

SAVOURY DISHES.



"It is almost too hot to eat." How often do we hear this remark during that sultry time known as the dog-days! There is no doubt that as a nation we do not make sufficient allowance for variations of climate, and are too apt

to feed ourselves and children on almost the same food both in summer and winter. The hotel waiter will give exactly the same answer in July and December: "Dinner, sir—yes, sir—chops, sir—steak—cutlet," and he stops, having exhausted the English bill of fare.

But it is not so much in hotel life that the difficulty of getting suitable summer food is found as in home life. How many tens of thousands of men are there who from sheer necessity are compelled for the greater part of the summer to be couped up in broiling weather in a hot, close office, their day's employment being varied but by occasional visits to hotter sale-rooms, &c., containing an atmosphere ten times more close and vitiated!

The unfortunate husband returns to his home with wearied brain and jaded appetite. Too often mingled carelessness and selfishness has provided such unappetising food for his dinner, that he is fain to seek for that nourishment in which his body stands in need in fluids rather than solids, and then the seeds are sown which eventually grow up and produce a harvest of wretchedness and misery.

I overheard a conversation once in a little back room in a famous pastrycook's (now done away with), between two wives, on their husbands' selfishness, each one of course trying to make out her own the worst. They had started with a basin of mock-turtle soup, and had followed with two oyster patties each. I left before they had finished. It was before wine was allowed to be sold by pastrycooks, or, judging from appearances, they would probably have remained there during the better part of the afternoon.

It is the way of the world all over. I recollect a man about five foot three passing one who was fully five foot two and a half, and remarking—

"Dear me, what a terrible misfortune it must be to be so short!"

Do you know any one who breakfasts in bed every

day, who never attends at all to household duties, and whose health requires a rarer wine at dinner than others? You may be quite sure that person will be most intolerant of any approach to self-indulgence in others, and will be given to hold forth little homilies on the duties of early rising, industry, and self-denial. Charity begins at home, and those only who deny themselves can make allowances for the want of self-denial in others.

Great allowance should be made for those who, after a hard day's mental work, return home on a hot day, irritable, thirsty, exhausted, without being hungry. There is a great art in adapting the food for the occasion. There are a certain class of persons, especially in this country, who seem to fail to perceive that what is suitable at one season of the year is quite unsuited at another. For instance, hot pea-soup followed by an Irish stew on a broiling July day, is quite as much out of character as ices at Christmas time.

In England, too, people do not seem to understand how to make the most of the means at their disposal, for making themselves comfortable. How many thousands there are who, having good gardens, yet never use them except to walk in! For breakfast or tea what better spot can be chosen than a shady corner of the lawn, yet how often do we find this done?

Probably many would say, "Oh, but the people next door can see us." As a nation we are undoubtedly very shy and ungregarious. This latter quality, if one may be allowed to use the expression, is particularly shown at railway stations. You may walk down a long train and find one man in each compartment, and each one glares at you if you attempt to enter.

The constitutional shyness of the middle classes has a strong ally in the constitutional rudeness of the lower.

Many years ago, almost the only lunch obtainable in London was a Bath bun, washed down with tepid ginger-beer. But this bun had to be eaten under difficulties. First, the extraordinary height of the stool on which one was bound to sit made one giddy; then a crowd of small boys, with noses flattened white against the window outside, would carry on a running conversation, such as "Give us a bit, guv'nor," &c. Unfortunately, the faster you tried to eat the bun, the more it choked you; and as to the ginger-beer, it too often refused to go anywhere except to the nose. A lunch is still a great difficulty in certain parts of London. It would be an interesting Parliamentary return—first, the number of licensed victuallers in London; secondly, the number of licensed victuallers who sold victuals.

Were any one, some hot day, to place a small table on the pavement, and sit down and eat an ice, like thousands do in Paris, the result would be such a crowd that one would probably be locked up for the night, for obstructing the public thoroughfare.

There is, perhaps, no dish so suitable for hot weather

as curry. But there are curries and curries. I have seen some that have made me shudder to look at them. If you see pieces of meat on a large dish, almost swimming in a quantity of bright light-coloured yellow gravy, people will probably call it curry; but my advice is, don't eat any if you can get anything else. I will try and describe how it ought to be done. Say the

and as sour as possible. Peel them, remove the core, slice, and add to the onions in the stewpan, then add a pint of good strong stock. Stir it all up, and let the whole boil till the apples are quite soft. Add to this a large brimming dessert-spoonful of curry *paste*, and a good-sized tea-spoonful of ordinary powder. The whole of this must be rubbed through



"A SHADY CORNER OF THE LAWN" (p. 496).

dish is curried sweetbreads. The sweetbreads must be fried as directed some time ago in the article entitled "The Uses and Abuses of a Frying-pan." The curry-sauce must be poured round them directly they are done, and this sauce is made as follows. We will describe how to make enough for about six people:—

First, take six large onions, peel and slice them, and fry them a nice brown colour in a stewpan, using about two ounces of butter. Next take two apples, about the same size, or rather larger than the onions,

a fine wire sieve, with a large wooden spoon. If you have not patience to rub it all through, you can't make curry.

The next point necessary is that this curry sauce should be made of the requisite thickness; and for the purpose, what I have alluded to before under the name of "brown thickening" is necessary.

Now, as this brown thickening is almost an essential in every house where gravies and sauces are made properly, I will describe how it ought to be made. As the process is somewhat troublesome,

and a large quantity is as easy to make as a small, it will be found best to prepare sufficient to last some time, as brown thickening will keep good for months if made properly.

Take half-a-pound of flour and, having thoroughly dried it on a large newspaper before the fire, sift it carefully. Next take half-a-pound of butter and melt it in an enamelled saucepan; a sort of white curdled substance will be generally found mixed with it, some of which can be skimmed off the top, and some will settle at the bottom. Skim the butter and pour off all that is as clear as good salad oil, and only use this for the brown thickening.

Next mix thoroughly well together the sifted flour and hot melted butter in an enamelled stewpan, and stir it over a quick fire with a wooden spoon. If the flour has been properly dried, and the butter properly clarified, the whole mass will stick together, and shake about in the stewpan. The stirring must be continued till it begins to turn colour. As soon as it has attained a light fawn colour, or looks like the outside of a nicely baked French roll, remove the stewpan from the fire, but still continue stirring. Throw in a large slice of onion; this will help to check the heat, and at the same time assist in giving the thickening a nice flavour.

It is wonderful how long an enamelled stewpan will retain the heat. It would be a good lesson to an inexperienced cook to watch for how long a period the butter and flour will go on bubbling after the stewpan has been taken off the fire. It depends of course on the thickness of the stewpan, but this frying process will go on sometimes for ten minutes, or even longer, after it has been moved on to a cold slab. This fact will explain why hashes and stews are so often tough. Most cooks know hash ought not to boil, but how many place a stewpan on the fire, and remove it on to the hob directly it begins what they call to simmer! They forget that the boiling, for that is what it really is, goes on perhaps for ten minutes after they have moved the stewpan from the fire, when a teaspoonful of cold gravy, or even cold water, would have stopped the boiling at once.

Keep stirring the brown thickening till it ceases to boil or bubble, and then remove as much as you can of the onion, and pour the whole into a stone jar—an empty white jam-pot is as good as anything—and allow it to get cold.

When it is cold it has the appearance somewhat of light-coloured chocolate, and a few spoonfuls of it will always give a nice rich brown look to gravies. It must be put in the gravy, and stirred over the fire in it; gradually, as the gravy boils, it becomes thicker. For ordinary gravy, when brown thickening is used, a teaspoonful of sherry is a great improvement.

Cooks often thicken gravies, curries, &c., with butter and flour. The effect too often is that the gravy looks a light colour, and has a gruelly taste. A good cook should never be without some brown thickening in the house.

Sufficient of the thickening must be added to the curry sauce, that is supposed to have been rubbed

through the wire-sieve, to give it the consistency of gruel; and, as we have said, this thickening only takes place when it is boiled, and at the same time stirred over the fire. The curry is now complete, and has only to be poured round, not over, the freshly cooked sweet-breads.

Suppose, however, the dish required was curried mutton, which is of course a much more economical dish than curried sweetbreads, and it is undoubtedly one of the best methods of using up a cold joint. Cut some slices of meat off the cold joint, avoid skin and gristle, and choose those slices as much as possible containing most fat. Then boil up the curry sauce, ready thickened and finished, in a stewpan, remove the stewpan from the fire, place the slices of meat in it, and cover them with the sauce; replace the stewpan on the hob, but not on the fire, leave it in a warm place for half-an-hour, and just before turning it out make it a little hotter, if you like, by carefully holding the stewpan over the fire; but recollect if it once boils or bubbles up the meat will get hard, and the curry will be spoiled.

The proper accompaniment to curry is boiled rice; this ought properly to be served in a separate dish. The rice must be boiled till quite tender, and then the grains should be separated from one another by being tossed lightly about on a cloth in front of the fire.

Curry is, as we have said, the most suitable dish for hot weather, as is abundantly proved by its being the most popular in India. In India fresh tamarinds and mangoes are, I believe, used instead of apples; various herbs and spices are also used, which differ in different parts of the country.

Many persons, especially old Indians, have recipes for curry. We have given what must necessarily form the basis of it, where the curry powder or paste is not home-made. By many, the addition of a little grated cocoa-nut to the curry is considered to be a great improvement, or where cocoa-nut cannot be obtained, a few grated Brazil nuts may be used instead. Others, too, strongly recommend the addition of powdered coriander seeds. Coriander seeds are, however, used in making curry powder, and this if good will contain sufficient. When therefore the powder is old, and has lost that aromatic smell which it ought to have, a little powdered coriander seed may be added with advantage; but it has a very decided flavour, and must be used with caution.

One of the most common faults in inexperienced cooks is to have certain fancies for certain flavours, and then to let that flavour predominate.

I have tasted mock-turtle soup which might have been called marjoram soup. Herbs and spices must always be used carefully, and it is generally better to err on the side of too little than too much. To illustrate this point, I would mention what is generally known as veal stuffing. Who has not, at one time or other, tasted a turkey in which the stuffing was so highly flavoured that you tasted it all through dinner? Indeed, at times, you may consider yourself fortunate if you don't taste it all through the next day.

How few cooks, too, understand how to use garlic,

or aromatic flavouring herbs! It is in the proper blending of these strong flavours that one can detect the hand of the *artiste*.

There are many worse things to eat in hot weather than cold roast beef and salad. Now, it will often be said that if you want a good salad you must go to Paris; certainly you *do* get a good salad there invariably, but it is equally easy to have one at home, by simply doing what they do. One principal reason why English people so often have bad salads is that they have an absurd prejudice against oil. Very often too, when they use oil, the oil is bad. Of course it is as impossible to mix a good salad with bad oil as to cook a good dinner with high meat. The oil must be clear, bright, and of a pale yellow colour; if it looks at all green it is probably bad. Bearing, therefore, this in mind, I will now tell you how to mix a salad, simply repeating the recipe or custom used in ninety-nine out of a hundred French restaurants. First get two or three small French cabbage lettuces. Wash them if necessary in a little cold water, but do not dry them on a cloth, as you will thereby probably bruise and spoil them. Shake them dry in a little wire basket, or put them in a cloth and take the cloth by the four corners, and make the lettuce leaves jump inside. Then put them lightly into a salad-bowl; next chop up enough parsley to cover a threepenny-piece, and also chop three fresh mint leaves, and sprinkle this over the lettuce. Next take a table-spoon and

place in it about half a salt-spoonful of salt, and a quarter of pepper; fill the table-spoon with oil. Mix up the pepper and salt with the oil, and pour it over the lettuce—I am supposing enough for about four persons—add half a table-spoonful more oil, and toss the lettuce lightly together for two or three minutes. Next add not quite half a table-spoonful of French white vinegar, mix it for a minute or two more, and it is finished.

Now, the difficulty in many households is to overcome the prejudice against oil. Perhaps some one, when they have read this, will do as follows:—First take care to have a *fresh* bottle of *good* oil. Then mix a salad as I have directed, without telling anybody how it is done. Let it be handed round at dinner time, and wait and see what people say. If you tell them that there is nearly two table-spoonfuls of oil, they probably will make up their minds beforehand that it is nasty; but say nothing, and give the recipe a fair chance.

There are two additions to a salad which many think an advantage: one is to chop up with the parsley and mint one fresh taragon leaf; another is to rub a crust of bread with a piece of garlic, and then put the crust into the salad-bowl and toss it about with the salad. This is quite sufficient to give it a decided flavour of garlic, and, where garlic is not disliked, will be found to be a decided improvement.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.

BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.



WE have arrived at July, the beginning of the end of our London season, when, however, the goddess Fashion still reigns supreme in the metropolis of England. Unlike the

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In Paris the shapes which have found most favour, in the matter of bonnets, are the Directoire, Bretonne, Couronne, Capote, and Chloë, while some few women of distinguished fashion have adopted designs of their

own, copied from old pictures, like the Countess de Pourtales, who looked vastly pretty at the races, in the Chapeau Merveilleuse, copied from a head-dress in Louis XVI.'s time, with a wide brim turned up in front, and a long ostrich feather drooping at the back.

In England we give the preference to two forms—a sort of oval like the cottage hats, such as Pamela, “the country girl,” and other heroines were represented in, worn quite at the back of the head, and a flat stiff shape with a coronet over the face. We affect drooping floral trimmings more than any other, and a superabundance of flowers are worn both in London and Paris, some of the Parisian bonnets having the entire crown formed of flowers. Such artificial blooms are often scented, and sometimes mounted on stems of real lavender, which emit a very pleasant odour.

The newest shape is the Dorothy, which bends a little downwards to the ears, and is, at the same time, a good shade and becoming: another re-introduction of bygone days. It is, as all these hats are, picturesque—no other term applies as well. A constant patron of Rotten Row will recognise the Dorothy as a marked feature of the matutinal gatherings there, together with all the incongruous rubbish people carry jingling from their waists. There is an affectation of usefulness in these appendages, which take the form of note-books, keys, small lanterns, and scent bottles.