

*Haras*, and because we do not ourselves profess to be at all stable-minded, and have on this subject to take our information in great part from others, we just humbly ask these questions:—Is it or is it not a fact that the race-course has long been upheld in Great Britain on the express ground that it is one of the greatest schools and encouragements to the improvement of the breed of certain high classes of horses, and through these, less directly of all other breeds? Is it also a fact that the Imperial Government of France has taken much trouble, and gone to no small expense, and been moreover highly successful in establishing races all over France? And is it not a fact that they buy our best race-horses to improve their own, and that the general standard of the French horse of all classes has been of late years greatly improved, and is still improving? If it be not so we can only say the impressions of some competent judges, who know what French horses were in 1830 and what they are now, as exhibited at the recent great horse show—which was held upon the esplanade of the Invalides at Paris, and is just closed—have been widely astray. And equally astray are the opinions of certain railway contractors' agents, and other good judges of money's worth, to be got out of a draught horse, who say that the compact gray or brown stallions which now pull the heavy traffic of Paris and of more southern France, are far more courageous, powerful, and economic draught horses than those ponderous sleek and slow equine aldermen that advance in London, and are the pride and panegyric of Londoners and of Englishmen generally. However, this may or may not be so. But if this be true that the breed of horses generally in France is being improved, have we not here extracted from the very absurdity we have quoted, a proof of the value of rightly directed technical education? even as respects the improved production of horse-flesh, for with the direct view to the improvement that is being effected as its consequence, has the Government of France promoted the racecourse as the best school for those wise in horseflesh.

Were it worth while we might follow this matter further in the other direction, and recall some unpleasant remembrances of veterinary professional ignorance and dogmatism in England emanating from our nearly voluntary and hap-hazard education in that particular, of which the *Times* took due notice at the time of the cattle plague. And *per contra* might notice as at least remarkable that in the only part of the United Kingdom in which the cattle plague got no hold and appears to have been most successfully treated—in Ireland—the leading veterinary surgeon charged with this matter by the authorities there, who is admittedly one of the most scientific men of his profession, was educated abroad, and chiefly at Alfort.

As we have followed into these low regions of illustration, we shall descend to a still humbler one.

However it may be debated, whether the development of cookery be a proof of national heroism and virtue—it certainly may be accepted, like the consumption of soap, as in proportion to its goodness one measure of comparative civilisation.

“Providence gives meat, but the devil sends the cook,” is a tolerably well known proverb, the

unpleasant truth contained in which, we are all in England feelingly convinced of. There is plenty of bad cookery out of England also, as those who have had to satisfy their hunger in the more savage countries of Europe, or the less settled ones of the new world, know but too well; but how comes it that if this proverb exist, it has lost all its force in certain other nations of Europe—as in France, Germany, Switzerland and Northern Italy, for example, while it remains the expression of an active truth in every household, except that of the noble with his *chef de cuisine*, throughout England, Scotland and Ireland. Mainly because in our own country cookery is picked up anyhow and at hap-hazard; is not recognized as “an art,” resting, like every other art, upon general principles, is never taught systematically at all, and scarcely could be taught as it should be taught to the poor ignorant women who usually form the substrate out of which English cooks are raised.

A “professed cook,” as seen in the advertising columns of the *Times*, means a squabby, red-faced, well-fed, fire-proof old dame, whose “experience” consists in her having seen some tons of raw flesh thrust through with iron spits, and set to hiss and terrify before roaring banks of blazing coal—or little more.

We need not say what “the *chef*” even of a provincial hotel or restaurant is abroad, nor what the cook of the higher order of foreign household, either in town or country. Those who have had the opportunity of remarking the domestic *regime* of the wide-spread middle-class of Germany and of France, know how the science of the management of the food for the family, is acquired both by mistress and cook. The former before she becomes a married woman, is in the habit, throughout a large part of German-speaking Europe, of putting on a “cooking jacket” and taking lessons in cookery, and acquiring its principles and actual practice, under the *chef* of some large hotel or restaurant. If in a lower rank, she engages as a cooking assistant at wages, (laid up for the future *trousseau*), often at a distance from her home, and for a period of several months. The man who has taught her does not do so, as himself a mere empiric, he knows something of the outlines of the chemistry and so forth, on which cookery, good or bad, depends—and he does not rhyme off “recipes” only—he communicates rules and principles.

Ask an English cook some such questions as these:—What is the lowest temperature at which it is possible to boil an egg? How do mushrooms and truffles differ from vegetable marrow or melon; and peas from all? Is it true that a junk of cheese helps to digest a slab of half raw roast beef? Have sweet puddings and the “emulsions” of the apothecary any near relations to each other? What sorts of food are most easily digested, which most nutritive, and which most fattening? Is a pound of fish as economic as a pound of flesh? When are potatoes poison, and why is the Irish mode of boiling those roots, the best—if they be *boiled* at all? To such questions we may safely say not one cook in ten thousand in Great Britain could return any reply. Few would have any notion of what the questions meant; and amongst the equally ignor-