

USEFUL DOMESTIC HINTS AND RECEIPTS.

THE POTATO DISEASE.

Mr. Herapath has widely circulated the following valuable information:—My attention has been given to the disease which has shown itself so extensively amongst the growing potatoes. I find, in almost every instance, that the epidemics of the stalk below the surface of the ground, is more or less in a state of decay, often disintegrated, and completely rotten; the leaves and branches accord with the state of that part of the stalk below the ground. The tuber, beneath the outer skin, is first spotted brown (like a bruised apple); these spots extend and penetrate towards the centre, quite changing the nature of the potato. Those near the surface are most injured; in some cases the lowest on the root are not at all affected, while the upper ones are useless. I should therefore expect that the longer the crop remains in the land, the greater the injury will be. It seems, from the microscopic appearances, that the starch escapes injury for a long time after the skin and cellular parts are gone; and as the whole of the nutritive powers of the potato reside in the starch, I should recommend that wherever the disease has shown itself to any extent the crop should be dug whether ripe or not, and the starch extracted by the following simple process:—After washing the roots, let them be rasped fine and thrown into a large tub or other vessel; pour a considerable quantity of water, and well agitate and rub the pulp with the hands; all the starch or fecula will, from its great weight, fall to the bottom, while the skin and fibrous matter will be carried away by the water; wash the starch with one or two more waters, allowing it to fall after each washing; spread it upon cloths in a warm room to dry; in this way about twenty or twenty-one pounds will be obtained from every hundred pounds of potatoes, and it contains as much nourishment as the original roots; it will keep any length of time, and might be used with flour to make bread, pies, puddings, &c., as well as farinaceous spoon-meat. This is much better than throwing away the diseased roots, and will furnish food for tens of thousands who might otherwise want it.

CURING BACON.

The following is the method of curing bacon in Yorkshire:—After being killed it is allowed to hang twenty-four hours previous to being cut up; then rub one pound of saltpetre on a twenty stone pig (of fourteen pounds to the stone), and one and a half or two stones of common salt, taking care that it is well rubbed in; it is then laid in a tub kept for the purpose. After having laid a fortnight, it is turned over, and a little more salt applied, say half a stone; it then remains a fortnight longer in the pickle-tub; it is then taken and hung up in the kitchen, where it remains two months to dry, but should the winter be far advanced, and dry weather set in, a shorter period might suffice; after being taken from the top of the kitchen, the inside is washed over with quicklime and water to preserve it from the fly; it is then removed into a room not used by the family, away from heat, and where it will be kept perfectly dry, and is ready for use at pleasure. The smoking system is not generally adopted in York. The above plan never fails, if done with care; the saltpetre and salt should be of the best quality, for upon those articles depend the success in producing a good article for the table. The whitewash not only preserves it from the fly, but also prevents it from being rancid, as it would otherwise be.

GESE.

The common Goose begins to lay towards Candlemas, and after laying from nine to eleven eggs, she sets thirty days, and then brings out her little flock. If, however, she shows a wish to set when she has only laid two or three eggs, she must be driven from the nest, or shut up for a day or two. She will then take to lay again. One gander and five geese are the regular stock to begin with; they will produce fifty goslings in a season. Geese are grazing birds; they love a common, but horses do not like their company in a field, as they object to feed after them. The herb called goose-grass they are immoderately fond of, and it is plentiful always under hedges during the gosling season. Water is important to geese, but they succeed in situations where there is no pond: a large shallow pan filled with water, sufficiently capacious to admit of their washing in it, has often answered the purpose; but a pool is most desirable. The goose-hovel should be low, well-thatched, and not facing into the farm-yard, otherwise pigs will get through the goose aperture. It should have a door also, for the owner to enter. The nests should be composed of straw, lined with hay, and the birds should be fed near their home to allure them to it. If some of the goslings are hatched before the others, they should be removed from the mother, kept warm in flannel before the fire, and returned to her when the whole brood are hatched. Thin barley meal and water is excellent food for goslings, with chopped goose-grass; they soon learn to eat oats and feed themselves. Mow down hemlock, if any grows near the poultry yard: it is pernicious in its effects upon poultry. Fatten geese in small parties, as they love society. They should be cooped a month, fed plentifully with sweet oats and clean pure water in a narrow wooden trough. An experiment has lately been tried of feeding geese with turnips, cut up very fine, and put into a trough with water. The effect was, that six geese, weighing only nine pounds each when shut up, actually weighed twenty pounds each, after about three weeks' feeding with this food alone.—*Farmer's Encyclopaedia.*

TO FATTEN POULTRY.

The following will be found a quick and excellent food for fattening chickens. Set rice over the fire, with skimmed milk; let it boil till the rice is quite swelled out, then add a teaspoonful of sugar. Feed them three times a day in common pans, giving them only as much as will quite fill them at once. Let the pans be well washed, and set in clean spring water, that no sourness may be conveyed to the fowls, as that prevents them from fattening. Give them clean water or the milk of rice to drink. By this method, the flesh will have a clear whiteness, which no other food gives; and when it is considered how far a pound of rice will go, and how much time is saved by this mode, it will be found to be cheap. It is said that a portion of animal mixed with vegetable food, causes poultry to thrive rapidly, but they should be confined to a vegetable diet some time before they are killed. A quantity of charcoal, broken in small pieces, and placed within reach of the poultry, increases their appetite, and promotes digestion.

TO KEEP RABBITS FROM BARKING TREES.

In order to keep fruit trees safe from these depredators take one spoonful of hot slacked lime, one ditto of clean cow's dung, half ditto soot, one handful of flour of sulphur, and mix all together with soft water or cow's urine, until they acquire the consistency of thick paint; then paint the trees sufficiently high to be out of the reach of these vermin. The trees should be gone over in the beginning of winter, or on the first appearance of frost, choosing a dry day, if possible, for the operation. The sulphur and soot, I presume, are the principal ingredients. The cow dung is added merely to make the others stick to the trees. I have not tried sulphur matches, as recommended, but I have no doubt of their efficacy. With the above mixture I have protected numbers of labourers, near the sides of walks, for sixteen years, with the greatest success, where there are multitudes of hares, and rabbits also frequently make their appearance. Except when the mixture has been washed off by heavy rains before being properly dry, one application has served for a whole year.—*Gardener's Chron.*

TO DRESS WHITEBAIT.

(Greenwich Receipt.) In season in July, August, and September.

This delicate little fish requires great care to dress it well. Do not touch it with the hands, but throw it from your dish or basket into a cloth, with three or four handfuls of flour, and shake it well; then put it into a bait sieve, to separate it from the superfluous flour. Have ready a very deep frying-pan, nearly full of boiling fat, throw in the fish, which will be done in an instant; they must not be allowed to take any colour, for if browned they are spoiled. Lift them out, and dish them upon a silver or earthenware drainer, without a napkin, piling them very high in the centre. Send them to table with a cut lemon, and slices of brown bread and butter on a plate.—*From Modern Cookery, by Eliza Acton; an excellent work.*

HER MAJESTY'S PUDDING.

Infuse in a pint of new milk half a pod of vanilla, cut into short lengths, and bruised; simmer them gently together for twenty minutes, and strain the milk through muslin to half a pint of cream; put these again on the fire in a clean saucepan, with three ounces of fine sugar, and pour them, when they boil, to the beaten yolks of eight very fresh eggs. Stir the mixture often until it is nearly or quite cold, and boil it as gently as possible for an hour in a well-buttered mould or basin that will just hold it. Let it stand for four minutes at least before it is turned out; dish it carefully, strew, and garnish it thickly with branches of preserved berries, or send it to table with a rich syrup of fresh fruit, or with clear fruit-jelly, melted. We have had often a compote of currants, cherries, or plums served, and greatly relished with this pudding, which we can recommend to our readers as an extremely delicate one. The flavouring may be varied with bitter almonds, lemon-rind, noyau, or aught else which may be better liked than the vanilla. New milk, one pint; vanilla, half pod; twenty minutes. Cream, half-pint; sugar three ounces; yolks of eggs, eight: one hour. The cook must be reminded that unless the eggs be stirred briskly as the boiling milk is gradually poured to them, they will be likely to curdle. A buttered paper should always be put over the basin before the cloth is tied on, for all custard puddings.—*Ibid.*

PRINCE ALBERT'S PUDDING.

Beat to a cream half a pound of fresh butter, and mix with it by degrees an equal weight of pounded loaf-sugar, dried and sifted; add to these, after they have been well beaten together, first the yolks, and then the whites of five fresh eggs, which have been thoroughly whisked apart; now strew lightly in, half a pound of the finest flour, dried and sifted, and last of all, half a pound of jar raisins, weighed after they are stoned. Put these ingredients, perfectly mixed, into a well-buttered mould, or floured cloth, and boil the pudding for three hours. Serve it with punch sauce. We recommend a little pounded mace, or the grated rind of a small lemon, to vary the flavour of this excellent pudding; and that when a mould is used, slices of candied peel-should be laid rather thickly over it after it is buttered. Fresh butter, pounded sugar, flour, stoned raisins, each half a pound; eggs, five: three hours.—*Ibid.*

TO MULL WINE.

(An excellent French Receipt.)

Boil in a wineglassful and a half of water a quarter of an ounce of spice (cinnamon, ginger slightly bruised, and cloves), with three ounces of fine sugar, until they form a thick syrup, which must not on any account be allowed to burn. Pour in a pint of port wine, and stir it gently until it is on the point of boiling only: it should then be served immediately. The addition of a strip or two of orange-rind cut extremely thin, gives to this beverage the flavour of a bishop. In France light claret takes the place of port wine in making it, and the better kinds of *vin du pays* are very palatable thus prepared. Water, one and a half wineglassful; spice, quarter of an ounce, of which fine cloves, twenty-four, and of remainder, rather more ginger than cinnamon; sugar three ounces; fifteen to twenty minutes. Port wine or claret, one pint; orange-rind, if used, to be boiled with the spice. Sherry, or very fine raisin or ginger wine, prepared as above, and stirred hot to the yolks of four fresh eggs, will be found excellent.

MINT JULEP.

(An American Receipt.)

Strip the tender leaves of mint into a tumbler, and add to them as much wine, brandy, or any other spirit, as you wish to take. Put some pounded ice into a second tumbler; pour this on the mint and brandy, and continue to pour the mixture from one tumbler to the other until the whole is sufficiently impregnated with the flavour of the mint, which is extracted by the particles of the ice coming into brisk contact when changed from one vessel to the other. Now place the glass in a larger one, containing pounded ice: on taking it out of which it will be covered with frost-work.

"GREAT FACTS" FOR "LITTLE FOLKS."

The "United Association of Journeymen Confectioners," whose confederation includes Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Arbroath, Leith, Perth, Dundee, and St. Andrew's, having come to a resolution to "put down" adulteration, have published a statement to the effect that a substance called "mimral white" (which is simply plaster of Paris or stucco) is largely used in the manufacture of sweet-meats. Here is the abominable receipt for adulterated lozenges—12lb. of plaster of Paris! 12lb. of starch! 12lb. of sugar. A grandchild, and domestic, of a gentleman in Clare, who had partaken of some confectionary and bridecake at a nuptial party, were seized with dangerous illness soon after, and but for the skillful remedies quickly applied, the lives of both, in all probability, would have been forfeited. On inquiry, it was ascertained that many articles of confectionary prepared for festive occasions are strongly impregnated with poisonous ingredients, especially in the exterior ornamental parts of these *bon bons*.

DEATH FROM EATING MUSHROOMS.

Last autumn, five persons were poisoned at Paris, from eating fungus-gathered by one of the party in the Bois de Boulogne, and supposed by him to be mushrooms. An inquest was lately held at Ipswich, to inquire into the circumstances connected with the death of Mr. John Carr, of that town, who, according to the evidence of Mr. Bullen, surgeon, died from eating mushrooms. It appears that mushrooms were grilled (not stewed or boiled) for dinner: one of them was a very large one, very black underneath, and in fact only fit for making catsup. The whole of this large one was eaten by the deceased, and part of the smaller one also. The son partook of a part of the smaller one. It was a red mushroom; "but," said the surgeon, "it should be understood that all fungous matter is really poisonous at some parts of their growth." By grilling the mushrooms, the poisonous matter remained in them, and the deceased having no teeth he swallowed it without masticating it. He was perfectly narcotised for hours. Mushrooms are of a narcotic and acid nature. Deceased was perfectly senseless and powerless from the moment he was taken ill. There were no symptoms of apoplexy; in fact they were the very reverse. His pulse was about fifty-six, and showed that he was under the influence of some strong poison. It is extremely important that the public should take this as a warning in the use of mushrooms; they are at all times indigestible, but they should never be taken when the underneath part is black, but only when they are of a light colour.