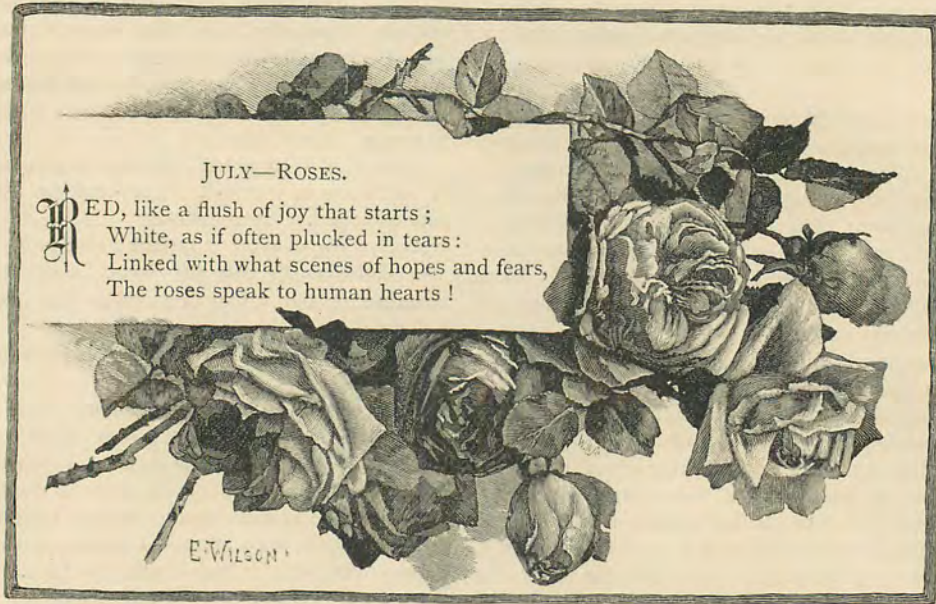


FLOWERS OF THE MONTHS.



HASTY DISHES.



WHAT a host of housekeepers there are who may fairly be entitled good managers as long as the wheels of life run smoothly, but should any emergency arise, such as the arrival of unexpected guests, they will often meet it in as flurried and unprepared a manner as a week-old wife would do. We will, in the present paper, run through a brief list of dishes that may be made, cooked, and presented at table in half an hour's time, in many cases, assuming that the cupboard is not entirely bare, and that the groceries are of as varied a nature as is customary in present middle-class households: and what a comprehensive order *can* be given to one's grocer now, compared with one of a dozen years ago! And not only groceries, but vegetables must not be allowed to run out, or hasty dishes—many of the nicest—will be impracticable.

It will be found advisable, not only for such dishes as are here recommended, but for every-day cookery, to keep at hand a bottle of raspings, another of ordinary bread-crumbs, a small quantity of grated cheese—Parmesan is best, but ordinary good cheese *will* do for some dishes—and a nice variety of powdered herbs and spices. Where the supply of "stock" runs short, a

few ounces of "glaze" will also be found invaluable, especially in the case of soups; for when a bowl is wanted in a hurry, a morsel of glaze dissolved in boiling water will form the base, which may be converted into many kinds of the well-known brown soups very readily. A spice-bag, filled with the following ingredients, will be found a great time-saver; it should be boiled in the soup until sufficient flavour has been extracted:—a tea-spoonful of peppercorns, a dozen cloves, a dozen allspice (pimento) berries, a blade of mace, a couple of bay-leaves, half a tea-spoonful of celery-seed, and a bunch of sweet herbs—thyme, basil, marjoram, &c.; these ingredients must be renewed as their strength decreases. A cheap colouring, equally useful for gravies or soups, can be made by boiling two ounces of the darkest chicory in a pint of cold water for a quarter of an hour, when it should be carefully strained, and bottled for use when quite cold.

We may take this opportunity of calling attention to "Rizine," as it has the merit of being prepared in less time than many farinaceous foods, and answers admirably for thickening soups and other savouries, as well as for making custards, blanchmanges, and porridge. Macaroni, vermicelli, and other kinds of Italian paste, are all nice for soups, but should be parboiled before adding, or the soup will look muddy.

Crushed tapioca, a French preparation, is another excellent medium for thickening purposes, especially

for white soups; the liquid to which it is added must, however, be stirred continually, or it will turn lumpy. About fifteen minutes will cook it, and as soon as it looks transparent it is ready. This is largely used on the Continent in celery, onion, potato, and many other white purées, to which it imparts body and a velvety softness. Mention must be made of the numerous soups known as "desiccated," "prepared," and "dried." Many of them are excellent, and deserve all that is said in their favour, while their cost is merely nominal. In some instances a dash of extra seasoning would be considered an improvement; however, as a *base*, they are a great boon in the hands of a practical house-keeper.

Macaroni, usually associated with cheese in this country, can be most successfully utilised in a variety of ways. *Macaroni mince* is tasty-looking and delicious; any cold meat, poultry, or game can be used. It should be cut small and moistened with gravy, an equal weight of macaroni being separately boiled and cut up into quarter-inch lengths; the whole is then made hot in a stewpan, and piled high in a hot dish, with croûtons of fried bread as a garnish. If the meat used be white, viz., rabbit, veal, or chicken, a spoonful of cream is a good addition.

Cold fish, with any sauce, such as parsley, may be converted into a similar dish; then the base of the pile may be garnished with slices of pickled beetroot, gherkins, or walnuts.

Macaroni with tomatoes is thus prepared:—Turn half a pound of tomatoes into a saucepan, with a spoonful of stock or a bit of butter; let them cook until tender enough to pass through a coarse sieve or colander, then re-heat, season nicely, adding a few drops of lemon-juice or vinegar, and pour over a flat dish covered with nicely-boiled macaroni, *not* the pipe: that answers when it is to be cut into short lengths. Cover the surface with grated cheese and bread-crumbs, put a few bits of butter over, and brown it before the fire or in a sharp oven.

Preserved tomatoes answer for this as well as fresh ones, or tomato conserve will do. It may be well to point out that "conserve" is simply tomato pulp, while "sauce" is flavoured and seasoned. The latter keeps some time, but a bottle of conserve must be used in a few days, at most, after it is opened. No one, now, can object to preserved tomatoes, fruits, &c., on account of the taste of the tin, as they may be readily obtained in glass; and some firms now put up meat extracts and other goods in tins lined with earthenware; indeed, the packing of preserved provisions is now-a-days quite a special feature, and the demand for them increases daily. All that *are* in actual contact with the tin, such as salmon, lobster, and sardines, should be at once transferred to an earthen vessel, never left in the tin, then no harm is likely to result if they have been bought from a good firm, as it is the action of air upon the food while in an opened tin that works the mischief.

Besides the above-named, shrimps and prawns are very useful for hasty dishes; they are excellent curried, and those who are not *au fait* at making curries will

be wise to use curry sauce, sold by all good grocers, with which a delicious curry may be quickly made.

Savoury toasts are invariably appreciated. Many can be obtained if a small jar of potted meat or fish is in the house. They are improved by moistening with gravy or butter, while, for the white kinds, cream or a spoonful of white sauce answers as well, or better; the toast should be free from crust, and buttered, then spread thickly with the preparation, cut into fingers, and made hot in the oven.

Sardine toast is excellent, made from boneless sardines, well seasoned, and flavoured with lemon-juice. The fish should be made hot before laying them on the toast; each piece to be large enough to hold one sardine.

Bombay toast will only suit those who like piquant flavours. To make it, put a table-spoonful of Indian chutnee, and the same of piccalilli, and good gravy, into a stewpan with any cooked meat or fish, cut small, sufficient in quantity to make the mixture of a suitable consistence; as soon as it is hot through it may be poured on to the toast, and that cut into squares. With cheese toast most people are familiar, but those who may have hitherto regarded a few ounces of cold meat as not worth re-serving will do well to make a few experiments in the way of toasts, for after one or two trials many varieties will suggest themselves, and they are now quite a feature of nice dinners.

The mere mention of batter suggests a long list of dainties that can be hastily prepared. *Golden fingers* are thick strips of cold beef, dipped into batter and fried brown; these, lightly piled on a hot dish and garnished with parsley, look very appetising. They can also be made from cold veal, each strip being rolled in a thin slice of boiled ham before coating with the batter. In this case, slices of lemon form a suitable garnish. The meat should not be over-cooked; hence this is a good way of using up the most under-done portions of a joint.

Cavalier's broil is very good. A cold shoulder or half-shoulder of mutton is the thing for the purpose; it should be neatly trimmed, or it will look uninviting, then scored right to the bone, and a mixture of butter and ketchup, or any good store sauce, with salt and pepper rubbed into the cut parts: the meat should be well coated all over with liquefied butter, then cooked on a gridiron over a clear fire until hot through. Any gravy left from the joint should be re-heated, and flavoured with vinegar from any nice pickles, some of the latter being cut up and used for garnishing the dish.

Bachelor's broil is similarly made, but curry powder is rubbed into the scored portions, and curry paste used for thickening the gravy, and the joint sent to table with a border of boiled rice.

Some of the tinned salmon, notably that put up in tins of 2 lbs., is in large pieces, and makes a very nice-looking dish. *Salmon au gratin*, prepared as under, will be found equal to that from the fresh fish. First drain it from the oil, and lay it on a trivet set in a baking-tin, then spread a sheet of white paper

with some of the oil and lay it over the fish, which must first be seasoned with cayenne pepper and a few drops of essence of anchovies or shrimps. Cook in a good oven until hot, then remove the paper, sprinkle the fish with raspings, and in five minutes it will be hot enough to serve. Pour round it a little sauce, with chopped pickles added, or a border of pickles made hot in a spoonful of sauce.

Flaked haddock (dried) is a nice change from the usual ways of serving this popular fish. Choose a fleshy one, and pour boiling water over it, in which it should soak for ten minutes, covered to keep in the steam, then take out the bone, and flake the fish, free from skin. Put a pound, or thereabouts, in a saucepan with half a pint of milk and a seasoning of cayenne, bring it to the boiling point slowly, and let it simmer for ten minutes, then thicken with a little flour and butter, again boil up, and serve on a flat dish: hard-boiled eggs make a suitable garnish. The remains of

any kind of previously cooked fish may be served in the same way, but will require the addition of salt, and any sauce may take the place of part of the milk.

Eggs lend themselves very readily to great variety of treatment, so does cheese, and both are of great value for hasty dishes. The under-mentioned dish of the two combined will be new to most people, and well deserves a trial:—Slice thinly six ounces of rich cheese, Cheshire or Derbyshire, into a saucepan, add a little salt, pepper, and mustard, and a quarter-pint each of milk and cream; stir until the cheese is melted, and the whole looks rich and custard-like, then pour on to a hot flat dish, and cover with poached eggs, five or six, and sprinkle them with grated Parmesan cheese and bread-crumbs; transfer them to the oven until the surface is hot, then serve without delay. Cheese dishes of all kinds, to be worth eating, *must* be hot.

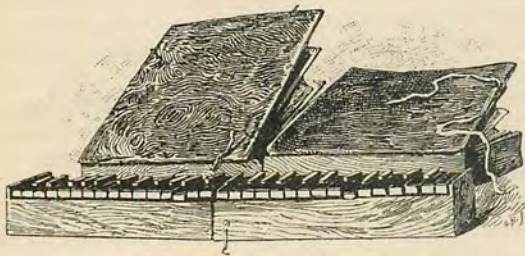
ANCIENT MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.*

BY WILLIAM HUGGINS, D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S.



THOUGH the last thirty years may be regarded as pre-eminently the Age of Science, scarcely less widespread and deep has been the increasing attention given during this time to music and to art. It is not surprising, therefore, that a subject like that of the present paper, which appeals almost equally to the students of music and of art, should be a very popular one. The crowds which gathered round the precious cases at the Music Loan Collection of 1885 witnessed to

the widespread interest in the forerunners of our present musical instruments, alike from the side of historical development and from that of decorative art.



BIBLE REGAL.

The period during which the chief transformations in the direction of progress in musical instruments took place was one in which the workman, whether in wood or in metal, was also an artist. It was the period during which the masterpieces of painting which adorn our galleries were produced. In most cases these mediæval transitional forms of our modern instruments were also, in a very true sense, works of art. It so happens that these early instruments, from the very circumstance of their imperfections as musical instruments, lent themselves more readily to the moulding of the artist's hand, and to a rich and highly-coloured decoration. For example, the early ancestors of the pianoforte, in consequence of their very limited keyboard, and the small stress of their thin and short strings, were objects so graceful and pleasing to the eye, that the contemporary painter loved to introduce them as accessories into his pictures. An example even more marked is furnished by the small mediæval organs which, from the St. Cecilia panel of Van Eyck's "Adoration of the Lamb," painted in 1426, down to a well-known picture by Rossetti, have added much to the charm of many paintings. The higher musical perfection of the present organ, and of the grand pianoforte, has almost removed these instruments from the domain of the artist to that of the engineer. The unwieldy form of the "concert grand," from its great width of keyboard and its iron carcass—

"Prone on the floor, extended long and large,
And stretching many a rood,"

* "Musical Instruments: Historic, Rare, and Unique," by A. J. Hipkins. Illustrated by Fifty Plates in Colours, drawn by William Gibb. (A. and C. Black.) "The History of Music," by Emil Naumann, edited by Sir F. A. Gore Ouseley, Bart., Mus.D. (Cassell and Co.)