GIVE US BREAD NOT JUST FLUFF

Editor's Note: Horace Reynolds is a writer, lecturer, professor, and author of many articles that have appeared in various leading periodicals. This paean in praise of darker, coarser breadstuffs appeared in The Christian Science Monitor; and we pass it along to our readers without further comment.

When things were going well with folks, John Mahoney, an old Irish schoolmaster of mine, used to say, "They're eating their white bread now." Then he would explain that the saying was an oblique reference to the fact that the common people of Europe had white bread only on special occasions.

I remember I used to feel sorry for the poor moujik eating away at his black bread. The other day a friend gave me a large loaf of dark Russian rye, told me how to toast it. Now I don't feel sorry for the Russians any more.

Modern industrialism has ruined American bread. Pick up a loaf in its waxed paper. It's so soft and spongy you can contract it with your hands, mold it any shape you've a mind to. Take off the wrapper and eat a slice. The soft, fluffy center is like a mouthful of powder puff. The more you eat the hungrier you get. This is what America's staff of life has come to. It's a pretty soft staff. The Russians are leaning on something more substantial.

It wasn't always so. In 1900, 95 per cent of America's bread was baked at home, and that bread was good, honest bread, not the aerated boudoir bread of today. Now 85 per cent of America's bread is baked in bakeries.

The bread of our ancestors was good bread, too. The corn bread the Indians taught the early Americans to make was tasty, nutritious, and filling. Our foremothers pounded corn in a mortar or ground it in an improvised home mill. Then they mixed the resultant meal with water to make corn bread, corndodgers, corn pone, hoecake, and johnnycake.

They made this bread in two forms: the raised variety baked in a pan, like the corn bread of today: the unleavened variety baked in hot ashes or on a griddle or in a skillet, called ash cake and corn pone. Many a plainsman has made many a dinner on corndodger baked in the ashes and salt pork broiled on the end of a stick.

That is the stalwart traditional bread of America, of which this puffed-up varety of today is a soft and decadent descendant.

In the large cities, where America's foreign-born congregate, one can get the good bread of Europe which our immigrants brought over with their folklore. From Westphalia the Germans of 1848 brought their pleasant pumpernickel.

The Jews brought us the delicious Jewish rye and the popular baigel. The French, the long ballbat loaves; the Italians, their round, solid loaves with a respectable deep crust. From Vienna came the light, well - seasoned Hungarian loaf, known as Vienna bread. From Finland, Limppu, baked in the shape of an oversize doughnut made of mixed wheat and rye flour. From Sweden, the flat, crisp unleavened bread, which goes so well with cheese.

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Take a loaf of the dark pumpernickel. Its rye hasn't been bleached or "enriched." Its rye hasn't even been bolted.

Cut off a couple of thin slices and put them in your toaster. Press down the rod which sends the bread to the bottom of the toaster. When the pieces of pumpernickel pop up, press them down again for a second toasting. This is he-man bread: it can take it a second, yea, even a third toasting. Butter the toasted bread; place it in the oven. As you eat it, you will amend John Mahoney's proverb to read, "They're eating their black bread now."

When you next go out in the woods for a steak roast, take a loaf of French bread, cut it vertically into slices about six inches long, then cut these slices again horizontally in half, and butter them. Cut the broiled steaks into slices to fit the bread; put the steak between the slices and press the resultant sandwich firmly. The juice of the steak will soak into the bread. That's bread and that's meat, and the combination is good.

Or if you haven't got a steak, just a loaf of French bread, take the loaf and cut it in half vertically. Now you have two pieces, each about a foot in length. Cut these two pieces into slices about two inches or so thick, but be careful not to cut the bread all the way through. Now you have about a dozen small slices, six in each half.

Take a third of a pound of butter and melt it in a measuring cup or small saucepan. Cut up a slice of garlic and put it into the melted butter. Allow the mixture to simmer a while. Then pour the butter over the bread lengthwise. Some of the butter will run into the incisions; some will remain on the top of the bread.

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Now put the two halves into a hot oven. After they have become hot, take them out and eat. There is still another proverb which runs like this: "Whose bread I eat, his song I sing." After you have eaten this hot buttered French bread, don't be surprised if you find yourself humming.

Another favorite bread is made of water-ground flour and it is even more solid than most homemade bread. The water-ground flour is important. Water power grinds slowly enough to allow the flour to retain much of the soil of the grain. In the large mills, too, the flour is bleached. It's a wonder they don't powder and rouge it.

Mass production can't leave good food alone. It must try to improve on nature. It homogenizes it, vitaminizes it, victimizes it. It adds potatoes, honey, bananas, currants, dates—even sunshine. It slices it, wraps it. Then it embarks on a $1,000,000 advertising campaign, assaulting both eye and ear.

Industrial America has glorified bread the way Hollywood has glorified the American girl. Man does not live by bread alone, but it is the foundation of our diet, and our sliced loaves of cotton batting are a weak foundation for anything.

What America needs is bread with crust to exercise the teeth and stick to the ribs, bread to strengthen the heart for the tasks which lie ahead.

Canadian Movie Makes Headlines

Class Room Scene from the prize winning Canadian film "Family Scene" soon to be shown in theatres across Canada.

The first Canadian film to deal with the personality of the child as affected by Home and School environment will be released very soon. The picture was made in Famous Players across Canada. The film is called 'Family Circles." It is outstanding and won the award as the best non-theatrical film in Canada at the Canadian Film Awards Competition last April. It was highly praised at the International Film Festival in Edinburgh, where it was played for discriminating audiences.

When the picture opens it shows a scene from a family of a generation or two ago; the father is Head-of-the-House; he made decisions, and was generous when they were accepted—which they always were! But, says the film, times have changed. Children do not go to bed at nine o'clock and the tempo of life has changed. The modern Father asks—Midnight? Where's George? Time I showed that boy I'm still head of the house, he'll have to knuckle under. To all of which his wife sleepily replies, Darling, this is the twentieth century.

The issues raised merit the attention of all parents and thoughtful people, because they deal with very important facets of family life—the development and growth of a child. The scenes show the effect of four different types of homes on a child's mind and development, and is a forthright and helpful expose which does not mince matters, but presents clearly how the child is helped or hindered in his growth toward good citizenship by the sort of help he gets at home.

The way of the parent is not easy in this modern age, and the film presents clearly where the modern parent often falls down in the job of helping a child to find himself, to meet needs which are not always obvious—confidence, security, and guidance.

Michael Denny, Foresthill, who played Freddie, in the prize winning Canadian film entitled "Family Circle."

Schoolboy "Howlers"

When a group of high school pupils sat for a general knowledge examination recently, some of them produced the following written replies to questions:

A skeleton is a person with his insides out and his outsides off.

A sensation is that state of public mind that exists in a given community when one man's wife runs off with another man.

Salt Lake City is a place where the Morons settled.

She was a sweet girl dressed in a simple Dutch costume consisting of a white cap and apron.

Typhoid fever can be prevented by fascination.

A referendum is having to look at notes to see what you are going to talk about.

The gelatine was used to cut off the heads of many thousands of people.

Woman witness: I have no quarrels with my neighbours. I just won't speak to them.

What The Well-Dressed Juvenile Will Be Wearing Next Winter—Nylon News! Pint-sized weather protection is offered by these wonderful lightweight all-nylon snow-suits.

His Stuff May Be Corny But It's Money-Making Corn

The year 1932 may be remembered for several reasons, not least for the debut of a comedian on an American radio programme. He walked nervously up to the microphone and said: "Hallo, folks! This is Jack Benny. There will now be a slight pause for everyone to say, 'Who cares?'"

As a result of this broadcast, letters poured into the studio praising his unusual and nonchalant style, which hitherto had not been exploited by any other comedian. Today, Jack Benny is acknowledged to be one of America's leading radio funsters and every Sunday some thirty million citizens tune in to listen to his show.

The "Average Man"

For Benny has perfected a characterization, fraught with human frailties. He is a typical "Average Man," a lovable boob, mean, cowardly, middle-aged—but with young ideas! All of which has endeared him to the man in the street with similar faults and weaknesses writes David B. Williams in Tit-Bits.

That some members of the public really believe in this comedian's failings is exemplified by an advertisment that appeared in the classified section of the "Sacremento Union": "Two women about Jack Benny's age would like a small, unfurnished house. Would like to pay what Jack Benny would like to pay."

Unlike Bob Hope and other contemporaries of wit, Benny is no master of repartee. But when he does come through with an ad-lib, his timing and delivery are perfect. On one occasion, Benny was appearing with Fred Allen, who was talking so fast that Jack found it impossible to get a laugh himself. In desperation, and to the delight of the audience, he exclaimed suddenly: "You wouldn't dare do this if my writers were here."

If anyone deserves the tag of "right-hand man" where Benny is concerned, she is Mary Livingstone who, besides being the comedienne on the programme, is in private life Mrs. Jack Benny. She is noted for her wonderful sense of humour, and Jack always relies on her keen judgment whenever he's worried about a joke or routine. Although Mary has had countless offers to be a star in her own right, she refuses them all: "I just want to be Mrs. Jack Benny," she says.

When they were married in 1927, Jack recalls that a big stag dinner was given in his honour and he felt very important. In the midst of the proceedings, the Master of Ceremonies called for silence while he read a telegram. It ran:

"When you come home tonight, be sure to take out the garbage.—Mary."

George and Gracie

While on the subject of marriage it might be as well to mention the George Burns-Jack Benny routine. It all started when George and Gracie Allen were betrothed. Jack was playing in San Francisco at the time and thought he would rib his newly-wed friends. He telephoned them at 3 a.m. on their wedding night. Getting an answer from a man, Benny inquired: "Hallo? George?" A gruff voice replied, "Send up two orders of ham and eggs"—and the receiver was slammed down. Since then the comedians have always telephoned each other on important occasions.

When George and Gracie were about to open at the London Palladium recently, Val Parnell threw a party for them. During the evening George was called to the telephone. Picking up the receiver he heard a girl with a Southern drawl say: "Mr. Burns? Long distance . . . one moment, please! Jack Benny from Hollywood wishes to speak to you."

At the end of his chat with his fellow comic, George told his guests about it: "Fancy Jack calling all the way from Hollywood just to wish us good luck!"

And There He Was!

He survey the gathering a smile of self-satisfaction spreading across his face. But at that moment his eyes fell upon the doorway . . . were Jack Benny was standing! He had arrived here unannounced, having made the journey especially for his friends' opening night. His practical joke had been carried out with the help of film star Jane Wyman . . . and extension telephones!

As a youngster, Jack studied the violin and at eight years old he was referred to as the "child prodigy" of Waukegan, his home town. Later he tried to obtain work with a theatre orchestra but was engaged as a ticket collector instead! The violin, much to his regret, soon became nothing more than a prop during his vaudeville appearances. Yet even today, this "frustrated Kreisler" practises in his spare time and constantly complains about his lost chance to make a name for himself as a musician.

When Benny moved his family and radio programme to California in 1937, the very first show there was an enactment of their journey west. The script required someone to play the part of the Pullman porter encountered on the train and the role was awarded to a coloured actor, Eddie Anderson. He made such a good job of of it that his one night stand became a permanent engagement—and that's how Rochester was born, Benny's gravel-voiced valet and chauffeur.

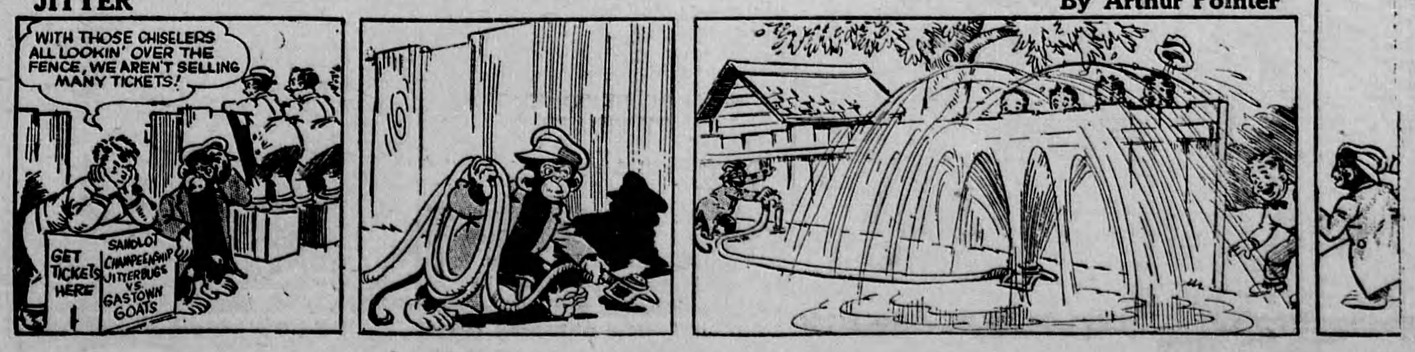
It is not surprising that Benny, having made a reputation on the stage and radio, should turn to Hollywood to reap further laurels. Since 1932 he has made over a score of films. His best known are "Buck Benny Rides Again" and 'George Washington Slept Here."

Counter Attack

He believes in giving the public what it wants, even if it does not always satisfy the radio critics, and says: "It took eighteen years to develop the characters on my show. They're as good as my writers and I can make them. Each week we've tried to inject a new situation, idea or character into our script and filling twenty pages a week for thirty-nine weeks isn't easy

"So what happens? A reviewer comes along, says the show was great, the audience loved it, the script was hilarious . . . BUT . . . I was the same stingy, toupee-topped, faulty fiddler; Mary was still snippy; Phil Harris continued as a fugitive from Alcoholics Anonymous; and Rochester was the same sassy butler.

"Now, I've been reading this reviewer's column for many years, and it's a darned good column. But every week, every year, this columnist's style of writing is always the same. Never changes. Always verbs, pronouns and adjectives. Why doesn't he get some new things?"

Farmers Combine Their Combines—A score of "good neighbors" from nearby farms massed their combines here recently to harvest a 125-acre wheat field for a widowed mother of two, Mrs. Marie Buller. Her husband was killed in this very same field a year ago, while cutting clover.

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