

immediate motives and proposals, the ultimate solution of this curious Chinese question may chiefly depend upon moral considerations; and it is almost certain that it will do so as regards British dominions. There are grave and pressing social difficulties in our own midst, which an ample supply of very cheap labour would do much to solve; yet, on the other hand, it is certain that we, in our crowded community, could even less than America afford to tolerate a horde of people whose habitual vices cast ancient Corinth into the shade. It must be remembered also that, should the tide ever actually reach our shores, our lodging-house regulations would prevent most of that excessive crowding which in California causes much of the mischief. It has to be considered, again, that the main part of the emigration so far has been of the very worst class; and while we know that the small numbers of this class in London have the same characteristics as in San Francisco, we also know that China can send out if need be a class at least better, if not all that could be desired. It certainly seems at present

far from improbable that the pressure of famine may promote emigration of the real country population. It would appear that a reckless destruction of forests has caused an almost chronic drought in large provinces, and that at this moment a population double that of the United Kingdom is either actually starving or on the point of doing so. Recent accounts are simply appalling: we are told that deaths *must* this year be counted by millions in North China, whatever now befall, and that there is reason to fear dreadful scarcity may prevail for years to come. A starving people cannot be kept in bounds; and if it be so, such a state of things will have such a terrible expulsive power, that we may see a wave of Chinese emigration before which even the present statistics of Queensland and California sink into insignificance. In that case the question will face ourselves, either for our own kingdom or for our colonies, and it will be a serious one—so serious, that it is well worth while thus briefly to trace its main outlines as it now faces the citizens of the Western States.

CREAM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "COMMON-SENSE HOUSEKEEPING."



IT is not given to every one to know what cream really is. People who have lived in towns all their lives, and formed their ideas of country life and country joys from the experiences gained during their yearly holiday, taken it may be in the heat of summer, are as ignorant of cream, its sweetness and richness, and delicate delicious flavour, as they are of the beauty of the lanes in spring, or the loveliness of the woods in autumn. If they could just for once have a dish of real cream put before them, say with a few freshly gathered strawberries, or a tart made of early gooseberries, what would their sensations be, I wonder? It would be like a revelation to them.

I remember many years ago that I had a treat of the kind. In the early summer weather I went with a number of friends on a picnic to Bolton Woods. After spending the day in gathering wild violets and primroses, and watching the rush of waters, and peeping at the blue sky through the branches of the trees, we went into the country inn and had some dinner, and amongst other good things provided there were gooseberry tart and unlimited cream. I am afraid it will be pronounced a very gross association of ideas, but ever since that time early primroses have been connected in my mind with gooseberry tart and cream.

Of course that cream was quite a different thing to town cream. And yet town cream is not so bad in its way. Putting all ideas of comparison aside, it is good enough. It is exceedingly expensive, that is the worst of it, so that in using it one has the uncomfortable feeling that Cleopatra must have experienced when she drank the pearl dissolved in acid. Very likely the

reason that it is so inferior to true country cream is that the milk from which it is taken is inferior too. Horrible stories have been told of late years of the most objectionable adulterations to which milk is subjected; and it has been said that the brains of animals, plaster of Paris, and other substances have been mixed with the milk; but the alarm was needless. It is not often that milk is diluted with anything worse than water—which is bad enough. Those serious adulterations would be very easily detected, for they would alter the flavour and appearance of the milk entirely, as they certainly would those of the cream.

But how even town cream makes its presence felt! Blancmanges and custards are very different articles made with cream and with milk, and certain soups into the composition of which cream has entered are not to be compared for a moment with the same soups when cream is absent. If good milk can be obtained at all, it is worth while to let it stand a little and see if it will not yield some of the precious liquid, which is sure to be appreciated by some favoured member of the household, or which will prove valuable for making cakes and pastry. A little water stirred into new milk makes cream rise more quickly than it otherwise would, although it does not affect the quantity yielded. And it is an undeniable proof of the goodness of milk when cream can be obtained from it. When it is wished to keep cream for a short time, it is a good plan to boil it and sweeten it slightly with sugar. At all times the cream should be kept in a cool place, and the jug which contains it may with advantage be put into a basin of cold water.

Then cream is such a wholesome dish. Is it not Miss Nightingale who says that "in many long chronic diseases cream is quite irreplaceable by any

other article whatever. It seems to act in the same manner as beef-tea, and to most it is much easier of digestion than milk. In fact, it seldom disagrees"? Many doctors are of opinion that Devonshire cream is a valuable substitute for cod-liver oil, in cases where the latter disagrees with the stomach. Strange to say, too, that when it is taken continually for a long time, it inspires the same distaste that oil does. A little while ago I brought out a dish of Devonshire cream to a young friend of mine, quite expecting that it would be considered a great treat, but to my astonishment she involuntarily turned away from it. I might as well have offered her a black draught. "Is it possible that you do not like Devonshire cream?" I inquired. "Indeed, I do not like it," was the reply. "I have never cared for it since I was obliged to take it as a child, instead of cod-liver oil." This is all the more singular because we know that cod-liver oil, though it may be disliked at first, frequently comes to be very much enjoyed by those who take it.

As a rule, however, Devonshire cream is valued and appreciated very highly, and those who are fortunate enough to be able to obtain it think themselves highly privileged. Some young folks of my acquaintance spent the summer at Ilfracombe a year or two ago, and they were so enthusiastic about the cream! They were always early "off to market on a market day," making the old women bring out the mugs, and jars, and cups that contained the delicacy, and entreating their mother to lay in a goodly store of the same. Then they ate the cream instead of butter at breakfast, and had the cream with jam and bread for pudding at dinner, and cream at tea, and cream whenever they could get it between meals; and when they returned to town, healthy and strong, after their summer's trip was over, they declared that they owed their rosy cheeks and bright eyes quite as much to the Devonshire cream they had indulged in, as to the fresh sea breezes, and rest, and change.

These children had a great desire to see how Devonshire cream was made, so one day we made an expedition to a farm-house a few miles out, which was kept by a friend of our landlady, and there they saw how their favourite delicacy was produced. The beautiful milk—yesterday's—was put into polished shallow tin pans over a low clear fire, quite free from smoke, and was to remain there gradually heating, but never being allowed to boil or to get any way near boiling, for about twelve hours, till the cream was ready to take off. We were fortunate enough to see it just as it was being lifted from the fire. It lay in a kind of thick ring on the top of the fluid, and looked most delicious; but we did not taste it, for we were told it was to remain untouched until the next day, when it would be skimmed off and put into jars ready for sale.

It would appear from this as if any one who had a shallow pan, and could keep a low bright fire, could have this kind of cream. So they could if they could get equally good milk. A friend of mine in Natal has supplied her family for many years with clotted cream of her own manufacture, and may be doing so now

for anything I know. But to have real Devonshire cream there must be real Devonshire milk, and this can only be obtained from cows that have been fed on the rich pastures of humid Devonshire. Everything has its price, and it is more than probable that the Devonshire people owe their rich milk to the continual rainy weather which they endure.

Corstorphine cream, sometimes called Ruglen cream or Lappered milk, is almost as great a favourite with the people in whose neighbourhood it is made as Devonshire cream is with the Devonians. It is made by pouring new unskimmed milk into a jar, and the next day pouring in some more milk and stirring the milks together, and in this way mixing the milks of three or four consecutive days, and letting them remain until sour and coagulated. The whey is then drawn off, and the thick milk is mixed with fresh cream and sugar. The cream is particularly refreshing and cooling, and is delicious when eaten with fresh fruit. There has been quite a dispute amongst learned men whether the honour of having invented this cream belongs to Corstorphine, near Edinburgh, or to the burgh of Rutherglen, in the neighbourhood of Glasgow.

Scotch sour cream is another delicacy very much esteemed by many people. It, however, is a sort of imposture. It looks very nice and tastes very nice, though not like real cream, and it sells for double the price of fresh milk, but it is really made from skimmed milk. The milk is put overnight into a small tub with a spigot at the bottom, and this is placed in another filled with hot water. In the morning the smaller tub is taken up, and the thin part of the milk, called the "wigg," is drawn off, leaving the thick sour cream behind it.

We English people are not, however, in a position to throw stones at the Scotch for impostures about cream, for it is to be feared that a good deal of what is sold as cream cheese is not made of cream, but rather of the last milk that is drawn from the cow at each milking. Yorkshire cream cheese is, however, usually made of real cream, and exceedingly delicious it is. The worst of it is that it will not keep.

Economical housekeepers, who do not like the idea of paying a fancy price for cream, occasionally make a mock cream with eggs and milk, and endeavour to persuade themselves that the imitation is as good as the reality. But, like Dick Swiveller's marchioness, they are compelled to "make believe very much." Perhaps the most successful of these sham creams is that prepared from the following recipe:—"Beat the yolk of an egg, and mix it with a quarter of a pint of milk. Strain the mixture into a jug, and set this in a saucepan of cold water over the fire, and stir the mixture until it thickens; but it must not boil. Sweeten the preparation slightly, and when cold it is ready for use. This cream may be used either for tea or tarts." A still more inexpensive substitute for cream is made by mixing a dessert-spoonful of flour to a smooth paste with a little milk, and adding gradually more milk to make up the quantity to one pint, and simmering the preparation for a few minutes to take off the rawness from the flour. The well-

beaten yolk of an egg should be added when the cream is partially cooled. Milk and the yolk of an egg are frequently put into soups, too, to save the expense of cream. When this is done, the milk should be boiled separately, and poured through a strainer into the soup just before it is to be served. The egg-yolk should be thrown into the tureen (which has been already made hot, ready to be sent to table), and beaten up with a spoonful of the soup out of the saucepan. Afterwards a few more spoonfuls may be thrown in one at a time, and when the yolk is well mixed with these the remainder of the soup can be added.

Besides being taken in tea and coffee, and served with fruits and compôtes, cream is subjected to the skill of the confectioner, and constitutes the foundation of various delicacies. Amongst these are ice creams, which are so popular with the fair sex, and are said to have been introduced by Catherine de Medici. They are made of congealed cream mixed with the juices of fruits or other flavouring ingredients. The mixture requires to be prepared and manipulated with great care, and especially while it is being thickened over the fire, during which time it should be continuously stirred till it is sufficiently smooth and thick, when it should be rubbed through a sieve. Afterwards it can be frozen and moulded in the usual way. When ice creams are only occasionally required, it will be found to be both more economical and more satisfactory to buy them of the confectioner than to endeavour to prepare them at home. Cream ices, though exceedingly refreshing and delicious, are not considered particularly wholesome. They should certainly be avoided either when people are very warm or after violent exercise, otherwise they might produce serious indisposition. The weakly, the aged, and the very young would do well to avoid them altogether.

Whipped cream is another of the forms under which cream is presented to us by the confectioner. It is used chiefly to fill meringues and adorn trifles and sweet dishes of various kinds. It is made by sweetening and flavouring good cream, then whisking it with an egg-whisk or wire spoon till a froth rises to the surface. This should be taken off as soon as it forms,

and laid upon a lawn-sieve, and the cream should be whisked again until it is used. This is best when made some hours before it is used, as by that means it will become more solid. When it is not needed to be very solid it can be used at once. The whip will be more easily made if the cream is whisked over ice. When very good cream cannot be obtained, white of egg is generally added to the cream before it is whisked. This preparation is seldom satisfactorily managed by the amateur.

French creams are simply custards flavoured with various ingredients, and stiffened with isinglass. There are a great many of these creams, such as lemon, orange, ratafia, vanilla, and maraschino, and each is named after the flavouring ingredient. Custards were for a long time known on the Continent as English creams. They are very favourite delicacies, and may be made with cream and eggs, or with boiling milk and eggs. The secret of making them well lies in stirring them sufficiently. The custard made of yolks of eggs upon which boiling milk has been poured ought to be put into a saucepan and stirred briskly over a slow fire for a quarter of an hour or more, till it begins to thicken. It ought then to be drawn back and put on a cool part of the range, where it cannot even simmer, and here it should remain, being stirred occasionally, for another quarter of an hour. A custard thus made with a pint of milk and three eggs will be very little inferior to one made with cream and eggs. The flavouring essence should be added very sparingly after the custard is poured out. If the flavour of lemon is desired, the thin rind of half a lemon finely shredded should be boiled in the milk, and left in the custard till it is cold. A very delicious flavour may also be imparted to a custard by boiling a laurel-leaf in it—not a bay-leaf, but the leaf of the cherry-laurel. The leaf should, however, be taken out as soon as the custard is flavoured, for it must be remembered that the cherry-laurel is poisonous.

In large towns and among ordinary people cream is becoming more and more of a rarity. The reason of this not that it is not appreciated, but that it cannot so easily be obtained.

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