

gladdened all hearts; "Christ is risen," was on every tongue. Prascovie felt the reviving influence of the scene, and new hope arose within her. The bridge over the Neva was replaced by this time, and the merchant's wife drove her to the house of Mme. Milin's friend, Mme. de L—, to whom

she presented her letter of introduction. "I had heard from Mme. Milin about you," said the lady; and her husband kindly interested himself in the case. He had a relative of influence at court, through whom he promised to appeal direct to the Emperor. This, he said, would be far more likely to be

effectual than approaching the senate with a petition. And Prascovie's letter of introduction from the abbess at Nijni Novgorod now gained her an invitation from the Princess T— to come and take up her abode in her palace. Success at last seemed near at hand.
(To be concluded.)

OMELETTES, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM.

By PHILLIS BROWNE, Author of 'The Girl's Own Cookery Book.'



IN the life of a great Englishwoman, just published, her biographer says that "she was an excellent housekeeper, and her excellence was partly attained from knowing how things ought to be done."

There is a great deal of truth in this remark. People who know how things ought to be, how they look when they are right, have a great advantage over people who simply make a guess, and try to imagine, after having the process of manufacture described, though actually seen what the result is. This is particularly the case with omelettes. For years authorities in cookery have been telling us that omelettes are delicious, inexpensive, elegant and wholesome; indeed, that they supply one of the most wholesome ways of cooking eggs; that French people use them every day, and never tire of them; that the varieties are endless; that if you can make one sort you can make fifty; that though a certain knack is required in making them, and though failure in them is much more frequent than success, yet that they are very easily made; that they are most convenient preparations, because they can be so quickly prepared (indeed they must be quickly prepared if they are to be good, and it has been said that an omelette should not only be made, but should be eaten also, in the space of three minutes). All these assertions are true, and yet omelettes are not at all common in England. English cooks seem afraid of them. I was most astonished the other day to hear a lady, who is, I know, exceedingly clever in cookery, and whom I have for years been accustomed to regard as an oracle, say, "We had company the other day, and I hired a French cook to prepare dinner for us. He proved to be so obliging that I asked him to teach me how to make omelettes, and he did so. I was surprised to find how easy they are. I shall never be afraid of them again." I should have soon have suspected this lady of being afraid of boiling an egg as of making an omelette. I feel sure that the timidity so frequently felt about preparing omelettes arises from the fact that few English cooks have seen them when properly made.

It is impossible for me in writing about omelettes to give the girls of our cookery class a sight of one. All I can do in this direction is to advise them to be on the look-out, and to

take advantage of any opportunity that may arise in this direction. If they know a clever cook, ask her to make an omelette for them, or if there should be any cookery classes held where omelettes are to be prepared, let them attend the lesson and learn for themselves. Or, if occasions of this kind should be quite out of reach, let them try to make an omelette once or twice, from the directions I am now about to give. It is quite possible that they will make one or two failures, but I should say also that it is almost certain there would be ultimate success, and if once they saw an omelette as it should be they would never mistake it for the future.

In this case they would find it best to make a small omelette to begin with, so that there need not be much waste if there were failure. Indeed, small omelettes are so much more easily made than large ones, that it is always well for beginners to commence with one or two eggs only. The French generally allow two eggs for each person, and these would be quite enough to experiment on. On this account the pan used should not be too large, because the eggs are not supposed to spread all over the pan as they do in a pancake; they are intended to be kept together and to form a thick, light oval-shaped cushion, the size and shape of half the pan. For three or even four eggs, therefore, the omelette pan should not be more than six inches in diameter, while for two eggs a still smaller pan will be sufficient. These small pans are now sold of different sizes at every ironmonger's, and they cost only a few pence. Indeed, they are offered for sale so much more frequently than they once were, that one cannot help thinking that the making of omelettes is better understood among us than it used to be.

A very important detail concerning these omelette pans is that they must be kept for omelettes only; indeed, it is almost impossible to make an omelette satisfactorily in a pan which has been used for all sorts of things. One reason for this is that an omelette pan should never be washed; it should simply be wiped dry. If it is washed, the next omelette fried in it will stick, and it is a great point in making omelettes to keep them from sticking. If through accident or forgetfulness the pan should have been washed, or even if a new pan is to be used, it must be doctored by leaving a little fat, made exceedingly hot, in it, then pouring this away, and wiping the pan out quickly and briskly with paper until it is clean and bright. Omelette pans are made of copper, enamelled iron, tin, and earthenware, and they should be shallow and round, as well as small. Above all things, they must be perfectly clean from rust and dirt. Experienced omelette makers generally, I think, become attached to one particular pan, and prefer using it to any other. I suppose the explanation is that they have used this same pan successfully a few times, and get into the way of associating it with their success. I expect that their fancy leads them to take care of it, and thus it is kept in good condition.

Strictly speaking, a plain omelette ought to

consist of nothing but eggs and flavouring. This flavouring may be varied indefinitely, all sorts of suitable ingredients being added, provided only that they are cooked or else need no cooking, for it cannot be expected that in the short time the eggs take to cook more solid food will be rendered eatable. Thus, when meat, such as game, bacon, kidneys, or fish are added to omelettes, the meat should be cooked separately, chopped small, then introduced deftly into the centre of the omelette, and covered with the egg, or else it should be mixed with the beaten eggs before cooking. Of course, the omelette is then named after the distinguishing addition. Thus when it is said that fifty varieties of omelettes are made, nothing more is meant than that fifty different additions may be put with the eggs. Thus we have asparagus omelette, bacon omelette, green pea omelette, kidney, lobster, mushroom, oyster, tomato omelettes, and many other sorts. *Omelette aux fines herbes* is omelette to which minced herbs, and perhaps a suspicion of finely-chopped shallot, has been added; *omelette aux confitures* is omelette with jam; *omelette au naturel* is nothing but plain omelette; *omelette au rhum* is made by mixing a glass of rum with the eggs, then sprinkling sugar on the dish, and at the moment of serving pouring a glass of rum over and setting on fire, as brandy is set on fire for Christmas pudding. This is considered a very superior dish.

M. Gouffé, who, as everyone knows, is a great authority in cooking, advises that the eggs in omelettes should not be over-beaten. He says that by so doing nothing is gained, and that the omelette is rendered watery. Other authorities, equally deserving of honour, say that the eggs should be well beaten, as this is especially needed to make the omelette light. I recommend girls not to overbeat certainly, but at any rate to beat the yolks and the whites together lightly, so that they may be thoroughly mixed before being turned into the pan. A mistake which English cooks frequently make is to cook the omelette overmuch. When properly done, the inside is quite soft and almost liquid, while the outside is firm enough to hold it together and keep it compact. An omelette must on no account be left standing in the dish after it is ready, but must be eaten immediately. No matter how light it is when finished, it will be heavy when cold.

We will suppose now that we are going to make a small omelette with two or three eggs. First, we must remember to have everything ready to our hand. If we get half through the business and then have to run off to fetch a knife, a spoon, or a dish, we are certain to come to grief; indeed, the dish which is to receive it should be very hot. Break two or three eggs into a basin, beat them lightly with a fork, and put with them some sugar and any suitable flavouring. Essence of vanilla is very good. Melt an ounce of butter in the omelette pan. When it is very hot, so that it froths all over, put in the eggs, and with a spoon or fork work the mixture lightly

from the sides, mixing in the butter while so doing, and be very careful not to let the eggs stick to the pan. Do not, however, continue stirring until the mixture is solid all the way through, but stop while it is still a little liquid. It may be finished in two ways. One is to tilt the handle of the omelette pan upwards, so as to let the egg slide downwards to the lower half of the pan, and away from the hottest part of the fire. As it goes, scrape it away so as to keep it together. Let it cook for a second or two, then tilt the pan the other way, and with a spoon roll the omelette over to the other end. Keep it together, because it ought to be thick, and as soon as it is set slide it upon a dish, sift sugar over it, and serve. The other way of finishing it is to fold it over something like a turnover when it is half set to make it the proper oval shape.

This sounds simple enough, does it not? So it is when you get to know how to do it; but, like many other simple things, it wants practice. It is quite an accomplishment to make an omelette properly. I often think that describing cookery is like describing how scales should be played. We might say that in going down the scale you should first play with the five fingers, then pass the second finger over the thumb, and afterwards the third finger. This sounds easy, but what a bungle those make of it who are not accustomed to the business. They twist their fingers up, and jerk their elbows out most awkwardly, while those who have practice glide smoothly up and down in most elegant fashion. So with cookery, practice is what is wanted to make perfect. The most elaborate instruction might be given, and yet the novice would come upon some little detail concerning which she was bewildered. Try again and again, if necessary; that is the best way of learning; the road to success lies through failure. And, as I said before, remember what you are aiming at—to produce a thick, soft, golden-coloured, oval-shaped mass, which, when cut into, shall look more like cooked custard than anything else I think of, shall be liquid in the centre and firm on the outside. And as the most usual mistake made in cooking an omelette is that it is too hard, err on the side of tilting up the pan too soon rather than too late, and above all things be expeditious.

Some people put a little milk into an omelette. The effect of this is to make it less rich, and although in a perfectly correct omelette I suppose this is not admissible, yet, on the whole, I do not think the addition is to be objected to, because a frequent objection made to omelettes is that they are too rich. A dessert-spoonful or a table-spoonful of milk to each egg will probably be considered sufficient.

When after persevering attempts an omelette has been made properly with two or three eggs, a larger number of eggs may be taken. I do not know, however, that it is in any case advisable to use more than six eggs. As an authority has declared, the best omelettes are never made with more than six eggs. Also when this skill has been attained, additions and variations can be made to any extent, for it will be understood an omelette may be mixed with almost anything.

An omelette soufflée is a favourite variety of the ordinary omelette. In making this, the whites should be beaten separately until they are very stiff, and added to the well-beaten yolks, so as not to beat down the froth. The omelette will be lighter if more white than yolk may be allowed, although this is by no means indispensable. Dissolve in a saucepan a tablespoonful of sugar and a teaspoonful of orange-flower water, or any other suitable flavouring. Pour the syrup into a cup to cool, then add the yolks of eggs and beat them to a cream; add then the whites, which have

been beaten to a stiff froth. Melt a piece of butter the size of a nut in an omelette pan; when this is hot pour in the mixture; put the pan over a gentle fire for a couple of minutes, just to set the bottom of the omelette; then put the pan into a very hot oven and bake it until it rises high. Slip it on a hot plate, put some jam or sugar on it, turn it over like a sandwich, and serve instantly. In an oven which is so hot underneath that the eggs will set at the bottom, there is no need to put the omelette on the fire. It may simply be put in the oven for five minutes, and it must not be left after it has risen, or it will fall again. This is a very easy way of making an omelette.

Another easy way is to beat the eggs with milk, sweeten, and flavour them; butter a frying-pan to prevent sticking, and pour them in as if we intended to make a thick pancake. Let the preparation set, and then roll it up. A third easy way is the following:—Soak the crumb of a slice of stale bread taken from an ordinary loaf in as much milk as it will absorb. Pour off any milk that is over, and beat the bread to a paste with a fork, adding a little sugar or salt and the yolks of four eggs. Make a slice of butter hot in the pan. Have ready the whites of the eggs beaten to a solid froth, mix these with the rest; pour the mixture into the pan, and move it about for a minute. When the preparation is set at the bottom, put it into a very hot oven for five minutes, or until it is firm on the top, then fold it over and serve.

Sometimes with savoury omelettes, or with omelettes mixed with meat or fish, gravy is served. This should never be poured over the omelette; it should be sent to table separately. The gravy for omelettes is usually thickened with arrowroot or corn flour.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EDUCATIONAL.

JESSICA.—We have just given the address of a reading society, which you will see in our recent answers to correspondents. There is one conducted by Miss McLandsborough, Lindum Terrace, Manningham, Bradford, Yorkshire.

TEACHER.—We do not see that you are entitled to any letters after your name from any examinations you have passed; but there is nothing to prevent your mentioning all you have done on your prospectus.

A READER OF THE G. O. P. (A. P.).—We have no doubt you could get such a situation in a school by inquiry at a governesses' or teachers' registry office, or by advertising; but we think that a lady's maid's situation is much more comfortable than that of a nursery governess, which would be the most your sister could obtain in these days of certificates.

VERNA.—If fond of book-keeping and keeping accounts, you had better go through a special course and choose that as your occupation in life.

PRINCE RUPERT.—You cannot say "Come with I," nor "Toil with I." In both sentences the right word is "me." "Come with William and me to Norwood," or, as many people prefer to say, "William and myself." The rule is this: "I" is used in the nominative case, and answers to the question "who;" "me" is in the accusative case, and answers to the question "whom." "With whom is she going?" "With me," not "With I." Again, "Who knocked at the door?" "I did," not "me did."

MAD CRICKETER.—A moderately well-informed girl would not be likely to pass the Oxford Local Examinations. You had better write for the papers to G. E. Baker, Esq., Clarendon Buildings, Oxford. The examinations are held in June and July, and the fee is £1.

ALMA.—What you require is Dr. Angus's "Handbook of the English Tongue," which can be procured at our publishing office. Your letter does you credit, but even were you able to write grammatically, and had acquired also a thorough knowledge of the rules of metrical composition, you would not thereby be rendered capable of writing a book. This requires considerable research or experience of things or events not generally known, or that you could place in a better form and clearer light. Or else, if a scientific work, or one of the imagination, it needs genius. Do you think you possess this attribute? Your verses do not show that, although they show tender and religious feeling.

COOKERY.

ENGLISHWOMAN.—It is evidently a misprint for the "juice of four oranges."

BLODWEN.—The recipe for making all kinds of biscuits is much the same, viz., 1lb of flour or oatmeal, the yolk of one egg, and milk sufficient to mix in into a stiff paste. Knead it smoothly, then roll out thin, cut into round shapes, prick with a fork, and bake in a slow oven. The dough for biscuits should be as stiff as it can be conveniently worked. If too thick the biscuits will be tough and heavy; if too thick they will crack round the edges. Of course you may add sugar, spice, ginger, or carraways.

NELLIE.—We should advise you to purchase your custard powder. The preparation of a small quantity would not repay you.

MATTY PRIMROSE.—Rabbits are a cheap form of meat. When well cooked they are easily digested and very nutritious. Try whether you cannot lighten your meat bills by using them frequently.

MUSIC.

DUPONT, J. M. S.—Messrs. Novello's primers on musical subjects are all excellent. You had better get the monograms drawn for you at an engraver's.

LOTHIAN LASS.—We are much obliged for your little song, which is singularly correct, and shows you have profited by your lessons.

S. D. F.—We regret to repeat that we do not advertise educational works of other firms. You should get a shilling book on harmony from Messrs. Novello and Co., music publishers. We return your good wishes.

EXCELSIOR.—Your health and strength appear to have given way, and your only chance depends on your obtaining complete rest and change of air. Your voice will probably return as your health and strength come back.

A WOULD-BE SINGER should consult a doctor, and attend to her own general health, keep her feet dry, and use a gargle of ordinary salt and water to strengthen her throat. No one should sing with a sore throat.

HOUSEKEEPING.

E. W.—Thank you for your interesting note. We cannot help thinking that, as you live alone, and have only yourself to cook for, instead of using the open grate, you would have much more pleasure and comfort in your cooking if you purchased one of the small oil-cooking stoves; with their complete outfit of pans and pots, you would certainly save money in the summer. We are glad to hear you succeed so well with the new piano. You are a wise woman to try to enjoy life in all simple ways.

COAL DUST.—We do not understand why your grates do not shine after they are varnished, unless you have used a wet or dirty brush, or added turpentine when it was not needed. The 3rd April, 1869, was a Saturday.

ESTELLE.—We fear we cannot help you. We do not know of any private schools where housekeeping and cooking are taught. If at school now, and not learning how to sew, your mother ought to write to the schoolmistress about it.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A SUFFERER.—Painting the enlarged joint with iodine, and always wearing a plaster, is said to be good for them, and to cure them ultimately.

E. M. C.—A national jubilee was held in England, 25th October, 1860, when George III. entered the fiftieth year of his reign. A jubilee, in celebration of the general peace, and also of the centenary of the accession of the Brunswick family to the throne, was held August 1st, 1814.

LOLLY'S CHERUB.—Astrachan is the fleece of a particular kind of sheep, found in Astrachan, on the Caspian sea; also in southern Russia, Bokhara, and Persia. The most valuable fleeces, those which have a fine soft curl, are procured from the new-born lambs, but it is asserted that these very seldom come to England, as they are highly valued in the East.

FLORENCE L. B.—The poetry shows religious feeling and some promise, and we have no doubt that it has been a comfort to you to write it.

A BRIGHTONIAN, and many others, have our best thanks for her kind words of Christmas and New Year's greeting, which they have sent us, and which we cordially reciprocate.

E. W. S., M. L. T.—If you cannot send the crewel-work to be cleaned, which we recommend, rinse it in tepid bran and water, boiling water having first been poured on the bran. No soap should be used. For our article on "Crysoleum Painting," see the summer number called *Silver Sails*. Rub chilblains with dry mustard.

PERPLEXED.—Without being a teetotaler, we feel with you in reference to the odious practice of drinking a gin cocktail every morning before lunch. The probability is that drunkenness will, sooner or later, be the result. No wonder he is cross when you expostulate with him; the drinking of spirits has that tendency; it spoils both temper and digestion. Besides this, it is an exceedingly low, vulgar habit. Such a beginning on his part gives no promise of happiness on a wife's.

EDITH S.—We regret that we cannot give space for any advertisement of the kind, nor do we answer privately.