

DAINTY DISHES

*For Indian Tables*

*A. J. Benson*

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FOR

INDIAN TABLES.



## کتاب طباطبائی

*An edition of this work has been prepared in Urdu character for the use of Servants. It can be procured from the Publishers of this work, price Three Rupees.*

# DAINTY DISHES

FOR

## INDIAN TABLES.

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We may live without poetry, music, and art ;  
 We may live without conscience, and live without heart ;  
 We may live without friends ; we may live without books ;  
 But civilized man cannot live without cooks.

He may live without books ;—what is knowledge but grieving ?  
 He may live without hope ;—what is hope but deceiving ?  
 He may live without love ;—what is passion but pining ?  
 But where is the man that can live without dining ?

(*Lucile.*)—OWEN MEREDITH.

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## PREFACE.

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It is with some diffidence we add another to the long list of existing Cookery Books, in the face of the fact that the amount of teaching would already seem to be out of all proportion to the progress made in the art. Where Francatelli, Soyer, Miss Acton, and a host of others have spoken in vain, what hope is there for a new teacher, unless indeed he be the pioneer of a new path up the hill of difficulty? And this is in truth our claim to be heard, that the present work contains an element of success in which its predecessors have been wanting. The principal stumbling block in the way of teachers has hitherto been the impossibility of relying on the memory of their cooks to retain the numerous ingredients and often complicated processes of a variety of dishes of which they have no record. It seemed to us that this obstacle would be removed by the possession of a Cookery Book which our cooks could read, in which they could find a simple clear account of the dishes they have to make, instead of being as heretofore dependent on a garbled, inaccurate, vague *vivâ voce* translation.

It was at first suggested to us to translate one of the many existing Cookery Books instead of compiling a new one, but we found they contained much that was useless for India, and that moreover, as a rule, the recipes were so carelessly written, and pre-supposed so complete a mastery

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of his art in the learner, as to be practically useless. Both these defects we have striven to avoid, and while confining ourselves almost entirely to the preparation of European dishes, (in making which our cooks seem to us peculiarly unskilful) we have endeavoured to provide a great variety, all of them within the means at the disposal of an ordinary Anglo-Indian establishment.

A good deal of attention has been devoted to the preparation of vegetables, eggs, macaroni, &c., as dishes composed of these ingredients do not, we think, occupy the place they deserve on our dinner tables. People, as a rule, scarcely realise how agreeably a diet in which meat now plays too important a part may be varied by the introduction of vegetable and farinacious food, especially during the hot weather.

It may be objected that as many cooks cannot read, the Urdú copy of this work will avail them nothing, but in all households some member will be found possessing the necessary accomplishment who will be glad to display it for the benefit of his brethren.

One other difficulty which lies in the way of reform in our *cuisine* is the painful fact that, with most cooks, lining their own pockets is to them a matter of far greater importance than the excellence of the dishes they are called on to make. One means of doing this, which finds special favour in their eyes, is to use half the ingredients named in the recipes, and to write down the full amount in the bill.

The only way to meet this difficulty is to face the fact that a certain percentage of his Master's money will surely find its way into the cook's pocket, and therefore it will

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be wise to allow him a certain latitude in the matter of prices, which will leave him at liberty to do justice to the recipe, and deliver him from the temptation to ruin our entrées by a fatal curtailment of eggs and butter.

It will be found a good plan to practise new dishes at your daily dinners till they are perfected. It flurries the cook to task him with experiments when you have a dinner party, and he will be likely to fail even in the dishes which he understands if he is anxious about the results of first efforts.

Good dinners are not achieved by lavishing money, but by bestowing care on their preparation, and the result will be proportioned to the attention given to each particular dish, and the careful working out of every detail.

Good, wholesome food, daintily prepared, is one of the minor luxuries which oil the wheels of life, and we shall be well pleased if this book brings it within the means of those who, while appreciating its value, have, from various causes, been unable to procure it till now.

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