

as a queen. We are all Hydes and Jekylls, "neither wholly black nor white, but grey." Of us all, like the shy curate's egg, "parts are good," and parts only.

Eh, lassies, here is a prayer for us all—

"O by Thy love and anguish, Lord,
O by Thy life laid down,
Grant that we fall not from Thy grace
Nor cast away our crown."

We pass along life's road and look our brother, our sister, king or queen in the face, or look deeper even into their character, that ancient word which denotes the mark a Babylonian brickmaker stamped upon his bricks. We ask alike of high and low, rich and poor—

"Whose is this image and superscription?"
And the answer will *not* be—"Caesar's."

A WELSH SPINSTER.

THE ART OF MAKING BREAD.



IN this paper I purpose to give some very simple directions as to the making of bread, directions by which I hope the veriest amateur of a cook could make that luxury known as "home-made" bread. I am not going to enter into any scientific details, for it will not make our bread any lighter to be told that yeast is really the *torula cerevisiæ*,

nor that the action of yeast on the starch in the flour produces alcohol and carbonic acid gas.

The maxims that should be carried out in bread-making are few, and if closely followed will prevent such accidents as heavy dough and spoiled batches of bread.

First, see that your ingredients are of the best; it is always cheaper in the long run. Second, mind that the yeast is fresh. Third, be careful that the dough is put to rise in a warm place, free from draught. Fourth, put your bread into a hot oven.

Now for the ingredients in bread. I am speaking, remember, at present, of plain household bread; fancy breads, buns, dough cakes, tea-cakes, etc., need a paper to themselves. Some housewives think that the second quality flour, termed household, makes the more nourishing bread, though it is not so white as that made from what is called the best pastry whites. I always use this myself, as I think it makes a lighter and more digestible bread. Do not ever be persuaded to put potatoes into your bread, as they are very apt to turn the dough sour and also make it heavy, unless they are very carefully mixed into the flour. Again, never mix alum with the flour to make the bread whiter, as in my opinion these foreign matters render the bread unwholesome and indigestible.

Now a few words as to the yeast. The two kinds most used in England are what is generally known as "brewer's yeast, or barm," which is a liquid and is most often met with in country places, and German yeast, which is procured in putty-like masses. Whichever yeast is used, it is well to remember that it is a plant, and a very difficult plant that requires particularly careful handling. If the growth of the yeast plant be checked, then the dough takes longer to rise, and sometimes will not rise at all.

The great thing, then, is to encourage this useful little plant to do its duty, and make our bread light, and it has been discovered that sugar will make the yeast plant grow quicker than anything else. To test German yeast, see that it crumbles easily when rubbed between the fingers and thumb, add castor sugar to it, work it lightly with the back of a spoon, and in two or three minutes it will become liquid, that is to say, if it be fresh. Never keep yeast for two or three days. In all towns it is procurable daily, and although named German yeast, it is not made in Germany only. Thundery weather will affect yeast and make it go bad, so be sure, if the weather be at all close, to get your yeast fresh the day you want to use it. Another thing to remember about yeast is that it does its work before the bread is put into the oven, and that is why we put the dough to rise, so as to give the yeast plant time to grow.

After it has made our dough rise, and our loaves are ready for baking, we have no more use for it, so the loaves are put into a hot oven, and the useful little plant is killed.

If bread be put into a slow oven, the yeast plant still goes on growing until the heat is sufficient to kill it. A slow oven will make the loaves have a fine outside appearance, but when we come to cut them we shall find the inside full

of large holes, caused by the yeast plant being allowed to grow for too long a time.

White Bread No. 1.—Three pounds of flour, one ounce of German yeast, or two tablespoonfuls of brewer's yeast or barm, one teaspoonful of castor sugar, one and a half teaspoonfuls of salt, about one and a half pints of tepid water.

Put the flour into a big basin; if in winter, warm both the basin and the flour. Add the salt, and mix it well into the flour, because if it comes into contact with the yeast it checks its growth. Put the yeast and sugar into a smaller basin and work them lightly to a liquid, add to them the tepid water. To make tepid water, have one third boiling water and two thirds cold, and that should make the water the same temperature as one's hands. Stir the yeast and water into the flour with a wooden spoon, mix well. Flour a pastry board, turn the dough out on it, and knead well with the hands. When kneaded sufficiently, the dough will be quite smooth. Put it back into the basin, and cut it twice across, as a cut surface rises far better than a smooth one. Cover over the top of the basin with a cloth, to keep away all draught, and stand it in a warm place. Let the dough rise for one hour. At the end of that time it should have increased to twice its original size. Turn it out once more on to a floured board, cut it into the number of loaves you want to make. Handle it very lightly and quickly. For a cottage loaf, take two pieces of dough, one slightly smaller than the other, work them into smooth rounds, place one on top of the other, press down the centre with your finger, and cut up the sides with a sharp knife; put the loaf on a greased baking sheet, stand it in a warm place and cover over for fifteen minutes to prove, then bake in a hot oven. To test bread, to see if it is done, tap the bottom of the loaf, and if it sounds hollow it is done. When baking bread, do not open the door of the oven for at least twenty minutes after the loaves have been put into it.

When the bread is cooked, stand the loaves on a sieve, or on their sides to cool, and do not take them into a cold room or the larder until they are quite cold, as change of temperature is apt to make the bread heavy.

White Bread No. 2.—Proceed as above directed, but instead of putting the dough to rise for an hour, cut it after kneading it into the number of loaves that you require. Have ready some greased and floured tins, put the dough into them, cut them across the top, and after letting them rise in a warm place for one hour, bake in a hot oven. This recipe is, of course, far less trouble than the former one, but I always fancy that the bread is not quite so light as when the dough rises first and the loaves are proved.

Brown Bread.—Two pounds of flour, wholemeal, one ounce of German yeast, one teaspoonful of sugar, one teaspoonful of salt, about one pint of tepid water.

Put the flour and salt into a big basin, work the yeast to a liquid with the sugar in another basin, add the tepid water to the yeast and sugar, pour it on to the flour and salt, and mix to rather a moist dough. Do not knead it, but beat it smooth with the back of a wooden spoon. Have ready some greased and floured tins; divide the dough into loaves, put them into the tins, and stand them in a warm place, covered over to keep draught away, for one hour. Bake in a hot oven and test in the usual way. Brown bread is always nicer if baked in tins, as then the dough can be mixed slightly moister. The time that bread takes to bake must depend on the size of the loaves made, and the quantity of water required depends a great deal on the quality of the flour.