

# New Foods at the Pan-American Exposition

By Mrs. L. O. Harris

ONCE upon a time there was a tired housekeeper who wished that she had been asked to assist at the creation, which would have given her a chance to suggest that man be put upon the stage without a stomach.

This woman, weary of preparing three meals a day, would find some comfort in the array of ready-to-swallow foods now so enticingly set forth at the Exposition in Buffalo. In the Building of Liberal Arts the exhibit of foods and their accessories presents a festive appearance; for what with sampling, demonstrating, handsome attendants and artistically devised booths, this Food Exhibit is, in a fashion, a rival of the Midway, in the entertainment of visitors.

As a part of this Food Exhibit, Equatorial America is a realized dream of tropical trees, plants, vines, foliage and flowers, nestled within decorated glass, ornate grills, and sparkling waters, suggesting the *dolce far niente* of Caribbean Seas. These have been selected from plantations and botanical gardens of tropical America, and include all the spice-bearing trees and shrubs, miniature tea and coffee plantations, together with kola, maté, vanilla, tonka, cocoa, sago, and arrow-root.

The more one considers the processes whereby food shows have come to be what they are, the more one is impressed with their educational value. Sampling, demonstrating, and the cooking school lead to serious thoughts on dietetics, nutrients, and well-balanced family meals. What nobler occupation for her activities can a young woman

find than the mastery of the art of human brain, bone, and muscle building? The importance of good health by means of good living can hardly be overestimated, and the modern food-show rises to a dignity above the mere purposes of trade, when it inspires and helps womankind to this end.

Now the education of the palate is not the work of a day. Only the cosmopolite is without prejudice, and hospitable to all new meats and drinks. Yerba maté, for instance, that South American shrub from whose leaves a tea is infused,—how many who taste it at the Exposition ever care to drink it again? Yet the persistent experimenter, the wise woman who realizes the folly of building up a wall of Chinese tea against all other teas, will taste again and again, until some day she awakes to a realization of her liking for the queer maté.

Yerba maté is a small evergreen shrub of the holly family, which grows wild along the Paraguay River. For centuries the natives have prepared the tea by gently roasting the green leaves until dry enough to grind to a powder. Until recently no systematic attempt has been made to put maté in the markets of the world, but now a rich company has gone into the business of producing and marketing it. The tea is said to invigorate, and has, besides, the sustaining properties of coffee.

Another South American food is the Tania, a tuber, which has somewhat of the appearance of a large white sweet potato. It is good roasted, and is eaten as an accompaniment to roast meats, also with butter; but it is dry and inferior in flavor to the sweet potato.

From Argentine comes Mandioc, a food substance that will in all probability find an extensive market in the near future, when its merits shall have been made known. It is a product of the cassava plant, and grows somewhat after the fashion of a carrot. Our own Bureau of Agriculture is now experimenting with the cassava in Florida, and it is thought with success. Nasturtium seeds are another food shown by Argentine. In the horticultural greenhouse there is a red-hot corner, where all the varieties of pepper grow, in all shapes, colors, and sizes, and all of them in good repute in the Southern countries.

The people of the United States need to be educated to a proper use of pepper. Their too often tasteless cooking would be vastly improved by its judicious use. So would their poor digestion. The Latin-American countries show an astonishing variety of Chili peppers, which are not hot, but sweet, and which are used there as a salad, as a flavoring for soups and stews, and as a garnish. Parboiled, the inner part removed and mixed with meat and bread crumbs highly seasoned, and the pepper-pods filled with this force-meat, then baked and served hot, they make a delightful *entremet*.

Chili brings a sort of Star Fish, canned, which she pronounces the most delicately flavored of any fish that is caught in any sea. Her Bacalao is another delicious fish that she shows, canned of course, a far-off and highly aristocratic connection of the cod. There is also to be seen in the Chilean exhibit a food for infants, invalids, and old people. Alimento Klein it is called. It has the unstinted commendations of doctors and nurses. Composed of milk, cocoa, and certain other well-balanced nutrients, it is delicious and sustaining.

In the Building of Liberal Arts there are demonstrations going on of cereal coffees, each one claimed to be a perfect substitute for the real coffee. Coffee, as it is made in these United States, ought to be the most easily given up of all drinks. Boiled coffee is poor stuff, as to taste, and not particularly comforting, even to the iron-clad stomach. The chemists have iterated and reiterated that there is but one way to extract the virtue of coffee, and that is by percolation.

There are coffee tablets and beef-tea tablets, both useful in traveling. Onion salt is a new thing and a good thing. Its preparation is similar to that of celery salt.

Of health breads there is no end. In that stage of the world, when bread was declared to be the staff of life, the human stomach must have been made of sterner stuff than the modern machine. Nowadays the way of bread in the stomach seems to prove it the veritable bread of affliction: else why so many devices to make wheat non-noxious food? Some of the new breads look suspiciously like dog biscuit, but they carry a string of well-attested virtues. Their outward appearance, however, is not seductive. One of these crackers fell from the demonstrator's booth into the aisle the other day, where the sweeper on his rounds came upon it. He picked it up, turned it over and over, eyeing it contemptuously the while, and then exclaimed, "This do be er awful thing fur er wake stumnuk."

A variety of predigested foods are shown, which only prove that the American stomach has gone "on strike," while the American head and the American hand keep at work as hard as ever. There is an albumenized egg-food, which is undeniably excellent for weak digestion, for infants and old people, and, furthermore, is palatable.

The same may be said of a lactated food tissue.

A visitor from Mars just arrived on this planet might be pardoned if, after a perusal of our magazines, he came to the conclusion that the only things worth while in this queerest of queer worlds were soap and baking-powder. The makers of these did not forget to go to the Exposition, but the only distinctively new baking-powder there is one made of the white of eggs. It certainly makes delicious hot breads and cake.

In one booth Aunt Jemima makes pancakes out of some new process flour, and very good they are; but Aunt Jemima is a darky, who has been living North so long that she has lost all the characteristics of the genuine negro, talks Chicagoese, and ought to change her stage name to Cindy, or Tildy, or Mandy, for no Jemima was ever found south of the imaginary line.

California and Florida have brought specimens of the pawpaw, whose juice has a powerful, disintegrating quality.

A little of it, squeezed over meat, an hour or two before cooking, will make tender the toughest of beef, and that, too, without injury to its flavor or wholesomeness. Both of these States show the Loquat, or Mespilus, locally known in Louisiana as the Japan Plum. This delicious fruit, sweet with an acid flavor, is of a bright golden color from its skin through to its shining brown seed. The tree that bears it is an evergreen with great dark green leaves; and in February it is thick-set with large, bouquet-like clusters of white and brown blossoms of entrancing sweetness. The Loquat deserves to be more widely known. The olives, raisins, prunes, and almonds of California make a wonderful showing, many of them being even better than the imported fruits.

A new cooking and salad oil frankly tells the story of its birthplace in the cotton-fields of the South. It has the flavor of olive oil, and also its color, which is given to the olive oils by steeping in them a certain grass that grows commonly in the European olive-producing countries.



## Some Culinary Hints from the House-mother's Chair

By M. E. Converse

**Y**ES, bread and good bread. There is no excuse nowadays for anything else. And you don't know what to do with the stale bread, and there is so much of it?

Now there is "Mumblety Bread" that the children call for. One day, when our school-girl came home tired and hungry, she saw the cook take from the oven a

large meat-pan full of pieces of bread that had been dried for pounding into crumbs. She filled her hands full, and ate them buttered for luncheon.

"This is delicious, mamma," she cried. "We must have it often. It is better than any other hot bread I ever tasted."

After that there were rapturous exclamations whenever "Mumblety Bread"