

And the lamps, as any one may guess, were the lamps of love lit in each other's eyes.

In the course of our *friendly* talks, I learned my fair one's history. She was an orphan, it appeared, and was now on her way to England to pay a visit to her father's friends, but being her own mistress and having been left a fair competency, she had no fixed plans for the future.

That was when we were not long out from Melbourne. Before we reached Brindisi I believe she had a rather more definite prospect before her, for while sailing along the Red Sea on one of those glorious nights such as are only to be seen beneath a tropical sky, with the stars of heaven all brilliant overhead, this fair astronomer accepted me as the star of her destiny.

J. G.



HOW TO COOK FISH.

BY A. G. PAYNE, AUTHOR OF "COMMON-SENSE COOKERY."



WELL-KNOWN receipt for cooking here commences, "First catch your hare." Equally necessary is it for us to first catch our fish, but unfortunately it has been proved beyond doubt by the recent ventilation of the subject in the public papers, that it is just at this point that our real difficulties commence.

Fish is caught in abundance, and is sold at an amazingly cheap rate by the original workmen, the fishermen, who make but a small profit; and yet we all know, especially those who live in the country, how difficult it is to get a nice little bit of cheap fresh fish. That this is to be regretted is admitted by all, and it does not require the testimony of medical men—who assure us, by-the-by, that fish is an admirable diet for those who work with their brains—to convince us that fish is a wholesome, agreeable form of food.

Our difficulty, as I have said, is to get it, and though my proper province is to tell you how to cook fish, I trust the great importance of the subject may be an excuse for dealing with the first part of the receipt, viz., First catch your fish—premising that fish is not caught to any practical purpose till we get it lying peacefully (*i.e.*, if it is not an eel) on a plate in a cool larder, for I presume all of you know better than to take fish into the kitchen, even for one minute, till it is ready for cooking.

I will not now enter into the various methods that have been suggested, that will make cheap fish a popular article of food with the poor, viz., the working man's wife and family.

In the recent discussions on "Fish Supply," I think hardly sufficient allowance has been made for fish purveyors of all classes. Fish is an exceptional commodity, inasmuch as it so rapidly spoils. Every one in any way connected with the fish trade must take this into account, and in all dealings allow of

a margin to recoup himself against loss from this cause. If housekeepers would give their orders beforehand, making a bargain with their fishmongers to supply them with sixpenny-worth, or a shilling's-worth, or upwards, of fish daily, leaving to him to supply them according to the state of the market, all parties would be gainers. Bargains might be struck for the fishmonger to supply so much fish daily at so much a pound, leaving it to him to vary as best he can. A man with a good business would be able to supply cheap fish easily were he to know beforehand that so many hundredweight would be taken off his hand for a certainty. Customers by this means would probably get quite as good fish in the long run as if they gave their distinct orders every day. A system of this kind would also have the desired effect of preventing certain fish fetching fancy prices, while equally good fish of other sorts is thrown away or destroyed.

The fish is "caught," it lies peacefully on a plate in the larder. We will suppose our system to be in force, and we don't know what the fish is till, in answer to a query, Mary Anne states—"They've sent us a haddock, mum." A very nice fish too, prized abroad, but somewhat neglected at home. The French *eglefin*, and the German *schellfisch*, plain boiled, with a little oiled butter and a nice boiled potato, is better known than the English fresh haddock, but it is the same thing, and exceedingly nice and cheap; and as boiling a haddock will illustrate boiling fish of every description, I will briefly run through the proper method.

First, as we are now going to have fish every day, let me caution you about cleaning your fish-kettle. It is bad enough to be careless about cleaning saucepans that have boiled meat, but if you extend this carelessness to vessels that have cooked fish, the consequences will be disastrous.

We will suppose the fish-kettle clean; wash the fish and scrape off all the scales carefully, and see that it has been properly cleaned, removing all little clots of

blood near the bone; place it in cold water with ample water to cover it, and put plenty of salt in the water, and put the kettle on the fire, and as it warms, remove all the scum that comes to the surface. You must regulate the time you put the fish on the fire so as to be able to send it to table without delay. A good-sized haddock will be done within five minutes of the water boiling. In other words, as soon as the water boils, let it boil for about five minutes, then take it out and send it to table quickly. The reason of failure of boiled fish is almost always owing to their being over-boiled, by which means the fish becomes tough and tasteless. Boiled fish also spoils by being kept warm. Fish is boiled sufficiently as soon as it ceases to be transparent. I would ask the cook not to be frightened about being late, but to risk one failure in the way of under-done fish, rather than persevere in years of real failure by over-cooking. It is not once in a hundred times that cooks will boil a fish properly. Do remember this maxim—Out of the fish-kettle on to the dining-room table as quickly as possible. Let it drain for a few *seconds*, slip it on to the white folded napkin and send it up—hot and steaming.

Next the sauce. Try oiled butter; it is so simple that no one can fail. Take a small butter-boat and place a piece of butter in it, and put the butter-boat in the oven till the butter is oiled. Don't waste the butter, as it is a rich sauce, and a dessert-spoonful is ample for each person. A little anchovy sauce can be handed round with the oiled butter, but I think plain salt preferable. This boiled fish really wants a nice floury potato.

Of course, in boiling fish, time varies with the *thickness*, not the weight. A thick piece of salmon will take longer than the same-sized piece of cod. Many cooks prefer to put salmon into boiling water at starting, but I cannot say I see the advantage of so doing. It is, I think, apt to risk getting the outside over-boiled while the meat near the bone is raw. However it is an open question, and I am bound to say the best opinions incline to boiling water.

When fish are thin, they are best placed in boiling water at starting. In fact, fish should be treated on the same principle as little new potatoes, and large old potatoes—boiling water for one at starting, and cold water for the other, lukewarm water for the intermediate sizes. Always throw a few pieces of fresh bright parsley round boiled fish, which can also be ornamented with slices of lemon.

The next point is, "How to fry fish." And some novices in the way of housekeeping will say, "Yes, but if we have fried fish every day, won't it run into a lot of fat?" I know I am on very tender ground with cooks when I touch on the subject of fat, especially frying fat. But it is only by having fried fish constantly that fish becomes economical. Will you believe me when I tell you that, if you will only have enough fat to start with, the same fat will do over and over again for months? The want of economy is the dab of fat

used once to spoil a fish and then emptied into the cook's grease-box. If ever I wrote a dictionary it should contain the following: "To Fry—to boil in fat heated to a temperature above that of boiling water."

Let us take that common fish, a sole, and fry it. First take a sole, and after seeing, of course, that it is properly cleansed, dry it, and flour it to insure its being perfectly dry. If we want to cook it in egg and bread-crumbs, we must have some nice, fine, dry bread-crumbs ready. Those sent through a wire sieve are best. Next get an egg and beat it up thoroughly, dip or moisten the sole with this, and let it drain for a second or two, and dip the sole lightly in the bread-crumbs—don't pat it. Many years ago I recollect writing a receipt—Pat it gently; but I was wrong. Have ready a frying-pan containing sufficient fat to amply cover the sole, and see that this fat is above the temperature of boiling water. Next see that the sole looks dry on both sides before you plunge it into the fat. Some cooks try and put on too much egg and bread-crumbs, and the top will be dry, and the other side a wet yellow mess. Let the bread-crumbs be dry on both sides. Plunge it into the hot fat, and in a very few minutes, two or three at the outside for an ordinary-sized sole, it will be done, and if the fat was sufficiently hot, it will come out of a bright golden colour.

And now for a general rule for frying fish, which, though it seems contradictory, is nevertheless perfectly true. The smaller the fish, the hotter the fat and the shorter the time. The smallest fish of all, whitebait, require about five seconds in fat heated to about 400°. This would be too hot to fry a thick piece of eel. When the fish is fried, drain it on a *hot* dry cloth for a few seconds, and send it to table quickly, when the flesh should be moist and yet not transparent or red, nor should it cling to the bone.

A little explanation is necessary with regard to fish fat. Cookery books inform us that when the fat ceases to crackle it is hot enough. This is often true, but not always. Cooks should bear this in mind, or otherwise they might make a mistake. The best test for "frying fat" for fish is to throw in a little piece of dry bread, and to see how it is affected. If it turns brown without being burnt in a very short time, the fat is about right for ordinary purposes. If it burns black, the fat is too hot for almost anything but whitebait. If it only slowly turns colour at the edges, the fat is not hot enough.

Space will not permit of further details, but the question of the supply of cheap fish as a daily article of food is of too great importance to be left without one word more. The soundest wisdom is to create, or rather assist to create, an increase in demand, and to leave the regular trade to rise to the occasion, as trade never fails to do, to furnish the supply. To create an artificial supply, and to trust to chance for the demand to follow, will probably result in more harm being done than good.



she answered him. "I am going to ask you something which will seem hard, Frank," she said: "that you will wait a month for my answer. Indeed, it must be so," she went on firmly, seeing that he was going to protest. "If I gave it to you now, it would be 'No.'"

"Oh, Rose! won't you believe or trust me yet? You are terribly hard on me! Do you mean I must keep away from you all that time?"

"You may come as often as you like, if you won't talk to me like this; but I must be free till then. Frank, you mustn't ask me to change my mind; I cannot do it."

"I didn't think you would have turned round upon me like this!" said Frank, half angrily.

Rose burst into tears. "I'm as vexed as you can be, Frank, but I know I'm right, and it isn't a very long time to wait."

"It is *very* long when a man wants his answer," he said, getting up and standing before her. "I shan't come here again until you mean to say 'Yes' or 'No' to me. It won't give me pleasure, or you either; but I'll just come once more, and get my answer for good."

"If you do, I'll say 'Yes,'" said Rose, lifting her head, with her eyes full of tears. "No, no! not now, Frank. Say good-bye to me, and go away now." She looked at him beseechingly, and he silently grasped her hand and left her.

Mrs. Tiverton came in soon after. "Why, Rose, what is the matter?" she asked, seeing her tears. "And where is Frank?"

"He has gone home. He is vexed with me just now, mother dear, and I don't know what you will say. He asked me to marry him, and I said he must wait a month before I could say 'Yes' or 'No.'"

Mrs. Tiverton stood in blank dismay. "What could you be thinking of, Rose? I believe you'll break my heart. I have tried so hard to make you happy, and now you have spoiled it all!"

"He won't be worth much if he can't wait that little time," said Rose. "And, mother, you'll think me right when I tell you that I heard to-day that Agnes is coming home, and perhaps when they meet they will love each other again, and he will never come back to me at all."

"If you had given him his answer to-night, he would never have gone near her."

"And do you think I could wish that?" cried Rose indignantly. "Do you think I could marry him if I thought it possible she could take him from me? I have given him time to see her, and know that he is free to try his chance with her again, and if he comes to me after that I can believe in him."

Mrs. Tiverton could not deny that Rose was wise, but for the moment she bitterly regretted her wisdom. No doubt, if Frank's love was too weak to withstand Agnes's presence he would be no husband for Rose, but if Mrs. Tiverton could have had her way, he should never have been exposed to temptation.

Rose could not bear to have a quarrel with any one, and went to see Agnes a day or two after her arrival. Mr. Baring had rallied for the time, and seemed in no immediate danger; but he showed such pleasure in Agnes's presence that even at the risk of vexing George she was glad to have come. The news of her engagement was too important to be kept a secret, and she told Rose of it immediately, and received such warm kisses and good wishes that she was astonished and touched, not knowing how nearly it concerned Rose's own happiness, or the weight it lifted from her heart.

Frank kept to his purpose, and did not see Rose again until the appointed time; and when at last he got the answer he wanted, and heard the reason of her delay, he scarcely knew whether he most admired her generosity or resented her doubts.

END OF CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

FISH AS AN ARTICLE OF EVERY-DAY FOOD.

BY A. G. PAYNE, AUTHOR OF "COMMON-SENSE COOKERY."



WE cannot afford to have fish every day," would probably be the remark of many, were the subject of fish as an article of daily food mentioned. This remark, too, would also be most likely made by those who, whether they can afford it or not, have invariably had meat twice a day at least, ever since they left the nursery. Perhaps, too, the objections may be made, "But fish is so unsatisfying:" "It gives such a lot of trouble;" or, "But it is not only the fish, there is the sauce." That fish is not so satisfying as "butchers' meat" will of course be universally admitted, but then the fishmonger's bill might so easily be made to assist the butcher's bill, and at the same time be the means of making our daily dinner, not merely cheaper, but better.

I will illustrate what I mean by the following example. Suppose the family to consist of father and mother and three children, all healthy. Say the dinner ordered has been the by no means unusual one of a roast leg of mutton, potatoes, summer cabbage, and a baked rice pudding. I can imagine the good lady observing, "I am sure it is a nice wholesome dinner, and there is not the slightest occasion to have any fish; besides, we shall most likely have some fish to-morrow with the cold meat." I am willing to admit that the person who could not dine, and dine well, off the dinner in question, does not deserve to dine at all. I suggest the fish, say some fresh herrings, to save expense. I also maintain that probably the dinner would be more wholesome as well as cheaper.

I think one great reason why we don't have fish

more often is that, although there are hundreds of different ways of cooking fish, yet as a rule our home bill of fare seems very limited. There is the fried sole or whiting; the boiled cod or turbot; the occasional piece of salmon, eels or smelts—these latter being nearly always dear. There is, of course, the herring; but why that delicious little fish called the sprat, price a penny per pound, is so despised I don't know, unless it is the vulgar reason that it is so cheap.

If sprats cost a shilling each, we should have the following receipt:—"This exquisite but expensive fish, so highly prized by epicures on account of its exquisite aroma, is best cooked," &c. But it is better rather to eat our fish than to talk about it, and as we must first cook it, we will commence with sprats, perhaps the cheapest of all fish. These require, first of all, a clear fire, as they are far best when grilled. The best sort of gridirons for them are those cheap wire ones that shut up. Flour the fish, and as soon as they are floured put them in the gridiron, which can be bent so as to avoid pinching the fish, grill them first on one side and then on the other, by turning the gridiron over—a very few minutes are sufficient—and send them up quickly on a hot dish, and with hot plates. Sprats are best sent up in relays, a second plate to follow the first. Recollect not to wait after they are floured, as they then get clammy. Some persons cook sprats in a frying-pan. It is best, if possible, to keep fish-gridirons as well as fish-frying-pans, for the purpose of cooking fish only. A gridiron that has cooked sprats, herrings, haddocks, &c., is apt to retain the flavour after the most thorough cleaning.

Those who cannot afford to have fish often should invest a penny in a quart of mussels, and cook them as follows:—Put a small onion sliced, a little salt and pepper, and a slice of lemon in a saucepan with some water—about a pint—and let it boil. Then add the mussels, which had better be first washed in water with a hard brush, and then allowed to remain in some salt and water for an hour or two. In cleaning, pull away as much as possible the little pieces of sea-weed that will be seen sticking out of the sides. As soon as the mussels begin to open they are done. About five minutes, as a rule, will be found sufficient. Send them up to table in a soup-tureen, with the liquor poured over them. Thin bread and butter should be served with them. They are best eaten out of soup-plates. A little vinegar may be added, as well as pepper, like oysters.

Although these "fishes" are so absurdly cheap, there is no use in wasting the liquor in which they have been cooked, which has been vastly increased in flavour by the liquor in the mussels themselves. This should be strained carefully—it is often gritty—and thickened with a little flour and butter; it makes capital fish sauce. It can be boiled down first, and a little boiled milk added. You must do what you can to persuade your cook to boil it away; it is an idea that they, as a rule, fail to grasp. The liquor that has boiled a quart of mussels should, after being strained, be boiled down to less than half a tumbler. Half a salt-spoonful of anchovy sauce can also be added.

When you intend using the liquor, care must be taken not to put in too much salt or too much lemon at first, the latter having the effect of making the sauce bitter. Should any mussels be left, they can be warmed up in the sauce, or rather the boiling sauce poured over them, as boiling makes them hard. When the mussels are first cooked in their shells, care should be taken to serve them up (of course shells and all) directly they begin to open, as otherwise they will be tough. Mussels cooked this way make an excellent commencement to a dinner, like oysters. They are obviously cheaper than natives. In making mussel sauce, of course they are taken out of their shells. Do not despise this dish because, like sprats, mussels are cheap.

A small shellfish, somewhat similar to the mussel, is the cockle. The cockle is really a very small clam, and, in the opinion of many first-class judges of cooking, is superior in flavour to the oyster.

I am indebted to the late proprietor of a New York restaurant, that has a world-wide reputation, for the receipt for making ordinary common clam chowder, and as cockles answer the purpose equally well, I will adapt the receipt, and explain how to make this delicious American soup.

First take a gallon of cockles, wash them thoroughly, as they are generally very sandy, and place them to soak for two or three hours in mild salt and water. By this means they cleanse themselves and become less gritty. Then drain them off, and let them remain out of water for another hour or two.

Next get a piece of fat pork, and cut it in slices, and line the bottom of a saucepan that will hold at least two quarts. Half a pound of pork will be enough. Take the cockles and put them in another saucepan, in a little water, put in a pint or quart at a time, and boil them just long enough to make them open. They will open directly the water boils. Take them out, saving the liquor, and put them by. Use the same liquor for all the cockles. Next rinse the cockles, now taken out of their shells, in a little warm water, and add this water to the liquor, which should be carefully strained through muslin. These precautions are necessary in order to entirely get rid of the grit. Then pour all the liquor into the pork-lined saucepan, add a pound of potatoes peeled and sliced. Next take a couple of onions, slice them, and add to the saucepan. Take a pound of fresh tomatoes, cut off the part by the stalk and squeeze out the pips and slice them up, add a tea-spoonful of mixed savoury herbs, and let the whole simmer till the potatoes and onion are perfectly tender. Add a little pepper and salt to taste, and add last of all the cockles, but do not let it boil after the cockles have been added, as it will make them hard. The whole is then stirred up with a stick, and served in an ordinary soup-tureen. In America, clam chowder is often made in large quantities in a sort of gipsy kettle over camp-fires. The amount of added water to this quantity should be sufficient to make about two quarts. This soup is a little troublesome, but very cheap, and very nice. Suppose you cannot get the cockles for less than threepence a

quart, a gallon would cost one shilling ; potatoes, say one penny ; the tomatoes, sixpence ; onions, one penny. At any rate, two shillings would cover the whole cost, which is more than enough for eight persons.

As I am trying to explain how to vary our dinners without increase of expenditure, I will, in the few more receipts I give, confine myself to those that are not otherwise than economical. A very nice and easy way of cooking fish is baking it in a tin in the oven. Take for example a haddock ; but the same *method* will apply to hake, cod, soles, plaice, &c. Take a fresh haddock. Take out the bone and stew it in a little stock or gravy of any kind that you may happen to have by you. Boning the haddock is not absolutely necessary, but it is far better to do so. Dry the haddock and flour it. You can then egg and bread-crumbs it or not as you think best. It is an improvement, but of course adds to the expense. Place the fish in a dish with a little butter, and turn it over in the butter, or baste it with the butter, if you have egged and bread-crumbed it. Boil the stock, with the fish-bone in it, down to less than half a tumbler, adding about a tea-spoonful of chopped onion, and a tea-spoonful of chopped parsley, and a small pinch of mixed savoury herbs. Pour this over the fish in the tin, and occasionally baste the fish. If you have not used egg and bread-crumbs, shake a few dry bread-crumbs over the fish, and let them brown, and also a little grated cheese, very dry. When the fish is done, send it up in the tin, if possible by placing the tin in a dish the same shape as itself, only rather larger.

Plaice is a cheap fish, but take care it is not flabby and watery, as then nothing can be done with it. The best way to cook plaice is to fry it in batter. Take

the fillets of the plaice, dry them thoroughly, flour them and dip them quickly into some batter, and then into some hot fat deep enough to cover them. Pray remember that this same fat will do over and over again. This fat must be smoking hot almost, and the batter thick.

The way to make the batter is very simple. Get a little milk, and add enough flour to make it thicker than double cream. Work it in a basin with the back of a wooden spoon till it is quite smooth ; add also a little pinch of salt. If you make your batter sufficiently thick with the flour, have your fat sufficiently hot, and deep enough, you cannot fail. Without these essentials success is impossible. Send the fish to table quickly, as it gets sodden by being kept hot. As soon as the batter turns a nice light golden brown colour the fish is done. A little dried parsley can be fried in the same fat, and sent up round the fish as a garnish, as well as to be eaten with it.

A very nice method of cooking fish is what is known as *à la Maître d'Hôtel*. *Maître d'Hôtel* sauce is made as follows :—Take a little good melted butter, and add to it some chopped blanched (*i.e.*, parboiled) parsley and some lemon-juice, with, of course, a little pepper and salt. The highest-class *Maître d'Hôtel* sauce is made by melting some butter in some good béchamel sauce, then adding the parsley and lemon-juice ; consequently, whenever you have a little white stock left you can use it up this way. Add it to a little boiled milk, and then make the béchamel. The best method of cooking the fish before adding the sauce is, I think, to do it on a gridiron, only the gridiron must be very clean and the fire very clear.

A GLANCE THROUGH AN ELASTIC MILL.



MOST people well know that elastic is a soft substance with a great deal of spring in it, often used for braces, belts, and the sides of boots. Every one also knows that if

for the latter purpose an inferior quality of this article is used, it means, after a very few weeks' wear, an unpleasant payment of two or three shillings to the bootmaker for new side-springs.

But, excepting this, and that elastic is made of silk or other material and india-rubber, I do not think many people know anything further about it, unless, like myself, they have gone over an elastic mill, and watched the interesting process of its manufacture.

The invention of elastic is ascribed to an officer in the Austrian army. He first manufactured it at Vienna, but shortly afterwards removed to the gay capital of France, where he erected a large factory in the Quartier St. Denis. The secret of its manufacture travelled to England, and it was soon made here as cheaply as in Paris. We now produce it in such large quantities, that we supply largely to the

Continent and also to the greater part of the civilised world. There are only three towns in England where it is made—viz., Leicester, Derby, and Coventry. (I must apologise to the latter, the "City of the Three Spires," for dubbing it a town.) In the former by far the largest quantity is made.

There are many different kinds of elastic, and it is used for a great variety of purposes. In Leicester are made chiefly "boot webs," as that class of elastic is called by the trade. It is estimated that two-thirds of the middle class, and almost all the "upper ten," more especially of the masculine gender, are indebted to elastic for the ease and rapidity with which they can pull off and on their foot-gear. Elastic of another kind is largely used for braces and belts—where would the cricketer be without the freedom of the latter? In the manufacture of the ladies' costumes and of millinery a small piece of another kind of this material is used. It guards a lady's hat from the dangerous assaults of a March wind, and holds her dress securely. For a purpose widely different, yet