

## AMERICAN BREAKFASTS.

**I**T is related of a newly-arrived German lady staying at the Astor House, New York, when that was considered a large hotel, that the first morning of her stay, on being handed the bill of fare for the day, she put it aside, and, supposing some few of the articles set down were ready, said, "Bring me all you have ready." The astounded waiter disappeared, and shortly he returned, cleared a huge space all round her, and she quickly saw herself the centre of a multitude of small dishes. She found she had unconsciously ordered something like the following:—

## MILK, FROM E. B. WESLEY'S FARM.

COFFEE, CHOCOLATE, GREEN AND BLACK TEAS.

## BREAD.

Muffins. Hot Rolls. Cora Bread. Graham Rolls.

Pan. Twist, Graham, and Boston Brown Bread.

Boiled Hominy. Fried Hominy. Butter and Dry Toast.

Cream Toast. Buckwheat Cakes. Indian Cakes. Rice Cakes.

## HEALTH FOOD.

FROM HEALTH FOOD COMPANY.

Pearled Wheat. Pearled Oats. Granulated Wheat.

## BROILED.

Beefsteak, plain, with onions or tomatoes.

Mutton Chops, plain, with onions or tomatoes. Calf's Liver.

Breakfast Bacon. Sugar-cured Ham.

Veal Cutlets. Pig's Feet. Stewed Kidneys. Frizzled Beef.

Scotch Herring. Fresh Fish. Salt Mackerel.

Bluefish. Smoked Salmon.

Salt Codfish, Shaker fashion.

## FRIED.

Siefred and Bro., Geneva Country Sausages.

Ham and Eggs. Scallops. Fresh Codfish, with pork.

Veal Cutlets. Corned Beef Hash. Pan Fish. Codfish Balls.

## POTATOES.

Stewed. Fried. Baked. Lyonnaise.

## EGGS.

Fried. Scrambled. Boiled.

Ome'ettes, plain, or with Parsley, Tomatoes, Onions, Ham, Kidneys, or Cheese.

## TRIPE.

Fried. Broiled. Stewed.

## OYSTERS.

Raw. Fried. Stewed. Pickled. Stewed Clams. Clam Fritters.

## COLD.

Boiled Ham. Roast Beef. Corned Beef. Lamb.

## FRUIT.

An Extra Charge will be made for any dishes ordered that are not on the Bill.

Meals, Lunches, Dessert, or Fruit sent to Rooms will be charged Extra.

Full Price charged for Children occupying seats at the Public Table.

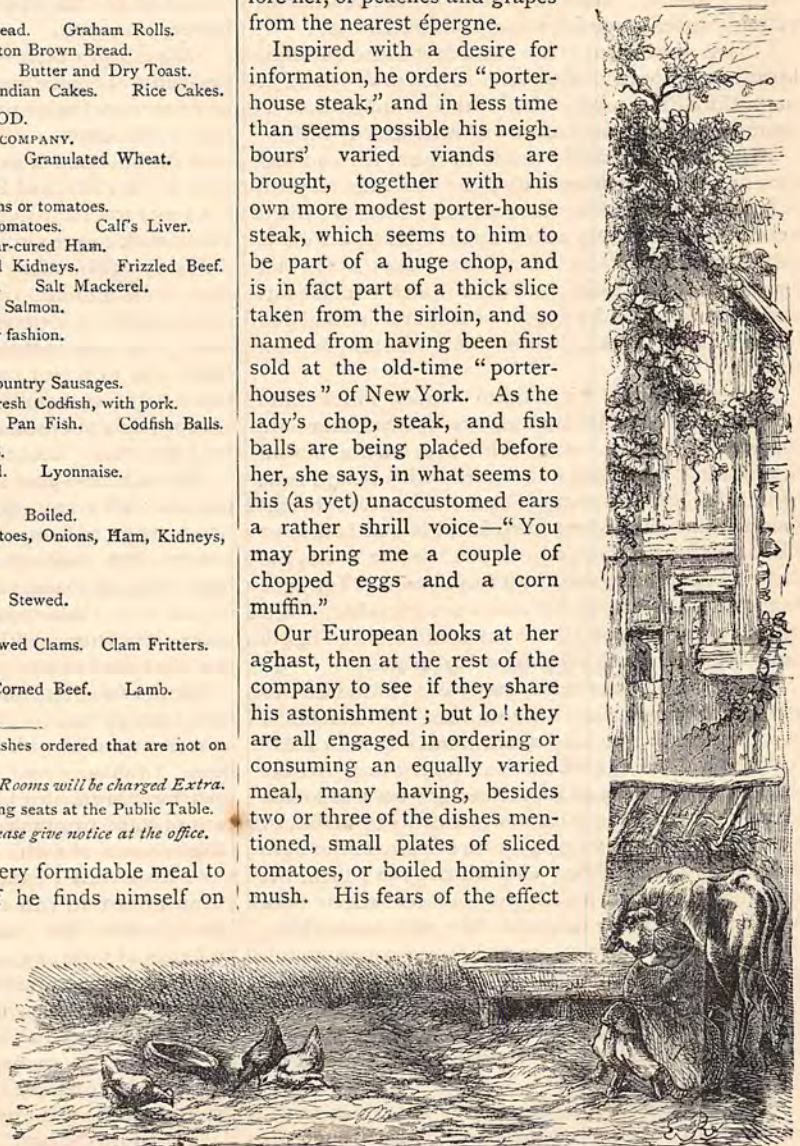
Guests having friends at meals will please give notice at the office.

An American breakfast is a very formidable meal to the average European, who, if he finds himself on his arrival in a New York boarding-house, will probably be assailed, as soon as he has taken his seat in the morning, with "Porter-house steak, pork steak, mutton chops, cod-fish balls, and hash," rattled off with the glibness of habit. Seeing the long table whereat

he and some score others are seated has dishes of fruit down it at intervals, with potatoes baked and fried (save the mark! the American word "wilted" will better describe them) in addition to the usual bread-and-butter he is accustomed to see at breakfast, he will perhaps fancy he has lost his reckoning, and that luncheon is the meal about to be discussed; but no, the odour of coffee is prevalent, and so while he wonders what "porter-house steak" may be, he hears with amazement his next neighbour—perhaps a fragile flower of a girl in the daintiest morning dress—order steak, chop, and cod-fish balls, at the same time helping herself to a section of melon from the dish of that fruit, with its glittering ice, before her, or peaches and grapes from the nearest épergne.

Inspired with a desire for information, he orders "porter-house steak," and in less time than seems possible his neighbours' varied viands are brought, together with his own more modest porter-house steak, which seems to him to be part of a huge chop, and is in fact part of a thick slice taken from the sirloin, and so named from having been first sold at the old-time "porter-houses" of New York. As the lady's chop, steak, and fish balls are being placed before her, she says, in what seems to his (as yet) unaccustomed ears a rather shrill voice—"You may bring me a couple of chopped eggs and a corn muffin."

Our European looks at her aghast, then at the rest of the company to see if they share his astonishment; but lo! they are all engaged in ordering or consuming an equally varied meal, many having, besides two or three of the dishes mentioned, small plates of sliced tomatoes, or boiled hominy or mush. His fears of the effect



of such a breakfast on the partakers of it are very much diminished however, as the meal goes on, by perceiving that although every one seems to order a variety of eatables, they make no attempt to consume them all; they "sample," as it were, everything, and leave the rest to enrich what is here called the "swill-barrel"—with us, the hog-wash.

One peculiarity of this excessive variety is, that it is found in all classes of boarding-houses, from the low-priced one to the highest, the difference being in the quality of the articles. The cheaper houses, instead of the expensive porter-house steak, substitute the cheap and profitable round steak—*i.e.*, buttock steak; but certain features are never absent. Steak and hash are inevitable, and changes are rung among the viands, on mutton chops, sausages, pork chops, fish balls, or fish—among breads, on corn muffins, "biscuit," waffles, and buckwheat, Indian, or flannel cakes, boiled hominy, cracked wheat, or mush, although latterly oatmeal porridge has grown into favour.

I have mentioned the boarding-house breakfast because—although Americans do not *all* board, as some English people think—the boarding-house is certainly a prominent feature of American city life.

The American family breakfast is not such a ponderous meal as it is where every one wants the full worth of his money, whether he consumes it or not; but it nevertheless is a very substantial foundation for the day's work. Here, as everywhere, steak is a very general breakfast dish, and even in small families it is often accompanied by eggs, or hash, or fish balls, and hominy, rice, or mush, besides hot "biscuit," or corn muffin.

During winter, "hot cakes"—under which head come buckwheat, Indian meal, or wheaten cakes—are served. These are eaten with butter alone, or with the meat, or are taken afterwards with honey, maple syrup, or golden syrup. These cakes are brought round at intervals during breakfast, hot and hot, some half-dozen at a time, and any left on the plates are carried out and replaced with fresh ones. They are a very distinct feature of the American breakfast, which in all other respects is a compound of the English meal and the French *déjeuner à la fourchette*.

As some of your readers may like to introduce this feature of transatlantic life into their own families, I give recipes for making several kinds of "hot cakes." A North Country girdle is the proper thing to bake them on, but a piece of iron reaching from hob to hob may be used if the girdle is not easily obtainable, or even a stout, large frying-pan, care being taken to have either very hot, rubbed well with dry salt; then, the last thing, greased with a piece of beef suet or pork fat, only sufficiently to prevent the cake from sticking. When the pan or girdle is quite hot, put a spoonful of batter on it for each cake, allowing them to form into round thin cakes, not near enough to run into each other. Hot cakes should be laid *one on the other* on a very hot plate, and handed round. They should look like very thin crumpets.

*Flannel Cakes.*—One quart of milk, three table-spoonfuls of bakers' or home-made yeast, one table-

spoonful of butter melted, two eggs well beaten, one tea-spoonful of salt, and flour enough to make a batter rather thicker than for Yorkshire pudding. The ingredients should all be mixed over-night, and set as bread sponge. In the morning try one on the pan; if it runs too much, add flour; if it will not spread into a very thin pancake, add a little warm milk or water. This rule applies to all girdle-cakes.

*Buckwheat Cakes.*—One quart of buckwheat flour, four table-spoonfuls of yeast, one tea-spoonful of salt, one handful of flour, and a table-spoonful of treacle; warm water enough to make a thin batter. Beat all together very well, and set in a crock over-night in a warm place. Next morning thin, if necessary, with warm water, and add a salt-spoonful of soda, dissolved in hot water, or sufficient to counteract any sourness there may be in the batter. Buckwheat cakes take but a minute or two to bake, if the girdle is hot; they should be as thin as possible, and eaten with butter, honey, or syrup.

*Stale Bread Cakes.*—One quart of milk, two breakfast-cups of stale bread-crumbs, one good handful of flour, one table-spoonful of butter melted, three eggs well beaten, a little salt. Work the bread and milk till smooth, stir in the butter and eggs, flour, and salt; if too thick, add a little more milk. These cakes are very nice, but require careful cooking, as they are apt to stick to the girdle.

*Indian Meal Cakes, or Flapjacks.*—One quart of sour or butter-milk, two eggs beaten light, salt, one tea-spoonful of carbonate of soda dissolved in hot water, one table-spoonful of butter or lard melted, and half a cup of flour; meal enough to make a thinnish batter. If sweet milk is used, as it may be, add two tea-spoonfuls of cream of tartar, or one of tartaric acid, the last thing. Bake thin.

*Rice Cakes.*—These are very delicious, and will be popular with most people. One cup of cold boiled rice, one pint of flour, one tea-spoonful of salt, two eggs beaten light, milk to make a rather thick batter; beat well, and bake on the girdle, as flannel cakes; or stir in a table-spoonful of melted butter or lard, make the batter a little thinner with milk, and bake in a hot oven in patty-pans.

Recipes for that American speciality, "hot biscuit," have been given in a former article, but I will insert another to make with brown flour, or, as it is called here, "Graham flour." Take three cups of the flour used for brown bread, one cup of white flour, three cups of milk, two table-spoonfuls of lard, one heaped table-spoonful of white sugar, one salt-spoonful of salt, one tea-spoonful (scant) of soda, two tea-spoonfuls of cream of tartar; mix the soda and cream of tartar into the white flour, then sift it to the brown, rubbing all lumps of soda or acid through the sieve, then rub in the lard and sugar, lastly the milk; mix as lightly and *quickly* as possible; the dough should be *very* soft; make into cakes half an inch thick, and bake in a very hot oven. The secret in having very light flaky "biscuit" is to handle it as little as possible, and get it quickly into a *hot* oven.

The word "biscuit," by the way, gives no idea to

English ears of this breakfast bread, being as unlike English biscuits, which are here called "crackers," as possible; they are, in fact, a sort of roll, or unsweetened bun, and very convenient and good, especially for country families who are not fond of stale bread.

One more recipe, for "pop-overs," and my gleanings from the farinaceous part of the American breakfast-table are concluded.

*Pop-overs.*—Take one pint of milk, as much flour as will make a thick batter, then beat the yolks of three eggs, stir them in, with a little salt, and a table-spoonful of butter melted. Then beat the whites till they are like snow, stir them gently into the batter, last of all add a tea-spoonful of sugar, a salt-spoonful of soda dissolved in a little hot water, and two salt-spoonfuls of cream of tartar (unless you mixed the batter with sour or butter-milk, in which case omit the acid). Bake in patty-pans, or small tins or cups, in a very hot oven. As their name indicates, they should be very light, literally "pop-overs." They are eaten with butter or meat, and are exceedingly good.

A very general breakfast dish, and a fruitful source of pleasantry to American wags, is the all-prevailing "hash." By some would-be wits you are solemnly invited to partake of "a little of this 'mystery,' madam?" And many are the stories told of its component parts, as the Londoner jokes about the sausages he yet enjoys. Every one eats hash, very few confess they like it; it is in this unthrifty land a dish of convenience. The cheap boarding-houses—"hash-houses," as they are dubbed—are said to bestow the ill-reputed dish too liberally upon their patrons; but people who board are, as a rule—which has many exceptions, be it understood—a very exacting and dissatisfied class, and the more so the less they pay.

Hash, however, in its best form—that is, as served in private families—is a very savoury and enjoyable dish, and also a very convenient one: not, as is often the case here, as the destination of a fine joint, only perhaps just cut on its first appearance at table, and then chopped up for hash, but as a means of using to advantage any odds and ends there may be—the more *odd* the better for a savoury result. There are several ways of making hash in vogue, of which I give the following:—

*Hash made from Boiled (or Corned) Beef*—a very favourite dish with Americans.—Two parts of lean cold boiled beef, chopped fine; one part boiled potatoes, also chopped; put both into a clean stew-pan, with a very little milk—only enough to prevent it drying—stir occasionally till very hot, but not all brown, add a large piece of butter, and season; when the butter is mixed, the "hash" is ready to serve, either upon toast or in a mound, garnished with sippets of toast. This may be varied by adding a little chopped parsley, or onion; but the orthodox "corned beef hash," dear to Americans, is made without any such sophistication.

*Roast Beef Hash.*—Chop some cold roast beef with half as much potato, a little fried onion if liked, and

moisten with gravy, or with a good piece of butter. This may be served directly it is hot through, or left in the frying-pan until it has become crisp and brown on the under-side, then turned out flat on a dish. This hash admits of infinite variety by the addition of a little parboiled celery chopped, or parsley, mushrooms, ham, or a table-spoonful of any cold boiled vegetable, such as carrot, turnip, or cabbage. Care must be taken, however, not to introduce any *raw* vegetable, even onion, as the hash takes so few minutes to heat through that the vegetable does not get time to cook.

Almost as prevalent as hash, and unaccountably more popular, is that most American of dishes, "cod-fish balls." I give the recipe because, although to many they will seem rank and coarse, to others, and especially those who are fond of dried salt fish, such as Scotch ling, unsmoked haddock, &c., they will be agreeable. For, like caviare, those who like it, like it very much indeed, while it stinketh in the nostrils of those who don't.

*Fish-balls* are made in this country of dried salt cod, put to soak in warm water early in the evening, the water changed the last thing at night, again in the morning, and the salt washed off. Then it should be plunged into *very* cold water to make it firm, then set on the fire with lukewarm water, and boiled for half an hour.

In England I imagine the salt cod *undried* will be found so much more delicate, that the above directions have only been inserted for those who prefer the flavour of the dried fish, or who are favoured with bales of salt ling from Scotland, and seek variety in the manner of using it. Take, then, as much cold boiled cod-fish as you need, pick it to pieces with a fork till it is in fine shreds, add an equal bulk of mashed potato, make it into a thick paste by adding a lump of butter and sweet milk, and one or two beaten eggs, according to the quantity of fish. Flour your hands and make the mixture into balls or cakes. Drop them into *boiling* lard or good dripping, and fry a light golden brown.

One very pleasant feature of American breakfasts is the fashion, now becoming general, of introducing fruit at that meal. In the South this has always been a custom, from the days of early strawberries to those of late peaches, melons, and grapes. Southern tables always glow with fruit. Of late years Northern families have taken to the fashion, and now, with most people of means, no season of the year finds their table without that delicious food. Strawberries, raspberries (in this country used as a dessert fruit), currants, blackberries (American blackberries, as large as pigeons' eggs, are a luscious fruit), plums, peaches, melons of all kinds, and grapes in great variety, follow in opulent succession till late fall, when bananas, plantains, and oranges carry us through the winter until San Francisco sends her early consignments of that berry fruit of which old Izaak Walton said, "Doubtless God might have made a better berry, but doubtless He never had."

CATHERINE OWEN.