

"It will be a long convalescence, doctor; but he is fairly out of danger now."

"Thank God! We can afford to be patient, if only he is spared us. Is he very much pulled down?"

"Yes, poor child. First the exhaustion, then the fever—no wonder he is pale and thin and weak. But he often smiles now, and he is the pet of the hospital. Patients, doctors, nurses—we all love him."

"And when may I see him?"

"I wish I could say—as soon as you like! As it is, we must wait till he asks for you, or till he is decidedly stronger."

"I can wait. I am too thankful for his life to be impatient."

"Here, Surgical Hospital."

For the first time Nurse Lester was the one to open the communication with Dr. Webber, though it was nearly five weeks since she had first spoken with him through the telephone. Now she was nervously tapping the heel of her light shoe against the floor, and there was a look of puzzled anxiety on her face which did not clear when she heard the well-known voice speaking in quick disturbed accents.

"Here, Dr. Webber. Anything wrong?"

"No, not exactly. Eric is rather better. He had half a pint of beef tea for dinner and a cupful of cocoa just now; but— Excuse me, doctor, I am afraid I must ask a somewhat indiscreet question."

"Well?"

"I am afraid it may—"

"Don't trouble about me, if it can help the boy. What is it?"

The nurse hesitated an instant, then plunged boldly into the subject.

"Doctor, is your wife alive?"

"Yes." The reply was curt, yet in the very harshness of the tone lay an indication of intense pain.

"Is she with you?"

"No."

The pained look deepened on Nurse Lester's face; but she resolutely continued her inquiry.

"Forgive me, doctor, but it may be a question of life or death for Eric. He asks for his mother, and nothing will satisfy him but the promise that she shall come to him."

"Oh, my God! And I want him so! He is everything to me! Does he not ask for me?"

There was such a depth of suffering in Dr. Webber's voice that Nurse Lester had to struggle for composure before she could answer in the cruel negative.

"No, doctor, he has not asked for you yet; but I am sure he will soon."

There was a moment's pause; then the nurse resumed somewhat timidly—

"Could you let Mrs. Webber know she is wanted here?"

"I am not quite sure of her whereabouts; but I will do my best to find her out. Tell Eric that father will send mother to him."

"I will. Would you like me to say anything else?"

"No. Let him forget me if he will!"

The bitterness of the last sentence hurt her. It was with infinite pity in her voice that she said—

"I am so sorry! I am sure Eric could not forget a father who is so fond of him. He is so clinging in his affection, poor little laddie!"

There was no response to these last words; so Nurse Lester merely added, "Good afternoon!" Then she stopped the communication.

Two days later, Nurse Lester stood before the telephone with a sweet young creature, in whose face sadness and joy were pathetically blended. As soon as communication was established between the hospital and Dr. Webber, the nurse glided into an adjoining room, closing the door behind her.

It was, this time, not her ear that listened eagerly for the doctor's sonorous voice—not the nurse's heart that beat faster at the familiar sound—but that of the estranged wife longing for reconciliation.

"How is the boy, nurse? How did he stand the meeting?"

"Oh, Donald, our boy is longing to see you. He was so glad to see me, poor baby; but now he keeps saying, 'Father too!' Won't you come, Donald?"

"I can't, Evelyn—not while you are there."

"Donald, be merciful! You know you condemned me unheard. I wronged you, I know; but I have repented bitterly. Forgive me for the sake of our boy! The doctor says we must on no account cross his wishes in his present weak state. You always were so fond of little Eric!"

"I can't, Evelyn! Besides, he does not really want me. Don't ask me to come!" And the communication was discontinued.

With bowed head, young Mrs. Webber left the room and returned to her child.

Nurse Lester clenched her fists in the twilight of the passage, and cast from her a tumult of rising passion, before she lit the gas and went about her evening duties.

Next morning it was the nurse, not the mother, who stood at the telephone, waiting for Dr. Webber to speak.

"Here, Dr. Webber. Who is there?"

"Doctor, you must come! Eric has had a restless night, and is feverish. He clings to

his mother and asks her to call father. You must come!"

"I can't!"

Nurse Lester hardened her heart and voice.

"If Eric dies, it will be your fault, doctor."

The next moment she heard a wild broken cry which frightened her. But presently the voice that had grown so familiar to her sounded through the telephone, calm and solemn.

"I will come!"

For an instant Nurse Lester forgot her habitual self-control, and involuntarily exclaimed, "God bless you!" The next moment she recovered herself and added, "May we expect you by the twelve o'clock train?"

"Yes. Good morning!"

Little Eric lay sleeping in his white hospital cot. His tiny pale face was pillowed against his mother's hand; his own left hand was clasped round one of her fingers. The bandaged arm and shoulder were held motionless by splints. He looked frail and ethereal, but very peaceful. His mother sat beside him, watching him with a look of infinite love.

Nurse Lester had drawn a screen round Eric's cot and had slipped out of the room. Now she was waiting in the entrance-hall, trying to imagine what appearance belonged to the voice of the man she had never seen but who was, nevertheless, no stranger to her. Her whole heart was filled with the wish that the estranged husband and wife might be drawn together by the bedside of their only child.

A tall dark man, with a noble face and earnest eyes, entered the hall. Nurse Lester advanced to meet him with outstretched hand, as one goes to welcome an old and valued friend.

"Dr. Webber, I believe?"

"Ah, you must be Nurse Lester! How can I ever thank you for all you have done for me and for my boy?"

He wrung her hand and looked down into the eyes she raised to his face with a deep gratitude shining in his own.

"Come to your wife and child," she said simply, in the soft, persuasive voice he knew so well. "Eric is asleep now, but you can see him at once."

She led the way, and he followed in silence. She saw him fall on his knees beside his sleeping boy and extend his hand to his wife in sign of pardon. As she closed the door behind her, she heard the solemn kiss of reconciliation. And her heart swelled with happiness and thanksgiving for the reunion of two lives that were indelibly bound together by the love of a little child.

It was not long before little Eric returned home to the arms of his mother and father.

COOKERY RECIPES.

MEAT DISHES.

HOW TO CHOOSE MEAT.

1. Beef should be a good red colour with yellowish fat.
2. Mutton should be a good red but not so red as beef; the fat should be firm and white.
3. The flesh of veal should be finely grained and the fat should be firm.
4. The flesh of pork should be finely grained, the fat white and without kernels.
5. The flesh of good meat is firm to the touch and no moisture exudes.
6. There should be no unpleasant smell.

RULES FOR ROASTING AND BAKING MEAT.

1. Have ready a clear, bright fire for roasting, and a hot oven for baking.
2. Wipe the meat with a damp cloth.
3. For baking, lay the meat on a meat-rack on a dripping-tin.
4. Put the meat in the hottest part of the oven first of all, or if roasting hang it at first quite near the fire; this is to keep in the juices. Afterwards let it cook more gently that it may not be hard.
5. Baste often.

6. A thick joint takes longer to cook than a thin one of the same weight.

7. Meat with bone cooks more quickly than meat without.

TO MAKE GRAVY.

1. Put the meat on a hot dish and keep it hot while you make the gravy.
2. Pour away the dripping into a clean basin.
3. Pour a sufficient quantity of hot water or stock into the dripping tin; add pepper and salt and a dredge of flour and boil up.

4. If the brown bits in the tin do not make the gravy brown enough, add a little browning.

RULES FOR BOILING MEAT.

1. Salt meat should be put into cold water.
2. Put fresh meat into warm or boiling water, according to its size. Never put a very small piece into boiling water or it will harden at once.
3. Skim well.
4. If vegetables are cooked with the meat, put them in after the meat has been skimmed the first time.

RULES FOR STEWING.

1. Cook long, cook slowly.
2. Do not skim stews.
3. Keep the lid on the saucepan.
4. Stir from time to time.
5. Do not let the stew boil.

STUFFED STEAK.

Ingredients.—Two pounds of steak, six ounces of bread crumbs, two ounces of chopped parsley, one small onion (chopped), one egg (beaten), a little stock or milk, pepper and salt.

Method.—Spread the steak out on a board; mix the bread crumbs in a basin with the parsley, onion, pepper, salt, egg and stock and spread on the steak; roll up, tie with tape, lay on a meat rack on a dripping tin and put plenty of dripping on top. Bake in a hot oven for thirty minutes and then lower the heat and cook one hour and a half. Remove the tape and put the steak on a hot dish. Make gravy in the usual way and pour round.

Breast of mutton can be boned, stuffed and cooked in the same way.

STUFFED SHEEP'S HEART.

Ingredients.—A sheep's heart, two ounces of bread crumbs, three-quarters of an ounce of chopped parsley, a small piece of chopped onion, one egg, pepper and salt.

Method.—Make the stuffing as for stuffed steak. Well wash the heart in warm water and salt to clear out the blood. Cut off the auricles, trim away some of the outer fat and cut down the wall that goes down the centre, fill with stuffing and tie a piece of greased paper over the top. Put the heart on a greased dripping tin with the dripping on top and cook in a moderate oven for one hour. The heart may also be cooked in a saucepan with dripping, but great care must be taken not to let it burn.

BOILED SALT BEEF AND VEGETABLES.

Method.—Wipe the meat with a damp cloth; put in the saucepan with cold water and bring slowly to the boil. Skim well and put in carrots, turnips, parsnips and onions washed and prepared. Skim again when it comes again to the boil. Cook gently until all are tender. A piece of salt beef weighing six pounds will take about two hours and a half.

IRISH STEW.

Ingredients.—One pound and a half of neck of mutton (scrag or middle), three pounds of potatoes, one pound of onions, water to cover, pepper and salt, a little chopped parsley.

Method.—Chop the mutton into nice sized pieces and take away all gristle; prepare the vegetables, cutting all the potatoes, except four, into quarters, and cutting the onions in slices from top to bottom; cut the other four potatoes in halves; arrange the rest with the meat and onions in layers in a stewpan, putting the halves of potatoes on the top; cover with water, season with pepper and salt and simmer very gently for two hours. Arrange the halves of potatoes round a hot dish with a little parsley on each, arrange the rest of the stew in the middle with the gravy over.

BROMPTON STEW.

Ingredients.—Half a pound of shin of beef, half a pound of mutton, quarter of a pound of

ox kidney (cut small), two pounds of potatoes, two onions, two leeks, one tablespoonful of vinegar, one ounce and a half of dripping, one ounce and a half of rice, one ounce of flour, one teaspoonful of salt, half a teaspoonful of pepper, warm stock or water to cover.

Method.—Mix the pepper, flour and salt on a plate and dip the meat in it. Slice the onions from top to bottom and fry them a good brown in a saucepan in the dripping with the meat. Parboil the potatoes, cut them in slices and add them to the meat and onions. Add the water or stock, the vinegar, the leek prepared and cut up and the rice. Simmer gently one hour and a half.

TOAD IN THE HOLE.

Ingredients.—Half a pound of flour, three eggs, one pint of milk, pieces of meat, pepper and salt.

Method.—Put the flour in a basin, make a well in the middle and stir in the eggs with the back of a wooden spoon; add the milk by degrees, keeping it very smooth, beat well with the front of the spoon until covered with bubbles. Cut the meat into pieces, about two inches square, season and lay them on a greased tin or pie dish. Pour the batter over and bake in a good oven.

LIVER STEW.

Ingredients.—One pound of calf's or sheep's liver, half a pound of rashers of bacon, two pounds of potatoes, half a pound of onions, one ounce of flour, one teaspoonful of salt, half a teaspoonful of pepper, warm water or stock to cover.

Method.—Wash the liver and cut it into slices. Mix the pepper, flour and salt on a plate and dip it in this. Fry brown in the dripping with the onions sliced from top to bottom; slice the potatoes and add them; simmer gently for one hour and a half. Fry the bacon separately. Arrange the stew on a hot dish with the bacon placed round.

ROAST RABBIT.

Ingredients.—A rabbit, six or eight ounces of breadcrumbs, two ounces of suet (chopped), one ounce of chopped parsley, one shallot, half a teaspoonful of mixed herbs, pepper and salt, one egg (beaten), a little stock, dripping.

Method.—Well wash and clean the rabbit; make a stuffing of the breadcrumbs, suet, parsley, mixed herbs and pepper and salt, mixed rather wet with the beaten egg and stock. Stuff the rabbit with this and then sew it up with white cotton; the liver and kidneys can be simmered gently for fifteen minutes, chopped and added to the stuffing or they can be used in the sauce. Truss the rabbit with its fore paws turned back under it and its hind paws forward, and its head trussed up with a skewer. Put plenty of dripping on it and lay it on a well-greased dripping tin. Cook in a good oven about an hour basting often; make gravy in the usual manner, thicken it well with brown thickening and add the chopped liver and kidneys and seasoning and pour round.

BOILED STEAK PUDDING.

Ingredients.—Half a pound of chuck steak, quarter of a pound of ox kidney, one ounce of flour, one teaspoonful of salt, half a teaspoonful of pepper, a little water, half a pound of suet crust—(see chapter on "Pastry").

Method.—Cut the steak in thin pieces and the kidney very small, roll up the pieces of steak with a little piece of fat in each. Mix the pepper, flour and salt on a plate and toss all the meat and kidney in it. Cut off a third of the crust and roll it into a round for the top. Roll the larger piece into a round to fit the pudding basin which should be ready greased; line the basin carefully with it, put in the meat and a little water, wet the edges and put on the top, pressing it firmly. Tie over a floured and scalded cloth and boil two hours.

CORNISH PASTIES.

Ingredients.—Quarter of a pound of meat, six new potatoes or two old ones, one small onion (chopped), one tablespoonful of chopped parsley, a little water, pepper and salt, half a pound of short pastry, beaten egg.

Method.—Prepare the potatoes and cut them and the meat into dice, put them on a plate with the parsley, onion, pepper, salt and a little water and mix well. Flour the board, roll out the pastry, cut into rounds with a small saucepan lid, wet round the edge and put some of the mixture on each; close up, beginning in the middle, ornament, brush with beaten egg, lay on a greased tin and bake in a good oven twenty minutes.

BEEFSTEAK PIE.

Ingredients.—One pound of steak, quarter of a pound of ox kidney, stock or water, one ounce of flour, one teaspoonful of salt, half a teaspoonful of pepper, half a pound of short or flaxy pastry—(see chapter on "Pastry").

Method.—Prepare the meat with the seasoning as for beefsteak pudding and put it in a piédish. Roll out the pastry, lay it over the top of the piédish and cut sharply round, holding the dish in one hand and the knife in the other; cut strips from the rest of the pastry, wet the edges of the dish, lay on the strips, wet them and put on the cover; press round the edge, make a hole in the middle, ornament with leaves cut from the remains of the pastry, brush with egg and bake one hour and a half.

SAVOURY DUMPLINGS.

Ingredients.—Half a pound of salt pork, three large potatoes, one small onion, one tablespoonful of chopped parsley, pepper and salt, a little water, one pound of suet crust—(see chapter on "Pastry").

Method.—Roll out the suet crust and cut it into rounds as for the Cornish pasties; have ready the pork, potatoes and onions cut into dice and mixed with the parsley, pepper and salt and a little water; put some of the mixture on each round, wet the edges, close up in the shape of a dumpling and tie each in a scalded and floured cloth. Boil one hour.

FRIED SAUSAGES.

Method.—Prick the sausages well and put them in a frying pan with cold dripping and let them cook slowly until a good dark brown, turning them over and over so that they are evenly cooked. They take quite half an hour.

LIVER AND BACON.

Ingredients.—One pound of liver, half a pound of bacon, two ounces of flour, one teaspoonful of salt, half a teaspoonful of pepper, half a pint of water.

Method.—Cut the bacon in slices and cut off the rind, fry it slowly and place it round a hot dish; cut the liver in slices, dip it in pepper, flour, and salt, and fry it brown in the bacon fat, put it on a dish; dredge in the rest of the flour and fry it brown in the rest of the bacon fat, or if necessary add a little dripping; stir in half a pint of water, let it boil well and pour over the slices of liver.

PIG'S FRY.

Ingredients.—One pig's fry, two onions, four potatoes, half a pound of rashers of bacon, half a pint of warm water, one ounce of brown thickening, pepper and salt.

Method.—Wash the fry and simmer it in salt and water half an hour, drain and dry it, dredge with flour, pepper and salt. Fry the bacon and put it on a hot dish; keep it hot while you fry the fry in the bacon fat with the onions sliced in rings; cook a light brown, pour off the fat and stir in half a pint of warm water, add one ounce of brown thickening, stir and cook well. Put the fry and onions on a hot dish and arrange the bacon round. Pour the gravy over the fry.