

CHAPTER V.

THE KITCHEN.

THE benefit of a good kitchen is well known to every housekeeper, but it is not every mistress that is aware of the importance of having a good cook. I have seen kitchens which, though fitted up with every convenience, and certainly at considerable expense, yet failed to send forth good dinners, merely because the lady of the house was not happy in her choice of a cook. I do not in the least admire gourmands, or gourmandism; and yet I would be more particular in selecting the servant who is to perform the business of preparing the food of the family, than I should deem it necessary to be in selecting any of the other servants. In large establishments there is a greater quantity of cookery to be performed, and, consequently, a greater quantity of waste is likely to be caused by unskilful cooks, than there can be in small families; but even in the latter considerable waste may be the consequence of saving a few pounds a year in the wages of a cook. An experienced cook knows the value of the articles submitted to her care; and she knows how to turn many things to account which a person unacquainted with cooking would throw away. A good cook knows how to convert the remains of one dinner into various dishes to form the greater part of another dinner; and she will, also, be more capable than the other of forwarding her mistress's charitable intentions; for her capability in cooking will enable her to take advantage of everything which can be spared from the consumption of the family, to be converted into nourishing food for the poor, for those of her own class who have not the comfort of a home such as she herself enjoys. The cook who knows how to preserve the pot-liquor of fresh meat to make soup, will, whenever she boils mutton, fowls, or rabbits, &c., &c., carefully scum it, and, by adding peas, other vegetables, or crusts of bread, and proper seasonings, make some tolerable soup for poor