

ENTRÉES.

By PHILLIS BROWNE.

I ONCE heard of a cook who was exceedingly great in entrées. She was not a particularly clever cook in other ways—she very often failed in making simple things, while her mistress was a very homely, quiet body, who, if she invited a friend to dine with her, was perfectly content if she had a plain joint and a good pudding, with a little ripe cheese to finish dinner. Yet, whenever the announcement was made that a stranger was expected, the maid invariably made the inquiry—"What entrées would you wish, madam?" The poor mistress was so thoroughly subdued by this, that she was really unhappy every time she had to give orders for an additional knife and fork to be laid. At length she confided her difficulties to a friend, who advised her the next time cook put the dreaded question to reply—"I wish chicken croquettes and cutlets à la Talleyrand." This was done, and it was now the cook's turn to be dismayed. She was obliged to confess that she could not make either of the entrées mentioned; and, indeed, that with entrées in general she was quite unfamiliar. The humiliation of the confession reduced her to a proper state of mind, and her mistress was never again called upon to answer unnecessary questions.

This cook thought an entrée was something very grand, and that her pretended skill in making them proved her to be a good cook. She was, however, thus far mistaken, because an entrée need not be grand at all; it may be very simple, although if it is to be worth anything, it must be well dished and made to look very attractive and pretty. M. Soyer, a very famous cook, said that in common terms entrées were "made dishes," and this expression helps us to understand their nature though not their position. In a regular orthodox dinner these made dishes are brought in after the fish and before the joint. They are handed round to the guests and are understood to consist of some little tasty delicacy which shall whet the appetite without satisfying it. They may be made of all sorts of things—game, fish, flesh, or fowl, and pastry, but they must be prepared in a fancy way, and they must be small; a huge entrée would be an anomaly. Usually one entrée is supposed to be enough for six persons, and at formal dinners two entrées are always provided, one of which should be brown and the other white. Where there are ten or twelve people there should be duplicates of each entrée, and for dinners of ceremony four entrées, two brown and two white, will be necessary.

Seeing, therefore, the important position which entrées hold in the order of dinner, we cannot wonder that our friend the cook thought a good deal of them. Yet I daresay that there are a good many sensible people who would pronounce entrées both extravagant and unnecessary. "What!" they would say, "when you have had soup and fish, and are going to have a joint, game, sweets, and dessert, can you not do without those little tasty morsels, which are troublesome to prepare, and which are so absolutely superfluous?" It cannot be denied that when trouble and expense have to be considered, and where people do not care to sit a long time at dinner, but prefer to get it over and done with, the entrées are the dishes which can be most easily dispensed with. In these luxurious days, however, a dinner is quite as much an opportunity for pleasant chat and social intercourse as it is for satisfying the pangs of hunger. Learned physicians tell us that this is as it should be. After the worry and anxiety of a modern day, an hour or two in the evening given, not to gormandising, of course, but to dallying with food, while enjoying the

society of one's friends, make a very pleasant change in life, and occasional changes benefit both mind and body. For this kind of thing entrées are very useful, and therefore it would be well if the girls of our class knew how to make one or two. Where formal, lengthy dinners are not approved, entrées might now and then take the place of the ordinary joints, or be served at luncheon; and used in this way they would furnish variety and be an economy into the bargain. I have no doubt, therefore, that girls will find a short lesson upon entrées very acceptable.

It will be understood that although entrées are somewhat troublesome to prepare, they need not be expensive, because the remains of an ordinary meat dinner can be converted into an inviting entrée. Of this inexpensive nature are croquettes, rissoles, and kromeskies, all very favourite entrées. The foundation of these three preparations is really the same; it is meat—generally cooked meat—finely minced and pleasantly seasoned, and covered with an outer case before being cooked a second time. I fancy that a little confusion exists as to what it is which constitutes the difference between the three. Even in cookery books they are often referred to as if the terms were interchangeable. In this matter I take as my authority M. Kettner, a celebrated *chef*, for whose opinion on these questions I entertain a great respect. M. Kettner says that when a preparation of mince before being fried is dipped in egg and rolled in breadcrumbs it is a croquette; when it is wrapped in thin paste it is a rissole; and when it is wrapped in a thin sheet of bacon fat or pig's caul, then dipped in batter, it is a kromeski. In every instance the initial steps are alike; it is the finishing process which varies.

The great objection which ordinary individuals entertain to preparations of this description is that the meat is dry. This is certainly a fault, and it ought not to be the case. The covering on the outside should be dry and crisp, but the inside should be moist and savoury when hot, though firm and stiff when cold, otherwise the mixture cannot be rolled into balls, nor will these balls retain their shape. To secure this object, therefore, the mince should be mixed either with a thick white sauce called panade, or with a little strong gravy which will jelly when cold. When hot, the gravy or sauce will dissolve and flow; when cold, it will be firm, which is exactly what we want. For the sake of illustration I will now give recipes for croquettes and rissoles of chicken. Girls will, however, understand that whatever sort of meat is used the method of making is the same; the seasoning only must be varied.

Chicken Croquettes.—Cut the meat off some cold dressed chicken and put with it a third of its bulk in lean ham. Mince the meat finely, and if possible send it through a sausage machine, and season it pleasantly with pepper, salt, and cayenne. We will suppose there is half a pound of meat. When quite fine, melt an ounce of butter in a small stewpan, mix an ounce of flour smoothly with it, and add a gill of stock. Cook the mixture thoroughly, stirring it briskly all the time, until it leaves the sides of the saucepan in one mass with the spoon. Unless this part of the business is thoroughly done, the croquettes will not be firm enough to keep in shape when cold. Lift the sauce off the fire, add two tablespoonfuls of cream, the minced meat, and a squeeze of lemon juice, and mix all thoroughly; then spread the mixture on a plate and put it in a cool place for two or three hours to get cold and firm. Have ready some breadcrumbs which have been made fine and even by being passed through a wire sieve. Divide the croquette mixture into parts about the size of a large walnut, roll these to the shape of balls or corks, brush them over with egg, roll them in bread-

crumbs, and place a single layer of them in the frying basket until wanted. It will not spoil them, but rather improve them, if they be made some time before they are wanted. When ready to fry them, take a saucepan half full of fat, make it hot (this, it will be remembered, means put it over the fire till it is still and a blue smoke rises from it), then put the basket into it and move the croquettes about till they are lightly browned, when they will be done. Lay them on kitchen paper and then dish them prettily in a circle, putting fried parsley in the middle by way of garnish. If liked, the balls can be floured instead of being egged and breaded.

These are croquettes. With rissoles the mince is prepared just in the same way, but instead of being made up into balls small portions are put securely into pastry which has been rolled out till very thin, and stamped to a small round shape. The rissoles should be egged and breaded as the croquettes were, or instead of using breadcrumbs they may be rolled in vermicelli which has been crushed to powder. Both should be fried in the frying basket, and will be sufficiently cooked when lightly browned.

With kromeskies the mince is divided into small portions, each of which must be rolled securely in a piece of pig's caul (which has been soaked in water till white, and dried by being pressed in a cloth), dipped in frying batter and dropped into hot fat and fried till the batter is cooked.

The kromeskies should be taken up one at a time in a spoon, dipped into the batter, and put at once with the batter which is in the spoon with them into the hot fat. As soon as the batter is lightly browned, which will be in less than a minute, the kromeskies are done. If pig's caul is not to be had, boiled fat bacon may be used instead, but it must be cut as thin as a wafer, so that it will almost dissolve in frying. Caul is to be preferred to bacon, because it cooks more quickly. Kromeskies, which are, I believe, also called "angels on horseback," are very easily made, and they are not troublesome when once the process is understood. They may be made of the veriest scraps, and will be excellent if only they are pleasantly seasoned and flavoured. Half-a-dozen mushrooms which have been peeled and cut up small are a valuable addition to the mince. When mushrooms are not to be had, tinned champignons may be taken instead. A few tinned oysters also may be put with kromeskies made of cold mutton, and they will help to convert homely materials into an elegant dish.

The frying batter, of which mention has been made, is prepared as follows:—Put a quarter of a pound of flour and a pinch of salt into a bowl, and mix smoothly with a gill of lukewarm water. Add two tablespoonfuls of salad oil, and leave it till wanted. Just before it is to be used, dash lightly in the whites of two eggs which have been beaten to a fine froth. If preferred, three tablespoonfuls of oil may be used instead of two, and then whites of eggs may be omitted. The batter may be made the day before it is wanted, and will be no worse but rather improved by waiting. It will rise in the bowl and seem to ferment, but it will be all right. Some people may think that batter made with three tablespoonfuls of oil is too rich. Then the whites of eggs may be taken.

Both lobster kromeskies and oyster kromeskies are very delicious. In each case the panade must be made as before, with an ounce of butter, an ounce of flour, a gill of water, milk, or oyster broth, and a little cream, lemon juice, salt, and cayenne. It must be *thoroughly* cooked, or the kromeskies will not remain firm. For lobster kromeskies the flesh of a small lobster will have to be cut into small pieces and stirred into the panade, and

a little of the spawn which has been dried in the oven, bruised, mixed with an equal quantity of butter, and passed through a sieve, may be added for the sake of the colour. For oyster kromeskiies the oysters would have to be cut into small pieces before being mixed with the panade. Firm oysters would have to be chosen for this purpose; American oysters are too soft for it.

The *Cutlets à la Talleyrand*, by means of which the lady vanquished her cook, are made as follows:—Take a pound and a half of veal and cut it into neat rounds about two inches in diameter and half-an-inch thick. Cut away all skin from these, flatten them with a cutlet bat, or broad-bladed knife which has been dipped in cold water. Dissolve two ounces of butter in a sauté pan. When it is hot, lay in the cutlets and cook them gently for five minutes, being careful not to let them acquire any colour. Sprinkle over them five mushrooms, two shalots, and a tablespoonful of parsley, all of which have been chopped very small, with a little pepper and salt. Pour on a gill of white sauce, and simmer again very gently for ten minutes. Keep stirring the sauce while on the fire, and when done add, off the fire, two beaten eggs. Return the pan to the fire for a minute to set the eggs, then dish the cutlets in a circle and pour the sauce round them. If there is no white sauce at hand, a superlative white sauce may be made as follows:—Melt two ounces of butter and fry in it two ounces of lean ham. When this is cooked lightly so as not to discolour the butter, mix an ounce and a half of flour smoothly with the butter, add a pint of white stock, and stir the sauce till it boils. Peel six button mushrooms, or if these are not to be had use eight champignons, or tinned mushrooms. Chop these small before using them. Add them and two small carrots also cut small to the sauce, draw the saucepan to the side with the lid half on, and simmer gently for half an hour. Skim away the butter which rises to the surface, and strain the sauce through muslin, or through a tammy cloth. The latter is the most effectual way of straining superior sauces, and it renders them beautifully smooth and velvety. The tammy, which is a sort of loosely woven cloth made for the purpose, should be placed over a basin, and the sauce poured into it. The cloth should then be turned over the sauce, and the two ends taken firmly hold of by different persons, and by means of one twisting one way and the other twisting the other, the sauce should be squeezed through into the basin. When strained, half a gill of cream may be added to it. The veal cutlets must be dished in a circle and the sauce poured over them. Thus prepared they are really delicious.

Cutlets à la Rachel are also most excellent. Prepare some veal cutlets, as in the last recipe, and fry them gently till cooked sufficiently. Cover them with what is called *pâté de foie gras* stuffing, lay a round piece of truffle or mushroom in the centre of each, and wrap each cutlet in pig's caul, which has been soaked in water till white and dried. When the cutlets are wanted, make them hot in the oven, and

serve them round mixed vegetables which have been cut into fancy shapes.

I ought to explain here that this *pâté de foie gras* stuffing is not the real article, which is regarded as a great luxury by epicures, and which is made of the livers of geese which have been tied down to a plank in a hot room, so that they cannot move about, and then overfed until their livers become diseased, and are very large, fat, gross, and much paler than when in a natural condition. These livers are considered a great delicacy, and when mixed with truffles and elaborately seasoned, form the basis of the renowned Strasburg pies, which are so highly esteemed by many, and sold at a high price. Girls need never look for a recipe for making a pie of this sort, or anything of a similar character, from me; for, indeed, I think it is very wicked to be thus cruel to animals. We are obliged to kill animals to obtain food—it is a law of our life; but we ought to have the business done as quickly and painlessly as possible. Perhaps girls feel inclined to say, "But we use so little food of this description, what difference will it make if we abstain?" It will make this difference: that we shall not have it on our consciences that we have done this iniquity. One, before whose teaching we bow in reverence, said long ago, "It must needs be that offences come, but woe to the man through whom they come." If even the smallest actions of our lives are carried out in the spirit of that teaching, there will be no fear that we shall act with cruelty to the meanest thing that breathes.

The *foie gras* stuffing to which I refer is made of ordinary calf's liver. It is excellent, and may be used for a variety of dishes. Take half a pound of calf's liver, a quarter of a pound of bacon, one carrot, one onion, and a bunch of herbs. Cut up the meat, chop the herbs, and fry all together till well cooked. Pound the ingredients in a mortar, pass them through a wire sieve, and the forcemeat is ready.

The great difficulty in writing on a subject like this is to know when to stop; for indeed there are scores of recipes which one might give, all of which are excellent. I must, however, content myself with three more, and then stop. These are *Filets de Bœuf à la Béarnaise*, which means filets of beef with Béarnaise sauce; a vegetable entrée, stuffed tomatoes; and a quickly prepared entrée. I will take the last first.

Oysters and Bacon.—Take as many fresh oysters as may be required, and wrap each one in a slice of thin bacon. Put the small rolls in the oven and bake until the bacon is sufficiently cooked. Have ready a small round of buttered toast for each oyster, arrange in a circle, and serve.

Stuffed Tomatoes, called also Tomatoes à la Provençale.—Choose half-a-dozen smooth, ripe tomatoes of an equal size. Cut a slice off the top, scoop out the inside, and fill it with a nicely-flavoured forcemeat, made as follows: Melt half an ounce of butter in a stew-pan, and mix thoroughly with it a tablespoonful of cooked ham finely chopped, a tablespoonful of chopped mushrooms, a teaspoonful of chopped

parsley, a shalot, a little pepper and salt, and one ounce of parmesan. Put the slice again on the top of the tomato, or, if preferred, sprinkle grated breadcrumbs over it, put the tomatoes in a greased tin, and bake them for twenty minutes or so, till cooked.

Filets de Bœuf.—These filets may be taken from the undercut of the sirloin, and may either be cut into slices the third of an inch thick, freed from skin, and fried in a little hot butter as the veal cutlets were (when they are said to be sautés); or they may be cut an inch thick and broiled in the usual way. The name of this dish (for those who approve of French terms) is determined by the way in which the filets are finished off and served. A little maître d'hôtel butter may be put on each filet, and fried potatoes served in the middle, when the dish becomes *Filets de Bœuf à la Maître d'Hôtel*. Brown sauce should then be served separately, a very small portion being put over the filets before the maître d'hôtel is laid on. Or a little truffle or mushroom may be employed to flavour the sauce, when the dish will be *Filets Sautés aux Truffes*, or aux Champignons. If served on a wall of potatoes, and arranged alternately with tomatoes, round mixed vegetables, they become *Filets à la Pompadour*; if Béarnaise sauce is poured over them they are *Filets de Bœuf à la Béarnaise*. When rich sauce of this description is employed it should be poured into the centre of the filets, and an appropriate garnish, such as scraped horseradish, or potato croquettes, put round.

The *Béarnaise Sauce* is made as follows:—Allow an egg for each person and one ounce of butter for each egg. The yolks only of the eggs will be needed, the whites can be set aside and used for something else. Beat the yolks lightly, put them in a small stew-pan, and stir them till they begin to thicken. Lift the pan off the fire, and put in a third of the butter to be taken. Stir the sauce again over the fire for two minutes, and then introduce, off the fire, another third portion of the butter. Simmer two minutes longer, and repeat the process a third time. Let the sauce cool a minute, add salt and pepper, a little tarragon vinegar to make it taste pleasantly. Last of all, throw in a tablespoonful of chopped tarragon, or, if this is not to be had, of chopped parsley.

Perhaps it will be thought that in giving these recipes I have wandered off into the region of extravagant cookery. I should be very sorry to do this, and I think if girls will calculate expenses they will find the sound is worse than the reality. It is an economy to make two hot dishes of a joint instead of dressing it all at once, and having it left to be used and often wasted, because not used up to the last scrap when cold. And as for this Béarnaise sauce, if we use three eggs, and allow a penny for each egg and a penny for each ounce of butter and a halfpenny for the pepper, salt, and tarragon vinegar (which last-named item is inexpensive, because we made it at home as we ought to have done in the season), the sauce will cost sixpence halfpenny. This is not very outrageous, is it?

AUNT DIANA.

By ROSA NOUCHETTE CAREY, Author of "Nellie's Memories," "Not Like Other Girls," "Esther," etc.

CHAPTER XII.

ROGER'S APPENDIX.

MISS CARRINGTON received a letter from Alison soon after this, the conclusion of which made her smile, but that was not Alison's fault. Roger

had taken possession of the half-finished sheet of note paper, and had filled it after his own fashion, adding a lengthy message from Rudel. Alison protested in vain, the letter must go with Roger's appendix or else a day's post would be lost.

"Dear Aunt Diana," wrote Alison, in her pretty girlish hand, "I had hoped to have commenced a long letter to you last Monday, and now it is Saturday, and yet not a word written. Last week I behaved better, did I not? But you cannot scold me, lest I quote your own