



Conducted by "ISOBEL"

Bread Making

Considering the antiquity of the homely and simple art of breadmaking, originating as it did in prehistoric obscurity, there appears to have been ample time for the human race to have attained universal perfection in this domestic labor.

When history began, bread was already on the scene.

Nevertheless, readers of even comparatively modern records bearing upon social conditions up to and including the romantic period covered by that "Prince of story-tellers," Sir Walter Scott, who peerlessly presents a series of early breakfasts and late suppers in hidden cavern, on mountain slope, in forest glade or rocky glen, by stream or lake or river, or wheresoever emergency, that inexorable arbiter of man's destiny, dictated, may well conclude that bread was an unknown quantity at that lawless date, as fish and flesh, eggs and oatmeal, wine and whisky formed the staples of diet in wide areas of country and bread was seldom seen.

However wantonly mighty Fate may have robbed this interesting period of its "daily bread," there is no shadow of doubt that breadmaking was practiced by our "forebears" as far back in the dim past as the Stone Period, estimated variously to have had prestige anywhere from a century or two B.C. to the 5th century. Excavations made among the ruins of dwellings, scattered along the banks of the Swiss lakes, and occupied by our prehistoric ancestors revealed quantities of bread preserved by a carbonizing process or, plainly, a burning of the bread to a crisp by the fires that so often destroyed the pile dwellings of these early tenants of the earth. It would seem too that breadmaking was even then "farmed" to a considerable extent as one heap of bread discovered weighed nearly forty pounds.

Bread in Scripture

In scriptural records it is found that Abraham, on the plains of Mawre, anxious to extend hospitality to the three angels, offered "to fetch a morsel of bread," and then required Sarah "to make ready three measures of meal, knead it and make cakes upon the hearth." And again, Lot in the corrupt city of Sodom sought to refresh the two angels by making "a feast, and baking unleavened bread." It is inferred that both the leavened and unleavened breads were then used.

Some time later the Egyptians, who assumed the custody of breadmaking and we are told brought this art to a very high state of perfection. They are said to have used "several kinds of flour and aromatic ingredients;" and indeed Pharaoh's chief baker, who has become immortalized by sharing the prison cell of Joseph, the son of Jacob, must have been quite an important potentate. Civilization and breadmaking seemed to travel hand in hand. From Egypt they march into Greece, whose ancient authors dilate upon no less than sixty different varieties of bread, giving minute descriptions of many of them. To Rome from Greece, by easy stages, bread making called another halt, and the practical Roman who never failed in trust with opportunity, promptly formed a breadmaking guild with special privileges and immunities to the calling. Slaves did the heavy labor in the public bakeries distributed throughout the city. Grain was collected in large store houses and diverted to the bakeries later; each bakery crushing and sifting its own grain; no mills for speedy and perfect grinding existed

A special magistrate, presumably corresponding to our health officer, superintended the bakeries. Even the ancient Roman was awake to the requirements of public health.

Climbing up the centuries to a little less than 100 years ago and meanwhile crossing Europe to England, breadmaking made its steady progress in the nation's esteem till by act of parliament the price of bread was fixed by adding a certain sum to the price of flour; this sum to recompense the baker for his labor and a margin of profit beside.

In the city of London, England, in the year 1814, the price of bread was a penny and a half or three cents for



Home of R. Tooke, Sec'y C.G.A. at Lyleton
Mr. Tooke has 600 acres of crop in this year

a pound loaf; six cents for a two pound loaf; 12 cents for a four pound loaf, and so on, up to 8 pounds.

Wheat the Source

Wheat is, of course, the great source of flour of civilized countries; though rye, oats, peas, beans, buckwheat, corn, barley and even millet seed are used in some countries.

Whether or not sugar exists in the best flour is still a disputed point, but heat and moisture in the baking soon transform starch into a soluble condition. Inferior flour usually contains a large percentage of dextrine, which by the agency of diastase converts starch into gum and sugar.

Any western pioneer of the late eighties or even the early nineties, will easily recall her fruitless struggle to make edible bread from "frosted" wheat flour. She will remember being lured on to apparent victory by the prepossessing appearance of her dough in its early stages, but, alas, as soon as the mass was exposed to the heat of the oven, it began to sink instead of swell and dribble in vexatious trickles over the sides of the pan and out through the oven door, over the kitchen floor, doubtless seeking an outlet to the pig trough, its only suitable location. The "frosting" changed the starch of the wheat to sugar, hence its melting tendency in the oven, as everybody knows that sugar becomes liquid if exposed to considerable heat. So far no agent has been discovered to correct this change and restore the gum and sugar back again to starch in the flour, hence frosted wheat flour can never make good bread.

The varieties of wheat bread are separated into two great classes, fermented and unfermented bread. Unfermented or unleavened bread is little used except by the Jews and by those unfortunates who cannot obtain the fermented variety. It is simply flour, salt and water stirred into a stiff paste and baked in the usual oven by those having that convenience or, failing that, by placing it upon a hot, flat stone, covered by a tin and the whole covered up with very hot ashes. This

last is the means employed by the Australian prospector and rancher.

Leavened Bread

Coming back to leavened bread, its use can be traced back into early Scripture records since in Galatians we find "a little leaven leaveth the whole lump," and it is claimed for the Parisian that he makes the best bread in the world and he still sticks to the old leaven as a fermenter.

Leaven is simply a portion of the dough, put aside in a uniform temperature for 7 to 8 hours from a previous baking in which fermentation has reached a very active stage. During this eight-hour period, the leaven swells and acquires an alcoholic odor. This leaven is then taken, worked up with flour and water to a firm paste, double its original mass, when it becomes the first leaven (corresponding to our yeast). After six hours the amount is again doubled, making the second leaven. The complete or last leaven is made by doubling the size of the second leaven and the proportion the complete leaven bears to the finished dough is about three-quarters in summer and one-half in winter.

Yeast also was used as a ferment at an early period by the French. Its popularity died out for a time, but was again revived at the close of the 17th century when the faculty of medicine strongly opposed its use; and it is said that even in the present day yeast is used only for fancy bread and pastry by those famed French bakers.

Fermented breadmaking is tedious and laborious compared to the other variety, but its superiority amply atones for the extra work.

Three processes are involved in ordinary bread. Setting the sponge, making or kneading the dough and baking. The ferment is first made, which consists of potatoes, yeast and flour. The average housewife will be surprised to learn that the London baker uses only six lbs. of potatoes to a sack of flour. He boils and mashes the potatoes, stirs in water to thin them and reduce the heat, adds 2½ pints of yeast, then adds 12 lbs. of flour, scalded in boiling water and reduced to a thin and uniform paste. This is added to potatoes and yeast, the whole mixture stirred thoroughly and then set aside for several hours, while active fermentation or "getting light," takes place. When the yeast is ready the sponge is made by adding ½ a sack of flour, salt and warm water enough to make a reasonably stiff sponge. This is then set aside to ferment and in the course of four or five hours it is again "light," when the balance of the sack of flour is thoroughly incorporated and once again the sponge or hatch is set to "rise" or ferment, which simply means the formation of carbonic (not carbolic) acid gas within the mass of dough. The dough is kneaded once again and molded into loaves and set in tins where a final fermentation fits them for the oven, where the baking process is concluded. The one particular point to be noticed in this commentary is that half the flour intended for the batch must go in when the sponge is set and the other half when the full sponge is completed. No flour should be added at the stage where the dough is moulded into loaves. Another point made is the amount of potato used. The Londoner uses very little. His formula for a four pound loaf is, flour 3 lbs. 2 oz.; water 1 lb. 1½ oz.; yeast ½ oz.; potato 1½ oz.; salt ½ oz. Bread should be baked in the course of from one to one and a half hours.

Some flour yields a result of 135.2 lbs. of bread from 100 lbs. of flour or, as the English and French authorities claim, a fluctuation from 127 to 135 lbs. of bread from 100 lbs. of flour.

Well baked bread from sound flour should have a yellowish brown crust; the crumb should be uniform in texture, permeated with minute cavities and without large air-cells. The color of the crumb, except in whole wheat bread, should be white. It should be free from acidity or sourness. It should keep sweet and eatable for several days and when stale should become soft and pleasant again by merely heating in the oven, after which it rapidly changes.

A very curious and scarcely credited statement is made by Dr. Frankland, who avers that one pound of the

crumb of bread, if properly digested and oxidized in the body, can produce at the maximum, one seven-tenths of dry muscle or flesh.

THE BALLOT AND THE BABIES

(By Mrs. Minnie Keith Bailey.)
The babies, bless their little hearts!
They make their mothers' lives complete;
They are the accents of her heart,
And give to life its bitter-sweet.

The babies, bless their little souls!
We guide their faltering little feet,
We hold them in our hearts enrolled,
We start them on life's journey fleet.

We start them; there our power must end,
Our duty on through life must go;
But power should with our duty blend
If we our true position show.

To teach the little feet to go,
The little mind to think aright,
The little hands to reach, I trow,
Unto the glorious endless light;

To train, to teach, to feel, to pray,
And then to yield this mighty part,—
To sit apart, to yield away
The power to help in life's great mart.

If God to woman could vouchsafe
The crown of glorious motherhood,
Should man from out his puny sphere,
Limit for her, her power for good!

Dare he the laws of nature thwart
And hold as his a right not won?
Dare he from woman still withhold
The meed of duty nobly done?
Enid, Oklahoma

EVERY-DAY JOYS

The beauty and chief ornaments of the world are human; no flower is as lovely as a sweet child; no sunrise as splendid as the golden morning of a young manhood or womanhood; no crystal as beautiful as the firm purity of a clarified character; no mountain so imposing and sublime as a lofty life; no harvest or fields or fruitage on branches so fair as the goodly product of a useful and noble career.

The music of the world is human. No bird-song so wonderful as the human voice; no babble of a brook so musical as the ripple of innocent laughter is a happy home; no solemn chant of winds so grand as the psalm rolled into the sky by worshipping assemblies. To stand by the ocean and hear the beat of its stupendous pulse is to take the sound of a shallower deep and narrower sea than when you lay your ear against the throbbing of a human heart.

The joy of life and wealth of the world are in humanity. He was a wise man who said: "A man's wealth is measured by the number he loves and is loved."—William V. Kelley in "The Ripening Experiences of Life."

BALLAD OF LITTLE SLEEPY TOWN

There is a little drowsy town,
Oh, not so far away,
Where all the merchants are asleep,
And nodding all the day.

So, when the time of harvest comes
Machine oil's not in place,
And when the fruitful season's here,
No sugar, is the case.

And when the flies are buzzing round,
In thickest of the fray,
'Tis then fly poisons on the road
Still many miles away.

For slumber you may wait a year,
Pots and pans also,
And boats and shoes and stove and pipes,
You likely must forego.

'Tis true the weather has been warm,
And who shall tell me "Nay"
But in the winter, 'tis the same,
And when the light of day.

Forsoke their snow-clad prairie fields,
And lamps are ordered round,
'There is no coal-oil in the stores,
'Come back the dreary sound.