

THE GIPSY.

WANDERING from the busy fair,
Free awhile from noise and bustle,
Rests she idly in the shade;
And the softness of the air,
And the young leaves' dreamy rustle,
Seem to soothe the little maid.

Look of bird, half bold, half shy,
Pretty smile, now grave, now pleasant,
And a certain careless grace;
Dusky tresses, brilliant eye,
Air of princess, yet of peasant—
All bespeak her gipsy race.

She is silent as the morn,
Yet her kindling eyes say clearly:
"I like not your friendly stare,
Which scarce hides your kindly scorn
For the life we love most dearly,
Though we tramp from fair to fair.

"Nay, then, smile—if you must gaze—
On the humble path we follow,
While we bless you, hearth and hall:
Though they wander different ways,
Do the tame bird and the swallow,
They are sisters—after all!

"And, suppose we sometimes tire
Of the tambourine and spangles,
Of the noises and the glare;
Have you nothing to desire?
Has your world no harsher jangles
Than the music of the fair?"

ELLIS WALTON.

SIXTY POUNDS PER ANNUM, AND HOW I LIVE UPON IT.

By A YOUNG GENTLEWOMAN.

CHAPTER IV.



FEW days after I was comfortably settled in my new abode, I was making rapid progress in learning how to manage my income, so that I bid fair to realise the ideal for which I was striving, *i.e.*, to live and provide light, fire, house, and food for £40 per annum. I knew this could not be

managed without great and incessant care, but still I thought it possible. It was not, however, at first that I fully arrived at my results, for I had to win my experience at every point, and I tried various modes of living before I discovered a solution for my difficulties, and adopted a settled plan that suited me. At first I began with the usual tea or coffee for breakfast, with bread and butter, but afterwards I found that wheatmeal porridge was a better substitute, with milk, for my morning's meal, and was, moreover, a decided saving. When I advanced as far as this, I also arrived at grinding my own meal in a coffee mill, for which I paid 3s. 6d., and found a considerable saving in doing so, as wheat is generally about a penny half-penny a pound, and five pounds of wheat lasted me a fortnight for my unleavened bread and my porridge. Then I discovered that I could make the latter twice a week, as it was more nutritious after keeping a day or two. When I got tired of wheatmeal porridge, I fell back on oatmeal and Indian meal instead. The last-named can also be ground in a coffee-mill, and is worth about a penny a pound.

One of the secrets of making any kind of porridge is to have the water you are about to use really boiling—bubbling up, I mean. Sprinkle the meal in with the left hand, while you stir with the right. This prevents it gathering into lumps. Oatmeal requires at

least twenty minutes' brisk boiling, but wheat meal will be cooked in ten minutes. Indian meal takes the longest time to boil of all, and will not be cooked under thirty or forty minutes. It may, however, be mixed with wheat or oatmeal with advantage. All these moist foods (I am told by a doctor) should be eaten very slowly. They may be eaten with salt or with sugar and milk, or else with "golden syrup" or a syrup made of fruit. One drawback in London is the dearth of milk. It is rarely to be depended on, save from a thoroughly good company, and costs from fourpence to fivepence a quart. Now, however, skim-milk can be got, and so can butter-milk. All the milk used should, in my opinion, be boiled before using. The unsweetened "Swiss milk" is considered by many to be the least expensive form of milk, but I did not find this the case. Perhaps I should have been more successful if I had liked it for porridge, but I did not, though it is very nice for tea or coffee; and also is preferred by many to eat with puddings, instead of cream.

I had thought a great deal over the subject of diet before I went to my new home, and I saw that I should not be able to manage on the usual diet, nor the general method of preparing the meals of the day.

In the first place, the cooking of meat was not to be thought of—even the smell and the grease alone put that entirely out of the question. So I was either thrown back on buying meat and poultry ready cooked, or on becoming in some sort a vegetarian, while retaining milk, cheese, butter and eggs in my diet. This last decision suited me best, and I felt I could manage very well on it, as I had never been a great meat-eater in my life, and did not care about it at all. I had learnt quite enough of the respective values of edibles to know that meat held a very low place, compared to the cereals, beans, peas, or lentils; the latter, indeed, contains more nutriment than can be found in any other single food. So my mind was made up. My object was to live, and to make eight shillings a week sufficient for everything, and so I went to work to arrive at my wished-for goal as soon as might

be possible. The first thing after making porridge was to try to make bread.

I was rather proud, as the days went on, of my success in this way. It was unfermented, and I had learnt to like it long before in my girlish days, and everyone who tasted it enjoyed it. I had several ways of making it, either with whole wheatmeal, white flour, or a mixture of Indian-meal, ryemeal, or oatmeal, with flour or whole wheatmeal. Any of these compounds were good. The flour, whatever it be, must be mixed with boiling water till resolved into a thick dough, and then rolled out into a flat cake, which I used to bake, as the Australians do their "damper," I believe, in the frying-pan, which latter requires in the first instance a very slight greasing. Do not wet the dough too much, nor roll more than twice, if possible, for fear of making it too heavy, and doubtless I need not say to you, do not make them thick; about an inch in thickness is quite enough, if not too much. Only experience will enable you to make them well, as it is impossible to say how much flour is needed, or how much water to mix it with. I used a large white basin, and one of my cakes sometimes lasted two days. But I am not a great bread-eater. Mrs. Murray, who used to come to tea very often, thought them delicious when first made, and eaten hot, cut open and buttered. Honey is a very agreeable addition to them.

People unaccustomed to unfermented bread and cakes require to get used to it; for our tastes have become so vitiated by civilisation that we cannot get used to the primitive forms. Cornmeal bread and cakes I am particularly fond of, and they are equally good hot or cold. The following is a good and simple recipe for corn-bread.

One pint of corn-flour, one pint of ordinary flour, half a teaspoonful of cream of tartar, half a teaspoonful of soda, and a little salt. Mix the two flours together first, and rub the soda smoothly into the milk—a small quantity of milk to begin with. Mix the cream of tartar dry with the flour, then add the milk. Beat till quite smooth with a wooden spoon, and bake in a quick oven for about thirty minutes.

DERBYSHIRE SEED BREAD.

Take one pound of flour, quarter of a pound of butter, six ounces of sugar, a few caraway seeds, one egg well beaten, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder; mix the baking powder with a little cold milk; rub the butter into the flour, add the sugar and the egg, and *lastly mix the whole into a light dough with a little cold milk.* A few raisins will be an improvement to this very modest recipe, which costs little and will keep for days. Bake in a slow oven, forming into the shape of buns on the tin you bake in.

My small household arrangements in my new home were all gathered together in one of the large cupboards, standing about four feet high, which were fixtures on either side of the mantelpiece in the sitting-room. They were sufficiently deep and commodious to hold all my belongings, and were pantry, kitchen, and larder in one, while I used the top as my kitchen table, and had a sheet of white American cloth as a cover, which could easily be washed clean. The first summer and autumn of my living alone I did all my cooking with the aid of a spirit lamp. I have the lamp, stand, two saucepans, a frying pan, and a tea kettle. I can, I think, perform all kinds of cookery on my spirit lamp. The best of these lamps are those that have a lid, by means of which one can reduce the fire to half, and this will be found to keep the pot boiling or saucepan cooking for fully half an hour. The best saucepans are of enamelled iron, which are easily kept clean, and the frying pan should be of this also. Stewed fruit, rice milk, batter puddings, custard puddings, blanchmange, stewed tomatoes, all kinds of soups; all of these are most successfully managed with the spirit lamp, and so is my wheatmeal porridge and my unfermented bread, which is baked in the frying pan.

With the advent of winter the sphere of my cookery enlarged, and I boiled my beans, peas, and lentils over the fire; and did enough of the former, and boiled enough potatoes to last some days, sometimes, indeed, quite a week. My method of cooking the beans was to soak them overnight in cold water; about half a pint of beans are enough; the small white haricots must be used. In the morning drain the beans and put them into a saucepan with plenty of cold water and a little salt. They should boil gently till they are tender, but not reduced to a pulp. Two hours is usually sufficient to cook them, then pour away nearly all the water and dredge in plenty of flour, with an ounce of butter, stirring them till they are thickened; a table-spoonful of chopped parsley is also added. Another way is to rub the butter into an ounce of flour, add half a pint of water and a table-spoonful of parsley, and when the beans are drained into a cullender, put them back into a saucepan in which the sauce has been heated. Shake them well over the fire till thoroughly mixed with it.

When cold they should be put away in a covered basin, and may be warmed up in many ways: curried, fried, mixed with Liebig's essence, and with grated cheese.

I add a few more recipes, which may be useful, if only as suggestions.

BUTTERED EGGS, OR "RUMBED EGGS."

Break two or three eggs into a small stewpan, put in a table-spoonful of milk, a table-spoonful of butter, a little salt, and a little pepper. Set the pan over a moderate fire and stir the eggs with a spoon, being careful to keep all in motion till the eggs are set. Make a slice of toast, and pour the eggs on it, lightly pepper the top, and serve.

POTATOES "A LA MAITRE D'HOTEL."

Put a table-spoonful of butter into your pan, melt it, and mix smoothly into it a small table-spoonful of flour. Then stir in slowly a pint of

milk. Stir constantly, till the milk begins to rise, when it is done. Then put in your cold potatoes, cut in slices, and add a little parsley chopped-up finely. The potatoes are ready to serve as soon as they are hot throughout.

AN EASILY MADE OMELET.

Take a small table-spoonful of flour, add enough water, or milk, to make a thin batter. Beat up two eggs very well, and add them to it, with a pinch of salt, and a little chopped up ham, or parsley. Pour the mixture into a well-greased pan, and fry to a light brown; turn and roll when done.

HAM TOAST.

Chop-up very finely the lean of a little boiled ham, beat-up the yolk and white of an egg, and mix with the ham, adding a little milk, to make a soft batter. Scald it over the fire, stirring all the time; have ready some well-buttered toast, and pour the mixture on it, and serve.

APPLE AND LEMON SAUCE.

Boil half-a-pint of water, with three-quarters of a pound of white sugar, till it becomes a rich syrup. Add the grated peel and juice of a large lemon, and a pound of apples, weighed after they have been peeled, cored, and cut small. Boil till reduced to a pulp; put into a jar. This sauce will keep for a year if needful.

CHEAP MARMALADE.

Add to twelve sweet oranges, one lemon. Squeeze out the juice, and boil the rinds till quite tender. Then cut into chips, taking out the seeds. Add to the juice, with a pound of sugar to every pound of orange peel. Boil for an hour over a slow fire, and when it begins to fasten, it is done.

MACARONI AND CHEESE.

Take two ounces of macaroni, boil for three-quarters of an hour, strain off the water; make a sauce of two table-spoonfuls of corn-flour and a little milk; put into the saucepan and boil. Then add the macaroni, and sprinkle in four table-spoonfuls of grated cheese, add a little butter and pepper, stir up well for a quarter of an hour, and serve. This may be also baked in the oven, with a little more cheese and butter on the top to make it brown, and served as "macaroni cheese."

STEWED TOMATOES.

Take a third part of the contents of a tin of tomatoes, or three or four fresh ones, cut up, put them into a saucepan on the fire, and add breadcrumbs to thicken them, a small lump of better, pepper and salt. Boil for about fifteen minutes.

TOMATO SOUP.

Take half the contents of a tin of tomatoes, put them on the fire in a small saucepan, and thicken with a table-spoonful of flour, rubbed up with a little butter. When hot, add a pint of milk, boil till thick enough, and serve. This is delicious tomato soup, and with bread, will form an appetising dinner.

SOUP WITH "LIEBIG'S EXTRACT OF MEAT."

Take a handful of the dried prepared vegetables for soup, and boil in a pint and a half of water for about half an hour; then mix enough extract in a cup with boiling water and a little salt to flavour the soup. This is generally about three-quarters of a table-spoonful.

APPLE AND RICE.

Boil three table-spoonfuls of rice. When tender, stir in two or three table-spoonfuls of stewed apples, a little piece of butter, and sugar to taste. Serve hot. Any kind of fruit may be substituted for apples in the summer, if already stewed.

FRUIT TOAST.

Make several rounds of dry toast, pour over them sufficient water to soften it. Have ready a dish of stewed fruit of any kind, with plenty

of juice, and while it is boiling hot put the toast in layers in a deep dish, and pour the hot fruit over each layer of toast. The latter will absorb so large a portion of juice as to surprise you, and the dish is a most agreeable one for summer.

As I look over the various cookery books, I think there are numbers of recipes capable of adaptation to the wants of the single woman who wishes to cook for herself. I found after a time that I could reduce my labour in many ways. For instance, as I sat by my fire in the evening, I could prepare and cook the dinner for the morrow; make a little marmalade and boil my beans, peas, or potatoes; and so, when to-morrow came, my meal was soon ready. Beans and peas I considered as a meat course, and generally had some fruit for the sweet portion of the meal. Tea I never took, except at afternoon or "five o'clock tea," as I preferred a little cocoa at night, or even gruel occasionally, or a cup of Liebig, instead of a heavy meal. I am quite sure that the majority of people eat more than is at all needful, and they would be in better health with less to digest, or else with food of a lighter nature, yet more nutritious. This is the case with bread especially. The ordinary white baker's bread, or indeed the usual brown bread sold by them, are neither of them sufficiently nutritious, and people are induced to eat that which does not do them good. The real unfermented bread is so extremely solid and satisfying that one cannot eat much of it.

In addition to being a nice, pleasant woman, I found my kind landlady a most intelligent one, anxious to learn and improve herself in every way. Her admiration for my prowess in the cookery line was immense; and I soon found that she enjoyed nothing so much as a visit while my cookery was going on. Her delight over it was extraordinary, and she soon developed quite a talent for acquiring new ideas, adding to her labours the enthusiasm which I have seen manifested by a first-class chef, who considers his art the first in the universe! She was certainly an admirable cook, a "born" cook, such as very few are. She soon supplied herself with a small gas-stove, and her husband declared her new accomplishments had "made her quite a girl again."

Her weekly cleaning of my rooms, with my daily dusting and brushing up the floor with dustpan and brush, kept everything in perfect order, and I was quite comfortable and happy. I was fortunate, too, in having the upstairs watertap close to me, on the little landing above, and consequently I could get my bath with no trouble for myself. As there happened to be no bathroom, I had been obliged to provide myself with a round sponge-bath, which fortunately required but little water. When the winter came my kind landlady insisted on lighting my sitting-room fire every morning, and putting my kettle to boil before I was up. There was no use in remonstrating, for I have learnt that one can give more pleasure to people by accepting small services than by any gift you can bestow upon them.

I think I have, so far, proved that my attempt to live on my income of £60 per annum, was, and has been, a successful one. At least, I have not had too many complaints or fault-finders from my aunt, who personifies "Mrs. Grundy" in my existence. She even deigns to partake of afternoon tea with me, and entertains me at dinner, without finding me too much of a "poor relation" to be presented to her friends. I have kept up my languages, and have made great progress with my painting; and Mrs. Murray has been heard to prophesy that I shall take a higher flight yet, and shall probably surprise my friends before long.

[THE END.]