

CHAPTER XII.

THE MESS.

GOOD powder is no more a munition of war than good food.

One of the principal elements of success in cooking is the proper provision of the few most indispensable articles of kitchen and table furniture. For every six persons, there should be supplied one camp-kettle (the kettles being of such sizes as to admit of packing one within the other, and the smallest one large enough for making soup or coffee); a heavy tin coffee-pot; ten tin cups, with revolving handles; ten strong tin plates; one wrought-iron frying-pan; one wrought-iron bake-oven; one heavy tin mess-pan; one strong water bucket (wooden buckets to be avoided); one extra small camp-kettle; ten knives, forks and spoons, with iron handles. One spade, axe, hatchet and chopping-knife should accompany each mess kit.

The mess boxes must be prepared with a view to their being transported on pack mules, if necessary; and when taken two together, should form a handy pack. The boxes may be readily constructed so as to form convenient tables, when the lids are thrown open.

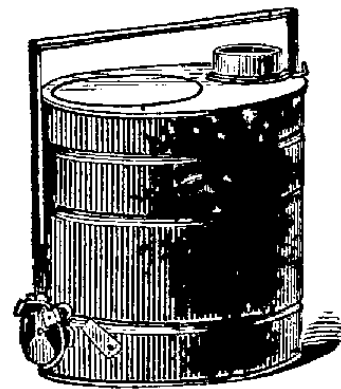
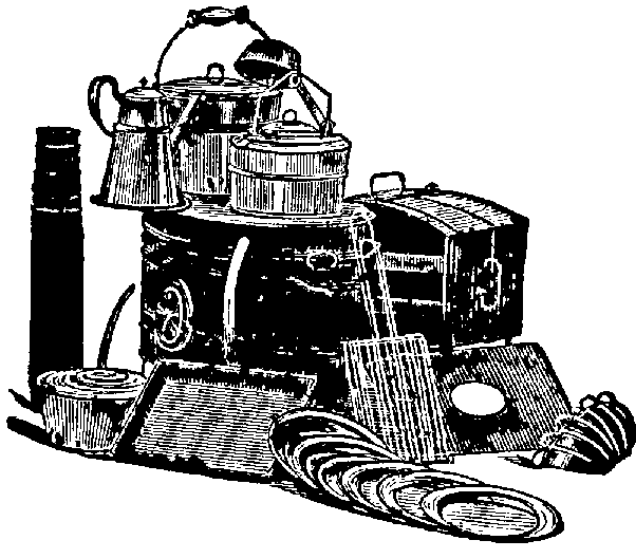
Matches should never be transported in the mess boxes, unless they are placed in tin boxes or tightly-corked bottles.

The frying-pan is the most invaluable of all cooking utensils. It may be made to serve a host of purposes—fish and game may be cooked in it, stews prepared, flapjacks made, coffee roasted, etc. The handle should be detachable, or have a 'parasol joint' made close to the pan, so that it may be folded across it.

I consider a handy camp stove a great luxury in the field,

and I know of no good objections urged against them, whether the party be large or small. Dunklee's Camping Stoves are excellent in every respect.

The drawing shows a very desirable stove for officers' mess, cooking for two or four persons.

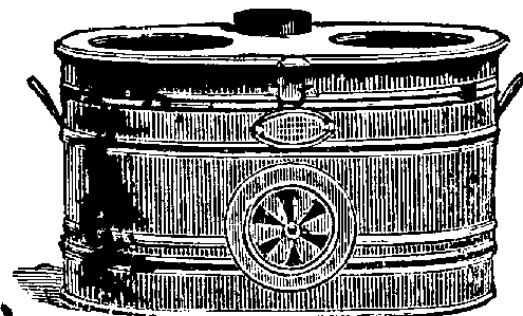
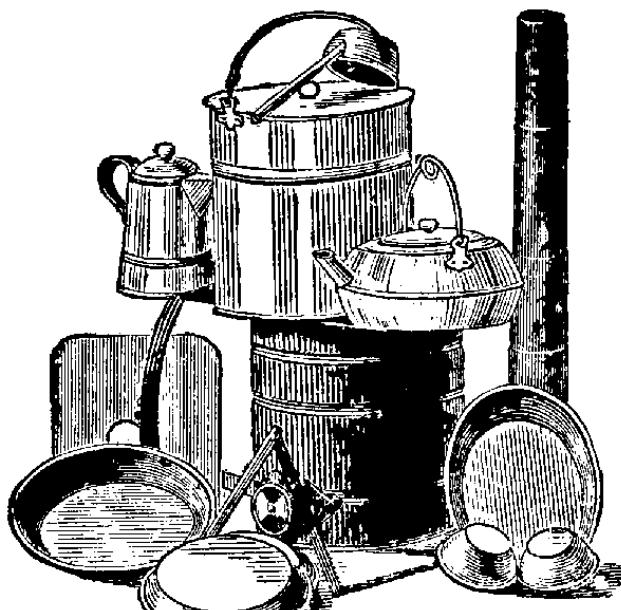


Dimensions, Packed,
 $9\frac{1}{2} \times 12 \times 13\frac{1}{2}$.

When packed for transportation, all the apparatus is inside. The total weight is 22 pounds.

The 'CENTURION'—*Field Stove, Baker and Mess Kit complete*—invented by Captain Clifford, of the Infantry, is well recommended by all who have used it. It is $30 \times 20 \times 13$ when packed for transportation, and will cook and bake for 100 persons.

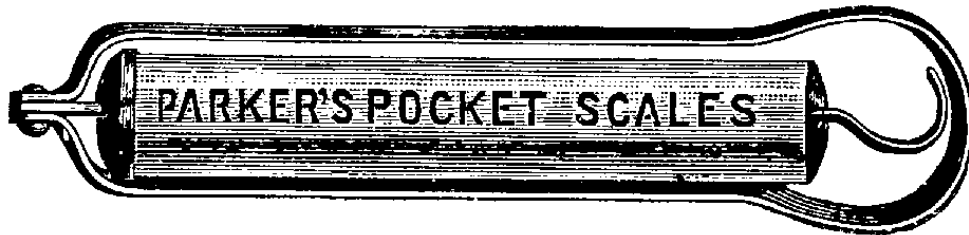
Below is represented an excellent stove for a detachment of ten or twelve men.



Dimensions, Packed,

Two wine glasses	=	One gill.
Two gills	=	One cup.
Two cupfuls	=	One pint.
One quart sifted flour	=	One pound.
One quart powdered sugar	=	One pound, seven ozs.
One quart granulated sugar	=	One pound, nine ozs.
Seven tablespoonfuls of same...		One-half pint.
One pint closely packed butter.	=	One pound.
One tablespoonful salt	=	One ounce.
Ten eggs	=	One pound.

The drawing shows a convenient form of scales for the



use of cooks. These scales may be readily transported in the pocket, and will do away with all guessing at proportions, the practice of so many indifferent cooks.

Those desiring a more complete chapter on this subject are referred to the "Manual for Army Cooks," from which much of what follows is taken :

METHODS OF COOKING.

Roasting is that process by which a substance is acted upon by the heat of a fire, without interposition of utensils, and generally in the open air.

Baking is that process by which a substance is acted upon by heat in an oven. The temperature of the oven is usually about 400° Fah.

Stewing is that process of cooking by which the substance to be cooked is placed in a small portion of fluid and cooked slowly by simmering.

To simmer is to boil slowly, and is accomplished by removing the liquid so far from the fire as to keep it up to a very slow-boiling point.

They should not be soaked unless they have been frozen or have inhabited muddy streams.

Boiled Fish : A fish, or part of a fish, weighing less than three pounds (except rock-fish) is too small for boiling. The time required for boiling depends upon the size and variety. Salmon requires about 25 minutes, while six minutes per pound is sufficient for most kinds. As a rule, fish with white flesh require less time for boiling than fish with dark flesh. Care must be taken that the fish is neither underdone, boiled too much nor allowed to remain in the water after it is cooked. The fish is done when the meat separates easily from the back bone. Place the fish into enough boiling water to cover it about an inch, with two tablespoonfuls of salt and four tablespoonfuls of vinegar to a piece of fish of about five pounds weight, and cause it to boil steadily until done.

Fried Fish : Large fish should be cut up before frying. Wipe the fish dry, rub it over with sifted flour, or sprinkle it with grated bread crumbs or rolled crackers. Put into a frying pan enough lard to well cover the fish. As soon as this is hot put in the fish, fry briskly until a clear golden brown appears. Then turn and fry the other side to the same color. Just as the fish is turning brown, sprinkle it lightly with pepper and salt.

Baked Fish : Baked fish should be sufficiently large to admit of being stuffed, and will require from thirty to fifty minutes to bake.

Prepare a stuffing of bread crumbs, with sufficient butter, lard or beef dripping to make the mixture moist, and season with pepper and salt ; also, a little thyme or sage, if obtainable. Scorching is prevented by placing a well-greased paper over the fish.

Baked fish are excellent when eaten cold.

Fish Chowder : One-half pound of salt pork; four onions; six potatoes; three pounds of fish; one-half pound of hard-bread.

Cleanse and cut the pork into thin slices, also slice the onions. Put the pork and onions together into a pot and fry them brown; then season lightly with salt and plenty of pepper. Slice the potatoes and lay them in cold water until wanted. Wash the fish, cut it into small pieces and soak the hard-bread in water until tender. When the pork and onions have browned and been seasoned, add a layer of fish; on the fish a layer of potatoes; on the potatoes a layer of crackers, and repeat the process until the kettle is nearly full. Set it over a gentle fire, let it heat gradually, and simmer until done.

Fish Sauce : One pint of boiling water; two tablespoonfuls of butter; same amount of sifted flour; pepper and salt. Mix the butter and flour into a smooth paste, in a saucepan on the fire, and pour over the boiling water, stirring it in well. The addition of a little vinegar will impart an acid taste.

MEAT.

Good fresh beef presents the following characteristics : The lean, when freshly cut, is of a bright red color, easily compressed and elastic, the grain fine and interspersed with fat, of a yellowish white color. The suet should be firm and perfectly white. In good mutton the fat is white also.

All frozen meats, game and fish should be put into cold water to thaw before they are cooked. Meat should not be placed in contact with ice, nor wrapped in anything that may impart a flavor. It becomes more tender and digestive by keeping it a while.

Baked Beef : Time, from fifteen to twenty minutes to the pound, depending on the oven, the quality of the meat, size and shape of the joint and the time it has been killed ; freshly-killed meat requires a longer time to cook.

Cleanse the meat; place it in the pan with the fat side up; put the pan into a hot oven, and when the heat has started

put in the mushrooms and fry both sides to a golden brown.

Edible mushrooms are found in open sunny fields and elevated ground where the air is fresh. They spring up after low-lying fogs, heavy dews, or rains. They first appear very small and of a round form on a little stalk; the upper part and stalk being white. As the size increases, the under part gradually opens and assumes a delicate salmon color, which in the course of a day changes to a dark brown. The odor is agreeable, flesh solid and brittle and skin easily peeled. The spores are white and usually of an oval shape.

Boiled Rice : Time, thirty minutes.

One pound of rice; one gallon of boiling water; four teaspoonfuls of salt. Wash and drain the rice and place it into the kettle of boiling water, adding the salt. Cover and boil steadily for fifteen minutes, then thoroughly drain off the water. Place the rice (in the covered kettle) into a larger kettle of boiling water and steam it for ten minutes; and, finally, uncover the rice and steam a few minutes longer. Rice is frequently spoiled in boiling, by being reduced to a watery mass.

Rice Pudding : One quart of clean rice; six quarts of sweet milk (or an equivalent of condensed milk); one pound sugar; two teaspoonfuls salt; enough grated nutmeg and ground cinnamon to flavor.

Cover the rice with a portion of the milk and let it soak two hours; then add the remainder of the milk, and stir into this the sugar, salt, and spices.

Put into a well-greased dish-pan and bake two and a half hours in a slow oven. Serve either hot or cold.

Frequently, owing to a scarcity of water and forage, the camp will be made near a dwelling house or ranch, when

