

## FESTIVE FARE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOLIDAY FARE, INDOORS AND OUT."



HERE ! that will do, I think. Run to mother, Frances, and ask her if she approves of our *menu*; tell her that we are quite ready to commence operations."

The speaker was Myra Hammond, whose acquaintance the readers of this Magazine made in the summer; she, together with her sister Frances, and her old schoolfellow, Beatrice French, was about to prepare for the entertainment of some friends on the following evening.

First in order to arrive would be a dozen or so young friends of the boys and their own, in time for afternoon tea; and at eight o'clock the parents of these young guests, with a few other friends, were invited to an entertainment to be given by the juniors; during the interval of which, as well as on the arrival and departure of the audience, refreshments would be handed round, all to be of such a kind as to enable the guests to partake of them without leaving their seats.

The idea of the "two parties in one" was Myra's, and, after a very short discussion, it was voted a good arrangement, as was also the plan of setting out the edibles on a large table at one end of the room; the space being insufficient to permit of a comfortable "sit-down" supper.

"The creams, of course, we shall bring in at the last minute," said Myra; "they are nothing if not cold; I *have* tasted them after a few hours in a hot room, and they have been most sickly; we'll avoid *that* error. We will get on with the savouries now, and make the sweets to-night."

The girls were soon at work. Myra proceeded to fillet a pair of large soles, the bones being at once broken up, and put in a stewpan with a pint of cold water, on a cool part of the range, to cook slowly, the stock being required for another dish. The fillets were then divided each into three, and coated with beaten egg and flour, the latter being more suitable than bread-crumbs for *cold* fillets, and these were of a novel kind. Care was taken to cover the cut edges well; they were then fried a golden-brown, and set aside, ready for garnishing the next day.

Frances had minced a lobster finely (from one of the best brands of tinned goods), and this, after being mixed with a table-spoonful each of lemon-juice, chopped capers, and minced parsley, was turned into a basin; the stock from the bones of the soles being run through a clean linen cloth, and mixed thoroughly with it. When somewhat cool, it was seasoned with salt and pepper, then spread on a large, flat dish, and transferred to the cellar.

"You have forgotten the flour!" exclaimed Beatrice.

"No," said Myra; "you are thinking of the kind of lobster cutlets which are to be served hot; *they* are mixed with white sauce, made of flour, butter, and milk, and shaped and fried after cooling; *these* will be cut into rounds and ovals to-morrow, and garnished as you will see; they *could* be served as they are, only then we must have clarified the fish stock. I forgot to tell you that it was reduced to half a pint, and that I added a quarter of an ounce of gelatine to it."

To Beatrice, the initial process of what Myra termed the *bonne-bouche* of the evening, viz., some *Game Sandwiches*, had been entrusted; and she was vigorously pounding the meat in a mortar, after first passing it through a mincing machine, and anxiously inquiring if it would do. Her fellow-workers laughed, telling her that she had only just begun; and, as she had forgotten the butter, the labour had been increased.

"I'll go on pounding," said Myra, "while you jot it down, as you said you would like this recipe. Here it is." And she read as follows:—

"Mince twelve ounces of the best part of a roasted hare (the back and legs should be used), then pound it with half its weight of butter, a table-spoonful of Worcester sauce, a good pinch each of powdered cloves and nutmeg, a little salt, a teaspoonful of sweet herbs in fine powder, and a little gravy." And it was fortunate," she continued, "that we had a hare for dinner, and were able to save the meat, or we could not have indulged in this."

"What is the brown loaf for?" asked Beatrice.

"For these sandwiches," was the reply; "and those tiny rolls which want 'rasping'—we have no rasp, so must use the large bread-grater—are for another lot of sandwiches called *Indian*: they must be cut through, and some of the crumb taken out, so that they will hold a dessert-spoonful or so of the *mince*; and it is time I made it"—picking up, as she spoke, a thick, juicy beef-steak, which she minced and put on to stew in a little stock, stirring it frequently to prevent burning. In an hour's time it was removed from the fire, after being seasoned with salt and pepper, and a little mulligatawny paste.

Some tiny china moulds like miniature flower-pots were then produced by Myra, who explained that they were for *Chicken Darioles*; the chicken had been boiled, and the best part cut up into dice, together with a little tongue.

"Nothing else?" inquired Beatrice, who was told that the bones were stewing, and that, when the stock had reduced itself to a tea-cupful or so, she could mix it with the meat.

"Well, we can spare a little cream," said Myra; "it makes *such* a difference. But don't add it until the stock cools, because there is lemon-juice in it; then you can fill the moulds, and set them in the cellar. To-morrow we will decorate the tops with chopped beet-root, and a couple of eggs boiled hard—we will leave

that until the last. It is a pretty dish, and very cheap ; only the breast and wings are required to make a good number, and the other parts of the chicken will come in for patties or little rolls ; but you must have the whitest meat for these darioles. Perhaps I'll make some *Rissolettes*," she went on ; "they are newer, and look nice."

"How are they made?" asked the girls.

"You want some puff pastry," answered Myra, "and you *must* roll it evenly ; you place the mince on in little heaps, leaving a space between ; then cover with another sheet of pastry, and cut round the part where you have put the mince ; brush them over with beaten egg, and bake them ; then cut some rings out of the trimmings ; these should be about as large as a shilling—the *rissolettes* must be larger, of course ; bake the rings separately, and lay them on the *rissolettes*, and fill them with whatever is suitable. In this you must be guided by the kind of mince ; a little mayonnaise does nicely if it is of fish or chicken ; or you can put on thick sauce of any kind, or chopped aspic jelly. Sweet ones may be made with jam in them ; but mind it is a *stiff* jam ; the rings of those you can fill with whipped cream, or a spoonful of custard ; damson cheese is effective, so is apple jelly, or any other kind you happen to have. Now we will set about the *Creams* I told you of ; one is *Tea*, the other *Coffee and Vanilla*."

For the first, the tea had been specially purchased, viz., two ounces of orange-flavoured Pekoe ; this was put into an earthen pot with a couple of pints of boiling milk, then removed from the fire, and left until cool, when another half-pint of milk—in which six ounces of loaf sugar and two ounces of gelatine had been dissolved—was put in ; also a half-pint of cream, well whisked to increase its bulk.

"This will fill two moulds," said Myra, "but we will not pour it in till it begins to set ; it will turn out all the better ; it will be a change from *Fruit Creams*, and will no doubt be eaten. Now for the coffee cream ! Will you make it ? Just the same quantity ; here is the coffee ; six ounces of freshly roasted berries, very coarsely ground, as you see, and the same weight of sugar ; after it has infused for ten minutes, not more, carefully strain the milk through muslin before you mix it with the cream and gelatine ; the vanilla, you know, goes in last."

"How much?" asked Beatrice.

"Well, as this is very good essence, about a dessert-spoonful ; of some kinds you would want double that amount."

Frances then appeared with two dishes of *Stewed French Plums*. "I've kept them whole, you see !" she exclaimed, "though they are quite soft ; and I've taken all the stones out ; and is not the syrup nice and thick ? What shall I ornament them with, Myra ? will cocoanut do?"

"Very nicely, and you might use a little coloured sugar ; put the grated nut on in tiny heaps, you know, and the sugar on the top. For the other dish you can have the whites of the eggs from my *favourite pudding* ; I only want the yolks, and I'll see what I have

left in the way of fruit, then I'll show you how to convert it into a *Meringue of Plums*."

Myra then boiled a pint of milk, which she poured over an equal measure of sponge-cake crumbs, two ounces of butter, and four ounces of white sugar. This she covered, while she prepared the fruits—cherries, angelica, and apricots—by cutting them small and putting them into a glassful of lemon syrup to soak. The mixture in the basin was then well beaten with the yolks of three eggs, and a few drops of essence of almonds, and transferred to a shallow pie-dish.

"There!" said Myra, "that wants nicely baking ; a hot oven would spoil it. I shall finish it off in the morning."

"You have left the fruits out," cried Beatrice.

"No, they are put on after it is baked ; there will be enough for a good layer, then I shall make a little thick custard and pour it round the pudding. The syrup in which the fruits are soaking will flavour the custard. I think this completes the sweets, excepting the mince pies, and a *Mince-meat Pudding*, which I will make next."

"Oh, no!" said Frances, "you forget the *Oranges in Syrup* ; you know they are so refreshing to the vocalists. Beatrice and I can manage *that* dish ; I remember how we made it last year. Here, Beatrice," handing her a dozen oranges, "will you peel these, and take the skin off after you've divided the fruit? Be sure you throw away any pips. I'll make the syrup ; it takes a pound of sugar to half a pint of water, and the juice of an orange and a lemon ; and Myra always puts in a little orange-flower water. You pile the fruit up high, ready for the hot syrup."

"Don't you boil the oranges, then?" asked Beatrice.

"No ; the syrup makes them soft enough ; you will find it very good if you are fortunate enough to get a helping. Oh ! I forgot ; I must rasp the lumps of sugar on some of the rinds first, to get the flavour ; and we are to remember in handing the fruit to take sponge biscuits and finger-rusks as well."

Meanwhile, Myra was making the *Mince-meat Pudding*, as she knew that some of the expected guests would not eat pastry, but were, at the same time, partial to mincemeat, which could, by means of this particular pudding, be presented in a very agreeable and digestible form. Alternate layers of bread-and-butter and mincemeat were put into a quart pie-dish until they half filled it, when a pint of milk and three eggs were beaten and poured over.

"No sugar, you see," said Myra to Beatrice, who watched the operation, "and we must bake it in the coolest part of the oven ; that is one reason why it generally agrees with people, they not only get rid of the pastry, but the mincemeat gets more thoroughly cooked than in mince pies. We made one for some old people who were entertained by our vicar last year, and there was quite a run on it, I assure you."

"But why is the dish only *half* filled?" Beatrice inquired.

"To allow for swelling ; and to prevent the bread-and-butter getting dry, I shall put this old plate over until it is half baked ; we will not pour custard over

before serving, but we will take some round with it ; some persons may like it.”

The following morning the girls were busy in giving the finishing touches to their respective dainties ; the fillets of fish were dotted over with mayonnaise sauce, then sprinkled with lobster coral ; the lobster cutlets were coated *entirely* with mayonnaise, and in the centre of each a prawn was placed, the remaining portion—from a small tin—being used, together with the trimmings of the lobster cutlets, to make *Savoury Rolls*, their foundation consisting of tiny rolls, as used for the Indian sandwiches.

The edibles looked very tempting when arranged on the “buffet,” as the girls called the large table ; and

there was no fear of an insufficient supply, for, besides those made at home, there were cakes, biscuits, and chocolates, and fruits in plenty, fresh and preserved. And all agreed that the variety of beverages would be ample, as, in addition to coffee and chocolate, Myra had provided an excellent choice of cordials, syrups, aerated waters, and so on ; and as the girls had a last look round just before tea, they took sufficient credit to themselves to announce that, if the dishes were not speedily emptied, it would not be their fault ; and Myra also cherished the hope that a little surprise in the shape of cups of beef-tea, made from a good meat extract, which she intended to present on the departure of the visitors, would be a welcome one.

“SO PEEVISH AND IRRITABLE.”

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



MOST of us grown-up folks have rather more than our share of troubles and worry and weariness. The oft-quoted text, “Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upwards,” does not, I fear, always console us ; and we go about airing our afflictions among, and seeking consolation from, our nearest and dearest.

Well, our griefs and pains are generally very real ; yet how seldom we think that there are others among us whose sorrows and aches are equally real, but who are deprived of the power of giving verbal expression thereof, or of seeking sympathy in any way whatever, except by the plaintive, peevish cry ! I allude, of course, to ailing little ones ; infants, young children—call them what you may.

The mortality among these in the earlier stages of existence is very great indeed, and in a direct ratio to the ignorance which prevails as to their management and rearing.

It is the children of the lower middle classes, and of the poor, that keep up this high rate of mortality. Nor is the latter due so much to the effects of poverty as to errors in diet, and inattention to the most ordinary rules of health.

The want of knowledge of the proper treatment of childhood is not, however, confined to the classes mentioned. Medical men encounter every day of their lives instances of the grossest ignorance of this kind, in the wealthier and well-to-do circles of society. And the little ones are the real sufferers. Indeed, in cases where kindly death does not step in to close their aching eyes, such children grow up, if not confirmed invalids, puny, sallow weaklings, dwarfed as much in mind as in body. Such beings are in the world, but not of it. They live, perhaps, in golden cages. They have every human comfort and enjoyment, but understand not what life and living mean. Rosy cheeks, muscularity, brightness of eye, firmness of

tread, sturdy independence are human attributes they may have heard about or seen, but have no more intrinsic knowledge of than my dog here has of the music of Haydn or the science of electricity. But I say, let any one of these world’s weaklings—rich though he may be—enjoy one day of bounding health, wholesome appetite, and genuine happiness, and to go back again to his gilded home and his *ennui* would seem like going to the dreariest prison.

Here is a truth which mothers too often forget : on the correct and judicious care and feeding of the infant or child, depend the health and happiness of his manhood if spared to grow up.

It is only in its early life that the foundation-stone can be laid. In infancy a child must build and build, and build. And he must be happy all the time he is building. If he is otherwise, morally he will be ruined as well as physically, for he will imbibe the bitterest pessimist ideas of life and everything and every creation around him. He will become selfish, morose, unaffectionate, self-conscious, and possessor of never an atom of sympathy to expend on the well-being of the fellow-beings with whom he must mingle in life.

The fact that health and happiness are synonymous terms cannot take too deep root in the memory of everyone who has a child or children to care for.

Now, an infant is not *naturally* peevish or irritable. An infant, if well, ought to be as full of joy and mirth and playfulness when well awake as a kitten or a baa-lamb. Whether rosy-faced or not, he should at least be happy-faced. The desire to take notice of everything and everybody around him should be expressed in his bright, clear eyes. Touch his cheek : it does not give to your finger in soft soddenness. Take his hand : you do not feel as if you had got hold of the tail of a dead fish. There is firmness in it, and a wholesome amount of warmth, while the fingers have a considerable degree of grasping power.