

I could not put aside. Her distress was so real and so pitiful, her manner so meek and timid, that I could not believe her a thief; and I was right. I heard, some time afterwards, that Mrs. Robinson had found

the brooch in a disused dress, and had cleared Jane's character. Jane lived with me until she married: an affectionate, tender-hearted servant; slow in her ways, undoubtedly, but faithful and willing.

FOOD FOR COLD WEATHER.



EVERY man knows that we live in an exceedingly variable climate, and although for by far the greater part of the year we suffer neither the extreme of heat nor cold, still we have at times our hot July or August days, when the English summer, which is often described as consisting of three hot days and a thunderstorm, vies with almost any heat that can be met with in the whole Continent of Europe.

Fortunately for the present season of the year, we are, as a nation, far better prepared to resist the attacks of cold than heat.

Abundant—though now, alas! not cheap—coal is to be obtained, and feather-beds, thick blankets, carpeted rooms are the universal custom in this country—making a winter in London as far superior to one in Paris, as a summer in the latter city is superior to one in London.

The question, however, before us is, do we as a nation sufficiently vary our food to make it consistent with the weather? Here, again, I must confess that we are more apt to give winter's food in summer time than summer's food in winter. Still there are certain dishes especially adapted for cold weather, and at the present season of the year we may call attention to some of them. First, however, it may not be amiss to consider on what general principles one kind of food is adapted for hot countries, and another for cold. The first principle is to remember that in cold weather we require *fat*. Fat and grease contain a large quantity of carbon, and this carbon taken and absorbed into the system keeps up the animal heat.

There is an old story told that many years ago, when the streets of London were lighted with oil-lamps, before the introduction of gas, Russian sailors in England were in the habit of climbing the lamps and drinking the lamp-oil. It is also asserted that in some of the Arctic expeditions the sailors have boiled down and eaten the tallow candles.

Whether these stories are true or not may be left an open question, but there is no doubt that the food craved for was that best suited to sustain heat. We all know how invaluable a remedy cod-liver oil has proved to many invalids, especially among young children; and how medical men often recommend cod-liver oil to delicate persons, to be taken during the winter, and left off on the return of warm spring weather.

Of all winter dishes, perhaps none is so suitable for cold weather as that rather vulgar dish, pea-soup. Persons who affect to despise pea-soup should remember that it is one of the most variable soups ever made. Poor pea-soup, which really owes almost its whole goodness to the split-peas from which it is made, is indeed poor stuff for epicures, though a very cheap and wholesome form of nourishment for the hungry poor. Good pea-soup is an exceedingly delicious compound, and I will describe how to make it.

First of all, one great advantage of pea-soup is that a greasy stock, scarcely adapted to make any other kind of soup, is really best suited for the purpose. For instance, the water in which a large piece of pickled-pork has been boiled, or even the greasy water in which ham or bacon has been boiled, is admirably adapted for making pea-soup. As a rule, the water used for boiling salt beef is too salt to be used for making soup; however, very often by soaking a piece of salt beef in fresh water for twenty-four hours before boiling it, the liquor left will be found to be not too salt for making pea-soup—the cook, of course, remembering that no further salt is added.

We will suppose, therefore, that some stock, or rather some greasy liquor, has been left, say in quantity about two quarts. I would here suggest that the water in which, say, a piece of fresh silver-side of beef has been boiled, should be used again to boil a good-sized piece of bacon, that may be served up hot with some roast fowls, that which is left forming a cold breakfast dish. First of all, take a quart of split-peas, and put them in a large basin, and let them soak in fresh water for nearly a day, a little piece of soda rather bigger than a pea being put into the water to render it softer. Should any of the peas float on the water, take them off and throw them away. Next, strain off the peas, and put them in the greasy stock mentioned to boil, adding to the two quarts of liquor one good-sized head of celery, four good-sized onions, two carrots, two turnips, and a little parsley. Let all this boil till the whole is thoroughly soft, occasionally skimming the soup, taking off that nasty thick film of fat which will sometimes rise to the surface. When the peas are thoroughly soft, strain the whole through a wire sieve into a large basin; pick out the stalk of

the parsley, and with a good-sized wooden spoon rub the whole through the wire sieve.

This is the great secret of good soup. Too often the cook will not take the trouble to send the whole through the sieve. It is undoubtedly a troublesome affair, and very apt to make the wrist ache. However, the result well repays the trouble, and the cook generally can call some one to her assistance to take a turn with the spoon. It will also be found advisable every now and then to moisten the ingredients in the sieve with some of the liquor that has run through; this rather helps the process. Now soup made in this way, in which the head of celery, the onions, the carrots, the turnips are all sent through the sieve, as well as the peas, is a very different affair from soup which has been simply flavoured by having them boiled in it. Indeed, pea-soup should really be called *purée* of peas, and when care is taken in its composition a very nice *purée* it is.

Pea-soup should, of course, be sent to table hot; and as it possesses, like all *purées*, the power of retaining its heat for some time, it is the better adapted for cold weather.

Some dried mint and some small pieces of toasted bread should always be sent to table with pea-soup; or pieces of bread cut square, the shape of very small dice, may be fried a bright golden colour in some hot lard. These pieces of bread, owing to their being crisper than toast, are better adapted for all sorts of *purées*, such as *purée* of Jerusalem artichokes, or Palestine soup; the pieces of bread being dried on some blotting-paper after frying.

With regard to the mint, take care to have it well sifted. If properly dried it will crumble easily on being pinched with the fingers, but the only way to avoid the stalks is to sift it. Mint can be bought ready dried in bottles in Covent Garden Market, and at all good greengrocers'; and as a small sixpenny bottle will last a twelvemonth probably, and keep good almost for ever if well corked, it is advisable always to have a bottle in the house.

Another very excellent dish for cold weather is Irish stew. Irish stew has the following strong points in its favour as a seasonable dish:—First, it retains the heat for a long time; secondly, it contains a considerable amount of fat; and thirdly, which makes it a desirable dish for all weathers, it is probably the most economical dish ever sent to table. The best joint for making Irish stew is neck of mutton. First cut off nearly all the fat, the reason being that when mutton is boiled the fat swells enormously. What is cut off will make an admirable suet-pudding—another dish adapted for cold weather—that can be flavoured with grated lemon-peel. Pare about four pounds of potatoes, and cut them into slices, and allow them to boil for about a quarter of an hour; by this means the water contained in the potatoes will be extracted—and all water held in roots is far from wholesome. Next slice up five large onions, cutting them cross-ways, so that circular rings fall in slicing. Then take a good-sized stew-pan—an enamelled one is best—and cover the bottom with

slices of potato and onions; add a little pepper and salt, then cover this with a layer of meat, the quantity required being about three pounds. The trimmed neck or loin of mutton should be cut into rather thin chops, and the short bones at the end of the neck should, of course, be all cut into separate pieces. Again pepper and salt the meat, and cover it over with a thin layer of sliced potato and onion. The whole should be packed rather close—*i.e.*, not much space should be left between the pieces, so that a very little water added will be sufficient to fill up the stew-pan, till the top layer is moistened. Add this quantity of water, so as to avoid leaving any of the potato or onion uncovered. Next cover over the stew-pan, seeing that the lid fits close; place something heavy, such as a four-pound weight, on the lid to keep it down, and allow the whole to simmer gently for about three hours. Be careful, however, not to let it *boil*, as that is apt to render the meat hard. Also on no account take off the lid during the stewing process, as by so doing you let out the flavour.

It will be readily seen how exceedingly economical this dish is, as absolutely nothing is lost, for the liquor is served up as well as the potato and onion. In roasting a joint some of the flavour necessarily goes up the chimney, and in boiling a joint some goes into the water in which the joint is boiled. Irish stew is, however, one of the few dishes in which there is absolutely no waste whatever.

One very seasonable, and at the same time delicious, sauce for winter is celery sauce; and in country houses where celery is grown in the garden, and can be had in abundance, a little should always be served with boiled turkey or boiled fowls.

First of all, cut up about six heads of celery, put them into boiling water, and allow them to boil for about ten minutes; strain them off, and throw them into cold water, and then drain and dry the pieces; next place them in a stew-pan, with about two ounces of butter and a little grated nutmeg, and allow them to dissolve slowly in the butter, but take care that the celery does not brown; when quite soft and tender, fill up the stew-pan with some good white stock that has been flavoured with some savoury herbs, such as marjoram, basil, and lemon-thyme; let the whole boil up, and then send it all through a wire sieve with a wooden spoon. Should the sauce not be thick enough, a little arrowroot may be added to it to thicken it; add also a little boiling milk, and a small lump of white sugar. Of course, when cream can be obtained it is far preferable to the milk. Another great advantage of having cream is that the sauce will look much whiter than when milk is used. The sauce may also be thickened with white roux—that is, butter and flour mixed together and baked, but not allowed to turn colour.

Celery sauce will be found to be by far the best accompaniment to a boiled turkey, which at the present season of the year seems to have that monopoly of one end of the table that the sirloin of beef seems to have of the other.