

his home everybody knew there was a skeleton of some sort, though nobody was quite sure of what sort it was. Some said Mrs. Purves went out of her mind at times, others said she drank. A few reported that the doctor beat his wife, but that was generally declared to be a lie. At any rate, Mrs. Purves was occasionally seen, draggled, demented; and in the house there was always a stern-faced woman, who seemed something between a nurse and a keeper. At intervals everything was right with Mrs. Purves, and she entertained her neighbours, and was very affable and charming. Miss Soutar had taken afternoon tea on several occasions. But was this a house to which to send an impressionable young girl—this house that might well, at any moment, be the scene of terrible tragedy? No, Miss Soutar felt she could not do it.

Then there were the Maws, who changed their servants every month or two because of Mrs. Maw's temper. If Morag went there and remained longer, it would be by submitting to a perpetual storm of railing and abuse enough to scald all the bloom from a sensitive spirit.

Lastly, there were the Whites—yes, there were ten of the Whites—and they none of them did anything for themselves, and they kept but one servant, a good little drudge, who was now going

away to be married to a man whom she had waited for ten years. Miss Soutar had seen her beating mats at half-past five in the morning, and known her to be cleaning silver at ten o'clock at night, and she had scarcely ever been seen without a black mark on her face, or with clean hands. That would not be a good exchange from Mrs. Cay's. As the Whites never spoke to their drudge except to give orders, it would be but solitary slavery in place of solitary confinement. Possibly the last poor little woman had been upheld by the thought of the absent lover, and Miss Soutar hoped that he would not show too much dismay at his bride's worn-down looks when she joined him in America.

Miss Soutar reflected silently that one may go to take tea with a great many people into whose kitchens one would not readily put a girl whom one loved.

"And of course, that means that no girl ought to be there!" she thought.

But she kept all these reflections to herself. She was not going to magnify the difficulties of Morag's position, and to own the truth, she was rather afraid that if she revealed some of these obstacles, this rash young experimenter might insist on tackling them!

Of course Miss Soutar knew of a great many nice people in whose well-arranged

households servants were kept. But the thing was they were really kept—they stayed! It was only death, marriage, or some extraordinary domestic crisis of their own which made an opening in their ranks. There was no such opening now. There was no reason to suppose there would be any.

"If Morag were but a little older, it would be different," considered the kind little infant-mistress. "By the time a woman is three or four-and-twenty, she ought to have an atmosphere of her own, with which she can surround herself and act on other people. But these young things of seventeen or so are still in a state of solution. I am not sure that Morag has not something of an atmosphere about her already; but if she has, that only makes one the more anxious that it should not get dispersed before it is settled. Of one thing I am clear. I will not myself recommend this girl to any place unless I am quite sure its influences are good. If she is to run any risk, she must do so on her account, for then she will be the more on her guard."

The result of their conference was that Morag put an advertisement into the *Northern Light*, a journal which had a circulation over a wide area of country.

(To be continued.)

SOME COLD MEAT COOKERY.

By AMY S. WOODS.



HAT to do with cold meat?" is, even in these modern days when we are blessed with so much technical education, so many classes to initiate us into the mysteries of "Highclass," "middle class," and "artizan" cookery, a

question of no little importance to many housekeepers, especially to those who have the management of small households and small incomes, to whom the sirloin of beef or leg of mutton after its first appearance as a hot joint, and its second as a cold one, is apt to assume the character of a too-well-known bug-bear which must be disposed of somehow before any newer and daintier dish can grace the family table.

The beef can be minced, it is true, and the mutton hashed, but the minced beef and hashed mutton of the ordinary "plain cook" are as a rule more economical and homely than appetising, and their too frequent appearance is apt to call forth the displeasure of at any rate the masculine members of the household. So in despair the poor house-mistress, dreading the difficulty of disposing of the remains of the joints, adopts the practice of providing steaks and cutlets and fancy dishes in preference

to the more nutritious, but too-lasting joints. In most cases this plan is not a good one, for as we all know, a large or medium-sized joint of meat loses less of its nourishment in the process of cooking, and contains more of the red juices and blood and flesh-forming properties than smaller dishes, with the exception of a perfectly-grilled steak or mutton-chop, besides which, the household stock-pot suffers from the loss of the liquor in which a joint has been boiled, and which serves as a foundation for many soups; there is little or no dripping for frying, or, when properly clarified, to use for plain cakes and pastry; and last, but by no means least, no large bones to provide the gelatinous substance which should form such an important and nourishing item in every soup.

It is therefore to the younger and less-experienced housekeepers, and to those elder ones who, though they have to study economy in the arranging of their menus, yet shrink alike from the insipidity of mutton cold and mutton hashed (though the latter dish is by no means to be despised if carefully prepared), that I offer these few suggestions for cold meat cookery. Having referred to hashed mutton, perhaps it will not be inappropriate for me to commence by giving a recipe for

Hachis de Mouton à la Parisienne.—For this dish take some cold mutton perfectly free from fat, skin and gristle; chop it finely with the same weight of chestnuts, roasted till floury and weighed after the removal of the skins. Put into a saucepan a teaspoonful of flour mixed with a quarter of an ounce of fresh butter previously melted; when nicely browned put in the chopped meat and chestnuts moistened with a little good stock or gravy, and seasoned with salt, black pepper,

and a suspicion of nutmeg; well mix over the fire, then cover the saucepan and allow it to remain for an hour over a very slow fire, then serve the hash on a hot dish—silver if you possess one—garnished with *croûtons* of bread fried very dry, alternated with tiny bunches of fried parsley.

A pleasing variety may be made by substituting mushrooms, tinned or fresh, for the chestnuts, and adding a good tablespoonful of ketchup to the gravy; or a larger quantity of meat may be used without any additions beyond the seasoning and gravy except two tablespoonfuls of Brand's or Worcester sauce, and the hash served garnished with alternate baked tomatoes and little heaps of plain boiled rice. The simplest way of cooking the former is to place them in a deep baking-tin, putting on each one a tiny scrap of butter, a pinch of salt, and a dust of pepper, and bake for ten minutes in a quick oven. The rice should be boiled in a large saucepan full of salt and water, so that each grain is perfectly separate, and dried for a few minutes on a sieve before the fire.

Hachis du rôti de Bœuf may be made in the same way from the remainder of a joint of roast beef, substituting two sheep's brains slightly boiled in salt and water for the chestnuts or mushrooms, and adding a tablespoonful of mushroom ketchup as a flavouring.

Another excellent way of using minced meat, though it cannot boast of such a grand name as the two foregoing recipes, is to form it into a shape or mould with macaroni.

For this dish you will require three quarters of a pound of cold roast or boiled fresh meat, finely chopped, one tablespoonful of gravy, a quarter of a pound of fine bread-crumbs, a

quarter of a pound of macaroni, one or two eggs, and a small piece of butter. Boil the macaroni in salt and water till tender, drain it well, and having buttered a basin or plain mould, line it at the bottom and up the sides with macaroni. Mix together thoroughly the meat, bread-crumbs, and gravy, season highly with pepper and salt, and bind with one egg, or two if required; fill the mould with the forcemeat, placing any macaroni you may have left in layers between it, press down firmly, set a small plate or saucer on the mould and steam for half-an-hour. Turn out carefully, and serve with some good thick brown gravy poured round, but not over the mould. It may be garnished in many tasteful ways, according to the fancy of the cook; the simplest plan is to place a cluster of parsley in the centre, but in a mould composed of mutton a ring of boiled carrot pressed through a sieve may edge the top, or alternate horse-radish and parsley on one made of beef; or when veal and ham is used the edging may be of hot grated ham interspersed with parsley, of tiny slices of lemon or little heaps of grated lemon rind.

This dish admits of many varieties; besides the beef, mutton, or veal and ham, to which I have referred, turkey and chicken and ham, or game with a little lean bacon are excellent served in the same way. When using veal, chicken, or turkey the addition of a little chopped parsley and a teaspoonful of fine herbs will be generally considered an improvement. Rissoles of beef or mutton are common enough in most households, but the following mode of preparing them will be found superior to the general method.

Take half a pint of stock or gravy, thicken with an ounce of flour, and season with salt, pepper, and a pinch of cayenne, and, if liked, a tablespoonful of Worcester sauce; stir over the fire until the rawness of the flour is removed, then add sufficient finely chopped and pounded meat to make a thick paste; add one beaten egg, stir the mixture over the fire for five minutes, then turn on to a floured dish to cool. When cold, form into long rolls, egg and bread-crumbs, and fry in very hot fat. Arrange the rissoles on a d'oyley or dish-paper with a bunch of fried parsley in the centre.

Fish rissoles are excellent made in the same way, substituting a thick white sauce made with half a pint of milk, one ounce of butter, and one ounce of flour for the stock, and any kind of white fish, well pounded, for the meat. The sauce should be well seasoned. The secret of success in frying rissoles, as well as every kind of fried dish, is to have the fat so far beyond boiling point that it has ceased to bubble, and to use plenty of it. No frying

will be successful if the quantity of fat used is too small, and as the same fat can be clarified and used over and over again there is no economy in not using a sufficient quantity.

Croûtes aux Jambon is a useful breakfast dish for using up a ham which is no longer presentable for the table. For it allow two ounces of finely chopped ham, which should be lean, one ounce of butter, one teaspoonful of finely chopped parsley, and one of fine herbs, and a seasoning of salt and pepper, with a little cayenne. Mix well. Melt the butter in a saucepan and adding the mixture stir over the fire till thoroughly hot. Have ready some slices of bread—not too thin—cut them into rounds with a pastry-cutter and fry a nice delicate brown in hot fat. On each one pile up some of the hot meat, garnish with fried parsley and serve at once.

Although fish dishes can hardly be correctly termed cold meat cookery, I think my readers will find the following recipes so excellent, that they will pardon me for giving them here.

Fish Soufflé is a pleasant change from the orthodox fish pie or pudding. Melt in a lined saucepan two ounces of butter, stir in (off the fire to prevent lumps) two ounce of flour and a good teaspoonful of anchovy sauce. Season with salt and a little cayenne and add the yolks of two eggs and a gill of milk. Continue stirring over the fire till the mixture is at boiling-point, then add five ounces of white fish, well pounded, and a tablespoonful of cream. Mix thoroughly, then stir in very lightly the whites of the eggs beaten to a stiff froth, pour into a *soufflé* dish, or failing this, an ordinary pie-dish, and bake for half-an-hour. The top should be nicely browned before serving.

Turbot au gratin is a general favourite, and if a little care is taken in the preparation of the sauce cannot fail to be a success.

To make the sauce, which is a very important item in this dish, and one which raises it above the ordinary level of fish pies, place in a stew-pan one pint of new milk, half a pint of water, one onion, one blade of mace, a small bunch of parsley, the trimmings of six medium-sized mushrooms or a dozen small ones, and a little salt. Leave them to simmer over the fire for twenty minutes, and meanwhile melt in another saucepan one ounce of butter, thickened with the same quantity of flour; strain the liquor from the stew-pan and add it very gradually to the paste, continue stirring till it boils, then remove it to the side of the fire and stir till perfectly smooth, then add the strained juice of half a lemon; beat up the yolks of two eggs with two tablespoonfuls of milk, and strain them to the sauce; keep stirring over the fire until thoroughly cooked, but beware of letting the sauce boil, as it will quickly curdle.

Remove from the flesh of a cold boiled turbot all the skin and bone and cut it into small dice. Place in a buttered pie-dish a layer of fine bread-crumbs, then half your mushrooms cut into quarters, then add alternate layers of fish and sauce until the dish is full; but place over your last layer of fish the remainder of your mushrooms, then the sauce, and finally a covering of bread-crumbs with tiny scraps of butter amongst them. Bake in a moderate oven for half-an-hour.

A deep pie-dish is necessary for this dish, and better than an earthen one will be found the enamelled iron pans which can be hidden by a "pie-dish collar," or a folded napkin when the dish is sent to table.

Should mushrooms be thought too extravagant their omission will not spoil the dish, though it will not be quite so *recherché* without them, and in winter when eggs are scarce, half the quantity of sauce made with one egg will be found sufficient for a small dish.

With one more recipe for "Curried Fish" I will close. This will be found a favourite dish in cold weather. For it you will require the remains of any cold white fish, which must be flaked and fried a nice brown with three ounces of butter and a sliced onion; place the fish in a stew-pan and add some white stock prepared as below; give one boil and serve with a border of rice boiled as directed in the recipe for hashed mutton.

For the stock, take a teacupful of white stock and simmer in it for one hour a small teaspoonful of curry-powder, then thicken with a tablespoonful of flour, add the juice of half a lemon and a seasoning of salt and cayenne. After the stock has been added to the fish stir in gradually a quarter of a pint of cream, and finish as directed above. Should cream not be procurable allow a quarter of a pint more stock with half the quantity more of the curry-powder, etc.

In conclusion let me advise all housekeepers and cooks who desire to produce tempting dishes from the commonplace material of cold meat or fish, to beware of carelessness in their preparation. It is carelessness that is usually to blame when stews and hashes are tough and insipid, or when curries either burn the mouths of those who partake of them, or have little flavour beyond a lurking suspicion of onions and pepper.

If you wish to make your cold meat cookery acceptable to those for whom you cater, see, by personal supervision, that each dish is delicately and carefully prepared, tastefully garnished, and served as hot as it can possibly be, with the all-important accompaniments of a clean table-cloth, bright silver, hot plates, and a smiling face.

VARIETIES.

B. A. kindly sends us the following information:—

1. St. Paul's choir is the largest cathedral choir in England, and costs the most to keep up.

2. It consists of thirty boys and eighteen men.

3. It is true that at certain great festivals the choir is assisted by some two hundred men and boys from outside; but these have nothing to do with the cathedral.

4. Other choirs are certainly as good as Durham, e.g. those of Westminster Abbey, the Chapels Royal, and Oxford Cathedral.

5. Probably St. Paul's fights King's College, Cambridge, for second place amongst English choirs.

6. But it is fully acknowledged by all competent judges that for some years past the

best choir in the world has been that of Magdalen College, Oxford. This choir, which consists of sixteen boys and ten men, costs the college £3000 a year. When a vacancy arises for an adult voice, almost every cathedral in the country is represented at the competition. At the last trial of voices for a tenor there were nearly eighty competitors; and about twenty-five boys try for each vacancy amongst the trebles. A mistake during service is practically unknown to the choir.

The Magdalen chapel for sound is considered to be absolutely perfect.

GREAT PEOPLE.—"The truly great people are those who have done everything thoroughly and who have never despised anything, however small, of God's making."—*Ruskin*.

BE IN EARNEST.—Charles Dickens in one of his letters says: "Every day of my life I feel more and more that to be thoroughly in earnest is everything, while to be anything short of it is nothing."

THE POET'S TESTIMONY.—Shortly before his death the poet Whittier wrote as follows:—"The foundations seem breaking up. I only hope that if the planks and stagings of human device give way, we shall find the Eternal rock beneath. We cannot do without God; and of Him we are sure. All that science and criticism can urge cannot shake the self-evident truth that He asks me to be true, just, merciful and loving; and because He asks me to be so, I know that He is Himself what He requires me to be."