

ON BOILING EGGS.



ANNIE W. ALLEN writes to say: I read with much interest the exhaustive article by Phillis Browne on "Eggs, and How to Cook Them," published in the current April number of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, and I quite agree with her that there is more culinary art in boiling an egg than most cooks wot of. My present object is to supplement her useful remarks and directions by narrating, as far as I can in his own words, the experience of the Rev. Dr. Badger, the famous traveller and Orientalist, on the art of boiling eggs as practised in the East. He said, "It was in the year 1844 that for the third time, accompanied on this occasion by my wife, I crossed the Euphrates at Birejik, where, in 1836, I first met the late gallant General Chesney, in charge of the Euphrates and Tigris Expedition, and after a ride of an hour or more had my tent pitched close to a Turcoman encampment. Our Syrian servant Habib, a most excellent caterer in such localities, soon made his way into their canvas dwellings and returned laden with a couple of fine fowls and a basket of splendid eggs. He had already rigged a rude stove of stones near the entrance to our tent, when the sun became suddenly obscured, and on looking out upon the desert I noticed that the deep shadow was caused by an immense flight of long-pinioned grouse then migrating eastward. Seizing my gun I sallied forth hurriedly, and on passing the tent-door noticed a saucepan full of eggs, apparently on the boil. Returning ten or twelve minutes later with an empty bag—the cautious birds soared too high for my shot—I observed the identical saucepan, with its galaxy of eggs, still simmering on the fire. Calling to Habib, I inquired whether the eggs were the same as those which I saw when I left the tent. On his answering in the affirmative, I remarked, 'Then we are to have hard-boiled eggs for dinner to-day.' 'Not so,' he answered; 'and as you have hitherto made no complaint on that score, rest assured you will have none to make to-day.' In due course, the eggs were served in a dish, and cutting one through with a knife I found that while the white was thoroughly cooked and fixed, the yolk was soft and quite ready to flow into the plate before me; and, as to the taste—a peculiarity which I had not noticed before—it was most delicious. The white was utterly devoid of the raw taste of half-boiled eggs, and the yolk had a mellow flavour peculiarly its own. On asking Habib to describe to me his successful process, he forthwith put another dozen of eggs into the saucepan and allowed them to boil fully ten minutes. He then took out six of these and immersed them for three or four seconds in a basin of cold water, remarking, 'You will find this ready for present consumption, the remaining six, which I intend to be hard and to be eaten as your luncheon while in the saddle to-morrow, I leave as they are, not dipping them in the cold water.' Dr. Badger told me that he had himself repeatedly surprised English people with the simplicity and perfect success of this process; and I can add, from my own experience, that it has scarcely been less successful with me. When it has failed, I was led to the conclusion that the eggs were not fresh. Whereupon Dr. Badger mentioned that Habib had strongly insisted on the eggs being fresh when boiled, as he boiled them for immediate use, with the additional souse into cold water. Perchance "Phillis Browne" will give the process a fair trial, and be able to add her testimony to mine as to the simple and admirable Oriental mode of boiling eggs. *Ex oriente lux!*

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MUSIC.

BESSIE.—If this be your first attempt at writing a hymn tune, we can only advise you to "try, try again." Such compositions are, after all, merely exercises, and are worth little.

ADMIRER OF BEETHOVEN.—1. We could not undertake to say that you will derive benefit from the use of the instrument you name. 2. See our article respecting the hands, entitled "Lissom Hands and Pretty Feet," page 348, vol. i. No wonder your uncle objects to so much playing. The piano has become one of the greatest of nuisances. Students, writers, invalids, and people with either sensitive nerves or sensitive ears, or possessing a cultivated taste in music, are worried to death with the practising of neighbours—above all, when it is carried on in the adjoining houses on each side at the same time!

EVA.—The habit of playing for others will tend to lessen your nervousness. Perhaps you attempt pieces rather beyond your powers of execution. Such pieces should be kept for private practice. Our contributors are not expected to reply to questions. In prescribing a tonic a doctor should see his patient.

ART.

STAPLETON.—The principal parts of drapery are painted on the plain glass, and such minor items as lace trimmings, jewellery, and ribbons, are painted on the photograph. Scour the latter very slightly.

FLAKEWHITE.—Lay a coating of Roberson's medium over the blank canvas before painting, and let it dry. Mix the same medium on the palette with every colour, but sparingly, because if too much be applied the colour becomes too thin.

NEW MALDON.—We have read your article on painting Christmas cards, but find no new suggestions in it, and the bevelled card enclosed has been sold in London for some time past.

CANELLA.—Wash the painting carefully with soap and water only. 2. The gloves are worn, but not the shoes.

STECHEPALME must inquire for the medium at crystal-leum shops.

MOUNTAIN ASH.—Pottery decorated with paintings in water-colours cannot be washed. Use oils on terracotta—they do not rub off; but if you require the article for use, you should paint it in china-painting colours, and then have it properly fired. There is a new and better method now discovered, whereby electricity has been employed, not merely to render the designs permanent on the exterior surface, but to make the colours penetrate the china or marble, and show the design on the opposite side.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.—1. The engraving you name would have to be valued by an expert; so many points have to be taken into account to determine such a question, and it should be seen. 2. A Basket Bible, dated 1738, published in London, is worth eight shillings. You do not give the date of yours, nor where published, so we cannot give you accurate information respecting this copy.

DUCHESS.—We had heard of your way of making raised flowers in imitation of barbotine, by cutting out the petals in stiff crinolette muslin, sewing them together, and then covering them with plaster of Paris; but we think it is not nearly so good as the gutta percha process, as the plaster is apt to crack, and you cannot mould it to shape with the same facility. Unquestionably the best plan is to soak gutta percha in hot water, cut it to shape, mould it with the fingers, and affix it with glue to the jar. Keep the water always hot, but not boiling, and dip the gutta percha in, to soften it, constantly.

PAINT BRUSH.—1. The address of Miss Mayor's Art Students' Home at Rome is 38, Via degli Artiste. 2. The name "Jerusalem," signifies "the abode of peace." The population, consisting of about 15,500, is one-fourth Christian.

YE ONLY DAUGHTER.—China paints are quite distinct from oil-colours, and the work is perfectly different likewise. China must be fired after having been painted—that means, that the colours must be baked into it; otherwise they will not bear washing. See articles on china painting, pages 74, and 340, vol. i.

ANNIE A.—You can employ copal varnish if a shiny surface be required; but with hard varnish if you only wish to preserve the painting.

A LOVING SISTER.—The sketches you send are creditable to one who has received no instruction in the art of drawing, and we think it would be worth while for you to take lessons at a school of art.

A LOVER OF THE G. O. P.—The surface of the card which you sent us was too shiny to take any paint. Wash it over with water gold size or white of egg. Mix all the colours used with Chinese white and water gold size.

CHATTE.—You will require oil-colours for painting the tobacco pouch, mixed with megilp. For instructions in painting on satin, see page 66, vol. iv. If you have some acquaintance with the art of painting already, the work in question will present no difficulties.

ROTHA.—We are much obliged for your letter, but should recommend a little further acquaintance with your spelling-book.

EDUCATIONAL.

ANASTASIA.—There is no opening for governesses and other teachers at present in our Australian colonies.

TROUBLED ONE.—We advise you to get a good atlas, and to study one map daily for a week until thoroughly acquainted with it, and procure Milner's "Universal Geography" (revised by Keith Johnston, 56, Paternoster-row, E.C.). Also, read a chapter daily of English history, which will be a good beginning of your home course of study. You can procure Milner's "History of England" likewise at our office. Your letter is fairly well expressed.

VINAIGRETTE should write to the secretary, College of Preceptors, 42, Queen-square, Bloomsbury, W.C.

QUEN.—1. We have no doubt at all that many clever people fail in competitive examinations; in fact, the latter cannot be considered a test of ability at all. 2. Bedding-out plants are the best; they save so much time and trouble to the gardener.

EVADE.—Most of the ranunculaceae, or "crow-foot" tribe, to which the anemones belong, are found to possess acrid and poisonous properties if eaten, and some produce wounds if applied to the skin. The celery-leaved crowfoot and the lesser spearwort are used in the Hebrides to produce blisters; but they are both objectionable, as they may produce sores difficult to heal.

EUGENIE M. SCHOPIN.—We are happy to give your assurance that corporal punishment is absolutely prohibited in all French schools, and that if such an abuse ever crept into some solitary private institution of the kind, the occurrence was in direct defiance of national opinion and prohibitory rules.

B. BURGIN.—Apply to the Civil Service Commissioners, at their office in Cannon-row, W., for the printed prospectuses with reference to the Post Office clerkships. It is not necessary to send a stamp in asking a question of us, as we do not write private letters to our correspondents.

LITTLE DORRIT.—Read books of research, travels, natural history, and biographies. Dr. Eadie's "Bible Cyclopaedia" would likewise be interesting and valuable to you.

TIGER.—We have not as yet heard of any female engineers or architects. We think that practical engineering, and that amongst working men, would be most unsuitable for women.

ELDEST OF TEN.—Your writing is neat and legible, and might pass in competition for a clerkship in the Post Office, but the "i's" must be properly crossed. See our directions for cleaning in our articles entitled "The Fairy of the Family," in the numbers for August and September, 1883.

MISCELLANEOUS.

E. C. R.—The verses, "An Old Woman's Love Song," show good feeling, but need a good deal of correction, as the lines do not all correspond in length or beat with their fellows respectively. Count the syllables on your fingers and beat out the measure.

ANXIOUSLY WAITING.—It is quite out of the question that we should prescribe for you. Of such complaints you should only speak to a medical man, not the editor of a magazine. A change into some country or seaside place would do you some good, but not till cured by suitable medical treatment.

AN AFFLICTED ONE.—Certainly, tell the man to whom you are engaged the truth about the illness that you once had. It would be dishonourable to conceal it, and would make unhappiness between you after your marriage. Do what is right at all costs. It is the best way to win his esteem.

MAY.—It is against our rule to give private addresses. Make application at some hospital.

WOOD ANEMONE.—Consult our indexes about the care of the hands, and read the articles by "Medicus" and our answers to your question given to other correspondents.

LEONA C.—If it would amuse you to write an account of your experiences amongst the ants, we also should be pleased to read about them, but could not promise to publish them.

VESEVIUS.—Consult a doctor about your eyes. It is very possible that their weak condition may result more or less from the state of your health.

MIZPAH.—Certain small beetles make a ticking like a watch. This is, we imagine, what you hear.

AN ENGLISH GIRL.—Many passages in the Holy Scriptures tell us that there is "one God and Father of all," and as many tell of the second and third Divine Persons, and the mysterious union of one with another is frequently named, as in those passages in which our Lord says, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. . . . I and my Father are one" (St. John x. 30). Read St. John i. and 1 St. John v. 7. Are not all Christians commanded by our Lord to be baptised "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"? St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

ORANGE and APPLE.—When a thread of silk comes out of the mouth of the silkworms they are about to spin. If they have plenty of mulberry leaves they should not have dandelion nor lettuce leaves.

F. J. G.—The verses have much merit. We regret we are not able to use them. Under our rules, all compositions must be certified by parent, guardian, or minister, and the age of the writer must be stated.

FAUST.—See last part of "The Fairy of the Family," p. 807, vol. iv.