



AN OLD-FASHIONED COOKERY BOOK

By "ELIZABETH"

IT is not often in this country that one comes across a real old book, and when one does it is looked upon as veritable treasure-trove, especially if by its nature it throws some light on the manners and customs of our ancestors, as does the quaint old cookery-book which came into my possession—only temporarily, alas!—the other day. Unfortunately the date is not given on the title page, but judging from the style of the type, and the appearance of the lady in the frontispiece, who, adorned with a large and frilly mob-cap, is about to set to work on a collection of fish, flesh and fowl of various kinds, I should say it was quite a hundred years old, if not more. Neither, unfortunately again, is the name of the authoress given. The compiler of this "Cook's Complete Guide, on the Principles of Frugality, Comfort, and Elegance, with Instructions for Preserving Health, and Attaining Old Age," etc., etc., coyly hides her identity under the vague title of "A Lady," but whoever she was, she was a worthy successor to the famous Mrs. Glasse (to whom she refers in her preface) and predecessor of the still more famous Mrs. Beaton, for her volume is nearly as complete a compendium of household knowledge as is the work of the latter accomplished lady. Everything the housekeeper could want is here—directions for boiling, baking and frying, and the making of all sorts of preserves—the art of carving—directions for fattening pigs and poultry, etc.—the cultivation of the garden, and instructions for treatment in ordinary sicknesses and common accidents, including what to do if one should swallow a wasp

which must have been a most unpleasant thing to happen to anyone. She does not tell you how to make a will, which Mrs. Beaton does, and the omission seems rather a pity, as judging from the things our ancestors ate, and the treatment recommended for various ailments, wills must have been frequently required. Some of the treatment seems very odd to us now. For instance, when a child is recovering from measles and requires strengthening, a tablespoon of wine is advised as the daily dose for a sufferer of—what age do you think? A child of five! Oh, Dr. King, and the W.C.T.U., where were you then? Where were you then? And there is almost a suggestion of witchcraft about the following directions for a poultice.

"Get the inner rind of elder, and of the female or blossoming elm; mallow, groundsel, plantain and houseleek, of each a handful; boil quickly in a quart of boiling water till the herbs are tender; strain off, save the liquor and chop the herbs up fine; take a part of the liquid and boil it in a large piece of bread, stir in part of the herbs and a scrap of raw fat bacon, and apply warm." Something should surely result from so potent a brew as that!

However, it is the cookery department, rather than the pharmacopœia, which has the most interest for the modern housewife, so let us turn back to the beginning of the book. As I remarked before—the things our ancestors ate!

All sorts of parts of all sorts of beasts that one does not know by name, even, nowadays, and so elaborately prepared, with lardings of bacon, highly seasoned stuffings, rich gravies, and a lavish use of oysters and what the lady always terms the "yelks" of eggs. (Some of her spelling is somewhat quaint to our eyes. "Potatoc" with an "e" looks odd, and so does "harico" and "vermicilly.")

Here, for instance, is a recipe, "To Disguise a Leg of Veal," though why one should want to disguise it, I cannot say. "Lard the top-side of a leg of veal in rows with bacon, and stuff it well with forcement made of oysters; then put it into a large saucepan with as much water as will cover it, and stew it gently till quite tender; then take it up and boil down the gravy to a quart; skim off the fat and add half a lemon, a spoonful of mushroom catsup, a little lemon pickle, and the crumb of a half-a-penny loaf grated very fine; boil all till thick, then add half a pint of oysters; and if not thick enough, put in a lump of butter rolled in flour with half a pint of good cream, and the yolks of three eggs. Pour the sauce over the veal and garnish with crisped parsley and fried oysters." Sounds very luscious, doesn't it?

And there is a way of dressing a cod's head and shoulders, in which the fish is first boiled and then roasted before a clear fire, being well basted all the time with butter, and is finally served with a sauce into whose composition there enter "half a hundred oysters, two glasses of madeira, and the meat of a boiled lobster pounded smooth!" By the way, it must



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