CHAPTER I

FOOD SAVING AND SHARING

Not long after the outbreak of the war, it became clear that unless the Allies and the neutral countries could get food from North America, they would soon find themselves hungry. We were glad to send food. We put wheat substitutes in our bread; we ate less sugar than usual; and we kept meatless days—all in order to save food to send across the ocean.

The war is over, but the coming of peace does not fill the empty plates of the hungry people of Europe. For some time to come, this must be chiefly the work of North America. We must do more than in the time of war because there are so many more people to feed. We must help not only the Allies but also the starving nations that we could not reach until they had been freed from the German invaders. It is not the American way to leave any people to die of starvation. We must do our share, and a generous share. We shall
probably have to eat less than we are accustomed to of some of the things that we like, and we shall have to be careful not to be wasteful.

Some of us have fallen into the habit of being careless and extravagant in the matter of food. Compared with the states of Europe, the United States is a young country, and the food history of all young countries is much the same. When colonists first come to a land, they usually find it for a time somewhat difficult to get food, excepting wild meat. Before long matters improve. The soil of a new land is rich and fertile, and soon food of many kinds becomes plentiful. Naturally, those who have not had all that they wished now enjoy the abundance, and take great pleasure in loading their tables with all sorts of delicacies.

That is the way it has been with this country. But even before the war, people were beginning to find out that this fashion of living was foolish and extravagant, that preparing so many kinds of food in elaborate ways was a great waste of time and material, and that an overloaded table was in poor taste. In short, people were beginning to think more wisely about their food.

When we began to send large quantities of food to Europe, we had to look at food in a new and different fashion. We had been in the habit of choosing whatever we liked, provided it did not cost more than we could pay. We now learned that we ought rather to choose what we needed for health and strength.

We had to send the amount of food that we could
A Bread Line in Europe
safely spare. We had to send the food that could best be shipped, and the kind that soldiers would like. No loyal American was so selfish as to keep the best of the foods for himself, and send the poorest and least appetizing to the Allies and to our own boys on the front who were risking their lives for us. An American boy wrote home, "When I think that the food I eat in the trenches was brought to me more than 4,000 miles by land and sea, part of the way on new roads built by the United States, that her bread has followed me wherever I have been, I cannot tell you how proud I feel that I am an American." To supply food to those who fight our battles is a noble task, but a nobler lies before us. Today, millions of people have not sufficient food to keep them in health. We must eat wisely and economically. We must save and share.

The world is large. It produces a vast amount of food, but there is also a vast number of people to eat this food. We never have much food stored up "against a rainy day." Even in time of peace, if all production of food should suddenly cease, the whole stock would be gone in sixty days. The world really lives from hand to mouth. The four years of war have lessened production in many places and destroyed many fields. There is much less food in the world than usual, and if people are not to go hungry, no one must be wasteful. The whole world is like one vast family, seated at one common table. There is only a certain quantity of food, and if some people take too much,
others will have to take less or go without entirely. This vast family is scattered over the world. The food which they need is also scattered over the world. Did you ever think how well arranged it is that we have different zones and that when the North Temperate Zone, for instance, is warmest, the South Temperate is coldest, so that the autumn of one is the spring of another? Even in places no farther apart than Idaho and Missouri, there is considerable difference in the time of harvest, so that the season for producing grain is lengthened and a greater amount of necessary food is brought into the world. In time of peace, trade and opportunity to make money by carrying products from where they grow to the places where they do not grow may generally be depended upon for the distribution of food. That is why people in New England or Michigan, for instance, can have early in the season peaches from Georgia, then from Delaware and New Jersey, and finally from their home orchards.

In time of war and for a long while after such a war as we have just passed through, it is not enough to raise food or even to send it wherever there is a food market and it can be sold at a high price. We must remember the "common table" and realize that too much food carried to one place will leave too little for other places. Transportation is disorganized; it is easier to send to one part of the world or to one part of a country than to another. People must not use food wastefully or too lavishly, and then have to go without
later. In short, everyone, in order to do his proper share of the work of the world, must have his proper share of the food of the world. To increase the production of food and to distribute it fairly needs a wise brain and a strong hand. This is why every one of the countries that were at war has needed a Food Administration, and why even with the coming of peace there will continue a need for careful economy in food. Representatives of these countries have held conferences, so this plan is really a world arrangement to provide for a world table.

We did not go into this war because we were eager to kill people, but because we were eager to save people, to give freedom to those in bondage, and to make the world a safe and happy place in which to live. We have helped our friends, and we must continue to help them. We must also see to it that those who have been our enemies are enabled to help themselves.

This little book was written to tell, first, what we did during the war to make sure that our own people and the Allies had their proper share of food; and, second, what we have yet to do as our share in providing food for the common table. Before we can understand this, however, we must know what kinds of food each person needs to make him ready to do his work in the world. That is why the book is divided into two parts, namely:

1. The value of different kinds of food.
2. What the United States did to provide food for ourselves and the Allies.

*It is worth remembering:*

That people are thinking more wisely about food. That we must choose our food for health and strength.

That the whole world sits at a common table, and food should be shared fairly.

That in peace, trade is the great agent of food distribution.

That in war only a strong Food Administration can make sure that all are treated fairly.

That to feed people wisely we must know the value of the different kinds of food.
War Orphans of Europe Enjoying a Meal Furnished by the American Red Cross