

with hands and teeth, gnawing and gobbling it up more like their neighbours the wolves than human beings.

Some rough games followed, such as running races, climbing a greasy pole, and scrambling for kopéks (Russian farthings), the elder women joining in the latter in spite of their age. It seemed as if they could hardly resist the sight of money, for they would toss their babies over to some friend to hold, whilst they rushed in amongst the breathless crowd; sometimes baby and all went, at which we could not help laughing; they also seemed to think it fine fun, and joined heartily in the laugh against themselves.

The talégas were now harnessed, and little by little different groups formed ready to depart; but one and all first came to bid farewell to their lord, our host, which they did by kissing his hands and embracing his knees. We came in for some of these adieus, as when they were informed that we were his relations they rushed round us, and kneeling, dragged our dresses in all directions to be kissed and embraced, till we ran a narrow chance of being thrown down, and my companion was not a little frightened.

So passed the gala-day, and afterwards we settled down into the quiet monotony of a Russian home.

A. A. STRANGE BUTSON.

A LESSON IN HOUSEHOLD COOKERY.



WE are poor; that is to say, we have to provide all the necessaries of life for ourselves, two children and two servants, with an income of two hundred a year.

I am a notable woman! For the first time in my life I have *written* the confession, although I have known my capabilities ever since I was ten years old. Let other women pride themselves upon beauty, fascination, or accomplishments—I am contented when Mr. Archdall says, “Mary, what a capital manager you are!”

I ask all the readers of this paper whether a higher compliment can be paid to any woman, especially in these hard times? We never have a quarrel, and this happy circumstance I attribute simply to my having studied cookery.

“My dear,” said Mr. Archdall a few days ago, “I think it might be a kindness to the world at large if you were to publish some of your recipes; this soup, for instance, deserves to be known.”

“I am glad you like it. This is fish soup, and very economical. I kept two pounds of the fish we had yesterday, and all the heads, tails, fins, and bones. These, with two quarts of stock, a blade of mace, two onions, two cloves, one carrot, a handful of parsley, a little celery-seed, salt and pepper, a dessert-spoonful of corn-flour, and half a pint of milk, made the soup. Shall I tell you the process of making it out of these ingredients?”

“If you like,” he replied.

“It is a kind of rehearsal before appearing in print, and besides that, will be useful to Nancy, whom I am training to be our cook.”

The little country girl who waited upon us blushed. She was only fifteen, and her wages were six pounds a year; but she showed some aptitude for learning my favourite art, and I was teaching her carefully.

“I went to the kitchen at ten o’clock, and began by breaking up the fish-bones. I then put them with the stock and vegetables into a stewpan, and let the mixture simmer until a quarter before two o’clock, when I strained it, returned it to the stewpan, put in

the fish, cut up in pieces about the size of dice, and added the corn-flour, blended with the milk. I let it simmer gently until two o’clock, when I added the chopped parsley, and it was ready; but you were not quite ready: you had that last sentence to write, you know; however, the soup has not suffered by the delay.”

“The result is excellent, Mary; this next dish also deserves to be chronicled.”

“Beefsteak pudding? Next time we have it Nancy must tell you how it was made; but for this time I merely require her to listen.

“I provided one pound of beefsteak, six ounces of suet, twelve ounces of flour, half a tea-spoonful of salt, a salt-spoonful of pepper, a gill of water or stock, two sheep’s kidneys, and a very small piece of onion, about the size of a quarter of a marble. I proceeded to chop up the suet with the flour as fine as possible, rubbing it in my hands until it was almost as small and fine as bread-crumbs. I then added enough cold water to make it into a stiff paste. American flour requires more water than English flour. I next cut up the meat into inch pieces, skinning the kidneys and cutting them also into small pieces; and having floured the board, rolled out the paste, cutting off one-third of it to be laid aside for covering over the top of the pudding basin. Having greased the said pudding basin and lined it with the paste, I put the meat into it, adding a little bit of fat from time to time. The kidneys make the gravy richer, and if you happen to have any liquid in which meat has been boiled, it will be of advantage to pour a small quantity over the meat in the basin. I had not any at hand, yet I flatter myself the pudding is very good without.”

“Excellent, Mary! Just write down the history of the beefsteak pudding as you have told it to me, and many a housewife will read it with profit.”

“It is not quite finished. I next wetted the edges of the paste, and pressed the paste covering down upon it. I dipped the pudding-cloth in boiling water, floured the centre, and tying the pudding up in it, plunged it into the pot, and let it boil for three hours, looking from time to time to make sure that it was

always covered with water. Nancy completed the operation. She made a dish very hot, and having loosened the edges of the pudding with a knife, put her hot dish on the top of the pudding basin, and reversing it, turned out the pudding. At least I presume you did so, Nancy?"

"Deed I did, ma'am; I did it the way you bid me."

"No sweet things, mother!" cried little Fred, in a tone of reproach.

"Don't be naughty, Fred," admonished his tiny

"I provided one pound of butter, one pound of flour, one tea-spoonful of salt, and two eggs. I rubbed the butter and flour together with my hands till it was like bread-crumbs. I then made a well in the centre of the heap of flour and butter on the board, and broke two eggs into it, kneading it into a nice smooth paste. I floured the rolling-pin and rolled the paste to the size of a small plate, and to the thickness of an inch. I put it on a greased baking dish into the oven for a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time I took it



"THE RESULT IS EXCELLENT, MARY" (p. 435).

sister, "'ou sall have gooder fings at tea if 'ou're a good boy."

The rector spent a very busy afternoon, and I was not idle. When tea-time came we found the children seated at table, Fred impatiently drumming with his fat fingers upon his plate, and little Mary rhyming on about "gooder fings;" these "gooder fings" being a galette Normande, and a plate of shortbread that I had made.

"Tell how you made it," said the children, remembering my cooking lecture at dinner. Their father laughed and joined in their request.

"This galette Normande is quite as good as those I used to buy in Caen, which is saying a good deal for my prowess, since the galette is as much the cake *par excellence* of that country as oaten cake is of Ulster.

out and painted it over with two more eggs and a dessert-spoonful of cream beaten up together. I replaced it in the oven for another quarter of an hour, and on taking it out, dusted it over with sifted sugar."

"Is that all? It sounds easy to an ignorant fellow like me."

"It is quite easy. Shortbread is rather more difficult. For it I provided three-quarters of a pound of flour, half a pound of butter, a quarter of a pound of soft white sugar, and a pinch of salt."

"Is not the butter a costly item?"

"Not just at this season; the market price of butter has gone down during the summer. I rubbed the butter into the flour with my hands, added the salt, then the sugar, and having floured my knuckles to prevent the mixture sticking to them, kneaded it

until it became a smooth paste. I next floured the board and tin, and rolled the paste into the form of a plate about half an inch in thickness; I pinched up the edges, pricked it over with a fork, dusted it with sifted sugar, and baked it for half an hour."

"Do you know that Nancy has cooked our dinner to-day, with very little superintendence from me?" said I next day, as Mr. Archdall took his place at table.

"I am glad to hear it," he replied, smiling kindly at our blushing little village maiden, who, with an air of modest pride, was lifting the cover of the soup-tureen.

"Yes, she is getting on nicely, and I had time to hear Fred's and Mary's lessons, knit a quarter of your sock, and write out the recipes for the benefit of the public."

"It appears that we have each spent a busy morning. Can you tell me how you made this soup, Nancy?"

"No, sir," she faltered, and I frowned at him to warn him not to expect impossibilities. Nancy could answer any question he might ask her in her catechism, but to address the rector in many words on any other subject was a feat beyond her courage. I therefore interposed by giving the recipe for "soup maigre au lait."

"We provided four potatoes, two leeks, one table-spoonful of prepared tapioca, one pint of milk, the yolks of two eggs, one tea-spoonful of salt, half an ounce of butter, a little pepper, and two quarts of water. Nancy proceeded to wash, peel, and slice the potatoes and leeks, and put them to boil in the two quarts of water. She let them boil until they were quite tender, and then strained the pulp through a wire sieve or cullender, pressing it with a wooden spoon till all the soft part had gone through. She returned it to the stewpan with the pint of milk, and let it come to the boil, stirring it carefully all the time. Perhaps you are not aware that milk boils more quickly than anything else, and therefore must be stirred constantly, both to prevent its boiling over the edge of the saucepan and to keep it from burning. Immediately on its coming to the boil, Nancy sprinkled in the table-spoonful of crushed tapioca, and let it simmer for a quarter of an hour. Meanwhile she beat up the yolks of the two eggs with a pinch of salt and pepper, and set them aside; she took the stewpan off the fire and put in the half-ounce of butter, then added a little of the soup to the eggs which had been beaten up, and returned it to the soup in the stewpan, replacing all upon the fire, and stirring it for three or four minutes. The only thing to be particularly observed

is that the soup must not be boiling when you put in the eggs."

"This is a cheap dish, is it not?"

"Yes, the ingredients cost very little."

"What comes next?"

"A boiled haddock. Nancy had not much trouble with it. It weighed four pounds. She washed it, scraped it, took off all its fins but one, took out its eyes, put it into the fish-kettle, and covered it over with boiling water. She put in a dessert-spoonful of salt, and let it simmer as gently as possible for fifteen minutes. In order to find out whether it was thoroughly done, she caught hold of the fin, which came out easily. She served it on a very hot dish, and poured that white sauce round it.

"No, children!—no more sauce! The sauce which Fred and Mary seem to appreciate so much is called 'sauce à la maître d'hôtel,' and deserves its fine name. I superintended Nancy anxiously while it was in course of preparation, for it is not every cook that can make a good sauce.

"We provided an ounce of flour, an ounce of butter, two gills of stock (made by putting the head, tail, and fins of the haddock, and bones of the sole I filleted yesterday, into a saucepan with a pint of water, to stew for half an hour). We then mixed the butter and flour together in a pan over the fire, added the two gills of stock, and stirred it for three minutes, then added a gill of rich milk, and lastly the juice of a large lemon." My description of the sauce lasted until the pudding was helped.

"Please, mother, some more," cried Fred.

"No more, my dear boy."

"Are you keeping it for the sick people, mother?"

"O! you may give old Matty my pudding," said little Mary, pushing away her plate, "I like gooder fings."

"Bad taste, little Mary! Come, Mary, the history of the pudding which little Mary despises."

"One table-spoonful of corn-flour, one pint of milk, an ounce and a half of sugar, a little grated nutmeg, and two eggs. You mix the corn-flour with a table-spoonful of cold milk, put the rest of the milk to boil, and directly it comes to the boil, take the saucepan off the fire and put in the rest of the cold ingredients, viz., the mixed corn-flour, the sugar, and the yolks of the eggs. Put the whites of the eggs on another plate, and beat them up with a little salt till they are a very stiff froth. You have meantime greased a pie-dish. When the whites are stiff enough you mix them with the corn-flour, &c., in the basin, and then put the whole mixture into the greased pie-dish, grate a little nutmeg over the pudding, and bake it for about twenty minutes."

LETITIA M'CLINTOCK.

