

HINTS FOR THE TABLE.

BY M. SOYER.

Amongst all the tribulations of the table, carving is not the least of them. "If you should, unhappily, be forced to carve at table," says Launcelot Sturgeon, in his "Essays, Moral, Philosophical, and Stomachic," "neither labour at the joint until you put yourself into a heat, nor make such desperate efforts to dissect it as may put your neighbours in fear of their lives; however, if any accident should happen, make no excuses, for they are only an acknowledgement of awkwardness." As an instance of this, we remember to have seen a man of high fashion deposit a turkey in this way on the lap of a lady; but, with admirable composure, and without offering the slightest apology, he finished a story which he was telling at the same time, and then, quietly turning to her, merely said, "Madam, I'll thank you for that turkey!" My conscience will not allow me to swear to the authenticity of the fact; but, in the course of twelve months past, I have witnessed a very similar instance; only the party, not possessing the assurance of the fashionable above mentioned, did not continue the conversation, but, in his nervous anxiety, endeavouring to replace it on the dish with vivacity, sent it rolling across the table to his right-hand neighbour; who, quickly perceiving the imminent danger in which he was placed, fortunately arrested its further progress with his fork. One hearty laugh of the remaining party terminated this scene of confusion.

After a short consideration, I found, by a most simple rule, and with the greatest facility, that a bird that would take ten minutes to carve very badly, may be done well in two or three, by the most inexperienced person. From this process a number of advantages may be derived; first, you may eat your dinner much hotter; secondly, you can make eight or ten pieces of a fowl, or any other bird, where previously great difficulty was experienced in making five or six, and each person will thereby be enabled to choose a favourite piece; and a large bird—such as turkey, poularde, capon, &c.—will be fit to re-appear on your table in a very inviting state. I must also observe that the birds are not in the least disfigured; but, on the contrary, their appearance is much improved. Formerly, nothing was more difficult to carve than wild-fowl, the continual motion (when alive) of the wings and legs making the sinews almost as tough as wires, puzzling the best of carvers to separate them. My new method for small birds has quite abolished such a domestic tribulation, by separating, with a long pointed pair of scissors, the sinews which join the wing to the breast, and also jointing the legs under the skin, as explained below for larger birds. The separation of the joints may be easily effected; and having thus detached the four principal parts, the carving, when roasted, will be very simple. But for the jointing of turkeys, geese, capons, &c., the tendon separator, made by Brawah and Prestage, Piccadilly, will be found a happy relief to carvers. Its object is to relieve carvers, more or less proficient; and must become indispensable for the use of all cooks and poulterers in disjoining the volatile species, previous to trussing, roasting, or boiling.

The simplicity of the operation will easily convince any one that the tendon-separator possesses all that is required to remove awkwardness in carving, the only necessity being to divide the tendons in the joints, the toughness of which is the difficulty to be overcome, and often abandoned to make a desperate cut at the bones: hence arise the accidents above mentioned.

When about separating the tendons, and otherwise dividing other parts of a fowl, you begin by turning the skin over the wings, and cutting the tendons of each of the joints; and then, by taking hold of the part commonly called the drumstick with your left hand, and the skin being already turned, you can easily get at the joint, by making it come out, to cut the tendons of each leg. On turning the separator with the points upwards, you give a cut at the breast-bone; and by holding the instrument with both hands, immediately after turning the points downwards, you also give a cut at the back-bone; and then, the four tendons being cut, the limbs are brought back to their former position. Then you introduce the instrument into the body at the other end of the bird, and with your left hand you take hold of the thigh-bone, which you also divide; and again turning the point downwards, you give another cut at the back-bone. With little practice, the cuts at the breast and back-bone are made without interfering in the least with the skin. Then you truss the bird in the common way; but a packing-needle and thread are to be preferred. When roasted, the appearance of the poultry is vastly improved by this simple operation. It looks more plump, on account of the sinews having lost their power of contraction whilst roasting; therefore, when the bird comes to table, the carver has merely to pass the knife in the usual manner to take up the wings and legs, and finds no resistance; the same at the breast and back, where it may easily be seen, whilst carving, that it has already been prepared.

Three minutes is about the time taken, by this new process, to cut into ten parts an ordinary fowl.

For a turkey or a goose the sinews are divided as above; and in the act of carving, instead of cutting the filets in a straight line with the breast-bone, you separate them obliquely, and all other parts as usual.

Pheasants, ducks, and all wild fowl especially, must be prepared in a similar manner.

A hare or rabbit may also have the sinews and back-bone divided: to effect this, you lay the hare upon its back and give six cuts nearly through the back-bone, holding the separator with both hands, through the belly part; then you truss it for roasting. If it should happen to be a very large hare, the filets only are carved, and they ought to be cut in thin slices in an oblique direction, instead of straight along the back.

Respecting the carving of any description of joints, it may be more easily explained. For a saddle of mutton or lamb, proceed as follows:—Commence by passing your knife down the back, where nothing but the meat and skin holds it together, and from thence crosswise to the flap, serving a cutlet and a slice between each person, continuing the same way through the saddle. You will thus carve the meat according to the grain, and produce fresh hot gravy for each person as you proceed carving. Should any remain, it is fit either to be sent cold to table, or dressed otherwise advantageously.

The saddle-back of mutton I prefer, is composed of the two loins and two necks, trimmed into the form of a double saddle, without interfering in the least with the legs and shoulders, which would cause a serious loss to the butcher.

A round of beef, when upon the table, must be carved with a regular round of beef knife (very sharp), in slices not exceeding the thickness of a crown piece, assisting each guest to a slice: also, give one-third fat, with a little of the carrot and turnip; but never dig the under-done part from the centre to oblige any one, for they that cannot eat from a joint well cooked and fairly carved, are not worthy of having one set before them. Some persons like them, when salted, to cut red quite through. I do not admire it; but it is done by adding two ounces of saltpetre and half a pound of saltpetre to every fifteen pounds of salt used in pickling. When a round of beef is very large, some persons place a tin tube in the centre to boil it. I do not think it a bad plan, as it causes it to cook more regularly.

Amongst the number of joints, boiled to serve cold at the large civic, agricultural or benevolent anniversary dinners, the round of beef is the most prominent, and commonly left standing in dishes to get cold, which are soon filled with the gravy that runs from it, particularly if a little over-done. To remedy this, the following expedient will prevent the meat losing so much of its succulence:—Fill two large tubs with cold water, into which throw a few pounds of rough ice; and when the round is done, throw it, cloth and all, into one of the tubs of ice water; let it remain one minute, when take out and put it into the other tub: fill the first tub again with water, and continue the above process for about twenty minutes; then set it upon a dish, leaving the cloth on until the next day, or until quite cold. When opened, the fat will be as white as possible, besides having saved the whole of the gravy. If no ice, spring water will answer the same purpose, but will require to be more frequently changed. The same mode would be equally successful with the saddlebone.

For the ribs or sirloin of beef, pass the knife between the chine-bone and the flesh, to about an inch in depth, but only to about the length you think sufficient to cut as many slices from as you may require; then, having a sharp knife, cut off the outside slice very thinly; hold your knife a little in a slanting direction, and continue cutting thin slices from the chine to the ends of the sirloin in the dish as you carve. If a slice from the fillet is required, turn it over with a couple of forks; carefully part some of the fat which covers it, if too much; then cut short slices in a slanting direction, as if from the breast of a fowl, instead of crosswise; for then, if clumsily carved and over-done, it has a strong resemblance to an old strap.

For a rump of beef, either roasted or stewed, always commence at the fattest end, carving in a slanting direction: by which means you will obtain a correct quantity of that delicate article, if even you should be carving for twenty people; whilst, by cutting straight across, some would have the greater proportion fat, and the remainder nothing but lean. Any other piece of beef rolled and stewed, and filets of beef, as served for a remove, all require to be carved in a slanting direction.

For a fillet of veal, proceed in the same manner as directed for a round of beef. A loin of veal, if cut straight at the commencement, is entirely spoiled; but when carved slantingly from the best end, and eaten with its own gravy, nothing could be nicer; the remainder is then also very good cold. Even the kidney ought to be served the same; and the breast, either roasted or stewed, requires the same style of carving.

For legs of mutton or lamb, I also proceed in a new way. The frill, which is placed upon the knuckle-bone, is not only intended to ornament the leg, but likewise to enable you to hold the bone with your left hand, and carving with the right, which would wonderfully facilitate the operation. Instead of cutting across the middle, which opens all parts at once, thus losing a great deal of the succulence, I commence carving at about two inches from the knuckle, beginning with the heel of the knife, drawing it along to the point, cutting six or eight slices at once, more or less if required; then pass the knife beneath the whole, detaching them from the bone, thus helping each person quickly, and with very hot meat. The gravy remaining in the meat will keep it moistened, in good order for cold; whilst, in the general manner, you have nothing but dry meat, or if under-done, on purpose for cold, the meat will always have a black appearance. This is my way of carving at home; but if objectionable to take the frill with the fingers, make use of the carving-fork. At home I never allow any gravy to be put into the dish, but served separately, in a boat; and if the meat is of good quality, and well roasted, it will supply an abundance of good gravy. If for the table of the wealthy, commence carving the leg nearer to the centre, but always in a slanting direction.

For shoulders of mutton or lamb to eat well and delicate, the fat and lean must be well mixed in serving; to accomplish which, the joint must be carved in a still more slanting direction than the legs, also beginning rather nearer to the knuckle.

For the necks and loins of mutton, never separate the bones of either with a chopper, or you will partially mutilate the meat, thus losing all the gravy in roasting, and frequently have great difficulty in carving; but separate the joints with a small saw, as neatly as possible, cutting in the direction you require to carve.

For ribs of lamb, which should be properly prepared for carving before being roasted, having the centre of the bones broken, with the chine-bone detached, to carve, you must, of course, follow the bones, which run rather slantingly, helping each person to a cutlet from the neck, with a slice from the breast, but not cut too thick. By following this plan, each person will have partaken of the breast, which, without contradiction, is the most delicate part (but which is most frequently left to be eaten when dry and cold); and if any remain, being evenly carved, it will be very presentable at table the next day.

To carve a ham, proceed as directed for the carving of a leg of mutton, commencing two inches from the knuckle, cutting very thin and delicate slices, slanting more and more as you proceed, or you will have nothing but fat left at the extremity.

To carve an ox tongue, stick your fork into the root, and cut a thin slice off, placing the heel of the knife upon it, which draw along to the point, thus taking the slice off in one cut, leaving it upon the dish, and serving the inner slices, cut in the same manner, but very thin and delicate; you will thus have carved the best part of it easily, without disfiguring the whole, still having a decent piece remaining to send up cold; but if you had commenced in the middle, you would at once spoil the appearance, and the remainder would eat dry when cold.

Nothing is more creditable to a carver, than leaving a piece of either meat, game, or poultry fit to re-appear at table in an inviting state.

HAUNCH OF VENISON.

How to serve eighteen or twenty persons:—Take off the flat bone, previous to roasting, at the back of the loin, and pass the knife from the knuckle all along the lower part of the flap, which is left about two inches wide; then begin to cut in a slanting direction from the beginning of the loin, through the leg as far as the knuckle, without reserving a well for the gravy, and, in fact, it is better, as every slice you cut through the leg produces its own gravy, boiling hot, which unavoidably gets cold in the well formed the other way of carving. Do not omit to save some fat for the next day, as your hash or pie would be insipid without.

Haunch of mutton or lamb may be carved either way.

For necks of venison, pass your knife across the lower part of the ribs, about four inches below the thickest part; then cut slices in a slanting direction, not interfering with the bone, as previously explained for shoulders of mutton.

Never let your guests sit down to table without acquainting them beforehand with the bill of fare, that is, if the dinner be a ceremonious one, because the great variation placed on the table is to give a choice to the different taste of the company. By selecting a few favourite dishes, digestion is rendered more easy, being then aided by the fancy of each individual: but should you be helped of a dish which does not meet with your approval, though, at the same time, you feel yourself constrained by politeness to eat of it, your dinner is spoiled, and you do no justice to the bountiful supply of your Amphitryon.

In domestic cookery, it is necessary to know, that however humble the means

of the individual may be, the food should be varied daily, if possible. Never dine two days on the same joint, without dressing it each day in a different manner. A plain joint, hot one day, may be served cold the next, particularly in summer—it is then excusable; but, by all means, the third day make a hash, as follows:—

HASH MUTTON.—Cut about a pound and a half of meat into thin slices, using a small quantity of fat; lay them upon a dish, sprinkle a spoonful of flour, a tea-spoonful of salt, and a quarter ditto of pepper; place the meat in a stewpan, moisten with half a pint of water, or light broth if handy: add a little colouring to give it a nice brown colour. Place it upon the fire, allowing it to warm gently, stirring occasionally, simmering a quarter of an hour. Taste if more seasoning be required; if so, add a little, and serve very hot immediately. In making hash of any description, avoid having the keeping of it hot, or it would become greasy; and likewise prevent the hash boiling over the fire, which would cause the meat to eat hard and tough. To vary any description of hash, it may be served upon a large piece of buttered toast, or half a spoonful of chopped onions may be added with the flour and seasoning. Chopped parsley may also be added, with a spoonful of catsup, two of Harvey sauce, two of vinegar, or one of Chili vinegar: four nice green gherkins, in slices, may also be added at the time of serving. Some fresh mushrooms from the fields, cleaned, and stewed in the hash, is also a great improvement. A bay leaf also added imparts a pleasant flavour.

TO MAKE COFFEE ECONOMICALLY.

Buy your coffee not over-burnt; grind it at home, if possible; have a middle-sized filter, which holds a little more than a quart; pour about a pint of boiling water into the filter to heat it through, then empty it, and put a quarter of a pound of ground coffee on the filter; then put on the presser, and lastly the grating; then pour about half a pint of quite boiling water over it, put the cover on, and let it drain through. After three or four minutes, pour, by degrees, a pint and a half more boiling water, and, when well passed through, pour it from the filter into a very clean stewpan; set it on the corner of the fire; and, when a little white scum rises to the surface (not letting it boil), pour it a second time over the filter, and, when passed through, pour either into a silver *cafetière* or the cups. Serve boiling milk or cream in two small jugs; and white, or brown, or candied sugar. As soon as the coffee is poured from the coffee-pot, I put another quart of boiling water over it. This saves one ounce of coffee, by boiling it instead of water, and pouring it over as before.

TO MAKE A COLOURING OR BROWNING FROM SUGAR.

Put two ounces of white powdered sugar into a middling-sized stewpan, which place over a slow fire; when beginning to melt, stir round with a wooden spoon until getting quite black; when set in a moderate oven, upon a trivet, for about twenty minutes; pour a pint of cold water over, let dissolve, place in a bottle, and use when required.

Never put salt, mustard, or any kind of sauces on your plate, without having previously tasted your food. It is not only a great breach of politeness towards your host, but an insult to the culinary artist; because that which is placed on the table as a made dish, is supposed to be seasoned to perfection. But, as very often this is not the case, then, after you have tasted it, you are at liberty to suit your own palate, which part of the human frame is as varied as the physiognomy.

When you help at table never give more than two or three slices of meat, cut thin. Carve everything in the slanting direction. A good carver ought never to ask if any person likes their meat well done or underdone, as you disfigure the joint at once: such fancies cannot be tolerated, except at the tables of the wealthy; for the million, it is a waste of £70 a year, when only seven or eight in a family.

Have your vegetables, no matter how plainly dressed, always well done; the crudity of such aliments is unwholesome, and apt to destroy the coating of the stomach, that being the most delicate part of the digestive organs. Be also contented with one sort of vegetable on your plate at a time, potatoes excepted.

The greatest compliment a guest can pay to his host, is to ask to be served a second time of the same dish, though not above half the quantity first served should be given.

If by chance you should spill any sauce or gravy in carving, do not apologise; it is only calling the attention of the company to your awkwardness, which, without remark, might pass unnoticed.

Never cut up a fowl, or any kind of bird, at once, without knowing how many persons are going to partake of it: the proper manner is to ask each person, and then to help them separately.

Never remove any dish which has been placed on the table by a servant, however awkwardly it may be set. It is not your business to serve at your own table; rather let your servant look awkward than yourself, by his placing it over and over again before it is right.

Never press any one to take more food or wine than they appear to wish; it annoys your guests, and, whilst you make yourself too cheap, you also make it too common.

Never put more than one wine-glass before each guest at the commencement of dinner; have the others ready, and place them as required. It saves confusion; and often relieves a person from great distress, who, by chance, may not be acquainted with the different glasses which each sort of wine requires.

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF WARD'S CASES FOR THE GROWTH OF FERNS, &c.

It is often asked, what are the best species of Fern, &c., to form a lasting, graceful, and effective group for those elegant little cases now so frequently seen in the windows of most houses? To this we reply, that the following arrangements will produce all that can be desired:—For the centre, a *Chamaecyparis humilis*, the dwarf palm of the South of Europe; covering the ground at the base of its stem are the delicate and beautiful little ferns, *Hymenophyllum Tunbrigense* and *H. Wilsoni*; while *Adiantum capillus-veneris*, *A. formosum*, *Asplenium marinum*, *Pteris longifolia*, *Scopolendrium vulgare*, *Aneides fraxinifolia*, *Cassebeeria hastata*, and the beautiful *Trichomanes speciosus* are other forms of ferns whose variously-shaped fronds contrast well with one another. Under the shadow of the ferns, several *Jungermannia* grow luxuriantly; and the *Oxalis acetosella* thrives wonderfully in the company of its cryptogamic neighbours, while *Lycopodium denticulatum* and *L. stoloniferum* surround the whole with a perennial hedge of verdure. Besides these, *Macularia frutescens*, an epiphytial orchid, has attached itself to the rough bark of a piece of suspended elder branch; and, in order that no space may remain unemployed, the husk of a cocoa-nut has been filled with earth, and hung in the dome at the top, and from this may be seen descending the graceful fronds of various pendulous ferns and lycopodiums.

When the case is small and close, a single watering at the time of setting the plants will generally be sufficient for nine or twelve months, or even longer. When the case is large, however, a freer application of water will be necessary.

GENERAL POSTAL REGULATIONS, &c.

RATES OF POSTAGE.—All letters from one part of Great Britain to another (including the Local Penny Posts and the London Twopenny Post) are charged, if prepaid, and not

Exceeding half an ounce 1d.
Exceeding half an ounce, and not exceeding one ounce . . . 2d.

and so on, at the rate of 2d. for every additional ounce or fraction of an ounce. Unpaid and unstamped letters are charged double postage on delivery.

HOURS OF POSTING FOR THE EVENING MAILS.—The Receiving-Houses close at 5 30 P.M.; but letters are received for the evening's dispatch until 6 P.M., if an extra penny stamp is affixed. The Branch Post-offices at Charing Cross, Old Cavendish-street, and 108, Blackman-street, Southwark, receive letters until 6 P.M., and until ½ to 7 P.M. by affixing an additional penny stamp. At the Branch Post-Office in Lombard-street, the box remains open without additional fee until 6 P.M., and until 7 P.M. by affixing a penny stamp. At the General Post-Office in St. Martin's-le-Grand until 6, free; and until 7, by payment of the extra charge as at Lombard-street. From 7 to half-past 7 P.M., letters may be posted at the General Post-office upon payment of a fee of sixpence each, which must, as well as the postage, be pre-paid. Letters intended to pass by outward mails to foreign parts must be posted at the above hours.—N.B. Newspapers for the evening mails must be put into the Receiving-Houses before 5 P.M., the Branch offices before 5 30, or General Post Office, before 6 P.M. From 6 P.M. to 7 30, on payment of one-halfpenny late fee; except newspapers for foreign parts, which must be posted at the General Post-Office and Branch Offices before 6 P.M., and at the Receiving-Houses before 5 P.M.

MORNING MAILS are forwarded to most of the principal towns in England and Wales, and to all parts of Ireland and Scotland, for which the letter-boxes at the Receiving-Houses will be open till 7 A.M. for newspapers, and ¼ to 8 A.M. for letters; and at the Branch Offices, Charing-cross, Old Cavendish-street, and the Borough, for newspapers until half-past 7 A.M., and for letters until 8 A.M. At the General Post-Office and the Branch Office in Lombard-street, the boxes will close for newspapers at a quarter before 8 A.M., and for letters at half-past 8 A.M.

Any SINGLE BOOK or PAMPHLET can now be sent through the Post-Office to any part of the United Kingdom if not exceeding 16 oz. in weight, and open at both ends, by affixing six postage stamps; if above 16 oz. lbs., and 6d. for every additional pound or fraction of a pound. The Postmaster-General does not guarantee the delivery of books and pamphlets with the same accuracy and regularity as newspapers and letters, but in no case will the delivery be delayed more than 24 hours after the usual post.

BRITISH AND COLONIAL PAPERS between British Colonies, without passing through the United Kingdom, to be free; except that 1d. may be allowed as a gratuity to the master of the vessel conveying them.

NEWSPAPERS, BRITISH, FOREIGN, OR COLONIAL, passing between British or Colonial and Foreign Ports, and through the British post, to pay 2d.; if not through the British post, 1d.

NEW POSTAGE STAMPS intended principally for the pre-payment of foreign letters have been issued. They are of the value of one shilling each, the colour being green, and the form octagonal, to distinguish them easily from the smaller denomination of postage stamps at present in use. These stamps may be used for inland as well as foreign postage, but they are chiefly intended for the postage of letters to the United States, India, China, the West Indies, New South Wales, New Zealand, and other places to which the postage is one shilling.

PACKAGES which in length, breadth, or width exceed twenty-four inches, cannot be forwarded by post between any places within the United Kingdom; except, however, petitions or addresses to her Majesty, or petitions to either House of Parliament forwarded to any Member of either House, or printed votes or proceedings of Parliament, or letters to or from any Government offices or departments.

MONEY ORDERS.—With a view to simplicity and economy in the accounts of the Money Order Office, it has been found necessary to lay down the following rules:—1. Every money order issued on or after the 6th October, 1848, must be presented for payment before the end of the second calendar month after that in which it was issued (for instance, if issued in October, it must be presented for payment before the end of December), otherwise a new order will be necessary, for which a second commission must be paid. 2. As already notified to the public, if an order be not presented for payment before the end of the twelfth calendar month after that in which it was issued (for instance, if issued in October and not presented before the end of the next October), the money will not be paid at all. 3. As, after once paying a money order, by whomsoever presented, the office will not be liable to any further claim, the public are strictly cautioned a. To take all means to prevent the loss of the money order. b. Never to send a money order in the same letter with the information required on payment thereof. c. To be careful, on taking out a money order, to state correctly the Christian name as well as the surname of the person in whose favour it is to be drawn. d. To see that the name, address, and occupation of the person taking out the money order are correctly known to the person in whose favour it is drawn. 4. Neglect of these instructions will lead to delay and trouble in obtaining payment, and even risk the loss of the money. These instructions, together with some others of minor importance, will be found printed on every money order.

THE LAW OF BANKRUPTCY.

The new Act of Parliament to empower the Commissioners of the Court of Bankruptcy to order the release of bankrupts from prison in certain cases, which took effect on the 31st of August, 1848, has just been printed (11 and 12 Victoria, cap. 86). By this act it is provided that where any person has been adjudged bankrupt, and has surrendered to the fiat, and has obtained his protection from arrest, pursuant to the practice in bankruptcy, if such person shall be in prison at the time of obtaining such protection, any Commissioner acting under such fiat may order his immediate release from prison, either absolutely, or upon such condition as such Commissioner shall think fit, which release is not to affect the rights of creditors detaining him in prison. The second clause is an important one:—“And be it enacted that if any bankrupt whose last examination shall have been adjourned *sine die*, or whose certificate shall have been suspended or refused, shall be in execution, or be taken in execution, under a *capias ad satisfaciendum* at the suit of any creditor who might have proved under the fiat and detained in prison, any Commissioner acting under his fiat may order his release, after he shall have undergone such term of imprisonment, not exceeding two years, as to such commissioner may seem a sufficient punishment for such offence as he may appear to such Commissioner to have been guilty of.”