

***ALEXIS
SOYER***

***THE MODERN
HOUSEWIFE
OR, MÉNAGÈRE***

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Alexis Soyer

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INTRODUCTION.

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IN the following gossiping conversation between Mrs. B—— and Mrs. L——, and in the two letters which follow, M. Soyer explains the motive of the work; and, in a natural manner introduces the subject.—ED.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN MRS. B—— AND MRS. L——, HER FRIEND AND VISITOR.

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Mrs. L. I have now, my dear Mrs. B., been nearly a fortnight at your delightful Villa, and I must say, with all truth, that I never fared better in my life, yet I am considered somewhat of an epicure, as is likewise my husband; but, of course, our means being rather limited, we are obliged to live accordingly.

Mrs. B. Well, so must we; and I assure you that, during the first few years of our marriage, our pecuniary resources were but small, but even then I managed my kitchen and housekeeping at so moderate an expense compared with some of our neighbors, who lived more expensively, but not so well as we did, that, when any of them dined with us, they flattered me with the appellation of the “Model Housekeeper,” and admired the comforts of our table, but would leave with the impression that I must be the most extravagant of wives. Now, believe me, I have always prided myself, whether having to provide for a ceremonious party or dining by ourselves, to have everything properly done

and served, that, if any friends should come in by accident or on business, they were generally well pleased with our humble hospitality, and that without extravagance, as my husband is well convinced; for when we dine with any acquaintance of ours he is very eager to persuade them to adopt my system of management; for though he is no great judge of what is called the highest style of cookery, yet he does not like to live badly at any time; as he very justly says, it matters not how simple the food,—a chop, steak, or a plain boiled or roast joint, but let it be of good quality and properly cooked, and every one who partakes of it will enjoy it.

Mrs. L. Nothing more true!

Mrs. B. But since you talk of limited income and economy, let me relate to you a conversation which occurred a few years ago between Mr. B. and a friend of his, who declared to him that his income would never allow him to live in such luxury, which he called a comfortable extravagance.

“Extravagance!” exclaimed Mr. B., “if you have a few minutes to spare, I will convince you of the contrary, and prove to you that such an expression is very unjust, if applied to my wife’s management. Now, to begin; what sum should you suppose would cover our annual housekeeping expenditure, living as we do, in a style of which you so much approve, but consider so extravagant? there are ten of us in family, viz., myself and wife, three children, two female servants, and three young men employed in my business, and including our usual Christmas party, which, of course you know, (having participated in the last two), besides two

separate birthday parties of twenty each, and three juvenile petits-soupers and dances for the children upon their natal anniversaries, also a friend dropping in occasionally, which is never less than once or twice a-week.”—“Well, I do not know,” answered our friend; “but having nearly the same number to provide for, and in a more humble way, my expenses for housekeeping are never less than £—— per annum.”—“Less than what?” exclaimed Mr. B.; “why, my dear friend, you must be mistaken;” at the same time ringing the bell.” I wish I were, with all my heart,” was the reply, as the servant entered the room; “Jane,” said Mr. B., “ask your mistress to step this way for a few minutes; I wish to look at her housekeeping book.” But being busy at the time in the kitchen, I sent up a key for him to get it, which happened to be a wrong one, but, upon discovering the mistake, sent up the right one with an apology for not coming myself, as I was superintending the cooking of some veal broth, which the doctor had ordered for our poor little Henry, who was ill at the time. “Well,” said his friend, “there is a wife for you; I must confess mine can hardly find the way to the kitchen stairs.” “Now!” said my husband, opening my desk, and, taking up my book, he showed him the last year’s expenditure, which was £——. “No! no! that is impossible,” replied the other. “But,” said Mr B., “there it is in black and white.” “Why, good heavens!” exclaimed he, “without giving so many parties, and also two less in family, my expenditure is certainly greater.” To which Mr. B. replied, “So I should imagine from the style in which I saw your table provided the few days when we were on a visit to your house; therefore I am not in the least astonished. Here,

however, is the account for the closing year just made up to the 28th December, 1848. Let us see what it amounts to, probably to £50 or £60 more." "So, so," replied the other, "that is an increase;"—"Let it be so," said Mr. B.; "but you must remember that we are twelve months older, and as our business increases, so do we increase our comforts; and this year Mrs. B., with the children, had a pretty little house at Ramsgate for two months, which will account for the greater part of it."

Mrs. L. But, my dear Mrs. B., I am as much astonished as your friend could possibly have been. I should, however, have liked you to explain the matter; but here comes your husband, who will probably initiate me in your culinary secrets.

Good morning, my dear Mr. B. I have been talking to Mrs. B. about her system of housekeeping, who was relating to me a conversation you had with a gentleman, who was surprised with its economy. I am also surprised, and should like to take a few leaves out of your most excellent book, if you will allow me.

Mr. B. Certainly, my dear madam; in my wife, without flattering her too much, you see almost an accomplished woman (in hearing such praise, Mrs. B. retired, saying, "How foolish you talk, Richard"); she speaks two or three different languages tolerably well, and, as an amateur, is rather proficient in music, but her parents, very wisely considering household knowledge to be of the greater importance, made her first acquainted with the keys of the store-room before those of the piano; that is the only secret, dear madam; and this is the explanation that I gave to my friend, who thought

it a good jest and one of truth. I told him to do the same by his two daughters, which would not only make them more happy through life, but transmit that happiness to their posterity, by setting an example worthy of being followed. I always say, give me a domesticated wife, and with my industry I would not change my position for a kingdom; "Very true, very true," was my friend's answer, and we then parted.

I have never seen him since nor his wife, who was probably offended at the economical propositions of her husband; for nothing, you are well aware, is more common than for people to be offended when told the truth respecting themselves; or perhaps she was too advanced in years to think of changing her ideas of housekeeping.

I see, my dear Mrs. L., the Brougham is waiting at the gate to convey you to the railway; allow me to see you safe to the station; you will not have many minutes to spare, for the train will shortly be up.

About an hour after the above conversation, Mrs. L. was seen entering her cottage at Oatlands, fully resolved to follow as closely as possible the economic management of Mrs. B.; but a little reflection soon made her perceive that she possessed only the theory, and was sadly deficient in the practice: she then determined to beg of her friend a few receipts in writing, and immediately dispatched the following letter:—

From Mrs. L—- to Mrs. B—-.

Oatlands Cottage; Jan. 1st, 1849.

MY DEAR HORTENSE,—Upon my arrival at home, I am happy to say that I found all quite well, and delighted to see me, after (to them) so long an absence as a fortnight, which my husband was gallant enough to say appeared months; but to myself the time appeared to pass very swiftly; for, indeed, every day I felt so much more interested in watching closely how well you managed your household affairs, that, believe me, you have quite spoiled me, especially with your *recherché* style of cookery, which even now I cannot make out how you could do it at such moderate expense: and, apropos of cooking, Mr. L., expecting me home to dinner, had, I have no doubt, a long interview and discussion with Cook respecting the bill of fare. “Well, sir,” I will suppose she said, “what can be better than a fine fat goose, stuffed with sage and ingyons; we have a very fine ‘un hanging in the larder.” (You must observe, dear, that my cook is plain in every way.) “A very excellent notion that, Cook; nothing can be better than a good goose;” was no doubt, my husband’s answer, who, although very fond of a good dinner, cannot endure the trouble of ordering it.

Well, then, here I am in my little drawing-room (the window slightly open), enjoying the fresh country air, which seems to have been amalgamated with a strong aroma from the aforesaid goose, especially the sage and onions; and I am almost certain that the

inseparable applesauce is burnt or upset on the stove, from the brown smoke now ascending from the grating over the kitchen window. This style is now to me quite unbearable, and I mean to have quite a reform in my little establishment, and first of all to bring up my daughter in the way recommended by Mr. B. to his friend, to make her more domesticated than I am myself, as I begin to perceive that a knowledge of household affairs is as much required as intellectual education; and, for my part, I have come to the determination of adopting your system of management as closely as possible; but first, you must know, that, without your scientific advice, it will be totally impossible; therefore I beg to propose (if you can afford the time) that you will, by writing, give me the description how you lay out your breakfast-table, with the addition of a few receipts for the making of rolls and the other breakfast bread, which I so much enjoyed while with you; even how to make toast, and more especially how you make coffee, chocolate, cocoa (tea, of course, I know). And should this meet your approbation, I mean to make a little journal, which may some day or other be useful to our families and friends.

Until I hear from you I shall be waiting with anxiety for your decision upon this important and domestic subject.

Yours very sincerely,
ELOISE.

From Mrs. B——, in reply.

Bifrons Villa; Jan. 3d, 1849.

MY DEAR ELOISE,—In answer to yours, I agree, with the greatest pleasure, to contribute towards your domesticated idea, which, I must say, is very original, and may, as you observe, prove useful; but why should we confine our culinary journal to breakfast only? why not go through the different meals of the day? that is, after breakfast, the luncheon; then the nursery-dinner at One; and here it strikes me that, in that series, we might introduce some receipts, to be called Comforts for Invalids; even our servants' dinners and teas; then the early dinner at two or three for people in business, the parlor-dinner at six, the coffee after dinner, and even suppers for a small ball or evening party; but all on a moderate scale, leaving the aristocratic style entirely to its proper sphere.

To show my approbation of your idea, I enclose herewith the first receipt, *How to make Toast*.

BREAKFASTS.

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WHEN we first commenced housekeeping, we were six in family, five of whom breakfasted together, the three young men in the shop, Mr. B——, and myself. The cloth was laid by the servant girl at half-past seven precisely; at ten minutes to eight I used to make tea, and at eight o'clock we were seated at breakfast, which was composed merely of bread and butter at discretion, fresh water cresses when plentiful, or sometimes boiled eggs, and for variation, once a week, coffee, and if in the winter, we had toast, which I

never suffered any servant to prepare more than five minutes before we were seated, for, if standing any time, the dry toast becomes tough, and the buttered very greasy, and consequently unpalatable, as well as indigestible. Twenty minutes only was the time allowed for breakfast, after which the table was cleared, the cloth carefully folded and put by for the next morning, for we kept a separate one for dinner, and imposed the fine of a half-penny upon any one who should spill their tea or coffee over the cloth by carelessness. Such was always my plan when in business; for you must know as well as myself, it is not only the expense of the washing, but the continual wear and tear of the linen, which make such frequent washings so ruinous, but my cloth used always to look clean, and I am confident that not less than five pounds a-year were saved on that very trifling matter, and you know we thought as much then of five pounds as we perhaps now do of twenty.

Before partaking of a breakfast, you must provide the materials (which I always select of the best quality), and require to know how to prepare them. I shall, therefore, give you a series of every description of articles which may properly be partaken of at the breakfast-table.

FIRST SERIES OF RECEIPTS.

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PERHAPS some housekeepers may laugh at the presumption of M. Soyer in attempting to give a formal receipt for so trifling a matter as making a piece of toast. But, in Cookery, there are no trifles. Every preparation of food, however simple, requires

thought, care, and experience. Among the unpleasantnesses of our breakfast-tables, there are none more common than poor toast.—ED.

1. *Toast*.—Procure a nice square loaf of bread that has been baked one or two days previously (for new bread cannot be cut, and would eat very heavy), then with a sharp knife cut off the bottom crust very evenly, and then as many slices as you require, about a quarter of an inch in thickness (I generally use a carving-knife for cutting bread for toast, being longer in the blade, it is more handy, and less liable to waste the bread); contrive to have rather a clear fire; place a slice of the bread upon a toasting-fork, about an inch from one of the sides, hold it a minute before the fire, then turn it, hold it before the fire another minute, by which time the bread will be thoroughly hot, then begin to move it gradually to and fro until the whole surface has assumed a yellowish-brown color, when again turn it, toasting the other side in the same manner; then lay it upon a hot plate, have some fresh or salt butter (which must not be too hard, as pressing it upon the toast would make it heavy), spread a piece, rather less than an ounce, over, and cut into four or six pieces; should you require six such slices for a numerous family, about a quarter of a pound of butter would suffice for the whole; but cut each slice into pieces as soon as buttered, and pile them lightly upon the plate or dish you intend to serve it. This way you will find a great improvement upon the old system, as often in cutting through four or five slices with a bad knife, you squeeze all the butter out of the upper one, and discover the under one,

at the peril of its life, swimming in an ocean of butter at the bottom of the dish.

N.B. The warming of the bread gradually through, on both sides, is a very great improvement upon the quality of the toast; it may give a trifle more trouble, but still it is quicker done, and much lighter.

All kinds of toast require to be done the same way, but if to be served under a bird, eggs, or kidneys, it requires to be toasted drier.

Being in every way an economist, I have generally saved the remnants of the loaf that have become too dry to be eaten as bread, and by just dipping them in warm water, toasting them gradually, and buttering them, I have generally found that they have been eaten in preference, but their being stale is a secret of my own, which, if divulged, would prevent their ever being eaten after.

2. *Dry Toast*.—Ought not to be toasted until quite ready to serve; when done, place it in a toast-rack, or standing upon its edges, one piece resting against another; any kind of toast that has been made half an hour is not worth eating.

3. *To toast Muffins* (for Receipt, see No. 6.)—Just open, half an inch deep, the sides of the muffins, exactly in the centre, with a knife, then put your toasting-fork in the middle of the bottom, hold it a little distance from the fire, until partly warmed through, when turn it and put it again to the fire until it becomes lightly toasted, when again turn it

to toast the other side; when done, pull it open, spread a thin layer of butter on each side, close them together; lay them upon a plate, then with a sharp knife divide them across the middle, and serve very hot. If more than one muffin is required, cut them all separately, and pile them lightly one upon another, on the plate; when well prepared, they are, in my opinion, a very great luxury, obtainable at a trifling expense.

4. *To toast Crumpets.*—Crumpets stand lower in the general estimation of the public, probably from not being so *distingué*, and having the misfortune to be cheaper than their sister muffins; but, for all that, the poor ought never to be forgotten, and a crumpet toasted as follows is not to be despised. Choose your crumpets fresh if possible, though they are not bad after having been made three or four days; toast them by warming both sides first, like muffins, then give them a nice light brown color on each side, lay them in a plate, and spread some rather soft butter lightly upon each side; cut in halves with a sharp knife, and serve; half a pat of butter to each crumpet is quite sufficient. If you have several to serve, lay them separately upon a large hot dish; some people lay them one upon the other, which is a very bad plan, as it causes the under ones to eat like a piece of dough, and such food cannot be wholesome. Crumpets require to be toasted rather quick.

5. *To make Rolls and other Breakfast Bread.*—Put four pounds of flour into an earthen pan, make a hole in the

centre, in which put three parts of a pint of warm water, to which you add a gill of white brewer's yeast, free from bitter, mix a little flour to form a leaven, which set in a warm place to rise (it must be allowed to remain until the leaven has risen and begun to fall), then add a little salt and a pint of warm milk, form the whole into a flexible dough, which keep in a warm place for another hour; it is then ready, and may be moulded into the form of rolls, twists, little crusty loaves, or any shapes most pleasing for the breakfast-table.

6. *To make Muffins.*—Mix a quart of warm water in which you have dissolved a quarter of a pound of German yeast, with sufficient flour to form a stiffish batter, which let remain in a warm place four hours, then stir the mixture down, and break it into pieces weighing a quarter of a pound each, which mould round with your hands, and put into wooden trays containing a round bed of flour for each; let them remain in a warm place two hours to prove, when have your muffin-stove hot; have a round piece of iron; place on the fire to get hot; set the muffins upon it, and when nicely risen, turn them gently over, baking them upon the stove until sufficiently set, when they are done; they will take about ten minutes baking if the stove is at the proper heat, which is known by throwing a little flour on it and becoming brown. Muffins may also be made of brewer's yeast, but then they would require longer proving, and great care must be taken that the yeast be not bitter.

7. *To make Crumpets*.—Mix a gill of brewer's yeast, free from bitter, with two quarts of water, just lukewarm, to which add sufficient flour to make a thinnish batter, and let it stand six hours in a warm place, when stir it well with a wooden spoon, and let it remain four hours longer; have the muffin-stove hot, upon which lay a number of tin hoops, the size of crumpets, pour a small ladleful of the batter into each hoop, and when the top is covered with small bladders, turn them quickly over (hoops and all) with a large palate knife, and in about five minutes afterwards they will be sufficiently baked.

8. *Rusks*.—Put three pounds of flour upon a dresser, make a hole in the middle, into which put two ounces of German yeast, dissolved in a pint of warm water, mix a little of the flour in, and leave it half an hour in a warm place to rise, then add two ounces of powdered sugar, and a quarter of a pound of butter, dissolved in half a pint of warm water; mix the whole into a dough, and let it remain in a warm place until well risen, when work it down with the hands, divide it in three pieces, each of which form into a long roll about two inches in thickness, place them upon a buttered baking-sheet, four inches apart, and put them in a warm place to prove, occasionally moistening the tops with milk; bake them in a moderate oven; when cold, cut them in slices the thickness of a penny piece, which lay upon a clean baking-sheet, and put into a warm oven, when well browned upon one side, turn them over, put them again into the oven until the other side is browned, when they are done and ready for use.

9. *Tops and Bottoms*.—Make a dough exactly as described in the last, but using only half the butter; have a deep-edged baking-sheet well buttered, and when the dough is ready, turn it on to a dresser, well floured; divide into small pieces the size of walnuts, which mould into round balls, and place close together upon the baking-sheet; put them in a warm place to prove, and bake well in a moderate oven; when cold, divide and cut each one in halves (making a top and bottom) which brown in the oven as directed for rusks.

10. *Buns*.—Put three pounds of flour in an earthen pan, make a hole in the middle, in which put two ounces of German yeast, dissolved in three parts of a pint of warm water, and stir in a little of the flour, forming a thinnish batter, let it remain in a warm place nearly an hour, until well fermented, when add half a pound of sugar, a few currants, and half a pound of butter, dissolved in nearly a pint of warm milk, mix the whole well together, making a soft but dry dough; let it remain in a warm place until it rises very light, when turn it out of the pan on to a board; work it well with the hands, shaking flour over lightly, then mould it into small round balls, double the size of walnuts, which place upon a buttered baking-sheet, four inches apart; moisten the tops with milk; put them in a warm place to prove, not, however, permitting them to crack, and bake them in a hot oven.

11. —*Brioche Rolls*.—Put four pounds of flour upon a dresser, one pound of which put on one side, make a hole in

the middle into which pour nearly three parts of a pint of warm water, in which you have dissolved an ounce of German yeast; mix it into a stiff but delicate paste, which roll up into a ball: cut an incision across it, and lay it in a basin well floured, in a warm place, until becoming very light, then make a large hole in the centre of the three pounds of flour, into which put half an ounce of salt, two pounds of fresh butter, half a gill of water, and sixteen eggs, mix it into a rather softish flexible paste, which press out flat, lay the leaven upon it, folding it over and working with the hands until well amalgamated, flour a clean cloth, fold the paste in it and let remain all night. In the morning mould them into small rolls; put them upon a baking-sheet, and bake in a moderate oven. Unless your breakfast party is very large, half the above quantity would be sufficient; but these rolls being quite a luxury, I only make them upon very especial occasions.

12. *How to choose Eggs.*—New-laid eggs should not be used until they have been laid about eight or ten hours, for that part which constitutes the white is not properly set before that time, and does not until then obtain their delicate flavor; that which is termed milk in eggs being, according to my opinion, very insipid; but that entirely depends upon fancy.

Nothing being more offensive than eggs in a state of decomposition, it is very important that every person should know how to detect them (especially in the winter), if, by shaking them, they sound hollow, you may be certain they are not new-laid, and not fit to be boiled for breakfast: but, if

broken, they may prove fit for any other culinary purpose, except for soufflés, for which eggs must be very fresh. The safest way to try them is to hold them to the light, forming a focus with your hand; should the shell be covered with small dark spots, they are very doubtful, and should be broken separately in a cup, and each egg smelt previous to using; if, however, in looking at them, you see no transparency in the shells, you may be sure they are rotten and only fit to be thrown away; the most precise way is, to look at them by the light of a candle; if quite fresh, there are no spots upon the shells, and they have a brilliant light yellow tint; in the spring of the year, it would be scarcely excusable to use any eggs that are not quite fresh.

13. *Eggs for Breakfast,—plain boiled.*—Put about a pint of water to boil in any kind of small stewpan (or saucepan) over the fire; when boiling, put in two or three fresh eggs, gently, with a spoon, being particular not to crack them or allow them to boil too fast, or the interior of the eggs would partly escape before they were set, giving them an unsightly appearance, and entirely prevent their cooking regularly: three minutes is sufficient to cook a full-sized egg, but if below the average size, two minutes and a half will suffice.

14. *Eggs au Beurre: a new method.*—Let the eggs boil six minutes instead of three, then take them out, dip them for two seconds in cold water, crack and peel off the shells, and lay them in a hot plate (they will remain quite whole if

properly done), cut each egg in halves lengthwise, spread a little fresh butter and sprinkle a little salt over the interior, and eat them very hot.

Eggs done in this manner are delicate and digestible.

15. *To boil Eggs hard.*—Never boil eggs for salads, sauces, or any other purposes, more than ten minutes, and when done place them in a basin of cold water for five minutes to cool: take off their shells, and use them when required.

Nothing is more indigestible than an egg too hard-boiled.

16. *Poached Eggs.*—Put a pint of water in a stewpan, with four teaspoonfuls of vinegar and half a teaspoonful of salt, place it over the fire, and when boiling, break your eggs into it as near the surface of the water as possible, let them boil gently about three minutes; have rather a thin piece of toast, as described (No. 1), upon a dish, take the eggs out carefully with a small slice, lay the slice with the eggs upon a cloth for a second to drain the water from them, set them carefully upon the toast, and serve very hot. If the eggs are fresh they will look most inviting, but the way of breaking and boiling them must be most carefully attended to, and care should be taken not to boil too many together; if the yolks separate from the white it may be presumed that the egg is not fresh, but it may be eatable, for the same thing may happen through awkwardness in poaching.

Again, the toast upon which they are served may be buttered either with plain or maître d'hôtel butter, or two

small pats of butter may be melted, without boiling it, and poured over, or a little melted butter sauce, or the same with the addition of a little maître d'hôtel butter poured over when just upon the point of boiling, or a little anchovy butter instead of the other; thus you may be able to indulge in nice little luxuries at a trifling expense.

17. *Toast and Eggs*.—Break three eggs into a small stewpan, add a saltspoonful of salt, a quarter of that quantity of pepper, and two ounces of fresh butter (the fresher the better), set the stewpan over a moderate fire, and stir the eggs round with a wooden spoon, being careful to keep every particle in motion, until the whole has become a smooth and delicate thickish substance; have ready a convenient-sized crisp piece of toast, pour the eggs upon it, and serve immediately.

18. *Eggs sur le Plat*.—Lightly butter a small oval dish, upon which break two, three, or more eggs without breaking the yolks, season lightly with a little white pepper and salt, put a few small pieces of butter here and there upon them, and then set the dish in a small oven, where let it remain until the whites become set, but by no means hard, and serve hot; if the oven is moderately hot, they will take about ten minutes; if no oven, put the dish before the fire, turning it round now and then until the eggs are set regular. This is a most excellent dish.

19. *Omelettes* may also be served for breakfast with great advantage, being very relishing, especially the omelettes *aux fines herbes*, *au lard*, and *aux champignons*, but as they are considered to belong to the dinner, they will be given in that series of receipts.

20. *Herring Toast Sandwich*.—Choose a bloater for this purpose not too dry, which split in two, cutting it down the back; lay them upon a plate and pour a pint of boiling water over; let them soak five minutes, when lay them upon a cloth to dry; then broil them very gradually upon a gridiron; when well done, which will be in about four or five minutes, have ready two thin slices of toast, made very crisp, butter them lightly, then take away all the bones from the herrings, lay the fleshy parts equally upon one piece of toast and cover with the other: serve very hot.

21. *Toast and Eggs with Herring*.—Prepare your toast and eggs as directed (No. 17), but previous to pouring the eggs over, lay the flesh of a herring as directed in the last, and pour the eggs over that. Herrings upon toast, with a layer of mashed potatoes over, is also very good.

Dried haddock may also be served the same, as also may sardines, but they being ready-cooked, are laid over cold without splitting them; they are very delicious; if wanted hot, set them a few minutes before the fire.

22. *Fish for Breakfast,—Bloated Herrings*.—They require to be freshly salted, for if dry they are quite rank and

unpalatable; scrape them lightly with a knife, and wipe them well with a cloth; pass the point of a knife down the back from head to tail, making an incision about a quarter of an inch in depth; place them upon the gridiron over a sharp fire; they will take about six minutes to cook, of course turning them occasionally; when done, put them upon a hot dish, open the backs, and place half a small pat of butter in each; again close them: cooked this way they are delicious, especially if they are real bloaters. Another way is to cut them quite open and broil them flat upon the gridiron, and serve quite plain; this way they are done much more quickly. Or, if nice and fresh, oil half a sheet of white paper for every fish, in which fold them and broil fifteen minutes over a slow fire, turning them over three or four times, and serve in the papers. Should you have any that have become dry, soak them about twenty minutes in lukewarm water, and proceed as first directed. (Same process will do for red herrings.)

23. *Dried Haddock*.—A very excellent thing for breakfast, but they never ought to be cooked whole, for one side being thinner than the other is of course dried up before the other is much more than half done, especially the larger ones; the better plan is to cut them in halves lengthwise, put them upon the gridiron over a moderate fire, keeping them frequently turned, and taking the thinnest half off first; the thickest will require about ten minutes to cook it thoroughly; when done, spread a pat of fresh butter over, and serve upon a very hot dish.

Haddocks may also be skinned and broiled in oiled paper, but of course would take rather more time in cooking.

24. *Whitings*.—Of all the modes of preparing and dressing whittings for breakfast I cannot but admire and prize the system pursued by the Scotch, which renders them the most light, wholesome, and delicious food that could possibly be served for breakfast: their method is, to obtain the fish as fresh as possible, clean and skin them, take out the eyes, cover the fish over with salt, immediately after which take them out and shake off the superfluous salt, pass a string through the eye-holes, and hang them up to dry in a passage or some place where there is a current of air; the next morning take them off, just roll them lightly in a little flour, broil them gently over a slow fire, and serve very hot, with a small piece of fresh butter rubbed over each, or serve quite dry if preferable.

25. *Slips or Small Soles*.—When cleaned, season them with a little pepper and salt, dip lightly into flour, and broil them slowly over a moderate fire about ten minutes, or according to the size; when done, place them upon a hot dish, pour two tablespoonfuls of cream over and serve immediately. They may of course be served dry, but pouring the cream over is a new and very good idea. Nothing but small white fish could be tolerated for breakfast.

26. *Sprats* when nicely cooked are very commendable. Dip them lightly into flour, and place them upon a gridiron

over a slow fire; when about half done, turn them; when done (which would be in about five minutes from the time you put them on), serve dry in a very hot dish.

27. *Meat for Breakfast,—Sheep's Kidneys.*—Procure as many as you may require for your party, about one each is generally sufficient; be sure that they are fresh, which any person can ascertain by smelling, if not able to judge by their appearance; cut them open very evenly lengthwise, down to the root, but not to separate them; then have some small iron or wooden skewers, upon which thread the kidneys quite flat, by running the skewer twice through each kidney, that is, under the white part; season them rather highly with pepper and salt, and place them upon a gridiron (the inside downwards), over a sharp fire; in three minutes turn them over, and in about six they will be sufficiently done; then take them off the skewers, place them in a very hot dish, and serve immediately. In opening them be careful to cut them in the centre, for should one half be thicker than the other, one would be dried before the other was sufficiently cooked.

28. *Kidneys on Toast.*—Prepare the kidneys precisely as in the last, but when done have ready a piece of hot toast, which butter lightly; lay the kidneys upon it; have ready a small piece of butter, to which you have added a little pepper, salt, and the juice of half a lemon; place a small piece in the centre of each kidney, and when melted serve.

29. *Kidney bread-crumbed, à la Maître d'Hôtel.*—Prepare the kidneys as before, and when upon the skewer, have ready upon a plate an egg well beat up with a fork; season the kidneys with a little salt and pepper, dip them into the egg, then lightly cover them with bread-crumbs, put them upon the gridiron, which place over a moderate fire, broil them about ten minutes, turning them when half done, have ready a little maître d'hôtel butter, put about half an ounce in each kidney, and serve immediately upon a very hot dish; by the time it gets upon the table the butter will be melted, and they eat very relishing; dressed this way they may also be served upon toast.

30. *Sautéd Kidneys.*—Should you not have a fire fit for broiling, put an ounce of butter into a sauté-pan (which of course must be very clean), cut the kidney in halves lengthwise; and when the butter is melted, lay them in, the flat side downwards, having previously well seasoned them with pepper and salt; set the pan on a moderate fire three minutes, then turn them, place them again upon the fire until done; when have ready a piece of dry toast, which place upon a hot dish, pour the kidneys with the butter and gravy over and serve very hot, care must be taken in sautéing that the butter does not become burnt.

Another way is to sprinkle about a teaspoonful of chopped eschalots, or onions, over them whilst being sautéd; this materially changes the flavor, and meets the approbation of many.

For the cooking of mutton chops, steaks, cutlets, broiled fowl, broiled bones, or remnants of poultry or game, I must