

COOKING—WHAT DOES IT MEAN ?

COOKING means, in every grade of its application, from the poorest to the richest, that the best natural use shall be made of the materials employed; that the peculiarities of each one of them shall be developed, not distorted; that whether they be cheap or dear, coarse or delicate, whether the results be a peasant's broth of potatoes and leeks or a sauce for Lucullus, the dish prepared shall be itself and nothing else, with all the special characters that its elements can be made to evolve by treatment intelligently devised and carefully applied. The true national uses of

THE ART OF COOKERY

do not lie in its scientific and expensive applications (if they did, cookery would be closed to all but the rich), but in the preparation, in a cottage or a palace, of every article of food, whether alone or in combination with others, in such a fashion that it shall retain the individuality that nature gave it, the full essence that belongs thereto, the properties, the aroma, the action on the palate that are specific to itself, and which ought to distinguish each dish from every other. Bad cooks are unable to bestow this character on their work; each of their productions resembles every other more or less, in utter contradiction to the fundamental law that every dish shall be itself alone, with no echo from elsewhere. When that result is obtained, no matter where or in what, in the simplest as in the most complicated work, true cookery has been applied. In England, however, the distressing error prevails generally that cookery implies the

FABRICATION OF SWAGGERING DISHES,

and that no one can be a good cook who does not possess acquaintance with such conceits. The Belgians and the Germans (especially the South Germans), are probably at this moment the most improving cooks in Europe, precisely because they perceive and apply the law of individuality, which alone can give true variety in cookery. It is because it is not, and cannot be, applied when many contradictory dishes are being prepared in the same kitchen—each one infecting the air with its own smell, combining that smell with the others, and forming in each dish a mixture of them all—that hotel and restaurant-cooking is generally so detestable. The cabbage soup of a cottage (you may see it simmering all day in almost every hut in France and Germany) stews in pure air; it remains itself, untouched by, unpolluted by, the hundred damaging contacts of the atmosphere of a great kitchen, and, for that reason, all

TRUE CRITICS OF COOKERY

will declare it to be a far more thorough representative of

the first principle of the art than any of the hundred plates sent up from a reeking basement in Paris. It is on the golden rule of simplicity and unity that every national system of cookery should rest. Each system may differ as much as it pleases in its details from the others, provided it agrees with them on that one point. It is by adhering to that rule that many Continental women, despite the comparatively limited materials at their disposal, obtain the truest and the most numerous forms of variety of food: while we, now that we are beginning in our turn to want variety, are content to obtain it, not from cookery, but from mere abundance of supply.

A FADED ROSE.

I TOOK up a book in a twilight room,
And from the leaves fell out a red rose,
Scentless and wither'd in the dim grey gloom,
Wrapp'd with its tales of long vanish'd woes.
Glowing with beauty it once bloom'd fair,
Stately and proud, on a bending bough.
Queen of the flowers in the summer air,
Ah, what a wraith is left of it now!

The room fades into an old garden fair,
With winding alleys and leafy trees;
Perfain'd breezes laden the slumbrous air,
And the soft crooning of humming bees.
'Be true, my sweetheart,' a lover once said,
'For true am I as the sky above!'
But oh, he is gone, and the days are dead;
There is naught left in the world to love!

The roses bloom fair on the red-rose tree,
In-scented wreaths hang the twining vine,
And the ghost of a day has come back to me,
In the faint pale sheen of white moonshine.
But ah! What is this? 'Tis a voice, a call!
And love has come back from days of yore—
Love, with his beauty, with his tales, with all,
But the rose said, 'He is here no more!'

I awake from my dream in the dusk of day,
With the faded rose in the twilight room,
Dead as the past as the swallows own lay,
And dark as my heart in its shrouded gloom.
Never for me will the red roses twine
Around the tree in the sweet old way,
Never the same droop the clusters of vine,
For dead as this rose is my heart to-day.

MAGNIFICENT JEWELS.

THE finest pearl in existence is one which the French traveller Tavernier sold in the seventeenth century to the Shah for £108,000, and which is still the property of the Persian Crown. The Imam of Muscat possesses a pearl of 12½ carats, perfectly transparent, which is estimated at £32,000; while the Princess Yousouf of Muscat has one still more valuable, which formerly belonged to Philip IV. of Spain, who bought it in 1623 for 80,000 ducats. Leo XIII. has a pearl which has for over a century been in the Vatican, and which is valued at £16,000.

With regard to pearl necklaces, that of the Empress Frederick, composed of thirty-two pearls, is valued at £24,000, which is about £3,000 more than the appraised value of the Queen's necklace of pink pearls, at one time exhibited among the Crown jewels at the Tower. Bronzes Gustave de Rothschild has a necklace with five rows of pearls, which is worth £40,000, and her cousin, Bronzes Adolphe, has one still more valuable, both ladies adding to them when a really fine pearl comes into the market. The Empress of Russia has a necklace of pearls with seven rows, but the stones are considered not to be quite so fine, while the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia has a necklace with six rows worth £35,000.

With regard to the most celebrated diamonds, such as the Regent, the Nancy, the Kohinoor, etc., the first named has for the last five years been on view at the Louvre, and is estimated at £125,000; while the Nancy, after having belonged to the Princess Paul Demidoff, passed into the hands of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, of Bombay, who gave £20,000 for it. The Orloff, originally bought for £30,000 by the Prince of that name as a present for the Empress Catherine II., is now among the Russian Crown jewels; while among the Austrian Crown jewels is the Foreutin, valued at £104,000; while the Rajah of Colesonda (from whence originally came the French Regent) has the Nizam, valued at £220,000, another Indian Rajah owning the Star of the South, for which he paid £160,000.

The Great Mogul, which the Shah of Persia named Derial, or 'Queen of Light,' has never been valued, but the largest diamond of all belongs to the Rajah of Matam, in the island of Borneo, who declined an offer from the Dutch Government of two warships and £32,000 in specie. King Charles of Portugal has a very fine diamond, weighing 205 carats; and the Empress Eugenie, who has sold so many of her jewels, still has a comb in diamonds said to be unrivalled for lustre, and a great length of vine and fruit design done in diamonds, which are of dazzling beauty when worn at night.

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