

The dormitories of L'Institution Legrand were peculiarly comfortless. Long and narrow, like a hospital ward, a strip of worn carpet between each bed, the whole lighted by a lamp swinging from the ceiling, a kind of glass vessel half-filled with oil, where three wicks flickered and spluttered. My dormitory contained seventeen beds. On one side of me lay Hélène, who, with bated breath, was giving a rapid sketch of her visit to London to her next neighbour; on the other side lay Irène. Mademoiselle Berthe, whose duty it was to see us safely to bed, had escaped for a few moments' peace and quiet after the toil of the day, but even night could not relieve her of her responsibilities, and too soon she was forced to return, worn out and utterly dispirited, to creep into her narrow bed at the further end of the apartment, whence presently, in an angry voice, she ordered complete silence under pain of certain punishments unknown to my inexperience.

The excitement of the day had given way to a terrible depression. There seemed such a lack of sympathy in this noisy mass of girls, each one intent on her own amusement, that I fancied my schooldays passed amongst them would be joyless and cheerless. I had raised myself in my bed, and with tearful eyes gazed down the bare room. The windows, high up near the ceiling, looked on to the courtyard; the high blank walls alone were visible from the street. No human sounds from the busy city without pierced their gloomy consistence, save once only when the silence was broken by the faint chimes of distant church bells tolling the hour. My young heart ached with such an infinite yearning for home, with such an overpowering sense of desolation, that, unable any longer to control my feelings, I buried my face in the pillow, and gave way to my grief in a very agony of passionate tears.

A soft touch came on my arm as I lay there. I turned surprised. Leaning across from the next bed was Irène, her delicate face lighted by the tender love gleaming in her dark Southern eyes.

"Good night, Princess," she whispered, caressingly. "If you are shedding tears of regret, of loneliness, remember your coming here has brought happiness to one sad little heart, which for three years has nursed an unshared sorrow; that your loving words have melted the hard resolves and cruel thoughts brooding there, so that they can never rise again. To-morrow will break in promise for us both. We are setting out on a new track; don't let us take pain with us."

I leant forward and kissed the pleading face. "Good-night, Irène," I replied. "You shall never look back; we will go forward together."

She pressed my hand, but said nothing. After a while I slept, and dreamt I went home and took Irène with me; that all the time I could scarcely escape from the searching gaze of her wonderful eyes, which grew larger and larger. I started and woke—a maid was walking up and down the dormitory swinging a huge bell, while the girls were tumbling out of bed as quickly as possible.

"Six o'clock," laughed Hélène, rubbing her eyes, and I, half asleep, followed her to the dressing-room.

At seven we had prayers; a mere farce, where each girl took it in turn to gabble a few phrases, whether in French or Latin I could never discover. At eight we breakfasted.

Such an un-English meal!

Soup made with onions, a cake of dry chocolate, some bread, and a cup of milk.

At nine o'clock school began. I was only to take private French lessons until able to join the classes, which, of course, I could not at first attempt, though I felt convinced I should completely outdo the girls in music. Thus, when during recreation hours a concert

was proposed, I readily acquiesced. As a stranger, they politely requested me to open the entertainment. Full of confidence, I sat down and commenced playing a brilliant piece full of intricate passages. However, a few moments later, I could not fail to perceive sundry shrugs of the shoulders, and other signs of disapprobation at my performance. Furious at the depreciatory conduct of my audience, yet perfectly satisfied with my own execution, I rose hastily, begging another girl to take my place. Alas! my foolish dreams of surpassing those French girls received a sudden, rude shock, and my musical capabilities, hitherto so highly estimated, appeared both feeble and insignificant in comparison with their efficiency.

Days grew into weeks. I was accustomed to—nay, happy in my new life. Hélène and I had drifted apart without any tangible reason, and she had become one with her compatriots. There was no apparent difference in their treatment of me, yet in a sense I still felt that Irène and I stood alone. I loved the child as though she had been a little sister entrusted to my care; and Irène—all the strong feeling she had held in curb during the three years of her dreary stay in Paris among the uncongenial companions, who, pandering to the favour of their Head, had ignored and ill-treated the child on account of her poverty—all the loving, unselfish thoughts of a noble nature seemed to have found vent in the intense affection she lavished on me.

(To be continued.)

EGGS: AND HOW TO COOK THEM.

By PHILLIS BROWNE.

It is said that there are six hundred different ways of cooking eggs. If this be so, I do not know them. I have a great respect for eggs, and I am acquainted with a good many different methods of preparing them, but not so many as this. Eggs are very nutritious articles of food, and they seem to be appreciated all over the world. They are very largely consumed in England, and it is said that besides those which are produced at home, about eighteen millions of eggs are imported into Great Britain from foreign parts, every quarter. Taken weight for weight, they contain as much flesh-forming and heat-giving substances as butcher's meat, while no matter how dear they may be, according to our present notions, they are always cheaper than the cheapest meat. Professor Church, who is a great authority on food and its uses, has told us that it has been calculated that eighteen eggs would contain nutrients sufficient for the various needs of life in an adult man for one day; but that if we wanted to provide the same amount of albumen from such a fruit as the pear, we should have to arrange that the man should consume no less than seventy pounds. This shows us very clearly in what a concentrated form nutriment is contained in an egg, and helps us to form some idea of its value. Eggs have been called perfect food, and it is often said that they furnish all that is required to build up the body. This would be true if we were accustomed to eat the shell, as well as the yolk and white; but this is, of course, not our habit, and consequently, eggs as we eat them are deficient in bone-forming material. Eggs are best when fresh; indeed, people who are accustomed to enjoy new-laid eggs find stale eggs most objectionable.

It is generally understood that there is no culinary process which is so easy of accomplishment as that of boiling an egg, yet we continually find that mistakes are made in it. Some cooks always boil the eggs too hard,

others always leave them watery, and people who prefer eggs hard cannot bear to have them watery; and people who like them just done dislike having them hard. "How is it," says the angry master of the house, as he cracks the shell of his egg at breakfast-time, "that I never can have my egg boiled to my liking?" while poor cook in the kitchen, hearing the grumbles, says under her breath that "Master is so hard to please." The failure is to be explained by the fact that the cook does not use her common-sense; she follows a hard and fast rule, and never remembers that circumstances alter cases. She has been told that an egg must be boiled three minutes, and therefore three minutes is the time she allows, no matter whether the egg is new-laid or stale. Yet even in such a simple affair as boiling an egg there are points which need to be thought of. Thus, a new-laid egg needs to boil four minutes in order to set it lightly; even an egg which has been laid some days, if it is very large in size, may with advantage have three-and-a-half minutes; it is the average "shop egg" which needs three minutes. If an egg is slightly cracked at one end, it should be pricked at the opposite end before being put into the water. An egg which is boiled soft properly, and allowed to go cold, will not become hard by a second boiling. When the shell of the egg is thin, there is a danger that it will break when plunged into boiling water. To prevent this, it is a good plan to put it into cold water, and bring it gently to the boiling point. When the water boils, the egg will be cooked. If a boiled egg is wanted in a sick room, or under exceptional circumstances when it cannot be set on the fire, it may be put in a bowl, quite boiling water may be poured over it to cover it, and a plate may be set on the top to keep in the steam. In from twelve to fifteen minutes it will be done. Eggs are sometimes cooked in this fashion at the breakfast-table.

Poached eggs also are very easily prepared, and very often spoiled. When the yolk is broken in cooking, it generally happens that the egg has been cooked fast, whereas it should be gently dealt with. A little vinegar or lemon-juice put into the water in which the eggs are poached helps to make the white part of the egg whiter. The following is an excellent method of poaching eggs:—Break each egg into a teacup, and quickly turn the cup over into a deep frying-pan or a saucepan of water gently boiling, so that the cup stands bottom upwards in the water with the egg inside. In a few seconds the egg will be set, and the cup can be removed. Serve the eggs on buttered toast, on spinach, or in any other approved fashion.

Fried eggs, according to a great authority on cooking, "are not to be thought of, they are a villainy." If this be so, there is a species of villainy which many honest folks cordially approve. Fried eggs are generally served with bacon or ham, and they are simply eggs poached in a frying-pan in hot liquid bacon fat instead of water. An egg thus cooked becomes thin, hard, and leathery on its outer edges.

I have an uncomfortable sort of feeling that I owe a slight apology to the girls of our cookery class for appearing to instruct such accomplished young ladies as they are on such simple matters as boiling, poaching, and frying eggs. I hope they will forgive me, and understand that I have made these references because I like to begin quite at the beginning of a subject when I enter upon it at all. Besides, there is always the possibility that inexperienced beginners may read what I say, and I have a great sympathy for beginners, and would like to help them if I can. Now, however, I will describe certain ways of cooking eggs, so as to make a variety, and furnish

a change. I have a friend who says that an egg comes perfect from the hand of nature, and that the less we try to improve it the better it is. If he had his way he would have a fresh egg boiled for every Monday's breakfast, boiled fresh egg for Tuesday, and repeat to the end of the week. It would not be very difficult to meet the wishes of this gentleman, but I do not think there are many people who will agree with him. At any rate, the ways in which an egg can be served are so numerous that it is worth while knowing a few of them.

Buttered eggs.—Put an ounce of butter and two tablespoonfuls of milk into a small stewpan, shake the saucepan over the fire till the butter is melted, then break in three eggs. Sprinkle pepper and salt over, and stir quickly and smoothly over a slow fire until the eggs begin to set. At this point take the stewpan off the fire, and keep stirring for two minutes longer. Have ready a slice of toast, turn the eggs upon it, sprinkle chopped parsley over the top and serve. Or if preferred mix the chopped parsley with the eggs, turn the latter upon a dish, and garnish with fried bread or three-cornered pieces of toast.

This very simple and excellent dish is very often a failure. M. Gouffé, in speaking of this, says that non-success arises either from the eggs being too much done or from their not being properly worked. It is necessary to stir with the whisk in all parts of the saucepan to avoid leaving the egg more set in some places than in others. Also, I may add, it is necessary to cook the eggs over a slow fire. Sometimes, in order to secure gentle cooking, it is found advisable to have a hot basin at hand, and to turn the eggs once or twice into this during their preparation. A little practice will, however, soon enable a girl to dispense with this precaution.

Eggs thus prepared are known by various names—as buttered eggs, rummelled eggs, scrambled eggs, and eggs brouillés. Sometimes a little grated Parmesan cheese is sprinkled over them; cooked green peas, asparagus tips, or chopped mushrooms are added to them after the eggs are set and before they are turned on a dish, or a mixture of gravy and milk can be whisked with the eggs instead of milk alone. Sometimes a finely-chopped onion which has been fried in butter and mixed with a spoonful of curry paste is put in with the eggs, which may then be dished with rice boiled as for curry. Whatever change is introduced furnishes the opportunity for a different name being given to the egg. Indeed, when people talk about there being six hundred ways of cooking eggs there is little doubt that they honour every one of these small varieties with a large name all to itself. This signifies little, however; whatever differences are introduced, if only the eggs are properly cooked the dish is sure to be satisfactory, and may be safely recommended.

Eggs on the dish, called also *eggs au plat*, are easily prepared and very good. For this a tinued iron saucer or an earthenware, porcelain, or china dish which will stand the fire is needed, because the eggs are to be sent to table in the dish in which they were cooked. It should not, however, be so large that the eggs will spread out too thinly, but each yolk should lie unbroken, evenly surrounded with white. Melt a little butter in the dish, and sprinkle salt and pepper over. Break into it the required number of eggs and put these on the top of the stove or in a gentle oven till the whites, but not the yolks of the eggs, are set, sprinkle a little more salt and pepper over and serve. This dish also may be varied in two or three ways. If, after being cooked thus, a little tomato sauce is poured over them, they are called *eggs in sunshine*; if Parmesan cheese is sprinkled over them they become *eggs in moonshine*. Occasionally bread-crumbs seasoned with pepper and salt are

placed under and over the eggs, little knobs of butter being distributed here and there among the crumbs. Sometimes a liberal quantity of butter is put under the eggs, and this is allowed to brown before the eggs are broken in. When the latter are set, a little hot vinegar is poured over them.

Eggs and onions, called also *eggs à la tripe*, are very popular with some people. Peel three moderate-sized onions, cut them into slices the eighth of an inch thick, blanch in boiling water for five minutes, and drain the onion on a cloth. Put an ounce and a half of butter in a stewpan, brown the onions lightly in this; add a spoonful of flour, a pint of broth or milk, and a little salt and pepper. Stew the onions gently over a slow fire for about half an hour. Take six hard-boiled eggs, cut the white in thin slices, mix them with the onions, add the yolks whole, taste the gravy to see that it is properly seasoned, and serve.

Perhaps it may be well to remark here that eggs which are to be boiled hard should be boiled ten minutes and no more, or the outside of the yolk will turn black.

Savoury eggs.—Take as many small dariole moulds as there are eggs to be cooked. Butter them inside thickly, and sprinkle over the bottom a savoury mixture made of equal parts of finely-chopped boiled ham and chopped parsley. Break an egg on this, and poach the eggs gently till the white is set in a saucepan of water. Turn the eggs upon small rounds of broiled ham or buttered toast, and serve. The eggs must be gently poached. If quickly cooked, the white, instead of being smooth and soft, will be hard and full of small holes, and this will be a defect.

Forced eggs (a very pretty dish).—Boil four eggs for ten minutes to make them hard, then throw them into cold water. Peel them, and cut them in halves the short way. Take out the yolks, and rub them with one ounce of butter through a hair sieve. Put with the pulp two tablespoonfuls of cooked ham, two tablespoonfuls of mushrooms, one tablespoonful of parsley, a little pepper and salt, and a grain of cayenne. Heat these ingredients through in a stewpan over a gentle fire, beating them well to make a smooth paste. Stuff the empty sections of egg with this mixture, and serve hot on toast, or cold surrounded by chopped aspic jelly and egg yolk, or by a green salad. When the stuffed eggs are served on toast a little of the mixture should be spread upon the toast to make them stand upright. Very delicious sandwiches may be made of this egg mixture.

Egg snow is a very excellent sweet, found nowadays chiefly at old-fashioned tables. It is always popular where it is known, especially amongst juveniles, and is made as follows:—Boil a quart of milk with the grated rind of a lemon and a little sugar. Break six eggs, and divide the whites from the yolks. Beat the whites till so stiff that they can be cut clean through with a knife, and when firm mix in two tablespoonfuls of pounded sugar. When the milk is boiling drop the white of egg into it, a tablespoonful at a time, and do not let so many tablespoonfuls be in at once that they need touch each other. Draw the pan to the side, and simmer the froth gently for four minutes, or till it is firm, and when set on one side turn the shapes gently over. Put them on a sieve to drain, and pour the boiling milk in which they were poached upon the egg yolks, and stir the custard over the fire till it is thick enough to coat the spoon. Sweeten and flavour it, and pass it through a strainer. Put the cold custard into a glass dish, lay the whites on it, and serve, giving a spoonful of the snow and a little custard to each person.

I said a little while ago that eggs would be even more valuable than they are, if we could eat the egg shells as well as the eggs themselves. A very clever old lady whom I

once knew used strongly to advise people who were a little below par, as it is called, to take as a tonic eggs prepared as follows:—Put some fresh eggs whole into a bowl, and cover them with the strained juice of as many lemons. Turn them every day for two or three days until the shell dissolves entirely, as it will do, leaving the skin which lines the shell, and which is the only part which must be thrown away. Remove the specks from the eggs, beat them up, and add a little sugar or honey to sweeten the mixture, and a wineglassful of rum. Bottle the preparation, and administer a wineglassful every morning fasting. I do not know what modern medical men would say to this medicine, but my own opinion of it is, that it is not to be despised.

There is another way of serving an egg which is to be strongly recommended as a strengthening drink for persons in weak health. It may be taken as a restorative between meals. Beat, first separately and afterwards together, the yolk and white of a fresh egg; first, of course, removing the speck. Add by degrees a wineglassful of hot water in which a spoonful of white sugar has been dissolved, and either a tablespoonful of brandy, a wineglassful of sherry, or a cupful of milk. A little grated nutmeg may also be added, if approved.

It is well known that eggs are always to be preferred when fresh. Experienced persons can test the condition of an egg by holding it up to the light. If fresh, it will have a transparent appearance; if stale, it will look cloudy and opaque. Another way of testing eggs is to make a little brine by dissolving two ounces of salt in a pint of water. In this liquid fresh eggs will sink, while stale eggs will swim. Eggs which are quite bad will often float even in plain water.

VARIETIES.

THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS.—I never divide myself from any man upon the difference of an opinion, or am angry with his judgment for not agreeing with me in that from which in a few days I should dissent myself.—*Sir Thomas Browne*.

COD-FISH BALLS.—A Girton College girl, being asked if she liked cod-fish balls, said she never attended any.

FAITHFUL FRIENDS.—If sincere friends are desirable at any time it is when we are in prosperity.

HUMILITY.—Humility is a flower that prospers most when planted on the rich soil of a noble and great mind.

THE OBJECT OF MUSIC.—The object of music is to strengthen and ennoble the soul. If it does else save honour God and illustrate the thoughts and feeling of great men, it entirely misses its aim.—*Cristofano Morales*.

RARELY AT LEISURE.—It is a well known though unacknowledged fact, that diligent and hard-working persons can always find time for special purposes, while those who have nothing to do have rarely a moment to spare from their absorbing occupations.—*James Payn*.

"TEETOTAL."—The word tectotal, it is said, originated with a Lancashire working man, who, being unused to public speaking, and wishing to pronounce the word "total" in connection with abstinence from intoxicating liquors, hesitated, and pronounced the first letter by itself, and the word after it, making altogether t-total. This fact it is well to be acquainted with, because it sufficiently refutes the vulgar notion that *tee* has reference to *tea*.