

## THE HOUSEHOLD.

## SPONGE CAKE.

BY ALICE A. MCKOON.

Ever since I began to dabble in eggs and sugar and flour, I have had a mania for trying recipes for sponge cake. My experiments have been as the sands of the sea for multitude, and have ranged from the variety made with a dozen eggs, sugar, flour, and no baking powder (which, by the way, rewarded me by falling flat as a pancake), through many combinations and concoctions down to the batter nearly as thin as water. For some time I used a recipe for cream sponge cake that was like the little girl we have all heard of—when it was good it was very, very good, and when it was bad it was horrid—tough as sole-leather. So I gave it up at last, as no dependence could be placed upon it.

From time to time I have congratulated myself that I had at last found the ideal cake and might cease from further experiments, only to discover that my new 'rule' was 'unreliable' like its predecessors, and that I must betake myself to 'pastures new.'

But now I can say 'Eureka, for my present recipe has been in constant use for over eight years, and the most fastidious member of the household has never suggested a change. The formula runs thus: One and one-half cups of sugar, one-half cup of cold water, three eggs, a pinch of salt, a heaping teaspoonful of baking powder, two cups of flour, and extract of lemon to taste. To insure success it is necessary to add a generous allowance of 'judgment,' else the result may prove as unsatisfactory as did a certain young housekeeper's 'One, Two, Three, Four' cake. She said she knew the recipe was all right, for she learned it when she was a little girl, and was careful to follow it exactly, using one cup of flour, two cups of sugar, three cups of butter, and four cups of eggs. But for some reason the cake did not bake right, and John would not even taste of it.

After repeated experiments I have chosen the following method of 'mixing' my sponge cake as certain to produce the best results: I put the sugar in a large earthenware bowl, pour the water over it and let it dissolve while I beat the yolks of the eggs to a yellow foam, which is then added to the sugar and water. Then I put in the sifted flour with the baking powder, also well sifted, and the pinch of salt (which I sometimes forget if I am in a hurry), and stir all together till the batter is smooth. Then I add the whites of the eggs, beaten till they will stand alone, and the flavoring, and pour the mixture into a cake-pan lined with buttered paper.

This makes a large loaf, and takes about forty minutes to bake—rather more than less. Much depends upon the baking, for if the oven is very hot at first it has a tendency to make the cake dry. I once asked a friend who had begged the recipe what success she had, and she replied 'O it was as dry as a chip! Not in the least like yours.' That was easily explained when I found that she had put it into a very hot oven and baked it less than half an hour. Therefore have only a 'moderate' oven to begin with, and if there is any need for hurry let it be at the finish rather than the start. When properly baked this sponge cake, if kept in a close tin box, will remain moist and delicious for two weeks or more.

The recipe makes such a large loaf that I often take out enough batter for a 'roll' jelly cake, and still have enough for a respectable loaf. Sometimes I make a cream or chocolate roll, only whatever 'filling' is used it must be spread on with haste, and the cake rolled up in a cloth as quickly as possible, or the edges will get crisp and break. Sometimes, too, I save out batter enough to fill a generous pie-tin, and serve it warm with liquid sauce for a 'cottage pudding.' This is frequently made for the benefit of the one who never eats cake, but is a lover of all kinds of puddings. He will accept a good sized triangle, food it with sauce, and eat it with evident appreciation. But if we urge him next day to take some cake he will refuse with thanks, saying 'You know I don't care anything for cake.' It is a standing joke in the family, and we call him Consistency.

## AROUND THE TABLE.

Does it ever occur to you that the daily gathering around the family board is an opportunity for the pleasantest as well as the most lasting impressions? Nowhere are the amenities of life more enjoyable nor more quickly recognized than at the table. There, too, not only family affairs are discussed, but those of the state and nation. It is the place for ideas to be exchanged, the place for good cheer and sympathy. The common interests, the pleasant familiarity with different individual tastes combine to make each meal a pleasant season. Can you not recall delightful letters from some old friend that gave an unwonted zest to the dinners where they were read, or the amusing story your father told when he laughed until he cried?

The birthday breakfasts of children sometimes make a great many days happy for them.

It was the tired, overworked wife of a poor minister that contrived to brighten her table as well as her children by placing at every plate a spray of red clover blossoms.

So when providing dainty appointments for the table, and appetizing dishes, forget not to secure all the graciousness that you admire, some table talk of charming things, some good thought or helpful work, as well as an abundance of that other element, 'consideration for others,' which will outweigh all other provisions in making meal-time a joy to remember.—*Ram's Horn.*

## TO REMOVE SPOTS AND STAINS.

There is not a day in the year when the housekeeper is not called upon to remove spots or stains from clothing, bed or table linen, furniture, carpets, silver or brasses, and to know how to do this quickly and effectually is an immense saving of time and temper.

Grease spots are perhaps those with which we have most often to deal, and though sufficiently discouraging, can usually be removed by patience and the proper means.

Ammonia is one of the most useful articles with which to take grease from cloth. For this purpose it should be diluted about one-half, and then tested on a piece of the goods before putting it on the garment. If it changes the color, dilute still more. Indeed, it is a wise precaution to test all cleaning compounds upon a bit of the material before using. To use, place several thicknesses of old cotton cloth under the goods to be cleaned, and then rub briskly with the diluted ammonia. Work this out gently with clear water, and repeat if necessary using clear water last.

Benzine or naphtha will dissolve grease, but as generally used the trouble is augmented. The best method I have found is to place the soiled spot between two pieces of blotting paper and press with a warm iron, allowing it to remain on some time that the grease may be absorbed as much as possible. Then, using a sponge, dampen the spot thoroughly with benzine, stroking gently towards the centre. Absorb this with blotting paper and repeat with benzine till you are sure no trace of the grease remains, when the benzine must be washed out with clear water and the goods pressed between two pieces of cloth, using the iron on the wrong side.

Wheel grease on wash goods can be taken out by using cold water and soap. If the spot has been on a long time, first rub it well with kerosene oil. Should the material still show a yellow stain rub with ammonia and then wash with soap.

Magnesia will remove grease from silk or woollen goods. Rub freely on both sides and hang away for a few days. For delicate colors use ether applying without rubbing and scraping off the adhering substance as fast as it becomes softened.

To remove tar, paint or rosin from woollen or silk, soak in pure alcohol for twenty or thirty minutes, and then rub gently, repeating if necessary.

To remove wax from cloth, hold a hot iron as near it as possible without scorching, when the wax will evaporate. Lay between heavy brown paper, when, if any stain remains, wipe off with a bit of cloth dipped in best benzine or alcohol.

Grease spots are frequently found on carpets, especially those of the dining room. An excellent mixture to use in such cases is made of two ounces of ammonia, the same

of the best white castile soap, and one ounce each of glycerine and ether. The soap is shaved fine and then dissolved over the fire in one pint of soft water, when two quarts more water is to be added. The glycerine and ether are then put in and the mixture is shaken, bottled and corked. To use, add one half pint of this to an ordinary pail of water, and wash the soiled articles in it, rinsing afterwards. If hot grease is spilled on a floor or carpet it is a good plan to deluge at once with cold water, that it may harden and be scraped up. Flour or meal sprinkled over the oil or grease will help to absorb it if left on for some time.

What is more discouraging than soot carelessly spilled upon carpets in putting up or taking down stovepipes? When this occurs on no account put water on it, but run to the kitchen for the salt box and throw handfuls upon the offending spot, scraping up as often as discolored. I have cleaned very light and delicate carpets in this way, so that no one but myself ever knew of the accident.

Salt is also excellent for removing ink stains from carpets or woollen goods, when the ink is all absorbed, moistening the salt with sufficient water to make it act on the ink. I have in this way entirely removed ink from a light Brussels carpet when it had become dry before my attention was called to it. Sometimes milk proves more effectual. First absorb the ink with blotting paper and then pour on sweet skim-milk and absorb with bits of soft old cloth, repeating as long as necessary. When dry, if any grease is left by the milk take up with benzine.—*H. Maria George, in N. Y. Observer.*

## KEEP UP WITH THE CHILDREN.

BY MRS. M. C. RANKIN.

'Isn't the physics lesson awful hard?' inquired Charlie Blake of Fred Bellamy, a new boy who had lately entered the high school.

'I thought it was going to be,' was the reply, 'but mother read it over with me and then we talked about it, and the first I knew I had it all.'

'Your mother!' exclaimed Charlie, 'why, is she a teacher?'

'She isn't anything but just my mother,' returned Fred, a trifle indignantly. 'What makes you ask that?'

'Oh, I don't know. Only I say it's funny she should study physics. Now isn't it?'

'Why?' demanded Fred.

'Oh, I don't know, only my mother would never have time. I shouldn't wonder if she didn't know what physics means. Anyway, she doesn't know I'm studying it.'

'Nor your father, either?' asked Fred.

'Oh, sometimes I ask him about things, but he always says he used to get his lessons alone, so I don't bother him much.'

As the two boys joined the crowd which was entering the high school gate, I wondered how many of their mothers did not know what their boys and girls were studying. If mothers only realized what an influence and hold on their children is lost through ignorance of their pursuits, I am sure they would reform.

Do not say you haven't the time. Spend less time in society, in having a needless variety on your table, in thinking about and making your clothes, or in sweeping and scrubbing; but do keep up with your children.

If when they commence to attend school you begin to look over their lessons with them every day and continue the habit, you will be surprised to find how little time it takes, and how easily you go from one subject to another, even those which you never studied before. The benefit is twofold. Always seeking to make the lesson attractive to your child, your mind is kept active, while he thoroughly understands and enjoys what otherwise would be a dreary task.

If you find your child has a special taste for botany, geology, or any other study, encourage him in it by showing that you enjoy it too. Be patient when he rushes in with his arms full of common flowers or stones. Show him how to arrange them and insist upon his taking care of them himself. If he is unwilling to do this, his interest is not very deep. Go with him, as often as you can, into the fields and woods and help him in collecting specimens. If he has a genius for mechanics, not only make an effort to provide him

with suitable tools and a work-room, but take an interest in every piece of work he attempts. It is safe to say that every child has a talent for something, and he should be encouraged to make the most of this talent.

The secret of success in bringing up boys is to make them love their home, so that they will be happier there than anywhere else. If they feel that father and mother like to hear about everything they do, even down to trading a jack-knife, that they are ready to listen to every new plan and experience, then they are not very likely to want to spend their evenings out, nor to have any friends or adventures which must be kept secret. If they know that father and mother keep track of their lessons and are anxious to have them understand every one, they will enjoy their studies and learn three times as much as they otherwise would.

I don't believe in helping them much. Teach them to help themselves, to rely upon their own powers, and you will have taught them one of the great lessons of life.—*Christian at Work.*

## HOW TO SWEEP.

For sweeping a room neatly there is nothing like newspaper aid. Take a page of newspaper, or other paper, at a time, wet in hot water and squeeze it until it ceases to drip. Tear into pieces the size of one's hand and cast them all over the carpet. Then sweep, and most of the dust in the room, if you use your broom judiciously, will be gathered into the papers. On matting use larger pieces of paper, pushing them about ahead of the broom, to take off fluff, if any, before beginning the regular sweeping. After a velvet or other heavy-pile carpet is thoroughly swept, a sponging with ammonia and water will preserve its brightness wonderfully. About once a month, after sweeping, take a pailful of warm water, adding thereto a teaspoonful of ammonia or turpentine. Two spoonfuls of the latter will do good, it being a preventive against moths. Go over the whole carpet with a large soft cloth or sponge, wrung so as not to drip. Doubtless you will be surprised at the rapid discoloration of the water. If the carpet be large and much soiled and dusty, the water should be changed once or twice.—*Philadelphia Ledger.*

## RECIPES.

(From Miss Parloa's New Cook Book.)

**TOAD IN THE HOLE.**—This is an English dish, and a good one, despite the unpleasant name. One pound of round steak, one pint of milk, one cupful of flour, one egg, and salt and pepper. Cut the steak into dice. Beat the egg very light; add milk to it, and then half a teaspoonful of salt. Pour upon the flour, gradually, beating very light and smooth. Butter a two-quart dish, and in it put the meat. Season well, and pour over it the batter. Bake an hour in a moderate oven. Serve hot. This dish can be made with mutton and lamb in place of steak.

**TOMATO SOUP.**—One quart can of tomato, two heaping tablespoonfuls of flour, one of butter, one teaspoonful of salt, one of sugar, a pint of hot water. Let tomato and water come to a boil. Rub flour, butter, and a tablespoonful of tomato together. Stir into boiling mixture, add seasoning, boil all together fifteen minutes, rub through a sieve, and serve with toasted bread. This bread should first be cut in thin slices; should be buttered, cut into little squares, placed in a pan, buttered side up, and browned in a quick oven.

**BOILED TURKEY WITH CELERY.**—Chop half a head of celery very fine. Mix with it one quart of bread crumbs, two scant tablespoonfuls of salt, half a teaspoonful of pepper, two heaping tablespoonfuls of butter, and two eggs. Stuff the turkey with this; sew up and truss. Wrap a large square of white cotton cloth out of cold water, and dredge it thickly with flour. Put the turkey in this, and plunge into boiling water. Let it boil rapidly for fifteen minutes; then set back where it will simmer. Allow three hours for a turkey weighing nine pounds, and twelve minutes for every additional pound. Serve with celery sauce. The stuffing may be made the same as above, only substitute oysters for celery, and serve with oyster sauce.

**COMMON FISH BALLS.**—One pint of finely chopped cooked salt fish, six medium-sized potatoes, one egg, one heaping tablespoonful of butter, pepper, two tablespoonfuls of cream, or four of milk. Pare the potatoes, and put on in boiling water. Boil half an hour. Drain off all the water, turn the potatoes into the tray with the fish, and mash light and fine with a vegetable masher. Add the butter, pepper, milk, and eggs, and mix all very thoroughly. Taste and see if salt enough. Shape into smooth balls, the size of an egg, and fry brown in boiling fat enough to float them. They will cook in three minutes. If the potatoes are very mealy it will take more milk or cream to moisten them, about two spoonfuls more. If the fat is smoking in the centre, and the balls are made very smooth, they will not soak fat; but if the fat is not hot enough, they certainly will. Putting too many balls into the fat at one time cools it. Put in say four or five. Let the fat regain its first temperature, then add more.