, anchovy paste, shrimp paste, bloater paste, all delicious for breakfast, and of which appetising sandwiches may be made. Dried apples, a valuable and inexpensive substitute for the fresh fruit when the latter cannot be obtained; and last, but not least, tomatoes. It is now almost universally acknowledged that tinned tomatoes are very little if at all inferior to the fresh fruit, and tomatoes preserved whole and sold in tins are so excellent that one would think it was impossible to improve upon them.

In a recent number of the *Medical Times* an objection was made to "tinned meats" on the ground that they were contaminated with tin, and therefore likely to prove injurious. This sounds serious, and I have no doubt that casual readers on seeing the notice to this effect will turn away from most valuable food supplies, and think that in so doing they are proving their prudence. I am afraid that if these prudent individuals refuse all food which is contaminated in one way or another to an equal extent, they will go very hungry. Unfortunately, we live in an age of adulteration, and it is difficult to know where to draw the line in avoiding what may do us harm. If we eat fresh meat, the animal may have been affected by some mysterious disease which we may get into our system; if we drink new milk fresh from the cow it may contain the germs of typhoid; water fresh from the spring seems to be, in certain districts, a most dangerous beverage; and we have all heard of the horrors which are associated with modern bakeries. The more inquiries into the risks we run every time we open our mouths, the more I am inclined to think that preserved provisions are (if bought of first-class manufacturers), comparatively speaking, most wholesome. Even the writer in the *Medical Times* above referred to, says that the amount of tin found in the provisions was not large; that the effect of small doses given to guinea-pigs was uncertain, and that the animals generally recovered. He adds that, "supposing man to be affected in the same proportion, he would have to consume at a meal ten pounds of the most contaminated of the tinned preparations." I do not wish to be foolishly incredulous, but I cannot help thinking that this sounds very much like a scare. We know that a great many people are killed annually in the streets, yet we none of us think of locking ourselves indoors. Yet should we not be doing something as sensible if we refrained from tinned meats, because of a warning of this kind? I can quite believe that to use tinned meats exclusively might be objectionable, yet I am decidedly of opinion that their moderate use, in alternation with ordinary food supplies, will be both a convenience and an economy, and that they will supply a pleasant and valuable variety in the daily fare.