

## EDITOR'S TABLE.

### EDITORIAL CHIT-CHAT.

**GOOD COOKING AND HOW TO SECURE IT.**—An article on French Cooking, in a recent English magazine, has been extensively copied in this country, and has created quite a stir. It only reiterates, however, at greater length, what we have been saying, for years, in "Peterson." No people in the world are such economical cooks, yet such good ones, as the French. They utilize every scrap of food. What is good in itself they cook so as to bring out all its virtues. What is comparatively tasteless they make delicious by some delicate sauce or sauces.

A cotemporary preaches an excellent sermon on this theme. It calls attention to the fact—too often overlooked in this country—that ill-cooked food produces indigestion. "A dyspeptic," it says, "is gloomy, morose, and irritable. Children as well as adults participate in the effects of bad or indigestible food. They become fretful, peevish and fractious. A husband, coming home after a wearisome day of business, has a right to be met by bright, healthful, shining faces at his own hearthstone, and to be furnished with a well-prepared and well-served meal; instead of which he finds, too often, a languid and sickly wife, troublesome and quarrelsome children, and an underdone or overdone dinner. These causes combined often send a man from his home to seek, at club or restaurant, the comforts he is entitled to look for within his own dwelling. It is no longer impressed upon girls about becoming wives, that the necessity of catering to the tastes of husbands is incumbent upon them. This delicate duty is transferred to ignorant and stupid servants, who have neither the intelligence nor the inclination to enable them to prepare or to serve up food in an acceptable manner. A woman, whatever her station, can possess no more desirable accomplishment than that of being able to instruct others, or, if need be, to prepare with her own hands all the constituents of a good dinner, and to serve it daintily."

In all of this we concur. There never will be good cooking, in the homes of America, until women, rich and poor alike, do as their French sisters do, learn personally how to cook. The Empress Josephine, even at the summit of her glory, did not disdain to cook for Napoleon the delicacies he liked. One of the most accomplished ladies of the present time, and one holding the loftiest social position, is also the best housekeeper and cook we know: if a cook is insolent, she can dismiss her, and do the cooking herself; if a cook is incompetent she knows how to teach her. It is just here, by-the-by, that the "help" question comes in. Ladies complain of inefficient "help." But why is "help" incompetent? It is because there is nobody to teach "help." Men have always to teach their assistants, whether clerks or apprentices. No husband could succeed in his business, if he did not understand it, even to its minutest details. When women practise housekeeping—which is their business, at least after marriage—as thoroughly as a man follows his trade or profession, then, and then only, will they begin to see their way out of this "help" business.

We are aware, that, in many places, especially in rural districts, servants can hardly be had of any kind. In such localities even comparatively rich women have to do the cooking themselves. But is not this all the more reason that they should know something about it? Yet, as a rule, even such women take no pains to learn, and even look down on cooking as a menial occupation. Here lies their error. As the cotemporary, to which we have already alluded, says, "We would have all women learn that no work, which is

calculated to promote the pleasure or comfort of those beloved, can degrade or humiliate the worker. It is by no means desirable that women should sink into domestic drudges; but it is certainly essential to their own happiness, and to those around them, that they should know much more about household matters, and especially about cooking, than they know at present. Let ladies, instead of helplessly trusting to ignorant and dirty servants, who are often incapable of cooking a potato decently, go to work to acquire the art of cooking, which should assuredly be ranked among the fine arts—so quick a perception, so delicate a taste, so nice a judgment does it require—and thus learn, not only to make home comfortable and attractive, but themselves happy and handsome; for nothing brightens eyes, or gladdens countenances so much as the knowledge that the work we are engaged in will bring happiness and comfort to those whom we love."

We can add nothing to this, except to say, that, if half the time wasted on acquiring so-called "accomplishments," the practice of which is abandoned as soon as a girl marries; if half this time, we say, was devoted to learning cooking, there would be fewer men driven to clubs, or restaurants, or taverns, and tens of thousands more happy homes in the land.

**LARGE FLOWER-BASKETS.**—In the grounds of a distinguished horticulturalist we lately saw large flower-baskets resting on the top of a stump of a tree, which had been cut off three or more feet from the surface of the ground. A few stakes driven into the ground, or a small log placed on one end, would answer the purpose of a stump, where no stump existed. A large wire basket was then made in the following manner: A wire ring about four feet in diameter was made of a rod—say one-fourth of an inch in diameter—which is secured about one foot above the point occupied by the bottom of the basket. Then smaller wires—say one-sixteenth of an inch in diameter—extend from the small ring to the large one, for the sides of the basket. The side wires are all cut off a given length, with an open eye at each end to receive the two rings. The side wires are bent of a uniform curve, so as to give the basket a swelled form. As fast as the open eyes of the side wires are attached to the bottom ring, and to the ring that represents the rim of the basket, the ends are bent around with pliers. With a few dimes' worth of galvanized wire one can make a large basket in about one hour, that will last many years, especially if it be housed after the growing season is over. These large baskets were lined with moss, filled with rich earth, and were the receptacle of several species of beautiful flowers.

**HOW CAN IT BE AFFORDED?**—The *Edina* (Mo.) Sentinel says:—"How Peterson can afford such superb engravings, such finely-colored fashion-plates and patterns, to say nothing of his admirable stories, for two dollars a year, is one of the mysteries of the art." The reason we can afford it is because we have such a large circulation, the largest, we believe, without an exception, in the United States. And this circulation we have gained, and keep, we flatter ourselves, by making this magazine "the cheapest and best."

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