

SYMBOLIC BREAD FORMS

Origins of Shapes of Pretzels, Buns and Cakes.

THE SCHWAANERKUCHEN

It Commemorates a Kindly Act of Many Years Ago.—The Curious Birth of the "Hair Monkeys"—Crescent Shaped Rolls Invented When the Turks Besieged Vienna.

Who would think of the pretzel as astronomical symbol or the hot cross bun as a missionary document? Yet it is said that originally the one was intended to represent the sun and the four seasons and the other to convert pagan England to Christianity. The former is declared to have been first made by the Romans, who called it the annulus—a word they are said to have formed out of annus, a year—by which they meant a year ring. The year represented the sun's annual circuit and the four spokes the seasons. It was afterward known under names in the more northerly countries of Europe. There are two stories of the origin of the hot cross bun. The Christian missionaries to England are said to have discovered that, although they could alter the views of the people on religious matters, they could not induce them to abandon their time honored pagan customs. One of these was the eating of a certain kind of cake in honor of the Goddess of Spring. They decided to put the sign of the cross on the Saxon buns and launch them forth on a missionary enterprise. The buns accomplished their mission.

The other story is that in early times in the observance of Holy Week the Church was more strict in the matter of fasts than now. Only a certain amount of food could be eaten. This was indicated by two boundary marks made in the dough to show the length and width of the piece. The loaves were sold in churches and were carried from place to place by pilgrims. So the custom of crossing the bread used on Good Friday became fixed.

These are not the only kinds of shapes of bread whose origin has been traced to odd circumstances. The crescent shaped rolls which one sees in some parts of the city had a curious birth. On one of the occasions when the Turks besieged Vienna, Peter Windler and his wife had a bakery in that city. This baker's patriotism was tinged with a sense of humor, and possibly a sense of business. At any rate, he conceived the idea of making rolls in the shape of a crescent, the emblem of the Turks. They found a ready sale, for everybody wanted to devour the half moons typifying the Mahometans at the outer gate.

A great many Americans would not know what Schwaanerkuchen is unless they asked a native of the old German city of Rostock. It is to be had only at a certain season of the year, because it commemorates a kindly act of a man years ago. Rostock was surrounded by an enemy. The city gates were closed and the enemy had come close to the wall with clubs, spears, heavy mortar slings and many other oldtime implements of war. Once, and again and again they rushed upon the wall with thunderous noise and clanging weapons, but the brave burghers as often forced them back. Then, urged forward by threatening famine, the latter sallied beyond the gates and drove back the foe until the siege was raised. It was with great joy that they saw the baker of Schwaan, a village twelve miles down the River Warnow, at the gate as the enemy drew away, bearing heavily laden baskets of cakes. It was such a godsend to the famished burghers that they rewarded the Schwaaner bakers by giving them the privilege of coming to Rostock every year on Maundy Thursday to offer their cakes for sale.

Another German bread, which in shape resembles a capital "W," owes its existence to the siege of the German town of Kraflshelm, 1379. It is called the haar-afion, or hair monkeys, a name suggested by the appearance of the apparition which raised the siege. The efforts of the besiegers to take the place had been in vain. They decided to starve the burghers and their families so they sat down before the town. There they sat for several months. By this time the provisions were getting short, and starvation seemed inevitable. One woman had pondered long upon the subject and finally she said to the head of the defenders:

"The people outside the wall are superstitious; let me masquerade at night before them on the city wall in a peculiar dress." She was permitted to carry out her plan. When the fantastic figure was seen upon the wall in the dim light, fitting from point to point climbing nimbly over obstacles, they were horror-stricken.

"Haar-affe!" they all exclaimed pointing at the apparition on the wall. "It is an evil spirit." The following night they fled from the town.

In remembrance of the success of the ruse this peculiar shaped cake was made.

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Books Returned After Years.

With the best system and careful watching books go astray, but it is hard to write them off as entirely "lost," since they have a way of turning up that is only paralleled by the cat of lyric fame.

The other day at the desk of one of the oldest city institutions, the Philadelphia Library at Locust and Juniper streets, there was returned by a fair borrower, a book that had been cut a little over three years. Fortunately for the borrower, no fines were exacted and after she had gone the question as to whether the woman had not established a record, was asked.

"No, indeed," said the librarian. "We have in the library several volumes that were held ten, fifteen and twenty years, and one book that was returned to us after being gone for over a century! It is one of a valuable set of the classics, and after succeeding in hiding itself so long, finally turned up in Holland, where its label declared its lawful place of abode and the honest finder lost no time in forwarding it to Philadelphia. Yes, we have books out still longer, and I have not the least doubt that some of them will yet find their way back to our shelves."

Deepest Rooted of All Hates.

The age long hatred of the white race for the black, yellow and other colored races is by no means one-sided. It is fully mutual. Years ago Livingston observed that "There must be something in the appearance of white men frightfully repulsive to the unsophisticated natives of Africa; for on entering villages previously unvisited by Europeans, if we met a child coming quietly and unsuspectingly toward us, the moment he raised his eyes and saw the men in 'bags' he would take to his heels in an agony of terror, such as we might feel if we met a live Egyptian mummy at the door of the British Museum. Alarmed by the child's wild outcries, the mother rushes out of the hut, but darts back again at the first glimpse of the fearful apparition. Dogs turn tail and scour off in dismay, and hens, abandoning their chickens, fly screaming to the tops of the houses." The same is true, though perhaps in a lesser degree, of the other colored races.

Where the Tips Go.

"But I can tell you something you don't know about the tipping system in the cloakrooms of some of the large cafes," remarked a midnight diner to his wife.

"Why—don't the small boys just pocket all they get?" inquired she.

"Pocket! Their uniforms are made without a sign of a pocket so that none of the tips can find a lodging there; those boys get nothing but a salary which is paid by a man who has purchased the cloakroom privileges for as high as five thousand a year. The tips are all turned in to him. You can imagine what the privilege is worth when he can say down that sum for the right."

The Donnee's Fall.

A Carthage minister jokingly told a friend an interview would cost him ten cents. The latter pretended to take the matter seriously and presented him with ten pennies. The minister then arose to protest and while rising his chair skidded and he stumbled. And now the friend is telling everyone he meets, now upon the minister was at having to return a contribution.—Kansas City Star

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