

SCHOOL for HOUSEWIVES

By MARTON HARLAND



They are not responsible beings until after breakfast



In all my long life I have heard not more than half a dozen persons say that they really enjoyed breakfast. The consensus of popular opinion is to the effect that the meal is a duty, not a pleasure, and that it is grudgingly performed. In France it is never a family function. Each member of the household, if he or she does not "mourn apart," sulks in the solitude of the bed chamber over the compulsory task of disposing of rolls and coffee. "Only that and nothing more!" At noon, when they have become measurably reconciled to the fact of continued existence in a world that does not pay the expenses of running it, men and women meet about a civilized table for the "déjeuner à la fourchette," which corresponds to our luncheon.

The English breakfast, never served before 9 or 10 o'clock, except in the hunting season, is a ponderous affair. Tea and coffee, boiled eggs, muffins, toast, and on the sideboard, rounds and joints of cold meat, not to mention jaded sweetbreads, deviled kidneys and "broiled bones," await the robust appetite of family and guests. For, as it is known, the English are not early risers as a rule. In America we growl at the laziness of the shopkeeper who does not open his doors and raise the window blinds by 7 o'clock on summer mornings, whereas when we cross the ocean we have to submit to the inconvenient custom of a 9 o'clock "opening" in town and country. It strikes the unphilosophical tourist as what Miss Ophelia, in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," calls "deadly shifftish." Yet the British are not a shiftless nation.

The American breakfast is distinctly a national institution. It is served at what nine-tenths of the eaters would condemn as an ungodly early hour; it is a heavy meal; it is a family meal, and in a shamefully large percentage of homes, the homes of Christian citizens, the least social and the most uncomfortable repast of the day.

NOT A PLEASANT PICTURE

Gentlemen and gentlemen, with never a touch of shame, that they "are not responsible beings until after breakfast." Father families veil his son's face with the morning paper and the mother bids the children "be quiet!" for she has "a cruel breakfast headache." Even the babble of the group is cross under the teasing of her biggest brother, and the others snap at one another as dogs snarl over their troth.

Do I exaggerate? Let those whose experience has been more fortunate and whose observations have been made in summer weather arise to dispute the picture. In how many so-called happy homes is not "father's breakfast grouch" a terror and a byword? To how many tables does the mother bring a brow furrowed by the coming cares of the new day and a critical spirit totally unlike her tender, kindly self as her husband looks on for the rest of the twenty-four hours?

The oddest part of the exhibition is that nobody is humiliated by the recollection of his morning mood. The man who "wishes" his gentle wife "would mind her own business" when she ventures a timid query as to the morning news over which he is gawking, and tosses his carfare to his son with a savage "You children are forever begging for money!" laughs at the recollection in his afternoon chat. "What else is to be expected of a fellow at breakfast? He is hardly an accountable creature."

MUCH-NEEDED GRACE

We learn at our mother's knees to pray, "Give us day by day our daily bread," and we do well to carry the prayer in our hearts all our life long. Who of us asks in true humility and earnestness, "Give us this day our breakfast grace?"

Very Dixon in Again. Black locks and a dolorous rest upon a North End face, Bobby enjoyed a few hours of repose yesterday morning, completing a sentence of two days.

I could not, I may hint at homes, otherwise worthy of the name, where not a word is spoken during the progress of breakfast, except what is connected with the business of the hour or



"half hour. There is no lingering over that gloomy altar of sacrifice to physical needs."

It is a cogent argument in support of the light breakfast—that excludes potatoes, steak, pork and chops, and for most of the week hot breads—that the American goes forth to his daily toll at an hour when the foreigner has not left his pillow. The set out of all the roundabout after awakening a solid meal is highly prejudicial to health. Henry Ward Beecher changed the hour of the second service in his church from afternoon to evening because everybody has an early dinner on Sunday. And he

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