

THE STORY OF BREAD

HAS ALWAYS BEEN MOST STAPLE FOOD OF MAN

BREAD, the lowly and yet the most substantial food of the race has been the subject of much comment at the Base Hospital since the detachment and the patient's messes have been reduced to one slice of wheat bread per meal. The order went into effect because of the latest request from Washington which asked that strict conservation of wheat bread be maintained.

Most of the soldiers in discussing the bread question think only of the amount of bread-stuff that they themselves consume. They do not consider the army of men necessary for the production of the grain and the making of that food and because of this the necessity of saving every possible crumb. It is estimated that the labor of scores and scores of people is lost by the pure waste of bread in the army camps each day. This is an especially important factor now because of the scarcity of labor.

It is known that there is none too much wheat in the possession of the Allies and America at this time.

Since the enemy has been whipped and it is necessary to feed him, the drain on the supply is going to be greater. There was never a time when bread is so important, so vital to the race as it is now. There has never been a time during the long war when it was necessary that food conservation be practiced as carefully as now.

But this article is to deal with the story in a loaf of bread. Anxious moments during the year just past, when it seemed hardly possible that enough of our scanty stores of bread-stuffs could be spared to maintain our took a long step forward. The people the savage turned to peaceful agriculture to supply this necessity the Allies, have brought home to people generally the vital importance of bread to mankind. No other food has taken so great a part in the civilization of the race; the progress of nations may be traced by the quality and quantity of bread they have used, and

THE CADUCEUS

ples of the earth may be divided into two classes, bread eaters and rice eaters, and the former are the leaders. Japan, once a rice eating nation, has varied her diet as she has become great.

The old word "bray" meant to pound, and food so treated was said to be brayed, the spelling of which has been changed to give us the modern bread. The original meaning of "dough" was to moisten, this being the second step in preparing the grain for food. An accident showed that dough, left to ferment, could be mixed with other dough and cause it to swell and become porous. "Lifian" meant to raise up or lift, and from it we get "loaf."

Wheat, queen of cereals, was discovered before the dawn of history; it is mentioned in the Bible and was cultivated by the Chinese as early as 2,700 B. C. Its ancestor is said to have been a grass, but there is no record of wheat growing wild.

Its grain has several coverings of bran coats, the outer being composed of silica, the substance of which grass is made. Beneath is the dark gluten which contains the nitrogenous elements valuable in flesh and muscle building, while the heart consists of cells filled with white starch, a great heat producer but of little value as food. When the entire grain of wheat, including the outer cover of silica, is ground up fine we have what is known as Graham flour, the most nutritious, containing all the grain except the outside covering. When the latter and also the heart of the grain are removed, gluten flour is produced—ordinary white, or boiled flour, and its by-products. In the separators, coarse grains, corn and oats, and imperfect kernels are removed. After passing through the "scouring machine," where it is cleaned from dust and dirt, the wheat is "tempered" so that the outer covering may be easily taken off. Next it passes between five different sets of rollers, each of which crushes it to a finer powder.

The bolting process consists of a series of sieves, which sift the grain after each breaking in the rolls. The bolter machine contains a number of sieves covered with silk bolting cloth, each with meshes of different size, and which makes from eight to ten different preparations of the material.

This process is repeated in the "purifiers," where a current of air draws all impurities out. Finally the mass of broken grain is mechanically separated into five different grades of "middlings" and is ready for the smooth rolls.

The flour next goes to large round bins of hard wood, beneath which are automatic devices, which accurately pack it into barrels and bags of various size. The precious wheat is now fit to be baked into bread.

The next time, lad., you have a piece of bread on your plate that you are considering throwing in the garbage can, think of this story of bread and its making.

Say dat am a mighty fine looking donkey dat yo' brother had wid him down on de street de oder night.

Yo' are correct, dat was one fine animal.

Who been own de donkey?

Mah brother owns him.

Uh'll bet dat he call him after de president, don' he?

No, he'd neber do nofn like'o dat cause he sure thinks too much ob President Wilson.

Ah sure hope dat he ain't named him after de Kaiser or nothing like dem Germans?

Wrong again, he thinks too much ob de mule.

A hundred years from now the fact that your discharge papers were delayed will mean nothing in your life.



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