KITCHEN SUPERSTITIONS.

Why Most Cooks Always Stir Their Batter One Way Only.

"Take a good lump of fresh butter and roll it in flour, place it in a lined saucepan with a half pint of good, rich cream, stir it gently over a low fire, always the same way, till it begins to simmer."

This recipe for the making of melted butter is quoted from an old fashioned cookery book of a century ago, but the direction to stir "always the same way" is observed as religiously today as it was then, and probably will be for a thousand years to come.

All cooks of all nations stir not only the same way, but also from east to west, a sure indication that the practice originated with sun worshipers.

Speaking of stirring brings to mind that in most English households—country ones at least—the practice of the whole family joining to stir the Christmas plum pudding is still in vogue.

There are many peculiar, old fashioned superstitions connected with cooking.

For instance, in Scotland, when oatcakes are being baked, it is still customary to break off a little piece and throw it into the fire.

At one time, whenever a baking was made—which was perhaps once a month only—a cake was made with nine knobs on it. Each of the company broke one off, and, throwing it behind him, said, "This I give to thee; preserve thou my sheep," mentioning the name of a noxious animal—fox, wolf or eagle.

A roast pheasant is usually sent up with the tail feathers. This practice is a memorial of the days when a peacock was skinned before roasting and when cooked was sewed into its plumage again, its beak gilded and so served.

Tossing the pancake is another interesting food superstition. Formerly the master of the house was always called upon to toss the Shrove Tuesday pancake. Usually he did it so clumsily that the contents of the pan found their way to the floor, when a fine was demanded by the cook. The custom is still kept up at Westminster school, where a pancake is tossed over the bar and scrambled for. The one who secures it is rewarded with a guinea.

The origin of the cross on hot cross buns is a matter of dispute. There is little doubt that cakes partly divided into four quarters were made long before the Christian era. At one time it was believed that bread baked on Good Friday would never grow moldy, and a piece of it grated was kept in every house, being supposed to be a sovereign remedy for almost any kind of ailment to which man is subject.

In many parts of England it is considered unlucky to offer a mince pie to a guest. It must be asked for.—Boston Journal.

Ancient Beds.

In ancient times the beds we read about were simply rugs, skins or thin mattresses which could be rolled up and carried away in the morning. At night they were spread on the floor, which in the better class of houses was of tile or plaster, and as the shoes were not worn in the house and the feet were washed before entering a room the floors were cleaner than ours. After a time a sort of bench, three feet wide, was built around two or three sides of the room about a foot above the floor and, covered with a soft cushion, was used during the day to sit or lounge on and as a sleeping place at night. The bench was sometimes made like a settee, movable and of carved wood or ivory.—London Standard.

THE TYPHOON.

A Chinese Legend of the Origin of This Fierce Storm.

This very odd bit is by a Chinaman:

"A little schoolboy while on his way to school one day picked up what seemed to him a small white pebble. He put it into his pocket. It proved to be a snake egg, and in time through the heat of his pocket it hatched out a young reptile.

"The boy fell in love with it and carried it from day to day to school with him and fed it with a part of his own lunch until it became too big to be carried, when he made a nest for it at home.

"But one day it suddenly grew to enormous size, and upon the boy's arrival home he was frightened to death.

"When the monster saw what he had done he was sorely afflicted and refused to be fed, but immediately put on mourning by turning his color from brown to pure black. He crawled beside the grave of his departed friend and lay there for seven days and nights.

"At the completion of the seventh night he came back to his late home, but the boy's old mother was so enraged at him for killing her only son that she picked up an ax and chopped his tail off.

"With a fearful scream and a lash of his bleeding tail he felled the house and made his way to the Moo Soon San mountains, where he never shows himself but once a year, just about the time when he lost his tail, to come out and make trouble for the people by creating storms called the typhoon. This he does to square himself for losing his valuable tail."

Lounge Anatomy.

The modern interest in science through "observation" has become more or less of a mania. Even the children are bitten by it. The Little Chronicle says that Georgie, aged five, takes a great interest in physiology and anatomy.

One day some members of the family had been studying a dissected porcupine and making drawings of the bones.

Not long after his sisters took an old lounge apart, and Georgie watched them. Presently he came running to another member of the family, his eyes on fire, his cheeks flushed and his locks flying behind him.

"Come! Come!" he cried. "If you want to study physerology now's your chance. The girls have got the lounge all to pieces!"

She Was Ashamed.

Mistress (angrily)—Bridget, I find that you wore one of my evening gowns at the bus drivers' ball last evening. It's the worst piece of impudence I ever heard of! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!

Bridget (meekly)—Oi wuz, mum, Oi wuz. An' me young man said as if Oi ivir wore sich a frock in public ag'in he'd break our engagemint.—London Telegraph.

Would Look It.

Photographer—Beg pardon, sir, but can't you look a little less stern and severe?

Sitter—Never mind how stern I look. This photograph is for campaign use. I am a candidate for judge. Go ahead.—Chicago Tribune.

The Physician's Affront.

"So you have decided to get another physician."

"I have," answered Mrs. Cumrox. "The idea of his prescribing flaxseed tea and mustard plasters for people as rich as we are!"—Washington Star.

Proof Positive.

"I wonder if all men are fools?" snapped Mrs. Enpeck during a little domestic tiff the other morning.

"No, indeed, my dear," replied her husband. "I know a number of men who are bachelors!"

Professional Confidences.

The Broker—Don't you find it easier to shave some men than others?

The Barber—Yes; don't you?—Yonkers Statesman.

Quite Impartial.

Mrs. Hiram Offen—I understand you to say you're a good, all round cook, but of course you must have some favorite dishes?

Applicant—No, ma'am. They're all wan to me. Oi'm not the koind to be considerin' whether a dish is chape or expinsive whin Oi'm breakin' it.—Washington Post.

HIS PRIZE ROSES.

A Little Secret That Was Confided to the Wrong Man.

An amusing incident is reported in connection with a small flower show in the north of England. One of the classes—cut roses—was open only to cottage gardeners within a certain radius, and the winner turned up in a laborer whom we will call Sandy. The lucky individual was in high feather and hung about near his exhibit all the afternoon receiving the congratulations of his friends.

"Beautiful roses," remarked a well dressed stranger to Sandy. "They tell me, however, that if Briggs had been qualified to enter he would have beaten you."

Now, Briggs was the rose grower par excellence in the neighborhood; but, unfortunately for him, he was just outside the radius.

"Briggs be hanged!" ejaculated Sandy. "He ain't got no better roses than them!"

"That's nonsense!" retorted the stranger. "Briggs' roses are the talk of the district."

Sandy still stuck to his point and became quite confidential. "Between you and me," he whispered eventually, "Briggs ain't got no better roses than them, 'cos them's his! He couldn't enter himself, so he gave me the pick of his garden."

The stranger was satisfied, and it was only afterward that Sandy discovered to his cost that he had confided his secret to a member of the show committee.—London Tit-Bits.

A Woodland Echo.

As became the idle man having the time of his life in the primeval forests of the Temagamie reserve in Canada, the clerk of the New York court of special sessions was graciously inclined to instruct the workers in camp. These, says the New York Tribune, were two young, unknown men who, with a canoe and a camping outfit, were likewise seeking backwood experience.

He came upon one of them baking bread in a portable aluminium oven before a smoldering log fire.

"Ah," said the clerk, assuming a reclining position of graceful ease, "baking bread, I see."

"Yes. It doesn't come up for a cent."

"You see," continued the clerk, with rising wisdom, "the baking powder, which contains cream of tartar, liberates when heated a certain amount of carbonic acid gas, which"—

"Oh, don't talk shop!" interrupted the cook. "I hate it out here!"

"Oh, you do!" the clerk observed, astonished. "What business are you in, may I ask?"

"I'm an assistant professor of chemistry at Yale."

Throwing Rice at Weddings.

Like roast pig, the origin of throwing rice at weddings is Chinese, and the legend is scarcely less worthy of Charles Lamb: "A famous sorcerer named Chao became jealous of the power of another sorcerer, a woman, and, conceiving a plan to destroy her, he persuaded her parents to bestow her upon his supposed son. The crafty Chao chose the most unlucky day for the wedding, the day when the 'Golden Pheasant' was in the ascendant, so that when the bride entered the red chair the spirit bird would destroy her with his powerful beak. But Peachblossom gave directions to have rice thrown out at the door, and she passed out unharmed while the spirit bird was devouring it."

Crushing a Bore.

John G. Whittier, the Quaker poet, once in describing the usages of the Quakers in regard to "speaking in meetings" said that sometimes the voluntary remarks were not quite to the edification of the meeting. It once happened that a certain George C. grew rather wearisome in his exhortations, and his prudent brethren, after solemn consultation, passed the following resolution: "It is the sense of this meeting that George C. be advised to remain silent until such time as the Lord shall speak through him more to our satisfaction and profit."

Trees of Europe and North America.

Forest vegetation is much richer in North America than in Europe and comprises 412 species, of which 176 are native to the Atlantic region, 106 to the Pacific, 10 are common to both, 46 to the Rocky mountain region, and 74 are tropical species near the coast of Florida as against 158 species in Europe. Six North American species of forest trees—the Judas tree, persimmon, hackberry, plane tree, hop hornbeam and chestnut—are also indigenous in Europe, all now growing there naturally south of the Alps.

Nature's Toilet.

The West Indian negro need not buy soap. He picks a bulb from the "soap tree" in the jungle, which makes a beautiful lather.

If he wants a shave, he uses a piece of sharp cocoanut shell or broken glass and it answers as well as a razor.

To clean his teeth he picks a twig of "chewstick," which is better than the best camel's hair brush and dentifrice.

The Correct Reply.

At an examination held at the agricultural college the question was put "When is the best time to sow barley?" The "examinate," a sharp country lad from the district of Altenburg promptly replied:

"Three days before a gentle rain sir."—From the German.

A Lender No Longer.

"Never lend Burroughs any money?

"Never did."

"But you have."

"No; used to think I did, but found I was making a gift every time."—Boston Post.

SERVANTS IN ECUADOR.

The Traveler Is Forced to Hire Many to Serve Him.

If you were living in Ecuador and wished to hire a servant you could hardly get one by himself or herself, but would be compelled to take up with a drove of them, probably far outnumbering your own family. For example, with a cook you would have to receive her husband and children, and perhaps also her father and mother, into your house to bed and board, and each would bring along all his or her portable property, consisting mainly of domestic pets, such as pigs, chickens, rabbits, dogs and other "live stock." The husband may have some trade which he follows during the day, but at meal-times and when night comes he returns to the bosom of his family and yours. It would be considered downright inhumanity to refuse them food and shelter, and not a servant in Ecuador would work for so mean a master or mistress. The children of your cook may be utilized for light services, such as running errands, weeding the garden and tending the baby, but the numerous brood is apt to be "light fingered" and certain to be lousy, dirty and probably diseased. There is no help for it, however, because "el costumbre" has decreed that for every servant you hire you must expect at least a dozen extra mouths to feed.

Not is this the worst of it. Occasionally the cook's relatives from another village come to pay her a visit of a fortnight or two—lasting as long as you will tolerate it—men, women and children, bringing more dogs, pigs, chickens, etc., to be housed and fed. Fortunately, they are not accustomed to "downy beds of ease" or sumptuous living, but consider themselves in clover if plentifully supplied with beans, corn meal and potato soup, and will sleep contentedly on the stones of the patio or the straw of the stable. The danger is that some of the stranger hangers on may not be as honest as the cook herself is supposed to be, and cases are known where thieves and even murderers thus gained admission to the inside of the casa with disastrous results.—Philadelphia Record.

PICKINGS FROM FICTION.

Most of us look best at a little distance from one another.—"Paul Kelver."

It is only in higher circles that women can lose their husbands and yet remain bewitching.—"The Gray Wig."

No man who is not an egotist or worse is ever sure of a woman's love till she has told it with her own lips.—"His Daughter First."

When in doubt go to church, for there's nothing that lets a man think better than a long prayer and a slow sermon.—"Adam Rush."

There are sixteen ounces to the pound still, but two of them are wrapping paper in a good many stores.—"Letters of a Self Made Merchant."

I used to think that marriage made men old, sour and suspicious. I find I was mistaken. It is not the wife; it is the money market.—"Love and the Soul Hunters."

I b'lieve in havin' a good time when you start out to have it. If you git knocked out of one plan you want to git yourself another right quick, before your sperrits has a chance to fail.—"Lovey Mary."

How Climate Has Changed.

In Switzerland a mean temperature equal to that of north Africa at the present time is shown by its fossil flora to have prevailed during the miocene or middle tertiary epoch. Anthropoid apes lived in Germany and France; fig and cinnamon trees flourished at Dantzic; in Greenland, up to 70 degrees of latitude, magnolias bloomed and vines ripened their fruit, while in Spitzbergen and even in Grinnell Land, within little more than 8 degrees of the pole, swamp cypresses and walnuts, cedars, limes, planes and poplars grew freely, water lilies covered over standing pools and irises lifted their tall heads by the margins of streams and rivers.—Edinburgh Review.

When the Barber Was a Wit.

In original literature the barber is a great figure, and Arabian tales are full of him. In Italy and Spain he was often the brightest man in town, and his shop was headquarters for wit and intrigue. Jasamin became famous as a poet in southern France and recited his verses with razor, scissors, brush and comical gestures as he dressed the hair and beard of fine ladies and gentlemen in his shop. He had a great run, made money, hived fame, and Smiles made a book about him.

Her Advantage.

"Oh, dear!" said little Harold's mother, who was somewhat rheumatic. "I seem to ache all over."

"Well," said her sweet child, "I'm sorry, but not as sorry as I'd be for father if he felt that way."

"Why would you feel more sorry for your father, love?"

"'Cause they'd be such a lot more of him to ache."—Chicago Record-Herald.