

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

THE ROBIN.

I.

I heard a robin in the tree,
And thought: Is it the same
A year ago to greet the spring
From groves of South-land came?

II.

O robin, one short year ago,
One dearer than the spring,
Was with me when beneath these boughs
I paused to hear you sing.

III.

The crimson coloured all her cheek,
Tho' not a word we spoke,
And then above our heads your song
Upon the silence broke.

IV.

Her face was lifted to the strain,
Her radiant eyes dilate
Had in them something so divine,
Love cried: No longer wait.

V.

And in that hour I knew my fate;
The rapture of the spring
Was in my heart, and I had won
From life the fairest thing.

VI.

O robin, trill your sweetest notes
In yonder churchyard tree,
For death the sweetest thing in life
Has stolen away from me.

EROL GERVASE.

HINTS FOR THE HOUSEHOLD.

GOOD BREAD AND HOW TO MAKE IT.

Holy Writ assures us that bread is the staff of life; and our daily experience fully proves the truth of the assertion. But it is not enough to procure this staff of life in sufficient quantity; the excellence of its quality is also of great importance. The strong, healthy man may perhaps eat poor bread without experiencing any inconvenience; but the delicate child or invalid, whose impaired digestion requires great carefulness in diet, cannot pay too much attention to the quality; bread is indeed to them the staff of life. The superior nutritious properties of bread have been disputed, but the doubt has been dispelled by some chemical researches made in France testing the comparative nutriment of various edibles.

The word bread is derived from brayed grain, from the verb to bray or pound; indicative of the old method of preparing the flour. Dough comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *deavian* to wet, to moisten. Loaf is from the Anglo-Saxon *lif-ian*, to raise, to lift up, as raised bread. Leaven is derived from the French verb, *lever*, to raise, as the Saxon word *lif-ian*.

The superiority of good home-made bread has long been acknowledged, yet how few families really make good bread. All bakers use alum, which is injurious to the health, and causes indigestion in delicate persons. But the alum benefits the baker in several ways; it causes his loaves to separate evenly and without trouble, and increases the weight of the loaf, as it makes the flour absorb more water; therefore, a four-pound loaf of baker's bread will contain less nourishment than a loaf of home-made bread of equal weight.

Economy should make every woman her own bread-maker. The alum also imparts a better colour to the flour, and conceals any unpleasant odour arising from damaged flour. Baker's bread dries much quicker than home-made. The reason is, that alum is what chemists call an efflorescent salt, that is, it dries by exposure to the air; common salt is deliquescent, that is, it attracts moisture from the air; therefore, bread which contains salt only, will keep moist much longer than that which contains alum. These are certainly reasons why every woman should make her own bread, or have it made in her kitchen.

HOW TO MAKE GOOD BREAD.

We propose to give a few receipts for bread making which will not fail. First we will give a receipt for making yeast. The yeast bought at the door is not always of good quality. The recipe for hop yeast given has been tested for twenty years, and rarely fails; never, if the yeast jug is perfectly sweet and the yeast properly made: Boil in porcelain or copper-tinned kettle, two large handfuls of hops, tied in a cloth, six large potatoes sliced thin, in six quarts of water. When the potatoes are very soft skim them out, and either rub through a colander or mash fine on a plate. Take out the hops; squeeze dry, and hang away for another time, as they can be used twice. Keep the water boiling, mix one and one-half pints of wheat flower to a smooth batter with cold water, and one tablespoonful of vinegar, two of brown sugar, and one teaspoonful of salt; mix in the mashed potatoes, stir all into the boiling water, and boil ten minutes. Turn into a six-quart tin pan. When milk-warm to the touch add one teacup of yeast. Let it rise over night, then put into a stone jug.

This yeast will keep in a cellar, perfectly good for six weeks. A large teacup full will make two large loaves of bread. Be sure to reserve a teacupful to rise the yeast with the next time. Always scald the jug thoroughly and keep water in it over night, with a tablespoonful of saleratus stirred into it. This will sweeten the jug. It takes a larger quantity of this yeast to rise bread, biscuit, or muffins than of distillery yeast, but the effect is quite as good.

To make bread of first-rate quality, the sponge should be made over night. Bread that has been raised three times is much the best. It is of a firm, even texture, has no fissures or cracks, and the slice presents an even surface. Here is a recipe that rarely fails: Take one quart of new milk, and add boiling water sufficient to make it warm to the touch. (Water can be substituted for the milk, but bread made without milk dries more rapidly.) Add one teaspoonful of salt, stir in three quarts of flour and one tea-cup of home-made yeast, or three tablespoonfuls of distillery yeast. Mix well together, then sprinkle flour all around the edges of the batter or sponge, leaving a small space in the middle uncovered. Set in a warm place to rise, covering with a pan. In summer the sponge will be ready to mould over before breakfast. Mix it up thick so that it can be kneaded well, and knead it half an hour or more. Chopping it with a chopping knife adds to its lightness and porosity. When well kneaded, sprinkle flour on the

bottom of the pan thickly, put in the dough, and set it away for half an hour or more, but watch it closely. (Bread making should be most carefully tended, as any neglect ruins the whole. If allowed to rise too much its sweetness is gone, and though saleratus will take away the acidity, its aroma and flavour are destroyed). When light enough turn out on moulding-board and knead thoroughly; divide into two loaves, reserving a portion for biscuit, so that the new-made loaves may not be cut that day. Mould well, put into the pans, let it rise in a warm place fifteen minutes, then bake in a hot oven. If the oven be hot, the bread will lose less weight in baking than when the oven is slack. The batter can be baked in the morning in muffin rings, and makes delicious breakfast cakes, better than hot biscuit.

Bread made with potatoes is very nice: Boil three large potatoes, well pared, or six good sized ones; rub them through a colander into your bread pan. Rinse them through the colander with a pint of boiling water; add one quart of milk. Stir in half a pint of flour, and when the liquor is cool enough add a teacup of home-made yeast; set it in a warm place. If this is done after dinner—using the potatoes left from the table—the sponge will be ready for more flour by eight or nine o'clock in the evening. Now mix to a stiff batter, sprinkle flour over it, set to rise. In the morning knead into a stiff dough, let it rise well, then knead again, put into pans, let it rise fifteen or twenty minutes, and bake in a hot oven.

All bread, biscuit or doughnuts raised with yeast should rise after being kneaded before they are baked. If put in the oven or fried directly they are never light. The dough has had no opportunity to recover its elasticity, and cannot be as good. Common sized loaves of bread will bake in three-quarters of an hour, provided the oven is of proper heat.

Palatable as good wheat bread is, there is no doubt that eating it entirely is not conducive to health. Rye, Indian meal and coarse flour make bread that is better adapted to the development of the muscles. Boston brown bread is much used, and is far better for young children than bread made of superfine flour. It is easily made: Take two quarts of Indian meal, sifted, one quart of rye meal or Graham flour, one large spoonful of salt, one teacup of molasses, one teacup of home-made yeast, or half the quantity of brewers' yeast. Mix with hot water as stiff as one can stir it, let it rise one hour, bake in deep earthen or iron pots, which are made purposely. To avoid the thick crust produced by baking so long, boil it four hours and bake one, removing the cover before setting it into the oven.

Good bread and butter cannot be made without some experience and intelligence. Upon their quality depends half the comfort of the table, and yet full half the people in this country never taste them in perfection.—*Ex.*

HANG UP PICTURES.—Any observing person will notice a great difference in people in the matter of furnishing or decorating their houses with pictures. Nothing adds more to the general appearance of a room than a tasteful adornment of the walls with articles of this kind, whether they be photographs, chromos, engravings, or oil paintings. And yet how often do we find parlours furnished with the costliest of carpets, curtains and furniture, where the walls are as bare as a sidewalk, and about as suggestive in all that pertains to matters of art and refined taste. There is evidence of wealth, but at the same time an utter lack of that appreciation of the way in which it should be used that it may render the greatest amount of return in all that redounds to culture and æsthetic taste. It reminds one of the barbaric splendour and show; of a wish to astonish rather than to charm; of great opportunities, with feeble realizations of the fact. On the other hand, many a humble home, never guilty of entertaining a Brussels carpet or a marble top table, has such an attractive look, as one opens the door, that it seems like seeing the face of an old friend, and almost wholly because it is so tastefully furnished with pictures, in appropriate positions, well fitted to the general size and height of the room. There is a cosy air about the surroundings which makes one seem at home, and a different feeling is imparted from that felt where there is more wealth exhibited, but less culture.

There is no excuse for a lack of pictures of some sort, for the cheapness of engravings and chromos place them within the reach of the poorest. It is not necessary that they should be oil paintings, or in expensive frames; even the cheaper chromos, or an engraving, or perchance a delicately tinted water sketch or crayon, may be more appropriate as compared with the furniture than one more expensive. But in these days when the engraver and lithographer have scattered the choice productions of their handicraft so cheaply all over the country, there is hardly any reason why even the humblest home may not have a variety of attractive pictures hung upon the walls to break the dull monotony of white plaster, or the stereotyped figures of paper hangings. And in the more luxurious furnished parlours, there is no excuse for a lack of pictures, save a want of proper taste in the occupants, which may be, let us charitably hope, more their misfortune than their fault.—*Cabinet Maker.*

WOMEN AND THE ART OF BEAUTY.—To a man who has a quick eye for the picturesque, or, let us say, the appropriate—and there are such men—these sights in modern drawing-rooms are more than disagreeable—they are ghastly. I am saying nothing about indecency. That is hardly a portion of my present subject. But why, if a woman has a neck like a skeleton, must she tell the world so? Why, if fate has made her grow stouter than it is permitted to be, must she squeeze and fold her fat into a tight low dress because it is the fashion? Why must she draw a hard line around her shoulders, that seems to cut her in two, and wear sleeves which are mere straps to keep her gown on, without caring, without knowing, whether her arms are models? Why must she wear trimmings of great O's and X's and vandykes on her skirt, so that at a little distance the first thing about her that strikes the eye is the trimming? Why, if very tall, must she take the arm of a very little man, and make herself and him look absurd? Why will she draw attention to her want of colour by wearing red or arsenic green? Why, with red hair, is her dress pink? Why, when in a very pale dress, does she lean against the wall which the barbarity of English ignorance has papered with white? Why, with black hair, does she carry a heavy burden of jet flowers, combs, and impossibly thick plaits that make her head look like an elephant's on an antelope's body? Why will she trust to the very moderate gifts nature has endowed her with, to fight against the most abnormal disadvantages? Why—why—but enough: these are

only some of the insane mistakes that nearly all girls commit, many of them girls with artistic tastes and capacities, in every direction except dress, whose eyes you may see shine with pleasure at a sunset or a bean-flower—which nevertheless they steadily refuse to take a hint from? Very few women know what style of dress suits them best, or what colours: even those who study the art study it wrongly. One may often see a woman who has the makings of a dignified goddess *se poser en coquette*, or a little creature attempt to be stately who can only be simple. The best grace is perfect naturalness. Our manners form themselves, but we must form our setting of them. Nature can do much, but not everything. Art should do something. You must choose suitable colours and suitable shapes for your dresses; you must study the room that you are to appear in, if you ever mean to look right; and if you know not what kind of room you are to be seen in, or if you know that it is one of the modern white and glaring drawing-rooms, a plain black dress (but never with low neck and short sleeves) will always be safe. The reason that an ordinary low neck with short sleeves looks worse in black than in any other colour is because the hard line round the bust and arms is too great a contrast to the skin. A low neck always lessens the height, and a dark dress made thus lessens it still more, and it strikes the artistic eye as cutting the body in pieces, in this way:—If you see a fair person dressed in a low dark dress, standing against a light background some way off, the effect will be that of an empty dress hung up, the face, neck, and arms being scarcely discernible. On the other hand, against a dark background the head and bust will be thrown up sharply and the whole dress and body will disappear. This effect, often enough seen, is execrably bad. If you must wear a low black dress, let it be cut square, giving the height of the shoulders (or better, the angles rounded, for corners are very trying), and have plenty of white or pale gauze, or thin black net, to soften the harsh line between the skin and the dress. White gauze or lace softens down the blackness of the dress at the edge of the bodice, and thin black stuff has an equally good effect, as it shades the whiteness of the skin into the dark colour of the gown. Only under these conditions does the sudden contrast enhance, as some persons suppose, the fairness of the complexion. Nature abhors sharp edges. We see contrasts in flowers and in marbles; but they are always softened, each colour stealing a little of the other at the junction of the two. Even the sharp edges of a crag or house against the sky are seen by a practised eye to gather some softening greyness either from the surrounding colours or by mere perspective. Trees grow thin at the edges and melt into the sky; in a prism, of course, we see the tender amalgamations of hues more distinctly, the secondaries lying clearly between the primaries. Ruskin had noticed this surely when he said, "All good colour is gradated," each mixed into the next where there are contrasts.—*St. Pauls.*

OUR BEDS.—Considering that about a third of our lives is passed in our beds, they deserve much more attention than they get. France has long been in advance of the rest of the civilized world in this respect, having really paid as careful attention to excellence in this respect as to that in cookery. The grand secret of the superiority of French bedding is to be found not merely in the existence of good springs and well-filled mattresses, but in the fact that these mattresses are pulled and re-made annually. This is the reason why beds in other countries are generally such a mockery of the French beds, which they are intended to imitate. French houses usually have a court-yard behind, in which carpets are beaten and various other domestic business is transacted, and here in fine weather may be seen the practice of mattress stuffing. An old mattress, on which heavy bodies have lain for a series of years, becomes, no matter how well fitted with horse hair, nearly as springy as street car cushions. If you want a comfortable bed, here is the unfailing receipt: First, very good springs; secondly, a thick hair mattress over them; thirdly, a thick wool mattress over that. Both mattresses should be remade every two years.

ANTIDOTES FOR POISON.—Commercial oil of turpentine is a good antidote to poisoning by phosphorus. The two substances form a compound in the stomach resembling sperm-aceti, and this can readily be removed from the system.

Laudanum, or other anodyne is sometimes taken by mistake or otherwise in excess. Swallow strong coffee or the whites of several eggs instantly; all these things are to be done while the doctor is coming. Let every family remember that sweet oil, the white of eggs, and strong coffee antagonize a larger number of poisons than perhaps other things all together.

If laudanum, or any other poison not burning the throat, is taken and is promptly discovered, the best plan is to get it out of the stomach instantly, which is done by stirring a tablespoonful of ground mustard in a tumbler of water, and drinking it down at once; almost before it is down the whole contents of the stomach begin to be ejected.

PICKLED EGGS.—At the season of the year when the stock of eggs is plentiful, cause some four or six dozen to be boiled in a capacious saucepan until they become quite hard. Then, after removing the shells, lay them carefully in large mouthed jars, and pour over them scalding vinegar well seasoned with whole pepper, allspice, a few races of ginger and a few cloves of garlic. When cold they are bunged down close, and in a month are fit for use. Where eggs are plentiful the above pickle is by no means expensive, and as an accompaniment to cold meat it cannot be outvalled.

IT IS A FACT.—That the Shoshonees Remedy and Pills exercise most wonderful powers in promoting appetite, improving digestion, regulating the bowels, and removing nervousness and debility. The weakest will take no harm from the use of this great Indian Alterative and Tonic Medicine, but will gradually regain their health. The strongest will preserve themselves from many of the mishaps in which their boasted strength and fearlessness of results often betray them. Long suffering invalids may look forward to this rectifying and revivifying medicine with the certain hope of having their maladies mitigated, if not removed by its means.

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Horse owners will find the Nutritious Condiment of great service at this time of the year. Where green food cannot be obtained it is invaluable. Ask your druggist for a 25 cent packet (2 lbs weight) that you may try it.

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