

LADY BARKER'S "LESSONS ON COOKING"
First Lessons in the Principles of Cooking. By Lady
 Barker (London: Macmillan and Co., 1874).

IN this little volume the authoress has proved beyond all manner of doubt how completely she is the right woman in the right place. Surely nowhere could the Committee for the National Training School for Cooking have found a lady superintendent better fitted than Lady Barker to put life and spirit into the scheme which they advocate, or one more thoroughly qualified to train and marshal the feminine bands that are now being drilled under her supervision in the South Kensington Schools of Cookery to invade and revolutionise the kitchens of the future in every part of the empire.

In the introductory chapter of her "First Lessons in the Principles of Cooking" the author at once grapples with the chief difficulty of the question at issue, and admitting the fact that fuel and food cost nearly twice as much as they did ten years ago, she tells her readers that this is precisely the reason why it has become the imperative duty of every mistress of a house, and indeed of every member of the community, to learn how materials for warmth or cooking may be made to go twice as far as they have done hitherto. And it is this problem which she here attempts to solve by help of her own practical experience, which was gained in that best of all training-schools, the school of necessity, as it existed in earlier days in the colony in which she learnt her first lessons of cooking. The theoretical knowledge of the "why" and the "how" has, as she informs us, been a far more recent acquisition in her case; but it is evident from the manner in which she discourses on the chemical composition of different articles of food, their various assimilative and other properties, and the confidence with which she tests, by the laws of science, every function of her ovens, pans and kettles, that she has mastered the scientifically theoretical branches of culinary knowledge as successfully as, in bygone times, she overcame its empirically practical difficulties.

Her lessons on baking, roasting and frying, boiling and stewing, and her remarks on fuel and fire, and on the advantages, economical and others, of cleanliness, are so sensible that we may commend them to the careful study of all housekeepers, young and old, who are actuated by the laudable ambition of combining economy and comfort downstairs, with good digestion and its concomitant, good humour, upstairs. When we say that Lady Barker is actually aiming at the daring innovation of making thermometers and "friometers" as indispensable to the cook as the compass is to the helmsman, we need expatiate no further on the debt of gratitude due to her from all long-suffering payers of heavy coal and meat bills. It might be supposed that Lady Barker's book was intended solely for her own sex, but this is not the case; for, more widely expansive in her desires than Mr. Ruskin, who wishes to see "every girl taught at a proper age to cook all food exquisitely," she considers that "a knowledge of cooking is every whit as necessary for a man," although she would not insist, in his case, on anything beyond the simplest forms of the art; and she evidently hopes to see the day when boys and girls will compete together for prizes

in the National Cooking Schools. More practically important and worthy of serious consideration is the strongly expressed conviction that "no schoolboy ever gets as much nourishing food as he requires, and that this is the secret why boys of fourteen or fifteen years old scarcely ever look anything but thin and pinched." Furthermore, she wishes their parents and schoolmasters to understand that if they desire to see boys with clear complexions, bright eyes, and active limbs, "every game of football and cricket and every sharp run across country on a paperchase ought to be followed by a hearty meal of good beef or mutton, and not merely by weak tea, poor milk, and bread and butter."

The author's experience of the enormous amount of meat—uncontaminated by stimulants, it must be remembered—which growing boys and young men consumed in New Zealand in the early times of the colony, has also led her to form the opinion that, in spite of all tables and dietary reports, our soldiers and sailors are not allowed food enough for healthy men with good appetites. This, however, is a point that we must leave her to settle with her Majesty's Inspectors of military and naval affairs, to whose notice we would strongly commend her book, as well as to that of all other persons interested in the practical and economical bearing of the relations existing between the consumption of food and of fuel, and the hygienic condition of the consumers. It is quite certain, however, that until the general masses—and consequently all those who have hitherto monopolised the direction and practice of cookery—shall become better acquainted with the ordinary laws of physiology and chemistry, it will be hopeless to look for any radical improvement in the manner of using food and fuel to the best advantage in our households. Hitherto our kitchens have been managed haphazard, without system; the time for allowing such a wasteful condition of things to continue undisturbed is evidently drawing to a close. High prices and diminished supplies require to be met by a new system, based on true scientific principles; and considered from this point of view, we think that this little volume may fairly claim to be considered as supplying the thin end of the wedge, and indicating the manner in which the questions of practical cookery will in future have to be considered.

MAUNDER'S "TREASURY OF NATURAL HISTORY"

The Treasury of Natural History. By Samuel Maunder.
 Edited by E. W. H. Ho'dsworth, F.L.S., F.Z.S.
 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1874).

THERE are few tasks more thankless and disagreeable than that of having to re-edit an encyclopædia or a dictionary, especially when it relates to a subject like Zoology, which is still so much in its infancy. A "Treasury of Biography," or a "Treasury of Bible Knowledge," in each fresh edition cannot, from the nature of its contents, need much modification; the manner in which the points that are dealt with have become stereotyped on the minds of mankind at large, makes the same operation having been performed on the letterpress a comparatively unimportant drawback to its reappearance in a