

The Homemaker

Picnic Enjoyment Depends Altogether On How It's Done

By PRUDENCE BRADISH

Propose a picnic, and watch the faces of the party. You can tell a good deal about a person by his attitude toward the proposal. You can tell a good deal about a homemaker from the way in which she manages a picnic and how her family feels about one. A badly managed picnic is indeed a good deal of a mess—especially if you go to the place after it is gone and see the whole landscape littered with the remains of it.

"Bully, mother! And can't we cook something and go in swimming?" That's the boy.

"Ugh! Spiders! And grass stains on your skirt!" That's the sixteen-year-old daughter.

"For the life of me, I can't see why you want to leave a comfortable home and eat out doors, with ants in your food, half-sitting, half-lying on the ground." Some fathers talk like that.

Well, if you manage it rightly, they will all like it; indeed, if you understand the picnic business, everybody will welcome the idea and do his share towards getting ready.

The automobile, flivver, or any other kind, has greatly simplified the process, though you can still have as good a time as of old with a couple of well-packed baskets, going by trolley car or train or excursion boat—far enough from the town to find a good place in the shade of trees. It adds tremendously if you can reach a place by the water, where the children can wade and the boys can swim. Don't fail to take a poncho, rubber blanket, big canvas, or perhaps a table cloth, on which to spread the food. You are fortunate if you do have an automobile and can slip in a folding card table and camp chairs, for those who don't want to sit on the ground. One of the nicest picnics in my memory I enjoyed once in a California canyon, when the host had enough compactly folding chairs for the whole party. But there were two cars in which to carry them.

Last spring a college president in New England took my husband and me on a family picnic far up on a mountain side. It was so well managed that I did not wonder the college ran well. On a wire grill over a fire he cooked chops, and bacon in a long-handled frying pan. He had the foresight to take along some hardwood kindlings, which, with what we could pick up of lighter wood, made a bed of fine coals for the broiling. Another time we had beefsteak broiled in the same way. You can buy these wire camp grills nowadays very cheaply in the sporting goods departments. Be sure to wait till you have a good bed of coals; don't try to broil in the flame and smoke of a freshly-started fire.

In the hill country where I have my summer home, we often have "cooking picnics," as we call them. Besides the coffee that we take in thermos bottles, and other prepared things, we take bacon and eggs to scramble, and sometimes an armful of green corn, with a big tin or aluminum kettle. Often we take buttered rolls, split them and make sandwiches with freshly cooked bacon between.

Even a comparatively stupid man can scramble eggs, or do any of the other cooking that I have suggested. Cook your bacon first, take it out on a hot plate, leaving a very little of the hot, melted bacon fat in the frying pan. Then pour in your eggs, which have been broken into a bowl with a little milk, pepper, and salt, and stir it as it cooks until it looks rightly scrambled. If you haven't

any bowl, you can break the eggs right into the pan as fast as possible. Remove from the fire while still soft; eggs harden very quickly.

If you have corn, you can put your kettle on the fire as soon as it is started, being careful to fix it so that it won't tip over as the wood burns and settles down. Have some salt in the water, and, when it is boiling hard, pop in your corn for about ten minutes.

It is great luck to be near enough to the right kind of stream or lake where you can get some fresh fish. The nearer you can come to flopping fish from the hook into the frying pan or on the grill the better they taste. Many people who do not like the fish you buy have no notion of the deliciousness of it when it is really fresh. And with the wire grill you can broil chicken or ham or make toast and pour over it melted cheese.

Once we picnicked near a field full of wild strawberries. Knowing they were there, we took in a thermos bottle a light pancake batter, and in the frying pan made large pancakes or flapjacks, and served them with sugared berries between. Any kind of berries are good this way.

You can make a hard job of picnicking, by taking messy things, ice cream and bulky stuff that is a nuisance to dispose of. The real thing is to reduce the bulk to a minimum, learn how to make simple sandwiches, and have a compact equipment. Then, too, you must have the "out-of-doors state of mind." That is a thing that cannot be acquired in a minute. I am taking it for granted that through all your family life you have been training and encouraging it in your little group—including father.

CHUBBY-CHEEK

Chubby - Cheek, Chubby - Cheek, where is your chin? Did it drop out, love, or did it drop in? There is only a dimple to show where it's been.

Chubby - Cheek, Chubby - Cheek, what will you do? There is only one way for a baby like you; When you grow up you will have to wear two.

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Through the Glad Eyes of a Woman

By JANE DOE

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Are You Superstitious?

There are girls who are so constitutionally superstitious that every time a man hands them a cup of tea they find a proposal from him in the tea leaves.

If they drop a knife it means only one thing—a stranger; when they walk under a ladder unthinkingly they shudder for the ills about to befall them other than possible paint pots; a dropped umbrella indicates disappointments and they are truly disappointed if they don't come to pass; when a picture falls from its hanging they take the joy out of their lives thinking there is certain to be a death in the family.

There are scores of women who daily "run" through the cards to see what the day will bring forth; they turn ineffective wheels of fortune; they twiddle the ouija board; they puzzle over horoscopes; they watch anxiously for black cats to cross their paths, and hunchbacks they hail with secret joy . . . if they can rub an unkind, ill-mannered finger across their backs, so much the luckier.

When they can spare the money they call on Madame Whizka, who, for the trifling sum of a dollar, will give them inside information leading to fame and fortune by merely reading the palms of their hands or looking through a lump of glass reposing on a black velvet cushion.

They answer the advertisements requesting the date of their birth and a fifty-cent postal order, in return for which will come a lot of flapdoodle masquerading as a reading of their fate as it is written in the stars.

One woman I know is regularly paying over hard-earned cash to one of these harpies. Every time she gets a letter from her lover she takes it unopened to a certain Professor So and So, Psychometrist, who holds the missive to a physis but dirty forehead and mutters a lot of bunkum, ending up with the profound truth: "All is well, Miss Blank, whatever is worrying you will pass over."

As everything in the natural order of things passes in this world, I told my friend there didn't appear to be any need to pay five dollars for the privilege of having it dinned into you in such sordid surroundings.

"Oh, but it's so comforting. He always bucks me up and I feel heaps happier and easier in my mind for going to him."

This was a young woman who earns fifty dollars a week as secretary to a prominent business man in her home town.

We once spent a week-end in the country, this friend and I.

Every bumble-bee which buzzed about our heads and followed us a little way indicated to her strange men.

Since all the males in the place were quite unknown to us that was not surprising.

Then we heard the mocking bird!

"Ah, Jane. That means we shall be here again next year."

In vain I did my best to point out to her the utter imbecility of such a statement by reminding her, by way of example, that if I visited a place each year following the occasion I heard the mocking bird, the cuckoo's cry, or listened to any other songster to which the absurd superstition clings, I should be spending my little life dodging about the globe.

No, my dears, don't waste your time and fuddle your brains with such futile nonsense.

Superstition of any sort is the indication of a narrow, foolish and uncultivated mind.

It's not worth it.

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