CHAPTER I.

THE ROMANCE OF BENGAL SWEETS.

In the wide realm of confectionery Bengal has attained the same unique position with regard to the whole of India as Italy appears to hold on the Continent of Europe. In no other part of this vast Peninsula will be found such a wide range of confectionery as is to be met with in this sweet Province flowing with "milk and honey." And the reason is not far to seek. For even in the National Anthem of Bengal poignant allusion is made to the "sweet air, sweet water, sweet corns and sweet fruits" of the Motherland.

The sweet tooth of Bengal is proverbial. Indeed the great role that Bengal Sweets play in the social life of the Bengali people will be realised when it is said that no dish is complete without them even in daily courses; that the lunch is entirely composed of them, that every menu is enjoined to be "finished with sweets," that the importance and gravity of every festivity is to be measured by the quantity of sweets consumed, and that the wealth of the aristocracy is gauged by the length of days for which bhiyan (having the sweets prepared at home).
by paid confectioners on ceremonial occasions) is continued without break.

In Bengal, sweets have been identified with cordiality and amity to an amazing extent. Whenever there is a friend of the family in the house, he or she may take leave only after "sweetening the mouth." The index of honour shown to invited guests is furnished by the variety and superiority of the sweets offered in their entertainment. Sweets have also been accepted as an emblem of hospitality by every stratum of society in every part of Bengal. Go to the remotest village and ask for a glass of water simply. You will have it sure, but not without sweets—be they a few pieces of sugarcandy or fondants (batasa). Even the humblest cottager will bring out a spoonful of jaggery and insist on justice being done to it in quenching the thirst.

Especially the Bengali ladies are so solicitous of sweet relations that they will not hand over anything but sweet substances—scrupulously eschewing sour and bitter things—directly to anyone for fear of estrangement. In entertaining the new son-in-law no salt is to be served to him, for it might embitter the relation for sooth. Instead sugar is allowed with which to season his foods! In welcoming the new bride in her husband's home the mother-in-law offers her a bit of honey so that no cross-
words might pass between themselves in future housekeeping.

The influence that sweets have exercised on the Bengali language can be easily traced. The vernacular word Sandesh originally meant “news,” but with long usage it has come to designate primarily ‘sweets’ because, admittedly there is no better way of wishing good health and prosperity to our friends and relatives than by sending them sweets. Again whenever one has to enquire about the news of any relative or acquaintance it has become customary to send sweets along with the enquiry. So that the Bengali word tattwa (enquiry) has come to signify “presents of sweets”. Similarly whenever we have to express our pleasure, gratitude or appreciation, or have to congratulate any one in some tangible form we send sweets with compliments and there is occasion for it every month. To mention only a few: in summer sweets accompany presentation of mangoes; in winter that of oranges; and so on and so forth. Thus, if we may be permitted to adopt a very pregnant expression, “we say it with sweets” in every case.

Bengal sweets have enriched Bengali literature by originating phrases and idioms and by forming themes for descriptive feasts. There are copious references to them in the poems and writings of medieval Bengal. The professional confectioner of Bengal has earned
the nickname of Bhola Moira. Paradoxical as it may appear he falls shy of his own hand-products thereby giving rise to the proverb “confectioners do not eat sandesh.” They are so much fed up with it that “familiarity breeds indifference” in this case. When any one refers to anything sarcastically covering caustic remarks under grab of sweet, expressions one is said to inflict a “dagger of sugar-candy.” The honeyed words of a mealy-mouthed person are referred to both in their general and ironical sense. The mind of a hypocrite and designing person has been fitly compared to the “maze of a jilapi.” It is as intricate.

Sweets have come to acquire a conventional significance in all religious observances in Bengal. They figure conspicuously in all sacred offerings which, in the minimum, must consist of “Rice, plantain and sandesh.” As an example of the high esteem in which Bengal sweets are held, of all other foodstuffs, it may be mentioned that the Brahmins, the priesthood of India, will not accept any eatables other than sweets at the hands of the members of other castes so as to safeguard themselves from ‘pollution.’ Whenever one has to observe penance or atone for uncleanness or prepare for religious rites or in similar other circumstances, one has to subsist mainly on sweets, the protector of purity.
As we have said before, sweets constitute an important item in all religious ceremonies. During the Durga Puja, the greatest Hindu festival of Bengal, heaps of sweets are to be seen all round for practically a week. After the immersion ceremony of the Durg Puja, it is customary to salute and embrace one and all with a view to forgive and forget every previous lapse and to condone all the wrongs even of foes and critics. And to cement the bond of friendship thus renewed and as an essential feature of the day’s function (Bijoya), sweets are freely offered—which cannot be denied on any pretext whatsoever—to sweeten the relation and establish cordiality for the rest of the year. In Dewali the “festival of lights,” there is a spontaneous display of sweets in heaps on all sides, preparations for which are taken in hand a long time in advance. In Bhaiphonta, which is a convention observed by the sisters for the longevity of their brothers, sweets constitute a main item. Observed nowhere else in the world—Jamai Sasthi is the happiest day in the year for the sons-in-law of Bengal! It connotes felicitations offered by the father-in-law or their families in the shape of clothes, fruits and sweets. But woe betide the father-in-law whose selection and choice of sweets prove deficient in variety and grandeur, for upon this primary factor depends the pleasure or displeasure of his darling son-in-law.
Bengal sweets are not immune from mysticism and superstition. As an illustration *Dahi* is considered as auspicious whether in setting out on a long journey or in putting forth a proposal of marriage.

The most important function of Bengal sweets, however, still remains to be mentioned. After all that is said above, it is to be presumed that a large portion of the mutual presents exchanged between the contracting parties in a marriage consists of sweets. It were idle to endeavour to portray in a few words the magnitude and splendour of the bridal paraphernalias of both sides. Suffice it to say that the sweets are conveyed, artistically displayed on trays and baskets and decorously covered with fancy embroidered napkins, by a long queue of retinues arrayed in red, the token of joy!

But to crown all there is the very piquant Bengali saying, which is oft quoted, that in a betrothal "the bride desires beauty (of the groom), the mother hankers after his wealth, the father seeks his attainments, the friends wish respectability but the lay people long for sweets only."

And thus it is that in Bengal the advent of any noteworthy event in the family or in the society is heralded by the unlimited provision for and unrestricted distribution of—SWEETS.
CHAPTER II.

THE CONFECTIONERY OF BENGAL.

IN Bengal the art of confectionery has reached the highwater mark of perfection. One will be astonished to learn how certain sweets have acquired well-deserved fame in association with noted places. A few instances enjoying considerable celebrity are cited for guidance.

Dacca is generally famed for Mithais of distinction and novelty; Burdwan for Sitabhog and Mhidana; Maldah for Khaja; Janai for Monohar; Natore for Kanchagolla; Murshidabad for Pantoah and Rasagolla; Krishnagore for Sarpuria and SarbhaJa; Muragacha for Chhanar Jilapi and so on.

The nearest claim to similar popularity is preferred by the United Provinces but even then, in many fundamentals, it lags considerably behind Bengal. Probably next in importance stands Northern India where Hulwas and Laddoos are a speciality and much prized for their substance and solidarity.

That confectionery is a living art in Bengal is evinced by the facts that upcountry sweets are assimilated in modified forms, e.g.,
Laddoos and Hulwas; that novel varieties are from time to time added to the long list, e.g., Rajbhog; and that on memorable occasions new sweets are invented and offered for sale, e.g., Delhi Durbar, Jubilee Gaja. The nomenclature is thus often an interesting study of contemporary history, to wit, Lady Canning. Hundreds of varieties are offered by progressive confectioners on ceremonial occasions and some of the names are particularly adapted to captivate European imagination: such as, Emerald Puff, French Chop, Victory, Royal Sweet, Golden Egg, Irish Cutlet, Roseade, Queen’s Own, Swiss Chocolate, Italian Cake, etc.

As a rule Bengali nomenclature has been adopted throughout the book though some sweet-meats are better known by their Hindi names, e.g., Laroo is the Bengali for Laddoo in Hindi. Where necessary Hindi equivalents have been included. Also where possible literal English meanings have been indicated. Furthermore, in order to avoid ambiguity, vernacular names have been pursued for a number of ingredients, there being scarcely adequate English expressions to designate them: the most noticeable instances are ‘Chhana’ and ‘Khoa.’

The sweetmeats of Bengal properly fall under two main categories; viz., (1) Mithai and (2) Monda. While the basic ingredients
of the former are flour and pulses, those of the latter are milk and its products. The former are generally fried in ghee while the latter are simply cooked: all of them, of course, are sweetened with sugar.

To these, however, there are numerous adjuncts, some of which are included in this book, such as the salt articles which have come to be associated with sweetmeats; and the milk preparations which really fall under domestic cookery. There is an order of precedence of serving Bengal sweets which must not be overlooked. First come salt articles, next mithai, then sops, after that monda and finally milk preparations.

There is no end to the shape and size of Bengal sweets. As to shape there are the triangle, square, oblong, diamond, oval and circle. These are all thin laminas. In solids there are the cube, round, ovoid, tablet and the like. Combination effects are numerous. Some of them are folded while others are moulded. The size of the sweets is determined arbitrarily by a certain number of them going to make up a certain weight, say, a dozen to a pound. Last but not least, the forms of the sizes and shapes cover a wide range.

Most of the Bengal sweets are prepared at home by prudent housewives and freshly served in tiffin, lunch or breakfast and constitute
substantial repast. They take the place of biscuits, cakes, chocolates, etc., in the Bengali household.

It will be apposite in this connection to say one or two words about the keeping properties of the sweets. The salt articles are best served hot, otherwise they are not much relished afterwards. The *mithais* as a rule keep for 2 or 3 days. But the *mondas* do not keep well for more than one day. Hard cooked *sandesh* does not deteriorate for an exceptionally long period, say, a week or more. Broadly speaking, there is no harm in using home-made sweets for 2 or 3 days. It should be remembered that sugar is a good natural preservative.

Bengal sweets are nothing if not original and ingenious. The factors which contribute to their success are careful attention and skilful manipulation. In addition an extraordinary degree of patience and diligence is called for. In short, Bengal sweets can be made to satisfaction only by being fastidious and pains-taking.
CHAPTER III.

COMMERCIAL POSSIBILITIES OF BENGAL SWEETS.

BENGAL Sweets are primarily intended for treating friends, relatives and guests but apart from aesthetic consideration they have commercial utilities too. It will be no exaggeration to say that Bengal sweets are given preference to by many non-Bengali races and highly prized by European and other foreigners even. Moreover, Bengali Colonies are to be met with in every part of India. It may be safely assumed therefore that shops for the preparation and sale of Bengal sweets will enjoy a wide clientele everywhere.

Indeed, there is evidence to show that adventurous Indian confectioners have started and successfully conducted confectionery business in foreign lands. It is on record that when such an enterprising Indian opened a sweetmeat shop in the Paris International Exhibition his hot jilabis were so much in demand that he sold each for a shilling and even then he could not meet the exorbitant demand. Even now an Indian gentleman is conducting a restaurant in the heart of London while
Bengal sweets are finding prominent mention in the menus of different restaurants and cafes.

Some of the well-known varieties of Bengal sweets are now-a-days being preserved and made available in remote parts of and even exported to foreign countries. Experiments were being carried out in this direction for a pretty long time and at last individual efforts have been crowned with success. Full advantage has been taken of the latest technological development in the scientific preservation of food and up-to-date technique has been applied to industrial uses. As a result, sandesh, rasagollah, pantoah, etc. are now packed in vacuum tins and are available in every part of the world, which is no mean achievement. Several noted confectioners are deriving huge profits thereby and incidentally spreading the fame of Bengal sweets far and wide.

Another factor of supreme importance which has proved helpful to the development of trade in Bengal sweets is the wide use of cold storage. Large and reputable confectionery shops are now-a-days mostly equipped with refrigerators and the sweets stored in them have proved immensely popular. Ice cream Sandesh which used to be a rare commodity in former times is very commonly available now. Then there are Ice cream Rasagollah, Pantoah. Dahi, etc., etc. Needless to add that these
iced sweets are evry much relished by every-one—particularly in the summer season when one feels parched and thirsty after a hard day’s toil. Then it is that the sweet sops served direct from cold storage are welcomed in deep and smooths the system at once.

Transport of sweets between distant places has also been made possible inasmuch as refrigerators are now fitted in many important Railways and Steamers and particularly in seagoing vessels. Full advantage may be taken of these storing facilities in building up trade in sweets with different parts of India as well as foreign countries.

Further more, in view of the fact that speedy air communications have been established between India, England and other foreign countries Bengal sweets may be exported for the use of the people of those lands. *Sandesh* of the *karapak* variety packed in *slopping* paper may surely be sent to different countries by this means, and they will be in great demand by aristocrats and rich men generally. A lucrative export trade may be easily built up in this manner. Some of the other varieties may also be sent by the regular steamships. As indicated above refrigerators will prove helpful in this connection. Packed and stored prudently there is hardly any fear of the sweets deteriorating or being spoilt.
CHAPTER IV.

UTENSILS.

For the convenience of those readers who are not familiar with the utensils required for the preparation of the Bengali sweets, these are described briefly. It will be seen that some of them are of peculiar shape and construction.

I. Of Pans the following kinds are in vogue:

(a) Khola, a deep pan for boiling liquids.
(b) Karha, a shallow pan for frying solids in deep liquid.
(c) Tai, a flat pan with two-inch high edge (rim) all round for special frying.
(d) Taoa, a flat pan slightly curved in the middle used for baking, sautéing, etc.

The second and the fourth are, however, more generally used than the others.

II. Of Ladies there are also several types:

(a) Hata, or a ladle proper for agitating liquids. A hollow cup attached at the end of a handle.
PANS AND LADLES.


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SALT ARTICLES.


[Ref. p. 61.]
(b) *Jhanjra*, or a skimmer for skimming liquids, removing scums, etc. A flat circular disc with numerous pores attached at the end of a handle.

(c) *Khunti*, or a spatula for turning solids, for basting, etc. A thin blade with a long handle.

(d) *Taru*, or a wooden paddle with a broad thick blade. This is used particularly for making a *sandesh* and generally stirring pasty masses on a big scale. Similar to Scotch Hand.

(e) *Kathi*, or a simple stick, either of wood or of iron.

III. Of the *Accessories* the following are required:

(1) *Chaki*—a pastry board. A wooden or marble circular disc mounted on a tripod and a foot or so in diameter.

*Belun*—a rolling pin. A cylindrical wooden roller one foot long. The one is the complement of the other.

*Pata* is a wooden plank 3 ft. long, 9 inches broad and 1 inch thick used as a pastry board for rolling out dough on greased surface.
(2) *Sil*—a slab,
    *Nora*—a muller;
both of stone with cutting ridges
(toothed notches) like that of a
file. Employed for braying solids
to a paste or for grating to a pulp.
(3) *Hamandista*—mortar and pestle
of iron for pounding.
(4) *Janta*—the millstone for grinding
pulse meal, etc.

IV. Of *appliances* the following will be
serviceable: viz., trivets, tom tom, etc.

V. Of miscellaneous utensils the following articles must be kept handy:

(1) Knife, fork, scraper, beater, spoon.
(2) Colander.
(3) Cup, bowl, dish, platter.

As a rule the utensils are of iron, though
now-a-days enamelled and aluminium wares
are coming into vogue. To attain cleanliness,
it is preferable to set apart a complete set of
utensils for confectionery only. Otherwise the
kitchen utensils should be thoroughly scoured
and cleansed. In Bengal earthen wares and
stone wares are employed in storing sweets.
Brasswares are not safe to use in every case.
Glasswares may be preferred but they are brit-
tle. Wooden utensils, like platter, etc., are
very handy, while wicker-work baskets, say in
lieu of colanders are extremely serviceable.
CHAPTER V.

INGREDIENTS.

NATURALLY enough, the quality of the sweets is determined by the proper choice of the ingredients entering into their composition. These should, therefore, be always pure, fresh and of tip-top quality.

(1) *Khasa* or flour of the first quality.
(By flour always wheat flour is meant).

(2) *Suji* or semolina: the coarser grains in flour making.

(3) *Ghee* is obtained by melting butter and boiling to free it from water. It is unknown outside India. It is the only fatty substance employed in frying sweets and in shortening flour.

(4) *Safeda* or rice flour. This is the meal of the best sunned rice (not parboiled) *Kamini* with its characteristic sweet and delicate aroma and delightful taste.

(5) *Besan* or pulse meal. This should be fresh milled, otherwise it becomes musty and clotty. The two kinds
obtained by grinding gram (*chana*) and field pea (*matar*) are common.

(6) *Pulses,* *Kalai* (Urid in Hindi) and *mung* (green gram) are the two other pulses employed. Split halves and unhusked pulses are to be preferred always.

(7) *Mewa.* This term comprises such articles as almonds, pistachios, raisins and the like. Before using they are shelled and steeped in water, then skinned and shredded. If required urgently they may be blanched by scalding in hot water. Raisins are simply picked, washed and stalked.

(8) *Fruits.* The fruits used in making confections are few in number: (1) Coconut, (2) Papaw, (3) Bael or Quince, and (4) Pumpkin.

(9) *Flavouring Agents.* Both cardamom major and minor (*bara elaich* and *chhota elaich*) are used to impart their characteristic flavour to the sweets. Only their seeds are employed either whole or bruised. Camphor, asafoetida, etc., are also used but only in special cases.

(10) *Perfuming Agents.* Rose water and Otto are the popular perfuming
agents. Mango ginger, lemon peel, etc., are employed in special cases.

Perfuming or flavouring agents are added in very minute doses, otherwise the ingredients will be embittered.

Good result is obtained by using artificial essences like those of orange, banana, pine-apple, mango, etc., (chemically known as amyl acetate, etc.). They are quite harmless. Also musk, vanilla, etc.

(11) Colouring Agents. Saffron or Zafra is employed for rich chestnut colour. It is used after blending in warm milk. Genuine unadulterated saffron should be procured. A cheap substitute for saffron is turmeric used for yellow. Cochineal is used for red. Pistachio brayed to a paste with water is used for green.

Now-a-days, however, cheap vegetable dye-stuffs are employed as colouring agents. Always edible colours should be used.

(12) Condiments which are ordinarily used for seasoning curries, stews, soups, etc., comprise turmeric, mustard, coriander, cumin seed, black pepper, chillies, etc. They are em-
ployed in the form of a paste. The prescribed condiments are wetted and brayed on a stone slab (sil) with a muller stone (nora) until a uniform paste is obtained. Before application the paste is blended in a little water. Powdered condiments, sold in the market, do not give quite satisfactory results. The whole condiments should be picked and washed.

(13) *Spices.* Aniseed, caraway, fenugreek, ginger, parsley, etc., are some of the spices which are used for miscellaneous purposes, either bruised, brayed or singed. In the special group known as Hot Spices are included cardamom minor, cloves, cinnamon and cassia leaves taken collectively. They are preferred for their rich odoriferous properties. They may be either singed whole in ghee or oil in which the cooking is to be done subsequently, or stirred in powder form in the cooked product when removed from the fire and covered up. Sometimes the ordinary spices are dried by baking or roasting and then pounded. The 'hot spices' are usually bruised in the mortar.
(14) The more costly and aristocratic varieties of sweetmeats are often embellished for spectacular effect with rose petals, silver leaf, gold leaf, etc. The metal foils are chosen as thin and fine as possible but zinc and bronze substitutes should be totally refused as being harmful. The former may be eaten up without the slightest hesitation.

(15) *Soda Bicarb*, which is the abbreviation for bicarbonate of sodium, is added to flour as shortening agent (in addition to the usual ghee) to make the products exceptionally flaky and friable.

(16) Mustard oil is employed for frying specially salt-articles which become more tasty with it than with ghee. It is ready for frying when it smokes.

(17) *Sathi* (or Zedoary) is a starch product like arrowroot. It is made from the rhizomes of *Curcuma zedoaria* growing in Eastern Bengal. It furnishes a light but substantial repast. It is sold in the marked packed in tins like barley.

(18) For the purpose of confectionery coconuts are always to be selected fully ripe. There is a thick kernel inside
them. This is scraped with an iron scraper. "Copra" is the dried meat of coconut. Where fresh coconut is not available copra may be used but it must be soaked in water previously.

(19) Binding Agent. Often a binding agent is required to be mixed with chhana and khoa to maintain the shape and form of the sweets which otherwise may crumble during subsequent operations. For this purpose Arrowroot is primarily used though flour or Suji is also employed.

(20) By far the most important ingredients entering into the composition of Bengal sweets are milk and its products and sugar and syrup. These two items are, therefore, treated more elaborately in separate places.
CHAPTER VI.

OPERATIONS.

MUCH of the success in preparing sweets depends upon the careful manipulation of the processes. No pains have been spared in describing in sufficient details and in proper places, the operations that are required to be undergone by the different products. Nevertheless to give a fair idea of these operations at the very outset the following general observations are made.

TREATMENT OF THE FLOUR.

The adequate treatment of flour has an important bearing on the products known as Mithai.

Shortening.

The prescribed quantity of flour is measured on a wooden platter. Before wetting it a certain quantity of ghee is invariably rubbed in for shortening. This is very important and cannot be omitted on any pretext. As bread is made light and porous by leavening with yeast, so sweets are made tender and crisp by shortening with ghee (or butter). The usual proportion is 3 to 4 oz. of ghee for every pound
of flour. For ordinary purposes when the products are required to be tender only, a lower proportion may suffice but when the sweets are required to be flaky a higher proportion will be necessary.

To shorten the flour the desired amount of ghee is melted and sprinkled all over the flour and then rubbed in with the fingers to break the lumps or clots.

*Kneading.*

The flour is then formed into a ring and a sufficient quantity of water poured in the hollow. Usually 4 to 6 oz. water will suffice to wet 1 lb. of flour. The flour is then kneaded thoroughly into smooth lithe dough.

The softness of the product depends to a certain extent on the quantity of water added and the time devoted for kneading. The dough will be improved by employing as little water as possible, nevertheless making up the deficiency by long and hard kneading.

*Forming.*

To facilitate easy working, the dough, if bulky enough, is divided into several batches, each being worked in turn.

The dough is then turned out, given a quick vigorous additional kneading to complete smoothness and neatly done up. It is next
drawn out with oiled hands. Snatch out from one end pellets of the size of an egg. Roll them under hands into rounds and flatten with the pressure of the palms. The pellets are thus “formed.”

If there is any delay in proceeding further with the pellets or if the weather is excessively hot cover them with a piece of moist cloth, otherwise they will dry up and crack. The pellets are rolled out as and when required, for on long standing the spreads will jumble together and be spoilt.

Rolling Out.

Take these formed pieces one by one, dredge with flour (instead of flouring the board), flatten by pressing with fingers and roll out to the required thinness usually one-eighth inch. It requires great dexterity and practice in rolling out the pellets to perfectly circular shape (without cutting or punching out). Gentle but uniform pressure is to be applied with the rolling pin and the flattened pieces are contrived to revolve on the board exposing fresh surface under the pin, so that the circles are perfect in shape and uniform in thickness.

In certain cases, however, the lumps of dough are rolled out with oiled board and pin to the desired thickness and the spread is then cut into square or cubical tablets and then pro-
ceded with. On these occasions no dry flour is allowed as it will spoil the ghee in frying de-
licate stuffs.

For the preparation of *Mithai* the pastry board and the rolling pin are invariably greased with ghee.

*Shaping of Sweets.*

After undergoing all the necessary treat-
ments the 'mass' of any sweetmeat has to be converted into several 'units.' For this pur-
pose the stuff, when completed, is divided into a number of pellets, each of which is then given its appropriate shape by forming, binding or moulding.

**Pulp, PASTE AND BATTER.**

*Pulses and Cereals.*

Unhusked split pulses should be used whenever possible, otherwise they may be ground through *Janta* (mill-stone). Pulses become tender by steeping in water for 6 or 8 hours which may be done overnight. The husks, if any, can then be removed from the soaked pulses easily by hard rasping in several changes of water. The blanched pulses are finally washed clean and grated to a pulp.

When there is no time for softening the pulse by steeping, it may be softened by boiling
in water for half an hour or more and then mashed to a paste.

**Grating Or Braying.**

Paste and pulp are obtained by grating or braying suitable materials on the stone slab with the muller stone. Soft substances like peas, steeped pulses, etc., yield by themselves a soft pulp on being brayed. But in braying dry substances like condiments a little water should be sprinkled from time to time to form a paste. When a great degree of fineness is required the paste and pulp may be brayed once or twice again.

**Grating Or Braying.**

In the preparation of batter from any meal there are two factors to be looked into: viz., the measure of water and the manner of whisking. The meal is first kneaded into a dough with as little water as possible and is gradually thinned down by sprinkling water during whisking. The exact quantity of water required depends upon the consistency of the batter required—both of which should be determined by experience. After beating for 10 to 15 minutes the stuff becomes light and foamy. As a test, put a drop on a cupful of water; if it sinks beat for some time more, but if it floats it is all right. Always beat to stiff froth. It is superfluous
to add that the quality of the product depends upon the pains taken in making the batter. When properly done, the subsequent fried product will be light and spongy; it will be cooked right up to the interior and will be soaked in and out on immersion in any stock liquid.

The batter is made in different consistencies. A thin batter will flow easily from the lip of a cup and is good for spreading. A thick batter will serve admirably for fritters, and a drop batter for pills and globules. Usually the batter is smooth and rather firm like soft butter.

*Khami Or Batch.*

*Khami* denotes the basis of any sweetmeat in the form of pulp, paste or batter. It may be conveniently designated as ‘foundation-pulp,’ ‘foundation-paste’ or foundation-batter.

**STUFFING AND FILLING.**

In the preparation of stuffings from cereals, pulses, or vegetables they are properly cooked and seasoned with condiments and spices as directed. They must not be sloppy on cooling, for then the dough will be moistened. In stuffing pastries the joints should be carefully fluted and made up to prevent them from bulging out or giving way in cooking.

In the preparation of fillings from khoa, mewa, etc., the ingredients are properly incor-
porated and perfumed and flavoured. The mass is divided into pellets which are duly filled in and the opening carefully closed up and fluted.

METHODS OF COOKING.

The distinction between the different methods of cooking adopted should be carefully noted.

1. **Bake**—To prepare food by cooking in a dry heat, either in an oven or under coals, or on heated stone or metal.

2. **Roast**—To cook by exposure to radiant heat before a fire; or by surrounding with hot embers, ashes, sand, etc.

3. **Singe**—To burn superficially.

Used in a special sense in connection with spices which when singed in ghee impart to it their characteristic aroma. This, in its turn, is subsequently absorbed by any stuff cooked in it.

4. **Coddle**—To parboil, to soften by boiling.

5. **Stew**—To boil slowly or to cook in a little liquid over a gentle fire, without boiling.

6. **Baste**—To moisten with melted butter fat, or other liquid to prevent burning and to add flavour.

7. **Sauté**—To fry lightly and quickly in a little hot fat while being frequently turned over.
8. *Fry*—To cook in a pan or on a griddle, esp., with the use of fat, butter, oil, by heating over a fire: to cook in boiling lard or fat.

9. *Boil*—To subject to the action of heat in a boiling liquid for cooking.

Of course all of the above methods are not pursued distinctly but the principle can be easily traced in many instances. Their application should therefore be clearly understood.

Hot pans, etc., when removed from the fire should be placed on a trivet on the ground.

**FRYING.**

By far the most critical stage in the preparation of flour pastries is involved in frying. On the one hand, the articles must not get scorched by strong heat and on the other, they must not remain raw owing to insufficient heat. The merits and demerits of a sweetmeat will depend to a large extent on whether it is properly cooked or over-cooked, un-cooked or half-cooked.

The best course is to have a moderate fire, unless otherwise stipulated. Whenever necessary the fire may also be damped with a fire damper—a circular earthenware disc with an aperture in the middle. The point to be noted in actual frying is that while thin substances may be fried rapidly, the thick ones must be fried slowly. This is to allow time for the fat
to penetrate into the interior and cook in and out uniformly. On no pretext whatsoever should the articles be thrown in the pan unless the ghee is quite ready which is known when it smokes. Otherwise the ghee will froth and the products will be tough.

In frying delicate stuffs, melt the ghee on a frying pan and when it bubbles up remove from fire to the ground. Stir the molten ghee briskly by raising and pouring with the skimmer. The temperature of the whole mass will be equalised thereby. Then throw in the articles to be fried and allow to simmer. When the ebullition ceases put the pan on the fire but bring it down again as soon as the ghee bubbles up. No doubt this involves labour and time, but the articles fried in this manner become short and crisp.

The articles are mostly fried in deep pan (about 4 to 6 ins.) according to the content of the pan, of course with notable exceptions. The ghee for frying purpose is, therefore, taken in excess but the residue that is left over may be utilised in making curries, etc. The colour of fried articles range from light fawn to deep buff.

In frying do not try to exceed the capacity of the pan or of the frying medium. If necessary the mass may be fried in one or more batches, allowing ample room for each bit. Never crowd too much at a time.
In this deep frying 12 oz. of ghee will be required for every lb. of flour; and 2 oz. of ghee for every lb. of chhana. But in the former case about 2 lbs. of ghee is to be provided for and in the latter case 8 oz. to ensure efficient frying.
CHAPTER VII.

MILK AND ITS PRODUCTS.

Milk is the only perfect food. It is the only food that contains in itself all the elements necessary to physical growth and mental development. Indeed it has been rightly called "the nectar of life." But it is only fresh, clean and pure milk that is a beneficent food.

In this respect cow's milk is most important and in the pure and fresh state most nourishing. Buffalo milk is richer in cream and therefore heavy. The products of the former are universally employed for making sweet-meats though those of the latter are preferred in some cases.

By special treatment several important products are obtained from milk, one or the other of which almost invariably enters as a basic ingredient in the composition of sweet-meats. Method of preparing each of them is given below. In every case, before scalding the milk, it should be strained, preferably through a piece of close-woven cloth, like cheese cloth.

SAR OR CREAMY LAYERS.

When milk is boiled and left to cool undisturbed, a thin film of creamy layer forms on B. S. 3.
the surface of the liquid. This is known as sar, which may be identified with ‘clotted cream.’ Thicker layers can be obtained as follows. Boil the milk for a longer period than usual, agitating constantly with a ladle (raising and pouring) to ensure a heaving froth. The more voluminous the froth, the greater the thickness of the layer. If the foam be unmanageable and boils over, sprinkle water and it will subside. When the milk is nearly reduced to half, leave the pan on the expired oven to cool in 4 or 5 hours. Gradual slowing down of the fire will cause a sufficiently thick layer to form on the surface of the cooling milk. Be sure that the fire is dying, otherwise the milk will be scorched.

**CREAM AND BUTTER.**

When milk is churned cream is separated; by ripening cream butter is obtained. These processes are too well known to need any elaborate description here. But in this country neither of these two articles is much cared for. The most extensive use that is made of similar milk product is that of ghee, which has been shortly defined as ‘clarified butter.’

**GHEE.**

Ghee is obtained by melting butter in heat until the watery portion contained in it is expelled. For clarifying and graining, one or
two betel leaves or lemon plant leaves may be singed in the melted butter which should be then filtered through cloth. The ghee solidifies on cooling. Pure cow's ghee should have a rich chestnut colour, a uniform granular appearance and its characteristic aroma and flavour. Taken daily in small adequate dose it enriches the blood, builds up nerves, strengthens the body in general and in particular sharpens the eyes and the brain. On the other hand, pure buffalo ghee is white. It is also granular to an extent, but the flavour is not so marked. It is, however, generally employed for frying operations, when it serves the purpose better than cow's ghee. Moreover, it is cheaper of the two.

KHEER AND KHOA.

Kheer is 'condensed milk' and may be sweetened or unsweetened. Khoa is solid milk or 'dried milk' and is unsweetened.

When pure and fresh cow's milk is boiled down until it is of the consistency of a viscous liquid the result is plain kheer. When, previously to boiling the milk, a quarter of its measure of sugar is dissolved in it the product is sweet kheer. It is deliciously enjoyed with plantain.

If the plain kheer is further boiled down completely, i.e., until all the watery portion has been evaporated and only a solid mass (about
one-sixth) is left, the residue is known as khoa. It is an important ingredient in many of the sweets which it enriches imparting a creamy taste.

More than common attention is necessary, in the preparation of kheer and khoa. In boiling the milk so long as it remains liquid it should be agitated with ladle by raising and pouring, otherwise it has every chance of boiling over. When, however, the milk becomes viscous it should be constantly stirred with the spatula (khunti). The best way is to scrape all the sides of the pan, and especially the bottom, with the blade of the paddle. Otherwise the stuff has every chance of being scorched. Still more difficulty is met with in the final stages when the milk begins to dry up and extraordinary attention is necessary. The operation is complete when the residue is of the consistency of butter. Then remove from the fire, gather in a lump and allow to cool. On cooling the khoa will become solid like dough.

Khoa keeps well for 3 to 4 days and even longer. Before use it is generally pulverised and sifted. Sometimes it is baked on a dry pan or soaked in hot water. It may be partaken of in the raw state with or without the addition of sugar and is extremely nutritious.
MILK AND ITS PRODUCTS

CHEHANA.

Chhana furnishes the basis of nearly all the important sweets of Bengal. Such being the case we shall deal with its preparation and treatment somewhat elaborately.

To our knowledge there is no exact equivalent of chhana in European dietary: the nearest approach being, we understand, home-made cheese with the susidiary process of ripening omitted. We have, therefore, decided to refer to the product by its vernacular name throughout the book. (The Bengali word “Chhana” is not to be confounded with the Hindi word “Chana” which means gram).

Preparation.

(A). FAMILY METHOD.

Chhana of the finest quality is made from pure and fresh cow’s milk. The easiest family method is as follows:—

Take 2 lbs. of milk in a deep pan and boil it. Select a good ripe citrus lime of the pati variety and squeeze its juice in a cup and keep it handy. When the milk has been boiling vigorously for a couple of minutes scatter the sour lime juice on the bubbling surface as speedily as possible and stir briskly. The whole of the milk will at once curdle and chhana will separate in solid lumps. The ex-
act measure of lime juice required to curdle a
given quantity of milk depends upon the quality
of the milk and should be determined by ex-
perience. But it must not much exceed re-
quirements as it will then sour the product.
The best procedure is to provide for a little
extra quantity of lime juice and to stop it pour-
ing as soon as chhana separates which occurs
instantaneously.

When sour limes are not available, as may
easily happen, the next best method of making
chhana is as follows: Take a few crystals of
citric acid, dissolve them in a tea-cup and pour
the solution on the boiling milk. The subse-
quent procedure is exactly the same as above,
the sour lime juice being only substituted by
the citric acid solution.

Indeed this method possesses several ad-
vantages in that citric acid is always available
at the chemist and druggist’s store at a trifling
cost and can be stored up in a glass phial.
About 8 grs. of citric acid will suffice for 1 lb.
of pure milk; and about 3 oz. of chhana will be
yielded by 1 lb. of milk. Moreover, citric acid
being the direct chemical product of citrus
lime is absolutely harmless. The practice of
curdling milk with alum, acetic acid or similar
other reagents should be reprehended. They
are open to objection on hygienic grounds and
are, therefore, not safe to use.
The curdling reagent may also be added to the boiling milk, after removing it from fire when it bubbles up but before the foam dies.

The properties of the chhana will, however, differ according as it is obtained by curdling the milk on the fire, or on the ground. In the latter case the chhana will be soft and creamy but at the same time soggy. In the former case the chhana will be firm and compact; and so it need not be pressed subsequently.

Now strain the curdled milk through a piece of clean cloth or napkin. The whey will filter through and may be collected. The chhana remains inside. It is drawn together and hung up to drain for a couple of hours. By that time it loses whatever portion of the liquid it might hold through dripping and becomes a compact mass with uniform texture.

The whey may be preserved for a day or two and used in curdling milk on the next occasion in lieu of lime juice, etc. Indeed good results are yielded thereby.

But even if the whey be not required for this purpose it need not be wasted. This whey contains very small percentage of fat and sugar of milk and may be drunk with benefit. Specially it is administered to infants and invalids, of course in the fresh state, when only liquid food is prescribed. A very minute per-
centage of ghee of exceptional purity and flavour is also obtained from the cream that forms on its surface on long standing.

A note of warning in connection with the preparation of chhana may not be out of place here. If the milk be old, it will get spoilt. Also if the quantity of coagulating reagent be deficient than the prescribed dose, the milk will be split and will refuse to curdle further. Should this happen, the best course will be to desist from proceeding further. Add some sugar to taste and use it up as posset.

Unlike khoa, chhana does not keep even for 24 hours. It is best made a couple of hours before the preparation of sweets from it. It may be partaken of in the raw state with or without the addition of sugar.

(B). Commercial Method.

On a commercial scale chhana is made as follows:—

Scald the milk in a shallow iron pan on fire. Remove when it heaves for the first time. Agitate to equalise the temperature of the whole mass. Take a little whey (from previous operations) in the ladle and pour on it a cup of milk. The milk will curdle. Now tie a piece of cloth at the mouth of a vessel. Pour the curdled milk from the ladle into the cloth. Repeat the operation until the whole milk is
thus exhausted. If the milk curdles too quickly there is an excess of whey and vice versa.

According to another method, the milk is boiled and poured in a vessel. The old whey is thrown into the milk with a ladle. The curdled milk is stirred briskly. In this way the percentage of chhana obtained is larger than usual, is more soggy and therefore remunerative.

The food value of chhana is immense. By chemical composition it consists of a great percentage of protein and serves as a substitute for meat. Vegetarians should therefore regularly include chhana in their diet. Moreover, being primarily a casein product chhana is a great tissue builder. Its regular use helps to repair worn out nerves and is therefore beneficial for nervous breakdown.

**TREATMENT OF CHHANA.**

In this connection we would like to draw the attention of the reader to a very significant point of procedure. As we have said before, chhana enters into the composition of almost all the Bengali sweets. And invariably, before it is so employed, the soggy stuff is packed in a new napkin and subjected to great pressure so as to squeeze out the water. For this purpose the packed chhana is inserted between two wooden platters and heavy weights are placed on the upper one. There is a hole in
the lower one through which the milky water flows out.

If properly compressed, the weight of the chhana should be reduced nearly by half and the resulting mass should show a solid texture. Only this compact pressed chhana is to be used and the whey runs away. This procedure is most important, nay, imperative and essential. In prescribing ingredients in the subsequent recipes the weight of compact chhana only, as pressed above, has been given unless otherwise stated. So when buying chhana from the bazar double the amount mentioned in any particular instance should be provided for.

It may also be noted here that generally two kinds of chhana are available in the market. One is rather stiff containing very little water and suitable for cutting into tablets—to be fried or cooked. This stands the knife well without crumbling. The other is rather soggy but is more creamy and tasteful and is indispensable for preparing the best kinds of confectionery.

With regard to the home-made chhana, however, an exception is often made. It is obtained almost always in a firm and compact state simply by hanging up to drip, and as such serves its purpose well without pressing. In those instances where sweets are made of compact chhana this will be preferred as it is. But
in preparing Sandesh the chhana is mashed and may be dried a little by gently baking the stuff in a clean iron pan.

After being pressed or squeezed the compact chhana is now treated for the preparation of sweets in the following manner. A lump of chhana is taken on a wooden platter and mashed fine. A bit of it is broken aside and rubbed on the platter in the manner of braying or maceration. In this way the whole lump is gradually beaten to a light mass. To test it put a drop on a cupful of water: if it floats it is all right; if it sinks it is to be macerated further. It is to be remembered that chhana is ordinarily heavier than water but when it is disintegrated by beating it becomes lighter. The more efficiently the chhana is thus beaten or rubbed the more light, white and porous the products will be.

Needless to point out that sweets should be prepared from freshly made chhana, for even one-day old chhana will taste sour.

**DAHI**

*Dahi* may be identified with sour milk, set milk or 'curd.' It is fermented milk and akin to Koumiss, Kephir, etc. In this country two kinds of *Dahi* are recognised, the sour and the sweet. The former is the most common, while the latter is the most agreeable. The underlying principle of its formation may be
briefly explained. Boiled and tepid milk is inoculated with lactic acid bacteria prior to souring or 'ripening'. These cultures are somewhat akin to yeast, and are termed 'starters.' They are now-a-days available at the 'chemists and druggists' in either liquid or in powder form. A good starter grows rapidly after inoculation into milk, and subsequent incubation. The acidity then increases rapidly. The bacteria helps in the formation of lactic acid, which acts as a preservative, preventing further decomposition.

To serve the purpose of 'starter' the professional confectioner will readily furnish a few drops of Dahi whenever asked for.

Preparation.

The simple family method of making dahi is described below. Take a pound of milk and scald it. It may be boiled somewhat thick if so desired. Put it into a suitable bowl, preferably of earthenware or stoneware. For this purpose commonly a set of earthenware vessels (handis) are set apart by the confectioners. When empty these vessels are washed, warmed at the fire-side and used over and over again. They yield better results thereby, accelerating the ripening process, most probably on account of the trace of dahi that is left dried up and adhering all over.
When the milk has cooled down but is still tepid add some 'starter' such as tamarind solution, whey or a pinch of dahi itself. Of course dahi furnishes the best 'mother-starter.' Only a very tiny dose will suffice which is determined by the rule-of-thumb. This varies according to the quality of milk, its temperature and density, atmospheric and climatic conditions and must be determined by experience only. Before inoculation the 'starter' is whipped on the palm of the left hand with the finger of the right to disintegrate it thoroughly and then added to the milk by sprinkling. The propagation of the culture is facilitated thereby.

The 'starter' is generally added in the evening and the milk left overnight undisturbed in a slightly warm place. If required, it may be artificially incubated by being packed in straw and husks, or by being wrapped up in blanket. These precautions are generally needed in the winter season.

The best temperature for setting is between 92° and 95°F., though the range is 75° to 100°F. The milk will set and form dahi in about six hours under favourable conditions. Care should be taken not to disturb the milk in the least after the 'starter' has been added.

The quality of the dahi depends upon the quality of the starter and the manner of its inoculation. As a rule, buffalo milk forms more solid dahi than cow's milk. Strange to
say, this solid mass, when perfect, may be cut in the manner of pudding with a table knife. Firm dahi of medium acidity is the best. When faulty, it may be wheying off: it may be slightly acid or excessively sour. In no case, however, it need be rejected. Dahi is a beneficent foodstuff. It may be partaken of with either salt or sugar according to taste. It promotes longevity.

Sour milk has long been looked upon as a healing agent, and is now-a-days often prescribed by medical practitioners. It is suggested that when dahi is taken as food, the lactic acid bacteria contained in it multiply in the intestines and aid digestion by preventing harmful fermentation. It is said to increase the thermal heat of the body and the vital power. It should, however, be used temperately as its constant and inconsiderate use produces cold. It is a wise hygienic rule to take dahi only in daytime eschewing it altogether at night.

. Sugared Dahi.

The process of sugared dahi is essentially the same as that of sour dahi. In this case the boiling milk is sweetened with the desired amount of sugar, say 3 to 4 oz., for every pound of milk. It is preferably sweetened with batasa or sugar fondants (like ratafia cakes) which may be had in the bazar. The
sweetened milk is inoculated as usual and allowed to set.

**Ghol and Sherbet.**

It will be apposite in this connection to refer to the two refreshing drinks which can be obtained from *dahi* directly.

(1) *Ghol* is generally prepared by dissolving two large tablespoonfuls of *dahi* in a tumblerful of water and adding a pinch of salt to it. It is a very soothing drink, specially in case of stomachic irritation.

(2) *Sherbet* is prepared as follows:—

Dissolve a spoonful of sugar in a glass of water, stir in a tablespoonful of *dahi*, add the juice of half a citrus lime, strain through a piece of cloth, add ice and enjoy in the hot weather. It is a very cooling drink.

In either case the *dahi* may be perfectly blended in water by first whisking with an egg-beater.
CHAPTER VIII.

SUGAR AND SYRUP.

Sugar, it must be admitted, is a basic ingredient of confectionery. And as such it will be helpful to become acquainted with its properties and different forms. Sugar is scarcely incorporated by itself; it is made into syrup with water of the desired consistency. Whenever sugar is mentioned in the recipe but not worked with as an ingredient, it is to be made into syrup. Particularly for soppy sweets (sops) a 'stock syrup' has got to be prepared beforehand and reserved—in which to dip them.

Sugar may be employed in the form of (1) crystals, (2) powder and (3) syrup. Ordinarily sugar crystals are white and either large (ekbara) or small (dobara). Granulated sugar is sometimes employed for which purpose 'castor sugar' may be used. When powdered sugar is required the crystals may be pulverised or better still, 'icing sugar' may be substituted. The boiling of syrup is detailed below. Brown sugar, both crystal and powder, is available and is cheaper. The whiter the sugar, however, the lovelier the sweets in appearance.
BOILING OF SYRUP.

A thorough knowledge of syrup boiling is essential to the successful preparation of soppy sweets. According to different densities syrup has been classified into four different stages. The lines of demarcation cannot, however, be easily recognised except by expert confectioners. For ordinary purposes it will suffice to be familiarised with only two densities of syrup—thin and thick like the gummy exudations of the Bengal Quince fruit (Bael—Aegle Marmelos) in its green and ripe stages respectively. The other densities have been noted wherever practicable.

Take 5 pounds of sugar; dissolve in 1½ pounds water in a deep pan and place it over a strong fire. After boiling for some time scum will rise on the surface. To clarify the syrup, take a large spoonful of raw milk, dilute it with an equal measure of water and sprinkle over the frothy surface. With a skimmer remove the scum as soon as it is formed. The dross need not be treated as a refuse but may be given over to the cow as a feed.

Slow down the fire at this stage. When all the scum has been skimmed away, sparkling bubbles will appear. Take away from the fire and strain through a piece of cloth.

Put the syrup in a separate pan and place it again on slow fire. When it becomes sticky and falls in a continuous stream from a ladle, it
is said to have arrived at the last stage. When it becomes denser and the stream is interrupted it is of the second stage. Again on becoming viscous, the syrup appears whitish and a drop being rubbed will show flakes, the syrup is then of the third stage. The fourth stage is that when the syrup has almost the tendency to dry up.

The following broad rules for the application of the different densities of syrup may be laid down. The first stage is required for boiling sweets; the second for soaking them, the third for smearing them and the fourth for coating them like icing of cakes.

The syrup required for the soaking of soppy sweets has been referred throughout as 'stock syrup.' It is always made ready beforehand, held in reserve and kept warm at the time of immersing the sweets. Otherwise it will not soak into them. The sweets also must be hot at the time of immersion. It is best to lift them out from the frying pan and dip them into the syrup direct. 2 lbs. of sugar will be required for every lb. of chhana.

The soppy sweets should be kept immersed in syrup till they are required for service. Otherwise they will become dry and insipid on long exposure.

**TRANSFORMED SUGAR.**

Sometimes for special purposes the sugar is made to undergo some special treatment.
Ordinarily sugar is hygroscopic, i.e., absorbs moisture from the atmosphere. Thus any sweet into which sugar preponderates will melt and become muggy when left in the open for long. To safeguard against this drawback the viscous syrup of the last stage is further boiled until the water has completely evaporated, and the mass left dry and solid. Then remove from fire and when cool grind the lump into fine powder. This is referred to as amorphous or ‘transformed sugar.’

**TREACLE AND JAGGERY.**

Often in the preparation of Bengal sweets sugar is substituted by treacle and jaggery, known in the vernacular as *gur*. The former is derived from the sugarcane while the latter is derived from the date palm, each having its choice varieties. While treacle is occasionally employed for inferior kinds of sweets, the admixture of jaggery is much relished, the type *nalin gur* being invariably preferred alike for its colour, aroma and flavour. But it is seasonal being procurable in winter only.

Jaggery, however, cannot be used solely by itself. It has got to be employed with sugar in a suitable proportion when it will impart its rich fawn colour, characteristic flavour and pleasant aroma to the final products.

Coarse moist brown sugar may be used instead of molasses.
CHAPTER IX.

RECIPES.

BEFORE proceeding to work with these recipes readers are requested to go through the introductory portion very carefully and thereby make themselves familiar with the ingredients, their treatment, methods of cooking and the like.

GENERAL HINTS.

Even a cursory glance at the complex nature of the recipes given in this book will make it clear that many of the sweets cannot be prepared alone. In practice the need for assistance will be keenly felt and indeed, for efficient working the help of an assistant will be welcome. Especially in some difficult processes the co-operation of two or more persons will be imperative. This will ensure continuity of work which is greatly desirable in preventing loss of time and energy and in saving unnecessary wastes.

It will be apparent that some sweetmeats cannot be rapidly made on a short notice. That will entail great labour and hardship. In those cases it will be judicious to make some
preliminary preparations previously. As for example, when khoa is not available in the local market it may be prepared the day before. Pulses, etc., may be steeped in water overnight. Even chhana has to be made at least a couple of hours in advance. In short, those ingredients which keep well may be conveniently made ready beforehand to be in time for the sweets proper.

It is obvious that proportions in any recipe cannot be prescribed correct to the minute dose. They are intended to convey only a fair idea and can be approximately varied within reasonable limits in different cases and depending on individual taste. In certain cases the proportion of unessential ingredients may be lowered and unimportant items totally discarded according to one’s discretion. Often the proportions of certain items have been omitted altogether, such as for ghee and syrup, the quantity of which may be easily ascertained. It will also be advantageous to compare recipes of a similar nature when hints contained in one may be applied with profit in another.

Often dainty novelties might be effected by judiciously incorporating new ingredients; e.g., jams and jellies may be used as stuffing for Singara; artificial essences of plantain and pineapples may be employed to perfume the filling of Rajbhog and so on. Many such sugges-
tions on which to act may be yielded by exercising a little originality.

Throughout the different stages in any process, the pastries should be handled very lightly such as in rolling, forming, turning, etc., so that they may not be deformed or impaired.
CHAPTER X.

RECIPIES—Loochi, Etc.

Loochi.

Flour 1 lb.
Ghee 1 lb.

Loochis, or as they are known Poorees in Hindi, constitute the staple article of diet for supper in wealthier families all over India and especially in Bengal. They figure invariably along with Sandesh in menus prescribed for the entertainment of guests in all festivals. They are prepared as follows:—

Take the flour on a wooden platter and rub in ½ oz. ghee for shortening. Unless this is done the loochis will be stringy. Add 4 to 5 oz. water and knead into dough. Divide the mass into some 3 dozen pellets and mould with the hands into round balls. Form them by gently pressing each between the palms greased with oil or ghee. Take one, dredge it with a little flour and roll it out into a thin circle, about 4 ins. across. The pellets should be rolled out one by one as the frying proceeds.

Meanwhile melt the ghee in an iron pan and when it is ready drop in a circular flap. It will try to float on the liquid but it must be
immediately immersed and held down with the skimmer. The side just in contact with the hot surface of the molten ghee will then swell up (like a blister) with a friable covering. It should now be turned over with the help of the skimmer. Gently press the edges all round to make them come in contact with the ghee. Remove when the underside has been fried, taking care not to reverse the piece again within the pan. It should be placed in the colander to allow the excess ghee to drip off and should remain there until the next one is ready.

Proceed in a similar manner with the other pellets one by one. When the fire is too strong remove the pan and fry on the ground.

*Loochis* are generally partaken of along with soups and curries. They are, however, most relished direct from the frying pan to the plate with table salt as the only sauce. And thus administered, of course in very moderate quantity and under medical advice, they form items of dietetics for patients suffering from loose bowels, diarrhoea and dysentery in the convalescent stage.

*Loochis* are also preferred with ginger chips and fried potatoes. The crisp film cover of the *Loochis* is known as cream.

**PAROTA.**

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<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
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<tr>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>1 lb.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
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Parotas come next in importance after Loochis as they consume less ghee and are more common.

Knead the flour into a dough after rubbing in a little ghee as shortening. Divide the dough into some 20 pellets and as above roll out each into a circle.

The next operation is to fold it up twice to form a quadrant and again roll it out taking care to press uniformly the three sides so that a triangular flap will be the result.

Meanwhile melt a teaspoonful of ghee in a rather shallow pan (taoa); spread the ghee all over the surface; paste both sides of the piece of triangle with the molten ghee and proceed with sautéing until it is cooked properly. When the side in contact with the pan assumes a fawn colour turn over.

If the allotted quantity of ghee appears to be insufficient for the purpose, baste the piece with a little more ghee. It will be better to have a quantity of ghee previously melted ready at hand. Proceed with the other pellets in a similar manner one by one. Two or three flaps at a time may be managed if basting and sautéing are done properly.

Parotas form a substantial repast with well-seasoned curries or preferably, cooked cereals (of gram).


ALOOR DUM.

(Potato Stew).

Potato 1 lb.
Ghee 4 oz.
Dahi 2 oz.
Condiments Paste 1 oz.
Hot Spices Powder 2 dr.

The paste is obtained by braying the following condiments in suitable proportions with water, viz., turmeric, chillies, coriander seed, black pepper, ginger, etc.

The powder is obtained by pounding the following spices, viz., cinnamon, cloves, cardamom minor, etc.

Boil large (Nainital) potatoes in plenty of water; drain in colander when tender. Peel them while tepid and smear them over with dahi and the condiment paste.

Melt the ghee in an iron pan and throw in 2 or 3 cassia leaves, a few aniseed and cumin seed. When these spices are singed put in the potatoes adding a little water just sufficient for stewing.

Add a pinch of sugar and requisite salt. Allow to simmer for a few minutes and remove when nearly dry. Dredge with the ‘hot spice’ powder and cover up until service.
**DAL POOREE.**

Flour 2  tb.
Gram (Chana dal) 1  tb.
Ghee 1  tb.
Mustard oil 2  oz.

Spices:—Black pepper, cayenne, aniseed, cumin seed, ginger and asafoetida.

Steep Chhana (gram) in water for 6 or 7 hours. If the pulses are in husk rasp them in several changes of water to remove it. Grate to a pulpy mass with as little water as possible. Singe the pulp in mustard oil adding spices for seasoning, requisite salt and few drops of asafoetida solution in water. Take away when it forms a stiff paste. Divide the paste into 4 or 5 dozen pellets of the size of marbles. These are to be used for stuffing.

Meanwhile knead the flour as in the case of Loochis. Divide the dough into some five dozen pieces of the size of eggs. Take one and shape it into a cup by uniformly pressing at the centre and all round with the thumbs. Put in one of the pellets of foundation paste (stuffing) prepared above and close up. The shaping of the cup and the stuffing of the cereals require careful manipulation. The size of the pellet is to be so adjusted that it does not bulge out subsequently. Roll out this stuffed ball into circle about 5 inches across and as thin as it
will bear without giving way. Have the rolling pin and the pastry board previously oiled for the purpose.

Then resort to sauteing as in the case of Parotas. Baste well with ghee and cook thoroughly, paying special attention to the edges which, oftener than not escape uncooked.

When the Dal poorees are required urgently and there is no time to steep the gram in water, it may be softened by boiling in water for about half an hour and then mashed to pulp.

These are best enjoyed hot with Aloor Dum.
CHAPTER XI.

RECIPES—Salt Articles.

RADHABALLAVI.

Flour 1 tb.
Kalai Pulse 2 tb.
Ghee, Gram meal, Soda Bicarb.
Spices:—Chilli, Black Caraway, Cumin Seed, Ginger, Asafoetida.

Steep the kalai pulse in water for 6 to 8 hours and remove the husks by rasping in several changes of water. Bray the blanched cereals into a soft pulp. Season it with the spices and salt. (Use powdered chilli, ginger juice and asafoetida solution). Make the paste somewhat stiff by incorporating with it gram meal and shorten by the addition of soda bicarb. Finally knead it with a little ghee. Prepare this stuffing in time and divide it into suitable pellets when required.

Now measure the flour and shorten it as usual and knead to a dough. For the preparation of salt stuffed articles like Kachuri and this one the dough is further treated by the following method:

Take a little ghee and beat it with salt, sprinkling water. Smear the dough with this
paste and knead it again till smooth and lithe. The flour thereby becomes elastic and afterwards flaky.

Divide the dough into rounds; stuff each with one of the above pellets. Roll out to a large circle about 6 inches in diameter.

Melt the ghee in a pan and remove it to the ground. Throw in the circles one by one. Place the pan on the fire when they will sink. In this way they will be puffed. Serve hot with curries.

**Kachuri.**

There are two typical varieties of these 'cereal cakes' or bannocks. There is the bigger one like the *Loochi*, 3 ins. across and thin and the smaller one, 1 in. across and thick. While the former is known simply as *Kachuri*, the latter is known as *Khasta Kachuri* (*Khasta* means flaky).

The mode of preparation of *Kachuri* is comparable with that of *Dal Poores*.

1. **Kachuri—Kalai Pulse**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>1 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalai pulse</td>
<td>8 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>q.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spices in powder.
Asafoetida and ginger.
Steep the pulses in water for 6 or 8 hours. preferably overnight. When thoroughly soak-
ed remove the husks by rasping in several changes of water. Grate down the pulses somewhat roughly with minimum of water to a tough paste. Mix the following spices for seasoning; pounded ginger, dissolved asafoetida, etc., and requisite salt. Singe the mass in 1 oz. mustard oil, if desired, to make it tasty. This step is however often omitted as the kalai pulse, being of a sticky nature, is sufficiently workable by itself. Divide the pulp into pellets.

Meanwhile measure the flour, in the shortening, wet and knead. Divide the dough into small balls. Mould them round and shape into cups. Stuff them with the cereal pellets. Close up and roll out into thin circles. Fry them like Loochis fully immersed in ghee. Some prefer to fry them in oil which is said to make them more tasteful.

The Kachuris are to be taken hot with pickles, jams and jellies.

The cereal mostly used for the preparation of kochuri is mash kalai or green kalai. Any other cereal may however be substituted for this, sometimes with better result. A very good variety is prepared with green peas (when in season) which must be skinned before grating to pulp. Another variety is obtained by using panch kalai (or five cereals) comprising different kinds of grams and peas brayed together to a pulp. In these cases, however,
the pulp must be signed in mustard oil to make it suitable for stuffing.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>1 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>2 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>1 lb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spices.

The peas are skinned and grated to a dry pulp. Work into it condiment paste of aniseed, black pepper and salt. Flavour with pounded ginger and asafoetida solution. Now melt 2 oz. ghee (or scald mustard oil) and singe in it the pulp. Baste it thoroughly to mask the raw odour of peas and until it becomes a stiff mass suitable for stuffing.

Then proceed as in the case of Kachuri of kalai pulse.

KHASTA KACHURI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>1 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gram</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ghee

Hot spices, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom.

Soften the gram by boiling in water for half an hour. Drain in colander and mash to a pulp. Singe the pulp in mustard oil as in the case of Dal Pooree to form a stiff paste suitable for stuffing. Dredge with powdered hot spices. Divide the paste into small pellets.
Rub a little more shortening into the flour than usual to make the product very friable and flaky, which are the marked peculiarities of this variety. Wet the flour and work into a smooth dough. Divide into small balls, shape into cups, stuff with gram pellets and close up. Mould into round balls and form by applying gentle pressure between the palms. Make a dent in the middle with the knuckle.

Fry carefully 5 or 6 at a time in a deep pan and at a uniform heat so that even the inside does not escape uncooked as is wont to happen with such thick stuffs. Lift out the fried pieces with the skimmer and transfer to a colander to allow the superfluous ghee to drip off.

Khasta Kachuri is to be served with ginger clips.

NIMKI (Salt Biscuit).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>1 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>1 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Caraway, fennel, parsley.

Rub about 5 or 6 oz. ghee in the flour as shortening to make the products flaky and friable. Incorporate salt and spices; wet and work into a smooth dough. Divide the dough into 5 doz. rounds. Roll them out into circles. Fold twice, press and roll out again into

B. S. 5.
triangles, like Parotas. Fry them in a full pan like Loochis.

SINGARA.

(1) Singara—Potato.

Flour 1 lb.
Potato 1 lb.
Ghee 1 lb.
Spices

Boil the potatoes in water; when tender drain in colander, peel and cut to small pieces. Dredge with finely powdered condiments and hot spices according to taste and a pinch of salt. If desired the potato bits may be singed in a little ghee to make them more tasteful. These are for filling.

Measure the flour, rub in usual shortening and knead into dough. Divide the mass into 3 doz. rounds. Take one and roll it out to an oval shape (about 7 ins. long and 3 ins. broad). Have the pastry board and rolling pin greased with oil for the purpose. Cut the oval spread breadthwise into two. Take one half and wet its edges by dipping the forefinger in water and gently passing over them. Make it into a cone by bringing together the two rims of the straight edge and leaving the circular edge as a flap. Fill the pocket thus formed with a few potato bits prepared as above and close down the flap fluting with moisture. Do the same
with the other half of the oval as well as with
the other pellets. Fry them carefully in ghee
5 or 6 at a time.

Great difficulty is at first met with in mak-
ing the edges stick together fastly. Any weak
point may give way in frying letting out the
filling. But the difficulty can be overcome
with a little practice.

The composition of the filling in the above
recipe may be easily varied according to indivi-
dual taste. A few coconut chips or baked
poppy seed will garnish it. Even jam and jelly
may be worked in a similar manner for novelty.

(2) Singara—Cauliflower.

Flour 3 tb.
Ghee 2½ tb.
Potato 2 tb.
Cauliflower 3
Coconut 1

Mustard Oil, Spices and Condiments, Ginger,
Cayenne, Coriander.

The stuffing has got to be prepared first.

Procure 3 large cauliflowers; reject the
stalks and slice the flower heads only. Peel
and slice the potatoes. Break the coconut and
shred the kernel into five chips.

Scald a little mustard oil on a pan, and
singe in it cassia leaves, aniseed, etc. Baste
the vegetables in the seasoned oil. Add to this
the condiment paste (coriander, cayenne and ginger brayed together) blended in a little water. Add coconut chips. Allow to simmer until the vegetables are tender. Remove from fire; dredge in powder of hot spices and cover up.

The stuffing thus prepared is extremely palatable. It should be allowed to cool before being worked with; otherwise the products will be spoilt.

Then proceed as in the case of ordinary Singaras.

(3) Singara—Kashmiri.
This variety can be made by substituting Mewa and Khoa for Potato, Cauliflower and coconut in item (2). To create novelty a quantity of jam, jelly or other fruit preserve may be mixed with the stuffing.

DALMUT.

Gram pulse 1 lb.
Ghee q.s.

Take fresh gram pulses (husked halves) and soak them in water overnight. Next morning wash them clean in fresh water and drain in colander. The dripping must be as complete as possible.

Now take the ghee in a pan and bring to boil. Throw in the soaked pulses and fry until
hard but brittle. If it be not possible to manage the whole quantity at one time, it may be fried in two or three batches.

If the ghee be not sufficiently hot a heaving froth will appear owing to the pulses being wet. Even as it is a froth will rise and the frying will be complete only after the froth subsides thoroughly.

Dredge with salt, black pepper (powder), ginger pieces and lime juice. The use of chillies or onion for dressing is optional. It is not only toothsome to the extreme but also serves as a mild laxative.

**JHURIBHAJA.**

(Lit.—Wickerwork).

Matar meal 1 lb.
Ghee q.s.

There are two varieties of this stuff which resemble *spaghetti*. The ingredients and preparation of both are the same. They differ only in their size; the one is thick like worm and the other is thin like thread.

Take the pulse meal in a bowl and whisk into a stiff batter with as little water as possible. The paste must be like soft dough. An excess of water will spoil it. For preparing the thick kind a quantity of powdered cayenne pepper may be worked into the paste while salt
and black pepper will do for the thin kind. Give two or three final kneadings and do it up.

Meanwhile procure a skimmer with pores of the required degree of fineness. Make the ghee ready in a pan. Place a pair of light wooden bars across the pan parallel to each other and resting on its brim. Rest the skimmer on the bars so that the pores may be in the middle of the pan. Now take a handful of the foundation batter as prepared above and force the same through the pores. The stuff will come out in threads and when long enough will tear away and fall on the molten ghee. Fry until crisp.

For the above purpose the professional confectioners employ a perforated wooden plank with four handles which easily rest on the pan.

PALTA BHAJA.

*Palta* leaves, Matar meal, Mustard oil, Salt and spices.

Take the cereal meal in a basin. Work in a pinch of salt and powdered pepper. Add a little water and whisk to a soft but rather firm batter. It must be of such a consistency that it will adhere to the leaves and not trickle down.

Pick the *palta* leaves, wash them clean and cut in halves if desired. Take one by one dip in the batter and fry in oil
Fried in ghee it will not be so tasty.

_Palta_ is the name of the creeper of _pulwul_ (patal). It is extremely bitter to taste but is a recognised febrifuge. It is much liked in nausea attending sickness.
CHAPTER XII.

RECIPIES—Mohanbhog & Barhas.

MOHANBHOG.

(Lit. A Captivating Dish).

Mohanbhog is known in Hindi as Hulwa which is, by the by, its more familiar name. There are several varieties of this Indian porridge the modes of preparation of which are similar. The chief ingredient of the most common variety is suji or semolina while that of the other varieties are either pulse, starch or even fruit. It is boiled in water or milk, the proportion of which is so adjusted that the product is just pasty but not soggy.

SUJI MOHANBHOG.

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<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suji</td>
<td>1 lb.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>12 oz.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>12 oz.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Melt the ghee in a pan over gentle fire. When this is ready throw in the suji and stew for about ten minutes, stirring briskly until it is of buff colour in appearance. The grains of the suji swell by absorbing the ghee and a very agreeable smell is given off. Pour water sufficient to cook the suji for ten minutes to make it soft. Add the sugar while the stuff is boil-
ing and mix thoroughly. Strew over seeds of cardamom major and raisins. Remove when it is pasty and draws away from the pan. An excess of water will make it soggy and insipid. *Hulwa* is sometimes seasoned by singeing one or two cassia leaves and aniseed in the ghee before frying the suji in it.

It is best served in tiffins at breakfast and is said to be a great bone-builder.

**MUNGER MOHANBHOG.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mung pulse</td>
<td>2 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>1 1/2 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>1 1/2 lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khoa</td>
<td>8 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>1 1/2 lb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almonds, Pistachio, Raisins, etc.

Soak the pulses in water for 6 to 8 hours. Remove the husks by rasping in several changes of water. Wash clean and bray to a pulpy mass. Stew the pulp in the ghee over a gentle fire for 10 to 15 minutes until the odour of the cereals is masked completely. Herein lies the secret of success for preparing these porridges. The smell of the raw cereals must be effectively ‘killed’ or masked so that it cannot be detected in the final product.

Now pour the milk on the stuff, stir, and add the sugar. Mix thoroughly and allow to boil. Water may be substituted for milk but then the product will not be so creamy. How-
ever, to ensure good cooking of the cereal a portion of the milk may be replaced by water. When the stuff begins to thicken incorporate the khoa, previously pulverised and sifted. Strew over a handful of raisins and seeds of cardamom major. Take away when it is pasty and draws away from the pan and pour in shallow plates. Garnish with finely chopped almonds and pistachios. A few crimson rose petals will lend the dish additional grace.

In the above recipe mung pulse may be easily replaced by gram or chana and cowpea or barbati with equally good result. A very nice dish is prepared by using green peas or even pistachios instead of the cereals. In every case, however, the pulses are to be soaked in water and skinned.

All these varieties are known in Hindi as Dal Halwa.

**SATHIR MOHANBHOG.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sathi</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>2 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>2 oz.</td>
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</table>

Melt the ghee in slow fire. Stew the sathi free from lumps. Pour in milk. Let boil. Add sugar. Take away when pasty.

*Sathi* being easily digestible helps the assimilation of ghee without effort. The product
may be therefore prescribed for persons with weak digestion.

**PAPAW MOHANBHOG.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green Papaw</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khoa</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>2 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>4 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>12 oz.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procure two medium-sized unripe papaw so as to yield about one pound pulp. Peel the skin, cut into 4 to 6 lengthwise slices and reject the seeds and slimes. Wash clean and boil them in water until tender. Drain in colander and mash into fine pulp.

Stew the pulp in ghee for about 15 minutes so as to mask its vegetable origin. Pour the milk and add sugar. When the stuff begins to thicken incorporate pulverised khoa. Agitate thoroughly and take away when pasty. Strew over chopped almond and pistachio, raisins and pounded cardamom seeds.

*Papaw,* the luscious tropical fruit, is generally preferred in the ripe state. But the confection prepared in the above way from the unripe fruit is no less covetable. The milky juice that exudes from the papaw (both fruit and plant) contains a valuable digestive ferment known as Papain or 'vegetable pepsin' and is equally efficacious in liver complaints like animal pepsin.
BARHAS.

Barhas are fritters of cereal meal soaked in syrup or other stock liquids. Whether salt, sour or sweet, the foundation batter is much the same: but it is thick enough to retain its shape when dropped by spoonfuls into the frying pan.

DAHI BARHA.

Kalai pulse 1 lb.
Mustard oil 8 oz.
Dahi 8 oz.
Salt q.s.
Spices q.s.

Soak the split pulses for 6 to 8 hours. Remove the husk completely by rasping in several changes of water. Bray the blanched pulses on the stone slab with the stone muller to a smooth pulp. Whisk this to a thick batter with as little water as possible.

Place the pan with mustard oil on the fire and when the oil is smoking drop the batter into it bit by bit with the tips of the fingers or preferably from a spoon. As many as 16 to 20 fritters can be managed at a time. The fritters will at first sink to the bottom of the pan; then as the paste begins to swell, they will rise to the surface. They should be gently turned and moved about until the fritters are finely coloured. Ladle out with the skimmer. Proceed on until the whole of the batter is
finished. Meanwhile take the dahi and dilute it with about a quarter of its measure of water. Add a pinch of salt and cumin seed (baked and powdered). Mix well and have this stock liquid ready beforehand.

As soon as the fritters are fried as above, transfer them direct from the pan to this stock-liquid. Allow to soak for an hour or so; they are ready when soft and sloppy.

**MITHA BARHA.**

Kalai pulse 1 lb.
Mustard oil 8 oz.
Dahi 4 oz.
Sugar q.s.

Proceeding as in the case of *Dahi Barha* the fritters are fried smaller in size and soaked in the following stock-liquid:—

The *Dahi* is diluted with water and sweetened with sugar.

**RAS BARHA.**

Kalai pulse
Mustard oil
Sugar

Proceeding as before the fritters are fried still smaller in size, say, like peas. They are then soaked in thin sugar syrup.

They are in the nature of *Bundias.*
CHAPTER XIII.

RECIPES—Coconut Conserves.

RASKARA.

Coconut 4
Sugar 1 lb.
Cardamom Major

Select medium-sized fully ripe coconuts. Break them in twos. Scrape out the kernel. Mix sugar in the scrapings. Cook the mass until it becomes a soft paste. Strew a few seeds of cardamom major and mould into balls with the hands.

In the more common varieties of this confection such as, coconut conserve (narikel naru) treacle or jaggery is substituted for sugar, the quantity of which may be varied according to the size of the coconuts. For big sized coconuts a little more sugar will be required and vice versa.

Raskara prepared with sugar is generally employed for ‘filling’ or ‘stuffing’ other sweets such as Peraki (which see). It is one of the simplest of confections.

Raskara prepared with treacle or jaggery is usually taken with Murhi and Murki (puffed and sugared rice) at breakfast in the villages.