

Manchester Times

Saturday, August 23, 1862

OF MALAY COOKERY.—Malay cookery is sometimes very tasty; I remember spending a fortnight in the Sultan's palace, and we were fed daily from his kitchen; sometimes the stewed fowls were admirable, and there was a particular kind of rice cake sent in very hot, which was delicious. But the triumph of Malay cookery is to send in the sambals in perfection, particularly the one called blanchang; the best is composed of the very finest prawns, caught, I imagine, soon after the little ones have burst from their eggs, and pounded up with red chillies and a little ginger. Coarser kinds are made from the larger prawn, or even from the smallest fish caught on the river's banks. Sometimes the material is first exposed to the sun in order to be completely dried, or it would not keep or mix very well, though it is often soaked till nearly decomposed, and that is perhaps the favourite way when it emits a rather powerful scent, but it is very tasty. Prawns and fish are cooked in a great variety of ways, but roasting them over a fire as abobs, is an excellent fashion, if you first sprinkle them with curry mixture. I have mentioned the admirable curry which Ahtan put before me; perhaps I ought to explain how we make that dish in the Far East; it appears a very different thing from what I have tasted in England under the name of curry: a fowl is cut up into small pieces, and four dried and two green onions, five chillies, half a turmeric, one teaspoonful of coriander seed, one of white cumlin, and one of sweet cumlin, are provided. You must well pound the seeds, turmeric, and chillies, and slice the onions fine; then take the saucepan, and after buttering it, slightly brown the onions, then add the pounded ingredients with just sufficient water to reduce them to paste, and throw in the fowl and well mix them up, till the meat has a yellow tint, and, lastly, add the cocoa-nut milk, and boil till the curry be thoroughly cooked. I hope my teaching is sufficiently clear to be understood, but I must add, the cocoa-nut milk is made by scraping the meat of half of an old nut very fine, then soaking it in warm water, and, after squeezing out the milk, throw the fibre away. I watched the whole process of cooking with great interest, and almost fancy I could make a curry myself.—*Life in the Forests of the Far East.*