

KITCHEN COUNSEL.

COFFEE.—Coffee was first brought to England in 1652. It was only prepared and sold for a long time, at first, at taverns; from which circumstance they acquired the name of "Coffee Houses." These soon became the resort of literary men and politicians; and on this account, more than from any hostility to the berry itself, it was that these houses were all shut up by royal edict in 1675. Previously to the introduction of tea and coffee into England, the people were accustomed to drink beer and wine; but their use had long been known in the East. The Chinese were the first who prepared tea, and the following anecdote will show that they are at least as whimsical as we, while it proves that the virtues attributed to tea are either imaginary, or may be found in many plants in our own country, whose cheapness has prevented them from being noticed. When the Dutch first visited China, they could not obtain their tea without disbursing money; but on their second voyage, they carried a great quantity of dried sage, and bartered it with the Chinese, at the rate of one pound of sage for three or four pounds of tea; but at length the Dutch could not procure a sufficient quantity of sage to supply the demand.

The following are some of the rules laid down for preparing this agreeable beverage:—

1. The best coffee is imported from Mocha. It is said to owe much of its superior quality to being kept long.

Coffee of all kinds should be carefully roasted by a gradual application of heat—scorching, but not burning it. Grinding coffee has been found preferable to pounding it: by the latter process some of the oily substances are lost. A filtering tin or silver pot, with double sides, between which hot water must be poured, to prevent the coffee from cooling, as practised in Germany, is the best machine to be used. Simple infusion in this implement, with boiling water, is all that is required to make a cup of good coffee and the use of isinglass, the white of eggs, or fish-skin, to fine the liquor, is quite unnecessary. By this means coffee is made quicker than tea.

It requires about one small cup of coffee-powder to make four cups of tincture. This is at the rate of an ounce of good powder to four common coffee cups. When the powder is put in the bag, as many cups of boiling water are poured over it as may be wanted; and if the quantity wanted is very small, so that, after it is filtrated, it does not reach the lower end of the bag, the liquor must be poured back three or four times, till it has acquired the necessary strength.

2. Let it be burnt in a close vessel, at a moderate heat, till it becomes quite black.

Let the coffee be ground or pulverized very fine, and pour hot water upon that portion which is designed for the morning or evening, and let it stand twelve hours before it is used. During the process of steeping, be careful not to raise the degree of heat to the point of boiling. Coffee prepared in this manner has a much richer and more agreeable taste than when it is cooked in the usual way; and for this reason:—Nearly all the aromatic, volatile principle, which resides in it in its natural state, and which adds very much to its pleasant flavor, is retained; whereas, if it is subjected to a high boiling heat a few moments, this ingredient is thrown off with the steam or vapor, and nothing remains but the grounds and more inferior qualities of the coffee.

Coffee has been repeatedly examined by chemists, both in its raw and roasted state. Several ingredients enter into its composition, such as resin, gum, a bitter extractive matter, gallic acid, etc. When it is roasted, a peculiar change takes place in its constituent parts, and if great care be not taken in the burning and steeping, the volatile particles will be dissipated and lost.

3. In making coffee, much care is requisite to extract the whole strength and flavor of the berry; and moreover it is very erroneous and most expensive to sweeten it with raw or moist sugar. Many persons imagine that the moist sugar tends more to sweeten; but if experiment be made, it will be found that one half the quantity in weight of refined sugar will add more sweetness, and the flavor of the coffee will be much more pure and delicate. In Holland, where coffee is the universal beverage of the lower classes, the sugar cannot be too refined; and the boatmen on the canals may be seen mixing the most beautiful white refined sugar with their coffee, while on such their custom and taste they pride themselves highly.

The seeds of grapes are generally used, in Germany, as a substitute for coffee, and they make a very excellent substitute. When pressed, they yield a quantity of oil, and afterwards, when boiled furnish a liquid very similar to that produced by coffee. Its flavor is delicious.

RICE BREAD.—Take one pound of rice, and boil it gently to a thick paste, which, when mixed with the usual quantity of yeast, will be sufficient to make 5 lbs of wheat or barley meal into a dough. When risen, bake it in the usual way. The London Chronicle says that this mixture with wheat or barley will produce a very great increase of food.

APPLE BREAD.—A Frenchman has invented, and practised with great success, a method of making bread with common apples, very far superior to potato bread.

After having boiled one third of peeled apples, he bruised them while quite warm into two thirds of flour, including the proper quantity of yeast, and kneaded the whole without water, the juice of the fruit being quite sufficient. When the mixture had acquired the consistency of paste, he put it into a vessel, in which he allowed it to rise for twelve hours. By this process he obtained a very excellent bread, full of eyes, and extremely palatable and light.

SWEET APPLE PUDDING.—Take one pint of scalding milk, half a pint of Indian meal, a tea-spoonful of salt, and six sweet apples cut into small pieces, and bake not less than three hours: the apples will afford an excellent rich jelly. This is truly one of the most luxurious yet simple Yankee puddings made.

CREAM CAKES.—A quart of cream; four eggs; sifted flour sufficient for a thick batter; a small teaspoonful of pearlash or saleratus; a spoonful of salt. Beat four eggs very light, and stir them by degrees (a little at a time) into a quart of cream; add gradually enough of sifted flour to make a thick batter: put in the salt; dissolve the pearlash in as much vinegar as will cover it, and stir it into the mixture. Bake it in muffin-rings. Send the cakes to the table quite hot; pull them open, and butter them.

For these cakes, sour cream is better than sweet. The pearlash will remove the acidity, and the batter will be improved in lightness.

GINGER SIRUP.—Take one pound of race ginger; beat it into small pieces in a mortar. Lay them in a pan, cover them with water, and let them soak all night. Next day, take the ginger, with the water in which it has soaked, put it into a preserving-kettle, with two-gallons of water, and boil it down to seven pints. Let it settle, and then strain it through muslin. Put one pound of loaf sugar to each pint of the liquor. After the sugar has melted in the liquor, return it to the kettle, and boil it one hour more, skimming it well. When cold, bottle it for use.

POTATOES A LA MAITRE D'HOTEL.—Every Englishman who goes to the continent eats potatoes *a la maitre d'hotel*. On his return, he is desirous of having them at his own table; a thing that can seldom be accomplished, though the process of preparing them is very simple. It is as follows:—Boil the potatoes, and let them become cold. Then cut them into rather thick slices. Put a lump of fresh butter in a stew-pan, and add a little flour, about a teaspoonful for a middling sized dish.—When the flour has boiled a little while in the butter, add by degrees a cupful of broth or water.—When this has boiled up, put in the potatoes with chopped parsley, pepper, and salt. Let the potatoes stew a few minutes, then take them from the fire, and, when quite off the boil, add the yolk of an egg beat up with lemon juice, and a tablespoonful of cold water. As soon as the sauce has set, the potatoes may be dished up, and sent to table.—*Magazine of Domestic Economy.*

WATERY POTATOES.—We every day hear complaints about watery potatoes. Put into the pot a piece of lime as large as a hen's egg; and how watery soever the potatoes may have been, when the water is poured off, the potatoes will be perfectly dry and mealy.

WINTER BUTTER.—An idea prevails very extensively, that good butter cannot be made in the winter. This is a great mistake. Where the process is well understood, as fine butter is made in the depths of winter, as at any season of the year. By pursuing the following course, the matter will be accomplished:—Let the cows be kept under cover in a warm stable, well fed with the best hay and provender, and milked regularly morning and evening. Place the milk in pans, in as cold a place as may be found about the dairy house; the sooner it freezes, the better. As soon as it is frozen thoroughly, take the cream from the top—the frost will force the cream to the surface—and churn it with no other warmth than the air of the kitchen at the distance of eight or ten feet from the fire-place. It requires more time to fetch the butter than in summer; but when brought, it will be of the finest flavor and quality.—*N. Y. Adv.*

BAD BUTTER.—It may be useful to grocers, as well as to private families, to know that had butter, so bad as to be scarcely eatable or salable, may be restored to its original quality, by washing it in water sufficiently warm to make it dissolve freely in the hand, until the old salt is washed out, and by then adding the proper quantity of new salt, and about one ounce of fine moist sugar to the pound. Beat it up till it is free from water, and it will be perfectly good.

CHIMNEYS.—Instead of plastering the inside of chimneys in the usual way, take mortar made with one peck of suit to each bushel of lime, adding as much sand and loam as will render it fit to work, and then lay on a thick coat. If the chimney has no offsets for the soot to lodge on, it will continue perfectly clean and free from all danger of taking fire. The writer of this has tried the experiment, and after three years' constant use of a chimney plastered as above directed, he could never obtain a quart of soot though he several times employed a sweep to scrape it from top to bottom. To persons living in the country, this will be found valuable.

RICE COOKING.—1st. The rice must be thoroughly scalded and rinsed in several waters, until the starchy particles, which are often sour or musty, are entirely removed.

2d. A handful of salt should be thrown into a pot of water, which must boil before the rice is sprinkled in.

3d. The rice should be boiled steadily twelve minutes by the watch; the water should then be poured off, and the pot covered and set close to the fire to steam for ten minutes.

Thus prepared, and eaten with gravy, milk, butter, etc., rice is one of the most digestible articles of food in nature; but if, on the contrary, it be badly cooked, few substances are more apt to disorder the alimentary system.

LEATHER WATER-PROOF.—Mix together a quarter of a pound of mutton tallow, three ounces of common turpentine, one ounce of shellac, and an ounce of beeswax. Make the leather perfectly dry and warm, and rub in this mixture as warm as possible, and repeat the operation every other day for three or four times successively.

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February 2.

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Black's Wharf. January 6th, 1838.

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