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Mulaga-Tawny Soup

Now we have heard how Mrs. Sedley had prepared a fine curry for her son, just as he liked it, and in the course of dinner a portion of this dish was offered to Rebecca. "What is it?" said she, turning an appealing look to Mr. Joseph.

"Capital," said he. His mouth was full of it: his face quite red with the delightful exercise of gobbling. "Mother, it's as good as my own curries in India."

"Oh, I must try some, if it is an Indian dish," said Miss Rebecca. "I am sure everything must be good that comes from there."

"Give Miss Sharp some curry, my dear," said Mr. Sedley, laughing.

Rebecca had never tasted the dish before.

"Do you find it as good as everything else from India?" said Mr. Sedley.

"Oh, excellent!" said Rebecca, who was suffering tortures with the cayenne pepper.

"Try a chili with it, Miss Sharp," said Joseph, really interested.

"A chili," said Rebecca, gasping. "Oh yes!" She thought a chili was something cool, as its name imported, and was served with some. "How fresh and green they look," she said, and put one into her mouth. It was hotter than the curry; flesh and blood could bear it no longer. She laid down her fork. "Water, for Heaven's sake, water!" she cried. Mr. Sedley burst out laughing (he was a coarse man, from the Stock Exchange, where they love all sorts of practical jokes). "They are real Indian, I assure you," said he. "Sambo, give Miss Sharp some water."

Vanity Fair, William Thackeray, 1848



William Kitchiner, M.D. (1775-1827) was an optician, inventor of telescopes, amateur musician and exceptional cook. His name was a household word during the 19th century, and his *Cook's Oracle* was a bestseller in England and America. Unlike most food writers of the time he cooked the food himself, washed up afterwards, and performed all the household tasks he wrote about. He travelled around with his portable

cabinet of taste, a folding cabinet containing his mustards and sauces. He was also the creator of Wow-Wow sauce.

The full title of the book was Apicius Redivivus, or the Cook's Oracle. It is also listed as The Cook's Oracle: Containing receipts for plain cookery on the most economical plan for private families, etc. The preface promises to "endeavour to hold the balance even, between the agreeable and the wholesome, and the Epicure and the Economist" It includes 11 ketchup recipes, including two each for mushroom, walnut and tomato ketchups, and one each for cucumber, oyster, cockle and mussel ketchups.

The following recipe shows the popularity of Indian in Georgian and Regency foods, the result of the East India Company's influence on society. According to the researchers at foodandheritage.com, "Currystuff" was a mixture of spices, of which there are many receipts in the old British cookery books. The word curry is derived from the Tamil word kari. Mulaga means pepper and tawny (tanni) means water or broth, hence "peppery broth" is a good translation.



Mulaga-Tawny Soup

Take two quarts of water, and boil a nice fowl or chicken, then put in the following ingredients, a large white onion, a large chilly, two teaspoonsful of ginger pounded, the same of currystuff, one teaspoonful of turmeric, and half a teaspoonful of black pepper: boil all these for half an hour, and then fry some small onions, and put them in. Season it with salt, and serve it up in a tureen. Obs. - It will be a great improvement, when the fowl is about half boiled, to take it up and cut it into pieces, and fry them and put them into the soup the last thing.*

** The pod of which Cayenne pepper is made.*

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