



AN OCTOBER EVENING.

FALL FRUITS.

WE use the term Fall in the American sense, and as referring to those fruits which come with the fall of the year. The gathering-in of these finds us an abundance of work, for we have not only the storing of fruits, nuts, vegetables and root-crops, but we have pickling, drying, preserving and brewing on hand. Some of these occupations are only possible to country dwellers, it is true, but it would be better for agriculture and general cultivation if townspeople would make it a practice to do more at home. By treating with small growers, or by purchasing in larger quantities from the wholesale markets, it would be possible for many town housekeepers to accomplish much in the way of storing and preserving which would save them many shillings in the course of a winter.

Foremost among the fruits belonging to the Fall season comes the apple, and it is far too valuable as food and medicine for us to allow even those which have dropped to be wasted through want of timely using. One authority on fruits, Mr. J. H. Salisbury, of Albany, tells us that in good varieties of apples there is more actual nourishment than in potatoes. He says the apple is richer in those qualities which go to form muscle, brain and nerve, and build up the organic part of the bodily tissues. Also the apple has properties which make it an antidote to dyspepsia, and we all remember the old adage which says, "An apple at night starves the doctor outright." Those who cannot eat an apple in its natural state can generally eat it cooked, and it may be cooked in such a manner as to lose as few of its natural properties as possible. This is best achieved by careful roasting, taking the precaution to cut the skin all round the centre before putting in the oven. By paring the skin off we lose a good deal; still, we can hardly dispense with the paring process when making tarts and other dainty dishes. Very small apples and pears that have fallen from the trees before they are full grown, may be wiped and picked over to exclude any which are grub-eaten, then baked in a stone jar in the oven. They will be hugely appreciated at the nursery table.

After a gale of wind, it is possible that we may get a quantity of good apples in a bruised condition which makes them impossible to keep, and the puzzle is how to use them to the best advantage while they are still fairly sound. They will not do for jelly-making, because they are neither fully ripe nor yet sufficiently coloured, but for American apple butter they will answer the purpose admirably. Large quantities of this are made in New England, and it is a composition that we in older England would do well to imitate.

To make this apple butter, fill a preserving-pan with pared, cored and quartered apples—a mixture of kinds will do—and add to them a few cloves, ground allspice and cinnamon, then cover completely with good sweet cider. Boil gently and steadily for five or six hours, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon until the whole is a smooth, brown, buttery mass. Pour into jars and tie down, and in six weeks' time it will be ready for use, when it may perfectly well replace butter on bread.

The addition of blackberries or plums to apples intended for jam or marmalade is an improvement. Cook the fruits until just tender before adding the sugar, then boil together for twenty minutes or half an hour.

Small green pears may be baked in a deep stone jar in a baker's oven, and will prove very good eating, but larger ones, especially those of the *Cuisses Dames* variety, will make delicious compotes and marmalade. When making either of these, they must be thinly pared, quartered and cored, and a little cheap claret added to them with sugar. For marmalade it would be well to boil the pears, after paring and quartering in sufficient water to cover them until they are tender, then lift them out, add wine to the water and sufficient sugar to make a syrup that will set after longer boiling. When the syrup is getting to the stage when it will set if poured on to a plate, the pears should be returned to the pan to simmer a few minutes, then all poured into jars and tied down. Where wine is objected to, a few drops of cochineal added to the syrup will give a bright colour, and the juice of a fresh lemon with some pieces of race-ginger will give flavour.

Compotes of pears and apples should form a contrast to each other, the former being reddish in colour and the latter kept transparent and white. Water and a little lemon-juice are all that need to be added to the sugar for syrup in which pared apples are cooked. It must be remembered that pears take four or five times as long to make them tender as apples require.

In Yorkshire it is a custom to serve a "covered tart," generally of apples, at the breakfast-table, and there are few things that are nicer, especially when this is served hot. Plain short pastry is used for both upper and lower crusts, the apples are pared and cooked till soft, then mixed with sugar and spice and piled on the crust, the cover put on and the edges fastened firmly together, brushing dissolved butter on the top, and sprinkling fine sugar over after the tart is cooked.

The processes of drying, candying, and preserving by desiccation are difficult to accomplish at home without proper machinery; still, for anyone who has an orchard with fruit in large quantities, it would be worth while to invest in some apparatus for the purpose.

Wild fruits, like blackberries, bilberries, whortleberries, and sloes, all are well worth harvesting, and from them we may make jam and jelly, wines and cordials, of no mean quality. Because these cost comparatively little but the trouble of gathering and using is no reason for despising them.

Of the damson it is almost superfluous to say anything,

as in jam or as cheese it is universally appreciated, but this fruit may also be baked for keeping by filling large stone jars when the plums are somewhat under-ripe, and adding to them half their weight of crushed lump sugar, sprinkling the sugar between layers of fruit. Place the jars in a rather cool oven, covering them well over. In four or five hours' time they may be removed and allowed to get cold. Cover the jars very closely before setting them away.

To bottle damsons put them in wide-necked glass bottles without water and tie the tops down with bladder. Stand them in a pan with boiling water reaching up to the necks. Bring up to boiling-point, then take off the fire and let the bottles remain in the water until it is cold. The next day remove the bladder and replace it by tight-fitting corks and seal them over, but before putting these in, pounded sugar should have been sprinkled over the fruit.

When mushrooms are plentiful we want to store them for winter use, and to do this they must be sorted out. The white or "button" mushrooms will pickle well, and the very largest and darkest of all will make ketchup. Those of a medium size can be peeled, wiped clean, and set out



singly on brown paper to dry in a cool oven. They must dry without being heated, as if any moisture is left in they will mould. When quite dry they may be stored in wooden boxes, and when wanted for use will only require soaking in warm water, and this will soon restore them to their natural size and flavour.

For pickling mushrooms, peel them and drop them into a saucepan containing boiling salted water. Simmer them for five minutes, then lift out and drain on a cloth. Boil a sufficient quantity of fine white wine vinegar, adding to it peppercorns, a few cloves, some bits of bruised ginger and a little more salt. When boiling pour into jars in which the mushrooms have been packed. Do not cover until cold.

Kidney beans for winter use may be stored by cutting them as for boiling, then packing them in stone jars with alternate layers of salt until the jars are full. Pour in sufficient water to cover all, and exclude the air by a tight-fitting cover. It is advisable to draw off the brine occasionally and put in fresh water, but if the air is kept out, the beans will keep as fresh as possible for months. They will simply require washing in fresh water before boiling.

While fowls are still laying and eggs are to be depended

upon, it is worth while to pickle a few, as they are decorative as well as wholesome. Having a brown outside they form an effective garnish to a dish when cut into quarters.

Take very fresh eggs and boil them ten minutes, throwing them into cold water immediately afterwards. Peel off the shells and place the eggs carefully in a jar, and fill this up with vinegar that has been seasoned and spiced and made boiling hot. Cover closely and set aside a month before using. These are very nice to eat with cold tongue or ham.

Apart from the storing and garnering of our fruit and root-crops for household provision, we may also lay by some of the beauty of autumn for helping to brighten our homes in winter. The branches of oak, maple, copper-beech and bramble, if pressed between blotting-paper, then washed over with thin gum arabic, will, when dry, make beautiful groups for our vases to mingle with bulrushes and white honesty.

LUCY H. YATES.

ABOUT HARVEST MUSIC.

By FREDERICK J. CROWEST.

FEW subjects which the round of each year brings with it has greater interest for mankind at large, and individually, than that of the world's perennial harvest—particularly of corn, upon which the main factor of our daily sustenance, as all know, depends. Nor does Nature, in all her manifold capacity for display, provide us with a more beautiful, fervently-appealing picture than that which harvest-time supplies. It furnishes a feast for the eyes, music to the ear, a potent lesson for the mind. What more beautiful, for instance, than the sight of a vast stretch of undulating corn (even such a one as our own country liberally affords) swaying to the will of a western wind, and seemingly imploring the reaper's sickle to relieve it of its overburdening heads of grain, browned and ripened to Nature's turn! What more grateful, harmonious music is there than that given off by the gentle rustle of the corn bending to the measure of any wind that blows. What a muted-diapason it all is! Or, again, what a teacher the ripened corn-field is! Who can stand by, and thoughtfully regard the sight for a single moment without its giving rise to a whole host of thoughts and reflections bearing upon this life and the life of the world to come. Yes, there is a something indescribable in the contemplation of the field of ripened corn which pen is unequal to portray.

Our Bible supplies us with the grandest word-picture that we shall ever have of the time of harvest. Naomi and Ruth—what lovely characters! Who will ever tire of reading of them, or of that historic cornfield—gleaning at Bethlehem—Judah some thirteen hundred and twenty years before Christ? "Intreat me not to leave thee; whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." These are words that have haunted the poet's and musician's ears from the moment that they were first uttered. And since, what bonds of friendship and compacts of unalterable love have been vowed to their theme and measure!

It is pleasing to note how great an interest is taken nowadays in the subject of the harvest by the dwellers in our cities and towns, compared with what was the case a few years back. Then, the matter was confined to the agricultural and rural districts, where farmers and toilers of the field celebrated the season to more or less extent with harvest-home, field sports, and other enjoyments. The man in the town thought only of what was to be the price of bread—the loaf—at least the poor man had to; and this may be said to have been the limit of the extent to which people in congested spots and crowded areas entered into the "joy of the harvest." This is not the case to-day, when the man in the city enjoys the true harvest spirit as sincerely as does any toiler on the soil. Here is a direction in which a marked change has come over men and manners quite within living memory. And how is it? To what or whom do we owe the change. To the *Church* emphatically. The vast wave of religious fervour, interest, and industry which has spread over the Church of England since the great Oxford Movement has led to our churches becoming something better than barns, to be opened once a week for the delivering of terrifying sermons and long-drawn-out psalm measures. The Church's machinery was widened by this movement, and opened out in directions

which in the days of our grandmothers would have been regarded as positively profane and mischievous to all good purpose. One of these directions—the Harvest Festival Thanksgiving Service—is, comparatively speaking, an innovation in our church life and work, and a very acceptable one. By its means the question of the yearly harvest becomes something more than a commercial question for the Corn Exchange dealer. Each individual, rich and poor alike, is more or less drawn towards, and interested in, the summing-up of the year's produce of grain—firstly, in our own country, and then in those enormous areas of seed-growth upon which we have come to be so dependent for our supplies of corn and barley and oats.

Invariably, in all our religious denominations, this takes the form of a "Thanksgiving Service," for in this country, at least, it is rare indeed if there is not some harvest blessing to be thankful for when the year's bounty has been gathered in. Nothing could be more gratifying than the way in which the Harvest Festival Services in our cities and towns have, if we may use the term, "caught on." Here and there are isolated cases of people who feel impelled to attend them out of a sense of gratitude which they cannot resist—people who otherwise do not enter a place of worship. Rich and poor alike willingly contribute their contributions in kind towards the decorations of fruit, flower, and grain, and when all is over everyone has the satisfaction of knowing that the offerings go to the hospital and other institutions for the pleasure of many poor souls who from untoward circumstances are prevented from sharing in the seasonable rejoicings. The Harvest Festival Service, then, is a function which we may hope will long flourish in our busy centres, as, in fact, it assuredly will.

The secular recognition of harvest time is a much older custom than is its celebration in our churches; and a most portly volume could be written if only a tithe of the old-world customs, even the musical ones relating to the in-gathering of the harvest, were garnered into it. The rustic festival, the rush-cart episodes, the harvest-home rejoicings—all of these would require to be gathered together. Unhappily, many of these have fallen into disuse, and have departed apparently for ever, even in remote districts where they might have been expected longer to survive. Gladly as some of us would, if possible, see them restored, it is to be concluded that this cannot now be so. The songs into which the joyous feelings of the harvesters broke forth in the old times as the last load of grain was carried off the field; the strains of the lads and lassies and the older rustics at the good supper in the farmer's kitchen; the dances to the music of fiddle and pipes in the adjoining barn (how many remains of old abbey barns abound still in the rural districts of Worcestershire and central England!)—all have gone or are gradually going the way of so many other things of the "good old times." The fact is, what with the ramifications of schoolmaster and mistress, the dissemination of cheap literature, even to the halfpenny morning "daily," all over the country, and the electric spread of enlightenment generally, the rustic of to-day, male or female, is as well informed as the town-dweller and citizen of the capital. Everything and everybody are being hurled onwards at a headlong pace,