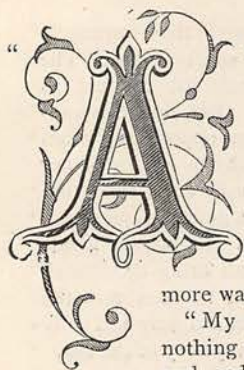


SOME PLEASANT VARIETIES IN FOOD.



AND what is the trouble to-day—you look worried; is anything serious the matter?" was the query of Mrs. Blakemore during her call upon an old friend's daughter, Mrs. Tomlin, who, having been married only six months, was always glad to ask for advice, while Mrs. Blakemore was equally ready to give it.

"My trouble," said Mrs. Tomlin, "is nothing more or less than *scraps*: odds and ends of an edible kind, I ought to say. Don't laugh; I know you will help me—you always do. Somehow, try as I will, with four men to cater for, I can't avoid the accumulation. I told you, I think, that my husband's three cousins are up for study, and making their home with us for the present? They all like change of diet, so I provide all sorts of things, with the result that the 'left-overs,' as I call them, are appalling. To an old housekeeper like you, no doubt the disposal of them would be but a small matter."

Mrs. Blakemore owned that the subject was well-nigh inexhaustible, and that the arrangement of meals of a varied and nourishing kind, without waste in any form, was only to be gained by experience. The chief difficulty in the present case seemed to be the disposal of cold meat, as the members of the family all enjoyed a cut from the joint, but were disinclined to eat it cold.

"Fortunately, they all like soup, and would be glad of it every day; that *does* use up the bones, but I get such a lot of fat," said Mrs. Tomlin.

"Well," was the reply, "the first morning I can spare I will come in and give you a practical lesson; there are dozens of nice things I could show you; just for the present jot down a few hints; but you must tax your memory too, for I know you have a good one. By the way, I forget how your meals are arranged. Do you have suppers?"

"No; tea is our last meal. As a rule, 'the boys' are seldom in before seven, and as we dine at one, they want something substantial."

"I see. Then you will be glad of anything which will come in for tea or breakfast, therefore recipes for such things as can be prepared beforehand will be most useful; you understand that I mean dishes that will not spoil—indeed, many are really improved by being made some hours before they are cooked. But why have so many joints? Begin at the beginning, and practise economy by substituting some other dish more frequently. Do you ever have poultry, or game, or fish?"

"Not often; fish is scarce hereabouts—save dried fish; we have poultry now and then. But what do you advise in the meat line to take the place of a joint?"

"First, I would say, acquire the art of braising and

stewing—nothing is more economical or tasty; among other things, try liver, hearts, kidneys, ox-tails, or a cow's cheek occasionally, and the remnants of the last-named will, if potted, give an excellent breakfast dish. *Liver* is perhaps nicest if stewed whole in a good gravy made from bones or trimmings; tomatoes or mushrooms added are a great improvement, and the dish should be garnished with sliced lemon and curled bacon. The *kidneys* you can prepare similarly; always wash those from beef in vinegar and water first: it removes the strong taste, and makes them tender; *hearts* you can stuff with a good veal forcemeat; sheep's and calves' are naturally more tender and take less time than a cow's heart."

Mrs. Tomlin was getting interested, and eagerly inquired how long to cook the viands in question.

"From one to two hours for liver, according to quantity and kind; for a couple of pounds allow quite two hours, and the same for a large kidney. Hearts vary most of all; I allow three or four hours for a cow's, but calves' and sheep's hearts are done in half the time. It is a good rule for beginners to weigh them, and give from thirty to forty minutes to the pound, as, being close-grained meats, they are very hard to digest if under-done, but if carefully cooked they are very nutritious."

"Now about the cheek," Mrs. Blakemore went on. "That wants several hours' soaking in salt and water to remove the blood; then, by adding plenty of weak stock for gravy, and a good supply of vegetables and herbs, you *may* get a tureen of soup, and plenty of meat for dinner, with, as I said, some left over for potting. I always cut up the meat into inch squares, and season it well with salt and pepper, powdered mixed herbs, and allspice, and add an equal amount of something of a gelatinous nature, such as a cow's or calf's foot, or some ears and feet from the humble porker—all thoroughly boiled, of course; you must pack it closely into your mould, with a very little of the stock from the feet, then turn it out next day. I forgot to say that it is much better to cut the meat up while warm."

"I'll try that," was the emphatic comment; "and of course those bones will come in again?"

"Just so; put them all on for further cooking. Now I want to remind you that braised steak is another excellent dish, and the kind called 'skirting' is very good, the gravy from it is so rich; a pet dish with us is made from it stewed, with plenty of celery or with Spanish onions; sometimes I use carrots, and for stews generally I grate them—the result repays me for the trouble. Remember, my dear, that plenty of vegetables in a stew serve two purposes—nay, three: they make the dish more appetising, save the meat—it goes farther than when quite plainly served in the roasted or boiled state—and we get all the benefit of the valuable salts which are lost when the vegetables are boiled, and the water thrown away. Good cookery

does not only tickle the palate : its aim is higher than that ; but I won't touch on matters scientific just now, or you'll vote me a bore ; but I'll give you instead a few recipes for the utilisation of your fragments."

"Do, please ; and keep to solids to-day. I'll ask you about some soups another time, because I know you make delicious purées without any meat at all."

"Very well ; here is a *pudding* I tried only yesterday," said Mrs. Blakemore. "Supposing you have half a pound of cold meat—if under-done all the better—pass it through your mincing machine, mix it with two ounces of bread-crumbs and the same weight of cooked rice or macaroni cut small, then beat up an egg, and add it, with a tea-cupful or so of stock mixed with half an ounce of flour."

"That sounds very good, but is there no seasoning?" interrupted Mrs. Tomlin.

"Certainly ; therein lies your scope for variety : plenty of salt and pepper as a matter of course, and, for the rest, some herbs, fried onions, a spoonful or two of celery sauce, or onion sauce if you have some left over ; a few tinned mushrooms or tomatoes, a dash of very nice store sauce, ketchup, or mixed pickles, a spoonful of curry-powder, or—but that will do for the present ; exercise your ingenuity, and note results. For a real *gamey* flavour, though, which will raise your dish quite above the level of the commonplace, put in a spoonful of anchovy essence."

"I never heard of that with meat !" exclaimed Mrs. Tomlin.

"I dare say not : a Frenchwoman told me of it ; whatever else may be said, seasoning is certainly one of the things better managed in France. But to cook this pudding : first grease a cake-tin or basin, coat it with bread-crumbs, and pack in the mixture—it should just come to the top of the tin ; put more crumbs on and a sheet of buttered paper over, then bake it in a moderate oven for an hour, or nearly ; it should turn out brown and firm, and more gravy can be poured round it. Or you can steam it : in that case you must allow rather longer, and don't forget that the water in which you boil your rice and macaroni should never be thrown away : it forms a good foundation for plain white soups (of which, however, more later on), and so does the liquor from boiled haricots.

"To proceed : try a *savoury roll*, made by mixing some cold meat (if fat, all the better ; or you can put in some bits of ham or bacon) with mashed potatoes, about an equal weight of each ; the meat must be minced, and the potatoes are all the nicer if sieved while hot, or if sieving is inconvenient they must be carefully mashed. I have just invested in a handy little article called a potato-masher ; it does for pulping all sorts of other things, and is a wonderful time-saver. But to return to my recipe : if you have, say, a pound each of meat and potatoes, add two eggs, well beaten, an ounce of dissolved butter, with seasoning to taste, a spoonful of chopped parsley, and a little thick gravy ; shape it like a roll pudding, and brown it in a quick oven. I generally reserve a little of the egg for brushing over the top, and I serve plenty of gravy round it, and sometimes put a few little heaps of

mixed pickles here and there, heating them first in a little of the gravy. The fact is, my dear Dora, these things want a little trouble in finishing off, but my experience is that the average housekeeper regards a bit of garnish as quite superfluous unless for some expensive dainty.

"Now, with your permission, I will end our talk by introducing you to the simple *menu* of our last night's supper ; you know what a house ours is for surprise parties, and it was bitterly cold, so I treated my guests to a hot meal in the shape of *savoury pancakes*, *haddock soubise*, and *potato fritters*, or, in reality, they were Parmesan fritters, as I added some grated cheese to a mixture which I use for ordinary potato fritters ; indeed, they can be varied in so many ways that if I begin to tell you I shall hardly know where to stop. Remember, all I am about to detail were made from scraps, and the dishes went down empty—a good sign of appreciation.

"First, the pancakes : just a plain batter for the foundation, made from a pint of milk, six ounces of flour, three eggs, and a good seasoning of salt and pepper. I always fry them small and very thin ; the "filling" was the remainder of some minced veal left at dinner : this I re-heated, and put a spoonful in the centre of each pancake, rolled it over, and dished them in a pyramid, with sliced lemon and fried bacon in little rolls as a garnish. You'll be surprised how tasty these are ; any mince will do, or some curry of fish or meat is excellent ; but whatever you use must be thick, or the gravy will run out, and make the whole most unappetising."

"Thank you ; please go on. Are the fritters to be fried too?"

"Certainly ; their name implies the process, and though, in the manipulation of these particular fritters, 'left over' potatoes were used, I ought to tell you that they were sieved while hot, also that they had been baked in their skins—the method *par excellence*, in my opinion, as both colour and flavour are so superior, and they are always more floury. For a pound, after thoroughly mashing and sieving them, you will want two ounces of dissolved butter and half a gill of hot milk ; beat up for a few minutes ; stir in an egg and a couple of ounces of grated cheese, salt to taste, a little cayenne, and a grate of nutmeg ; beat hard—it makes them lighter—then fry in hot fat, a table-spoonful at a time. I must remind you that the exact quantity of milk can only be regulated by the mealiness or otherwise of the tubers. You seem interested in my hints."

"I am, very ; but do these go into a frying-basket?"

"Oh, no ! only firm things, like croquettes and rissoles, are treated in that way ; these are too soft : they go right into the fat quite hot, and enough to cover them ; they are quickly cooked, and will be brown and crisp, or should be, if the fat is of the right heat. To test it, drop in a bit of bread ; it should turn a golden brown instantly ; or watch for a thin, bluish smoke ; the moment it appears, drop in the fritters, or any other *small* things of the same nature ; a second too long, and the blue flame turns to black, and the fat is burnt and spoiled."

"Thanks ; now your fish dish ; it is a new name to me, but I hope it is not an expensive affair."

"Not at all, but it is very delicious ; its peculiarity consists in the addition of an onion, which gives a piquant flavour without being really decided. We had had boiled fresh haddocks for dinner ; a pound or so was left, and this I had flaked while hot, then stewed down the bone and skin in water for an hour until I had a quarter of a pint left. I dissolved two ounces of butter in a pan, added a small onion, *very finely* chopped, two ounces of flour, and three gills of milk, which I stirred to boiling point, and cooked for five minutes, then put in the fish stock and the fish, and just stirred it until heated through. In the present instance I used shrimp essence for flavouring, but any other kind can be used. Finally, it was dished on a large piece of hot buttered toast, with some slices of hard-boiled egg put on the top. It was intended for a breakfast dish this morning, but, as I say, came in handy for supper.

"Pardon the reminder that all white fish can be used

up similarly ; I know of not one exception, and for a plain family dish, a border of mashed potatoes, or boiled rice, or macaroni can be added. Now, is there anything more you specially wish to ask ?"

"Yes. I did want to ask you for some recipes for potted meats, and how to use up cheese in some nice ways. Could I, for instance, use other vegetables in the same way as *cauliflower au gratin* ?"

"Indeed you can ; onions—Spanish for choice—are excellent, so is celery, likewise carrots and beetroot, any one singly, or all mixed if you like ; the sauce, you know, must be always thick enough to coat them, and if you can, let a portion of the cheese, however small, be Parmesan, because it gives just the twang which all other kinds lack. But I'll hurry off now ; you have enough to work out for the present. I'll run in again shortly, and bring you something new, if I can."

"Thank you a thousand times," said Mrs. Tomlin ; "and when you come again I hope to be able to tell you that I have acted upon your hints, and that the dishes have been duly appreciated."

WHAT TO WEAR IN MAY.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS : FROM OUR LONDON AND PARIS CORRESPONDENTS.

I.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.



THERE can be no reasonable doubt that the weather in May, 1891, will be very different from the Mays of fifty years ago. Then muslin and cotton gowns were cheerfully donned, and careful housekeepers had their chimneys swept, and left off fires. These would not be wise proceedings nowadays ; but still "hope tells a flattering tale," and spring sun, however sparse its rays, shows up the defects of winter garments, and we begin with as good a heart as we can muster to make our preparations.

The figure in the initial vignette wears a new-cut gown, such as we desire to don without any other covering out of doors ; but the chances are a fur cloak will be acceptable, which we can leave in the hall or carriage when we call to see our friends. The dress is of poplin, embroidered in a darker tone with a faint line of gold thread run through the silk work. I would specially draw attention to the make of this dress, because it is the height of fashion, and also because it is well suited to the re-arrangement of a last year's gown. The bodice is pointed back and front, and the deep basques, which would appear to be an essential part of all the new fashions, are added to this bodice. The embroidery is carried

down one side of the skirt, for the front breadth is apparently laid outside the rest ; it also ornaments the basques and the front. There is an upright velvet collar, lined with poplin, the points turning downwards and revealing the lining. Sleeves are not worn of the preposterous length seen in the winter, happily, for it was a most disfiguring mode, but they are still a little raised. The bonnet is straw, trimmed with ribbon only, to match an upstanding bow over the face, a torsade of the same carried beneath the brim at the sides, and a high bow, with visible ends, at the back, from which come the strings. The backs of bonnets this year are most carefully trimmed, and a cluster of bows or roses invariably nestles on the hair, beneath the brim. Capes are newer than long cloaks or jackets, and are most comfortable wear—they are quickly slipped on and off, and do not crush what is worn beneath. The cape in the illustration is composed of cloth for the lower portion and of velvet for the upper, the velvet being worked either with gold bullion thread or black silk. The model from which the drawing was made was of a terra-cotta tone, but black, green, or dust-colour would be equally fashionable. The cape is tied at the throat with cord and tassels, and the collar is entirely composed of black ostrich feather tips.

These high collars are a great feature in the dress of the present day, but they need to be most carefully arranged. They should fit up close to the back of the head, and when made of any woven material are generally cut on the cross and joined down the centre, being lined with the stiff holland used by tailors. Cloaks of this kind to match dresses are often now sent home as a natural accompaniment,