

## BREAKFAST-DISHES.



HERE are, perhaps, few meals that in this country vary more than breakfasts; and, indeed, it is not possible to draw any exact line between the hospitable and heavy Yorkshire breakfast, including the huge game pie, and draughts of home-brewed strong ale at its finish, and the feeble breakfast consisting of thin dry toast and cup of tea, which with

many is the limit of nourishment they can take early in the day.

There can, however, be no doubt that a good breakfast is very conducive to good health. There is perhaps no other meal at which the appetite is more capricious than breakfast, and few occasions on which more depends upon appearances. A nicely-laid breakfast-table, with its snow-white cloth, crisp brown loaves, bright silver, neatly-patted butter, looking doubly tempting by contrast with the rich dark green parsley with which it is ornamented; the juicy joint and tempting ham upon the sideboard; the rich fragrant smell of the coffee—are in themselves sufficient to create an appetite.

But let us wait till the door opens, and the rattle of the silver covers is heard. First, say, a fowl done spread-eagle fashion, with mushrooms; next some curried sausages; next some mutton cutlets, with mixed hot pickles in the centre; while in another dish some poached eggs sleep peacefully on slices of rich juicy ham that have just left the gridiron. All these are placed on the table, while some grilled salmon, with which the breakfast begins, is handed round: many preferring hot muffins in lieu of bread as an accompaniment. But we must not forget the tankard, with the college arms emblazoned on its side, full of good buttery ale; for, as many probably have already guessed, it is a college breakfast we are describing; and Paterfamilias, when he shakes his head over the college bills, will do well to excuse a little of the extravagance of youth which breaks out in the form of breakfasts rather than suppers, the latter being conducive too often to the former consisting simply of a red herring and a brandy-and-soda.

With a dozen or more healthy young men seated round the table, free from the cares of life, indifferent to, and indeed ignorant even of, the meaning of the "money article," no wonder the tempting viands cooked by cunning hands rapidly disappear amid a merry conversation, in which the *summum bonum* of earthly happiness seems to be row in the university eight. But we must wait a few years. The bright-eyed youth with the fluffy whiskers, who performed such prodigies of valour in the last town and gown, has settled down into the quiet-looking country clergyman, or lawyer; and his pretty little wife probably never dreams even of the life he led in the

boisterous, but for all that really innocent, days of his college life. The college breakfasts and the college hall have, however, had their effect, and the change from the "college professor of cookery" (who probably is far better off than the tutor) to Mary Ann is—well, a change. The unvarying cold boiled bacon and hot boiled eggs will, in spite of the bright silver tea-pot, the butter-dish with the silver cow on the top, the lavish display of butter-knives (all wedding presents, of course), after a time pall upon the strongest appetite; but, unfortunately, if Mary Ann breaks down in one thing more than another it is over the breakfast. There is an indescribable something in the appearance of the breakfast-dishes she sends up that is not conducive to appetite. The yolks of eggs have a tendency to run into the whites, and the fried bacon always seems as if it had been up the chimney, or under the grate, as well as in the frying-pan. An omelette is a hopeless impossibility, kidneys turn out tough, sausages come up burnt in one place and burst out like old boots in another, and when eaten, the bread-crumbs overpower the pork. After a series of failures, people settle down into the cold bacon and boiled eggs; what little change they do have consisting of potted meat, the most delicate palate being unable to distinguish between potted ham, potted beef, potted tongue, and potted game; for if there is one thing in the world of which the pieman's remark of "It's the flavouring as does it" holds true, it is of many potted meats.

That breakfasts will occasionally go wrong is probably everybody's experience; to show how to make them always go right is not so easy. One great cause, in addition to ignorance of cooking, is late rising. Cooks sometimes start the day an hour behindhand, and never overtake the time. I am not sure that in judging a cook's character I would not take her as she appears in the morning coming down to light the kitchen-fire. Some will be seen at this period fresh, clean, and bright-looking. This is a good sign, and augurs well. Others, however, come down yawning—no cap—the hair in an eccentric fashion, consisting apparently of one large knot at the back of the head. They have a fluffy and disagreeable look, suggestive of having slept in their clothes in a close room, the window of which has not been opened for months, and in which you would expect to find an inky fluid render itself visible in the washhand-basin, were you to blow away the soap-suds. All this augurs ill for breakfast.

However, we will suppose the former of the two servants has come down, and that the dish for breakfast is the very common one of ham and eggs. First the ham, which is probably in a slice or slices already. The first point to be considered is the state of the frying-pan; this latter should be perfectly clean before the ham is placed in it. Next cook the ham rather slowly; with ham, poached eggs look better, and to my thinking taste better, than fried. Have a stew-pan



ready full of water gently boiling, and drop in this water four or five drops of vinegar. Have a dish ready in the oven ; and as soon as the ham is nearly done, take the eggs, which should have been carefully broken each one separately into a cup, and let them slide out slowly into the boiling water, doing two at a time ; as soon as the eggs are in the water, place the ham on the hot dish, and so place it that an egg will stand on each slice. Next take the strainer and lift each egg carefully out of the water, and have in your other hand a knife ready to trim off the loose pieces of white, so as to have the egg a compact mass, the yolk surrounded by an even rim of white. Next, should a little of the water rest in the bend of the strainer, mop it up with the end of a cloth before you slide the egg on to the ham, or otherwise, owing to the vinegar, the ham will taste acid. After the eggs are on the ham, see that all is placed uniformly in the middle of the dish, put two or three pieces of fresh parsley round, and send the dish up to table as quickly as possible.

In cooking eggs and bacon, fried eggs are best. Have, as before, the eggs ready in a cup, each in a separate cup. As soon as the bacon is cooked place it on the dish, and put it in front of the fire. Then slide the eggs into the frying-pan with the boiling bacon fat. Do this slowly and carefully, the chief point being not to break the yolks. It is a mistake to have too much fat, as that seems to increase those large bubbles that form themselves under the white. Take care also not to have the fire too fierce, or the egg will get burnt at the bottom. In taking out the eggs with the strainer use the left hand ; and if the white has spread itself too much round, or very unevenly, trim the white so as to have the yolk as much as possible in the centre. A knife will do for this purpose, but better still an old pair of easy-going scissors. Place these on the bacon, and look carefully over the dish, and wipe up with a cloth any appearance of "blacks" having mingled with the fat that has run off from the bacon, as this black grease, though perfectly wholesome, is disagreeable to the eye, and through the eye affects the palate.

We will next take another dish, cheap and nice—viz., bloaters. The objection to bloaters is the smell. If the cook has a private bloater for breakfast, the bloater himself informs you of the fact before you leave your bed. Now, bloaters cooked as they generally are—viz., whole—send forth a gust of extra flavour on being opened in the room. The best method of cooking them, therefore, is as follows :—First, shut the kitchen door ; secondly, take off the heads, and split the bloaters open like a haddock. Have a perfectly clear fire, and having rubbed the gridiron with a piece of mutton fat, place the bloater on it and grill it ; four or five minutes will be ample time. When done, take a piece of butter, and after placing the bloater on a dish, with the skin side downwards, rub the butter over the upper side of the bloater, and thus take off the dry appearance, and make it look moist. Bloaters cooked and sent to table this way are not nearly so disagreeable as in the ordinary way. Indeed, bloaters done this

way often finish up a bachelor's dinner-party at a club.

The only way I know of getting good sausages for breakfast is making them at home. A sausage machine soon repays itself, and is useful for many purposes besides making sausages, such as forcemeat, rissoles, &c.

The great advantage in making sausages at home is, first and principally, that you know what is in them ; secondly, that you can flavour them to suit your taste. Some persons like sausages highly flavoured—some not. I will give you a receipt for sausages that I like myself, and would recommend you, if you like highly-seasoned sausages, to increase first the quantity of marjoram, secondly the quantity of sage, and see which flavour you prefer. I would, however, warn you against increasing the quantity of lemon, as the result will probably be that you will taste the sausages, not merely with your breakfast, but with your lunch and even your dinner, in a way better imagined than described.

The ingredients are as follow :—One pound of lean pork, and half a pound of fat pork, or rather less ; one teaspoonful of salt, half a teaspoonful of pepper ; half a teaspoonful of dried marjoram, one-third of a small nutmeg, the sixth part of the rind of a lemon, three good-sized sage-leaves. First, of course, take care that the pork is perfectly fresh ; mince the lemon separately, as fine as possible, and mix it up with the other ingredients, having chopped or powdered the sage-leaves. Cut up the pork into little pieces, and having mixed up all together in a basin, pass the whole through a sausage machine, taking care to send the part that comes out first through the machine a second time. Roll the sausage-meat into small balls—the quantity I have named would make quite sixteen—and fry these balls in a frying-pan, and send them to table on little square pieces of toast. The toast can be dipped in the fat that runs out of the sausage-meat into the frying-pan.

Kidneys make a nice breakfast-dish, especially when sent to table in company with a little fried bacon. The general fault is that they are overcooked, and consequently hard, tasteless, and indigestible. Some persons like kidneys absolutely blue inside when they are cut ; this is, perhaps, going a little too far. they should, however, always be cooked so that when placed on the dish some red gravy runs out. A good-sized kidney is best cooked split open on the gridiron, and as soon as it is done, placed on its round sides, and a little piece of butter put on each half, on to which a pinch of chopped parsley is dropped. Sometimes kidneys are sent up skewered on a small silver arrow. A little pepper should always be sprinkled over kidneys while they are cooking.

The best form to have fish for breakfast is, undoubtedly, plain grilled. When those very small soles called dabs can be obtained, the best method of cooking them is simply to dry them, flour them, and then cook them over a clear fire on a gridiron—rubbed, of course, with a piece of fat to prevent the fish from sticking. Fish sent up this way should be put on an



ornamental piece of white paper. The fish, also, should show the marks of the gridiron in light brown streaks. A little pepper and salt should be sprinkled on them before sending to table, and a piece of cut lemon can also be sent up with the fish for those who like lemon.

There are very many dishes I could mention that are suitable for breakfast; but one word to those—and many such exist—who consider hot breakfast extravagant, the only dish of which they approve being eggs eaten with bread and butter. I would first remind them that the eggs and the butter, in the shape of an omelette, would be just the same so far as expense goes; but I would protest against the custom of the day of young men eating, comparatively speaking, no breakfast, but taking a heavy meat meal in the middle of the day, about one or two o'clock, and then going back to work. A look into the City dining-rooms, in the middle of the day, shows to how great an extent this practice is carried, and also suggests how very un-intellectual the greater part of City work must be. To really work with the brains immediately after an early

dinner is, if not impossible, at any rate very injurious. Probably the seeds of chronic dyspepsia are sown by this unwise habit.

What men should do is to eat a good hearty breakfast; take a light lunch, say a few biscuits, or at the outside a piece of bread and cheese and a glass of ale, if this latter has not the effect of incapacitating them for work; and then to make a good dinner at six or seven o'clock, or later, as the case may be.

There is one thing in connection with breakfast that should not be omitted to be mentioned, and that is coffee. How it is that, as a rule, good coffee can no more be obtained in England than tea in France, is difficult to say. One great secret, however, of French coffee is that it is always not only fresh ground, but fresh *roasted*. I would therefore briefly advise you, in reference to coffee, first to buy it in the nibs, and grind it yourself; secondly, never to grind it till just before you want it; thirdly, before grinding it heat the coffee in the oven for a few minutes—this latter having the effect of bringing out the flavour; lastly, do not grudge the coffee. A. G. PAYNE.

## A HARD CASE.

### CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

"Sick art thou—a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill,  
The fear of men—" (*Tennyson.*)

"HAVE I done wrong? Should I be ashamed for Lynn to know it if I could tell him everything?" were questions Bertha asked herself over and over again. She did not regret her sudden action. It had been done in haste and excitement, with little thought of the consequences; but now, when she recognised its importance to herself, she would have done it again without hesitation. But whether, while she fully believed all Mrs. Greenwood's money ought to be hers, it could be a sin to take a small part of it for Lynn, who, after herself, had such strong claims upon it, she could not tell. She did not feel guilty; in her own sight she was fully justified, but she did not know whether her own sense of right and wrong was to be trusted; whether in God's sight and in the eyes of the world her knowledge of her own rights was—as it appeared to her—sufficient justification.

What Mrs. Greenwood would do with her, if she were found out, Bertha could not guess, but surely with all her severity she would feel the weight of the excuse. But yet if she refused help to her own son in his need, what could Bertha expect from her? People were sent to prison for stealing, she knew, but then this was widely different from ordinary cases, even without her own claims. She had not taken the money for herself, except in so far as Lynn was a second self, she thought, with a little gleam of happiness in her distress; she had only taken from the mother's over-abundance to help the son's need. Could any one deny his strong claim to the money

which he had been brought up to look upon as his own? That Lynn should think so well of her, so far better than she felt she deserved, had at the beginning of their engagement been almost a trouble to Bertha, but of late his good opinion had grown very precious. Was it not because he believed her standard of right to be so high that he endeavoured to give up his careless ways and conform to it? Was it not because he knew she thought it dishonest to spend money on his own pleasure while his debts were unpaid, that he tried to become careful and saving and steady? And now when his faith in her had grown so valuable, when he had learned to look to her to keep him straight and, as he had told her a few days ago, to be like a conscience to him, and to her were referred his actions and thoughts and motives, now when in his difficulties and disappointments he wanted her more than ever, if his faith should be overthrown, his trust broken, what could the end be to both? She knew his reckless nature; a man who could decide in a moment to give up a fortune which he had looked for all his life, who knew himself so weak of purpose that he blindly trusted to a woman to guide him, not in one but in everything, who needed to be constantly reminded that he could not at the same time save and spend, be industrious and self-indulgent—how would such a man fare when his faith and trust were brought suddenly to an end, when the woman he had believed in was found guilty of what she now saw must appear a crime—though it was done for him—without the justification which she could not give? Had she done wisely? Would it not have been better for him to lose everything in the world rather than his faith in her? Yes, for a time it seemed as if nothing but evil could come