

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BREAD.

TO PURIFY YEAST FOR BREAD OR CAKES.

The yeast procured from a public brewery is often so extremely bitter that it can only be rendered fit for use by frequent washings, and after these even it should be cautiously employed. Mix it, when first brought in, with a large quantity of cold water, and set it by until the following morning in a cool place; then drain off the water, and stir the yeast up well with as much more of fresh; it must again stand several hours before the water can be poured clear from it. By changing this daily in winter, and both night and morning in very hot weather, the yeast may be preserved fit for use much longer than it would otherwise be; and should it ferment rather less freely after a time, a *small* portion of brown sugar stirred to it before the bread is made will quite restore its strength.

German yeast, imported in a solid state, is now much sold in London, and answers, we are told, remarkably well; but we have not ourselves had an opportunity of proving it.

THE OVEN.

A brick oven, heated with wood, is far superior to any other for baking bread, as well as for most other purposes, the heat of an iron one being much less easy to regulate; but those attached to the kitchen ranges are convenient, for the facility they afford at all times of baking in a small way. They are, however, we should say, far from economical as regards the proportion of fuel required to heat them; and the same objection may be made to the American oven also; the strong smell, too, emitted from the iron ones, and diffused often entirely through a house, is peculiarly unpleasant. A brick oven should be well heated with faggot wood, or with a faggot, and two or three solid logs; and after it is cleared, the door should be closely shut for quite half an hour before the baking commences; the heat will then be well sustained for a succession of bread, pies, cakes, and small pastry. The servant who habitually attends at an oven will soon become acquainted with the precise quantity of fuel which it requires, and all other peculiarities which may be connected with it. In general more time must be allowed to bake any thing in an iron than in a brick oven.

TO MAKE BREAD.

Every cook, and we might almost say, *every woman*, ought to be perfectly acquainted with the mode of making good household bread; and skill in preparing other articles of food is poor compensation for ignorance upon this one essential point. A very slight degree of attention, moreover, will enable any person to succeed in it, and there is, consequently, small excuse for those who neglect to render themselves properly acquainted with the process.

The best flour will generally be found the cheapest in the end; it should be purchased if possible from a miller who can be depended on for supplying it good and unadulterated. Let it be stored always in a

dry place, as damp is very injurious to it; if kept habitually in a chest, this should be entirely emptied at intervals, cleaned with great nicety, and not filled again until it is perfectly dry. The kneading trough tub, or pan, with every thing else indeed used for the bread, or for the oven, should at all times be kept scrupulously clean.

The yeast of mild home-brewed beer is the best that can be procured, and requires no purifying; but it should be strained through a hair-sieve after it is mixed with a portion of warm milk, or water, before it is added to the flour.

Very rapid fermentation, which is produced by using more than the necessary quantity of yeast, is by no means advantageous to the bread, which not only becomes dry and stale from it, but is of less sweet and pleasant flavour than that which is more slowly fermented. In winter it should always be placed near the fire, but never sufficiently so to become hot; nor should it ever be allowed to become perfectly cold. Put half a bushel (more or less, according to the consumption of the family) of flour into the kneading tub or trough, and hollow it well in the middle; dilute a pint of yeast as it is brought from the brewery, or half the quantity if it has been washed and rendered solid, with four quarts or more of lukewarm milk or water, or a mixture of the two; stir into it, from the surrounding part, with a wooden spoon, as much flour as will make a thick batter; throw a little over it, and leave this, which is called the leaven, to rise before proceeding further. In about an hour it will have swollen considerably, and have burst through the coating of flour on the top; then pour in as much more warm liquid as will convert the whole, with *good kneading*, and this should not be spared, into a firm dough, of which the surface should be entirely free from lumps or crumbs. Throw a cloth over, and let it remain until it has risen very much a second time, which will be in an hour, or something more, if the batch be large. Then work it lightly up, and mould it into loaves of from two to three pounds weight; send them directly to a well-heated oven, and bake them from an hour and a half to an hour and three quarters.

Flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel; salt (when it is liked), 4 to 6 ozs.; yeast, 1 pint unwashed, or $\frac{1}{2}$ pint if purified; milk, or water, 2 quarts: 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour. Additional liquid as needed.

BORDYKE BREAD. (*Author's Receipt.*)

Mix with a gallon of flour a large teaspoonful of fine salt, make a hollow in the centre, and pour in two tablespoonsful of solid, well-purified yeast, gradually diluted with about two pints and a half of milk, and work it into a thick batter with the surrounding flour; dust a little on the top, and leave it to rise from an hour to an hour and a half; then knead it up with as much more warm skimmed milk as will render it quite firm and smooth without being very stiff; let it rise another hour, and divide it into three loaves; put them into square tins slightly buttered, or into round baking pans, and bake them about an hour and a quarter in a well-heated oven. The dough can be formed into household loaves if preferred, and sent to the oven in the usual way. When a finer and more spongy kind of bread is required for immediate eating, substitute new milk for skimmed, dissolve in it about an ounce of butter, leave it more liquid when the sponge is set, and let

the whole be lightly kneaded into a lithe dough; the bread thus made will be excellent when new, and for a day or so after it is baked, but it will become dry sooner than the other.

Flour, 1 gallon; salt, 1 teaspoonful; skimmed milk, 2½ pints: to rise from 1 to 1½ hour. Additional milk, 1 to 2 pints: to rise 1 hour. 3 loaves, baked 1½ hour.

Obs. 1.—A few spoonful of cream will wonderfully improve either of the above receipts, and sweet butter-milk substituted for the other will give to the bread the shortness of a cake; we would particularly recommend it for trial when it can be procured.

Obs. 2.—For an invalid, especially when the digestion is impaired, butter should be altogether omitted from the bread; and eggs, which are often added to the finer sorts of rolls, are better avoided also.

Obs. 3.—We must repeat our caution against milk or water of a *scalding* heat being ever mixed with the yeast: it should be warm, rather more so than when taken from the cow, but not much.

BROWN BREAD.

Make this by any of the foregoing receipts, with meal, as it is called (that is to say, the wheat just as it is ground, either separated from the coarse bran or not, according to the quality of the bread required), instead of flour. It ferments easily, and does not, therefore, require a very full proportion of yeast; and it absorbs more moisture than the flour; it also retains it longer, if properly baked. The loaves should be *well soaked* in the oven, but not over-dried.

Obs.—The best bread we ever tasted was made in great part with rye-flour: this was in a provincial town in France.

POTATO BREAD.

One pound of good mealy potatoes, steamed or boiled very dry, in the ordinary way, or prepared by Captain Kater's receipt (see Chapter XV.), and rubbed quite hot, through a coarse sieve, into a couple of pounds of flour, with which they should be well mixed, will produce excellent bread, which will remain moist much longer than wheaten bread made as usual. The yeast should be added immediately after the potatoes. An ounce or two of butter, an egg, and some new milk, will convert this bread into very superior rolls.

[DYSPEPSIA BREAD.]

This bread is now best known as "Graham bread"—not that Doctor Graham invented or discovered the manner of its preparation, but that he has been unwearied and successful in recommending it to the public. It is an excellent article of diet for the dyspeptic and the costive; and for most persons of sedentary habits would be beneficial. It agrees well with children; and, in short, I think it should be used in every family, though not to the exclusion of fine bread. The most difficult point in manufacturing this bread, is to obtain good pure meal. It is said that much of the bread commonly sold as *dyspepsia*, is made of the *bran* or *middlings*, from which the fine flour has been separated; and that *saw-dust* is sometimes mixed with the meal. To be certain that it is good, send good, clean wheat to the mill, have it ground rather coarsely, and keep the meal in a dry, cool place. Before using it, sift

it through a common hair-sieve; this will separate the very coarse and harsh particles.

Take six quarts of this wheat meal, one tea-cup of good yeast, and a half a tea-cup of molasses, mix these with a pint of milk-warm water and tea-spoonful of pearlsh or saleratus. Make a hole in the flour, and stir this mixture in the middle of the meal till it is like batter. Then proceed as with fine flour bread. Make the dough when sufficiently light into four loaves, which will weigh two pounds per loaf when baked. It requires a hotter oven than fine flour bread, and must bake about an hour and a half.

RYE AND INDIAN BREAD.

This is a sweet and nourishing diet, and generally acceptable to children.

It is economical, and when wheat is scarce, is a pretty good substitute for dyspepsia bread.

There are many different proportions of mixing it—some put one-third Indian meal with two of rye; others like one-third rye and two of Indian; others prefer it half and half.

If you use the largest proportion of rye meal, make your dough stiff, so that it will mould into loaves;—when it is two-thirds Indian, it should be softer, and baked in deep earthen or tin pans after the following rules.

Take *four quarts* of sifted Indian meal; put it into a glazed earthen pan, sprinkle over it a tablespoonful of fine salt; pour over it about two quarts of boiling water, stir and work it till every part of the meal is thoroughly wet; indian meal absorbs a great quantity of water. When it is about milk-warm, work in *two quarts of rye meal, half a pint* of lively yeast, mixed with a pint of warm water; add more warm water if needed. Work the mixture well with your hands: it should be stiff, but not firm as flour dough. Have ready a large, deep, well-buttered pan; put in the dough, and smooth the top by putting your hand in warm water, and then patting down the loaf. Set this to rise in a warm place in the winter; in the summer it should not be put by the fire. When it begins to crack on the top, which will usually be in about an hour or an hour and a half, put it into a well-heated oven, and bake it three or four hours. It is better to let it stand in the oven all night, unless the weather is warm. Indian meal requires to be well cooked. The loaf will weigh between seven and eight pounds. Pan-bread keeps best in large loaves.

Many use milk in mixing bread;—in the country, where milk is plentiful, it is a good practice, as bread is certainly richer wet with sweet milk than with water; but it will not keep so long in warm weather.

Baking can very well be done in a stove; during the winter this is an economical way of cooking—but the stove must be carefully watched, or there is danger of scorching the bread.]

GENEVA ROLLS.

Break down very small three ounces of butter into a couple of pounds of flour; add a little salt, and set the sponge with a large tablespoonful of solid yeast, mixed with a pint of new milk, and a tablespoonful or more of strong saffron water; let it rise for a full hour, then stir to a

couple of well-beaten eggs, as much hot milk as will render them luke-warm, and wet the rolls with them to a light, lithe dough; leave it from half to three quarters of an hour longer, mould it into small rolls, brush them with beaten yolk of egg, and bake them from twenty minutes to half an hour. The addition of six ounces of good sugar, three of butter, half a pound or more of currants, the grated rind of a large lemon, and a couple of ounces of candied orange-rind, will convert these into excellent buns. When the flavour of the saffron is not liked, omit it altogether. Only so much should be used at any time as will give a rich colour to the bread.

Flour, 2 lbs.; butter, 3 ozs.; solid yeast 1 large tablespoonful (saffron, 1 teaspoonful; water, less than a quarter-pint); new milk, 1 pint: 1 hour, or more. 2 eggs, more milk: $\frac{3}{4}$ hour: baked 20 to 30 minutes.

RUSKS.

Break very small, six ounces of butter into a couple of pounds of fine dry flour, and mix them into a lithe paste, with two tablespoonful of mild beer-yeast, three well-beaten eggs, and nearly half a pint of warm new milk. When it has risen to its full height knead it smooth, and make it into very small loaves or thick cakes, cut with a round cake-cutter; place them on a floured tin, and let them stand in a warm place, to *prove*, from ten to twenty minutes before they are set into the oven. Bake them about a quarter of an hour; divide them while they are still warm, and put them into a very slow oven to dry. When they are crisp quite through, they are done. Four teaspoonful of sifted sugar must be added when sweetened rusks are preferred.

Flour, 2 lbs.; butter, 6 ozs.; yeast, 2 tablespoonful; eggs, 3; new milk, nearly half a pint; baked $\frac{1}{2}$ hour.

CRUSTS TO SERVE WITH CHEESE.

Take a half-baked loaf from the oven, and tear it into small rough bits with a couple of forks; lay these on a tin, and put them back into the oven for ten minutes. If a light loaf be made for the purpose, with a couple of ounces of butter and new milk, they will quite resemble rusks.

GOOD CAPTAINS' BISCUITS.

Make some fine white flour into a smooth paste with new milk; divide it into small balls; roll, and afterwards pull them with the fingers as *thin as possible*; prick them all over, and bake them in a somewhat brisk oven from eight to twelve minutes. Thin cream may be used for them on occasion, instead of milk, or a *morsel* of butter may be worked into the flour; but they are very good without this last.

[BREAKFAST BATTER-CAKES.]

Take one pint of milk, three eggs, a piece of butter as large as an egg, two spoonful of yeast, and flour enough to make a stiff batter; bake them in tin hoops or on a griddle, let them stand and rise all night, but not in a very warm place.

TEA CAKES.

Rub into a pound of flour, an ounce of butter, a beaten egg, and half a teaspoonful of salt; wet it with warmed milk; make the paste rather stiff, and let it remain before the fire, where it will be kept warm for an hour or two; then roll it thin and cut it with the top of a tumbler; bake it quick.

MUFFINS.

Muffins are baked on a hot iron plate, and not in an oven. To a quarter of a peck of flour add three-quarters of a pint of yeast, four ounces of salt, and as much water (or milk) slightly warmed, as is sufficient to form a dough of rather a soft consistency. Small portions of the dough are then put into holes, previously made in a layer of flour about two inches thick, placed on a board, and the whole is covered up in a blanket, and suffered to stand near a fire, to cause the dough to rise; when this is effected, they will each exhibit a semi-globular shape; they are then placed on a heated iron plate, and baked; when the bottoms of the muffins begin to acquire a brownish colour, they are turned, and baked on the opposite side.

WHEAT MUFFINS.

Melt a small piece of butter into a quart of milk, and set it aside until cold—beat four eggs very light, and make a batter by adding alternately and very gradually a little milk and a little flour, until the batter is of the proper consistence, which is quite thin—then add a large spoonful of yeast, if you do not use the powders. Bake them in muffin-rings on a griddle, and butter them before serving—they must be torn asunder to butter, as cutting them open renders them heavy.

RICE MUFFINS.

Rice muffins are made in the same manner exactly as rice cakes, except that the batter of the former is thinner—that is, to a quart of milk and three eggs, you put less rice and less flour.

RICE CAKES.

Boil half a pint of rice until quite soft, setting it aside until perfectly cool; beat three eggs very light and put them with a pint of wheat flour to the rice, making it into a batter with a quart of milk; beat it well, and set it to rise with a spoonful of yeast, or use the yeast powders as directed in a note at the foot of this page. Bake on a griddle, and butter them before sending them to table.

BUCKWHEAT CAKES.

To a quart of buckwheat meal put a little Indian meal (say a table-spoonful) and a little salt; make them into a batter with cold water, taking care to beat it *very well*, as the excellence of buckwheat cakes depends very much on their being well beaten; then put in a large spoonful of good yeast,* and set to rise; when sufficiently risen, bake them a clear brown on a griddle. They are usually buttered before being sent to table.

FLANNEL CAKES.

Melt a table-spoonful of butter in a quart of milk, and after stirring it

* Many persons now make use of the yeast powders, and give them a decided preference. They certainly possess the advantage of requiring less time, and thereby enabling you to make muffins, buckwheat cakes, &c.—which, set with yeast, require some hours in the preparation—at a quarter of an hour's notice. The ingredients are the super-carbonate of soda and tartaric acid, to be used in the following manner:—A spoonful of soda, and a spoon *two-thirds* full of tartaric acid, are to be dissolved *separately* in a little water. The soda is to be put into the batter when it is partly beaten, taking care that it is *perfectly dissolved*; and the acid is to be added when the cook is *ready* to begin baking, as they must not be allowed to stand after the effervescence takes place.

well, set it away to cool; then heat four eggs very light, and stir them into the milk in turn with half a pound of sifted flour; put in a spoonful of yeast, and set it aside. These are baked on a griddle like buck-wheat cakes, and are always buttered before being sent to table.

YEAST.

It is impossible to have good light bread, unless you have lively, sweet yeast. When common family beer is well brewed and kept in a clean cask, the settlings are the best of yeast. If you do not keep beer, then make common yeast by the following method.

Take two quarts of water, one handful of hops, two of wheat bran; boil these together twenty minutes; strain off the water, and while it is boiling hot, stir in either wheat or rye flour, till it becomes a thick batter; let it stand till it is about blood warm; then add a half pint of good smart yeast and a large spoonful of molasses, if you have it, and stir the whole well. Set it in a cool place in summer and a warm one in winter. When it becomes perfectly light, it is fit for use. If not needed immediately, it should, when it becomes cold, be put in a clean jug or bottle; do not fill the vessel, and the cork must be left loose till the next morning, when the yeast will have done working. Then cork it tightly, and set in a cool place in the cellar. It will keep ten or twelve days.

MILK YEAST.

Take one pint of new milk; one teaspoonful of fine salt, and a large spoon of flour—stir these well together; set the mixture by the fire, and keep it just lukewarm; it will be fit for use in an hour. Twice the quantity of common yeast is necessary; it will not keep long. Bread made of this yeast dries very soon; but in the summer it is sometimes convenient to make this kind when yeast is needed suddenly.

Never keep yeast in a tin vessel. If you find the old yeast sour, and have not time to prepare new, put in saleratus, a teaspoonful to a pint of yeast, when ready to use it. If it foams up lively, it will raise the bread; if it does not, never use it.

HARD YEAST.

Boil three ounces of hops in six quarts of water, till only two quarts remain. Strain it, and stir in while it is boiling hot, wheat or rye meal till it is thick as batter. When it is about milk-warm add half a pint of good yeast, and let it stand till it is very light, which will probably be about three hours. Then work in sifted Indian meal till it is stiff dough. Roll it out on a board; cut it in oblong cakes about three inches by two. They should be about half an inch thick. Lay these cakes on a smooth board, over which a little flour has been dusted; prick them with a fork, and set the board in a dry clean chamber or store-room, where the sun and air may be freely admitted. Turn them every day. They will dry in a fortnight unless the weather is damp. When the cakes are fully dry, put them into a coarse cotton bag; hang it up in a cool, dry place. If rightly prepared these cakes will keep a year, and save the trouble of making new yeast every week.

Two cakes will make yeast sufficient for a peck of flour. Break them into a pint of lukewarm water and stir in a large spoonful of flour,

the evening before you bake. Set the mixture where it can be kept moderately warm. In the morning it will be fit for use.

POTATOE YEAST

Is made of mealy potatoes boiled thoroughly soft—they are then skinned and mashed as smooth as possible, when as much hot water should be put on them as will make a mash of the consistency of good beer yeast. Add to every pound of potatoes two ounces of treacle, and when just warm stir in for every pound of potatoes two large spoonful of yeast. Keep it warm till it has done fermenting, and in twenty-four hours it will be fit for use. A pound of potatoes will make nearly a quart of yeast, and it is said to be equally as good as brewers' yeast.

The following is Dr. Lettsom's directions for making another Prepared Yeast.

Thicken two quarts of water with four ounces of flour, boil it for half an hour, then sweeten it with three of brown sugar; when almost cold, pour it along with four spoonful of bakers' yeast into an earthen jug, deep enough for the fermentation to go on without running over; place it for a day near the fire; then pour off the thin liquor from the top, shake the remainder, and close it up for use, first straining it through a sieve. To preserve it sweet, set it in a cool cellar, or hang it some depth in a well. Always keep some of this yeast to make the next quantity that is wanted.]

[CHAPTER XXIX.]

AMERICAN MODE OF COOKING INDIAN CORN, PUMPKINS, &c.

MAIZE or Indian corn has never been extensively used in Great Britain, and the editor has every reason to believe that this has arisen from the almost total ignorance of the English people as to the mode of preparing it for human food. It is, perhaps, the most productive crop that can be grown, and its nutritious qualities, when properly prepared, are equal to its productiveness. We are satisfied that it may be grown in that country, or, at any rate, in the south and eastern parts of it, with great advantage; indeed, the experiment has been tried, and with decided success. The late Mr. Cobbett grew an average crop of the dwarf kind on Barn Elms farm, Surrey, for three or four years.

INDIAN CAKE, OR BANNOCK.

This, as prepared in our own country, is cheap and very nice food. Take one quart of Indian meal, dressed or sifted, two table-spoonful of treacle or molasses, two teaspoonful of salt, a bit of "shortening" (butter or lard) half as big as a hen's egg, stirred together; make it pretty moist with scalding water, put it into a well-greased pan, smooth over the surface with a spoon, and bake it brown on both sides before a quick fire. A little stewed pumpkin, scalded with the meal, improves the cake. Bannock split and dipped in butter makes very nice toast.