was, as she had said, at sea, and compelled to read from the notes merely. However, she was only attempting to do her best, and would not be hurt or offended by criticism. She was too modest and too true a musician for that.

"Well, I don't wonder at your not being able to make head or tail of that," burst forth Fanny, indignantly, when the sonata was ended. "A dryer, more unintelligible piece of music I never heard in my life, even from your precious old master."

Grace made no reply; she was waiting for the criticism, which had not as yet been given. Mr. Mackenzie sat thoughtful, balancing a teaspoon on his finger. Helen looked on, very much inclined to be amused by the whole scene.

"I am afraid I played badly," Grace said, timidly.

"No, not badly," Mr. Mackenzie said, without looking up. "Very well indeed, so far as the mechanical part goes, but it was a child's interpretation. Close up those pages of your book. Don't play it again until you are older, or—have experienced sorrow."

"Well, well," cried Fanny, amused, and not a little delighted, "that is a nice thing to tell her. And so she must needs have sorrow before she dare attempt to play the incomprehensible productions of this divine master. By the musicianly code she should immediately set to work to seek it. Perhaps you can advise her the best way to set about her search, Mr. Mackenzie."

"God forbid," he replied, hastily. "It comes to us all soon enough. It is not a matter to be jested about."

"Mr. Mackenzie always snubs me," quoth Fanny, in a determinedly gay temper.

Grace had turned again to the piano to hide the tears that were filling her eyes for some unaccountable reason—a sort of longing to penetrate the hidden depths of that master's mind which had found expression in a language she could not read. Who can understand her disappointment? None but the true artist. Of one thing she was sure: she would not by her temerity merit such another reproof.

She struck out the first few notes of Fanny's song, and Fanny came to the piano and began to sing, doing her best, for she was in a mood she seldom experienced—anxious to please. Her voice was an unusually fine one, and she could sing well, and at times with much beauty of expression. By-and-by Helen, who had a pretty voice too, was induced to join her in a duet. Then a trio was found, and Mr. Mackenzie astonished his companions with the fact that he too had a very tolerable voice, and could take a part at sight. So the time flew by in perfect enjoyment, until the gong in the hall warned the girls to prepare for dinner.

"If any of you young ladies wish to see my picture," Mr. Mackenzie said, as he bowed them out of the room, "I will advise you to come to my room some time to-morrow. On the next day Mr. Leslie has been complimentary enough to invite his friends to see it, and the same afternoon it departs with its owner."

"What, are you leaving us so soon?" Fanny exclaimed. "What about the garden party on Thursday?"

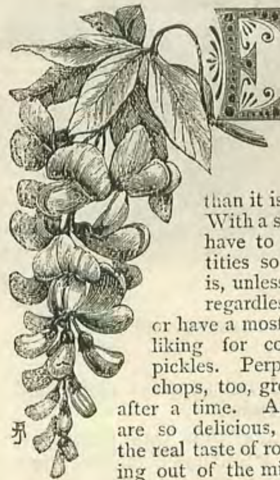
"I shall not be staying for that," he replied, with the air of one who does not intend to be persuaded. "Mr. Leslie has kindly excused me."

"What could papa have been dreaming of?" remarked this inconsistent individual, as she marched upstairs. "Everybody knows Mackenzie. He would have been quite a lion. And what a delightful afternoon we have had, haven't we, 'Grace darling?' I'd no idea he was musical till you came."

Mr. Mackenzie, however, was reckoning without his host. Like many a humbler individual, he found that the planning and the carrying out of an arrangement are sometimes two very different matters.

(*To be continued.*)

HOW TO PROVIDE FOOD FOR SMALL FAMILIES.



EVERYONE who has had any experience in such matters agrees that it is much more difficult to cater for a small family than it is for a large one. With a small family you have to calculate quantities so closely — that is, unless you are quite regardless of expense—or have a most unconquerable liking for cold meat and pickles. Perpetual mutton chops, too, grow monotonous after a time. And large joints are so delicious, you never get the real taste of roast beef excepting out of the middle of a large sirloin. Warmed-up meats are never so enjoyable as meat freshly cooked, no matter how skilful cook is. Then, with a large family, you can always turn things to account; but in a small one people are never hungry when they ought to be, to say nothing of their having such excellent memories. Altogether," and my friend looked quite excited as she made the remark, "I do not think that people who have large families know what the difficulties of housekeeping are."

Now, as I am not in the least inclined to question the correctness of my friend's opinion, but am, on the contrary, prepared to endorse very nearly every word she has uttered, and as I fully appreciate the difficulty of catering for a small family, I think it may be useful if we turn our attention for a short time to the subject of which she spoke.

Properly cooked joints, such as are constantly served at English tables, are most excellent. Moreover, for large or even for moderate-sized families they are economical also. But for small families, no. It is a mistake to cook a joint with the prospect of enjoying it at one meal, and being weary of the sight of it for days after. There is not the slightest occasion for anything of the kind either. By thinking beforehand, and in buying provision for to-day, remembering to-morrow—and perhaps the day after, also—we may have meals of uniform excellence every day in the week; and what a triumph of good management this will be! It is said that, next to being thought handsome, a woman likes best to be thought a good manager. The woman who provides regularly a variety of wholesome, appetising food at an economical rate for a small family may be *thought* I care not what; she *is*, unquestionably, a first-rate manager.

There are, however, joints which need not be cooked whole, but which divide well, and therefore may be turned to good account even in small families. Among these none are more valuable than the universal favourites—leg of mutton and sirloin of beef. Yet it is not everyone who can cook and serve them when divided to the best advantage. With regard to the sirloin of beef, for instance, how often do we find that those who divide it in the orthodox manner—that is, cut off the flap for boiling, take out the undercut for broiling, and roast the upper part—discover that the last of these joints is the only satisfactory one of the three! Yet if all were carefully cooked all would be excellent. I will therefore describe in full how the different parts should be dressed.

First of all, a piece of beef with a good thick undercut must be chosen. The fillet or chump end of the sirloin is the best. A thick undercut is a necessity, for we can do nothing with a narrow little strip of meat which would scarcely be sufficient for one person. As soon as the sirloin comes from the butcher's, take out the thick pipe which runs down the middle of the broad bone, cut off the flap—being careful to do this neatly, not to spoil the appearance of the joint—and, lifting back the fat, cut out the whole of the undercut (with a little fat attached) with a sharp knife, and then replace the fat in its original position.

Lay the flap in pickle such as is usually employed for beef and tongues. This pickle should be kept in every larder. It is inexpensive, and will keep for three months or more in winter, and for some weeks in summer, if only it be boiled up, skimmed, and strained after use. It is exceedingly useful for salting pieces of fresh meat, tongues, pork, &c., and meat thus salted at home is much superior to that which is salted at the shops. The pickle may be made by putting one pound and a half of salt, six ounces of sugar, one ounce of saltpetre, and one gallon of water into a saucepan, bringing it to the boil, skimming it well, and letting it boil for five minutes, then straining it into the pan, and using it when cold. This flap may remain in the pickle for three or four days.

The undercut will serve for the first day's dinner. It must be cut into neat steaks almost an inch thick, and these must be brushed all over with oil and then broiled over a clear fire in the approved way, being careful to turn the steaks frequently. When done, the slices may be arranged in a circle on a dish with the end of one piece overlapping the edge of the other. Have ready in a small stewpan or gallipot a little Béarnaise sauce. Pour this sauce over the slices of meat, and if it can be managed place potato chips or mixed vegetables in the centre, and serve.

The Béarnaise sauce is made as follows:—Allow as many eggs as there are persons to partake of the steak, with an ounce of butter for each egg. Divide the quantity of butter into three portions. Put the yolks of the eggs (the whites will not be needed for this sauce) into a small stewpan, beat them lightly, then stir them briskly over the fire until they begin to thicken. Take the pan off the fire, stir in a third portion of butter, and return the stewpan to the fire for two minutes, beating briskly all the time. Repeat this process

twice, until all the butter is used, being careful to add the butter off the fire. When the sauce is smooth and has simmered two minutes for the third time, lift it again from the fire, add pepper and salt, with a little tarragon vinegar, and pour the sauce carefully over the broiled fillets. Sprinkle a little chopped parsley, or, if it is to be had, a little chopped tarragon over all, and serve.

This dish, thus easily prepared, would be filet de bœuf à la Béarnaise. If we were to use any other superior sauce which was suitable for our purpose it would be filet de bœuf à la—whatever the sauce was. Sauce Hollandaise, Soubise sauce, or Chateaubriand sauce are all good. I am quite aware that many housekeepers would be horrified at the idea of using three eggs and three ounces of butter for a little sauce. It is a good deal, I confess, but then it should be remembered that eggs, even in the depth of winter, are cheaper and almost as nourishing as meat; and if we used six or seven eggs it would be more economical than cooking the joint whole and letting a quarter of it be wasted when cold. However, if eggs may not be allowed, put a little maître d'hotel butter (you remember how that was made?) under the steaks, and with the vegetables as a garnish, you will still form a superior dish. If there should be a little good rich brown sauce in the house (and I do not in the least suppose there will be, for such a thing is a rarity in small households), it might be thickened, mixed with a glass of claret, and a little maître d'hotel butter, and this would be a sort of modified Chateaubriand sauce.

I do not suppose that there is any occasion to say anything about the portion of beef which is to be roasted. If English cooks can do nothing else they can roast. All I would say with reference to this is, let the carver do his work neatly, for if the appearance of the dish is not spoilt, it is probable that for one day cold meat may be acceptable for dinner if it is accompanied by a good salad, preceded by a little soup or fish, and followed by a delicate pudding. Occasional cold meat is by no means to be despised; it is unlimited cold meat and nothing else that we weary of, and from which we would fain be delivered.

The little flap of beef I should boil and press, then glaze and serve for breakfast or luncheon. It must be cooked carefully, put into lukewarm water, allowed to boil, skimmed, then drawn back, and simmered slowly till it has a loose look and is perfectly tender. The beef should then be laid while hot in a small dish, and another dish with a weight be laid upon it. It may then be brushed over with liquid glaze (which has been melted like glue), or a little clear savoury jelly may be poured into the dish with it and left for the night, and this will make the beef, when it is turned upon a dish, look as if it were coated with jelly.

The flap of beef is a very fatty piece, but the long gentle boiling will draw out a good deal of the fat and make what is left less oily. When cold, this fat will taste like butter and really be very good. If, however, the flap of beef is to be served hot for dinner instead of cold for breakfast, let the housekeeper see that a little trouble is taken in dishing it, and also in sending suitable accompaniments to table with it so as to make as much as possible of it. Garnish the dish with small suet dumplings which have been boiled without a cloth, and also with turnips covered with tomato sauce, and carrots. These additions will not only make the beef look appetising: they will make it taste ever so much better and go farther as well.

One word I must say about the glaze. This preparation is a most useful and convenient one to have on hand. It will keep for a long time, both hot and cold meat look better when brushed over with it, and it is convenient for enriching soups and sauces. Glaze may be made by boiling down the liquor in which meat has been boiled until it is very much reduced and is as thick as treacle. If meat is bought for the purpose of making glaze, gelatinous portions, such as knuckle of veal, leg of beef, or pork hocks should be chosen.

The stock in which meat of this kind has been boiled should be flavoured and seasoned pleasantly; boiled down quickly, with the lid off the stewpan, until it is very much reduced; boiled again, and stirred well to keep it from burning till it is quite thick, and then be poured out and allowed to go cold and stiff. In this form it will constitute glaze, and will keep for months. If in any of the standard works on cookery—such as "Francatelli" or "Gouffé"—you see the words, "add a little glaze" (and these words occur very frequently), you may know that the preparation described above is referred to. When the glaze is to be brushed over the meat, it will be necessary only to put a little into a jar; set this in a saucepan of boiling water, and keep the water boiling round it till it is melted, when the meat may be brushed all over with one or two coats of the glaze, being careful always to let one coat dry before another is put on. Meat which is glazed looks as much superior to meat which is unglazed as a mahogany table which is newly French polished looks to the same table after it has been in use for twenty years, and all the brightness is gone from it. Neither the table nor the meat *are* better, you understand; they only *look* so.

If the cook does not care to prepare a quantity of glaze from meat procured for the purpose, she may with great ease make a little for present use. For this she needs only half a packet of gelatine, which has been soaked in cold water for an hour, and a cupful of strong gravy from roast meat; or, wanting this, a spoonful of Liebig's extract dissolved in a little water. Put the gelatine and the gravy together, add a little salt, and boil the mixture, stirring it all the time till it is as thick as cream. Put it into a jar, and it will be ready for use. This glaze also will keep for a long time.

So much for our sirloin of beef. We have from the one joint obtained four dinners—that is, if cold meat is allowed for one day. With the scraps cut from the cold joint after it leaves the table we may make minced meat or potted meat for luncheon or breakfast. The bones may be broken up, and will supply excellent stock, and who will say the joint has not been made profitable?

As with the sirloin so with the leg of mutton. When buying it, get the butcher to cut it into two unequal parts, and ask him to take a cutlet about three-quarters of an inch thick from the larger portion. This cutlet, broiled and served with piquant sauce—that is, melted butter to which pickles finely chopped have been added—will make a superlative dinner for one day; the knuckle end, boiled and served with caper sauce, mashed turnips, and carrots, will be excellent dinner No. 2, while the fillet end, if well roasted and served with potatoes, greens, and Yorkshire pudding, will be a third dinner. If, instead of having the fillet roasted the day after the knuckle was boiled, you can leave it to hang a little longer, and introduce a roast chicken for the intermediate dinner, you will have made an agreeable variety which will be fully appreciated.

I know what old housekeepers will say when they have read thus far: "Your other dishes are all very well, but the fillet end of mutton roasted is a mistake. It looks substantial enough upon the dish, but when you come to carve it you get one or two good slices from it, and then you have done. The rest is bone and disappointment." So it will be if you have the joint roasted as it is, but why not get the butcher to bone it. He will do so if requested. Then all that you need to do is to bind the meat firmly with tape and roast it. In this way you can carve it satisfactorily to the end. The bones stewed down will make excellent gravy, and if you like to insert a little forcemeat in the place where the bone was, all the better.

Birds of all kinds cooked in various ways make a very pleasant change for small families. Poultry is by many looked upon as a luxury impossible to obtain, yet during the cheap seasons, and where plentiful, it is really as inexpensive as butcher's meat, especially now when the facilities for bringing the food from a distance are so much greater than they once were. Fowls which cost 4s. 6d. each are a luxury, but fowls which cost 1s. 9d. are not out of the way. Many poulterers sell what they call Irish poultry, which is quite as tender as English poultry, but which is not trussed and plumped out when offered for sale, as English birds are, and consequently does not look so well.

Salmon, too, when plentiful and moderate in price, is cheaper than the same weight of butcher's meat, even when it costs more per pound, simply because it goes so far, and is so satisfying. A salmon cutlet an inch and a half thick will make an excellent dish. It may be wrapped in muslin, boiled in very little water, taken up as soon as done, then be laid on a hot dish; have some good caper sauce poured over it, and be garnished with cucumber. A circle of cucumber slices, which thickly overlap each other, may be placed round the fish, and the edge can be ornamented with the green rind of the cucumber cut into shapes.

Large joints can only be divided and kept thus in cold weather, and during a large part of the year the small housekeeper is obliged to buy what she wants for the day and no more. I will therefore, before concluding, describe briefly a few dishes which will meet her requirements here. And it will be seen that in doing this I am not thinking of people who have four or five courses every day, but of the far larger number of those who are accustomed to dine off meat and pudding, or fish and meat, with, perhaps, cheese, and nothing more.

Veal Rolls with Broccoli.—Take from one to two pounds of lean veal, and divide this into slices half an inch thick, about four inches long and two wide. Put in the middle of each a teaspoonful of forcemeat or of sausage meat with a little chopped parsley, a very little minced shalot, and pepper and salt. Roll the slices, and tie each one securely with twine. Melt a little butter in a stewpan, and fry each roll lightly to a pale brown. Add enough water to make gravy, and stew very gently till tender—that is, about an hour and a half. Thicken the gravy with breadcrumbs, and in serving arrange small sprigs of cauliflower, which have been previously boiled and well drained, round the meat. Two or three slices of toasted bacon will be an improvement to this dish. Beef also may, if liked, be substituted for the veal.

Lentils and Sausages.—Soak half a pint of green or German lentils overnight. The next day boil them till soft, and drain well. Cook some sausages in the usual way, that is, fry or bake them, and brown them well. When they are nearly ready, melt a slice of butter in a clean stewpan, and throw in one small onion chopped finely. When the butter is melted stir in a teaspoonful of flour, add a little pepper and salt, and as much stock or water mixed with a few drops of vinegar to make a thick sauce. Put in the boiled lentils, and simmer for about ten minutes. Lay the lentils on a dish, arrange the sausages on the top, and serve very hot.

Beef collops are very popular in Scotland, but they are not much used in England, or at any rate not in the places which I know. In the "North Countree," however, the meat is sold ready chopped for the purpose, and Scotch families are accustomed to have collops for dinner at least once a week. This is how they are cooked: Take, say, one pound of pieces of lean, uncooked meat, and mince finely. Melt an ounce of dripping in a stewpan, throw in the meat, and turn it about until it is lightly brown, but not at all hard. Pour in a teacupful of water thickened with a tablespoonful of flour. Stir the meat well and stew it gently, with the lid on the pan, until it is tender, stirring it now and then to keep it from getting into lumps. A few minutes before serving add pepper, salt, and a little Harvey or Worcester sauce. Another way of cooking these collops is to mash the minced meat with cold water to cover it, then stew it gently for half an hour or more, thus omitting the flour altogether. In either case the meat should be garnished with toasted sippets.

A lady whom I knew used to say that she followed this recipe, yet she persisted in substituting cooked for uncooked meat. She said she thought it was a shame to mince fresh meat, and afterwards maintained that Scotch collops were not worth much. She did not know what they were.

Rabbits, too, are excellent for a change. I will not, however, describe the methods of cooking them, as I hope to devote an entire article to them shortly.

The friend whose remarks I have already quoted said that warmed-up meat was never so good as freshly-cooked meat. This may be true enough; nevertheless, if there is any one who should know how to warm up meat to advantage it is the small housekeeper. Make what calculations we may, occasions will arise when *rechauffés* must enter into the *menu*, and if these could be properly cooked they would not be so much dreaded as they are. This, however, is a large subject, and can scarcely be dealt with now.

PHILLIS BROWNE.

LAURA LEIGH.

A TALE OF HIGHBRIDGE PAPER MILLS.

By M. M. POLLARD, Author of "Cora; or, Three Years of a Girl's Life," &c.

CHAPTER V.

COUNTRY LIFE.

AFTER this event, Miss Leigh rarely wandered about by herself in lonely places. Marion led far too busy a home life for her always to be ready to accompany her cousin in her interminable daily walks, but she always managed that Mysie or Trot should be ready to go with Laura, and, somehow, it often happened that Vincent Ashton joined them in their rambles.

There were so many pretty places in the neighbourhood to show a stranger, such telling points of view from the high grounds, such cosy nooks in the green valleys, such solemn shades in the deep woods, that, after all, were safe enough when an apt guide was present who could find the right pathway.

Then, again, the country walks had another meaning when Mr. Ashton was near to point out the beauties.

It is one thing to look at a flower-wreathed hedge by one's side—at a flower-sprinkled carpet of grass under one's feet—and to say the blossoms are lovely; but it is another thing to look at these blossoms with the intelligent eye of a botanist—to understand their structure, habits, and classes

The love of Nature's beauty is a gift that often lies dormant in the mind because it has never been awakened, and Mr. Ashton was just the person to arouse the interest.

He loved and cherished the science himself, he understood it thoroughly, and so they often set out together—he, Laura, Mysie, and Trot—to hunt for specimens during these lovely summer months They rambled about the fields and meadows, or wandered over the breezy moors amongst the blooming heather and the dancing blue bells, and the hours never seemed too long.

Laura at this time might have sung with the Dutch poet—

"Oh, surely 'tis a bliss to lay one down
Upon a shady bank, where blushing flowers
Smell sweetly, and the meads are blooming prime,
Till Flora's clock—the goat's-beard—marks the hours,
And closing says, 'Arise! 'tis dinner-time;'
Then dine on pies and cauliflower heads,
And roam away the afternoon in garden beds."

Mrs. Ashton took a great fancy to the London girl, who was at once so friendly and so attractive, and she would often invite her to take a drive with her. Seated in the pretty pony carriage, with Vincent holding the reins, and guiding the well-trained ponies, they drove through parts of the country that lay beyond walking distance.

It did the widow's sad heart good to watch the fair young face beside her, to catch her silvery peals of girlish laughter, as she and Vincent carried on some brisk argument, and to hear her town notions of country things and country life.

As time went on, Miss Leigh was no longer a stranger at the mills. Hardly a week passed but her bright face would be seen at the door of the well-remembered loft, and she would hand in some bunches of sweet-smelling flowers, gathered and arranged by herself, a basket of fresh fruit, some packets of simple narrative books, or any other little gift she could think of, and she had always a few pleasant words to say to the girls nearest her.

Many a present found its way to those who were ailing, and the giver might generally be found to be Laura Leigh

She went sometimes to see the evening school the late Mr. Ashton had founded, and where some of the elder women taught.

Rough and unpolished as these mill girls were, Laura was much interested by their attempts to penetrate letter by letter, word by word, into the yet unknown regions of learning. To be able to read the short words, and to spell the long ones, was considered a great feat, and those who accomplished it were looked on as "good scholards."

Much impressed was Laura when their master stood amongst his workers, looking not much older than themselves, as he read aloud to them a short story, a chapter, or spoke wise words of advice, telling them where workpeople and employers must alike carry their sins and sorrows—namely, to the feet of a pardoning, prayer-answering, atoning Saviour.

Miss Leigh in her rich apparel, with her lovely face, her fashionable air and polished ways, sat listening also to his teaching, and, despite the difference of appearance, she had as much to learn, and was just as ignorant, as indifferent to sacred things as were the workgirls.

She meekly took some of the lessons home to her own heart, lessons that could never be forgotten, and for the first time in her life discovered how religion could be a real practical thing, not intended for Sundays only, but for the grand motive power of one's whole life and actions.

She had never been so happy before. Laura seemed to herself as though transported to some purer moral atmosphere, with new objects, new duties, new responsibilities, new capabilities.

Life at the curate's house was developing into something higher than the mere selfish enjoyment she had hitherto been accustomed to in the gay London society in which she mixed when at home.

There was only one drawback to her full contentment, and that was a certain experience of her own, that she would sometimes fain have altogether forgotten. Oh, if she could only enjoy the present without those tormenting thoughts of the future that every now and then made her restless and unhappy! And what that secret disquiet was will ere long be related.