

levels; whilst, as the ground rises, the open moor draws nearer, with its great masses of colour, golden and green, purple and green, or yellow and dark brown, as spring, summer, and autumn bring out their gorse, heather, and fern, or spread decay's effacing fingers over the latter. On the south, the sloping of one of the ranges of hills tells of the winding of the railway which first traversed the district; far northwards is Skelton and the region where the De Brus ruled; eastwards, there "glooms the dark broad sea;" and westwards, to the extremity of Cleveland, hill and moor embosom fertile little valleys in their dark and remote recesses—valleys as varying from the customs of the world

outside as their streams are from the swell of the sea. It is in the north that we see the change which has been brought about in Cleveland by the uprisal of the iron manufacture there. The decaying hamlets that clustered at either base of the spur of hills, Eston and Marske, Skelton, Kilton, and Brotton, have been made populous places by the introduction of iron-miners; Skinninggrove, where Paul Jones landed to strike terror into the half-score of dwellings, has become a mining centre; Lofthouse, a town; and though the stagnation which has been known so long in the branch of trade on which they depend is checking their growth now, their future seems an assured one.



"AN AUNT CHLOE OR DINAH, WHO MAKES CORN-MUFFINS" (p. 20).

SOME FAVOURITE AMERICAN DISHES.

BY A LADY RESIDENT.



with what?" seems a question that rarely disturbs the intelligence of the American provider. They certainly

PEOPLE who pay only a short visit to America carry a way with them, usually, a contempt for American cookery, only equalled by their amazement at the heterogeneous mass of food that appears at one meal.

"What goes

have as little idea of harmony in food as we English are said to have in colour. Yet it is quite as unjust to form an estimate of American fare from knowledge gained during a three months' scamper through the country, as it is to believe, as many do, that English people live on such fare as hasty travellers may pick up at a railway station. Thus the idea has occurred to me, since my residence in America, that there are many good things made on this side of the ocean which would be appreciated by lovers of good living in England.

Especially now that the importation of the large American oysters into the old country is so great, does it behove Englishwomen to know how to have them cooked—that is to say, cooked in the way special to America, and which seems peculiarly adapted to the American bivalve.

Perhaps one of the first things that will attract the eye of the newly-arrived European, after it has become accustomed to the general confusion of gay sign-boards,

is the one so prevalent in all parts of the city, bearing the legend, "OYSTERS IN EVERY STYLE—ROAST, FRIED, BROILED, STEWED, OR ON THE HALF-SHELL." Every few shops there is a lunch-room, eating-house, oyster-saloon, or restaurant which has the announcement in largest capitals: it is more frequent even than the all-pervading "ICE-CREAM."

Oysters fried, roast, and broiled are, I think, peculiarly American modes of cooking. Stewed, in soup, or scolloped, they are familiar enough to English people.

A fried oyster is one of the most delicious morsels that ever tickled the palate of an epicure. To have them in perfection, take large fat oysters and lay them on a cloth to drain. Roll some plain unsweetened biscuits, such as cabin biscuit, or the common square biscuit, until they are in fine powder; if any small lumps or crumbs remain, sift it; any unevenness will destroy the appearance, as large crumbs drop off in frying. Have ready a stew-pan or saucepan, with at least half a pound of lard, nice dripping, or oil, which must have become very hot—and remember, boiling fat is *not hot enough*—it must boil, get still, and then be about to smoke. Roll each oyster in the biscuit-powder until it is well covered. See if the fat is hot enough by dropping in a crumb of bread; if it browns at once, drop in the oysters, only so many as can be easily turned. If the fat has been sufficiently hot, they will be crisp, plump, and brown in a minute or two; turn them, and when all over of a golden hue, take them up, serve on a hot dish, garnish with pickled gherkins, eat with Worcestershire or tomato sauce.

Remember, the only requisites in frying these (or, for that matter, anything else) are a clear hot fire and *plenty of very hot fat*—this is the secret of French fried potatoes.

Broiled oysters are simply large oysters wiped dry and broiled on a close-barred gridiron over a quick, clear fire. Before putting them on, rub the gridiron with a little butter or vinegar to prevent sticking; when hot through, they are done. Have a hot dish with a piece of butter melted in it, lay them on it, pepper and salt to taste.

Roast oysters are laid on a clear fire in their shells, deep shell downwards; when they open they are done. They must be eaten, with butter, pepper, and salt, from the shell while very hot.

Every one who has read American novels will be familiar with the names of many toothsome breakfast-cakes unknown to us. There is always an Aunt Chloe or Dinah mentioned, who makes corn-muffins, hoe-cake, Johnny-cake, and buckwheat-cakes. For some of these we have no materials, but there are many kinds of rolls made with wheaten flour that housewives may be glad to know of, especially those in the country, who are out of reach of the early baker, and have plenty of sour milk or butter-milk on hand, of which so little use is made with us, yet which is one of the American housekeeper's greatest treasures; with it she makes an endless variety of hot breakfast-cakes and rolls, by the addition of a little bicarbonate of soda.

Apropos of soda, and before saying how many good things may be made with it, let me state to my countrywomen, who I know are full of prejudice so soon as they see the word, and expect no good of me or my cakes if I advocate its use, that I had as great a prejudice against it as any one could have, simply because I did not understand the use of it, nor did I ever meet with proper directions in any English recipe for using it.

In the few recipes we have in which soda is used, it is usually without any acid to cause effervescence; hence, it neither makes sweet nor light the article in which it is employed. In America it is never used without acid of some kind; this is most readily found in sour milk or butter-milk in the country; but in cities, where sour milk is not plentiful, cream of tartar is substituted—always *double* the quantity of cream of tartar to the soda.

A kind of roll, called here "biscuit," is seen on almost every breakfast-table. If it is well made, it is light, flaky, crisp, and white, has no suggestion of soda either in taste or smell, and can be made and baked in fifteen minutes. Of this "biscuit" there are several kinds; one of the nicest is what is called "butter-milk biscuit," and is made as follows:—Take a pound of flour, rub into it a piece of butter or lard the size of an egg, and a pinch of salt; then dissolve a small teaspoonful of soda in a little boiling water (only enough to dissolve it), and put it into a pint of *sharp* butter-milk; add these to the flour; it should make a very thick batter, that you can just stir, and that will drop in mounds from the spoon; if too thick, add more butter-milk. Drop it into small cakes on a buttered tin, and bake in a *very hot oven*; a few minutes will do them; they should be puffy and crisp. Eat with butter like any other roll.

Another recipe, to be used when butter-milk is unattainable, is the following:—One quart of flour, two heaping table-spoonfuls of lard or butter, two cups of sweet milk, one small tea-spoonful of soda, two of cream of tartar, one salt-spoonful of salt. Rub the soda and cream of tartar into the flour, and sift all together before they are wet; then put in the salt; the lard must be rubbed in quickly and lightly; lastly pour in the milk; make into dough as quickly as possible, since handling injures the rolls. The dough must be *very soft*; if stiff, add more milk. Roll out lightly and quickly on a well-floured board, and cut into cakes at least half an inch thick, with a round paste-cutter. Bake in a quick oven. Instead of rolling these, you may take a table-spoon dipped in flour, and cut pieces from the dough and drop them on to a tin, putting them quite close together like bakers' square rolls. Butter-milk may be used for these instead of cream of tartar, if handy.

Waffles are a very popular breakfast dainty. I am not sure whether waffle-irons are easily obtained in England; but I give the recipe on the chance that so good and pretty an article of food may find favour in some families.

Take two cups of milk, two eggs, three cups of flour, one tea-spoonful of cream of tartar, half the quantity

of soda, one salt-spoonful of salt, one table-spoonful of butter melted. Sift the cream of tartar into the flour with the salt; dissolve the soda in a little hot water; beat the eggs very well; add the flour the last thing. Grease the waffle-iron well when it is very hot, then fill and bake.

If you have no iron, grease a large frying-pan, make it *hot*, and pour the batter from a jug on it, to form small cakes about the size of crumpets, which they resemble, only that they should be no thicker than a pan-cake. Serve hot and with plenty of butter.

Scones are well known in Scotland, but easy as they are to make, I do not remember that they were made in the house in England; but, like the butter-milk rolls, they are so quickly made that they are especially useful for breakfast, and will be much liked. Flour, one pound; carbonate of soda, a *small* tea-spoonful; a pint of sharp butter-milk, or sour milk, and a little salt. Mix into slack dough; if stiff, add more butter-milk, as the more nearly the dough approaches to thick batter, the better the scones will be. Put a quantity of flour on the board, or, being so wet, the dough may stick; flour the rolling-pin well, and roll out part of the dough at a time, half an inch thick; cut into three-cornered pieces or squares, and put immediately on to the frying-pan, which you must have ready hot and floured, not greased; raise it from the fire so that they may not burn before being cooked through; when brown on one side, turn them. These take about ten or fifteen minutes to cook. They are good hot or cold, with butter or cheese.

I have to repeat that everything of which soda forms a part must be put into the oven, or otherwise cooked, as quickly as possible after that ingredient is added, and the oven must be *very hot*. Although sour milk or butter-milk is by far the best thing to use for such articles as I have given, yet their place may be taken by cream of tartar and sweet milk in all cases.

Before quitting the subject of butter-milk, I will give another use to which it is put, that is in the making of a cheese which is much liked by many, and will be by all who like cream-cheese, which it much resembles.

Set a pan of butter-milk, or sour milk, or both together, where it will get hot enough for the whey to rise, but don't let it boil. Pour off the whey and hang it in a coarse calico bag to drip for some hours without squeezing. When dry, salt the curd to taste, and with the hand work in enough butter or cream to mould it into small round cheeses or balls. To be eaten in the same way as cream-cheese.

American ladies excel in sweet dishes, confectionery, preserves, and cakes, which they usually make themselves.

Of cakes there is an almost endless variety. I mention only a few of those made with soda and cream of tartar, such as may be easily bought in London under the names of "Victoria cake," "Queen cake," "sandwich cake," but which no one without a professed cook seems to dream they could make for themselves. To those who like a dainty cake the

following recipes will be found acceptable; they are inexpensive, easy to make, and excellent to eat.

Every one who reads this perhaps has eaten, or tried from politeness to eat, "soda cake," and remembers with a qualm the soapy mouthful. Even at its best it is strongly alkaline, crumbly, and suggestive of an overstrained economy.

Soda and fat of any kind make soap, and the soda, introduced as we do it in England, has nothing better to do when near its affinity than to fall into the natural course of things and become soap—to the utter ruin of the cake.

"Jelly cake," for which I am about to give the recipe, is familiar to Londoners under the name of "German cake" or "sandwich cake." But as it seems made only by confectioners, I am not sure that the tins for it could be easily got unless they were made to order. The cake is baked in two, or more often in America three, layers, and as all must bake at once, three round "jelly cake tins" are necessary; they are flat, round pans, only half an inch deep, and about the size of a pudding plate. It is made thus:

Materials required:—One scant breakfast-cup of sugar, a full breakfast-cup of flour, three eggs, *half* a tea-spoonful of soda, a tea-spoonful of cream of tartar.

Beat the eggs and sugar together for ten minutes. Mix the cream of tartar with the flour thoroughly, and sift them to the beaten eggs and sugar; stir just enough to mix well; then dissolve the half-tea-spoonful of soda in a table-spoonful or less of boiling water, add it to the rest and mix it quickly in.

If you have the proper tins to bake in layers, put equal parts on each of the three, spreading it over very *thinly* and evenly, and put into a *hot* oven quickly. If the oven is hot enough it will not take more than five minutes to bake; directly it takes a pale brown tinge it is done; take it out, spread two layers, about a quarter of an inch thick, with currant jelly or any jam you have—strawberry or raspberry is best—place one layer on the other, then put the unspread layer on the top, and sift white sugar over it. Any batter left may be used for drop-cakes. Or two two-layer cakes can be made, requiring four tins. If the layer tins are not to be had, bake in a large, shallow, tin baking-pan, spread the jam thinly over it when done, and roll up like a roly-poly pudding.

As regards the rolled cake, it must not remain in the oven one instant after it is done, or it will get crisp at the edges and not roll well.

I may add that whenever sour milk or butter-milk is given in recipes, sweet milk may take its place if more convenient, but in that case cream of tartar must always be added, and always just *twice* the quantity that there is of soda, and in measuring the latter be careful to use *less* rather than more than the given quantity; of cream of tartar more rather than less.

A cup is to be understood as a moderate breakfast-cup, about half a pint; sugar must always be white, crushed loaf or granulated.

I have said nothing about flavouring, which may be left to individual taste.