



FOR one person who takes chocolate as a beverage, perhaps a dozen eat it as a confection. The explanation of this is not far to seek. Nothing that comes under the head of sweets is more temptingly displayed in our shop windows ; while every day brings us novelties, either as chocolates pure and simple, or blended with other delightful confections, but all so cunningly fashioned and flavoured as to appeal equally to the artistic eye and the refined palate. How much some of these dainties would be missed in the dessert course of the modern dinner !

The dishes here given should appeal to chocolate eaters generally. They are original, wholesome, and less costly than many sweets of the more familiar sorts. Where no special kind of chocolate is named, it is assumed that a reliable brand will be selected. Never make experiments with low-priced stuff. And a rule that should never be deviated from is to buy no chocolate that has been exposed in a sunny window and lost both flavour and colour. The original brightness should be looked for, particularly for ornamental dishes.

Are you yet acquainted with those little dainties known as "Chocolat aux Noisettes" ? If not, a treat awaits you. There *may* be more than one maker of chocolate under this name; I know but one. The exquisite little creams are of melting softness, and of such a delicate tint as to blend with almost anything in the way of coloured sugars, icings, or confections. In fact, they are quite distinct from the dark brown usually associated with chocolate. Then, owing to their size, that of a hazel nut, they can be adapted to the decoration of cakes of all shapes and sizes.

Meringues à la Suchard.

The fashion of the moment is for flowers of pink and mauve blended ; fawn and mauve are also appreciated ; the meringues combine

these colours, and are as delightful to eat as to look at. The meringue cases may be bought of a confectioner or home-made, so that they are even in size and a good shape ; they should be all white, or rather of the delicate tint which passes as white. The fresher they are the better, that the crispness be not lost.

To prepare them for table, some of the little chocolates above referred to will be wanted, as well as a supply of crystallised violets and rose petals, and a "filling." First take each half meringue and spread the outside very thinly with a white icing, made by mixing the white of an egg with enough sifted icing sugar to form a smooth paste. Be very careful that the edges are not smudged ; before the icing dries, commence the pleasant task of garnishing. Start at the edges, as by so doing any spare icing gets worked up to the top, whereas, by reversing the order of procedure, it would run over at the edges and spoil the appearance.

What about pattern ? This may be left to the individual. No two halves need be just alike ; the idea is to blend the three colours artistically. In some, the edges may be of the chocolate, and the pink and mauve kept for the tops ; in others, this may be reversed. Stripes and irregular spots are other simple modes.

As to the filling, whipped cream with sugar and vanilla flavouring almost everyone knows and likes, and it is not readily dethroned. But change is ever welcome. Try the cream with a morsel of preserved ginger, chopped, and a little of the syrup, with, if you like, vanilla or grated lemon rind ; the amalgamation of these flavours is most satisfactory, and ginger seems to possess the power of reducing the richness of cream or custard preparations somewhat. Those to whom ginger is not acceptable may be inclined to make trial of cream flavoured with good essence of rose and coloured the faintest pink. I say good essence, for bad ones are an utter abomination. The service of these meringues is as usual, so

far as putting the halves together goes ; but place them in a single layer only, on a flat dish, garnished with natural green leaves, and nothing is prettier than ferns. Never be satisfied with artificial substitutes for the real thing. Some, in the modern craze for paper decoration, appear to ignore Nature altogether.

Chocolate Jellied Cake.

This is of so decorative a character as to be quite an acquisition to the supper-table, and it will stand the heat of a room for some hours without suffering in appearance—more than can be said for many sweets. A round sponge or Madeira cake is wanted (a Madeira for choice); cut out the middle, leaving a wall an inch thick. The portion removed is to be soaked in a little hot jelly, holes being first made in the cake. One of the best of the tablet jellies will answer admirably for this, but a little extra flavouring is often the making of it; and as brilliancy is not essential, a few drops of any essence may be used.

The outer surface of the cake is then to be coated with an icing made as under, and put on with a palette knife dipped from time to time in cold water. Here are the proportions; the quantities may have to be doubled for a large cake: One ounce of chocolate, very good, hard, and flavoured well with vanilla; half a pound of finely-sifted, good quality icing sugar; six tablespoonfuls of hot water; and if spice be not disliked, a dash of ground cinnamon, or cloves. The grated chocolate and water are to be mixed and stirred to the boil in a small bright stewpan, and the sugar added off the fire; a rapid stir, and it is ready. The soaked portion is now to be restored to its original position, and the cake set on the dish for serving. The brightest of glass is called for here.

Finally, surround the cake with a ring of jelly, the deepest yellow at your command; it should be chopped on a sheet of slightly-damped, stout white paper. Here and there put a few pieces of crystallised oranges, both green and gold; and for the top of the cake cut some of the same fruit into spikes and stick them in, after making good-sized holes with a skewer. A whole orange should be reserved for the top. Another way of finishing off may be noted: that is to cut the top off entirely and coat the cake with more chopped jelly and fruit as directed for the base.

The effect of such dishes as these, where the rest of the sweets are pale in colour, is very good. With reference to the soaked portion of the cake, it may be useful to add that fruit syrups serve as well as jelly for soaking; the

surplus syrup from many kinds of canned or bottled fruit may be instanced. A little gelatine must be added.

Apple and Chocolate Trifle.

"Chocolate with apples," someone will exclaim; "what a strange mixture!" The answer is that the combination is very agreeable, and there are any number of more costly trifles that do not look or taste as nice as this, and it has the added merit of wholesomeness. A large, deep glass dish is wanted. First, a thick layer of apple pulp should be sandwiched between two layers of thinly-sliced bread or cake and put at the bottom. To make the pulp, stew some pared and cored apples in lemon-juice and sugar and beat or sieve it; anyway, see that it is smooth. The flavouring may be spice or vanilla, or lemon-peel can be added. If the cake be soaked in some melted apple jelly, a great improvement is effected. But here is a cheap substitute: Stew the parings with the cores and pips in a little water for some time, then strain off and add sugar and reduce to a thick syrup by quick boiling. Next in order comes a layer of macaroons, softened in the above way.

And now for a custard. First, a pint of milk and cream, mixed in such proportions as can be afforded; very little cream, remember, serves for a plain dish, and imparts the smoothness which no substitute *does* impart. Two ounces of grated chocolate, three or four ounces of sugar, a heaping teaspoonful of ratafia powder (made by sieving some crushed ratafias), the yolks of four and the whites of two eggs, are the remaining materials. The chocolate and some of the hot milk are to be mixed and boiled up; all the rest must be added, and the whole thickened in the orthodox custard fashion over the fire, viz., without boiling. This must go over the cake while hot, and be set by to get *stone cold*. When ice is available, spread a baking-tin or an old tray with a layer crushed small, and set the dish on it. Failing this, use cold water and plenty of salt in a shallow vessel, renewing the mixture as it becomes warm.

For the top garnish, endless ways could be given. One consists of pale pink jelly, maraschino, or vanilla, in blocks or chopped. Either way, the custard should show between; and, by the way, the colour of the custard is preferably deepened by the aid of a few drops of brown colouring. Or use a plain custard, adding a little gelatine to set it, pour it on a flat dish, and cut in pretty shapes with a fancy cutter. Some may be tinted a pale green and a leaf cutter used; this enhances the appearance, and the extra cost and trouble are not worth consideration. The ways of

using the shapes are as varied as leaf decorations for open jam tarts; no two people will place them exactly alike. In addition, a morsel of angelica is quite a boon, especially if only a yellow custard be at hand. And yet another mode. Some of the apples may be stewed in quarters and a border formed of them. They want careful treatment, and firm apples should be selected to avoid breaking. A pile may be put in the centre, and for a plain dish will pass muster.

To cheapen the trifle, so as to make it suitable for a children's party, use a greater amount of bread and dispense with the macaroons, add a layer of plain custard, such as cornflour, before putting on the chocolate, and dust over with "hundreds and thousands," or crushed pink sugar candy. There are few children who dislike apples, and fewer still who would turn away from chocolate.

Cherry Roll with Chocolate Icing.

This is our old friend "Swiss roll" with a new face. The well-known foundation of equal weights of flour, sugar, butter, and eggs cannot well be improved upon. Supposing from four to six ounces of each to be used, incorporate with them about a quarter of a pound of glacé cherries, cut in quarters, and enough pink colouring to give a *decided* pink tinge. If too little be used, the cake will look *muddy* when done, and imperfect mixing will result in *streakiness*. These two hints are worth attention when colouring cakes of any description.

Assuming this to be carefully baked as usual on a flat tin, it must be spread with

all speed and rolled while warm. You cannot roll it if allowed to get cold, for there will be cracks all over it. But what about the "spreading"? A choice is at your service, but something yellow is required. Lemon or orange curd, marmalades of the same fruits, magnum bonum or apricot jam, all good, and not much of either, must be used, or the cake will be not only rich, but sickly. When quite cold, finish off with the icing given for the jellied cake, and served in slices overlapping each other straight down a dish. The combined pink, yellow, and brown blend very harmoniously. It may be served hot, in the pudding course; this is worth remembering by way of a change, and, given a good oven, it does not take long to make either. In this case, the chocolate custard of the apple trifle comes in handy, and it should just coat the roll. Round it, if time permits, a hot custard, coloured pink, and flavoured with cherry syrup, may be poured; or the syrup from bottled cherries, heated, will be found delicious.

The mixture given for the roll is a good one for hosts of small cakes baked in moulds of fancy shapes. They may be decorated on the tops after baking with cherries or other pink fruits, and small fancy chocolates of various kinds; or yellow colouring and fruits of the same hue may be put in the mixture, and the same fruits used with chocolate outside. With the latter, some of the tiny silver sweets sold by confectioners may be used with certain success, for gold and silver with brown, though not very common, is most effective.

DEBORAH PLATTER.



THE ART OF WASHING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "OUR HOME LAUNDRY."

LACE AND MUSLIN.



Not taking up any women's paper of the present time one often sees an advertisement to the following effect: "WANTED.—A good hand at cleaning and mending valuable lace, etc." Now, if every lady would do the washing of her own laces in her own hand-basin, no such advertisements need appear. To wash the most fragile Valenciennes, or Limerick, or Rose Point is quite an easy thing if one knows how to set about it.

The way *not* to do it was exemplified by Mrs. Jenkins, of household fame. Some valuable lace cravats *à la* Louis Quatorze—given me as a wedding present many, many years ago—were handed over to the one servant who *loved* washing.

Mrs. Jenkins had been a soldier's wife. She had watched Dhôbies at work in the Ganges; she had sniffed at French "blanchisseuses" in Jamaica; she had studied the ways of the Heathen Chinese in the Middle Kingdom of the Golden Umbrella—and a Chinaman *can* wash! Yet she took my precious cream-coloured ruffles, kept them *bleaching* for several weeks, and brought them back to me