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Music by Vernon Rey.—A spirited song, with a martial refrain. Suited for a male voice.

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Many - Mile Away, and *Someone's Sweetheart.* Two songs by Ciro Pinsuti; the words by Mary Mark Lemon and D'Arcy Jaxone.—Have a pleasant humour; both songs are likely to become popular.

PHILLIPS AND PAGE.

Glory to Thee, my God, this night. Bishop Ken's evening hymn set to music by Ch. Gounod.—This is a very sweet and reverent song, admirably suited to the words, and without any very great difficulties.

EGGING AND BREAD-CRUMBING.

By PHILLIS BROWNE, Author of "The Girl's Own Cookery Book."



WAS once present when some children were being taught in cookery, and a little girl was told to fry some fish, which had been made ready for her beforehand. The poor child, who was very nervous, placed some fat in the pan and put the fish into it at once whilst it was cold, and thereupon one or two clever people round about began to laugh excessively, as if she had perpetrated the most obvious absurdity. I confess I did not see anything to be amused about. The child could not tell by instinct that the

fat should be made hot before it was used for frying, and if she had never been taught, how was she to know? Wise men tell us that instinct is only accumulated experience. It is very hard upon beginners when teachers will not understand this, and persist in taking it for granted that a pupil should know so much before she begins to learn at all. The trying part of the business is that in cooking it usually happens that this mistake is made with regard to the simplest operations. No one thinks it worth while to explain how this, that, and the other ordinary process is accomplished, and the unfortunate learner has to grope her way, arriving slowly and painfully at success through failure and disaster, while a few timely words of explanation would make everything easy for her. Egging and bread-crumbling is one of those simple operations in cookery for the due performance of which one scarcely ever sees directions given. In cookery books we very often see the words, "egg and bread-crumbs in the usual way," but few people think it necessary to go into detail concerning it. Yet it is a business in which it is exceedingly easy to make a blunder, and also scarcely possible to fail if attention is paid to one or two points. I have no doubt that there are a good many would-be cooks who feel rather in a fog as to what these points are, and who when they are called upon to egg and bread-crumbs feel anxious and uncertain as to what the result of their efforts will be. "Will the fish or the cutlet be light yellow when it is finished? or will it

be burnt? And how is it that they never can make the coating uniform, and avoid leaving it in patches and looking mottled?" If these inexperienced individuals will listen to me for a few minutes, I will tell them what I know about the process, and I hope this will enable them to discover what their mistake has hitherto been, so that they may avoid it for the future.

In trying to perform any culinary operation, it is a great assistance if we know clearly what we are aiming at, and can say in so many words what we want to do. Now, in egging and breading, we want to enclose the food which we intend to fry with a coating of egg and bread-crumbs which shall form a perfect unbroken covering of a uniform brown colour, and act as a crust to keep the fat out, and to keep the juices and goodness in. It is evident that to do any good the coating must be whole, otherwise it will not answer the purpose intended. If there is a break in it here, and another there, the flavour will get out and the fat will get in, and the whole affair will be a failure.

Our endeavour, therefore, must be to make the coating perfect, and to achieve this we must first of all look after the bread-crumbs to see that there are a sufficiency of them, and that they are of the right sort. I say "first of all," because bread-crumbs for frying are amongst the things which it is not safe to prepare just when they are wanted. If a girl says at the last moment, "Oh, dear, I want some bread-crumbs," and takes a slice off the loaf, cuts away the crust, and rubs the crumb between her hands, she is just doing what she can to make fish or cutlet, or whatever it is that is to be fried, unsightly. Crumbs made in a hurry like this are likely to be made of bread which is new, and new bread makes large, uneven crumbs, whereas the crumbs for frying should be as fine as fine oatmeal, even, and dry. They should be prepared from stale bread. It is a very slovenly way of making them to rub them between the hands; they should be rubbed through a wire sieve, and they will be all the better for being dried in a cool oven after being thus passed through. But in any case it must be understood that unless the crumbs are dry, the article to be fried will not take a good colour.

Many sensible cooks make a practice of putting aside any broken pieces of bread which they may have, and rubbing these through a sieve as they have leisure, then putting them away in a dried stoppered bottle to be used when wanted. This method is an excellent one, and can scarcely be too strongly recommended. In many households it is a difficulty to know what to do with the stale bread. Here is an excellent way of disposing of it. The crumbs may be put in a dry place, and they will improve with keeping, so long as they are not permitted to grow fusty. Even the crumbs which have had fish or croquettes rolled in them may be used again and again if they are sifted afresh; and those which have been moistened with egg, and so have stuck together, are kept back. But if through accident it should happen that crumbs must be made as they are wanted, it is absolutely necessary that the crumb only of stale bread should be taken, and it is advisable that the slices, before they are rubbed through the sieve to make them fine and even, should be put into a cool oven to secure their absolute dryness.

I dare say girls who have been to exhibitions where domestic appliances are on view are well acquainted with what is called the "rotary" grater, even if they are not fortunate enough to possess one already. The disadvantage of rubbing bread through a wire-sieve is that it is rather a lengthy process, and that you cannot rub it entirely through; there are sure to be some little pieces which must be left behind. With the "rotary" the bread can be used to the last fragment, and the machine is exceedingly expeditious in its action. A "rotary" suitable for family use costs about twelve or thirteen shillings, and in the long run it is an economy. It can be used also for mashing potatoes.

Where a wire sieve must be used, it is always possible to dry the pieces which will not pass through, till they are crisp without being brown, and when cold crush them with a rolling-pin, and afterwards put them through the sieve. By this means waste may be avoided, although the business is rather troublesome.

The crumbs being prepared, the next point to be attended to is that the article which is

to be fried is quite dry. To secure this object many cooks prepare it some time beforehand, and fold it in a clean napkin for a time to absorb the moisture; others hang it in a current of air, while others flour it lightly for the same purpose. When the last plan is adopted it is important that only as much flour should be used as is absolutely necessary, and no more. Indeed, if a perfectly dry condition can be attained without it, it would be better to omit the flour, because the granules of flour swell with the heat of the hot fat, and this tends to disturb the outer coating.

The egg is the next consideration, and concerning this there is a good deal of divergence of opinion. Some cooks say that the yolk only should be used; others take the yolk and a portion only of the white; others put a teaspoonful of boiling water with the egg; others adopt the French plan of mixing oil and water with it in the proportion of a table-spoonful of oil, a table-spoonful of water, and a little pepper and salt, for three eggs. My own opinion is that where people have had a little practice the whole of the egg may be used without difficulty, if only it is beaten up well before using. At the same time it should be remembered that where a whole egg is not likely to be required, or where novices have to do the work, the white is the part which should be left out, partly because it is much more likely to slip off than the yolk is, and partly because whites of egg can be made use of in so many ways. And in any case, if there is any fear that the egg and crumbs will not adhere properly, it should be remembered that a very little flour mixed with the bread-crumbs will help them to do so; also, that the coating is less likely to fall off if it is made ready for frying some time before cooking, because it sticks on more firmly as it becomes dry.

All things being now ready—that is, a good pile of prepared crumbs put on a sheet of kitchen paper, the egg beaten up on a plate, and the articles to be fried properly dried—take the latter and lay it on the egg, and egg it all over with a brush. Lay it on the crumbs, and taking hold of the corners of the paper, shake the crumbs over to make them

cover it in every part, handling it meanwhile as little as possible. Croquettes and fillets of fish may be tossed lightly in the bread-crumbs; cutlets may be taken up by the bone and held up to let any crumbs that do not adhere fall away; but in any and in all cases the surface must be completely covered. Still one point remains to be attended to if the dish is to be a success. It is that the fat used in frying should be hot. I spoke of this necessity once before, when I was dealing with the subject of frying (see "Girl's Own Cookery Book"), but it is so imperatively important that I must refer to it again. There should be plenty of fat in the pan, enough to immerse the article which is to be fried, and this should be so hot that it is still, and that a blue fume rises from it. Sometimes people think that fried food is greasy. If this is so, it is more than probable that the fat used was not hot enough when the article to be fried was put in. If it had been the outer surface would have been cooked perfectly, and would have formed a crust which would have prevented the grease getting inside, and which would have dried quite quickly on the outside. It is almost always safe to conclude when fried articles are greasy that the fat was not of the right temperature. The temperature for frying varies from 350 degrees for ordinary purposes to 400 degrees for white-bait. The smaller the article the hotter should be the fat.

Small slices of meat cutlets, etc., after being egg and bread-crumbed, are generally cooked in a small quantity of fat. Then they are, strictly speaking, not fried but *sauté*. In this case the fat should be melted before being used, but it should be watched carefully, because a small quantity of fat quickly burns. The article to be cooked, too, should be turned over occasionally, so that it may be equally cooked on both sides.

I suppose it is generally acknowledged that the end chiefly served by the coating of egg and bread-crumbs is the improvement of the appearance of the food. Many cooks, for the sake of economy, and also to save trouble, simply flour the article before frying it; others

dip it in milk and roll it in flour; others use a batter made of flour and water, to which a little oil has been added, if approved. This batter must be thick and smooth, and made some hours before it is wanted; or if this cannot be, the well-whisked white of egg should be stirred into it, in the proportion of one egg white to two table-spoonfuls of flour and half a gill of water. Excellent results may, however, be obtained with flour only; but it should always be remembered that though egg and bread-crumbs is better to be put on some time before frying, the article should not be dipped in until the last moment. Whatever the coating chosen may be, the fish, or whatever it is that is being dealt with, must, after being fried, be laid on a hot dish and covered with kitchen paper. This will absorb any grease which there may be on the surface. If the fat was of the right sort and the right temperature, it is the surface only which will have to be considered. If only people could be induced to use kitchen fat for frying instead of lard, they would not need to be half so uneasy about "greasiness" as they are at present. It cannot be too often or too plainly stated that of all the fats which could be chosen for frying, lard is the most commonly used, and the very worst.

There is still one word to be said about the time required for cooking anything which is egg and bread-crumbed and fried. If the fat is properly hot, and everything is properly prepared, it may be known that the article is sufficiently cooked when it is brightly browned. We have to recollect that frying is a mode of cooking which is only used for small articles, besides which fat is exceedingly hot, so that the heat penetrates very quickly. It is on this account that frying is so convenient, because when everything else is made ready the finishing process is very quickly accomplished, and there is much more danger that fried things will be overcooked than there is that they will be undercooked. The outer coating should be crisp and savoury, certainly, but the inside of the *friture* should be moist and succulent, and unless this condition is secured the business can scarcely be pronounced a success.

BITS ABOUT ANIMALS.

A LITTLE DUCK.

ONE of the most uncommon pets I ever heard of quartered itself on some friends of mine. It was, to use an Irishism, a tame wild duck. Where it came from, or why it elected to become a domestic duck, no one ever found out, but it waddled into the yard one evening. It was very small and very knowing-looking. A hen had a brood of ducks under her motherly wing, and it was thought she would make a kind foster-mother to the poor little orphan lost duckling, or whatever it was. The stranger was put into their nest. Next morning it was found ejected, and the poultry yard was up in arms over the little intruder. Hens pecked, turkeys gobbled at it, grown-up ducks sat round it and dabbed it with their big flat bills. It stood humbly in their midst, a wretched, disconsolate outcast. The children fancied it, and were indignant at the rough treatment it had received, for it was by no means an ugly duckling. They took it into the house, and the homeless duck was delighted. It waddled after them along the passage; it partook of dinner greedily; at night it cuddled close to the face of one sleeping playmate. It became such a companionable little duck. It disliked being alone, and found its way upstairs and downstairs. "Take care of Duckie, please!" the maid would say

to unwary visitors who didn't know of the household pet. Its peculiar step was known, and if it found a door closed its web-footed patten on the tiles warned those inside their feathered friend wanted to come in. "Please open the door for our Duckie," said one of the young ladies to a guest. He did so, expecting to see a child, when in rolled a complacent, pleased bird. He nearly shut the door on the twinkling-eyed Duckie, it looked so uncanny. When the children trooped into the drawing-room Duckie came too. "Hold Duckie till I finish my dinner," one child would say, and pass the well-hugged duck on to her neighbour.

Poor Duckie's diminutive size was the death of it. After living as a member of the household for some weeks it was trod on, and died. Great were the lamentations over this queer favourite, whose pattering steps had become so familiar a sound as it hurried from room to room in search of its self-chosen human companions.

MR. HARE.

A young hare was brought in one day by one of the farm men, who had managed somehow to catch it. We did not think it would live, but to our astonishment it thrived in a box in the kitchen. Two terriers we had were very anxious to demolish this new pet, but Mr. Hare was put "on trust." They used to sit

and gaze at the long-eared beast and shiver with excitement. The hare at first was timid, but he soon grew bold. He would leap out of his box and sit before the fire washing his face like a cat, the terriers meanwhile watching him attentively. He was allowed out short runs on a small piece of turf, and lived for some weeks a very much coddled hare. His ultimate fate is hid in oblivion. Whether the dogs one day quietly thought the time had come to do away with him, and managed to do so and hide the remains, or whether Mr. Hare, when out for a walk, slipped below the gate, we know not; but we do know he disappeared. The dogs were not sorry to have the hearthrug once more to themselves.

NECESSITY THE MOTHER OF INVENTION.

The mistress of a household was one night roused from her sleep by a loud noise, which appeared to come from the dining-room below and to be caused by the violent banging of a door. She wished to prevent its repetition as there was an invalid under the roof, to whom quiet was essential. Fearing that burglars were in the house, she at first hesitated to go downstairs alone; but anxiety about the sick person gave her courage, and she went softly down.

On approaching the door of the dining-