

THE DESERTER.

A POEM.



HO comes between two soldiers through the city's mud and mists,
Bareheaded, with a hang-dog face, and handcuffs on his wrists?
While the idle and the busy just lift a glancing eye
Of scorn or indignation at the coward passing by!

Is this the lad who, but last year, upon his village green
Glad-hearted took "the shilling," and said he'd serve the Queen?
Who tied the ribbons in his hat with happy boyish pride,
And marched away so readily at the vet'ran sergeant's side?
Who donned his red coat thinking, with honest heart and keen,
What a glorious thing it was to fight for country and for Queen?

And now! he walks shamefacedly through the city's mud and mists,
The runaway, bareheaded, with handcuffs on his wrists.

Oh, laggards in the hosts of toil! Oh, idlers false, untrue!

What of the good intentions, the vows to dare and do?
What of the claims of others on your work of hand and head?

Are there no wives neglected? Are there no babes unfed?

Are there no masters cheated of their dues of work and will?

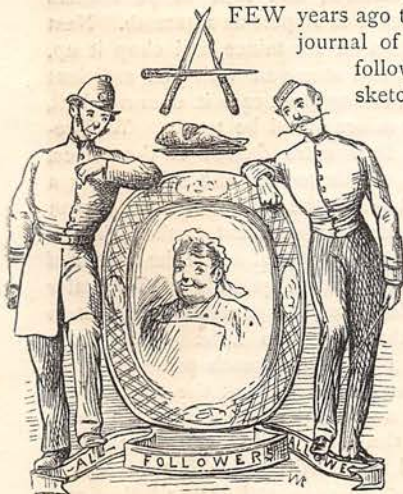
Are there no hours ye worse than waste? No tasks unfinished still?

Oh, keep your pity and your scorn of him who passes by!
Cast not the stone so readily; arch not the blaming eye.
Remember, if ye break your oath, whate'er that pledge may be,

Ye are cowards and deserters every whit as much as he.

F. E. WEATHERLY, M.A.

COLD LEG OF MUTTON.



FEW years ago the leading comic journal of the day had the following graphic little sketch:—A middle-aged gentleman leaving his house door in the morning inquires—

"What is there for dinner to-day, Mary?"

"Cold mutton, sir."

"Then you can tell your mistress that she need not wait dinner for me."

Now, although this sounds exceedingly selfish, yet perhaps the blame is not entirely due to one side only.

There can be no doubt that, just as among the lower orders there are hundreds of wives who, from ignorance and stupidity, drive their husbands to the public-house, so among the middle classes there are as many who from the same causes too often drive them to the "Club."

Now, the increase in the number of these luxurious establishments in the present day is something wonderful. It has already had a marked effect upon the restaurants in the metropolis, some of which now

do not dine half what they did formerly; but it remains to be seen how far the clubs will in time affect the Registrar-General's marriage returns. As this latter point is of the greatest importance to that large and charming portion of the population, the young unmarried ladies, we trust we may be pardoned if for one moment we pause to ask them a few questions.

Did you ever consider how your future husband is accustomed to dine every day, and contrast it with the way in which he will dine when you will have the management of the household? We will suppose him to be accustomed to the ordinary club dinner, or say the regimental mess. Do you not feel how entirely dependent you will be on your cook? Should she be clever and honest, you may do very well. Should she, however, be idle and dishonest, what will you do?

Now do not, pray, think that to get a good common-sense cook is by any means an easy affair. If you only inquire of your friends and relations, you will soon find out the difficulty.

You have all probably read that exquisite little sketch in David Copperfield, who mildly addresses his child-wife as follows:—"You must remember, I am sure, that I was obliged to go out yesterday when dinner was half over, and that the day before I was made quite unwell by being obliged to eat underdone veal in a hurry; to-day I don't dine at all; and I am afraid to say how long we waited for breakfast, and then the water didn't boil. I don't mean

to reproach you, my dear, but this is not comfortable."

Unfortunately, this is only a slight exaggeration of what goes on every day in many houses throughout the country. What housekeepers should strive at is to get a nice little savoury dinner, and yet at the same time to be economical. We will now take a simple case to illustrate our point, and suppose that the larder contains the remains of a cold leg of mutton, which leg has been decently cooked, and did not the previous day appear as a ghastly sight after a few cuts, like one of those horrible pictures in the penny journal that disgraces some of our shop-windows.

We will suppose the time of year to be early summer. A good many young wives under these circumstances would simply order a cucumber—possibly a shilling each—and think that everything had been done that was necessary; or some, still worse, would order the cook to hash the remains of the mutton—and a nice hash they make of it, in another sense of the word; for who has not at times seen that dreadful dish of immense size, covered with often hard slices of mutton, the whole swimming in a quantity of thin broth—we cannot call it gravy—in which slices of onion vie with sodden sippets as to which shall look the least inviting? Now, when such a dish appears, probably the husband, accustomed formerly to his club or college dinner, or the mess, says nothing; but he feels—"I don't mean to reproach you, my dear, but this is not comfortable."

Now, as the cookery-books say, suppose we give "another method." The cook in the morning early has cut off all the meat from the leg of mutton bone, and put it by in the larder. She has then chopped up the bone into small pieces, and put it on the fire to make stock, with the usual etcetera—viz., some onion, carrot, turnip, celery, and parsley. We will also suppose the house to contain some frying-fat, bacon or ham, and eggs.

The first dish we would recommend would be some rissoles. Take three or four small slices of the mutton, picking out those containing most fat, and one slice of bacon containing twice the quantity of fat to lean; chop up finely a small piece of onion rather larger than the top of the thumb down to the first joint, sufficient parsley when chopped fine to fill a teaspoon, about enough thyme to cover a sixpence, or rather less if the thyme be strong; add a little cayenne-pepper and salt. Chop the whole ingredients *very* fine, or, still better, send them through a sausage-machine. When thoroughly chopped, the whole mass ought to be sufficiently moist to be capable of being rolled up into balls. If this is not the case, it only shows that there has not been sufficient fat put with it. These balls should be about the size of a large walnut. Dip each ball into some well beaten-up egg, and afterwards into some fine bread-crumbs. Fry them in some boiling fat for two or three minutes, which will generally be found sufficient to make them of a nice golden colour. Next for the gravy, which ought to surround them: take about half a cup of stock, add to it a little brown thickening—*i.e.*, some flour fried a light golden

colour in an equal quantity of butter—some of which thickening ought always to be kept in the house, as it will keep good for many months. Enough of this brown thickening should be boiled in the half-teacup of stock to make it a good colour, and a little thick. Add a teaspoonful of sherry to give it a nice flavour, and, if liked, a teaspoonful of mushroom ketchup. Pour the gravy round the rissoles, which will be found none the worse for being warmed up in the oven. A little piece of fresh green parsley may be placed on each rissole, by way of garnish.

And now for the next dish, which will consist of mince with poached eggs. We would, however, remind the reader that the previous dish required bread-crumbs and boiling fat. In order to make the bread-crumbs, cut a large slice of bread of equal thickness, and having removed the crust, with a tin cutter or a small knife cut four pieces of bread the shape of a heart, about the size of a queen's-cake, and about an inch thick. Put these four pieces by carefully, so as not to break them, and make the bread-crumbs out of the remainder of the pieces, bearing in mind that the crusts will make an excellent bread-pudding some other time. Then, when the fat is boiling for the rissoles, throw these pieces of heart-shaped bread into it. In a very short time they will become a bright golden colour, when they should be taken out and placed on a cloth in front of the fire. Should there be any black specks on them, they will easily scrape off. These fried pieces of bread look like rusks in appearance, and their shape renders them infinitely superior to sippets as a garnish. Next take sufficient mutton for the mince, and chop it up, warming it in a small stew-pan with just sufficient stock to moisten it, taking great care it does not boil, as in that case the mince would be tough. With regard to giving a little extra flavour to the mince, besides, of course, a little pepper and salt, that is a matter of taste. Rubbing the bottom of the stew-pan with a bead of garlic is an excellent method, though of course it must not be adopted where the flavour of garlic is not liked. A small quantity of Worcester sauce may be added; but the general mistake is to put too much rather than too little. Next poach some eggs, allowing one egg to each person, pile up the mince neatly in a dish, and put the eggs on the top, cutting them neatly round, so that the yolk is surrounded with a rim of the white. Garnish the dish with the four fried hearts of bread, with a very small piece of parsley stuck in each, and have a little finely chopped parsley—enough to cover a threepenny-piece would be ample—to sprinkle bit by bit on the eggs, which renders the dish prettier. A very little pinch of pepper may be placed in the centre of each egg. Care must be taken that the cover, as well as the dish, is made thoroughly hot, and of course the eggs must not be poached until a minute or so before they are wanted.

Two dishes such as we have described, served nice and hot, in rather small dishes than otherwise, how different are they to the large, cold joint, or the immense dish of hash too often seen! Young house-

keepers should always bear in mind that very much more depends on appearances than they think for. When alone—*i.e.*, tête-à-tête with their husbands—let the dining-table be made as small as possible, let the cloth and dinner napkins be white as snow, and the latter exactly folded into some pretty shape. If possible, let there be a few flowers in the centre of the table. See that the wine-glasses are without a blemish. A smeary glass always betrays a slovenly servant, and the latter equally betrays a slovenly mistress. There is also no objection to having a green glass put to each person, even if no hock or similar wine be drunk; it brightens up the table, and looks—well—more club-like. If these little things, small in themselves—but they all tell—be attended to, a bright face and a bright pair of eyes will more than compensate for all the rest.

There are many good housekeepers who may read this who will say, "Why, all this is exceedingly simple, and only what everybody knew before!" Such, however, is not the case. The amount of absolute ignorance of the very first principles of cooking is far more common than many persons imagine. Again, too, with regard to the ornamental part of cooking—*i.e.*, the art of making dishes look nice and tempting—there are hundreds of fairly good plain cooks, as they are called, who seem quite incapable of grasping the simplest idea of the subject.

It is in this matter of taste, often, that the mistress will find her influence most beneficial, as her superior education will, as a rule, enable her to grasp ideas far more quickly than the uncultivated mind of the domestic. For instance, we most of us know the difference between a cold roast pheasant, perfectly plain, placed on a dish, and the same bird glazed and decorated with bright green parsley and cut lemon, and some of its feathers stuck in it in an artistic manner; yet there are, especially among ignorant country-women, many who would fail to see much difference. It is in this respect that the French are so far superior as a nation to the English, though probably the *highest* class English cooks are better than the best French. Compare, for instance, a French pastrycook's window in Paris, and one of a similar class in London.

In the above directions, recollect that there was some stock made. Now this stock, if it was required, would make a little soup in a few minutes; the addition of a little extract of meat, and a good pinch of vermicelli, being all that would be required. Suppose therefore your husband had committed that dreadfully thoughtless act, bringing home a friend unexpectedly to dinner—you would really have nothing to be ashamed of. The dinner would consist of some vermicelli soup, a dish of rissoles, a dish of mince and poached eggs, ornamented as we have described, and by simply ordering a savoury omelette to follow—very few men care about sweets—you would probably be rewarded after the guest's departure with an inquiry as to where you got all those things for dinner from.

On the other hand, think of the cold leg of mutton—such an inartistic thing when it has been cut into—or the dreadful dish of hash, which, somehow or other,

has got as bad a name as a cold shoulder, although *properly* made hash is a very nice dish.

How much better all this is than the ordinary course of proceedings—*viz.*, the arrival of a telegram in the afternoon as follows:—

"Mr. A. B. to Mrs. A. B.—I shall bring home a friend to dinner—make dinner 6.30."

Mrs. A. B. instantly issues forth—the extravagance of the shilling telegram has its unconscious effect. She probably orders a pheasant, or any bird in season; some gravy-beef to make gravy; perhaps, in addition, a mould of jelly from the pastrycook's, which is not cut at dinner at all.

Ah! Mrs. A. B., a little more pains taken to make things look nice as well as taste nice when alone, and a little less ostentation and extravagance when you receive visitors, would make your home more happy. Your husband should never feel that he is the only one in the world for whom anything is good enough.

But if young ladies are ignorant of the first principles of cooking, what shall we say about some of the men?

I recollect at Cambridge, once, efforts made by two novices to make a sweet omelette. They thought that by breaking eggs into a saucepan, and adding sugar and jam, the result would be an omelette. With the slight *contretemps* of one or two of the eggs falling outside the saucepan, instead of in, and landing all shaking—perhaps with laughing—among the ashes of the grate, they got the ingredients in at last, and stirred them over the fire. After repeated failures, as, of course, without any butter it burnt almost immediately—they gave up their attempts, after exhausting their supply of eggs—sixteen in number—and wasting a whole pot of jam. One of these novices is a great friend of mine, and on one occasion when in Scotland he was one of a party who, during the season when all the hotels and lodgings were full, were obliged to take refuge in a furnished house, where however there were no servants at all. The party, all of whom were young, were quite delighted at the idea of managing for themselves for a few days. Everybody did something, and though it was some years ago, I fortunately had sufficient knowledge of the culinary art to keep us from raw meat or starvation.

A small codfish captured by one of us was brought home for dinner. The ignoramus in question was caught endeavouring to clean the fish, which he had got tightly grasped by the throat with his left hand, by pushing his thumb and finger down its mouth, and pulling out whatever he could from inside. And yet this man was an M.A. Cantab. It has, of course, been a standing joke ever since.

Now, when we come to consider how ignorant even educated people are with regard to cooking, what are we to expect when we turn to the poor? Too often persons will be found to exclaim against the waste, the ignorance, the extravagance, &c., of the lower orders, who forget that the fault to a great extent lies with the upper. In how many national schools in England are the rudiments of cooking taught, or even hinted at? The girl who in after-life will have to scrub floors,

wash her husband's clothes, and cook his dinner, is taught history, geography, &c.; but surely it is equally important to her to know how to make an Irish stew, as to be able to name the principal Irish rivers. It is more useful to know how *not* to spoil shirts in the Wash, than to know King John lost his baggage there.

elder girls among the most ignorant of the poor instructed by his cook, in his own kitchen, how to make Irish stews and other economical dishes. They one and all succeeded in learning—all said that it was much nicer than what they got at home. Upon making inquiries however, a few weeks after, among



"ENDEAVOURING TO CLEAN THE FISH" (p. 211).

I do not for one moment mean to say that poor children should not be taught history, geography, and drawing, but that the first principles of cooking form a more important branch of education for them.

It is a common thing to find in the country that the only method of cooking a piece of meat is to stick a fork in it and toast it before the fire, letting all the fat and gravy drop into the ashes and waste. Of course, the difficulty to be contended with in any encounter with invincible ignorance is very great.

A clergyman once told me that years ago he had the

his parishioners, he found that in no single instance was the attempt made to introduce the new style into their own homes. Meat, when they had it, was toasted and wasted as before.

Were, however, every child in England to be daily taught at school the importance of economy in the preparation of food, the seeds of knowledge thus sown might sink into the mind, lie dormant for a time, but take root, and eventually bring forth a crop, the result of which would be to increase the wealth of the country, to how great an extent no one can say.