

mutilated tires, while Agatha flew out from its midst like a ball, and alighted on a grassy bank a yard or two away; and the express rushed past with a wild yell on the line just below, and vanished round a sharp curve that matched the road above it.

Then, and then alone, did Richard's legs regain their power of motion; and he set off as fast as they could carry him to where the little black figure lay. Somehow it took longer to run down that hill than the last descent would have led one to think; for when Richard, panting and breathless, reached the scene of the accident, the little black figure, very much out of its usual trim neatness, was seated on the grassy tangle that broke her fall, busily binding up with her own small handkerchief a deep gash in the hand of the knickerbockered person who knelt at her side. It was a very pale face that looked up at Richard's, with the sort of awe that any human creature must wear who has just been face to face with death; but her great grey eyes had a wonderful shining light in them.

"The poor tricycle!" she said; "I am so sorry. Is it very badly hurt?" And, in the fervour of his relief and gladness, Richard could find words for nothing but—

"Bother the tricycle!"

He was ready enough to say something, however, presently, when he found himself obliged to stop and see its remains decently cared for, while Captain Hardwicke took charge of Miss Travers' return to the Rectory. She said she was none the worse for her fall, but perhaps she was a little shaken; but Captain Hardwicke kindly offered her his arm, and she took it. Richard hurried after them before long, his whole heart aglow. That awful minute this afternoon had taught him that life without Agatha Travers would seem a poor and worthless thing, were she a factory-girl. He hurried after them, therefore, and came in

sight of the Rectory gate as two hands, one very neatly bandaged, unclasped over it, and a small dark head raised itself swiftly from a brown tweed shoulder, where it seemed to have been resting.

"Good gracious!" was all Richard could utter, as Agatha vanished, and Captain Hardwicke, looking odiously radiant, sauntered towards him.

"Ah, Allerdyce, old fellow, caught us, have you? Then I may as well tell you all my tremendous good luck at once, and take your congratulations. Perhaps you've heard how Miss Travers' nursing saved my life last year, and when of course I fell in love with her, as who wouldn't? She would have it, it was only gratitude, and refused to let me make what she called a misalliance, just because there's that brute of a title coming to me some day. I told her I thought all that rubbish was obsolete, and offered to drop the title altogether if she liked; but nothing would do, and we parted rather out of temper. I heard she was down here, and ran down to see my uncle, hoping he would talk her over, but I began to think it was no use. And, do you know, I was frantically jealous of you, old fellow! I saw she liked you, and I almost believe you could have cut me out, early in the day, if you'd had the pluck to try, she was so set against me. But to-day has made it all right, and she thinks I've saved her life this time, so we're quits. Well, old man, am I not the luckiest man alive?"

"But—but—" stammered the wretched Richard, "surely, her family!"

"She's an orphan. Oh, I see what you mean; she told me she had been shocking you with an uncle who's a chemist, or a butcher, or goodness knows what. Bah! I should think the mere fact of being a hospital nurse was a patent of nobility to any woman. But if my little girl were a beggar-maiden she would still be a real princess. God bless her!"

And Richard's groan may have been an assent.

DISHES OF HARICOT BEANS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOW WE MANAGED OUR WEDDING BREAKFAST," ETC.



BEFORE I give any instructions as to the preparation of the numerous nourishing dishes that may be made from haricot beans, I will mention one or two common errors which need correcting. In ordinary directions as to the boiling, it is usually recommended to "boil the beans until tender, *drain* and serve;" vague and misleading, to say the least, for it would be quite as sensible to make good beef tea and throw the liquor away, giving the patient the dried-up, non-nutritious meat. Again, one is frequently advised to add to a pound of beans, after boiling, four or six ounces of butter; and it has often occurred to me that this item alone may have deterred many from making trial of a dish of beans, for it is a fact that they are comparatively little used—

at any rate, they are far less appreciated than they deserve to be.

In the hope, therefore, that some of my readers may be induced to give their families a dish at once cheap, tasty, and nourishing (the beans, being so rich in carbonaceous matter, are among the best vegetables for cold weather), I submit a few reliable recipes. I would suggest that the beans be purchased at a trustworthy shop, and, when a good kind has been secured, a stock laid in, and kept excluded from the air. As a rule, the small ones are nicest in colour and flavour, but they vary much in quality and time required for cooking; some will take three or four hours to boil, others may be done in far less time.

They will need soaking for ten or twelve hours, in cold water to which a bit of soda the size of a bean

has been added ; this water should be drained off, together with any beans that float. To boil them, they should be put into a stewpan, and *just* covered with cold water, with the addition of a tiny bit of soda, and an ounce of dripping, fat meat, or bacon, to a pound of beans. They must be brought very slowly to the boil—this is a step on the road to success—and *simmered* until tender, and, if required, a little cold water may be added during the cooking, but there should be none to drain off when they are done. Salt should never be put in until they are quite soft ; if added at first, it tends to harden them ; and if touched with an iron spoon they shrivel ; a wooden one is best. This is the plainest and cheapest mode of boiling the vegetable ; stock may be used instead of water, to the great improvement of the beans ; an onion chopped and boiled with them will be liked by some, though I prefer chopped parsley or a pinch of sage.

A dish by no means to be despised is one of beans and fried ham, the fat from the pan to be poured over just before they are dished.

By rubbing boiled beans through a coarse sieve, or colander, and adding, when they have cooled a little, two eggs to half a pound, then filling a greased basin with the mixture, and steaming for an hour, an excellent substitute for peas-pudding is obtained. If any is left, it will be relished if thinly sliced and fried. Cold boiled beans may always be fried—they are delicious ; a sprinkling of herbs and pepper to taste must be added.

A well-known authority on vegetarian diet recommends *Haricot Tea* to convalescents. The beans are to be cooked for about ten hours in a stew-jar in a very slow oven, in the proportion of a pint of beans to three of cold water ; the liquor should be strained off, and served with toasted bread. Equal parts of haricot tea and beef tea will furnish an agreeable and nutritious meal for an invalid.

Two sturdy boys of my acquaintance are fed twice or thrice weekly on *Haricot Porridge* at breakfast. The beans are boiled over-night as in my first recipe, rubbed through a sieve while hot, diluted with milk, and a little sugar added, so a boil up in the morning is all it needs. Sometimes, by way of variety, stock is used instead of milk. Lest any fight shy of the trouble in preparing this substantial meal, I may say that in cold weather sufficient may be cooked for three or four days ; all can be rubbed through together, and the milk added as required.

I tasted recently a very nice purée served with boiled mutton ; it consisted of onion sauce, and haricot beans finely mashed with milk ; all mixed well together.

Haricot Curry is a good winter dish ; the beans should be cooked in stock, nicely flavoured, and seasoned with curry powder or paste to suit the palate, and a fried onion and apple, both finely chopped, stirred in the last quarter of an hour ; a spoonful of gavy will improve this.

Baked Beans are very delicious ; after boiling, they should be put into a greased tin or dish, and the top of the beans covered with bits of butter or dripping, and bread-crumbs. Ten or fifteen minutes in a good oven will brown the surface.

Beans à la Maître d'Hôtel, first boiled in the usual way, require two ounces of butter, a table-spoonful of chopped parsley, salt, pepper, and a grating of nutmeg, together with an egg and a quarter of a pint of hot milk to each pound of beans, stirred in a minute or two before serving. This will furnish a separate course at the dinner-table.

Cold beans form an excellent basis for a winter salad, the oil in the dressing supplying the one element which they lack, save in a very small proportion. I prefer the addition of boiled beetroot, potatoes, celery, or Spanish onions, to a salad of beans alone. Vinegar, oil, salt, pepper, and a pinch of sugar, and a little mustard, are the only necessities for the dressing, though a spoonful of cream greatly improves it.

Lastly, there need be no difficulty in supplying the family with good soup at small cost, if a supply of haricot beans be at hand. A brown soup may be made from the liquor in which a piece of beef, or tongue, or an ox-cheek has been cooked, or a white soup from the pot liquor from veal, mutton, poultry, &c. ; and when fresh vegetables are put in with the beans, it will be found a great improvement to the flavour of the soup if these are fried brown for brown soups, and stewed, or, as it is sometimes called, "allowed to sweat" in a little butter or dripping, for the white soup. By these means the full flavour of the vegetables will be developed far more than if cold water were poured on them in the ordinary way. The fat from the frying or "sweating" can easily be removed during the cooking ; a spoonful of cold water will "throw it up."

About half a pint of beans to a quart of stock, if no other vegetables are added—if there are, fewer beans in proportion—will be the right consistency for a cold weather soup. After it has been rubbed through a coarse sieve and returned to the saucepan, any flavouring, such as sauce or ketchup, with seasoning to taste, can be added ; curry powder gives variety. When a rich soup is required, good stock or "meat extract" can be added, but for ordinary family dinners it will not need it.

A mixture of beans and potatoes will furnish a nice soup for children ; some milk should be stirred in just before serving. Any of the white kinds may receive the addition of milk with advantage, or better still, a little cream ; this converts a homely soup into a delicious purée, if care be taken in rubbing the beans well through the sieve after thoroughly boiling them ; and when cream is not at hand, the yolk of an egg or two will answer the purpose ; but they must be well beaten in, the last thing ; *off* the fire is best, so as to insure the soup not boiling afterwards. Serve squares of toasted or fried bread *with*, not *in*, any soup.