

Vintage Recipes:

From the Country Doctor



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The Vintage Recipes Series is dedicated to my Auntie. Esther Coon Rider's (1905-1993) home cooked meals were the original farm to table creations. Her hearty dishes and tales of daily life on Trail's End farm nourished those returning to the fields and visitors alike.

Images: From the 1895 publication entitled [A Doctor of the Old School](#) by Ian Maclaren with illustrations by Frederick C. Gordon. It is also available online as a Gutenberg ebook. Burton Coon referred to this text in his article entitled "Recollections of Red Hook: The Country Doctor"

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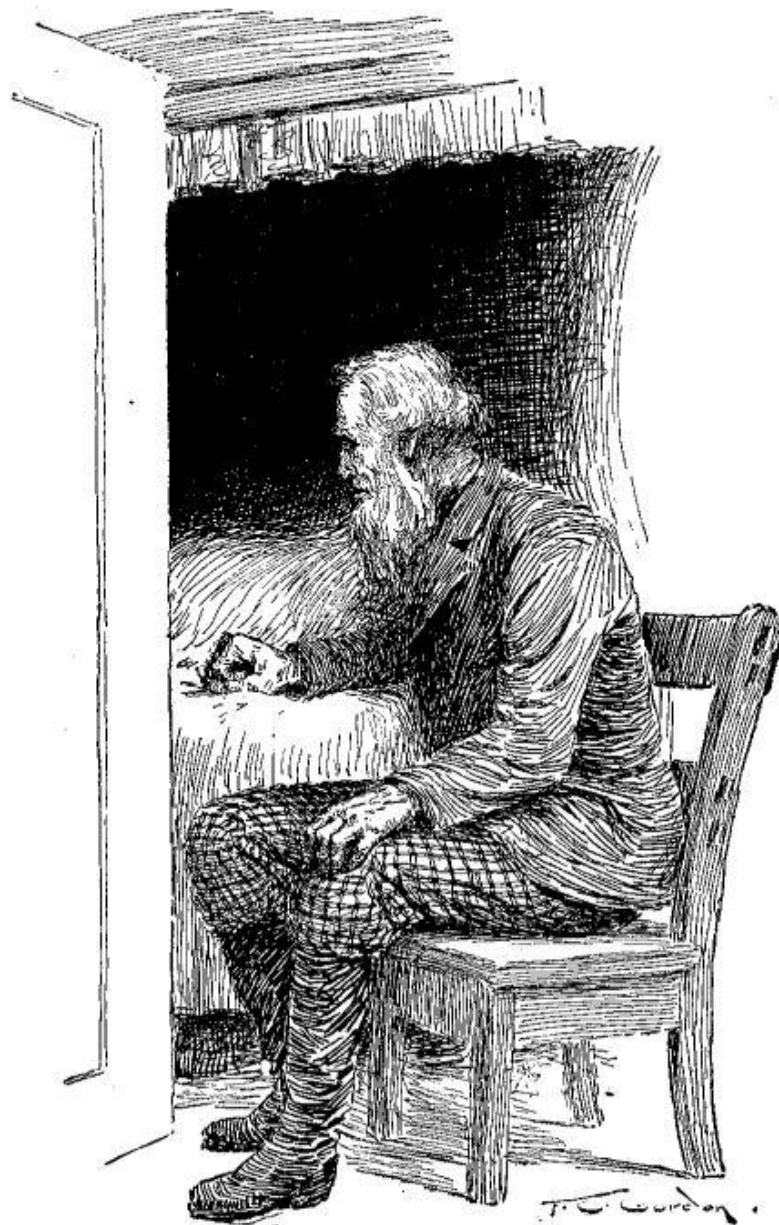


Auntie was a natural cook known for her generosity of spirit and her love of cooking- frequently with ingredients grown in the kitchen garden. She thrived on providing pleasure and sustenance through her soul food- that heart and stomach warming fare needed after a day on the farm or a walk in the fresh country air. I treasure the time spent in her kitchen and her recipes - those she created, those she collected and those she acquired from previous generations.



"THE BONNIEST, SNODDEST, KINDLIEST
LASS IN THE GLEN"

What I did not realize until this extended time of contemplating and organizing (Covid-19) was that her collection of recipes included those from several doctors. For many centuries, the kitchen garden was functional; the plants and herbs grown had specific purposes whether nutritional, medicinal, and/or ornamental. From Chaucer's knowledge of medicinal remedies in *The Canterbury Tales* (1392) to Shakespeare's Friar Laurence describing the healing powers of plants and herbs in *Romeo and Juliet* (1594) to the journals and notations of Auntie and her ancestors, cure for ailments was as close as the kitchen garden to be administered by a monk, the cook, the country doctor, or perhaps the local medicine man or woman.



"A CLENCHED FIST RESTING ON THE BED"

Auntie's father Burton Coon recalled visiting the doctor when he was about five years old. "Dr. Cookingham was then unmarried, and boarding with the widow Benedict, and I believe had his office there" (*Memories of Ol' Red Hook From the Burton Coon Collection*). Auntie kept Dr. Cookingham's recipe for mustard plaster in the midst of other more savory recipes in her collection.



F.C. Gordon
"ANE OF THEM GIED OWER THE HEAD IN A DRIFT, AND HIS NEEBURS
HAD TAE PU' HIM OOT,"

I recall Auntie mentioning the next contributor to her medicinal recipe collection and suspect Dr. Morrison's recipes may have been a more popular antidote on a hot summer afternoon on the farm and can still be enjoyed today.



Cool Drinks for Fever (Dr. Morrison)

Juice of 2 oranges and 1 lemon and 1 quart of water
1 tablespoon cream of tartar
2 tablespoons of sugar

Tomato Cocktail

Large can of tomatoes with 1 cup of water
Put through colander.
Juice of 1 lemon
1 teaspoon of horseradish
1 teaspoon of worcestershire sauce
Pepper and salt

The final doctor mentioned in Auntie's recipe collection is Dr. Cotter. Burton Coon pasted the doctor's obituary in his scrapbook on pages titled "Report of the Botanist" and "Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture".

"Apparently in the best of health, Dr. Cotter went to his apple farm at Jackson Corners Sunday as was his custom during the summer."

"Shortly after the Irish Rebellion, Dr. Cotter came to this country settling near Schultzville where he became a farm laborer and afterwards engaged in the business of a miller."

He graduated with highest honors from Albany Medical College in 1878, practiced as a country doctor for about 17 years in Jackson Corners before opening a practice in Poughkeepsie. He eventually rose to become president of the Dutchess County Medical Society.

Dr. Cotter appears to have been a man worthy of the "Imperial".



Imperial Drink for Illness (Dr. Cotter)

1 quart of water

Juice of 2 lemons

1 small teaspoon cream of tartar

Use as you would water.

Recollections of Red Hook: The Country Doctor

“At any time in history, recognition of those in the medical profession is appropriate. Today as we experience Covid-19 history in the making, it is apropos to include Burton Coon’s recognition of physicians in his newspaper article written in the early 20th century. Coon concludes with these words, “The country doctor is fast passing out of our civilization. Time was when no storms were too heavy, no snow banks too high, no roads too bad to travel when he heard the call;”



"FOR SUCH RISKS OF LIFE MEN GET THE VICTORIA CROSS IN OTHER
FIELDS"

“and like old Dr. MacClure of Drumtochty, he rode or waded as the case required. If the case was a serious one he would stay on the job, watching the progress of the disease, while the lamp of life burned low and the watchers stood about with anxious faces. And there are other risks besides the weather and the roads. The doctor always stands a chance of contracting certain diseases himself. One doctor died of erysipelas which he got while treating a patient with the same disease.”



"WITH THE OLD WARM GRIP"

“When there is an epidemic the doctor is exposed to its contagion more than anyone else. Yet no one thinks of the doctor except to get his help. All honor to the worthy sons [and daughters (2020 update)] of this profession who literally take their lives in their hands to minister to their fellow human beings” (*Memories of Ol’ Red Hook From the Burton Coon Collection*).

