



“The vulgar boil, the learned roast an egg.”  
POPE.

IN the name of the profit : Eggs ! Although farming in England may spell ruin, poultry almost always pays, and if intelligently and economically managed, one rarely hears of the failure of a poultry-farm. We import a vast number of millions of eggs annually (many of which come to a deservedly unrighteous end in villainous omelettes), but it would be easy, with capital, initiative, and incubators, to produce them one and all in Great Britain and make the egg trade a national industry.

A couple of generations ago, when any one walked gingerly in the street, he or she was said to be going at an “egg-trot,” because it

reminded one of a good housewife riding to market at a jog-trot pace with eggs in her panniers. Let us therefore approach the subject of eggs at an "egg-trot."

A good egg is never bad. That is not such an inept truism as it looks. A good egg is unspoilable, even by the worst cook. There are over four hundred and fifty ways of cooking eggs, each of which has some peculiar excellence denied to the others. You cannot even make an omelette without breaking eggs, and most people find breakfast almost impossible without the regulation hen-fruit. To teach one's grandmother how to suck eggs is a futile labour partaking of juvenile presumption, but it is at least easier than persuading the average cook that the fried egg of commerce is only one out of scores of simple breakfast egg-dishes. "There is reason in roasting eggs." Even the most trivial culinary conjuring trick has some good motive for being performed in one way rather than in another. When wood fires were usual it was more common to roast eggs than to boil them, and great care was required to prevent their being "ill-

roasted, all on one side," as Touchstone says in the play. Which is an additional reason for keeping strictly to the formula. Eggs are ticklish things to monkey with, and it is much easier to break them than to make them.

Learned disquisitions have before now been written on "How to boil an egg." It is not in my province to touch on that subject. The votary of the Chafing Dish may be presumed to have enough common sense to come in out of the rain, and to be able to boil an egg. It is not much to ask. Pope, by the way, thought it vulgar to boil an egg, but then we are all vulgar nowadays—and glory in it. Neither do I propose to expatiate upon egg-flip, egg-nog, and kindred "dulceties." I will give a few plain straightforward recipes for eggs in the Chafing Dish, and leave egg-eccentricities to my betters. I have only to premise that there is but one kind of egg. The Best. Real new-laid eggs are reliable friends. All others are base impostors!

### Poached Eggs.

The Chafing Dish should be more than half full of boiling water. Break each egg separately into a saucer and slip it steadily and dexterously into the Chafing Dish. Light the lamp, cover up the water and eggs, and put the dish over the lower hot-water pan, which should have in it a pint of hot water. Let it heat until the whites of the eggs are set ; then remove the eggs from the pan with the special flat implement *ad hoc*. Put the eggs on rounds of toast. Sprinkle them with pepper, salt and parsley, and put a tiny piece of butter on top of each egg.

### Scrambled Eggs.

Beat up three eggs, whites and yolks, in a bowl, and add a pinch of salt. Put a good tablespoon of butter in the Chafing Dish, over a pan of hot water. When the butter sizzles, pour in the eggs, and stir with a wooden spoon very briskly for a minute and a half to two minutes, keeping the eggs from adhering to the sides and bottom of the

Dish. Have rounds of toast ready, and pour the eggs on to them. Dust them with Paprika and parsley.

It is easy and pleasant to vary plain scrambled eggs with a dozen odds and ends. Asparagus tips, for instance, bacon dice, tiny slicelets of ham, green peas, thin rounds of Brunswick sausage, broad beans, chicken livers, button mushrooms, tomatoes, or chopped nasturtium leaves. All these should be added, cooked of course, towards the end of the stirring operation, and just before serving. Many other ingredients might be suggested, but the ingenious innovator will be able to think these out for himself, and he can always christen his invention scrambled eggs *à la quelque chose* to please his own fancy and flatter his friends.

### Omelettes.

An omelette should not be too lightly undertaken. There are few things more tricky, more unreliable, more human, in a sense, than an omelette. You may make it a dozen times with perfect success. It will

be light, frothy, ethereal, almost gossamer-like in its impalpable fairyhood. The thirteenth time you proceed on precisely the same lines, use the same material, and in every way follow the same formula, and the result is chaos. If there be a sex in cookery, omelettes must be essentially feminine.

This is how to make an omelette. Beat three eggs lightly with two tablespoons of milk, a little salt and pepper. Put one tablespoon of butter in the Chafing Dish over the hot-water pan, and when sizzling hot, pour in the eggs. You must hold the dish in the left hand, and rapidly scrape away with a knife the cooked egg where it seems to adhere, letting the liquid portion follow the knife. It should be cooked in less than fifty seconds if the water beneath it is boiling. Then gently, but firmly, slip the knife under the left-hand edge of the omelette and fold it over rapidly and neatly to the side of the dish opposite the handle. Have a very hot plate ready; reverse it on to the dish, turn the latter over the former quickly, and the omelette will (or should) rest on the plate.

Of course all this sounds very easy, but it needs knack and practice—lots of both. When entirely successful, however, it is most gratifying and self-flattering. You feel a real cook at last, and look upon Ude, Carême, Francatelli, and the other great names of history as brothers. All Chafers go through that pleasant period when all goes right and nothing goes wrong. Sometimes it lasts quite a while; but at last, sooner or later, there comes a moment when we know we feel that we know how little we know. As at golf, when we never play so well as during our first month, even so is it with Chaffinda.

The testing of eggs should not rightly be one of the Chafer's duties. He should be able to rely on his purveyor. The best eggs I ever had in London were provided by an old landlady who told me that she got them twice a week from the country. When I asked her what county they came from, she said, "They come all the way from Clapham Junction, sir!" Anyhow, they were remarkably good, and I have been served with less reliable ones in country farmhouses.

This was possibly for the same reason that one can rarely get fish at the seaside until the London train comes in.

### Eggs en Cocotte.

You must provide some of those dear little fireproof china cups especially made for the purpose. Butter these little cups. Put two teaspoonsful of cream into each. Then break very carefully an egg into each. Dust with pepper, salt, and parsley. Stand these cups in the Chafing Dish with enough boiling water to come half-way up the cups. Have the lower pan full of hot water underneath. Boil up gently till the eggs are just set. Serve in the cups very hot, taking care in hauling them out of the Chafing Dish as they are very easily dropped

### Lady Effingham's Eggs.

Put two slices of Gruyère cheese (not very thin) in the Chafing Dish with a tablespoon of butter. Break two eggs in a saucer and slide them on to the cheese; sprinkle with



salt and Paprika and let it simmer (over the hot-water pan) till the eggs are set. Serve with fingers of toast.

### **Newmarket Eggs.**

Put a tablespoon of butter in the Chafing Dish. When it sizzles add an onion cut into slices; let it get well browned. Then throw in three fair-sized potatoes in slices. Pour over these the well-beaten yolks of two eggs, adding salt and pepper. Heat up to boiling-point. Serve with toast.

### **Kempton Eggs.**

Cut into slices three hard-boiled eggs and one onion; put the latter only in the Chafing Dish with a tablespoon of butter. Stir it, and fry the onion to a light brown, then sprinkle in half a tablespoon of flour, and add two tablespoons of milk, pepper and salt. Boil up and then add the eggs; serve at once with grated Parmesan cheese.

### Anchovy Eggs.

Place a tablespoon of butter in the Chafing Dish, add half a teaspoon of dry mustard, two tablespoons of tomato sauce, one of Worcester sauce, and one of mushroom ketchup. Let it simmer, and then drop in four hard-boiled eggs cut into quarters, salted and peppered. Prepare four rounds of toast, spread them with good anchovy paste, or, better still, with Patum Peperium, and put the eggs on the toast, pouring over them the mixture.

This a remarkably good dish after a dance in the country and a ten-mile drive home. If the proper preparations are made, it can be turned out in five minutes in the billiard-room, and it picks one up in a thoroughly businesslike and efficient manner. Those cold winter drives after a busy night's dancing, especially if the supper was good and frequent, demand a powerful restorative.

Now come we to the great question of Welsh Rabbit. I venture to doubt whether Rarebit is defensible, and I have read shoals

of arguments for and against. Anyhow, my kind is a Rabbit, and it tastes as nice—or nicer.

A small boy walking across a common with his mother espied a bunny. “Look, mother, there goes a rabbit!” “Nonsense, my boy, it must have been imagination.” “Mother, is imagination white behind?”

There is no imagination about a Welsh Rabbit. It is sternly real. But not, I think, quite as indigestible as generally supposed, especially if it be liberally dosed with Paprika, which I find to be marvellously digestive. A well-made Rabbit should be suave in flavour, not harsh, stringy, or pungent. There should be a silky sensation of sensuous softness, and, above all things, it should not tickle the palate. I fear that I am led to dogmatise on the rabbit, and to ferret out my own didactic ideas on the subject, but if my rabbit be carefully concocted and intelligently degustated, I am convinced that I shall be forgiven.

### Welsh Rabbit.

Use about half a pound of hard, dry, sound, mild cheese, without flaw or speck. Cut it up into tiny dice, in fact the smaller the better; some indeed insist on grating the cheese, but I have found this to be an unnecessary labour. Put a tablespoon of butter into the dish and knead it well with a wooden spoon until it begins to sizzle. Add half a teaspoon of Paprika, rather less of salt, and a tablespoon of beer (anything except bitter) Mix all thoroughly. Turn in the cheese and stir it about until it gets as consistent as thick cream, adding two to three more tablespoons of beer gradually, and taking great care that it does not become lumpy or stringy. Now put in a teaspoonful of made mustard. Keep on stirring until bubbles appear. It is then ready. You should beforehand get some toasts ready and as soon as the bubbling is well developed plunge in the toasts and cover them with the cheese. Serve on very hot plates. Milk can be used instead of beer, and condiments may be added in the shape

of Worcester sauce or Tabasco, but I do not recommend them. Everything depends on regular and practically continuous stirring, always in one direction of course.

If you want to turn the Welsh Rabbit into a Buck Rabbit, drop a poached egg upon each piece of toast on top of the cheese. Here you have the whole art of Rabbiting, and it is a very good thing to eat—sometimes.

The right and only place for Savouries at a dinner-party is fixed and determined by immutable custom, but at a Chafing-Dish meal, be it luncheon or supper, more latitude is allowed, and a savoury may pop up here and there at the most unexpected—and thereby most delightful—moment. I see nothing heterodox in having a savoury instead of *hors d'œuvres*, or introducing it after the fish or instead of sweets. Few people, and those only of the baser sort, despise a simple savoury. It is such a succulent trifle, a mere mouthful of suggestion, an airy nothing that agrees with everything. There are of course savouries and savouries. I can only give a very few recipes,

but have tried to make them as diverse and appetising as possible.

### Ham Toast.

A quarter of a pound of lean ham, chopped fine. Do not mince it. Mincing machines, however patent and "adjustable," have a way of reducing everything to an unholy pulp. Put the ham in the Chafing Dish with a teaspoon of Worcester sauce, half a teaspoon of good curry powder (I like Ventacachellum's), a small tablespoon of butter, three drops of Tabasco, and two tablespoons of milk. Mix all well, heat up for five minutes and then spread on hot fingers of toast.

### Cheese Matador.

Put a walnut of butter into the Chafing Dish, also a Spanish onion sliced. Simmer for three minutes. Then cut a quarter of a pound of hard dry cheese into dice, and drop into the mixture; add half a cup of milk and stir well till it is all thoroughly

amalgamated and the cheese melted; add salt and Paprika and one beaten-up egg. Hot up for another three minutes and serve with toast.

### Savoury Biscuits.

Mix up the yolks of two eggs and two tablespoons of grated Parmesan cheese. You can buy this ready grated, but it is not as good as if you grate it yourself. Add half a teaspoon of mustard and some salt. Spread the mixture on thinly buttered water biscuit (or thin Captains), put the biscuits in the Chafing Dish, over boiling water, and let them get slowly hot.

### Braised Olives.

Stone neatly a dozen Spanish olives. Put them in the Chafing Dish with enough strong bouillon to cover them. Add a wine-glass of claret and the rind of half a lemon. Boil up quickly, strain, and serve the olives on toast or heated biscuit.

### Bombay Toast.

A tablespoon of butter in the Chafing Dish; as it melts stir in two eggs, yolks and whites, half a teaspoon of Paprika, the same of anchovy sauce, and half a dozen capers, chopped up. When very hot spread this upon rounds of buttered toast.

### Devilled Chestnuts.

Boil half a pound of chestnuts and remove the shells and skins. Break them in handy little lumps. When cold and hard return them to the Chafing Dish and fry them in a tablespoon of butter, half a teaspoon of Paprika, and plenty of salt, until they are well cooked through. Drain and dry them on blotting-paper, and put a drop of Tabasco on each lump.

### Salted Almonds.

Melt one and a half tablespoons of butter. Drop into it a quarter of a pound of blanched almonds, and hot up till the almonds are



well burned, brown but not black. Drain them on blotting-paper and sprinkle them with plenty of salt and a little Paprika.

### The Devil.

One can devil bones, biscuits, meat and fish in a Chafing Dish very nearly as well as on the grill. Care must be taken always to score the flesh across with deep incisions, so that the devil mixture penetrates well into the meat. This is the best devil mixture for Chafing-Dish purposes that I know. There may be better, but I have not come across them. Mix well upon a plate a teaspoon of mustard, the same of Worcester sauce and anchovy sauce, two teaspoons of olive oil and half a teaspoon of Paprika. Let the meat soak up this mixture, and then hot it up in a tablespoon of butter till it almost boils. A chicken drumstick makes the best devil in the world, but biscuits dipped in the mixture are not to be despised, and even slices of cold cooked meat, beef or mutton, are very toothsome if treated in the same manner. Any cold bird makes an excellent devil.

## Macaroni.

Although it may not come quite strictly under the head of Eggs and Savouries, this seems about the right place to expatiate upon Macaroni, the national food of Italy and the delight of every cultivated nation.

Real macaroni is made of hard wheat of a semi-translucent kind, which is richer in gluten and other nitrogenous matter than soft wheat. Macaroni is nothing but flour and water mixed in a cylinder, which concocts it into stiff paste. Then it is rolled under a huge granite wheel which flattens it into a smooth mass. It is cut into squares, and flattened by the wheel again and again until it is thoroughly kneaded. The dough then goes into an upright metal cylinder closed at the lower end with a thick disc of copper. This is pierced with openings through which a plunge-piston squeezes the dough into threads. The threads are cut off at regular intervals, and hung upon wooden drying-rods. Real macaroni is tender, yellowish, rough in texture, and elastic. It breaks with a clean, porcelainlike fracture. When

it boils it swells to twice its size, and does not become sticky, but keeps its tubular form without collapse. It will keep any length of time in a dry cool place.

There are many agreeable variations on the macaroni theme, some of which suggest music rather than cooking. Everybody knows Vermicelli, but among the lesser known but equally admirable kinds are Tagliatelli, Lasagnete, Fuselli, Bicorni, Candele, Cannelloni, Pennoni, Capelli di Angelo, and many more. Each has its own little special peculiarity. All are alike excellent.

### Tagliatelli.

Perhaps the handiest for Chafing-Dish purposes is Tagliatelli. Boil two pints of water in the Dish, put in half a pound of Tagliatelli, boil eight minutes, then strain. Return to the Dish, add a tablespoon of grated Parmesan cheese, and the same of butter. Toss round and round until well mixed, and serve very hot. Tomatoes mix well with macaroni, and so do mushrooms;

but the real macaroni-lover will prefer it by itself, accompanied always, of course, by plenty of cheese. Mustard mixes well with it, but be very chary of the salt, for it is already salted during the process of preparation. To make macaroni *au gratin*, which seems (unaccountably enough) to be the only way in which it is served in nine British households out of ten, the top of the cooked macaroni must be well covered with grated Parmesan cheese, and then carefully browned with a salamander.

### Ravioli.

Another most useful Italian preparation is Ravioli, which is compounded of a variety of good things. As Leporello says in *Don Giovanni*: "Madamina, il catalogo e questo!" Eggs, Macaroni, Paste, Pork, Chicken, Vegetables, and Cheese. It is a sort of White Knight portmanteau food, and if quite fresh (it is best in summer) is rightly termed "A dinner in one course"—if you cook it badly you may omit one letter in the last word.

This is how to prepare Ravioli with the help of Chaffinda. To two pints of boiling water in the Chafing Dish put a quarter of a pound of Ravioli ; boil for ten minutes, then strain. Return to the dish ; add half a teaspoon of butter, the same of grated Parmesan cheese, and hot it up for three minutes. Additional zest may be given, though it is by no means necessary, by cooking with the Ravioli a few fresh mushrooms, tomatoes, or even anchovies or olives. The best Ravioli I have found in London come from the Vegetable Meal Company of Soho.

With Macaroni or Ravioli I always suggest the drinking of Chianti, or Lacrima Christi. The former can often be obtained of quite good quality, not too rough or fiery. As to the latter, it is rare to find it drinkable. As a rule it is impossible. But the combination of food and wine is a good memory-reviver of a week at Genoa.