

HOW TO MAKE BREAD

A Special Featurette by Miss Elizabeth Taylor

IT was a very hot day, and Oo-cara-pa had walked a long way gathering Burrawong nuts, now she was sitting in the shade of a lovely paper-bark tree with a small heap of nuts beside her.

A small fire glowed nearby on which Oo-cara-pa had already roasted the nuts so that the hard shells had cracked, as she removed the shell she pounded the soft kernel between two flat smooth stones until it became a white disc, and very thin, each disc was threaded on to an upright stick stuck in the ground by Oo-cara-pa.

After pounding kernels until the heap of nuts had disappeared and many discs had been threaded on to the stick, Oo-cara-pa picked up the stick and walked to the river bank, where a log had fallen lengthways into the river. On one side near the bank and surrounded by ferns, there was a quiet little pool, the cool water flowing gently through to the main stream. Here Oo-cara-pa stopped and, kneeling in the ferns, at the very top of the pool she spread out all the discs, layer after layer, so that the clear water trickled through the discs thoroughly washing them.

After carefully covering with ferns so that no one else would find her store, Oo-cara-pa left the pool to return in two days time, then she gathered up the well-washed discs, and put them into her coolamon. She was very wise, the water had washed away a poison found

in the unwashed kernel of the Burrawong nut. Some lazy ones had once made their bread without being careful, and had been poisoned.

Oo-cara-pa went to her camp and there mixed and kneaded the dough into a loaf, wrapped it in a sheet of paper bark, and tied it with some tough grass. A red hot ash fire was all ready and on this was put the loaf and covered well with hot ash. Later on, a flat tough damper appeared which was chewed with relish by numerous piccaninnies.

In the Burrawong season the natives of Oo-cara-pa's island put on weight. This bread goes well with goanna and "sugar bag" or honey. And keeps well if wrapped in paper bark and carried under your arm!

WHERE IS PERCY KAY?

Although numerous efforts have been made to trace Percy Kay, brother of Margaret Kay, no information has been received by the Board which might help in locating him.

This is a final appeal to anyone knowing anything which might help in tracing Percy Kay, to get in touch with the Board as soon as possible.

POT-POURRI AGAIN—*continued from previous page.*

The Manager and I held a conference at which it was decided that I should make a coffin, because distances were too great to think of getting one from the nearest town, and the weather was hot and time was limited. There was no timber available on the Station, other than some empty packing cases in the store. So I got to work with these and made quite a presentable coffin.

It was not until the coffin was loaded on the tray of the Ford truck and the mourners lined up ready to go to the cemetery that it was discovered that I had overlooked one little detail in the hurried manufacture of the coffin. Right in the centre of the side, in big, bold, red letters, was a most unusual and most unsuitable inscription:—UNION BRAND PRESERVED MEAT—FIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION. That was the one and only occasion upon which I have been grateful that education had not yet come to the people of the western plains.

To all of those old Carowra Tank people who are left—there are still a few—I send our heartiest greetings. My wife and I will always remember you as the most lovable people we have ever worked among.

Freddy Biggs and dear old Nancy, we remember you for all your help and advice. Charlie Bourke, we remember you as a saver of lives in the back country. Your name will live long in the west country because of your skill as a tracker and your superb bushcraft. There must be quite a number of people living today who would have perished of hunger and thirst had you not found them in time. Faithful old Gidget Williams, happy-go-lucky Cobar Jack, and all the rest of you, we still remember you and the happy times we had together so many years ago.

Carowra Tank still remains to mark the spot where the old Station stood, but the station and its people have moved in closer to more settled places, and their children and their children's children are gradually learning to grapple with the problems of an advanced civilisation and to take their place as one with a great and new Australian family.

Only two more instalments to go, kids. We go to Condobolin next month. Then I will talk to you about your future and its possibilities.