



COOKERY FOR THE POOR.



HERE is no class of the community which needs to be instructed in cookery so much as the very poor. If some of the well-to-do folks who grumble when their rump steak is not so tender as it should be, or when game is not

sufficiently high, were compelled to live for a week on food which thousands of their fellow countrymen eat with relish, they would be, to say the least of it, astonished. Not only is it true that one half of the world has no idea how the other half lives, but a small portion of the population has no conception how thousands and tens of thousands of those who reside within a stone's throw of their homes live.

A good many intellectual, highly cultured people have a sort of mild scorn for cookery, although I have noticed that they rarely object to partake of the results thereof. Let cooks, however, be comforted, for their work is honourable and useful. Cookery is a larger question than these clever gentlemen imagine, for it has to do with morality. There is an old proverb which says, "Those who drink beer think beer." Whether this be so or not I cannot say, but I am quite sure that those who have been made bilious and dyspeptic by eating coarse, undigestible food, which has been badly cooked, are much more likely to commit all sorts of horrible crimes and to seek comfort in strong drink, than are those who have good wholesome food cooked in such a way that it is made not only palatable, but digestible.

A large number of those who "take to

drinking," as it is called, begin to go wrong by taking beer as a substitute for food. They feel exhausted, there is no food "handy," and so they take a draught of beer, and this quickly revives them. The experience is repeated, they gradually acquire the habit of relying on beer, and go from bad to worse. If it could have been that, when this "sinking at the pit of the stomach," as they call it, was felt, some true friend had given them a cupful of good beef tea, or a cupful of coffee to drink instead of the beer, they would have felt better almost as quickly, and no harm would have been done. Unfortunately, however, beer is always to be had, and beef tea is a rarity, and so the mischief is done.

I am not going to advocate teetotalism here. It is not my place to do so, for cookery is my subject now, not the drinking habits of the community. Perhaps, however, I may be allowed to say one thing—it is that *people should never take stimulants without food, or immediately before taking food.* Let them relieve the feeling of exhaustion by eating, not by drinking, and afterwards take the beer or wine, if they must have it. If everybody would follow this simple rule, drunkenness would very soon be almost unknown among us.

Yet how usual it is for people of all sorts and conditions to take a glass of beer or wine when tired, and spoil their appetite on that. I have again and again heard cooks—for example, when hot and weary with preparing food for others—say, "Give me a glass of beer—I am ready to drop;" and when the beer was finished they have not much cared to eat. It is conduct like this which leads to drunkenness. Many poor women are accustomed to drink beer when exhausted, and when they do not drink beer, drink tea, and

that is, almost as bad, only it acts in a different way. How many poor women there are—sempstresses and others—who sit still to their work, who take tea for dinner! Tea and coffee both are very excellent indeed in their right places, and no one appreciates them more than I do; but they do not constitute nourishing food, and people who try to live on them are simply starving themselves by inches.

Beer and tea are both taken because they are convenient, and it is troublesome to prepare good food. Yet I fear that in many cases these poor women would not know how to cook the food even if it were at hand. It would be true charity if those who have an opportunity would teach the very poor how to cook.

There are a great many clever managing women amongst the poor who cook very well, and who are willing to prepare good food for their families. All honour to these virtuous ones! They have no place in storied page, but they are doing their life's work nobly, and they will have their reward in seeing their children grow up healthy, and knowing that their husbands are steady and respectable. Perhaps you say cookery is all very well, but it is not everything. A woman may be a good cook and yet keep a miserable home. That is true, and such cases occur, but they are not common. The likelihood is, that if a woman is clever and energetic enough to provide wholesome, well-cooked food on very small means, she can, and does, do a great deal more. I should quite expect that such a woman's home would be clean and well-kept, her children would be tidily if poorly dressed, and her husband would go about with his head in the air, feeling conscious that there never was such a clever manager as his "missus."

These clever women are, unfortunately, rarely met with. The majority of poor women know little about cookery, and care less. Moreover, they will not be taught. You can scarcely offend the ordinary working woman more than by hinting that the red herring which she gives to her baby is not exactly all that a baby requires. You may speak to these women on religious subjects and they will listen quietly, very likely regarding the sermon as a prelude to the alms which is to follow; but talk to them about getting dinner ready, or keeping the house clean, and you have the fat in the fire in no time.

Even where working women can be persuaded to learn cookery, it is not much use to tell them about foods to which they are not accustomed. Lentils, haricot beans, and macaroni are nourishing and cheap foods, but they are very little used by the working classes. Even oatmeal is not valued as it deserves to be. There has been a great deal said of late years about the value of lentils, and they are much more used than they once were, but it is not the very poor who use them. It is the middle class who are, as a rule, willing to receive new ideas, and who are anxious to learn all they can about domestic management. If we go into the poor districts, and notice the food which is offered for sale (for that is the food which is eaten), we see black puddings, small savoury pies, pigs' and sheeps' heads, liver, lights, hearts, pigs' feet, cows' heels, tripe, including "reed" tripe, chitterlings, cheap fish, including mussels, whelks, cockles, &c., but we hardly ever see lentils, haricot beans, or maize; yet district visitors and charitable people have tried their best to make lentils popular—and, so far, without success.

I will confess that if I were to speak my real mind, I should say that the taste for lentils was an acquired one, and that though lentils constitute a most valuable article of diet, unlimited lentils may become monotonous. Yet even I should prefer lentils to lights. However, these are the facts of the case, and it seems to me that if cookery teachers are to do any good, they must first teach people how to cook well food which they have a preference for, and so by gradually giving them an idea of what properly-prepared food is, they may be led to try foods which are new to them. Enlightened ideas about cookery, like enlightened ideas about all other branches of knowledge, lead people to avoid grooves. The unfortunate part of the business is, that at present the prejudices of the very poor are in favour of foods many of which are almost worthless from a nourishing point of view. If only it could be that our poor friends should lay out their money more judiciously, and pay more attention to the cooking of the food, they might, for the same amount as they spend now, have food which would build up their bodies and give them strength for the hard battle which life is to so many of them.

As, therefore, it is likely that this paper will be read not so much by the very poor as by those who wish to benefit the very poor, I will give a few recipes for properly cooking the better sorts of food which the poor are in the habit of using, and also for cooking food which it would be well if they would use.

OX-CHEEK STEW.—Ox-cheek and cow-heel are favourite articles of food, and deservedly so. A stew made from the following recipe will be wholesome, delicious, and will cost very little. The cow-heel may probably be bought for fourpence and the cheek for threepence or fourpence per pound. A stew made of two pounds of cheek and one heel will furnish two or three nourishing dinners for a small family. Wash the ox-cheek thoroughly, dry it in a cloth, cut it into inch squares, mix a tablespoonful of flour, a teaspoonful of pepper, and the same of salt, and roll the squares in the

mixture. Cut the cow-heel also into pieces, and keep them separate. Slice two onions in rings. Melt a good slice of dripping in a saucepan, put in the pieces of floured beef, and fry them a good brown, being careful that they do not stick to the pan. Take up the beef, and fry the onion rings in the same fat; on no account allow them to brown. Add three carrots cut up into slices and a halfpennyworth of mixed herbs; pour on two pints and a half of cold water, cover the saucepan closely, let it boil, draw it to the side of the fire and simmer it gently, skimming it occasionally for at least three hours. Taste it, and if necessary add a little more salt and pepper, pour it into a tureen, and it is ready to serve. The bones of the heel may be stewed again for soup.

COW-HEEL WITH PARSLEY SAUCE.—Wash the heel well, cut it into small pieces, then put it in a saucepan with as much cold water as will cover it. Let it stew very gently till the bones can be drawn out, which will be in about four hours. Put the meat on a dish, season with pepper and salt, pour a little parsley sauce or onion sauce over, and it is ready, and will be found excellent. If liked, and where there are children in the family, the heel can be stewed in a quart of milk instead of cold water, to cover. This milk, when poured off, may be sweetened and flavoured, and will make jelly; and the pieces of meat may still be served, with sauce over them, for dinner. If milk is used, the jar should be greased before the meat is put in.

PIG'S FRY, OR POOR MAN'S GOOSE.—Procure a perfectly fresh pig's fry. This will cost about sixpence per pound, and one pound will make a good dinner for four or five people. Wash the fry well, and cut it into small pieces. Brush and wash three pounds of potatoes, and parboil them—that is, put them into a saucepan with cold water to cover them, and let the water boil. Take the potatoes up, skin them, and cut them into slices. Peel an onion, and mix it with three sage leaves which have been finely chopped. Grease a pie-dish, and fill it with alternate layers of sliced potatoes and fry, remembering that potatoes must form the first and last layers, and that a little of the savoury mixture, with pepper and salt, must be sprinkled over each layer of fry. Fill the dish with water for gravy, cover it with the thin skin of the fry, or, wanting this, with greased paper, and bake in a moderate oven for about an hour, or, if more convenient, gently stew it in a saucepan.

STEWED GIBLETS.—Giblets are very delicious and nourishing if well stewed, and a good dishful, sufficient to make a dinner for a small family, may frequently be bought on Saturday evenings for threepence or fourpence. It must, however, be remembered that the giblets require to be thoroughly stewed, and also that they will not keep. Wash them thoroughly in two or three waters. Skin the necks, and cut them into small portions, cut through the top skin of the gizzard and clean it well, divide the heart and liver into halves, and remember not to break the gall bag of the liver, because gall is very bitter. Scald the claws and legs by throwing them into boiling water, then remove the skin. Be sure to use the feet, as they are rich in jelly. Put the gizzards and feet into a stewpan with water to cover, and stew for three-quarters of an hour; add the rest of the giblets, which have been rolled in flour with two onions, each stuck with a clove, a large carrot sliced, a bunch of herbs, and a little pepper and salt. Stew for an hour and a half longer, and serve very hot.

STEWED MEAT.—Take a pound of scraps of meat. Fry these in dripping till brown, and also two onions, two carrots, and two turnips cut up small. Put both meat and vegetables into a saucepan, cover with water which has been thickened with a little flour,

add pepper and salt, and simmer gently with the lid on the pan for an hour, or longer if the meat is tough. If liked, potatoes cut into quarters, and onions, can be stewed with the gravy. Serve very hot.

STEWED SCRAPS OF MEAT WITH ONIONS.—Grease a stewpan thickly with dripping, cover the bottom with a layer of onions, put a layer of meat on this with pepper and salt, and repeat until all is used. Cover the saucepan closely, and stew very gently for an hour and a half. The water which is in the onions will make plenty of gravy. Onions are nourishing and wholesome, and constitute a valuable article of food.

These pieces of meat will make an excellent pie or pudding. A little piece of beefskirting will help to make gravy.

Thus far I have spoke of stews only. Stewing is the most economical mode of cookery which we know. I think it was Poor Richard who used to say that he who roasted his meat threw half of it into the fire, he who boiled it threw half of it in the water, he who stewed it made the most of it. This is nothing but fact. Stewing is profitable for many reasons. For one thing, it has to be done gently, and therefore a small amount of fuel suffices for it. Many a clever house-mother has provided a stew for next day's dinner by preparing it beforehand, leaving a few cinders in the range and letting the food simmer during the night. Coarse, cheap meat can be rendered tender and succulent by long and careful stewing. The process can be carried on too in more ways than one. If there is an oven attached to the range, the stewing can be done then in a jar with a closely-fitting lid, or a cover of greased paper. If, unfortunately, there is no oven, this same jar can be placed on the hob at the side of the fire, or it may be put on the hearth in front of the fire. Or, supposing a poor woman has to go out and leave her cooking operations, she may "rake" her fire, put the jar containing the stew in a saucepan, and surround it with boiling water, and it will go on gently simmering all the time she is away. When once working women learn to appreciate the advantages of stewing, half their difficulties will be over. At present, however, they are too fond of the fryingpan to value the stewpan as it deserves.

SCONSE.—I believe this name is given to a stew made of scraps of meat and bones broken up, which is sold in the market-places of various towns at so much per cup. To make sconses, take cooked or uncooked scraps of meat, whichever can be obtained, cut them into very small pieces, and put them into a stewpan with the bones chopped, pepper and salt, a good quantity of sliced onions, double the quantity of raw potatoes, and cold water to cover. Simmer gently for about three hours, remove the bones, and serve the sconses very hot. The potatoes should be reduced to pulp. This is, perhaps, the most profitable way of using up cold meat and bones which can be adopted.

A SCRAP OF MUTTON stewed gently for three hours or more in three pints of water is an excellent dish. A cupful of rice or pearl barley should be washed separately and thrown into the water when it boils. The liquor will make excellent broth, and the mutton will be tender and good. If barley is used for this dish, the broth should be used quickly, as it will soon go sour.

TOAD-IN-THE-HOLE.—I have in a former paper given a recipe for toad-in-the-hole, but this one is less expensive than that. Buy a pound of meat pieces, such as are sold by the butcher for from 5d. to 7d. per lb., according to the locality. These pieces consist of trimmings from large joints, and are often of excellent quality. If they are not to be had, the short bones of a neck of mutton or a pound

of beef skirting, may be used instead. Many people use sausages for the purpose, but cheap sausages are not to be recommended. Put six ounces of flour into a bowl with a little salt; break an egg into this and beat thoroughly, adding a spoonful or two of water to make a smooth paste. Stir in a little less than a pint of milk. Grease a pie-dish, arrange the pieces of meat in it, season them with pepper and salt, pour the batter over, and bake for one hour.

Fish constitutes nourishing and wholesome food; some sorts, such as plaice, flounders, conger eel, ling, hake, haddock, mackerel, etc., are very cheap, and we hope that in the course of a year or two they will be cheaper still. Cods' heads also are frequently sold for two-pence each, and excellent picking may be obtained from them. Here are two or three recipes for cooking fish:—

STEWED FISH.—Take any kind of white fish. Wash it quickly and dry it; then cut it into two-inch squares. Put it into boiling water to cover it; bring it to the boil, draw it back, and let it simmer gently for a few minutes till it is done. Take up the fish and thicken the water in which it was boiled by adding to it a tablespoonful of flour, mixed smoothly with a gill of milk to each pint of water. Stir the sauce till it boils; add a slice of butter or dripping, and keep boiling for ten minutes. Put in the fish, let it get hot once more, and turn the whole into a dish. Eat with vinegar and pepper.

FISH PIE.—Take fish, prepared as above; remove the skin and bones, and tear the flesh into flakes. Measure it and mix with it an equal quantity of cold mashed potatoes, a little dripping, pepper and salt. Put the mixture into a well greased pie-dish, place a little dripping on the top, and make hot in the oven. If liked, cold boiled rice may be used instead of potatoes; or the potatoes and fish can be placed in layers in a well greased pie-dish and baked.

BAKED FISH.—Hake and conger eel, both excellent fish, may, when they are to be had at all, be bought very cheap—at about two-pence per pound. Prepared as follows they will furnish a delicious dinner. Flat fish may be cooked in the same way. Clean the fish; if it is flat, divide it through the bones; if round, cut it into slices. Melt a good slice of dripping in a tin baking-dish; arrange the fish in this; pour over it about two tablespoonfuls of water mixed with a little vinegar, sprinkle on the top a seasoning mixture composed of a small onion, boiled and chopped, breadcrumbs, pepper, and salt. Put pieces of dripping here and there upon the fish, and bake till the flesh leaves the bones easily. Time according to thickness. If a piece of hake, cod, or conger eel can be obtained, and a wire stand (to be bought for a penny) to raise the fish above the tin, is at hand, the fish may be laid upon the stand, the vinegar and water may be poured underneath, and sliced turnips, sliced onions, or sliced potatoes may be put in the tin. The fish can then be baked gently and basted frequently for about an hour. When half cooked the fish should be turned over, that it may be equally cooked.

Herrings both fresh and salt are largely consumed by the poor, as are also haddocks fresh and dried. It is scarcely necessary to say how dried and salt fish should be cooked. Fresh herrings are excellent when opened, emptied, boned, seasoned and rolled, put into a pie dish with vinegar and water, and baked for three-quarters of an hour. A few potatoes baked in a jar with herrings thus pickled form a most appetising dish.

Good soup is wholesome and nourishing, but it is not so much made or used as it deserves to be. The following is Mrs. Buckton's recipe for an excellent vegetable soup. Put a quart of water into a saucepan,

and while it boils prepare the vegetables by cleaning and cutting into small dice an onion and a lettuce. Throw these into the boiling water, with two ounces of green peas, and two potatoes cooked or uncooked. Mix a tablespoonful of flour or oatmeal with two ounces of dripping, add this to the soup with pepper, salt, and a pinch of sugar. Simmer gently for nearly an hour, mix with half a pint of boiling milk, and serve with sippets of bread. If liked, carrots or dried peas can be substituted for the green peas, but dried peas will need to boil for two hours or more.

SCRAP PIE.—Put a pound or more of lean scraps of meat (beef or mutton, or both), cooked or uncooked, into a saucepan with carrots, turnips, onions, and a couple of potatoes cut into slices. Season with pepper and salt, and pour on cold water to barely cover the meat. Bring the water to a boil and lay on the top of the meat, etc., a stiff crust made of suet or dripping, which has been rolled to fit the saucepan. Put the lid on the pan and simmer gently for an hour and a half. Pass the knife round the crust every now and then to keep it from burning, and serve with the meat and vegetables on a dish and the suet crust cut into quarters and laid upon it. If meat cannot be obtained, this pie may be made of vegetables alone.

Porridge can scarcely be too highly recommended as nourishing food. The Scotch, who are a hardy race, almost live upon it. Yet it is scarcely worth while to give directions for making it, for those who appreciate its value will not need the recipe, and those who do not will scarcely be induced to try it. Perhaps I may be allowed to remind my friends that one pound of oatmeal, ground pease, haricot beans, and semolina will give a man as much strength as three pounds of lean meat. The following is the ordinary method of making porridge:—Boil a little water and add a pinch of salt. Sprinkle a little oatmeal into the boiling water, and beat vigorously with a wooden spoon or knife till the required thickness is obtained. Boil for a few minutes longer, still stirring the preparation briskly, pour the porridge out, let it stand a few minutes, and eat with treacle or sugar and milk.

SUPERIOR PORRIDGE.—Soak a heaped tablespoonful of coarse oatmeal in a pint of water overnight. In the morning put the saucepan with the oatmeal and water on the fire and let it boil, stirring it occasionally to prevent burning till wanted. It may be eaten in twenty minutes, but will be improved by long boiling.

Broken bread is frequently given to the poor, and a great scandal is created because they throw it away instead of using it. Very often, however, they do not know what to do with it. An excellent pudding of broken bread may be made by pouring boiling water upon the pieces, letting them soak for awhile, then draining them, and beating them up with a good slice of dripping, some coarse sugar, currants, and nutmeg. The mixture thus prepared may be turned into a greased pie-dish, and baked in a well-heated oven till it is brightly browned on the top. It may be eaten hot or cold.

CHILDREN'S CHEAP PUDDING.—Stew a little cheap fruit of any kind, sweeten it, and spread it upon broken bread, pour cold milk over, and let the bread soak for awhile. Children will eat this pudding with great relish.

Few dishes are more nourishing than peas, lentils, or haricots made into soup. The process in all cases is the same. Soak the beans, then draw off the water and boil them in three times their bulk of fresh water till soft. They will take three hours or more, and a little dripping should be thrown into the water with them. Flavour the soup as convenient, rub it

through a colander to keep back the skins which are not easy of digestion, and serve very hot. A crust of bread boiled with soup is a great improvement, and, when it can be procured, greasy stock in which fat meat has been boiled should be used instead of water to make the soup.

An excellent supper for a working man can be made from cheese and rice. Cheese, it will be remembered, is more nourishing than meat, and can generally be digested without difficulty by those who work in the open air. Take a quarter of a pound of rice, put it into a saucepan with cold water to cover it, and bring it to the boil. Drain it, and put it back into the saucepan with three-quarters of a pint of milk and a little pepper and salt, and boil it gently till tender and rather dry. Grate a little cheese finely (dry, stale cheese will answer for this purpose if it is not hard); place alternate layers of boiled rice and grated cheese in a greased dish, and let cheese be the uppermost layer; put little pieces of dripping here and there upon the top, and brown in the oven. Serve hot.

Lentils or haricot beans may be soaked and boiled till soft, then eaten either as a vegetable or as a substitute for meat. They are excellent prepared as follows:—

HARICOT BEANS.—Boil the haricots till tender, and drain them. Mince a small onion finely, toss it over the fire, and mix the beans with it. Serve hot.

LENTILS.—Boil the lentils till tender, and drain them. Melt a slice of dripping in a saucepan, and throw in an onion finely chopped. Stir in a teaspoonful of flour, and add a little of the water in which the lentils were boiled to make a thick sauce, with half a teaspoonful of vinegar if liked. Put in the lentils, and let them simmer softly for a few minutes. Serve hot.

I have only given a few out of the many dishes which might be named, which cost little, and yet are wholesome and nourishing. We must not forget, however, that the poor have frequently to contend with an insurmountable difficulty in their cookery, and that is scarcity of fuel. How can those who have very little coal, and perhaps no oven into the bargain, prepare their food properly? It is very easy for us who have every needful appliance and utensil to say what others should do; yet very likely if we were in the place of these poor creatures we should not do nearly so well as they do. Let us, therefore, while trying to help our poorer brothers and sisters, be very charitable in our judgment of them, and remember who it was who said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

PHILLIS BROWNE.

GIRLS' CHRISTIAN NAMES.

(Continued from page 40.)

EDA. *Gothic*. Happy. *Date* 1229. Psalm cxxviii. 4-6.

EDITH. *Gothic*. Happy. *Date* 850. Psalm lxxxix. 15.

EGIDIA or GILETTA. *Fem.* of Giles. *Latin*. A little goat. *Heb.* ix. 12. *Date* 1239.

ELA. *Gothic*. All. *Deut.* vi. 5. It is doubtful whether this was ever used as a proper name by itself: it seems rather to have been a *dim.* of names ending in *el* or *ela*, such as Adela, Isabel, etc. *Date* 1110. The same may be said of Ella, which is, however, much more modern (as a female name) than Ela.

ELEANOR, ELEONORA, or LEONORA. (Elinor is simply a spelling by sound, without regard to derivation). *Celtic*. Bright-haired as gold. The old *dim.* of this name is Annora,