



## THE LEMON AND ITS VARIED USES.

THE lemon was unknown to the ancient Greeks and Romans. Now it is so extensively used in the culinary art, and we have grown so accustomed to the delicious flavour, that we could not very well do without it. It was the introduction of the lemon by the Arabs into Spain, about the twelfth or thirteenth century, that caused it to gradually become more freely used with meat and fish, as well as in the preparation of other dishes. As regards England, it was cultivated in the Azores in the year 1494, and shipped to England until 1838, when this particular trade ceased. At the present time the lemon is grown in Portugal as well as Spain, in California, Florida, etc., and there are as many as forty-seven varieties.

A lemon-tree grows from ten to twelve feet high, the flowers, somewhat like the orange-blossom in appearance, having, like that much-favoured bloom, a sweet odour of their own. In Spain or Sicily a large tree will bear, perhaps, three thousand lemons. The fruit is gathered green, each lemon protected in paper and packed in cases—about four hundred and twenty in each case.

The gathering is not confined to any particular part of the year, excepting in Sicily, where they appear to be collected only in November and December.

The candied lemon-peel which helps us to enjoy our mince-pies and Christmas pudding comes from Sicily. The fruit for this purpose is gathered ripe and crystallised in England.

Essence of lemon is manufactured in Sicily, at Reggio in Calabria, at Mentone and at Nice. But, strange to say, essence of lemon is hardly ever sold in a pure state. Being unaware of this, most housewives not unnaturally think the bottle supplied to them by the grocer, for flavouring jellies and creams, is the genuine article. It will be found more satisfactory, and less costly, to use the thin rind of a lemon, or a little piece of a vanilla pod, for this purpose, than to buy either of these favourite essences.

The reason that pure essence of lemon is seldom to be purchased, lies in the fact that four hundred lemons yield only from nine to fourteen ounces of essence, and the price at which the so-called essence is sold in England is less than the cost of the manufacture of the pure essence. Essence of lemon is not unique in the costliness of its production. One thousand rose-trees, we are told, are required to produce two ounces of attar of roses.

To return to our subject. Slices of lemon form a cooling and appetising table decoration. They may be cut in various ways, as fancy may dictate. At a cold luncheon, "high tea," or supper, by way of a pleasing variety, four red geranium petals may be lightly placed on each slice round the dish.

Lemon is a delicious accompaniment to roast or boiled turkey or chicken, mutton and veal cutlets, roast veal, salmon, sole, plaice, etc.

In the flavouring of sauces and soups it is invaluable. In the preparation of forcemeats it is an essential ingredient, as well as in all manner of sweet dishes.

We all know how great an addition a squeeze of lemon is to our pancake.

The following recipe for "Sir Watkin," or lemon pudding, will be found reliable.

*Ingredients.*—Two fresh eggs, half a pound of beef suet, half a pound of breadcrumbs, half a pound of moist sugar, and two large lemons.

Bread for puddings should, of course, be stale and free

from crust. The suet must be chopped finely. Put the chopped suet and breadcrumbs into a bowl, also the sugar; grate the rinds of the lemons; add the juice (leaving out the pippins) and a pinch of salt; stir well with a wooden spoon; well whisk the eggs; add these and thoroughly mix the whole. Butter a basin or mould, and pour in the mixture. The bottom of the mould may be decorated with a few sultana raisins, but the pudding will be very nice without. It should be steamed for two or two and a half hours. The "Yankee Idea" steamer cooks puddings excellently. If water gets into a pudding, it is, of course, spoiled. "Sir Watkin" may be served with cup custard, arrowroot sauce, or plain sweet sauce.

*Lemon Sherbet* is made by boiling the thin rind of lemons with a little bruised ginger and loaf sugar—the lemon-juice being added afterwards. The ingredients should be in the following proportions: two lemons, two quarts of water, half a pound of loaf sugar.

*Lemon Cheese-cake* is easily made, and forms a nice change from preserve for open tarts or tartlets or Victoria Sandwich. The ingredients are: one pound of crushed loaf sugar, six fresh eggs, three large lemons, a quarter of a pound of fresh butter. Grate the rinds of two lemons into a bowl, add the sugar, butter, and the juice of three lemons. Mix all well together, whisk the eggs (leaving out the whites of two), and pour to the mixture. Then put the whole into an enamelled pan and boil gently over a slow fire, stirring the while with a wooden spoon, until it has attained the consistency of honey. Put into pots, cover with paper, and it will keep a considerable time.

*Lemonade* is little trouble to make and is a delicious drink in summer or winter.

Select a deep jug and one that can be covered with a small plate or saucer. Cut the rind of four lemons as thinly as possible; put this into the jug with sufficient loaf sugar to sweeten. Squeeze all the juice out of the lemons into a basin (taking out all the pippins). Fill the jug with boiling water from the kettle. Stir once, to dissolve the sugar, add the juice and cover quickly. As soon as cold, strain the lemonade into a glass jug. If too strong, add water.

*Pickled Lemons* take a little time in the preparation, but are worth the trouble, as it is so nice an accompaniment to cold meat, and a change from other pickles. Grate off a little of the rinds, then put them into salt for ten days, *i.e.*, cover well with salt and do not let the lemons touch each other. Remove carefully from the salt, put into jars and pour over them some boiling vinegar in which pepper and spice have been boiled. In a week or two the jar will want filling with a little more vinegar. Keep the pickle some time before using.

Lemons are strongly recommended as a remedy for rheumatism. The juice of fresh lemons should be taken daily, increasing the quantity, says a recent writer in *Chambers's Journal*, until as many as twelve lemons per day are used, and, as soon as some improvement in the symptoms is observed, decreasing the dose in like manner (gradually) until the pain has disappeared.

The juice of a lemon, in a tumbler of hot water, taken each morning before breakfast, has proved itself a useful daily tonic to many who, like the present writer, have tested its efficacy. In conclusion, it may be remarked that a drop or two of fresh lemon-juice will be found as effectual (and less injurious to the fabric) as "salts of lemon" in removing a stain of ink, etc., from table or toilet linen. E. J. J.