

**COOKERY, RATIONAL,
PRACTICAL AND ECONOMICAL,
TREATED IN CONNEXION
WITH THE CHEMISTRY OF FOOD**

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Cookery, Rational, Practical and Economical, Treated in Connexion with the Chemistry of Food
by Hartelaw Reid

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HARTELOW REID

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RATIONAL, PRACTICAL, AND ECONOMICAL;
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WITH
THE CHEMISTRY OF FOOD.

BY HARTELOW REID.



"I could write a better book of Cookery than has ever yet been written; it should be a book on philosophical principles."—DR. JOHNSON.

"Those [cooks] who wish to excel in their art, must only consider how the processes of it can be most perfectly performed."—DR. KITCHNER.

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P R E F A C E .

THE aim of this work is fully expressed in the two quotations which appear in its title-page. A rational understanding of every process, so as to be able to distinguish its essential peculiarities from those which merely mark its relation to a particular article of food, is, we are convinced, far more important to the modern housewife than an empirical knowledge of specific receipts. This latter, indeed, is but the pedantry of cookery, which many modern cookery-books seem specially designed to encourage. On consulting some of them, one might almost suppose that the *precise proportioning* of ingredients and seasonings was everything, and the *process* nothing ;—that there existed some mysterious virtue in certain relative quantities, without which every effort of cookery must be an utter failure. Now the real fact is the very reverse of this. Great latitude may be allowed in proportioning the various ingredients of almost every culinary compound, provided its treatment otherwise be correct. Indeed, to insist upon exactness in this respect would in nine cases out of ten ensure an unsatisfactory result. It is very possible that this is the secret cause of the general dissatisfaction regarding most cookery-receipts. The reason of it will be evident when it is considered that the tastes of in-

dividuals differ so much, that what pleases one offends another, and also that the flavour of almost every kind of vegetable-seasoning varies in strength with the specimen employed. But it is otherwise with the *operations* of cookery. These bear relation to the chemical and mechanical properties of food, which never vary; and to the requirements of healthy nutrition, which are equally immutable. We do not mean to deny the possibility of an artistic combination of flavours: all we assert is, that upon this art no exact science can be founded, in consequence of the indeterminate nature of its subject as already explained. Its rules must therefore be of the most general kind; and may be briefly stated as follows:—*1st*, The natural flavour of that which gives name to the dish ought always to predominate,—such adjuncts only being selected as will serve to heighten this; *2d*, If the principal ingredient be in itself insipid, the communicated flavour should be simple and distinct; and *3d*, A mixture of decidedly different flavours ought never to be attempted unless the result be a close imitation of some other well-known flavour. In this way the cook will avoid equivocal mixtures, regarding which two persons with a slight difference in the constitution or habit of their organs of taste, might pronounce contradictory opinions.

The present work, being conceived in accordance with the foregoing remarks, naturally came to be classified according to the various processes,—Roasting, Boiling, &c. To each of these, therefore, a separate space has been devoted, containing not only receipts for the most generally popular dishes, but also an introductory paragraph of “General Directions.” To these paragraphs, as being the most important part of the book, and in-

deed the proper complement to the receipts, the author begs particular attention ; and likewise to Chapter IV. which treats of " The General Principles to be kept in view in every process of Cookery." Where definite proportions are stated in the receipts, it is merely to show what is *admissible*—not to prescribe what is indispensable. To render the book as nearly perfect as its limits will allow, its first three chapters contain remarks on household economy, as well as a description of the various culinary processes, and the utensils and appliances required for each ; and the concluding chapter embraces a number of miscellaneous receipts which could not well be included in its system of classification. To this there are also appended some remarks on dinners and suppers, with directions for carving ; and likewise an index of the times at which the various provisions are in season.

A table of Contents, arranged partly by way of Index, is prefixed, showing the page on which the receipt for each dish is to be found, and also that containing the General Directions for the class to which it belongs, which ought to be studied in connection with each particular receipt. The contents of Chapters V. to IX. are arranged together in a tabular form as being more concise. It is hoped that the book will thus not only be rendered useful to those who already possess some experience in domestic management, but also serve as an elementary guide-book to young housekeepers ; to whom it is most respectfully dedicated by their obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Erratum.—In the receipt for *Suet Dumpling*, on page 110, for " an hour and a half," read " half an hour."

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