desired quantity—viz., about three pints; to this must be then added a claret-glassful of Madeira, which can now be obtained really good at forty shillings a dozen from any respectable wine merchant. If, however, it is not thought necessary to have Madeira bought on purpose—and it is a somewhat rare wine in the present day—a similar quantity of *good* golden sherry will do. The soup is now done, and only requires a few drops of lemon-juice added to it after it is put in the tureen.

One of the greatest mistakes in the use of wine for cooking is to think that any wine will do. I have known cases where people have ordered a few bottles of what they chose to call "cooking sherry" from the grocers, and filthy stuff it has been, enough to spoil anything. If you think turtle soup does not deserve a glass of good wine, my advice is, do not make any. It is no use adding a glass of some horrible concoction called sherry or Madeira, and then tasting the soup and saying, "Ah! it is not a bit like what we had at Francatelli's." Of course it is not, and you have only yourselves to blame. The same thing applies to real mock-turtle. "What does he mean by *real* mock-turtle?" I can imagine you saying. But we live and learn. This is exactly the question I asked a waiter many years ago. We were discussing the important subject of what I should have for dinner.

"Soup, sir? yes, sir; very nice mock-turtle, sir—real mock-turtle, sir."

This led to the disclosure—it was in the country—that it was made from calf's head, not pig's head.

Now, more than three parts of the mock-turtle soup sold in London—I do not mean in the better-class hotels or restaurants—is made from pig's head, and very nice it is too. Were it really made from calf's head, it could not possibly be sold for the money. At some future period, when speaking on the all-important subject of "economy" in cooking, I will give you the recipe. Half a pig's head can be bought for ninepence; nine persons out of ten would not tell the difference between soup made from it and soup made from calf's head. As the pie-man said to Sam Weller, "It's the seasoning as does it."

In the above directions, I have only mentioned what I consider absolutely essential. When too many things are mentioned in recipes, people are apt to despair of trying them. However, there are several little things that might be added to the above stock during the period of making with advantage: some chicken-bones, bearing in mind that they must have no white sauce in connection with them or the soup will never be clear. A mushroom would be another little improvement. Any odd scraps of meat, especially roast meat, may be added. The only difference between clear turtle and thick is that the latter has some brown thickening added to it. But it is, in my opinion, a great mistake to begin dinner with a thick soup, which is a capital thing to lunch off in cold weather, but it is apt to spoil the very best sauce—viz., appetite. The best recipe I know of for this sauce is exercise. Of course it is quite possible to have too much of a good thing, and this was the opinion of a certain gentleman, who once went out to dinner, as follows:—

He was a short, middle-aged gentleman, with a waistcoat that conveyed the idea of having swallowed a water-melon. He was not, as may be imagined, fond of exercise as a rule, and therefore took a cab. Unfortunately, the cab was old and rotten, and the bottom gave way and came clean out, seat and all. The unlucky man inside had consequently to trot the whole way through the mud. As the cabman, quite unconscious of what had happened, drove on at a brisk pace, the middle-aged gentleman fruitlessly endeavouring to attract his attention all the time, on arriving at his destination, his feelings, as well as his legs, can be better imagined than described.

Cooking is a high art. There was some great foreign minister, I forget who, who owed his great success as a diplomatist to his cook.

I have got another recipe for an old aunt, worth thousands. I would not divulge it at any other time of the year but the present, when every one must be good-natured. It is, as I say, worth thousands—*i.e.*, if the aunt be old, rich, and capable of making a will. Yes, I will tell, and in so doing probably make hundreds of fortunes for others, some of whom may one day recollect me. The recipe is as follows:—Make the tipsy-cake with brandy.

A. G. PAYNE.

WOMEN WHO WORK.

POST OFFICE CLERKS.

TELL you about my work, ma'am? Well, I don't know that there is much to tell. I've been at it three years, and I get eight shillings a week and my food. Only that? Yes, ma'am, only that. It isn't much, certainly; but I'll tell you how I manage. I've an uncle living near by, and I pay him three shillings a week for my lodging, so that I've the other five for dress, washing, travelling, doctors, and—everything, in fact.

There are some young women who manage it, but I think they must have help of some sort. I know a lot live in kinds of Homes, managed by charitable people on purpose for them and needlewomen and teachers—respectable kind of young women, you know, ma'am—where they pay a trifle, and get lodged, and sometimes boarded too, if needful. Well, yes, ma'am, you're right; it is a kind of living on charity; but then, you see, it's to keep them decent and honest, and how are they to do it otherwise? One must live somehow, and they pay all they can. It's the fault of their employers that they can't pay more. If I liked, mine would give me ten shillings a week and my tea only, instead of eight and all my meals; but I couldn't breakfast and dine nowhere on two shillings a week, so of course I'd rather stay as I am—unless I get into one of the Government offices, indeed. I would like that dearly; but then you do want such a deal of interest for anything of that sort.

This isn't a Government office then? No, ma'am, this is what is called a receiving house. It belongs to the grocer's shop it's in; and the owner, he gets thirty pounds a year from Government for keeping it, one per cent. on stamps sold, and six shillings a week for the telegraph, besides a penny extra on every message sent. The Government has the head offices, of course, and what are called the district and branch offices. I've a cousin in one of the district ones. Her godfather was the superintendent's brother, so that's how she got in.

They've got to go through a regular training first, and get a certificate, before they can enter; but it isn't difficult. My cousin trained me herself, and I was with her for awhile in the office, and soon learnt the work. The telegraph seems difficult at first, but once you've mastered it, it's as easy as easy afterwards. You've got to be able to read and send off a certain number of words in a certain number of minutes before they'll pass you, but I wasn't long doing it. I rather like that part; it's the Savings Bank business I can't bear. It's so awful difficult to keep all the little accounts correct, and not make mistakes, when you're continually called off for stamps and things.

How many branches of duty have I to attend to? Well, ma'am, let me see. There's stamps and money-orders, telegraph, letters, and Savings Bank—five in all; and for my part I like the telegraph the best, though the foreign messages are very difficult at times, and now and then you may make a mistake in counting the words, and charge it wrong. If you do, you're fined a shilling for it. You've got to sign your name to the sending of it, so the mistake is easily traced to you.

Any other fines? No, ma'am, that's the only one. Of course if the money in the evening don't tally with the account of stamps, &c., in the morning, you've got to make it good. If there's a loss in any of the departments under your charge, you're bound to make it right; but then there oughtn't to be no loss without carelessness; and you have to learn to be extra careful when your earnings and character depend on it. Oh, yes, certainly; character is one of the principal things required for getting into the Post Office. You must be known to be strictly honest and upright, and you must be a little above the common—dress nicely, and have had a decent sort of education; not only reading and writing, but to be a quick hand at arithmetic, and know something of geography and French. In fact, the more foreign languages you know, the better it is for you, on account of the telegrams.

There are ladies at the Post Office who know four or five languages, and are thought a deal of, and paid well; for the pay at the Government offices rises, you know. You go in at eight shillings a week too, and find your own food; but that's only for the first year. After that it rises to twelve and sixteen. If you're superintendent, you get as much as one pound four a week, and so on. You're always rising in the Government offices, and that's why I'd like to get into one of them so much—not to speak of your getting a pension after you've served twenty to twenty-five years; and then they pay you for over-hours, too, which isn't the case with us.

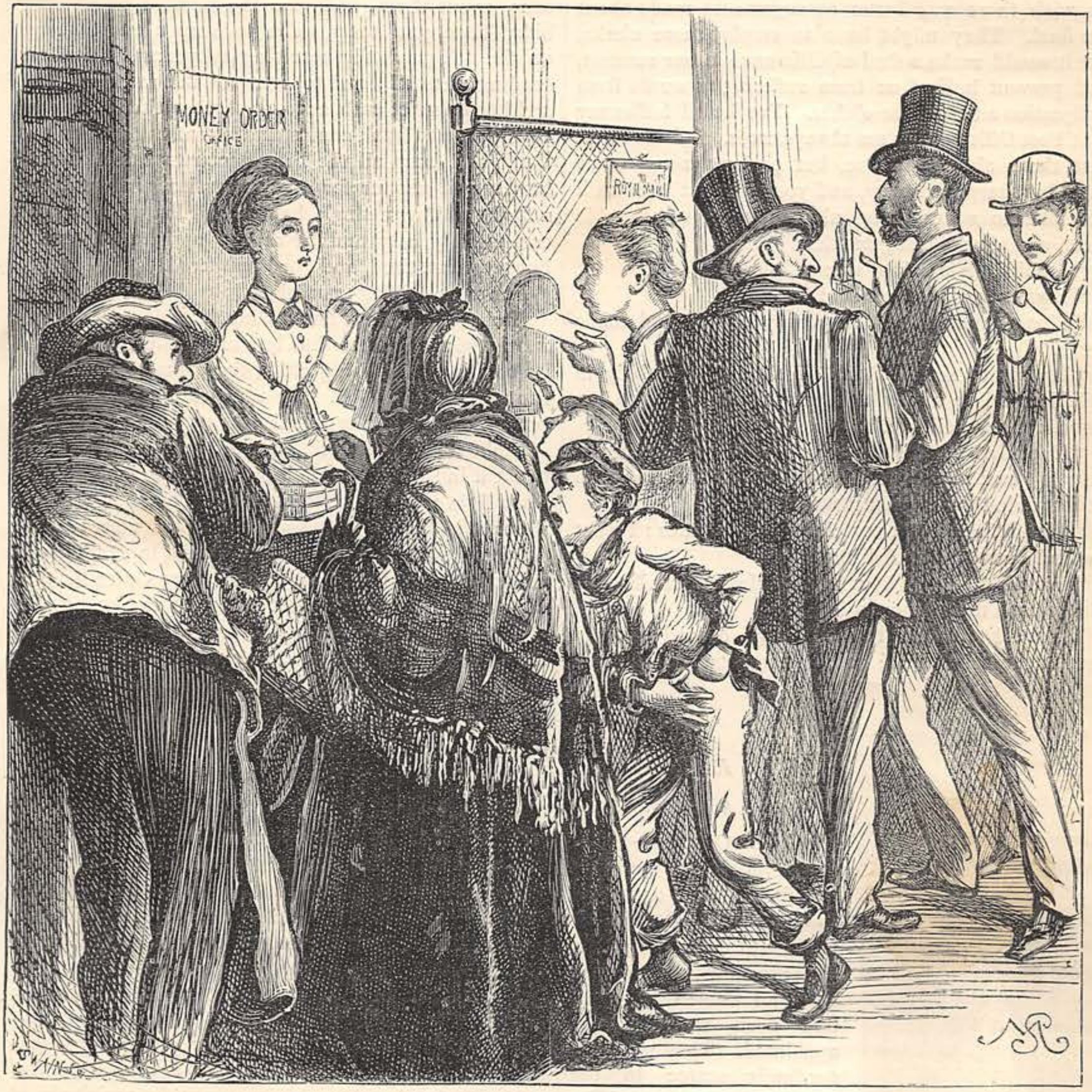
But I was telling you about the languages, wasn't I, ma'am? Well, there was a young lady at the head office who knew several foreign languages, and was so quick and clever every way that the authorities thought a deal of her, they did, and one day there came into the office a gentleman, and asked her to send off a telegram in French for him. She did it at once, and then he asked her to send one in German, and then in Portuguese. In fact, I forget how many he tried her in, for he'd been a great traveller himself, and he wanted to puzzle her; but she did 'em all, taking a deal of trouble about it, till at last he gave her one in Hebrew, and she couldn't do that; but she was so bright and civil about it, begging him to wait a little bit, and she would manage it somehow, that he was quite taken; and the end of it was, he made acquaintance with her, and married her.

Age? Well, ma'am, to tell you the truth, I don't know how old you must be before you can enter. I suppose there is a rule, for of course it's too important a place of trust for a very young girl, even if she'd the head and capability for the work; but I know you're not allowed to be taken *after* you're thirty. My cousin's eight-and-twenty now, and she's one of the principal young women at her office, paid well, and thought highly of; but if she were to leave, and come back again in a couple of years, they couldn't, by rule, admit her. Of course, once you are in, you can stay till you're past thirty, or any age—till you're eligible for your pension, in fact.

Another rule they have at the district offices. They can change the young women from one to another as they please, and without their being asked whether they're agreeable to moving or not. If two young women, for instance, don't agree, so that it's unpleasant for others in the office, or awkward in any way, one can be shifted to another district, and the young woman from there put in her place; or again, if two agree over-well, so that the work gets hindered; or for a hundred other reasons; and it isn't always pleasant to be moved on if you're settled and comfortable in a place. If a girl, however, is very anxious to remain where she is, and has urgent reasons for it, she can appeal to the authorities; and if her objections are thought stronger than the argument for her going, she's allowed to stay on. Of course in the receiving houses it is different. The shopkeeper engages us, and we stay with him till we leave of our own accord, or are dismissed.

What are our hours? Well, ma'am, twelve in general, from eight to eight. We are expected to be here by eight sharp, and to set to work at once. Our breakfast is got ready for us in the inner room, and we take it—somehow! Dinner at noon in the same way, and tea at five. How much time allowed us for them?

None at all, m'm. We've got to take 'em as we can. There are two of us here, and whichever isn't occupied at the moment slips in first and gets it, and then comes back and relieves the other while she snatches a bit. One can't sit down comfortably to it, because one may be called off any minute in the middle of a mouthful; and sometimes when town's full, and business lively, it all gets cold, or dried up, without either of us having a chance to get away to it. It's very uncomfortable, and I don't see why it shouldn't be remedied, especially with regard to the breakfast. If we came half an hour earlier we could get our breakfast comfortably, and begin work afterwards; but the masters don't seem to have thought of it, and of course it isn't our place to suggest things. At the district offices they're allowed a certain time to go away and get their meals in, as they're not given them in the office. It's twenty minutes or half an hour, I think; but of course that's not near time enough for cooking anything and eating it peaceably, counting the coming to and fro; so they generally get a cold snack of whatever's handiest; and that sort of thing bolted down in a hurry is apt to disagree with you, especially when you're stand, stand, standing all day long. We never sit down except to send a telegram; and of course it's very fatiguing; the more so that nearly every one that comes to the Post Office is in a hurry, and that if twenty people come in at a time they all want to be served first. No, m'm, at first I didn't think as I *could* go on with it. My head used to be in a whirl by the time evening came, and my legs were that tired I could hardly crawl home. As to taking a walk afterwards for the sake of exercise and fresh air, that's all nonsense. One is far too dead-beat with standing



"I'VE HAD ALL THAT AND MORE DINNED INTO MY EARS AT THE SAME TIME" (*p.* 82).

only, to want any more walking than is needful for getting home. I am always glad to get to bed as soon as ever I've mended up my clothes, and done any other bit of sewing I have to do; and I've often fallen asleep over that; though of course I don't feel the tiredness anything like as much now as I did at first. One can always get used to anything in time; but I do wish there was better arrangements made about the food. They might have to employ more clerks, but it would make a deal of difference in our comfort, and prevent half of us from suffering as we do from indigestion and the like o' that. I've heard ladies say that Post Office clerks are always cross. I don't know that that's altogether true, but perhaps some of us are a bit sharp and testy, and you may put it down if you like to never being able to get a comfortable meal, and always being hurried.

"A shilling's worth of stamps, please."

"I want this telegram sent *at once*."

"Five pounds' worth of penny stamps, and make haste."

"I want to send a Post Office order to a lady in Wicklow, miss; and what's the nearest office to her place, can you tell me?"

"A packet of postage cards, and six halfpenny stamps; and please put a stamp on this for Hungary. Missis didn't know what it would be."

"Weigh these book parcels, please, at once; I want to send them by this delivery."

"What's the latest hour for the Mexican mail? and please cash this money order."

There! I've had all that and more dinned into my ears at the same time; and isn't it a stretch on one's temper to attend to each without seeming hasty or abrupt?

Why, in the season we often sell as much as twenty pounds' worth of stamps in a day. In the autumn perhaps not more than half, and it's pretty well all in shilling's-worths and less.

We separate the town letters from the country ones, count them, and give the number on a yellow bill. Then, you know, we've to keep a constant eye on the telegraph for receiving telegrams, as well as sending them off; and to enter all the money orders, and keep a strict cash account of everything, and sell envelopes and book-covers, and attend to *that* Savings Bank, and keep all the little accounts balanced, and have a civil answer for every question, and not keep nobody waiting a single half-second longer than you can possibly help, and be always upright, intelligent, hungry, neat, tired, and good-tempered.

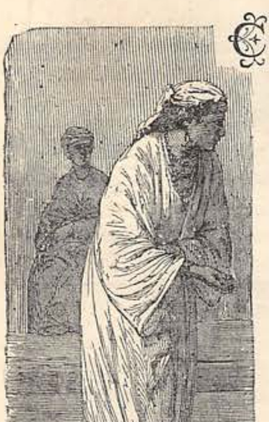
For eight shillings a week!

A charwoman gets half as much again—sometimes nearly twice as much—has less to do, is better fed, and isn't expected to bring either the dress or the qualifications (all of which take time, skill, and money to procure) which are expected from us.

Eight shillings a week, and your food—with no time to eat it in! It do seem a little, ma'am, look at it in what light you will; but there! it's just our sort for which it is difficult to get what is called nice, *respectable* employment, with nothing menial in it. There's many a born and bred lady in the Post Office for that very reason, and thankful and glad to get into it. Work is never too plentiful for any when there's such a number crying out and clamouring for it.

MY *REAL* TURKISH BATH!

A LADY'S EXPERIENCE IN EGYPT.



CAIRO is Oriental—therefore it is dirty; but it is also delightful. No pictures could be too bright of what we imagined the bath to be. My expectation of seeing beautiful women in Cairo had been woefully disappointed. They were exceedingly scarce in the streets; but we fancied the bath to be a kind of ladies' club, with marble halls, plashing fountains, and soft-cushioned divans, on which dark-skinned houris reclined. My sister and I pictured to ourselves white-robed attendants gliding noiselessly about, amid a drowsy silence, and filled up our vision with chibouques, narghilis, sherbet, coffee, and delicious perfumes.

One fine afternoon we called for Madame Ali Mahomet and her daughter-in-law, according to appointment. They came out to us veiled up to the eyes, the long black silk cloak drawn over their heads, and all the gorgeous apparel underneath carefully concealed.

We stopped at a narrow passage which led directly into the outer hall of the bath. It was a large, dilapidated court, roofed in with planks. In many places these had fallen away, letting in a flood of warm golden light, that, like charity, covered a multitude of the sins of which the place was guilty. But alas, for our visions of marble halls, cushioned divans, and so forth! The interior of the court was surrounded with broad stone divans. These were covered with antiquated matting, apparently intended for the growth and protection of fleas. Intended or not, the fleas had taken advantage of such good cover to grow and multiply in a most alarming manner. A large stone basin, surrounded with seats, stood in the centre of the court. Women and children of all ages sat, lay, or walked about in every possible stage of undress. The noise made by this crowd of women was something