

**SCOTCH DYE WORKS.**

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Guaranteed.**The Ladies' Column.****TEA-DRINKING IN LONDON.**

It is safe to say that until within the last five or six years the metropolis afforded no facilities at all for inexpensively supplying the needs of those who must eat in the middle of the day, and who have to think twice before they spend even a penny. Married clerks, who could not afford to revel in the dubious delights of the few cheap eating-houses, would lunch in more or less surreptitious fashion on the sandwiches brought from home and washed down with a glass of heady beer or stout, which costs them three halfpence or twopence at a bar where they could not even sit down for a second to glance at a paper or a book. The juniors fared worse, and, finding nothing better to do, utilised the luncheon hour by "loafing" in the streets; and who shall say that the public generally were in better case unless they were prepared to spend eightpence or a couple of shillings for a greasy chop or a leathery steak, served in slapdash fashion by polyglot waiters of uninviting appearance and rude or morose bearing? At most of the cheap restaurants they supplied a feeble infusion libellously denominated "tea," but those were best off who avoided the unpalatable concoction.

Although in London it has not yet become the fashion for ladies to make tea-drinking at the confectioner's part of their day's routine, it would be idle to deny that the West End contains rallying places of infinitely greater elasticity than the establishment in Berkeley Square, and that these resorts are exceedingly popular with both sexes. One is an Anglo-French house, where may be seen marvels of confectionery, such as the visitor to Paris has admired in the windows of Siraudin and of Boissier; but here the teapot is worshipped with a very lukewarm ardour, the favorite beverages being chocolate and iced coffee, accompanied by pastry of every description. The establishment is unique of its kind, but very lately there was opened at the wrong end of Oxford Street a small shop, where for a brief space they dispensed chocolate absolutely "as in Spain."

In a more accessible part of the same thoroughfare there is a French establishment of the first-class, which would be thronged in the afternoon were it the custom for those of high degree to "five o'clock" in public. But no, it is not "fashionable" to resort to the confectioner's for tea and gossip in London; albeit, it is decidedly modish to do so at Cannes and Nice, and equally at Aix-les-Bains and other health stations. At Rumpelmeyer's, on the Croisette, at the famous Rivieran town, and at the branch establishment of the same name on the shores of the Lac du Bourget, half the crowned and princely heads of Europe have been, and are still to be seen, at the regulation *moment du gouter*. Over the tea and chocolate, the cakes and the ices, monarchs and *mondaines*, diplomatists and duchesses exchange gay talk, and the news of Courts is narrated with a freedom all the more unrestrained because of the knowledge that no impoverished aristocrat of either sex is lurking about to gather up the verbal crumbs for ultimate publication in some local or foreign "society" journal.

The hold which the teapot has gained over the middle classes and the sections of the public immediately below them—the great army of shop-assistants, clerks, and "out-o'-works" of all sorts, to say nothing of the legions of visitors from the country—is strikingly evidenced by the rapid development of this new industry. London is now, indeed, honeycombed with tea-shops, even as Paris is honeycombed with *cafes*, *restaurants*, *brasseries* and *crimeries*.

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Small and unpretentious at first, these temperance establishments are now spacious and comfortable, and distinguished by a cleanliness and a cheerfulness lacking in many of the cheap foreign restaurants which have elbowed the old-fashioned and indescribably dirty "eating houses" well-nigh out of existence.

It is the entire absence of all cookery that makes these places so agreeable to the olfactory sense, the plan being to do nothing on the premises except make the tea and coffee and boil the eggs. The busy scene presented by one of these establishments between twelve and three o'clock suggests the question whether all these people, and so many different grades, resorted before the bread and tea shops came into existence. Not to the confectioners', for only a small number sold tea, and all were, and still are, too expensive for the majority of those who daily foregather round the marble tables of "the Aerated"; and certainly not to the restaurants, where everything is dearer, and the "tip," rigorously prohibited at the tea-shops, practically compulsory.

Particularly trying to the youth of both sexes must have been the days when tea-shops were not, for there was no place in London where they could get such an inexpensive lunch as that now obtainable in every street; while the youngest and most inexperienced country cousin is practically as free from annoyance as if she were under her mother's roof.

**GIRDLE CAKES.**—For about two dozen of these delicious little cakes, put twelve ounces of fine flower into a bowl and rub into it until as smooth as oatmeal, four ounces of good butter and three ounces of pure lard, add a seasoning of salt, a dessert-spoonful of baking powder, and half a pound of carefully prepared currants, then form the whole into a nice light paste—not too stiff—with a little cold milk, milk and water, or only water. Sprinkle a little flour on the board, turn out the paste, and knead it lightly with the finger tips for a minute, then roll it out about one-third of an inch thick, and stamp it out in small rounds with a pastry cutter, if one is at hand, or with the top of an ordinary tumbler. Bake on a hot girdle, over a clear bright fire, until the under side of the cakes is nicely browned, then turn them over and brown the other side equally. From twelve to fifteen minutes will be required for the cooking. When done enough slit the cakes open as lightly as possible, butter liberally, close the halves together again, arrange neatly on very hot plates, and serve quickly. Sometimes, for a change, caraway seeds may be substituted for the currants. If any of the cakes are left over they are very nice to eat cold.

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