

*Henry Coleman*

USEFUL

# SUGGESTIONS

FAVOURABLE TO THE

COMFORT

OF THE

LABOURING PEOPLE,

AND OF

DECENT HOUSEKEEPERS.

EXPLAINING

HOW A SMALL INCOME MAY BE MADE TO GO FAR IN A FAMILY, SO AS TO OCCASION A CONSIDERABLE SAVING IN THE ARTICLE OF

BREAD.

A CIRCUMSTANCE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO BE KNOWN  
AT THE PRESENT JUNCTURE.

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LONDON

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY HENRY FRY,  
NO. 8, MIDDLE-MOORFIELDS,

AND SOLD BY J. PARSONS, NO. 21, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

[PRICE THREE-PENCE.]

M.DCC.XCV.

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## SUGGESTIONS, &c.

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**I**T has long been observed as a matter of regret by the friends of the poor, who have had access to examine the modes of living which prevail in other parts of the kingdom, that the labouring people who have been chiefly bred in London, are deprived of many comforts which they might freely enjoy, were they acquainted with the various useful methods of dressing meat and vegetables, so as to make their earnings go as far as possible in a family, and thereby afford a wholesome, palatable, and an abundant supply of savory and nourishing food, at a small expence.

It is not many years ago, since the more opulent part of the people of London could be made to believe that soups were good and profitable in a family; and even now, except among the higher ranks, it is not a mode of cookery which generally prevails, although it is advancing very fast; because the secret is no sooner discovered than it is adopted, and considered by all who have learned the true and proper method of making soups of meat and vegetables, as a  
great

great acquisition to every family, especially where there are children

So powerful is habit and custom, that it is only a few years since soups were introduced into the workhouses in London, and it will scarce be believed, that the rich and nourishing juices of the meat which intermixed with the water which boiled it, were generally thrown out and lost.

A better knowledge of cookery, and a greater regard to the healths of the poor people have induced the managers of many workhouses to save the water in which their meat has been boiled, and to make it into soup on the following day, with the addition of some bones to enrich it, and a mixture of such vegetables as the season of the year affords; by which means, at a very trifling additional expence, the poor people enjoy a most nourishing, palatable, and balsamic food, to which they were strangers before, but which experience teaches them, after knowing it, to prefer to every thing else. and yet in the workhouses this soup is not so good as it might be, by a proper distribution of savory vegetables and barley, which will be learnt hereafter.

The best and cheapest method of making a rich and nourishing soup is only known to the higher classes of people in London, with a very few exceptions, and therefore the object of the writer of these pages is to extend that knowledge, in all its branches, to the labourers, mechanics, and other decent housekeepers, who have small incomes and large families,



that they may thereby be enabled to live better themselves, and to feed their children with as wholesome a diet as the rich man's children enjoy, and that too at a smaller expence than they now incur.

At present, the labouring poor are not frequently known to purchase what is called the coarser pieces of the different kinds of butcher's meat. Unskilled in the nutritious qualities which attach to them, because of their ignorance in cookery, they leave this kind of meat to be bought up at an inferior price by many of the higher classes, and they lay out their money in pieces for roasting, where the bones perhaps enhances the price of the actual meat to 9d. or 10d. a pound, which is sent to an oven to be baked, where the nourishing parts are dried up, and where all that a poor man can afford to purchase, perhaps does not half satisfy the appetites of himself and family.

Another method is to purchase bacon often of an inferior quality, perhaps at 9d. or 10d. per lb. and to deal out the greasy unwholesome morsel perhaps among a large family of children, which, when eat up, rather tends to whet the appetite than to satisfy it, and the consequence is, that recourse must be had to the ale-house for one or more pots of porter to *fill up*, which, after all, does not answer the purpose; while the expence of such a dinner may be double the sum that a wholesome, palatable savory dish of meat and soup, mixed with vegetables would cost, with this advantage—that it would fill, and satisfy the stomach. It would leave no craving behind even for porter. a certain



certain proportion of which would at least be saved, and when a frugal man considers that two pots of porter in the course of a day, will be equal to 10l. 17s. 6d. a year, he will reflect that such a saving will pay the rent of a comfortable house, or the schooling of three or four children, or will purchase decent cloaths both for a poor man, his wife and children, to last a year

It is not, however, here meant that the labouring man, or his family should deny themselves their pot of porter, or occasionally their roast meat when they have a desire for it.—God forbid. The object of the information now conveyed is to shew them, that they can have more variety, and that many profitable, palatable, and beneficial dishes may be afforded, by which they may live far better, and at less expence than they do at present. Nor can it be argued with truth, that the poor have not convenience for the sort of dishes which are now to be recommended, since all that is necessary is a stew-pan, and a little fire to cook every sort of soup that can be made, and as the very poorest of the people generally boil a tea-kettle twice a day, they can with equal ease to themselves boil meat and vegetables.

There are various kinds of excellent soups suited to each season of the year, which frugal families chiefly in the country, who know how to live comfortably on a small income, generally make a part of their food three or four times a week, adding some little article according to their circumstances, and varying the kind of soup by way of change.

The following *Receipts* will shew how several of these Soups are made.

### I. POTATOE SOUP.

*Potatce Soup* is made by stewing about five pounds of the coarsest parts of beef or mutton, or even part of a bullock's head, in 10 quarts of water till half done; then pare the skin from the potatoes, and put a quantity in the stew-pan with the meat, together with some onions, pepper and salt. Stir it frequently, and when the potatoes are boiled sufficiently, it will be found a very excellent dish. If a few bones of beef are added, it will make the soup richer and a greater quantity may be made. The meat, when seasoned with the onions and pepper, will eat extremely well along with that part of the potatoes which remain whole, and do not mix with the soup, and in this way a most comfortable meal for a large family is obtained without using any bread at all.—What is called the sticking of the beef, which is rich and full of gristle, is the best meat for this kind of soup, because there is no bone in it.

5lb of this beef generally costs 2d. a pound,

but at present it will be  $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. in all 1 6

Bones to enrich the soup — — 0 4

24lb. of potatoes may now be bought for the

price of a quartern loaf of bread, (which

weighs 4lb  $5\frac{1}{2}$  oz.) and they will soon be

much cheaper —The cost will be another 1 0

A bunch of onions will cost, if good and large 0 4

Pepper and salt - - - 0 4

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Total expence of ingredients 3 6



This dish will afford a savory, comfortable, and even a plentiful and wholesome dinner to a family of 10 or 12 persons, including children, at the expence of  $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each. It will fill the stomach with what will be found both palatable and nourishing, and it will prevent that desire for large quantities of porter which always become necessary when the same sum is expended in a dinner of baked meat, or of bacon and bread, which is not so wholesome—leaves the stomach empty—creates a thirst, and does not convey half the nourishment, and, in point of weight of food, the proportion for the same money is considerably above four-fold in favour of the potatoc soup and meat, a circumstance well worth attending to by the middling, as well as the lower ranks in life—especially where there are a number of children.

This calculation is made with a view to the present high prices of meat and vegetables.—In a short time, potatoes will be at, or under one farthing a pound, and onions will be much cheaper and better, so as to afford a greater quantity, and thereby make the dish more savory. Beef will also be cheaper, so that in place of  $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. a family may dine well at 2d. or  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. a head.

## II. BARLEY BROTH.

This dish, when well made, is, of all others the most savory, rich, palatable, and nutritious that can be conceived. It admits almost of a mixture of every kind of vegetable that can be procured throughout the year, and it cannot be said to be ever out of

season. The vegetables are parsley, common greens, cabbages, turnips, carrots, pease, beans, collards, and brocoli according to the season, constantly attending to one rule however, that whatever other herbs are used, *onions* or *leeks*, and parsley if it can be had, must form a part of the ingredients, and the soup may be made thick or thin, according to the taste of the person who uses it. The clod and sticking of the bullock makes the best barley broth, and it may also be enriched much by the addition of beef or marrow bones. Mutton is frequently used in this kind of soup, but it does not make it so rich or so good as beef, which may be used in larger or smaller quantities, according to circumstances. A tea cupful of barley is sufficient for a large family. What is called pearl barley is not so good as a larger sort, which does not cost half so much money, and may be purchased at about 3d a pound or less.

The general rule for making this soup is as follows:

Take four quarts of water, four pounds of beef with bones, four ounces of barley, and so in proportion for a larger or smaller quantity.—

Stew the whole together for two hours, then put in such pot herbs and greens as may be suitable to the season, cut small, with a proper quantity of salt, and let the whole boil until they are quite tender.—If necessary, scum the fat off that it may not be greasy.—There may be more or less carrots, turnips, greens or pease, accord-



according to the taste of the parties ; but onions or leeks, according to the season, must not be omitted, as it gives the soup an excellent flavour.

This soup is generally taken without bread, and with the addition of a few potatoes, to be eaten afterwards with the boiled meat, makes an excellent meal, extremely good and wholesome, where there are a number of children.

### III HODGE PODGE.

This kind of soup is reckoned still more palatable than any of the former, but it is more expensive, and can only be made during the season of green peas — It is made of mutton stewed, with parsley, young carrots, turnips, and green pease, with a few onions cut small — If well made, it is preferable to all other soups both in taste and flavour.

Take a leg, loin, or neck of mutton, cut it in small pieces, and boil it in six quarts of water for some time, then put in a quart of green pease, with young carrots, turnips, onions and parsley, with a proper quantity of salt, and let the whole boil gently till the vegetables are tender.

When meat and vegetables are cheap, this soup is within the reach of every housekeeper, and is even accessible to the lower orders of the people, and when once tried, it will be found that there cannot be a greater luxury, the expence of a piece of meat, baked in an oven (the worst of all modes of cookery) with the usual appendages, will, at any time, procure  
thus

this excellent dish, which will go twice as far in a family, will be more palatable, convey double the nutriment, and is a most nourishing and wholesome food for children. Potatoes, or bread may be eaten afterwards with the mutton. This kind of soup may also be considerably enriched by a piece of gravy beef, or good bones, which may be boiled along with the mutton.

#### IV. BEEF SOUP.

This kind of Soup is better known than any of the former but neither so profitable nor useful to those who have large families.—It is made by boiling Beef in water according to the quantity. When half done, scum the fat off, and add, carrots, turnips, and onions, cut small, with a proper quantity of salt and some pepper-corns, and let the whole stew till properly reduced.

#### V. VEAL BROTH.

Stew a knuckle of veal with four or five quarts of water, to which may be added a little good bacon, or bacon ham, with salt, onions, parsley, and green peas, in the season.—It will be found to be a very excellent soup, and the veal and bacon may be eaten together with potatoes and bread.

#### VI. PEASE SOUP.

This Soup is so generally known, that it is unnecessary to explain how it is made. It is a very excellent soup, but in many respects inferior to some of the others, and more expensive.

These different soups form that change of diet which



which is always agreeable, and experience will enable those who use them to make improvements according to their own tastes. The same experience will soon manifest their utility in improving the healths of every member of a family, both young and old, and after a little perseverance, this mode of living will be preferred as the most palatable and conducive to real nourishment, as well as the most economical. An excellent and nutritious soup may also be made from Fish, which, when mixed with vegetables and onions, is a very palatable dish, and will be found, if well made, not to have the least taste of fish. Money will be saved, by the use of these different kinds of Soups, for a roasted joint with potatoes and vegetables to be occasionally added to the bill of fare.

Children will no longer feel that craving appetite which at present too often succeeds a dinner of bacon or baked meat upon the present plan. They will always be satisfied, because the stomach will be full.

The writer of these pages is instigated by no motive under Heaven but a desire to add to the comfort of the labouring people, by making them acquainted with a good mode of living, which their habits of life has not given them access to know.

It is reasonable and proper in every point of view, that the poor man should be instructed in every thing that can make his little earnings go as far as possible, or which can add to the comfort of himself and family, and this is the sole object of the writer, who will consider his labour on this occasion well bestowed, if



if he can even in a small degree be instrumental in introducing the mode of living which he now recommends, because he is well assured it would, when once tried, rapidly gain ground, and thereby not only produce a considerable saving in the expence of every poor man's family, but add greatly to the comfort and health of a vast body of people.

It is well known that potatoes are the chief food of many of the northern counties of England, where the people are strong, healthy, and happy, and where a knowledge of some of the modes of living, similar to what is now suggested, enable them to live comfortably, and to rear and educate large families with decency, upon much smaller wages than the labouring poor in London receive.

Why therefore should not they also be as comfortable and as easy in their circumstances? Why should they not determine to be less dependent on bread, which, in a large family, is at the cheapest time a most expensive article, and follow the laudable example of the country by using a larger proportion of that excellent substitute potatoes, which is seldom above one sixth part of the price of bread, and which may be dressed in so many different ways? The people have only to resolve to make the experiment, and they will accomplish their object, *and now is the time to do it.*

Potatoes may be used in soups in the manner already described they may also be eaten with salt-fish and butter, which is an excellent dish; They may be also used in puddings, or with milk boiled, which is  
a most



a most, palatable cheap, and nourishing food both for young and old.

Potatoes may also be mixed up with flour and made into a most excellent, cheap, and palatable bread. Those who know how to bake this kind of bread in their own houses, may send loaves to the oven, which will feed their families at one third of the present price of Bread. Thus circumstanced, while there are plenty of potatoes, (and thank God! there never was so great a crop as the present season is likely to afford) the poor man has nothing to fear. On the contrary, he may rather rejoice at the present temporary scarcity of bread, (for it can only last a few weeks) if it shall be the means of leading the attention to a better, a more frugal, and a more wholesome mode of living, so as to leave a portion of the annual earnings of a family for the purchase of decent cloaths, for the education of children, and to render the labouring people more independent of the pawnbroker's shop than they are at present, and where it is to be lamented, a considerable portion of their earnings center in the course of the year.

All this might be attained by following in a greater degree the mode of living practised in the country—by eating less bread and more potatoes, or potatoe puddings, and nourishing soups—by giving up in a great degree baked meats—by feeding children, and even grown people on milk porridge, or very thick gruel, called hasty-pudding, mixed with milk, or small beer and molasses to breakfast, in the same manner

manner the children of the higher ranks are generally fed, and this in place of bread and butter (the latter often rancid and bad) to breakfast, as is too generally the custom at present, a diet which is doubly expensive, and not half so nutritious or wholesome, or even so palatable, as the sort of breakfast which is now recommended.

It is here to be observed, that there is not a single article of diet recommended to the labouring people, which the children of the higher ranks do not generally use and prefer and happy would it be for themselves and families, if they could only be persuaded to understand the comforts which are the constant rewards of frugality.

Those who feel so much discontent on account of the present high price of bread and meat, do not reflect that, *after all*, this country is supplied more abundantly at this present time, and probably at a cheaper rate, than any other country in Europe. No person will say that there has ever been any actual want, either of bread or meat, in the metropolis.—Thank God! there has always been enough both for the poor and the rich, and all ranks ought to be thankful that this has been the case, while it is known that such distress prevails in France, and other parts of Europe, where it has often happened, that no money would purchase bread or even meat, because none could be procured on any terms.

The poor of England have never been in this situation, there has hitherto been abundance of every thing



thing, although dearer than usual · but where is the country in the world, where every pressure upon the poor is so amply relieved by the rich as in England? —Are not their purses opened upon every occasion where real distress is to be found? and is not relief constantly administered with a degree of liberality, which is not to be found in any other nation in the world? This truth will not be denied, and it is a blessing for which the people cannot be sufficiently grateful.

It is also great cause of thankfulness, that the very high advance on bread did not take place until a season of the year when potatoes and vegetables were becoming abundant, so as to render it of much less consequence in the consumption of a family for no person is so ignorant as not to know that in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and many other parts of England, potatoes are the only bread of the people for the chief part of the year, and in Ireland, the great body of the nation live entirely on this excellent root, the nourishing qualities of which are proved by the health, strength, and good appearance of all who make potatoes a general food.

While therefore we are sure of having abundance of potatoes, neither the rich nor the poor have any thing at all to apprehend from the high price of bread. In a few weeks the harvest will be general, and let us all be thankful that the prospects in every part of the country are so abundant, as to give us encouragement to hope that in a short time there will be a redundancy both of corn and vegetables, as well as meat of every sort,



fort ; for at no period in the memory of man, did the pastures of England exhibit such a luxuriant appearance as at present. This must and will unquestionably reduce the price of meat, for the country is full of cattle, and there is no cause for any alarm whatsoever, much less for a spirit of discontent manifested by tumultuous meetings. Of all expedients, this is the most wicked and dangerous for the comforts of the poor that could be resorted to. for independent of all other bad consequences which attend riotous assemblies, it is the readiest and most obvious way to distress and starve all ranks of the people, by frightening the Farmers and Graziers from bringing their cattle, corn, provisions, and vegetables, to market, for who would venture their property in the metropolis, if they found it under the mischievous influence of a mob-government ?

Every individual, therefore, whatever his condition may be in life, becomes interested at all times, but particularly at this time, in preserving the peace and good order of society : while those who are deluded into a contrary conduct, are the means of multiplying, by the worst of crimes, those distresses which would arise from any interruption to the free admission of provisions, so as to lower their prices to the poor, an event which will soon take place in the ordinary course of things.

LONDON, 17th July.

1795.