



Illustrated London Almanack, 1851

## COOKING IN MAY.



THE very mention of May and June brings to our thoughts bright sunshine, open windows, and a table that is appetising only to look at, not alone because it is gay with flowers, but because we know that salmon and

trout, lamb, asparagus, green peas and gooseberries are almost sure to find a place upon it. Then, too, we have cream and butter that taste so rich and sweet, for the cows are all out in the lush meadows; besides cream we have curds, junkets and syllabubs; we have buttermilk-scones, too, oh, and a host of other pleasant things that go with May and June days in the country! But can town-dwellers hope to share in them? Why, assuredly, for does not the best of everything find its way into town? The early potatoes, the first gooseberries, the first asparagus—all these are ready for the townfolk long before country people dare to venture on their gathering.

Now let us see if we cannot get together a few dishes that shall make ideal faring for these bright days.

Supposing that some kind friend has sent us a couple of *Trout*, or we have been tempted to buy them—how shall we cook them? First empty and cleanse them, then dry them, leaving the heads on; butter a fire-proof china dish, lay the trout on it, sprinkle them with salt and pepper, also chopped green

parsley; lay small pats of butter on the top and squeeze a little lemon-juice over; then bake them in the oven for about twenty minutes. They are a delicate fish and should not be too much cooked. The angler's favourite mode is to split the trout open, lay them on a buttered gridiron and broil them lightly over the red coals, laying small pats of butter on each one; this mode has much to recommend it too.

Here is a delicious way of serving *Salmon* when we cannot afford to purchase a large piece. Take two or three slices from the thick part of the tail, the slices to be nearly an inch in thickness; lay them in a shallow stew-pan, with water enough to well cover, and simmer them until tender through, but do not let them break. Lift the slices out and drain them on a plate; let them become cold. In the meantime prepare a mayonnaise sauce by beating the yolks of two eggs, adding a spoonful of salad oil to them, half a teaspoonful of made mustard, as much salt and pepper mixed, and the juice of half a lemon. Whisk these well for three or four minutes. Chop a few sprigs of fennel or parsley quite finely, then arrange the slices of salmon on a white china dish; spread them evenly with the mayonnaise sauce, but do not let it run over the edges; then sprinkle the chopped green over the surface and garnish with a double ring of sliced cucumber, dredging a little celery salt over the latter.

From the remains of some cold-boiled *Salmon* some very delicious *Breakfast Cutlets* may be made, by flaking the fish and mixing with it an equal quantity of fine breadcrumbs, a spoonful of chopped parsley, sufficient seasoning, and using the remainder of the sauce which went with the salmon when it was hot to mix the ingredients together. Shape them into very small cutlets, have a beaten egg on a plate, coat each cutlet with

it and cover with bread raspings. Fry them in boiling fat, first on one side, then on the other; arrange them on a fancy paper and garnish with fried parsley. A little piece of macaroni should be inserted in the end of each cutlet to represent bone.

The most economical way of buying *Lamb* is by the quarter, and even for a very small party this is still the best, as so many dishes can be made from it. Say that we have a fore-quarter to deal with; the shoulder we, of course, reserve for roasting whole, as either hot or cold that is equally good, especially if a salad of fresh lettuces and spring onions, also mint sauce, goes with it. Then we may take cutlets from the best end of the neck; the breast, if gently stewed until the bones will slip out, then well-seasoned and pressed into a mould, will make an excellent luncheon or supper-dish for eating cold; and the leaner parts of the neck make an excellent pie. A bay-leaf, a few sprigs of mint, and one or two spring onions should be used to flavour the pie.

It always seems something of a shame to see *Asparagus* served plainly boiled as an accompaniment to roast meat. It makes such a dainty dish by itself. When cooked until tender, then well drained, laid in cross bars (the hard part cut away) on buttered toast and a little creamy *sauce poulette* placed on the top, it becomes worth ever so much more. For the sauce dissolve two ounces of butter in a saucepan, work into them an ounce of flour, half a teaspoonful of mixed pepper and salt, and the yolk of an egg, then sufficient milk to make a quarter of a pint of sauce. Mix well, then stir over the fire until it boils.

The French always serve asparagus as a separate course, and the sauce is sent round in a tureen; very generally this sauce is pure dissolved butter, but a thickened sauce is better.