

familiar cornstarch mould if turned out in a fresh shape or coloured with a few drops of cochineal or spinach green. The food is rendered more attractive, more palatable, and, last but not least, more digestible. "To make the mouth water" should constitute a cook's ambition, for it is a preliminary to good digestion. Monotony in daily diet is a widespread source of dyspepsia.

REASON (2).—FOOD IS COOKED TO INCREASE ITS DIGESTIBILITY.

It is possibly a matter for surprise that this reason does not appear first on the list, for the changes brought about in well-cooked porridge or in a "floury" potato are, as we all know, necessary to their digestion. But, as a matter of fact, while exposure to heat is essential for all starchy foods, such as rice, flour, etc., flesh foods and fats are thereby liable to become, to a greater or less degree, indigestible, unless care be exercised and certain precautions be observed.

Nearly all the varied kinds of manipulation employed in the preparation of food materials have as their object to increase their digestibility. The majority may, indeed, be looked upon as a first stage of mastication or chewing.

For example: Meat is pounded or minced. Bread, cheese, suet, or nuts are grated, chopped, or ground, because, by dividing these substances into tiny fragments, the digestive juices come more completely in contact with every particle. Eggs are beaten or whisked; the result of which is to entangle air in the glutinous substance. These bubbles of air expand when heated, so that the jelly-like mass becomes "light." If a cake or pudding is chilled by the premature opening of the oven-door before a crust has formed, the heated air contracts and the mixture is "heavy." Butter or lard is "rubbed" into flour; a process called "shortening," of which the object is to divide the lump of fat into very small particles, as well as to separate the grains of flour. Pastry is "rolled" to make it dry and flaky, and it is pinched together gently at the edges when "folded" in order that cold air may be imprisoned between the folds. This air also expands in the process of baking and makes the pastry "light." Sometimes cheese and bread are grated and mixed before cooking, by which means the concentrated cheese particles are separated and made easy of digestion; whereas uncooked or toasted cheese is often a source of dyspepsia.

Another important form of manipulation is the removal of the bruised or diseased parts of fruits and vegetables, as well as their skins, cores, and stalks. The rinds and cores of fruit and the stalks of vegetables may fairly be compared to thin layers of cork, and are just about as digestible. All bruised or diseased parts of any form of food are the seat of decay and unfit for human food.

REASON (3).—THE COOKING OF FOOD INCLUDES THE COMBINATION OF DIFFERENT SUBSTANCES.

(a.) To afford variety:

(b.) To increase the amount of nourishment.

Illustrations of (a).—The addition of lemon-peel or a few drops of vanilla to a cornstarch mould, or the flavouring of a meat-stew now with onion, parsnips, and carrots, now with celery. The combination of suet-pudding mixture with sultanas, or jam, or molasses, or syrup, or stewed fruit, or meat.

Illustrations of (b).—The combination of eggs with milk in custard, or of butter with bread in a pudding, or of oil with lettuce in a salad.