

Perhaps the easiest way of testing the heat of the oven is to sprinkle a little flour in it. If this should turn black in one minute the oven is too hot. If it should be of a bright brown colour the oven is hot enough for baking. If it should remain uncoloured, the oven is slack.

An oven that is too hot is, however, to be preferred to one that is "slack." It is always easy to put an additional baking sheet underneath, or a strip of paper over what is to be baked; but an oven that is too slow never bakes well. It will make bread and cakes heavy, pastry hard, and meat dry and flavourless.

There is generally one part of the oven that is hotter than the other. I have already said that meat should go into this first, in order to brown the surface quickly; and so also should cakes and pastry, and anything that contains flour or any starchy substance. The small starchy grains need to be burst with the heat, and after this is done the mixture can be allowed to bake more slowly. If it is not done the preparation will be heavy.

Bread requires peculiar management, which must be the result of experience. As a rule, brick ovens are to be preferred to iron ones for baking bread, because the heat in them is more equal. Iron ovens, such as are attached to kitchen ranges, quickly become over-heated, which causes the surface of the bread to become hard before the heat has reached the centre of the dough, and this keeps the bread from rising. Therefore, if an iron oven must be used for this purpose, it will be found that small loaves or rolls are more easily baked than large ones.

There is one thing in baking that we must bear in mind, and that is that "an oven will not look after itself." The numbers of carefully prepared delicacies I have seen spoil through forgetfulness of this simple fact. Only the other day a young friend of mine announced her intention to make some buns. She collected her materials, selected the recipe, mixed the ingredients in the most satisfactory manner, and put her buns into the oven. The whole family was in a state of expectation, when suddenly an odour more strong than agreeable diffused itself through the house. The melancholy fact slowly forced itself upon us. The buns were burning. My friend had forgotten to look after them whilst they were in the oven, and they were all burnt as black as our shoes.

One objection to an oven is that it is not always hot when it is wanted. Those who want to do a little cooking in a hurry and find that the oven is cold and the fire low, may make a substitute for the oven out of a saucepan. Small pieces of meat, poultry, and game are excellent thus "baked in a pan." Take a common iron saucepan (a tinned or an enamelled one would not answer for the purpose). Melt a slice of dripping in it, and rub the meat or bird that is to be cooked all over with dripping. Place it in the pan, put on the lid, and turn it about every two or three minutes till it is equally browned all over. Cover the pan closely, draw it to the side of the fire so that the meat can cook slowly, and turn and baste it frequently. It will be done in about the same time that it would take to cook in an ordinary oven, and few would guess that it had not been dressed as usual.

PHILLIS BROWN.



CHINESE AND FRENCH.



OMEN have no souls, said a Chinese mandarin one day, with a very self-sufficient air of superiority; and when the missionary with whom he was conversing maintained that "women possessed immortal souls as well as men," the Chinese laughed loudly. "That is good," he said, "I will tell my wife when I return home that she has a soul, and I expect she will be considerably astonished at the information." He laughed again, apparently very much tickled by this new notion, for in China the popular belief is that a woman is an inferior being, and cannot even aspire to go to heaven. Women in China are entirely under the control of their parents until her marriage, and should a wife give birth to sons she is supposed to have the privilege of returning to earth at some future time in the form of a man. In this event she may hope to reach the Buddhist paradise, but under no other conditions. Thus the great desire of all Chinese girls is to return to earth as a man.

In France things are very different, for in that country women are supposed to possess souls, and it is not thought strange that a woman should prepare herself for the life to come. It is generally otherwise with the men, of whom the greater part do not appear to believe in a future state, at least very few amongst them make any preparations for it. Most of them live as if their existence ended in this world, and as if immortality were a fiction. It is not then very consoling to reflect that it is not much better to be a man in France than to be a woman in China. Fortunately for both the Gospel gives us all hopes of eternity—for Christ said, without making any distinction between man or woman, "Whosoever believeth in Me hath everlasting life." May these blessed words enlighten our fellow-creatures in every country, and lead them to look over the horizon of this world to a limitless future! May Christians soon encourage and console the poor Chinese women, and teach them how far better from being men here below it is to become angels in heaven—a blessed aim and end open to the whole human race by faith in Jesus Christ, through Whom we may enter the kingdom of heaven, and attain to the glorious liberty of the children of God.

VARIETIES.

MARRIAGE IN GERMANY.—In Germany elopements are never heard of, and yet there is no such thing as getting married there without the consent of parents. Certain prescribed forms must be gone through or the marriage is null and void. The proposal being formally made and accepted, then comes the betrothal. This takes place, for the most part, privately; shortly after which the father of the bride (as she is then called) gives a dinner or supper to the families and the most intimate friends on both sides, when the fact is declared, and leave given to publish it to the world—who, however, has generally been fortunate enough to anticipate the information. The cards of betrothal are then circulated amongst the friends and acquaintances of each of the lovers.

KINDNESS will soften the heart of the most obdurate, if patiently persevered in. Even an enemy may be won over by oft-repeated acts and words of real sympathy and love. Our own happiness greatly depends upon our endeavours to promote the happiness of others.

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

"Can you by any means the cause divine
That U and I together ne'er can dine?
O yes, the reason all must plainly see,
Who know that U can't come 'till after T."

AVOID all forms of affectation in speech or manner—it is a deception easily seen through, and gains contempt instead of admiration.

DOUBLE DIAMOND ACROSTIC.

The centre lines from top to bottom and from left to right will give the name of a well-known London suburb.

My first in cork is to be seen,
A little letter 'tis I mean.
A measure long my next will be,
In trains by ladies worn, you see.
A little word without delay
Is opposite to strong, you'll say.
A fourth will name a district well
To those who in the south do dwell.
The pallid cheek my fifth describes,
Alike of scholars and of scribes.
An animal my sixth, you'll say,
With reel or cotton oft will play.
A letter in the word muzzle
Will conclude this little puzzle.
My central down words spell in full the name,
And my fourth you'll find will do the same.

A NAUGHTY, rough schoolboy lately threw a ball so hard at his little sister that he hit her on the back of her head, and the *bow!* came out of her mouth.

PRINCE BISMARCK is the possessor of 482 decorations, received from all sovereigns but that of Great Britain. To display them all at once would require a breast *only* twenty-one feet wide!

1. What article of apparel does a girl who cannot sleep resemble?

ANSWER.—A wide-awake.

SQUARE WORDS.—1.

My first is a useful piece of furniture.
My second can never be put under.
Climbing the Alps my third is thought to be.
My fourth is often joined to science.

SQUARE WORDS.—2.

Where ladies meet my first is sure to be.
With pleasure men my second would allure.
My third belongs to houses you oft see.
My fourth ne'er cause, let sympathy be sure.

A WIFE should be her husband's dearest and nearest friend, therefore his equal in the qualities of heart and mind; as capable of advising as of consoling him; a true woman, to be his helpmate and companion, not a goddess to be set on a pedestal and adored with prostrate homage; or a doll to be tricked out with with the gauds of ostentatious and degrading partiality.—*Davenport Adams.*

LITTLE Cecil, at his reading lessons, comes to the word "corrode." "Corrode, to eat away. I say, mamma, dear, didn't I corrode at that jam pudding to-day?"

AN IRISHMAN who wore a very ragged coat was asked of what it was made. "Begorra! I think there's more *fresh air* in it than anything else."