

## THE OLD PEAR - TREE.

BY RICHARD HENGIST HORNE, AUTHOR OF "ORION," ETC. ETC.

**E**MBLEM of by-gone days ! who still so green  
Spread'st thy broad arms athwart the  
southern wall—

Memorial of fresh youth, and life's young scene—  
Full many a vision thou dost well recall.  
The morning dews fast from thy branches fall,  
As though in tears to welcome my return ;  
Thick snow of blossoms decks thy foliage tall,  
And gazing thus I feel my being yearn  
With heart-suspended sighs, that melt and thrill in turn.

Fresh art thou as the day that I was born,  
But I am sunken from thee into eld :  
The winds sang through thee on my natal morn,  
And round the darken'd window moan'd and swell'd :  
A babbling of strange fates as beldames held :  
Then wert thou lusty in each serpent fold,  
Though not with summer's hanging fruit o'er-bell'd,  
But showering leaves upon the wintry mould,  
'Mongst which, with three years' pride, my elfin limbs  
I roll'd.

Now have thy blooms white crowds of thoughts become,  
Fragrant of earliest scenes. Bright hours appear  
When thy broad wall screen'd in my childhood's home—  
Long loved—long left—but, oh ! for ever dear.  
Thou, lady, whom my silent thoughts revere,  
Art long since gone, and, like a cloud-pile's fall,  
Thy loving gift hath melted into air ;  
The iron gates, I thought so grand and tall,  
Are ever closed to me—and strangers tread the hall.

Rich was thy fruit in autumn's mellowing smile,  
And well the grave face do I call to mind  
With which my grandame's knife in silvery guile  
Moved round and round, until the curling rind  
Hung in a ringled cone. How quaint and kind  
The aged gardener would beckon oft,  
When none were near, and, looking sly behind,  
A huge old ladder drew from out the loft,  
And journey'd—oh, so high!—and dropt pears from  
aloft !

That mansion bears to me an alien face—  
Forbidding looks the room where I was born :  
Few shapes of lawns or garden-walks I trace ;  
The dove-cot stands a mildewed wreck forlorn—  
The ancient coach-house turned into a barn ;  
The gilded weather-cock and iron bell—  
Tray's kennel, deep-thatch'd stables, all are gone ;  
The green-house—once all blooms—a ghastly shell ;  
And naught I loved remains but thee, sweet jar-  
gonelle.

Vain were the present, if the past be vain :  
Though man i' the future lives, 'twere vainer still  
If by such themes we profit not. Our gain  
Springs with our loss, upon Thought's fruitful hill.  
Then from sad memories we may distil  
A spirit that shall set our hearts aglow,  
Armed with the fortitude of wise-eyed will,  
That waits for dawn in darkest cells of woe,  
Till patient well-built hopes our best resources show.

## BUTTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "COMMON-SENSE HOUSEKEEPING."



**T**HERE'S folks as make bad butter and  
trusten to the salt to hide it," said  
Mrs. Poyser. Ah ! but the salt  
will not hide it. Bad butter pro-  
claims itself, it is an abomination,  
an annoyance, a loss, and an in-  
jury. It is unwholesome and un-  
palatable. It is good for nothing,  
neither for eating nor for cooking.

Good butter, on the contrary, is exquisite, tempting,  
delicious. It melts in the mouth as butter should do.  
It crowns the efforts of the skilful cook and helps to  
hide the short-comings of the unskilful one. It gives  
satisfaction however it is used. It is a most valuable  
food, less likely to disagree with the stomach than any  
other fat, and is liked and enjoyed by the sick as well  
as the hale and strong. Amongst the cultivated and  
refined it is everywhere regarded as an indispensable  
article of daily food, and the meal is incomplete from  
which it is absent. In short, it is one of the crowning  
luxuries of a perfect meal.

This being the case, what a pity it is that good  
butter is so hard to get ! But there is no question  
about the fact. It is quite appalling to read the  
accounts of the adulterations to which it is subjected.  
For it is said that not only do salt and water enter into  
the composition, but that in different samples there  
have been found, besides salt and water, flour, oat-  
meal, pea-flour, lard, mutton and beef fat, purified  
animal fat (by which is meant bone-fat, horse-grease,  
and the fat of dead dogs melted down), with oil, tallow,  
rag-pulp, &c. &c. There !—that is quite enough.

It appears as if only one thing could be done in the  
matter. We cannot awaken the consciences of the  
manufacturers and purveyors of butter ; we cannot  
terrify them with our Adulteration Acts, so it only  
remains for us to try to understand for ourselves what  
good butter is, and to refuse to put up with the inferior  
article. If impositions did not succeed they would not  
be repeated.

Of course the great test of butter is the palate. Those  
who are accustomed to perfect butter, "gilt-edged



butter" as the Americans call it, cannot tolerate the sham. But what about those who are not accustomed to it—whose only experience in that line is "Dossset, inferior Dossset?" Would it not be best that they should remain in the ignorance which is bliss? A summer or two ago, some friends of mine who had lived in town all their lives, having only occasional glimpses of the country, had the unspeakable happiness of receiving an invitation to spend six weeks at a large farm in Denmark. They accepted it, and it was quite amusing to see in how short a time they took advantage of their privileges. They had cream, unlimited cream, and beautiful butter, fresh and sweet, and of an exquisite flavour, and they proved in the most satisfactory way that they appreciated it. Even the very little ones got into the way of spreading the odorous substance upon the bread in layers ever so much thicker than the bread itself; and this to the distress of the mother, who, frugal soul, was horrified at their extravagance, as she called it. "Oh, let them have it," said the hospitable hostess, "it will do them good, they cannot have too much good butter." "But what shall I do when they return home, if they acquire habits of this kind?" was the answer. "I can never afford to supply them with butter at this rate." But it was soon found that there was no cause for anxiety on this account. Their taste had been educated. They knew good butter from bad, and had no desire to do more than spread the "best fresh" lightly and sparingly over the bread as they had always been accustomed to do.

But now about understanding butter. Butter is either fresh or salt. A little salt is put even with the best butter, but the quantity ought not to exceed half an ounce to the pound. Sometimes, however, in inferior samples salt and water together make up more than a third of the weight. Salt can, however, easily be removed by washing the butter, and water can be squeezed from it, and the extent of the adulteration can be ascertained by weighing the butter before and after these operations.

There are certain special chemical tests by which the quality of butter can be determined, but these cannot be applied by every one. Still there is one very simple plan by which the commoner adulterations can be discovered. This is to put some of the suspected butter into a glass tube and plunge it into hot water till all the substance is melted. After a little time it will separate into layers, and then the different ingredients which enter into the composition will lie in marked distinctness before us. If lard is present it will be of a paler colour than the butter. If little pieces of skin are found, coarse animal fats have been introduced; and if bits of thread are there, rag-gulp has been used for adulteration.

Supposing, however, that the butter is tolerably good and pure, there will be seen in the bottom of the tube a little, very little, water; on this, and like it by no means conspicuous, will be the curd, and at the top of all will lie the true butter or milk-fat, which will in appearance much resemble oil.

Yet even when both manufacturer and purveyor are quite honest and well-intentioned, butter is not always

perfect; for there are so many little circumstances that may hinder success in butter-making. No other substance absorbs foreign odours and volatile flavours as butter does, so that foul gases or smells accidentally admitted to the dairy are sure to taint the butter, and once injured in this way it can never be recovered. Our forefathers knew this, and in order to prevent the admission into the dairy of any unpleasant odour they used to plant bushes, more particularly the common elder, a short distance in front of the dairy window, to purify the air before it came to the butter. It would seem that modern science has confirmed the wisdom of this plan, for it has discovered that trees and shrubs do inhale gases, some so markedly as to prevent fever. Any one who doubts the fact that butter easily absorbs the flavours of other substances, would do well to put a little butter away on a plate with a slice of cheese and a rasher of bacon, and taste it after a short time. Careless cooks make this experiment constantly though unconsciously.

Then the taste of butter is influenced by the kind of food upon which the cow has been fed; a pleasant and delicate aroma being given to it by some pastures which is not afforded by others. If strong or improper food has been given to the cow, the butter is sure to be affected. Thus butter is much stronger when the cow is fed on turnips than when it is fed on grass or hay. Besides this, a very unpleasant flavour is frequently noticeable in butter made in the autumn, and this is caused by the cow having eaten fallen and decayed leaves with its food. The taste of the butter differs also with the animal from which the milk is taken; and butter made in Egypt and India from bison's milk, and in our own country from goat's milk, is much stronger than that made from cow's milk.

A good deal of difficulty is experienced by house-keepers in keeping butter in good condition. It is so liable, and especially in hot weather, to become rancid. It should be generally known that if rancid butter be washed first in good new milk, and afterwards in cold spring-water, it will become as good as ever. The rancidity in butter is due to the presence of what the chemists call butyric acid, and this is freely soluble in fresh milk.

Fresh butter will keep sweet for a long time if it is put into a bowl with plenty of water, with every half-gallon of which a tea-spoonful of tartaric acid has been mixed. This water should be changed every five or six days, and oftener in hot weather. Butter thus treated has been known to retain its freshness at the end of two months under the existence of a temperature of from 60° to 68° Fahr.

In summer time butter is frequently presented in an oily condition. This is, however, quite unnecessary, for it may easily be kept firm with ice, or, failing this, by the adoption of either of the two following methods—1. Put the butter on a soup-plate and place upon it an inverted flower-pot covered with a cloth, then pour water on the plate. 2. Put the butter in a bowl and place this in a dish that contains water in which a little saltpetre has been dissolved. Lay on and round the bowl a clean cloth with the ends in the saltpetre-



water, and keep the bowl in a cool and *dark* place.

If it is wished to preserve butter for a considerable time, it is a good plan to press it into pots to within an inch of the top, then to lay on it some coarse-grained salt about half an inch thick, covering each pot with a plate or slate. By long keeping the salt runs to brine, which forms an air-tight covering for the butter, which can be easily poured off when the butter is wanted. Dr. Anderson recommends a plan by which he declares that butter may be kept in a cool place for years, and if packed so as not to melt will even bear a voyage to the East Indies. According to this method, each pound of butter is incorporated thoroughly with 1 oz. of a mixture made of 1 oz. of saltpetre, 1 oz. of white sugar, and 2 oz. of Cheshire large-grained salt, all finely powdered. "Butter thus prepared does not acquire its proper taste until it has stood for three or four weeks, when it is found to have a rich marrow-like flavour which no other butter ever possesses."

The varieties of butter are, of course, numerous, as every one knows, and amongst them it must in all honesty be confessed that the English butters do not hold a prominent place. Some of them certainly are excellent; Devonshire, Aylesbury, and Epping butters are deservedly popular, and Cambridge butter also, though it is said that what is called Cambridge butter is only a mixture of foreign butters. Delicious butter, possessing a fine creamy flavour, is made also in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. Yet nearly all the best butter supplied to the London clubs comes from Ostend, from Normandy, and from Brittany. Dutch butter is very largely consumed in every part of Great Britain, and it has been estimated that three-fourths of all the foreign butter used in England is imported from Holland. It is much to be feared that a good deal of this is only purified fat flavoured with buttermilk. A considerable trade is done in butter in Ireland, but as a rule foreign butters from Holland and France are preferred to Irish butter, because they are scrupulously clean, while the Irish butter frequently contains hair and dirt as well as too much salt and brine.

The French in their cookery use a great deal more butter than we English do, and an English house-keeper would be appalled at the quantity disposed of in a French kitchen. But we are not in a position to blame our neighbours in this respect. They save more by utilising the scraps and pieces than we do by being sparing of butter, and if we had learnt to employ the fragments as they do, we could well afford to enrich our dishes in the same way. In various forms they use butter for sauce. *Ravigote* butter is butter incorporated with chopped herbs, pepper, salt, and lemon-juice. It is served with steaks and broiled fish. *Maitre-d'hôtel* butter is butter kneaded with chopped parsley, pepper, salt, and lemon-juice, and a pat is put cold either under or upon broiled meat or fish, and melts in the dish. When a dish is said to be *à la maitre-d'hôtel*, it is almost always served either with this butter or with what is called *maitre-d'hôtel* sauce, which is only English melted butter with chopped

parsley added to it. Anchovy butter is made with butter and pounded anchovies.

There are simpler preparations of butter sauces than these, however, which are most excellent, and which can be prepared so easily that it is a pity they are not more generally known. Amongst these the most important are "black butter," the French *beurre noir*, a piquant sauce used for skate, calf's brains, and similar dishes. It is made by melting fresh butter in a small saucepan and letting it remain over the fire till it is brown, without being at all burnt. It is then mixed with vinegar which has been boiled rapidly till it is considerably reduced, pepper and salt are added, and the sauce, after being passed through a strainer, is ready to serve. *Beurre à la noisette*, or "nut-brown butter," is one of the most perfect of fish sauces. It is made by melting fresh butter and allowing it, not to brown, but to acquire a light golden tinge. When this point is reached, the butter is taken at once from the fire and served with salt and a little lemon-juice. Oiled butter, another simple sauce highly esteemed by epicures, is nothing but fresh butter melted to oil, but not coloured at all, then strained to free it from the milky sediment contained in the butter, and slightly salted before being served.

It must not be thought, however, that butter is esteemed everywhere alike. In the United States, in Sweden, and elsewhere it is made and used in large quantities, and it is employed in England so generally that, in addition to that made at home, 80,000 tons of foreign butter are imported annually, and it has been estimated that in London only the consumption amounts to 15,000 tons. In India it is made from the milk of buffaloes, and under the name of "ghee" is universally used in native cookery. In Brazil it is largely used, and quantities are imported from England, France, and Germany, in addition to that made by the natives. The Brazilians churn their butter in a very curious fashion. Sometimes they put the milk into a bottle, and shake it till the butter comes, then to get it out break off the top of the bottle. Another plan is to put the milk into a hide, and let this be shaken well by two natives, one at each end, or else be dragged on the ground after a galloping horse till the butter appears. Yet in Southern Europe butter is very sparingly used, and in Italy, Spain, and Portugal it is sold by apothecaries as an ointment for external application—as we use it also ourselves, for if one gets a knock or a bump, there is nothing more natural in the world than to rub the place at once with butter.

In choosing butter it should be remembered that fresh butter should be of a pleasant odour, and of an equal colour throughout. If it smells sour it has not been sufficiently freed from the buttermilk; if it is streaked or veiny it has probably been worked up with stale butter or lard. It is a good plan with salt butter to plunge a knife right into it, and if when this is withdrawn it has a rancid and unpleasant smell, the butter is bad. When butter is bought in a tub it is best to have the cask unhooped and try the butter in different parts, for it is more than probable that the butter has



been made at different times, and is not all alike in quality.

Clever housekeepers with artistic tendencies are very fond of making butter *look* pretty for the table. One of the methods they employ for this purpose is to "squirt" the butter. This is done by rolling a piece of stiff white paper to the shape of a sugar-bag, and squeezing the butter in strings through a hole at the bottom. Butter thus prepared may be dished, and garnished with small sprigs of parsley, or it may be used to ornament glazed hams, tongues, &c. "Scooped butter" is made by scooping the butter quickly and thinly with a scooper that has been dipped in warm water. "Curled butter" is made by putting the butter into a cloth, two ends of which are fastened to a hook in the wall, and the other two are tied in a knot so that a stick might pass through. The cloth is twisted

tightly so that the butter shall fall in small curly strings through the knot into a dish put under it to receive it. Very pretty moulds are sold and extensively used for shaping butter. They should be kept perfectly clean, and before being used should be wetted with cold spring-water in order to prevent the butter from sticking to them. Scotch hands for moulding butter are very inexpensive and very easily managed. They consist of two plain pieces of wood fluted in the inside. They require to be soaked in cold water before being used, and if used constantly should be kept in a bowl of water to be ready when wanted. The butter should be taken up between them in small portions, and rolled either into balls or small rolls, and if these are put on a butter dish and garnished with parsley they may be made to look very pretty.

PHILLIS BROWNE.

### ON HEARING JENNY LIND'S "GOOD NIGHT" SUNG IN THE STREET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WHITE CROSS AND DOVE OF PEARLS."

**S**WEET, songful sister! my full heart  
Is borne upon thy strain,  
And in its sadness bears a part  
And answers to its pain;  
Yet, while the sunset sky is bright,  
We will be strong and say, "Good night!"

Good night! good night! to those who weep  
Such tears as we have wept;  
Sweet peace to those who dread the sleep  
That all before have slept;  
Bright dreams to maidens worn with care,  
And brave youths struggling with despair.

Good night! good night! to rich and poor,  
To prisoner and to free;  
To children playing at the door  
And laughing merrily;  
Good night to mothers fond and proud,  
And fathers bearing through the cloud.

Child of Cecilia! why has fate  
Been so unkind to thee?  
Thou wert not born to this estate,

Nor nursed in misery.  
"Good night!" it echoes down the street:  
Thy mien is proud, thy song is sweet.

What hast thou done to vex the world?  
And what the world to thee?  
Oh, heavens! Who shall say? our life  
Is full of mystery;  
Yet angels leaning from the height  
May hear thee wish the world "Good night!"

Nor let the scattered pence it flings  
Be painful to thy touch;  
The bard who for its guerdon sings  
Is equal, and has much  
To break his heart-strings ere his lyre  
Fail 'neath unsatisfied desire.

Good night! good night! The eyelids ache  
With tears too long unshed;  
We weep ourselves to sleep, and wake  
With heavy heart and head;  
But when we say our last "Good night,"  
God grant the waking may be bright!

### FIREPLACES IN SUMMER.

**W**HEN the increasing warmth of the spring weather forces us to extinguish our blazing and cheerful winter companion, the fire, nothing, I think, can surpass the melancholy blackness, the utter unsightliness of the vacant grate. Even the bright associations of the past winter—the friendly chat and pleasant laughter over afternoon teas innumerable, taken in the warmth of its cosy light—fail to redeem its mournful ugliness. Modern fashion has introduced many much-needed improvements, which, after all, are only revivals of the taste of

our ancestors, who certainly knew how to design delightful fireplaces; and we cannot do better now than carefully to copy their oak over-mantels, and shelves for china, and their Dutch tiles of every design and colour.

Of course those who are happy enough to own a fireplace beautified and adorned in the modern style will not be very anxious to hide it. Those who happen, however, to live in houses (and their name is Legion) which they do not own and cannot improve, will feel the wish, with each returning summer, to "do something" with the unsightly hearth. For their benefit I