

was Dora—"I am too tired to talk; let the children go now, and come and sit by me while I go to sleep," and mother gently dismissed us.

I had rather a difficulty with Dot when I got outside, for he suddenly lowered his crutch and sat down on the floor.

"I don't want to go to bed," he announced, decidedly. "I shall sit here all night, in case mother wants me; when it gets dark she may feel lonely."

"But, Dot, mother will be grieved if she comes out and finds you here; she has anxiety enough as it is, and if you make yourself ill, too, you will only add to her trouble. Come, be a good boy, and let me help you to undress." But I might as well have talked to Smudge. Dot had these obstinate fits at times; he was tired and his nerves were shaken by being so many hours in the sick room, and nothing would have induced him to move. I was so tired at last that I sat down on the floor, too, and rested my head against the door, and Dot sat bolt upright like a watchful little dog, and in this ridiculous position we were discovered by Allan. I had not heard of his arrival, and when he came towards us, springing lightly up two stairs at a time, I could not help uttering a suppressed exclamation of delight.

He stopped at once and looked at us in astonishment. "Dot and Esther! in the name of all that is mysterious; huddled up like two Chinese gods on the matting. Why, I took Esther for a heap of clothes in the twilight." Of course I told him how it happened. Dot was naughty and would not move, and I was keeping him company. Allan hardly heard me out before he had shouldered Dot, crutch and all, and was walking off with him down the passage. "Wait for me a few minutes, Esther," he whispered; and I betook myself to the window-seat and looked over the dusky garden, where the tall white lilies looked like ghostly flowers in the gloom.

It was a long time before Allan rejoined me. "That is a curious little body," he said, half laughing, as he sat down beside me. "I had quite a piece of work with him for carrying him off in that fashion; he said I was a savage, a great uncivilised man, to take such a mean advantage of him; 'if I were big I would fight you,' he said, doubling his fists; he looked such a miserable little atom of a chap as he said it."

"Was he really angry?" I asked, for Dot was so seldom out of temper.

"Angry, I believe you. He was in a towering rage; but he is all right now, so you need not go to him. I stroked him down, and praised him for his good intentions, and then I told him I was a doctor now, and no one contradicted my orders, and that he must be a good boy and let me help him to bed. Poor little fellow! he sobbed all the time he was undressing, he is so fond of father. I am afraid it will go badly with him if things turn out as I fear they will," and Allan's voice was very grave.

We had a long talk after that, until Uncle Geoffrey came upstairs and dislodged us, by carrying Allan off. It was such a comfort to have him all to myself,

we had been so much separated of late years.

Allan was five years older than I; he was only a year younger than Fred, but the difference between them was very great. Allan looked the elder of the two; he was not so tall as Fred, but he was strongly built and sturdy; he was dark complexioned, and his features were almost as irregular as mine; but in a man that did not so much matter, and very few people called Allan plain.

Allan had always been my special brother—most sisters know what I mean by that term. Allan was undemonstrative; he seldom petted or made much of me, but a word from him was worth a hundred from Fred; and there was a quiet unspoken sympathy between us that was sufficiently palpable. If Allan wanted his gloves mended he always came to me and not to Carrie. I was his chief correspondent, and he made me the confidante of his professional hopes and fears. In return, he good humouredly interested himself in my studies, directed my reading, and considered himself at liberty to find fault with everything that did not please him. He was a little peremptory sometimes, but I did not mind that half so much as Fred's sarcasms, and he never distressed me as Fred did, by laughing at my large hands, or wondering why I was not so natty in my dress as Carrie.

(To be continued.)

APPLES, AND WHAT TO DO WITH THEM.

It is expected that apples will be very plentiful this year, plentiful and consequently cheap. Let us hope that the expectation will be realised. Apples are delicious and wholesome; they can be prepared in a hundred different ways; they keep well, and last long; they are universally popular, and they possess many most excellent qualities. We are speaking within the mark when we say that the apple is the most useful fruit we possess.

I have heard it said that there are 1,500 varieties of named apples. I cannot answer for the truth of this statement, but I willingly acknowledge that apples are of all sorts and sizes, tastes and flavours. There are apples sweet and apples sour, apples juicy and apples dry, apples soft and apples hard, apples mellow and apples rough, apples large and apples diminutive. The true connoisseur in apples generally judges of an apple by its smell; if this is good, appearance is for him a comparatively minor consideration.

For a long time apples have been largely imported from America, and now they are sent to us from New Zealand and Australia. I had some apples given to me a few months ago which came from Sydney, and they were excellent both in quality and flavour. It is said that this year we shall not need to have apples from anywhere; we shall have quite enough at home. This is good news, yet I confess that, when the time comes for them, I hope we shall have Newtown pippins. In my opinion no apples are to be compared with Newtown pippins. For years English gardeners have been trying to reproduce this apple, and they have grown something very nearly equal to it, but possessing not quite the same delicious flavour. The worst of Newtown pippins is that they are not good keeping apples, and on this account fruit dealers are

chary of purchasing them, because unless sold off quickly there is sure to be loss connected with them. People who are very fond of apples would find it a good plan to buy one or more barrels of Newtown pippins, according to their requirements, as soon as they come into the market, and then use them straight away. Apples are very much cheaper bought in quantities thus, and, if care be taken of them, they will prove very serviceable. Where there is room for storage, this plan is to be recommended also for English apples, care being taken always to buy sound fruit of a kind which keeps well. For the use of my own family I have bought Blenheim oranges and Flanders pippins, and these two varieties have with me kept all through the winter, and been good to the last.

Apples which are to be stored for winter use should be picked from the tree carefully, they should not be thrown about, and they should be handled as little as possible. Those which are sent from a distance should be unpacked as soon as may be, and they should be wiped carefully with a soft cloth, because moisture will cause them to decay sooner than anything. They should be examined carefully before being put away, and those which show signs of decay should be put aside for immediate use. This process of looking over the fruit should be repeated regularly at intervals, say of a week, for decomposition quickly communicates itself from one apple to another. A little straw should then be spread on the floor or shelf, and the apples should be put in rows side by side, and they should not be allowed to touch. The room or outhouse in which the fruit is kept should be cool, dry, and airy.

Delicious as apples undoubtedly are, they are not so delicious that they cannot be improved by additional flavour. Old-fashioned cooks are accustomed to put one or two cloves with apples, in cooking them. I have sometimes had apple pie, in which the taste and the aroma of the cloves overpowered that of the apples. Grated lemon rind is also employed for the same purpose, as are also cinnamon, grated nutmeg, and in all cases sugar, and, whenever it can be obtained, cream.

Individual taste must, of course, determine what flavour is to be used; therefore, in giving recipes later, I will not repeat this information in each case. May I, however, suggest to those who have not tried the combination, that apricots or quinces, and apples, should be put together. A great epicure once said that quinces, though of little value in themselves, improved an apple pie beyond the power of words to describe. One quince is sufficient for a moderate-sized apple pie.

Dried apples or chips are imported in large quantities from America, and, though there is a great difference in their quality, good dried apples are both excellent and economical. They need to be soaked all night in cold water, and then stewed gently in the same water till soft, before being used. Sugar should not be put with them until they have been stewed for some time. As it is difficult to judge the quality of dried apples by their appearances, intending purchasers should be careful to procure them of a respectable dealer. Inferior dried apples are a great delusion.

I will now give a few recipes for the preparation of apples, and I shall make no mention of apple pie, the ordinary boiled apple pudding, apple dumpling, apple tart, apple sauce, apple fool, or baked apples, because I should think that by this time the girls of our cookery class know as much about these preparations as I do.

Compôte of Apples.—Cut four good sized apples into quarters, then peel them, and throw them at once into water with lemon juice. (It saves time to quarter apples before

peeling them, and it preserves their colour to throw them into water to which lemon juice has been added.) Make a little very thin syrup with loaf sugar and water. Boil this till clear, put in the apple quarters, and simmer them very gently till they are soft, without breaking. Take them up and put them aside to cool. Add more sugar to the syrup, and boil it again till it is very thick. Arrange the apples in a circle, colour the syrup either with a few drops of saffron water or a little cochineal or red jelly, and serve cold. A pennyworth of saffron may be bought of the chemist, and a portion of this should be soaked in a tablespoonful of boiling water, until the liquid is a deep orange colour. A very pretty compôte may be made by peeling, coring, and stewing the apples whole, and putting a little red jam in the centre of each when dishing them. This dish may be further ornamented by putting little strips of angelica or of marmalade on the top of each apple.

Apple Fritters.—Make a little frying batter by mixing smoothly four ounces of flour with two dessertspoonfuls of salad oil, and a gill of lukewarm water. This batter may be made thus far before it is wanted. About ten minutes before it is used, stir in lightly the whites of two eggs which have been beaten to a froth. Choose three or more large, firm apples. Peel them and cut them across the core in rounds as thin as a shilling, and stamp out the core. Make some dripping hot in a stewpan. As soon as it is still and a blue smoke begins to rise from it, take up the apple rings one by one by means of a skewer put into the centre hole, dip them into the batter to cover them completely, and drop them into the fat. Three or four fritters, as many as the pan will hold without their touching, may be fried at one time. Have ready a sheet of kitchen paper on a plate. When the fritters are lightly browned on one side, turn them quickly on the other; when this side also is coloured, they are done. Put them on the paper to drain, and keep hot, till all the fritters are cooked. Arrange them in a dish, sift white sugar over them, and serve. Some cooks use apple chips in making apple fritters. When this is done, they must be soaked well and stewed a little before being fried, or they will be hard.

Apple Charlotte.—Take a plain round mould, about five inches deep; butter this inside. Cut some thin, stale bread into strips for the sides, and a round for the bottom of the mould; melt some butter, dip the pieces of bread into this, and line the mould so that there are no vacant places, thus making a bread mould within the other mould. This is most easily made (by people who have not had experience in making a Charlotte Russe) by making the strips of bread overlap each other. Stew some apples to make a pulp, which must be firm and well sweetened, melted with butter, and flavoured with lemon juice. Very little, if any, water must be used; but it is impossible to lay down an exact rule, because the nature of the apple must determine the quantity. Fill the mould with the pulp, lay a piece of buttered bread on the top, put a plate, or cover, with a weight to keep the fruit in its place, and bake in an oven for about three-quarters of an hour, till the bread is deeply browned; turn out carefully, and serve with cream or sifted sugar. A simple variety of this dish, known under the name of Brown Betty, is made by filling a buttered dish with alternate layers of apples and bread-crumbs, intermixed with butter and sugar, and flavoured with lemon-peel or nutmeg. Bread-crumbs should form the uppermost layer, a little melted butter be poured over all, and the pudding baked till well browned.

Apple Cheesecakes.—Peel some apples and grate them to the core; take equal weights of

grated apple, castor sugar and butter, and flavour with a little grated lemon-rind; melt the butter, add the other ingredients, and mix thoroughly, then add one egg for each quarter pound of pulp; line cheesecake tins in the usual way, half fill them with the mixture, and bake.

Apple Gâteau.—Soak half an ounce of gelatine in water, to cover it; peel, core, and slice two pounds of good baking apples; put them into a stewpan, with water to cover them, and let them simmer till quite soft; drain off the water and beat the apples till smooth, or press them through a sieve, and add a little grated lemon-rind and sugar to that; put the water which was drained off into a saucepan, and add the gelatine. When this is dissolved, stir in the apple, first allowing it to cool, mix all thoroughly; pour into a damp mould, turn out when cold, and serve with cream and sugar. If liked, one or two tablespoonfuls of cream can be put with the apple pulp, which may then have a pint of good custard poured round it.

Apple Custard Tartlet.—Peel, core, and quarter some good baking apples to fill a quart basin, and stew them with very little water till quite soft, being careful not to let them burn. Add a flavouring of lemon or cinnamon, sugar to taste, a good slice of fresh butter, and an ounce of flour. Beat the flour till smooth, and stir the mixture over the fire for a few minutes to cook it. When the apple pulp is cool add, one at a time, two well-beaten eggs. Line large tartlet tins with pastry, spread the apple custard on them, garnish with pastry leaves or twists, and bake in a good oven. Serve hot or cold.

Apple Custard.—Stew some apples to a firm pulp, as in the last recipe; sweeten, and flavour. Put the fruit into a glass dish; when quite cold pour some thick custard over, garnish with angelica or strips of lemon-rind, and serve with sponge fingers. If liked, the apple pulp can be put into a pie-dish, custard can be poured over, and then gently baked, or the apple pulp can be laid on sponge biscuits which have been spread with apricot marmalade, and soaked in syrup.

Apples and Tapioca (a simple wholesome dish for the nursery).—Soak overnight two tablespoonfuls of tapioca, then stew it gently in the same water till it is clear. It must not be over thick. Peel, core, and quarter six large apples, and stew them in the oven, or steam them till they are slightly softened. Put the apples in a pie-dish, sprinkle sugar over them, sweeten and flavour the tapioca, pour it over the fruit, and bake gently till tender. If liked, the tapioca can be coloured with cochineal, or sago may be used instead of tapioca.

A refreshing drink for invalids is **Apple Water**, made by pouring a pint of boiling water upon three juicy apples (which have been peeled, cored, and sliced) and a little lemon-rind; then sweetening to taste. When the liquid is cold it may be strained, and is then ready for use.

A peculiar, but by no means disagreeable, pickle or relish to eat with cold meat may be made by mixing some apple grated with its bulk in finely-chopped onion, to which are added a little red chili cut up small, salt, and vinegar to moisten the whole.

PHILLIS BROWNE.



SINGING.

By LADY MACFARREN.

PART I.



o branch of study is more generally aspired to than singing, none is capable of affording so deep and widespread a pleasure, and yet none more often has an unsatisfactory result. Given a good

voice, correct intonation, and fair intelligence, still it is far more rare than it ought to be to hear a simple song interpreted with good taste and feeling.

One of the chief reasons for this general shortcoming is want of sufficient preparation before songs of any kind are attempted, and another is the choice of songs of an emotional or descriptive character, while the singer's experience is yet immature in declamation and management of the voice. As to this last point, it is by no means sufficient to sing a few scale passages and single notes with crescendo and diminuendo on A², as is still so generally done; let the young singer begin by confining herself to an octave or tenth in compass, of notes she can sing without effort. It may be that only a fifth or sixth at first is available, in which case it will be best to gain the mastery of these before attempting to widen her compass. A (as heard in *far*), E (as in *babe*), and I (as in *free*) should be practised equally, being the most important vowels, on long sustained notes, without any modification of intensity, "straight lines" of sound, firm, but without effort. If the tones are tremulous, it is better to precede the vowels with P or T. Great care is necessary that the position of the mouth and tongue is the same at the end as at the commencement of the note. This exercise may be practised several times a day for some weeks, and should unfold to the pupil the sounding board or vibrating point of each note, which enables her to sustain the notes with very little breath. From one note she will proceed to several, limiting herself to short scales of two or more notes, and passages, such as are found in all good instruction books, for a long time, and remembering that the scale of an octave consists of two equal parts, viz., of two scales of a fourth, and that unless she can sing the half perfectly she will miserably fail in the whole.

Side by side with the foregoing exercise should be practised those consonants that have duration, and especially those having musical sound—L, M, and N; also the young singer must train herself to make the required distinction between P and B, F and V, T and D, K and G, S and Z. When the consonants and vowels have been well understood and exercised, it will be time to consider the diphthongs, so difficult in Northern languages. Here we have to face the unparalleled carelessness of even educated English people in pronouncing their language; but the rule that governs all other European tongues cannot be infringed in English without manifest ill effect, that only one vowel should be sustained for one syllable, such vowel having sometimes an initial and sometimes a closing sound (as in *youth* or in *hear*, pronounced *he-er*), but that all such pronunciations as *chi-eeld*, *aeengel*, *maed*, *so-oo*, *te-ahr*, are intolerable. This is a most important feature of a young singer's practice, since a clear perception of the above, or the contrary, must stamp her pronunciation either with distinction or with vulgarity.

* The vowels referred to throughout these remarks are the Italian or German.

(To be continued.)