

It has been proved by Dr. Prout, that sugar, butter, or oil, and white of egg, or substances partaking of their nature, form the chief alimentary food of man. The saccharine, or *sugary* principle, in its extended sense, is mostly derived from vegetables. A proper knowledge of these principles forms the basis, or foundation, of French cookery, or, indeed, every other good system of cookery. It does not follow, however, that it is necessary that a cook should understand these things philosophically, so as to be able to give a reason for them. It is sufficient for him or her to take for granted the maxims or rules that have been deduced from them, and act accordingly.

In France, most substances intended for food are exposed, by means of oil or butter, or grease, in a frying-pan, to a heat of 600° Fahrenheit, that is, nearly three times hotter than boiling water. This is done by frying, or by some other method similar to frying. They are then put into a macerating or stewing vessel, with a little water, and kept for several hours at a temperature, or heat, below the boiling point; that is to say, the liquid is never allowed to *bubble up*, nor yet scarcely to simmer. By these united processes, it has been clearly proved, that the most hard and tough substances, whether vegetable or animal, are, more or less, reduced to a state of pulp, fit for the action of the stomach, and consequently for easy digestion.

In this country, the majority of cooks, particularly in small families, toss the meat into a large quantity of water, make the water boil as speedily as possible, and as fast as possible; and foolishly imagine, that it will be sooner and better done. But what is the consequence? The outside of the meat is rendered so tough, that it will not admit the heat to penetrate the inside, which remains undone, and the result is, that both the outside and inside meat are spoilt, or at least greatly damaged, both as respects flavour and wholesomeness. Here an anecdote occurs to us, which, though it has been before related, will serve to illustrate our subject. An Irishman was ordered by his master to boil him an egg for his breakfast, and was particularly enjoined to boil it soft. After waiting for more than ten minutes, the master inquired after his egg, which, however, was not forthcoming; the servant was *seeing* about it. Another five minutes elapsed, when the impatient master was coolly told his egg was not done—"Yer honour told me to bile it soft, and sure I've biled it a quarter of an hour, and it is as hard as ever."

Our ignorant, and too often unteachable, cook maid, would laugh at the simplicity of the Irishman—not considering that the very means she uses to make meat tender and palatable, that is, fast boiling, are just as absurd as those taken by Paddy to boil an egg soft.

There is no rule, they say, without an exception; but, generally speaking, ill-dressed meats, or even solid food well-dressed, taken in large quantities, are indigestible. It is a mistake to imagine, that people who take violent exercise in the open air, are always free from indigestion, and those numerous diseases to which it gives rise. That they are not so liable as those confined to a house, or a workshop is true; and there are some stomachs that appear to be able to digest