

darts by, and it is pleasant to think that the Act establishing a close season for wild birds has benefited this bird. Many more have been seen of late years in their favourite haunts. The heron and the dipper are the birds of the river side *par excellence*, the former always eating trout and eels and any hapless small fry that approach its dreamy watchfulness; the latter singing amid the broken water from some boulder, and slandered by keepers as a destroyer of trout-spawn. Why it should perpetually wag its tail is a mystery—which it shares, however, with the wag-tail family. The most familiar of these about the water-side is undoubtedly the grey wagtail. It is far

more yellow than grey, and is a good example of a partial migrant, being found on one stream one month, and the next migrating to a far distant one—probably on higher ground.

Enough has been said to show that a river with wooded and shrubby banks forms a delightful hunting-ground to a lover of birds. How many additions to his pleasant "History of Selborne" would not White have written had a river flowed near that village! And perhaps at no time is there so much to observe by a fair-flowing river, and nowhere such a feast of beauty to be obtained, as in golden autumn.

M. G. WATKINS, M.A.

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### CHEAP DELICACIES.

BY A. G. PAYNE, AUTHOR OF "CHOICE DISHES," ETC.



IT is a question well worth asking, Is it more economical to dine off two dishes than off one? We often hear people say, "Oh, we live very plainly;" and these good people are under the impression that the more plainly they live the more economically they live. Of course, everything depends upon what we

explain our meaning of "assisting" and "rivalling" by giving an example. Suppose there is a small piece of roast beef left over from the previous day. The dinner consists of a dish of minced beef with sippets at one end of the table, and a piece of boiled neck of mutton and turnips at the other. Very often, by a sort of mutual consent, the family all have a help of mince first, in order to "finish it up," although everyone present would have preferred to dine entirely off the fresh joint of mutton and turnips, which they see getting cold while they eat the mince. The result is that the greater part of the boiled neck of mutton is not eaten hot, but is sent downstairs to get cold, and has to be served up the second day, probably as haricot of a very inferior kind. Is this true economy? We have no hesitation in answering—No! True economy does not consist in having a superfluity of cold meat; but on the contrary it will be found that the less cold meat we have left upon our hands the less will be our butcher's bill.

mean by "plain living." Suppose we have a roast leg of mutton for dinner, with a dish of boiled potatoes, followed by a suet pudding. This is plain living. But suppose the family consists of husband and wife and eight healthy children, then the income of the master of the house must be fairly good to put up with this "plain living" daily.

When two dishes are served, true economy consists in making one dish a sort of damper to the appetite for the second dish, which second dish we will suppose to be a small joint of butcher's meat, which may be sent to the table smaller in size in consequence of the other dish than if it were sent to the table by itself.

In the present day, by universal consent, medical men seem to be of the opinion that the large quantities of meat consumed by children as well as adults, that was customary some thirty years ago, is not necessary for health and strength, but on the contrary has an injurious tendency.

It is obvious that if this second dish consists of meat which originally cost as much per pound as the joint, there is no saving whatever; but if, on the other hand, we have our second dish, composed of some cheap material which partially satisfies the appetite and enables us to do with less meat off the joint, then we effect a saving, not merely in money, but, if medical men are right, we benefit in health as well.

There are many households who dine daily off one dish of meat. There are also many households where it is the custom to have two dishes placed on the table—what is called top and bottom.

We will endeavour to give a few dishes that shall be cheap, wholesome, and appetising.

We will not now enter into the subject of the advisability of commencing dinner with some kind of cheap soup or fish, but will endeavour to give a few practical hints in reference to what we may call the second dish, which in households where economy is practised should assist, but not rival, the first. We shall perhaps better

A very nice and too much neglected form of food in this country is macaroni. Macaroni is now sold by large retail grocers at threepence-halfpenny per pound. It is extremely nourishing, and when cooked increases very



much ooth in bulk and weight. Parmesan cheese is sold in bottles, and probably of all cheeses is the most economical, as a very little goes a long way. A small bottle can be bought for ninepence. When tomatoes are in season, no fruit or vegetable—we scarcely know which to call it—is more wholesome. American tomatoes are sold in tins, whole, for fivepence-halfpenny. Suppose we now take a pound of macaroni, and boil it in water which has been slightly salted till it is tender. In the meantime we have opened a tin of whole tomatoes and made them hot in the oven, or you can make them hot in the tin before you open it, in which case you can put the tin in the saucepan where the macaroni is boiling. Next drain off the macaroni and place it on a dish; sprinkle two table-spoonfuls of grated Parmesan cheese over it. Then place the tomatoes, just as they are, being careful not to break them, on the macaroni. If you wish to make the dish look very pretty, you can sprinkle a little chopped parsley over the macaroni as well.

We now have a pure white surface, ornamented with little green specks and the bright red tomato. The mixture of flavours of tomato, macaroni, and Parmesan cheese is exceedingly good. This dish will be amply sufficient for six or eight persons. The cost would be—macaroni, threepence-halfpenny; tomatoes, fivepence-halfpenny; and Parmesan, say, a penny. Total, tenpence.

How far nicer and how far more economical would a dinner be if we commenced with a dish of this description, and finished with some minced beef and plenty of potatoes, than if we had commenced with the minced beef and finished with the boiled mutton!

Parmesan cheese also assists us to make a very small piece of meat go a very long way. Suppose we have half a pound of beef-steak, and we cut this steak into little pieces not much bigger in size than a halfpenny, and about a quarter of an inch thick. Pepper and salt these little pieces of meat slightly, and then dip them into grated Parmesan cheese. We then egg and bread-crumbs them—that is, we first dip them into an egg well beaten up, and then cover them with dry bread-crumbs. It is always best to make the bread-crumbs out of stale bread, and get them done the day before, if possible. We can now boil a pound of macaroni as before, and serve these little tiny cutlets, which must be fried in very hot fat for about thirty seconds, on the top. A little Parmesan cheese can be shaken over the top of the macaroni, as well as some chopped parsley. The half-pound of steak will have increased so much in size that it gives the idea of being a pound and a half. It is wonderful what a nice dish, sufficient for six or eight persons, can be made from so small a piece of meat, assisted by the macaroni, the Parmesan cheese, and the one egg. The cost of the bread-crumbs can be left out of the question. The chief difficulty that will be experienced by an ignorant cook will be the frying.

The hot fat must be sufficiently deep to cover the pieces, and sufficiently hot to turn these pieces brown in about half a minute. A small saucepan is better than a frying-pan.

Another very cheap method of sending macaroni to the table as a second dish is to use a little tomato sauce—which is now much cheaper than it was a few years ago—in conjunction with Parmesan cheese.

We have described how to cut up a small piece of steak and make it into cutlets flavoured with Parmesan. A very nice and cheap second dish can be made in a similar manner with a small piece of veal, only, instead of using Parmesan cheese to flavour these little cutlets, we must use what is known as mixed savoury herbs. In most households there is a bottle labelled mixed savoury herbs, and these herbs are chiefly used for making what cooks call veal stuffing. Suppose we take this bottle of mixed herbs and empty it into an ordinary sieve, and shake the sieve, we shall find a fine dust fall. We can now put the herbs back in the bottle. Cut up a little piece of veal—say half a pound, or a little more—as we cut up our steak. After slightly salting and peppering these pieces of raw veal, dip them in the dust that has come from these savoury herbs; then egg and bread-crumbs them as before, and fry them. These can be served with macaroni, or with fried or mashed potatoes. The amount of meat required is so small, and the dish so savoury, that it will convey a considerable quantity of cheap material such as potatoes or macaroni. The result is that a great saving is effected when the attack is made upon the *pièce de résistance*—namely, the joint.

Of course, it is very important to bear in mind the principle at stake. In the old days of the Yorkshire schools, so graphically described by Dickens—indeed, in the present day in many parts of the North of England—it was customary to serve the pudding before the meat. A heavy, greasy suet pudding with gravy came first, and the meat followed. Throughout the greater part of France the ordinary dinner consists of a piece of beef boiled. The liquor in which the beef was boiled, with the vegetables and a quantity of crusts of bread soaked in it, is served *first*; the piece of boiled beef is served afterwards. We can carry out this idea, only in a more elegant and artistic manner. What we require is something savoury, to accompany a larger quantity of plain, cheap, and wholesome food. If we study true economy, and if we wish to have really cheap dishes, we must remember that it is a great mistake, if we have healthy appetites, to start at once on butchers' meat. The meat should follow some kind of lighter food. This mode of living is better both for brain and body. Great meat-eaters are too often men who indulge in alcoholic stimulants; and in the opinion of many medical men in the present day a large consumption of meat gives rise to a craving for stimulants, while on the other hand taking stimulants gives rise to a craving for meat. To a certain extent one is the antidote of the other; but what a terrible waste to pay for a poison and an antidote when we can do without both!

Rice boiled in a little stock made from bones, and flavoured with a little Parmesan cheese and a little tomato sauce, could be used in this country, like it is in Italy, as an excellent dish with which to commence



our dinner. But here, again, we must remember that the nourishment is in the rice. All we require is a little flavouring, that enables us to render palatable this much-neglected form of food.

A very excellent second dish, which will save our butcher's bill, can be made from a small quantity of sausage-meat. Half a pound of sausages can be made into a large dish of fritters. We first make a thick batter in the ordinary way with milk and flour till it is quite thick, and one egg can be beaten up and mixed with it. The sausage-meat can be rolled into small pieces not much bigger than a marble, which can then be flattened to about the size of a halfpenny. These must be dried in flour, then dipped into this very thick batter, and then dropped into very hot fat. It is wonderful what a large dish of fritters can be made in this way, and how nice they are. Some fresh dry parsley can be thrown into the fat for a few seconds only, and served with the fritters. This is a very cheap dish, and will be found a great saving in families if served previous to the attack on the joint.

A still cheaper sort of fritters can be made from the remains of a dish of liver and bacon; or, if we have the end of a piece of boiled bacon left in the larder,

we can use it up by buying a little piece of liver on purpose. Calves' liver, of course, is the most delicate; but pig's liver, sheep's liver, or even bullock's liver will answer the same purpose. We take equal quantities of liver and fat bacon, and fry the liver in the fat bacon. If we wish to have the fritters very nice, we ought to have in the house a little bottle of what grocers sell under the name of "herbaceous mixture." These bottles cost about ninepence each, and will last for months, as a very small quantity only is required. Suppose we have half a pound of liver and half a pound of fat bacon. If we add these herbs or spice—for they are a mixture of both—we should not require more than would be sufficient to cover a sixpence; and yet the addition of this small quantity of flavouring makes a wonderful difference in the flavour of the dish. The liver and bacon must be pounded in a mortar or basin—or, better still, rubbed through a wire sieve—till it forms a pulp. It must be shaped like the sausage-meat, and allowed to get cold. It should then be floured, and dipped in the batter as before. It is well worth trying, as the dish is very cheap and very savoury, and in the end it will most undoubtedly lessen the amount of our butcher's bill.


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## HOUSEHOLD SKETCHES.

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### Our Poet

MUST songs be always sung? Ah no!  
 The silent poems are the best;  
 The lovely thoughts by lovely deeds,  
 Pure aims by purer life, expressed.

And so, he never wrote a line,  
 Our household poet, full of charm;  
 But day by day his gracious life  
 Flows past us like a holy psalm.