

News of Food

Behind the Sale of a Certain Candy Lies Alger Business Success Story

By JANE HOLT

Like many others, perhaps you are becoming increasingly aware of those bright yellow boxes of candy, labeled Ellens, that are to be found in many stores in the city. Behind the confections, which include excellent bittersweet chocolates and unusually creamy caramels, lies a success story of a young German woman who learned to make candy in Berlin before she left in 1937. She studied behind closed doors, for even at that time no one was allowed to acquire a trade that might benefit him in another country.

When Ellen Simon first reached New York with her family she got a job as salesgirl in one of the city's dress shops. Occasionally, to keep her hand agile, she stirred up a batch of chocolates in her kitchen at home. One day when the establishment's chief executive was ill she was persuaded by her colleagues to send him a box of her products, whereupon he ordered twenty pounds to be sold in the store. The customers bought them so fast that Miss Simon soon had to rent a kitchen and enlist the aid of her family.

Working nights and week-ends, she was barely able to keep up with the orders. In time other stores wanted the candy, and eventually Miss Simon moved to larger quarters, gave up her job and is at present employing fifty persons in her factory, which supplies stores throughout the country. Last fall she opened a small retail shop at the front of the plant, at 164 East Ninety-first Street.

The standard chocolate assortment, which costs about \$2 a pound, includes French truffles, rum-stuffed prunes—the filling is rum jelly—ginger and nut clusters, a nut crunch and caramels. In a special assortment called super deluxe, which incidentally comes in a red box, more elaborate pieces are added, such as chocolate-covered roasted coffee beans, cordial cups in black walnut, pineapple, mint and rum flavors and so forth.

Miss Simon believes the most popular of her candies are the caramel surprises. These are long rolls of soft chocolate caramel with almonds inside, and they come packaged in small, round tins as well as in larger boxes. The tins sell for about 85 cents and are fine for overseas mailing. And, speaking of overseas mailing, Miss Simon ships quantities of her candy abroad, direct from the factory.

Aside from her own shop, Ellens chocolates are sold in this city at Altman's and Alice Marks, 6 East Fifty-second Street, as well as in several other stores where they appear under the store's own label. Mail orders may be sent direct to the plant.

Cook Book Review: Something distinctly novel in the way of a cook book is "How to Cook and Eat in Chinese," by Buwei Yang Chao (The John Day Company, \$3.50). Mrs. Chao is a doctor who, as she says in her introduction, never cooked an egg until she went to medical college in Tokyo. "I had always looked down upon food and things, but I hated to look down upon a Japanese dinner under my nose. So by the time I became a doctor I also became something of a cook."

Though we don't profess to be experts on the subject, the book strikes us as being an authentic account of the Chinese culinary system, which apparently is every

bit as complicated as the culture that has produced it. Well-seasoned with humor though it is, the volume is not for the novice, but rather its appeal will be for those whose hobby is cooking or who have a professional interest in food.

A good portion of the book is devoted to some interesting discussion of Chinese conventions in dining, both at home and out, and various menus are suggested all the way from meals en famille to banquets. Mrs. Chao's daughter translated it into English, but her husband, a Professor of Philology at Harvard, finding the proper English dull, put much of it back into more literal approximations of the picturesque Chinese.

If you can keep the phrases, which are also explained at the beginning of the book, straight, you'll find the recipes practical and good. Mrs. Chao asserts that all of the foods required are obtainable in this country, either in ordinary markets or in Chinese ones. A thorough reading of the volume is a prerequisite to its use, however, since it's not the sort of cook book from which to select a dish at random.

We reprint here one of the recipes included in the chapter on fish. Incidentally, the best "defisher," Mrs. Chao believes, is wine, and she says that sherry is the nearest substitute for the rice wine of China.

RED-COOKED PERCH OR BUTTERFISH

- 2 pounds perch or butterfish
- 5 tablespoons soy sauce
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 3 slices fresh ginger
- 1 scallion (in 1-inch sections)
- 1 cup water

Clean the fish. Put two tablespoons soy sauce in a saucer and wet the fish in it on both sides. Heat the vegetable oil in a skillet till hot. Put the fish in and turn them over as often as necessary to keep them from sticking to the bottom and losing their skin. Add the salt, sugar, ginger, scallion, remaining soy sauce and water. Cover and cook for ten minutes. May be served either warm or cold. Serves from four to six.

Editor's Note: Though the author disapproves of powdered ginger, we suggest its use if the fresh is unavailable.

The book contains a foreword by Hu Shih, a former Ambassador to Washington, and a preface by Pearl Buck. It is sold at the Doubleday-Doran book stores, Brentano's and Macy's.

Along the Food Front: More than 10,000 acres on Guam, Saipan and other islands of the central Pacific where battles raged so recently are now under cultivation, according to the Consumer Guide for April. Gardens being grown to feed service men are expected to yield 5,000 tons of fresh vegetables a month. . . . In sunny California, where rain seldom falls, what is euphemistically called "excessive moisture" has harmed blooms on apricot trees, with the result that next fall's production will be about a third smaller than last year. In Washington and Utah, however, present prospects are favorable.

Questions concerning rationing and other food problems may be submitted by telephone, LA 4-6324, except Saturdays and Sundays, or by writing to the Food News Editor, THE NEW YORK TIMES.