

fall in with your view; for a very wide latitude is given, and while we have rubbings from the old stones in Fowlis churchyard, and the bronze weapons and ancient coins that have been turned up by neighbourly ploughs, we also welcome the outbringing of any foreign curiosities which may be hidden away in the houses round. Fowlis was telling me that the stall boasts of maté cups from South America, bark embroidery from North America, Kandyan whips, Lapp snow-shoes, and peasant wood carving from the Black Forest and from Norway."

"Oh, I am glad to hear that!" cried Margaret. "We have some Norwegian carving at Balaclava. I can't think why the art need have died out among us. It would be just the thing for the men's long, idle evenings. But they seem to despise it now, for they make nothing of the sort except a few wooden shoes. I shall tell them that people in the south regard it with so much interest that they bring it out at shows. Who knows but I may start Shetland carving as a companion to Shetland knitting!"

"You dear, enthusiastic child!" said Mrs. Esselton. "It is so delightful to hear you."

But at that moment, just as they paused midway between the two stalls of the visitors' tent, the marquis came up behind them.

"I hope you have not forgotten my petition, Miss Stewart," he said. "Are you in search of May Castle's performances?"

"I never thought of them as being here!" answered Margaret, with frank surprise. "I thought you meant to show them to me afterwards."

"She could not see any possible connection between pictures and pigs," observed Mrs. Esselton. "I told you, Fowlis, that you should hardly bring in high art as a sort of relish to your food for cattle." She loved to tease her cousin.

"But the pictures are among the works of art and industry, of course," rejoined the marquis, who was inclined to be literal. "I told Miss Castle she must put them in. Here they are. I don't think you can see them well in their present position. Let me take them down and hold them in a good light for you."

There were plenty of observant eyes on the little group. Why should the marquis take so much notice of anything done by May Castle, of all people in the world? But they comforted themselves—those village maids and matrons—that he was not thinking at all of the pictures; anything which had been at hand would have met with the same attention; he was only trying to make himself agreeable to the young lady who was likely to be his marchioness. And wasn't she nice-looking and gracious in her manners! She stood outside their ambitions and above their envy, and so they could afford to acknowledge her good qualities, without abatement.

She and the marquis were too absorbed to notice the expression of the faces round them, but Mrs. Esselton took it in

with one of her swift, sweeping glances; then, with her eyes steadily fixed on the sketches, which she knew well enough already, she said out of the fullness of her chivalric, perhaps Quixotic, heart—

"There is something about May Castle herself which gives me more interest in her than I should have if she was only the greatest painter living."

And the moment the words were out her cynical brain decided—

"And now I've only made them all hate her more than ever; and oh, won't they snub her for this!"

(To be continued.)

HIGH TEA.

FOR people who are not in the habit of giving dinner-parties, who do not keep an unlimited number of servants, and who, lacking confidence in those they do employ, prefer when they are going to have company to see the table laid and the dishes neatly arranged upon it before they prepare to receive their friends—high tea is a capital institution. It is productive of peace of mind for the entertainers, and satisfaction for the entertained. We never feel so sure that things are right and will turn out rightly as when we have looked after them ourselves; and in high tea we can look after every detail, and so need be under no apprehension that at the last moment some important service will be left undone. Dinner-parties are all very well for people who have plenty of trained help and plenty of money at their disposal, but the majority of housekeepers cannot command these, and then dinner-parties are an effort, and it is very questionable whether in them "the game is worth the candle," to use a homely phrase. But high tea is informal and easily managed, and it may be sumptuous or inexpensive to suit individual ideas. It is served at an hour when people who dine late are wanting dinner, and when those who have been busy all day are feeling faint and tired and need a hearty meal to put them in good humour with themselves and the world; and it supplies all that is required for everybody. Moreover, it does away with the necessity for supper; and I think we may say that suppers are nearly gone out. We have realised how unwholesome and inconvenient they are, giving bad dreams and unsettled rest to those who partake of them, and keeping those who have to prepare them hard at work till the last thing before going to bed. Late dinner and high tea render supper a superfluous, and they are all the more to be recommended because they do so.

I do not know in which county in England high tea may be said to have originated. It is always said that to present tea and coffee with more substantial viands is a north-country custom. I should have said it was a Devonshire custom. At any rate both north-country housekeepers and Devonshire housekeepers are celebrated for the domestic virtues, and if a thing is good in itself we need not trouble about where it comes from.

It is always painful to me to differ from authorities, yet in this matter of the provision suitable for high tea my experience and my proclivities compel me to do so, for authorities unite in telling us that on these occasions joints of meat should be avoided. In my time I have been—I think I am speaking within the limit when I say—to scores of entertainments where high tea was provided, and again and again I have seen cold joints placed on the table. Of course they were made to look pretty by being tastefully garnished, for

it is indispensable that at high tea the table should be pretty with simple ornamentations, flowers, fruit, elegant china, and glass, but still the joints were there and they usually proved acceptable.

The fact is, that in this particular, as in many others, we make a mistake if we lay down a hard and fast line, and say, "We are going to have high tea; therefore we must have only small delicacies," risoles, croquettes, cutlets, kidneys, patties, or similar dishes. Let us be guided by circumstances. If we have to arrange for a meal for those who in the ordinary way would have had dinner, let us provide something substantial; but if we want only light and elegant refreshment, let us choose small dishes. If it is necessary that we should give an explanation of our conduct, let us announce that we are independent, or explain that when we provide substantial viands we were thinking of high tea as Devonshire people understand it; when we have small viands we were adopting north-country ways.

Whether joints are provided or not, it is usual at high tea for everything to be put on the table at once. Meat, sweets, fruit, whatever there is, are on the spot, and it is not unusual for wine to be at hand for gentlemen who are not partial to the more homely beverage. The tea and coffee are at one end of the table, and the hostess takes charge of them, for though the tea is sometimes made at the side and handed round, this plan is an innovation. It is part of the idea of high tea that it should be the old-fashioned tea-table and something more. Whichever method is adopted, however, a waitress should be at hand to pass round the cups and saucers, to remove plates which are done with and supply fresh ones, and to perform those innumerable duties of which a skilled waitress is so quick to understand the necessity.

There must be an abundance of plates, knives, forks, and spoons at high tea, but the relays of plates need not be all put upon the table in the first instance; indeed, it is undesirable that they should be so, for a high tea table should not be overcrowded. There must be opportunity for homely, friendly intercourse and general conversation, and, on this account the floral decorations should neither be too numerous nor too high, or they may prevent friends at opposite sides of the table from seeing each other. Small table appliances, too, such as salt, sugar, mustard, water carafes, &c., should be put in different parts of the table, so that the guests may be able to obtain at once anything which they need without either being waited upon formally or unduly trespassing on the kindness of their neighbours. And though, as I have already said, the various dishes may all be placed on the table at one time, yet for tidiness' sake the meats may be taken off as soon as done with, so that the sweets and fruits can be drawn forward and receive due attention.

Pressed beef, boiled chicken cut into neat joints and covered with white sauce, roast leg of lamb, meat pies, game pies, lobster salad, salmon mayonnaise, devilled eggs, dressed crab, and similar dishes are all suitable for the principal meat dishes provided for high tea. If anything hot is also to be served, it should be brought in and put before the host and disposed of first, and when it is done with the cold dishes can take its place. The sweets, too, should be good of their kind, but not numerous. After fish and meat, one or two choice sweets are sufficient, and too many are suggestive of vulgarity. A little fruit with cream, if it is to be had, constitutes a very agreeable conclusion to a meal of this sort, and it is always acceptable.

Among the hot dishes which are specially suitable for the commencement of high tea I

may mention three, viz., sole à la Horly, oyster kromeskijs, and Wyndham cutlets. They are all remarkable in one way, they do not cost much money, and by the expenditure of a little trouble they look a good deal, elegant and *recherché*, that is. The only disadvantage connected with the choice of these hot preparations is that they must be fried last thing, and, therefore, when they are decided upon one has to trust something to those outside. Now when the helper in the kitchen is not very skilled, disappointing failure frequently arises as the result of the necessity. The girls of our cookery class may be very clever, but under present conditions they cannot be in two places at one time, and it is impossible to be talking politely to the guests in the dining-room and frying kromeskijs in the kitchen at the same moment. However, I will give the recipes, and girls must determine for themselves whether they are to be employed.

Sole à la Horly.—The reason why this dish is inexpensive is that one sole cooked in this way "goes" as far as two of an equal size fried in the usual way. Fillet the sole (I have already, in a previous article, "How to Cook Fish," published in the "Girls' Own Cookery Book," described this process elaborately) and divide the fillets into slices about the size of a finger. Lay these for a couple of hours in a marinade, or savoury pickle, made of the juice of a large fresh lemon mixed with a bunch of parsley, a slice of onion, and a little pepper and salt. Turn them once or twice, then dry them by laying them between the folds of a cloth. Make a little frying batter when the soles are filleted. I daresay it will be remembered that frying batter is made with four ounces of flour and a pinch of salt, mixed smoothly with a gill of lukewarm water, two tablespoonfuls of oil, and, just before the batter is to be used, the whites of two eggs beaten to a firm froth. When the sole is to be fried, put on the fire a stewpan half-filled with frying fat. Let this get hot—so hot that it is still and a blue vapour rises from it. Take the pieces of sole one at a time, dip them in the batter, take them up with a tablespoon, and turn them, with the batter held in the spoon with them, into the fat. In less than a minute the batter will be crisp, and will form a kind of oval ball round the fish, which will also be sufficiently cooked inside. The sole may then be taken out and laid on a dish covered with kitchen paper to free it from grease, and the rest of the sole may be treated in the same way. Any little pieces of batter which may float away from the fish and go into the fat should be removed, or they will discolour the fat, which must be carefully strained when done with. Pile the pieces of sole on a dish covered with a napkin, and garnish with fried parsley; they will constitute a very pretty-looking, deliciously tasting dish.

Oyster Kromeskijs.—For these frying batter is wanted, as in the last recipe, and the kromeskijs are fried in fat just as the sole was fried, and piled on a dish in the same way. A dozen oysters will make a moderate sized dish of kromeskijs. Firm-fleshed oysters should be chosen for this purpose. Those known as Anglo-Dutch are very excellent, but American oysters are too soft. Take a dozen oysters, blanch and beard them, and cut them into pieces about half an inch square. Strain the liquor. Make a panade by melting an ounce of butter, mixing smoothly with it over the fire an ounce of flour, adding three-quarters of a gill of oyster liquor, and half a gill of cream. If the measure of oyster liquor is not sufficient it must be made up with water. Add salt and cayenne, and then (off the fire) the yolks of two eggs. When these are incorporated let the sauce thicken over the fire for a minute, but do not allow it

to boil. Mix in the oysters, once more off the fire, and turn the preparation upon a plate to get cold. Buy a pig's caul and let it soak in cold water till white. Dry it, form the oyster mixture into the shape of corks, and wrap each one in a piece of caul. When ready to fry dip in batter and proceed as for sole à la Horly.

Bacon is usually used instead of caul for this dish, but the disadvantage connected with its employment is that it does not cook quickly enough, and may form a fatty uncooked morsel when eaten. If caul cannot be obtained, bacon must be used, but it should be boiled separately and allowed to go quite cold, and it must be cut as thin as is possible. The latest authorities in culinary matters, however, now recommend the use of caul instead of bacon.

Wyndham Cutlets.—Take from two to three pounds of the best end of a neck of mutton, and do not let the butcher divide the cutlets, but chop off the chine bone. Lay the meat in a deep baking tin, put with it a carrot, a turnip, an onion, a piece of celery, all cut up, and a little pepper and salt. Pour half a pint of second stock over the meat, fasten a piece of greased paper over it, and bake for about three quarters of an hour, basting it frequently over the paper. It should not be too much cooked. Let it go quite cold, divide it into small cutlets, and leave half an inch of the bone bare at the top of each. It is a convenience to bake the meat the day before it is wanted in order that it may have time to go cold and stiff. It should on no account be overcooked, and should not be cut up beforehand. Boil a pound and a half of potatoes, dry them well, and rub them through a sieve. Beat them well with half an ounce of butter and the yolks of three eggs. Flour the hands and take a small portion of the potato and press it till very thin. Wrap each cutlet in the flattened potato, leaving out the end of the bone. Have ready a stewpan half full of hot frying fat, drop the cutlets in this, and when they are brown they are ready. Arrange them in a circle on a dish, put in the centre a macédoine or some tinned green peas which have been made hot, and serve. If it is not convenient to fry the cutlets in hot fat they may be made hot and brown in a quick oven, being first brushed over with milk. They should be placed in a half upright position, each one partly overlapping the next, and little paper frills should be put round the bones. This is a pretty and appetising dish, and it is evident that if liked cold dressed meat and cold potatoes which have been rubbed through a sieve may be used for it. Cold joints which are prepared for occasions of this sort should be very prettily garnished. The pressed beef may be taken either from the brisket or the thick flank of beef. A good square piece is excellent for the purpose, and it is best to be rubbed all over every day for a week or ten days with plenty of common salt, to each pound of which half an ounce of saltpetre and three ounces of moist sugar have been added. If liked, half an ounce of cloves, and the same of mace and peppercorns can be added, but then the beef becomes spiced beef, and for high tea it is more generally preferred unspiced. The beef must be carefully boiled. It should be laid in lukewarm water, brought slowly to the boil, skimmed, then drawn back and simmered gently until the bones can be drawn out easily. It should then be taken up, laid between two dishes with a weight on the top, and left till cold.

I have already, when speaking of homemade glaze, described how meat should be glazed. This meat may be glazed, or more pretty still, it may, after pressing, be cut to a neat shape and put into a pan about its own size, and clear aspic jelly may be poured over

it. When taken out it will be found that the meat is encased in jelly. In the same way, when cutlets are to be served cold, they are put into a shallow pan, jelly is poured round and under them, and when it is stiff they are cut out so that they have a coating of jelly all over them. In any case the beef must be garnished with light and dark leaves, beet-root, horseradish, aspic jelly, or whatever else is suitable and obtainable, the object being to make the meat look as pretty as may be.

We all like to know of new and pretty sweets, and I will, therefore, before concluding, give recipes for two sweets, which are, in my opinion, most delicious, and certainly not old, and which would certainly be appreciated at high tea. The first is called orange soufflé pudding, and the second pineapple cream.

Orange Soufflé Pudding.—Soak half-ounce of gelatine in water. Squeeze out the juice of six oranges, mix with it the yolks of four eggs, and add sugar to sweeten it agreeably. The quantity of sugar will vary with the acidity of the fruit. Put the mixture into the jug and set it in a saucepan of boiling water, and keep the water boiling round it till it thickens, stirring it all the time. As soon as the custard coats the spoon it is ready to be taken off. If preferred the custard may be put at once into a stewpan, not into a jug, but the latter method, though longer, is safer. Custard made thus of juice and eggs curdles very quickly, and needs, therefore, to be carefully boiled. When done, strain the custard through muslin. Cooks who desire to be expeditious often omit this very necessary operation, thinking that the custard will be smooth enough without it; but this is a mistake, for there is always a quantity of yellow curd-like substance in custard which is better to be removed. Dissolve the gelatine separately, and when both gelatine and custard are cool, put them together and mix them well. Beat the whites of the eggs till quite stiff, and stir these in last of all. Put a thin layer of clear jelly at the bottom of a mould, let it set lightly, then sprinkle upon it in alternation small quantities of desiccated cocoanut (to be bought in packets of any grocer), and dried cherries finely chopped. Pour a little jelly over to cover the ornamentation; let this also set lightly, then add the preparation of orange. Turn upon a glass dish when stiff. It will be remembered that jellies and creams are ready for moulding when they are just beginning to set, so that a spoonful taken up and emptied upon the mass slightly retains its form.

Pineapple Cream.—Soak an ounce of gelatine in a little cold water. Take a tin of preserved pineapple, strain off the syrup, put it into a stewpan with a cupful of sugar, half a pint of water, and the pine; simmer gently for half an hour or so until the fruit is soft, then chop it into pieces about the eighth of an inch square. (If Singapore pineapple or pineapple preserved whole is used, the brown specks must be cut out and the fruit cut into slices before it is used. For this purpose the pineapple preserved in slices is perhaps to be preferred.) Dissolve the gelatine separately, and when cool mix it with the fruit pulp and syrup. Have ready half a pint of double cream which has been whisked till thick, and the whites of two eggs also beaten to a stiff froth. Mix both thoroughly with the pineapple, and when cool enough mould in the usual way. As with all creams, the appearance of this sweet will be improved if a little jelly and ornamentation be introduced into the bottom of a mould.

