

Morland's eyes grew tender, and his voice was more musical than ever, as his friends asked about his holiday, and talked of the soft shadows on the heather, the gleaming of the waters, and the bubbling of the peaty streams. At eleven they ceased, and went once more up the staircase to the top floor.

"This is the workshop, you remember," said Whyte as he threw open the door of a great bare attic of which the dividing partitions had been removed, leaving plenty of space. Hickes made the gas-jets flare, and Morland looked round.

"You *are* busy!" he exclaimed.

"Yes. Amuse yourself for a little," said Whyte, as he and Hickes went into a dressing-room, and presently came back with changed garments. Whyte had on the terrible suit of checked tweed, a blue tie with pink rosebuds on it, and a straw hat with a blue and pink ribbon. Hickes wore a shabby violet velvet coat, and a pale green smoking-cap embroidered with tarnished gold.

"But why in the world do you get yourselves up like this?" said Morland.

"Helps the imagination. It is a distinct aid to our work to be ill-dressed," said Whyte.

"I couldn't do my own work in the clothes I wear for this," said Hickes in his refined voice, going up to a large canvas and taking off the cover.

Morland had been amusing himself with turning all the pictures round that were placed with their faces to the wall.

"It is wonderful!" he said. "I never see an advertisement now without thinking you did it; but I suppose you are not the only men, eh?"

"Oh, no," said Whyte; "but we are at the top of the profession, and we began the sort of thing. Look here," he continued, "this was our first," and he pointed to a girl with a bunch of roses; "that was taken by a tobacconist; how he used it I don't know; then came these," and he touched a row of girls in every sort of dress and amusing themselves in every kind of way, "they are for—"

"Oh, yes, I know," interrupted Morland. "Man alive! don't I go on the Underground Railway every day of my life?"

"And this set was a happy thought that came to Hickes one day at the Zoo," continued Whyte, pointing to some capitably drawn animals that were disporting themselves with articles of household use or ornament.

"He paints them, you know, and the advertising agent says what he wants, and we put in saucepans or lamps, or looking-glasses or coffee-pots, or soups or cocoa, or anything else. I do all the love scenes or Eastern halls, and things of beauty generally; he does the comic ones and the animals. We want a set of children. I can't do them—never could."

"Good heavens, Whyte! Why, that is what you *do* paint," said Morland, perplexed.

"When I am downstairs, yes," said Whyte; "but up here, in this dress, no."

"We want landscapes, too," said Hickes, turning round from his canvas, where enormous grasshoppers were jumping about with "Wade's honeydew" stuck on boards on their backs or held between their legs as they stood up.

"But *you* paint landscapes?" said Morland.

"Downstairs," returned Hickes, putting a finishing touch to the eyes of one wise-looking insect.

Morland laughed.

"Well," he said, "give me what you like, I will do it; and don't be so doleful about it, Hickes. I can't see why you should put on such tragedy airs over good and useful work."

"Hear him!" said Whyte. "Three months ago, Morland, your remarks were of a different complexion."

"You shall have as much of it as you like next year," said Hickes; "we take no more orders after Christmas. The work downstairs will keep us going now, but this was how we managed to live before we made our names."

There were two weddings down in Heathshire in January, and Maude Wareham and May Elsworthy are closer friends than ever now that they live in town and their husbands are artists of note. The workshop in Elvaston Gardens is tenanted by Morland and an industrious young friend of his, and a great deal of "business" is still done there.

M. R. L.

THE KEY-NOTE OF DINNER.

BY A. G. PAYNE, AUTHOR OF "COMMON-SENSE COOKERY," "CHOICE DISHES AT SMALL COST," ETC.

SOUPE, says Sir Henry Thompson, is "the best commencement, as it is the key-note, of the dinner, revealing also, as it does, nine times out of ten the calibre of the cook to whose talent the guest is entrusted."

There is no doubt that, in giving a little dinner, no series of after-successes will ever atone for bad soup. Most men, who have daily to undergo a mental strain, approach their dinner with feelings of ex-

haustion rather than hunger, combined too often with a feeling of irritability, which passes away after they have swallowed a plateful of really good soup. At the present festive season of the year, there is no harm in asking ourselves in strict confidence the two following questions: How often, when we dine out, do we commence our dinner with a plateful of really good soup? The second question is more serious, and that is—When we give a little dinner at home,

what is the calibre of the cook to whose talents we entrust our guests? We fear that some of us must honestly confess that in our innermost heart we feel that she has no "talent" and no "calibre" at all. The next question that naturally arises is—If we give a little dinner, how about the key-note?

Real turtle soup can be obtained ready made, the price being a guinea per quart. But as this soup is not adapted to persons whose means are limited, we will, of course, confine ourselves to the simple directions for making it at home. Real turtle can be obtained home-made in two ways. One is to buy a tin containing the turtle meat—not soup, but meat only—ready cooked; and the other way is to make it from dried turtle flesh, this latter method being the cheapest. In both methods, what we require is some really good clear stock, for we presume the soup will be required for a dinner-party, and it is a great mistake to commence dinner with a thick soup.

The turtle flesh sold in tins has simply to be added to the stock, and boiled with it for about an hour. These tins vary somewhat in price according to the maker, but, as a rule, a tin of meat sufficient to make two quarts of soup would not cost more than five shillings. One ladleful of soup is generally, at the commencement of dinner, considered sufficient for each guest; and as two quarts will make sixteen ladlefuls, we consider this quantity to be amply sufficient for a dinner of ten persons. Of course this would not apply to a bachelors' dinner-party in the City. It is chiefly, however, with the dried turtle flesh that we would deal at present. A pound of the dried flesh is sufficient to make *four* quarts of soup, and, as this flesh varies in price from four shillings a pound to ten, or even twelve, it is quite possible to have home-made real turtle without plunging into reckless extravagance, as we undoubtedly should do were we to buy it at a guinea a quart.

The best dried turtle flesh is the "Sun-dried," and comes from the West Indies. This is genuine *green* turtle. In the present day, however, a good deal of very second-rate turtle flesh comes from Syria and the East Indies; and, to make matters worse, the natives have a trick of drying the flesh of dead turtles, nicknamed "angels." Of course this is quite unfit for the purpose. The only way to guard against the danger of buying this rubbish is to deal with respectable tradespeople, and pay a respectable price. The rage for cheapness is often carried too far.

We will suppose that we have got half a pound of dried turtle flesh, and that we are going to make two quarts of turtle soup. The first thing to do is to throw it into cold water in a saucepan, bring the water to a boil, and let it boil for nearly an hour, take the turtle flesh out and throw the water away. Next place the turtle flesh in cold water—just sufficient to cover it—and let it soak till we have our stock ready in which to boil it. Next, how are we to make stock, so to speak, worthy of the turtle? For this we shall want about four pounds of knuckle of veal. We must cut up the knuckle of veal into small pieces, chop up the bone, and be very careful to remove any of the

marrow, as this has a tendency to make the soup cloudy, and will consequently give us a great deal more trouble when we come to clear the soup. Put this in a large enamel saucepan, which is far better than a tin one. An enamel saucepan to hold four quarts should cost about three and threepence. We must also place with it two large onions or three middle-sized ones, one carrot, a small head of celery, and a small handful of freshly picked parsley. Put this on the fire to simmer gently, and there is no harm in putting in the pieces of turtle flesh at the same time, only be careful to count the pieces of turtle. This saucepan should be put on early in the morning, and allowed to simmer the whole day; and as, of course, it will boil away, you may add three quarts of water at starting. As the saucepan is an enamelled one, the last thing at night you can remove the lid, and place a plate on the top, and then leave it on the fire all night. At first starting it is very important to remove all the scum that arises from time to time, by skimming. Of course, also, we presume that the stove is a shut-up one. What is still better than a shut-up stove is a gas stove, as we can then simmer the meat without any fear of its boiling too fast, in which case it is best to have on no lid at all. Early the next morning remove all the fat that may have settled on the top while it is cold, and bring the stock again to a boiling point, when it can be strained off, and the pieces of turtle flesh put by on a plate. Now pour back the stock into the saucepan, and add the following herbs:—A brimming tablespoonful of dried sweet basil, another tablespoonful of mixed savoury herbs, similar to those you use in making veal stuffing, and a teaspoonful of pennyroyal; and let these boil in the soup for about an hour. Again strain off the soup through a hair sieve, so as to get rid of the herbs. Once more pour it into the saucepan, and add a large dessertspoonful of extract of meat, which is far cheaper than the four or five pounds of gravy beef which would have been used years ago. Next, we must clear the soup in the ordinary way by beating up two whites of eggs to a froth with a little water, adding that to the soup, and stirring it up, and then letting the soup boil gently for two or three minutes while we stir it.

The soup must now be strained through a flannel jelly-bag, or, what is much more simple, place a sieve in a large basin, and place a square piece of flannel in the sieve. It is generally best to pass the soup twice through the flannel, as when the flannel is quite dry the first lot that runs through is a little cloudy. When the soup is quite bright, pour it all back into the enamel saucepan, cut up the turtle flesh into pieces about an inch and a half square, and let it remain on the fire till each piece is perfectly tender and a silver fork will go through it without the slightest resistance. When this is the case, the soup is ready to be sent to table. It will require the addition of a little pepper and salt. Many cooks add wine, but it is not really essential. Indeed, in the opinion of M. Rouard, who is generally considered one of the first cooks in Europe, wine, so far from improving the soup, destroys

its more delicate flavour. Of course, if you have more than two quarts the soup must be allowed to boil away gently till it is reduced to this quantity, and there is no harm in letting the soup boil after the meat is tender. Many persons add a little lemon-juice; but it is better to have a little cut lemon and cayenne pepper handed with the soup. We cannot too much bear in mind the fact that tastes differ.

If you wish to make the soup richer and more pronounced in turtle flavour, you can accomplish this by buying what are called turtle chips. These must be first boiled for a short time by being placed in cold water at starting, the first water being thrown away. The chips can then be placed in the soup *after* it has been cleared, and the soup must be boiled gently until they are perfectly soft.

The chief drawback to making turtle soup from dried turtle flesh is that it is undoubtedly a work of time. In cold weather, if you have gas in the house, and a gas stove, or even a little gas stand attached to a burner, it saves a great deal of trouble, as you can let the soup simmer all night long, besides which it will help to keep the house warm, and prevent the pipes from freezing; but then the soup must simmer and not boil. One word of warning, if you leave the soup on the gas all night long; and that is, you must be careful that it does not boil away altogether, and consequently you must fill the saucepan up so that there is no danger. Another point on which you must be careful is this:—Suppose the cook, when she goes to bed about ten o'clock, leaves the soup all right, just simmering, which means an occasional bubble now and then. If, however, as is generally the case, she leaves the gas burning in the hall, and perhaps three burners in the dining-room—the master of the house, say, goes to bed between eleven and twelve—directly he turns out the gas in the dining-room and hall, the gas stove gets more lively, the result being, the soup will begin to boil, the house will smell of cooking, you will dream of turtle soup all night, and find the real turtle a blackened mass, owing to its having boiled away.

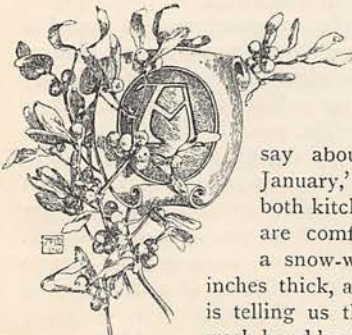
Consequently, whoever turns out the last gas-jet must see to the soup.

As we have said, in making the soup from a tin of meat all we have to do is to make the stock as we have described, and then add the meat and let it boil for about an hour; but then the dried turtle flesh helps us in this way to make soup for other purposes: it obliges us to let the material stew a long time. This is the secret of making good soup. Cooks have an idea that they can make soup in two or three hours. If, in cold weather, they would go to the other extreme, and let the meat, bones, and vegetables, &c., stew for two or three days, the result would be far different; and when we have an enamelled saucepan, and use a plate for a lid, there is very little trouble, as it need not be strained off till the very last.

In making stock for turtle soup we have really learnt how to make high-class clear stock for an immense variety of other soups. For instance, suppose we want some good vermicelli soup, all we have to do is to take the necessary quantity of vermicelli, and boil it *separately* in a little water till it is tender. If we boiled the vermicelli in the soup direct, it would make it cloudy. We add this vermicelli to the soup just before sending it to table.

Again, a great variety of soups can be made by adding what is called Italian paste. This must all be boiled separately, like the vermicelli, in order to avoid making the soup cloudy. Another very nice soup can be made by adding a tin of mixed preserved vegetables, called macedoines, which are generally composed of green peas, carrot, and turnip, and small green flageolets, which are the white haricot beans before they are dried. All you have to do is to open the tin and pour its contents—juice and all—into the clear stock, and let it boil for five minutes before the soup is sent to table. We ought perhaps to add that the savoury herbs, consisting of the basil and other mixed herbs, are only to be used when the soup or stock is intended for the turtle.

THE GARDEN IN JANUARY.



AND what," it may be asked, "can you possibly find to say about 'The Garden in January,' in a month when both kitchen and flower garden are comfortably asleep under a snow-white counterpane six inches thick, and while Sam Weller is telling us that the water in our wash-hand basin is 'a mask o' ice'?"

But for all that, we are going to talk about the garden; and by way of a compromise with our ima-

ginary grumbler we have decided to talk about the holly. And how could we possibly make choice of a more appropriate subject for a Christmas Eve paper, when young Squire "Jacob" is standing on the "ladder" surrounded by the fair decorators of the chancel—shall we call them the "angels"?—who, in eager competition, hand up to him ever and anon a prickly holly bough, with now and then—though, of course, quite by mistake—a spray of the mistletoe?

Since then the old squire has just told the head gardener that he "cannot have the holly-trees cut away like this," and his more fierce neighbour has positively offered a reward for the apprehension of the