

As You Were Saying...

The Samaritan's Beacon



WHILE traveling in Oregon recently, we got hopelessly stuck along a lonely country road. It was past midnight and we had been driving 14 hours.

Seeing a light in a farmhouse about a mile down the road, we trudged to the door to ask for help. A young girl answered, listened to our problem, and woke her father. As he hurriedly dressed, the girl explained that they were caring for an invalid and always kept a light burning.

The farmer got out his tractor and pulled us from the muck. When we offered to pay him, his only reply was, "I'm glad you saw our light."—Alice Kollenborn, Fort Bragg, Calif.

Grandma's Misfortune. I made a long-delayed trip to California to visit my son and his family. I hadn't seen them in eight years, so I met my 7-year-old grandson for the first time.

After a few days of getting acquainted, he started asking me the usual childish questions, such as, "How come you're my grandmother?" I carefully explained that his mother had a mother and his father had a mother and I happened to be on his father's side.

He looked at me as if he felt very sorry for me, then said, "Well, Grandma, after you've been here a while you'll find out you're on the wrong side."—Mrs. A.I.M., Rhodell, W. Va.

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I Was Just Thinking...



ON THE SHELF are the cookbooks: Cooking Magic, Volumes I and II; The Encyclopedia of Cooking; The American People's Cookbook; The American Woman's Cookbook.

All of them have bright and shiny covers but some of the pages are glued with egg yolk and stained with milk. And some of the end pages have flour fingerprints.

All of them are proudly displayed and treated like trusted friends who become dearer with use.

Each of them has something vital missing from its contents. Each of them has no section which means the difference between success and tragedy for me.

No place in the profusion of beautiful color illustrations and mouth-watering delicacies do I find a statement:

"To one bleeding finger add one cup cold water. Soak until numb." Or:

"Grease seared forearm. When cool, serve with dressing of white gauze."

Cooking is a great adventure. Exploring the contents of a cookbook is like climbing a mountain and the finished product like exulting in the view from the top. Translating the vague pinches and handfuls donated by a talented neighbor is like finding a diamond in the back yard.

When something I cook turns out, in defiance of my stupidity, to be edible, I am enchanted. I shout my own praises. But I usually have also cooked myself.

If I am able to peel a potato without cutting my thumb to the marrow, it is a minor miracle. If I remove a casserole from the oven and remember to insert a hot pan holder between my hand and the dish, it is a triumph.

Seldom do I open the refrigerator without holding my apron like a platter

to catch whatever is falling forth. It is impossible for me to wipe tumblers without somehow filling my towel with broken glass.

Cookbook experts and I have only one thing in common. Ingredients. I can scrape a dinner together without poisoning the guests, but I never get to the table myself without looking like a rejuvenated Egyptian mummy.

When I don gloves for a gala evening, I always carry the one which won't fit over the bandages. One day I cut myself on a rounded figurine while dusting the record cabinet. That takes unusual skill. I've got it.

Sometimes when I have become blasé about cookbooks and when I have learned a few tricks of my own, I will ask Melanie de Proft to permit me to add the 25th chapter to her Encyclopedia of Cooking.

It will be entitled: First Aid.



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