

A FAVORITE SUBJECT.

There Are Many Curious Superstitions About Bread.

It would be surprising, indeed, if there were not many superstitions about bread. The indispensable article of food is naturally in every nation a favorite subject of folk-lore. No French peasant begins a new loaf without crossing it with the knife. The English superstition that bread cracked in the baking portends misfortune in the family has taken root in America. In Germany, too, the housewife still believes that cracks on top of the loaf of bread indicate the death of some one in the household, or, perhaps, misfortune to a dear friend, while cracks on the lower side of the bread are taken to indicate a birth.

As many of us know, our bakers mark the sign of a cross upon the dough before placing it in the oven. The reason for making this sign becomes plain when we know the origin of the custom. Almost all our superstitions about bread date back to old pagan days, though they have been greatly modified so as to conform to Christian beliefs.

The old domestic practice was modified when Christianity became triumphant, and, in place of a pagan symbol, the early Christian housewife not only used to make the sign of the cross when she began to knead the dough, but she marked that sign upon her loaf before placing it in the oven. Why? Simply because the sign of the cross is the recognized Christian protecting mark against the attacks of evil spirits, witches and the like. Hence, bread marked with the cross is supposed to be witchproof, will bake all right, not crack across the top, etc.

Just as the Jews have Passover cakes, and other people have had specially prepared food for their religious festivals, so Christians have cakes for certain seasons. Our hot cross-buns on Good Friday are simply modern representatives of the cakes used at some old pagan festival. In days gone by, the cakes and buns baked at Easter were supposed to possess great virtue. Thus, it is an old belief that the observance of eating cross-buns on Good Friday insures, so to speak, the house from fire for the coming year. We still eat a certain kind of pancake on Shrove Tuesday. The practice is referred to in "All's Well that Ends Well," where the clown speaks of a "pancake for Shrove Tuesday." In "Pericles" they are called "flapjacks"—a term still used in country districts.

In truth, to study the superstitions about bread is to take a wide lesson in folk-lore. These superstitions relate to the kneading trough, the oven, bakers and bread. For instance, in many parts of France the "arche," or kneading trough, is more than a rude kitchen utensil; it is often a pretty bit of furniture. Mr. Sebillot, who has collected many of the superstitions of the French folk relative to bread, quotes the story of a thief who entered the window of a house with intent to commit burglary, but refused to step on the trough still containing the dough, believing that to do so would be an impiety. This is similar to the American story of two hungry burglars who refused to satisfy their hunger with the meat which they found in a well-stocked larder because it was Friday.

A writer in one of our magazines says that in Gottland the cross is still signed before the oven fire is lighted or the dough kneaded. This practice is very common in the country districts all over Europe. In Brittany the housewife makes the sign of the cross with the right hand while she places the left hand in the trough. After the dough is kneaded the lid of the trough is shut, and so is the door; for if a cat should enter the room the bread would not rise. Certain charms or invocations are used to cause the bread to multiply itself. Thus, the peasant housewife adjures the dough to imitate the leaven, the wheat, the miller, and to rise. She would be very angry if any one should sing or whistle in the room while she is making the loaf.

TRUE TRAMP PHILOSOPHY.

Fortunately It Does Not Include the Majority of Mankind.

A St. Louis reporter has discovered a tramp philosopher, who, through the columns of the *Globe-Democrat* delivered himself of the following bit of creed:

"It's the philosophy of things that interests me. Here, for example, is man. He works, and for what? If he saves his money, it does him no good; if he spends it, he is called a fool. There is worry and a heavy heart on the one side; worry and headaches on the other. As the boy said: 'What is the use of anything, anyhow?' Of course, some people—most of them, I guess—believe in God. I don't. If a man does believe in religion, he has a desire, naturally, to go to Heaven, but, allowing there is such a place, what is his reward? The Bible says he shall live forever. I should like to ask some theologian what kind of a reward that is. To live one must work or loaf, and this world is all right for either. It's a beautiful world. It's full of life and sunshine, and even though it rains, one knows the grass will be greener, the flowers brighter, the air fresher to-morrow, and the skies will seem more beautiful. As for work, a man has every chance in this world that he could ask, if he chooses to work. But this is the end of all. When a man dies he dies; he is gone. I have no fear of a hereafter, and I laugh with Mephistopheles at those who subscribe to a creed that damns them ere they're born, starves them while they live, and burns them when they die."

That is hardly orthodox, but, after all, it has some grains of gold. The man who spoke it probably spoke honestly, for by his manner of life he proves his faith by his works, or, more correctly speaking, by his persistent refusal to work. He takes life as he finds it, and pronounces it very good. Having no ambitions, he has no worries; having no aspirations, he strives not. The present has no cares for him, the future no terrors, the past no regrets. When the end comes he will simply accept the rest which he believes the grave furnishes as a little more profound than the rest he has spent his lifetime listlessly enjoying.

That is true tramp philosophy, perfect of its kind and for its class. Only it is a fortunate thing that the class does not include the majority of mankind.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

FRANKLIN'S EXPERIMENT.

The First Scientific Kite Flying—How It Was Done.

The famous kite experiment is described by Franklin in a letter dated October 19, 1752: "Make a small cross of light sticks of cedar, the arms so long as to reach to the four corners of a large, thin silk handkerchief when extended. Tie the corners of the handkerchief to the extremities of the cross, so you have the body of the kite which, being properly accommodated with a tail, loop, and string, will rise in the air like those made of paper, but being made of silk is better fitted to bear the wet and wind or a thunder-gust without tearing. To the top of the upright stick of the cross is to be fixed a very sharp-pointed wire rising a foot or more above the wood. To the end of the twine next the hand is to be tied a silk ribbon, and where the twine and twine join a key may be fastened. This kite is to be raised when a thunder-gust appears to be coming on, and the person who holds the string must stand within a door or window, or under some cover, so that the silk ribbon may not be wet; and care must be taken that the twine does not touch the frame of the door or window. As soon as the thunder-clouds come over the kite, the pointed wire will draw the electric fire from them, and the kite, with all the twine, will be electrified, and stand out every way and be attracted by an approaching finger. And when the rain has wet the kite and twine you will find the electric fire stream out plentifully from the point on the approach of your knuckle."—Appleton's Popular Science Monthly.

Factional Church Choir.

One of the times when a factional church choir met its match was on a recent Sunday evening at Elkhart, Ind. The choir refused to sing without its leader, and, when the minister announced a hymn, kept perfectly still. The congregation began to sing, but still the choir was silent. When the hymn was ended the clergyman gave out another, saying that it was to be begun at the second stanza. Turning to the place, the people found that the first line was: "Let those refuse to sing who never knew our Lord." The choir silently acknowledged unacquaintance.

Victims of Misfortune.

"No one," he wailed, "will give me a show!"

And the accusation against the world at large was too true. He had tried to dead-head his way into every theater in town, but there was no gift of a performance available.—Indianapolis Journal.

CITY OF GUATEMALA.

A Beautiful Town with Its Best Sun Before It.

The city of Guatemala is situated in the temperate zone, or "tierra templada," at the northern extremity of an extensive and fertile plain about 4,500 feet from the level of the sea, the climate being a continuous spring.

It has a quadrilateral form, and in the early time it was for more safety surrounded by walls. Considering the small number of inhabitants, the city occupies a vast area, but that is owing to the magnificent gardens with which every house is surrounded, and also the spacious squares which garnish the city.

Wide and well-kept streets add to the natural beauty, and good sanitary regulations have introduced sewers throughout the town and furnished with water brought from a distance of 15 miles, a work that cost the progressive community more than \$2,000,000.

A most interesting visit in the early morning is to the city market, situated in the center of the town, adjacent to all the public buildings, such as the municipal building, the government building, the theater and the cathedral.

The numerous stalls are filled with productions both domestic and foreign; baskets, bird cages, cigarettes, shoes, saddlery, rebozos of silk and cotton, filled one aisle, while another was devoted to tropical fruits and vegetables—rich, brown sapotes, mangos, bananas, oranges, limes, lemons, cocoanuts, custard apples, yams, chiles and tomatoes, while at intervals flower-sellers and bird and meat sellers offered their wares.

A fact impressive is that all of these merchants are women—women with fine, large, black eyes, and an eternal smile upon their lips; women with skin like a faded magnolia leaf and ebony-colored hair, half-covered by the never-missing rebozo. Their striped petticoats are of the liveliest colors—red, green and blue; some wear a corslet, but more abandon their bosoms to the voluptuous white shirts common to the country.

They are vigorous and healthy, and look like so many Greek women of ancient times, as with sympathetic invitation they coax one to buy the goods they are selling.

Perhaps the most magnificent view of the town affords is from one of the cathedral towers upon a clear evening. By a corkscrew staircase one enters the entrails of the dark tower, and after ascending the 250 steps illuminated by the meager light of the entrance door, and of the small opening, unite with that of the ground floor, one finds himself confronted by the huge clock which adorns the tower, and contemplating a splendid panorama that will never desert his memory while life shall last.

East the ground undulates away in rich fields of maguey, and the dark green of the coffee trees, until far beyond it loses itself in a mahogany forest; to the south lie the ruins of Antigua, the name by which the remains of the buildings left from the first earthquake are known; north and west the Sierra Madre, like a true mother, stretches out her powerful arms through Guatemala, mitigating, with her snow-capped heights, the ardent heat of that tropical sun.

Guatemala is no longer an almost unknown country. The pen and pencil of historians, explorers and artists have caught and held her dense, luxuriant forests, her picturesque lakes and her green slopes and glens and given to the world their beauties, and with the fresh breath of foreign life has come the untrammeled old faiths and superstitions, strong wind which changes the glories of the past to the glories of the present, and strengthens as it foretells in whispers the glories of the future.

The best lies yet beyond Guatemala, although she has had in her history men of remarkable progressive energy, such as Francisco Morazan, Jose Rufino Barillas, and last, but not least, the present president, J. M. Reina Barrios, all of whom have made powerful efforts to put their country on the road to advancement and civilization, and in the free schools of the country may be observed crowds of eager, active scholars with the bright glance of awakened intelligence in their eyes, and in intellectual development which promises well for the next generation.—N. Y. Ledger.

Light from Sugar.

A scientist has discovered that light may be procured from sugar. He has succeeded in taking several photographs by the light supplied by sugar only. The sugar was first exposed to a direct sunlight for two hours, and then placed in a dark room. Immediately on being placed in the darkness the sunlight stored in the sugar began to glow, faintly at first, but quite brightly after a few minutes. After about 20 minutes, during which time the photographs were taken, the light began to die away and gradually went out. The photographs taken by sugar-light are quite distinct, though not as clear as an ordinary photograph.

VENTES A L'ENCAN.

PAR PAUL & GURLEY.

ANNONCE JUDICIAIRE.

Propriétés de choix, dans le 3^e District.

Successeur de William Hillman.

PAR PAUL & GURLEY—Alfred Paul, Administrateur—Bureau 227 de l'Hotel MARDI, 4 Janvier 1898, à midi, et la Bourse des Encantaires No 629 rue Commerce, en vente, sur d'aujourd'hui date le 29 Janvier 1897 et jusqu'à l'heure de 12 heures, les biens de la Cour Civil de District pour la Paroisse d'Orléans, Division D, daté le 1^{er} décembre 1896, in re successeur de John Hillman.

COUR CIVILE DE DISTRICT, pour la paroisse d'Orléans—No 64,852—à midi, et la Bourse des Encantaires, No 625 rue Commerce, entre les rues Camp et St. Charles, dans l'arrondissement de la Paroisse d'Orléans, Division D, daté le 1^{er} décembre 1896, in re successeur de John Hillman.

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