

whole power is vested in one man, the judge. And now comes the question, Would this judge be always more impartial than the jury? Is it impossible that he also might have some reasons—public or private—which would influence him, perhaps imperceptibly to himself, in his judgment of a prisoner? Look at some of the judgments of our county magistrates! A poor boy may—either in a fit of thoughtlessness or because he is really hungry—pull up a turnip from some rich farmer's field, and, being "caught in the act," may be marched off to the nearest justice-room, where he is convicted of theft, and sentenced to some days' imprisonment. He goes to prison, and when the

period of his confinement is over he comes out an altered boy. For, sensible that his character is gone, and smarting under the injustice of the sentence which deprived him of it, he commits crime after crime, until at last he becomes a notorious "gaol-bird." Would this have happened had twelve jurors tried his "petty case"? I think not. This may sound to some ridiculous, but I believe there have been quite as absurd facts recorded in our daily papers, where the judgment given was quite out of proportion to the offence committed; therefore I say, let us hold fast to every Englishman's lawful right, "trial by jury."

SOME RATHER ODD DISHES.



HERE is nothing about which we more unjustly abuse our ancestors than their habits at the table. "Probably," says one writer on the subject, "the bullock, or the eternal 'swine' they seemed to live on, was seldom cooked through, and each guest flung

himself upon his favourite food, tore it in his hands, and crammed it into his mouth, and what he could not swallow he would cast upon the table-cloth, which, as no plates were used, must have been drenched with grease."

What a foul libel is this on an age which had tastes almost as exquisite as those of Brillat Savarin, and cooks nearly as dexterous as Soyer! Why, strange as the assertion may seem, our ancestors of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were scarcely less "nice" in their eating than are the epicures of to-day. So far from limiting themselves to roasted bullocks, and the "eternal swine," they had a choice of at least 300 curiously devised dishes; and, as for insufficient roasting, those who care to do so may read in the "Liber Niger Domus" of Edward IV. how even Hardicanute, who, the historian observes, "doyed drinking at Lambithe," engaged "cunyng cookes in curiositie," that "the honest peopull resorting to his courte" might be decently and abundantly fed.

Our ancestors had, indeed, their books of cookery, two of which have descended to us; and it is particularly noticeable that, whilst they contain some hundreds of recipes, there is nowhere any mention of the roast bullock, and scarcely a single reference to the "eternal swine."

The most authentically dated of all ancient books of cookery is "that choice morsel of antiquity" the "Forme of Cury," compiled by the "Maistre Cookes" of Richard II. It seems, however, to have been preceded by another cookery book, a manuscript of which is also extant, and which, although its precise period is in doubt, is supposed to date as far back as 1285.

Either of these ancient documents furnishes a complete refutation of the libel that our ancestors ate half-raw food with their fingers. On the contrary, they were somewhat dainty, preferring soups before

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joins, and having many varieties of sauce and garniture. This, for instance, is how they dealt with cabbages:—"Take cabaches and cut hom on foure, and mince onyons therwith, and the white of lekes, and cut hom smale, and do all togedur in a pot, and put therto gode broth, and let hit boyle; and colour it with saffron, and put therto poudre douce, and serve hit forthe." Saffron was the most popular of all articles for colouring and garnishing. It is mentioned in almost every ancient recipe, and was used indiscriminately with green peas or "Boor in Brasey." "Raisnynges of Corance" were also used very frequently, and in very singular combinations, as, for instance, with the aforesaid boar, with "conynges," and with "drye stewe for beeff."

Whether the "drye stewe" would please present-day palates is perhaps doubtful. The "cunyng cooke" was directed to make the following singular mixture:—"Take a great glass and do thi beef therin, and do therto onyons mynced, and whole clowes, and maces, and raisnynges of Corance, and wyn; then stop it welle, and sethe it in a pot with watur or in a cawdrone, but take gode care that no water goe in; or take a fair urthen pot, and lay hit well with spentes at the bothum, that the flesh neigh hit not; then take ribbes of beef, and couche hom above the splentes, and do thereto onyons mynced, and clowes, and maces, and poudre of pepur, and wyn, and stop it well that no eyre goo oute, and sethe it wyth esy fyre."

Among our ancestors, as these ancient manuscripts show, roasting and boiling were processes frequently used as auxiliaries to each other. Here, for example, are directions to cook "felettes in Galentyne":—"Take felettes of porke, and roste hom till thai byn nere ynogh, then take hom of the spitte and do hom in a pot, and chop hom, if thowe wyl, on gobettes, and do thereto gode broth of beef, and draw up a lyoure of brede steped in broth and vynes, and do thereto powder of clowes and maces, and put thereto galentyne, and let hit sethe, and colour hit with saunders, and serve hit forthe."

Again, we have this recipe for making "Goos in Hocephot":—"Take a goos not fully roasted, and chop her on gobettes and put hit in a pot, and do thereto broth of fresh flesh, and take onyons and mynce hom, and do therto; take brede and stepe hit in brothe, and

drawe hit up with a littel wyn, and do hit in the pot, and do therto poudere of pepur and of clowes, and of maces, and of raisynges of Corance, and colour hit with saffron and saunders, and let thi pottage be hangyng, and serve hit forthe."

The direction to "take a goos" is rather more clear and definite than most of the instructions of the ancient cooks. As a rule, they leave quantity to individual discretion, as in this recipe:—"Take pygges and scalde hom, and wash hom clene, and smite hom on gobbettes, and sethe hom in watur and salt, and when thai arne ynough, take hom up, and let hom kele, and then take sauge and parsel and grinde hit, and do thereto brede staped in vynegur, and grynde it smal, and take the yolkes of harde egges and do thereto; and grynde hit all togedur, and tempur hit up with vynegur sum dele thick; then put thy pygges in a faire vessel, and poure the sawce above, and serve it forthe colde."

It is safe to take it for granted, probably, that the "pygges" which were thus to be dealt with were merely in their infancy, in which case the ancient methods of cookery would scarcely have met with the approval of Charles Lamb. That delightful epicure might have been better pleased to read in what manner "pecokkes shall be dight at a feeste Roiall." For these important occasions the cook was instructed thus:—"Take and flee off the skynne with the fedurs taylor and the nekke, and the hed theron; then take the skynne with all the fedurs, and lay it on a table abroad; and strawe theron grounden comyn; then take the pecokke, and roste hym, and endore hym with raw yolkes of egges, and when he is rosted take hym off, and let hym coole awhile, and take and sowe hym in hys skyn, and gilde hys combe, and so serve hym forthe with the last cours." On less splendid occasions it was directed that "pecokkes and parteriches schalle be parboyled, and larded, and rosted and eten with poudere of gynger." Similarly "craunes and herns shall be armed with larde, and rosted and eten with poudere of gynger."

We should scarcely like to eat cranes and herons nowadays; and even the following miscellaneous way of dealing with smaller birds would hardly meet with popular approval:—"Take chekyns, and pejons, and small briddes, and make hom clene, and chop hom on peces, and stew hom all togedur in a gode broth wel made with faire grese, and poudere of pepur and of clowes, and do therto verjouce, and colour hit with saffron; then make coffyns, and pynche hom, and couche thi flesh therein, and put therto raisynges of Corance, and poudere of gynger, and of canell; and take raw egges, and breke hom, and streyne hom thurgh a streynour into the serve of the stewe, and sterve hit wel togedur, and poure hit in the coffyns above the fleshe, and then lay the covers theron, and serve hit forthe."

The mention of "coffyns," let it be observed, need not strike terror into the most timid—a "coffyn" in

ancient cookery being merely the empty crust of a raised pie.

What is most striking in these ancient directions about cookery is the prevalence of the advice to "breke," and to "hewe," and to "streyne." Nothing seems to have been served whole. If, as it is sometimes said, the highest art of cookery is to disguise the fact that we are eating creatures that have lived and enjoyed life, our ancestors were certainly vastly superior to ourselves.

Any one who sat down to a dish compounded as follows would have considerable room for speculation as to its nature:—"Take conynges and parboil hom, and choppe hom on gobettes, and rybbes of pork or of kydde, and do hit in a pot, and sethe hit; then take almonds and grynde hom, and tempur hit up with broth of beef, and do hit in a pot, and take clowes, maces, pynes, gynger mynced, and raisynges of Corance; and take onyons and boyle hom; then cut hom and do hom in the pot; and colour hit with saffron, and let hit boyle; and take the flesh oute from the broth and cast therto; and take alkenet and frye hit, and do hit in a pot thurgh a streynour; and in the settyng down put therto a lytel vynegur and poudere of ginger medelet togedur, and serve hit forthe."

It must, indeed, have been as difficult to guess the nature of a dish like this as to partake of it with the fingers.

Such dishes as are dealt with in these ancient books of cookery were, of course, only within reach of the comfortable classes, who, it seems, were as fond of "set courses" as are the corresponding classes of our own day. Thus, the "service on fisshe day" was as follows:—"At the first cours, oysters in grave, and baken herringe, and pyke, and stok fisshe, and merlynges fried. At the seconde cours, eles in grave, and purpays, and galentyne, and therewith congrur, and salmon, freshe and dore rosted, or gurnard sothen, and baken eles and tart. At the thrid cours, rose to potage, and crem of almondes; and therewith sturgeon, and whelkes, and gret eles, and lamprons rosted, and tenches in gele; and therewith daryolus, and lechfryes, made of frit and friture."

The service on flesh days was even more elaborate. The first course consisted of "boar's-hed enarmed, and bruce to potage; and therewith beeff, and moton, and pestels of pork; and therewith swan and conynges rosted, and tarte. At the second cours drope, and rose to potage, and therewith maudelard and faisant, and chekons sarsed and rosted, and malachis baken. At the thridde cours, conynges in grave and bore in brase to potage; and therewith teles rosted, and parteriches, and woodcock, and raffolys baken, and flampoyntes."

How, with such elaborate methods of cookery, and such habits of precision as to the setting of the table, our ancestors have obtained such an evil gastronomic reputation, must remain one of the puzzles of history.