

## DISHERS FOR A CHRISTMAS PARTY.

By PHYLLIS BROWNE.



r this festive season, when so many people are on hospitable deeds intent, it is satisfactory to be able to add to

our list of approved sweet dishes. It is hoped that the following suggestions and recipes will be acceptable.

**Punch Torte.**—Take half or three-quarters of a pound of Savoy finger biscuits—the quantity used must be determined by the size of the dish required. Make a syrup by boiling three or four lumps of sugar in half a teacupful of water, and adding the strained juice of a lemon. The amount of sugar needed will depend upon the acidity of the lemon. The syrup should be pleasantly acid and pleasantly sweet. Dip the finger biscuits into the syrup while it is hot, so that they may quickly soak through, and arrange them at once in a pyramid on the glass dish in which the *torte* is to be sent to table. The higher the pyramid the better, so long as it is not lop-sided. After the biscuits are in position, the syrup which drains from them should be taken up with a teaspoon and poured over the top, so that they may be thoroughly basted. Take the yolks of six fresh eggs, three wineglassfuls of sherry, and three tablespoonfuls of sugar. Put the yolks of eggs into a double pan, or if this is not at hand, into a jar which can be placed in a saucepan with boiling water round it. Pour the sherry over the eggs, and mix them a little, then add the sugar. There will not seem to be very much sauce, but before it is finished it will increase to three or four times its bulk. Put the saucepan on the fire, and whisk the mixture with an egg-whisk while the water boils round it, until it rises in a froth and begins to get thick and smooth. Take it off at once when it reaches this point, and let it go cold. A few minutes before the dish is served, pour the sauce by tablespoonfuls over and around the biscuits. Whisk the whites of the eggs to froth, sweeten them slightly, colour to a light pink with cochineal, and pile upon the preparation as a garnish. If more convenient, the biscuits may be soaked, and the sauce made some hours or even a day before the *torte* is wanted; but the sauce must not be poured over the biscuits until the last thing. Also, if preferred and for the sake of economy, good raisin wine may be used instead of sherry, as the process of boiling somewhat robs the wine of its distinctive flavour. This dish is very simple, very delicious, and not expensive when compared with preparations of a similar character, because no cream enters into its composition. The sauce was invented by Carême, the most celebrated cook of the present century, of whom it was once said that “if one were under the necessity of eating up either an elephant or our grandfather, it would be well that Carême should prepare the sauce.” Some people think that this sauce was one of Carême’s happiest efforts.

**Bavarois.**—(Half a dozen recipes in one.)—Blanch and bruise six bitter almonds, and put them, with the very thin rind of a fresh lemon,

into a pint of milk. Let them infuse for a while until the flavour is well drawn out; then bring the milk to the boil. Sweeten it with five ounces of sugar, and pour it boiling upon the yolks of three eggs. Return the mixture to the jar or double pan, set it on the fire again and stir it till it is thick and smooth. Let it cool, then put with it one ounce of gelatine which has been soaked and dissolved, and half a pint of cream which has been whipped till firm. Put the preparation into a mould which has been rinsed first in hot, and afterwards in cold water: turn out and serve upon a glass dish.

The preparation now produced may be made into half a dozen sweets, according to the way in which it is finished, and flavoured, for the flavour may be varied in many ways. Vanilla and brandy, coffee, tea, fruit syrup, or what not, may be used instead of almonds and lemons; or two ounces of candied cherries and two ounces of candied citron cut small, or three ounces of preserved ginger, and one ounce of pistachio kernels blanched and chopped, can be stirred in when the cream is on the point of setting. Here we have variations of the Bavarois, every one of which is so unlike the other in taste, that no one would think they were made from the same recipe. The garnish also may be varied, because in no instance should the cream be put by itself into a mould; that would be a painful waste of good material. The cream will look very pretty if light coloured jelly, which will occupy space to the depth of about an inch, be allowed to set before the Bavarois (as the preparation of custard and cream is called) is poured in. It will look still prettier if the mould is completely lined with jelly before the Bavarois is placed within it. An easy way of doing this, and one which can be managed without ice, is to place a mould of a rather smaller size inside the mould that is to be used, and to fill the space between the two with liquid jelly. When this is set the smaller mould may be taken out, and the cream, which should be just on the point of setting, put in its stead.

When girls have a party on their minds, and intend to make a number of dishes of the sort described, it is an advantage to be able to calculate exactly how much material will be needed so that there may be no waste. If we get a clear idea of what we are aiming at before we commence proceedings, we shall save both time, labour, and money. Some girls would make each mould separately, but this would be a very wearisome business. Others would follow the recipe exactly, and take the chance of the quantities being right. The consequence would be either that their moulds would not be filled, which would be disappointing, or they would not contain all the cream which was made, which would involve loss. What they have to do, therefore, is to endeavour to make the exact quantity which will fill the moulds they have at command. To do this they must make their calculations from their moulds, which will, of course, vary in size and number in every household.

Collect the moulds that are to be used, therefore, in the first instance, no matter what their number, shape, and size may be. Half fill them with milk, then empty all the milk into one measure and measure it. It is to be used to make the custard, which will be the basis of each Bavarois. Next prepare the moulds, rinse them well first in boiling water, then in cold water, and remember they are to be left wet. Now decorate them in any approved

way. The decoration ought to be done early, because it will need time to set. If coloured jelly is used it should have time to get firm before the cream is added; if any special decoration, such as preserved fruits, sliced pistachios, angelica, or silver or gold leaf is to be set in jelly, it should be placed in position, and then liquid jelly should be put gently over it with a spoon, so as to cover it entirely, and keep it from moving. This is a secret of successful decoration, to cover the garnish lightly with jelly, and to let the garnish become quite firm before the cream is placed upon it.

Measure the milk, and for each pint allow three-quarters of an ounce of gelatine in warm weather, and one ounce of gelatine in cold weather. Allow also for each pint of milk three eggs and half a pint of cream, and a tablespoonful of sugar for each egg. Put the gelatine to soak in good time. When giving recipes we are accustomed to say soak the gelatine for ten minutes; this is quite correct, as ten minutes will do for it; still, an hour is better, because the gelatine dissolves in a minute or two when it is thoroughly well soaked.

One way of saving time and trouble is to let the milk boil before pouring it on the eggs in making the custard. Many girls are afraid to do this. They think that it will make the eggs curdle. But if the milk is sweet and the eggs are good, there will be no fear of curdling, and if the ingredients are not good we should be fortunate if we discovered the fact now, before further mischief is done. The eggs should be lightly beaten and the boiling milk poured upon them, off the fire, and the two should be mixed very thoroughly before anything else is done. Also, after the eggs and milk are mixed, the custard should be thickened over the fire, but it should not on any account be allowed to reach the boiling point. If it did, it would curdle without doubt. To prevent this, it should be put into a double pan, or into a jug placed in a saucepan of boiling water, and stirred without ceasing until it becomes thick and coats the spoon. Then it should be taken off the fire at once, because if left it would become lumpy. Now every one who is accustomed to make custard knows that if milk and eggs are put when cool into a jug, and set in a saucepan of water to be stirred till thick, they are a long time before they become thick and smooth; indeed, they are so long, that oftener than not the individual who has to stand over the saucepan and stir, grows weary of her task, comes to the conclusion that the game is not worth the candle, and after a time in desperation pours the contents of the jug into an ordinary saucepan, sets it on the fire, and gets it burnt or curdled straight away. There is, however, no occasion for all this worry. If the milk is poured boiling over the eggs, and if the mixture is at once put into the double pan with boiling water round it, a few minutes will be sufficient to thicken it; and there will be no fear of spoiling it either, because being surrounded with boiling water it cannot boil, and custard spoils through being boiled. All we need to do is to be careful to keep the water boiling round it, and to keep on stirring it, making the spoon touch the bottom of the pan with every turn of the arm; then the custard will be everything that could be wished with no trouble at all. In making custard, as in many other of the more delicate operations of cooking, girls might avoid many an accident if they would but realise that no food can be brought up to the boiling point in a pan or jar that is surrounded

with boiling water. This fact it is which makes a double saucepan so valuable.

Where a double saucepan is not available, however, and a jug has to be used instead, there is a danger ahead against which we need to be on our guard. It is this: the jug into which the hot custard is put must itself have been heated gradually, or it will be liable to crack and come in two pieces when put into the hot water. An accident of this kind is most annoying. When we have taken pains to make some excellent custard, we do not want to dilute it with a large quantity of hot water. More than once have I known this mischance to occur; and on one occasion the poor girl who had the custard in charge burst into a flood of bitter tears, wept long and loud, and refused to be comforted. One way to prevent the accident is to put the jug or jar which is to contain the custard, to get hot with the water which surrounds it; then it is hot enough to allow of hot custard being poured into it. A better way even than this is to provide ourselves with a porridge pan, or double pan. The inner pan of the utensil being made of white china, is so thoroughly sweet and clean that it is a satisfaction to use it, whilst it soon saves its price in preventing food being spoilt.

The custard being made, it may be left till cool; yet not left entirely, for it must be stirred every now and again to keep it from skimming on the top. The cream is the next consideration. I have before now spoken in detail of whipping cream, therefore the remarks made need not be repeated. It is, however, worth while to mention that when economy is a consideration, or when the richness of a large quantity of cream is considered objectionable, half the measure of cream may be taken, and white of egg used instead of the remainder. As the yolks only of eggs are needed for custard, whites of eggs are sure to be available. Of course, both the whites of eggs and the cream must be whisked till firm.

The order of making up the different creams is the same. The custard should first be flavoured. If brandy is to be introduced,

a tablespoonful of the spirit will be sufficient for a pint of custard. If liqueurs are preferred, a wineglassful may be allowed. The custard must be cool, and the gelatine must be cool before the two are mixed; but neither must be cold, or they will not "come together" properly. The cream and white of egg should be added last of all, and the Bavaiois should not be moulded until it is on the point of setting.

When preserved ginger is to be used as a flavourer, it should be cut into very thin slices and stewed for a few minutes in its own syrup, then allowed to cool before it is stirred into the cool custard. Ginger syrup is usually served with this cream as a sort of sauce.

*Rice Cream* is a very simple preparation, but it is much liked by those who know it. Soak half an ounce of gelatine in cold water to cover it. Put three tablespoonfuls of Carolina rice into a saucepan with a pint of cold water. Let it boil up, then drain away the hot water and wash the rice in cold water. Drain it again, and boil it very gently with a pint of milk, till the milk is absorbed. Sweeten it pleasantly, and flavour it as approved. Boil a quarter of a pint of milk, pour it upon the beaten yolk of one egg, and stir the custard over the fire in the usual way till it thickens. Add this with the gelatine dissolved, to the rice, and last of all add one gill of whipped cream. Set a gallipot with a weight in it in the centre of a plain round mould, and arrange the rice around. Turn it out when cold, and fill the space occupied by the gallipot either with cream, which has been whisked till firm and coloured pink, or with stewed fruit of some kind.

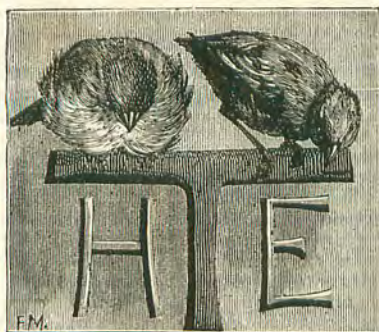
*Apple Cream*.—One or two very excellent though simple sweet dishes may be made with apples, and these are generally liked because they are refreshing to the palate. It is important, however, that the apples chosen should be of a fine flavour. Some people have an idea that baking-apples are simply apples not good enough for dessert apples. This is

a mistake. The fact is that it is much easier to choose a good dessert apple than it is to choose a good baking apple, and when there is any doubt about the quality of those which are offered to us, it is much the best to take a known "dessert" variety, such as Blenheim, Flanders, or Ribston pippins, rather than to take apples simply because they will fall. To make the cream, pare and core the apples, and cut them into quarters, then weigh them. Soak half an ounce of gelatine in as much water as will cover it. Put the apples into a jar with the rind and juice of a small lemon, and a quarter of a pound of loaf sugar. Cover the jar closely, set it in a saucepan of boiling water, and steam the apples till they fall. Take out the lemon rind and beat the apple pulp in a basin. Mix thoroughly with it the gelatine which has been melted over the fire, and when nearly cool add half a pint of cream which has been whisked till firm. A few drops of cochineal may also be added for the sake of colour. Put the preparation into a mould which has been rinsed in hot and afterwards in cold water and left wet, and turn out when stiff. When wine is not objectionable, it makes a change of flavour to put a glass of port into the apples while they are steaming.

*Oranges and Cream*.—Peel six or eight St. Michael's oranges, and carefully divide them into sections, freeing them entirely from pith. Put the strained juice and very thin rind of one lemon, also a little of the orange rind, into an enamelled saucepan with a cupful of water, and a cupful of loaf sugar. Boil to a clear syrup, then put in the orange sections and let them boil a few minutes. Take the oranges out, and let the syrup boil a little longer till thick, and if approved put a teaspoonful of brandy into it. Let the sections become quite cold, then place them in layers in a glass dish; sprinkle desiccated cocoanut over each layer, and moisten with the syrup. Pile whipped cream on the top. The cream should be arranged last thing before serving, but the syrup should be poured over the cocoanut a little while before the dish is required.

## THREE FLOWERS.

### A NEW YEAR PARABLE.



New Year stood at the World's threshold as the midnight bells died away into silence. In his hand he held three buds, white flowerbuds, folded tightly in their fresh green leaves. And in the hush that fell upon the sleeping city, a sound of heavenly music trembled through the air.

The New Year stepped very softly to a casement whence shone one little light, burning brightly through the darkness like a star.

A maiden was watching behind her

mother's sick bed, and she rose and opened the window to greet the new comer.

"What will he bring, this strange New Year?" she said to herself as she looked out upon the night.

"I have brought you flowers from the garden of God," said the New Year, whispering among the ivy-leaves. "Take care of them, and when you see them open their petals, know that your Father is going to give you, and those you love, His greatest blessings, more than you can ask or think."

And when she looked upon the sill there lay three buds, the infant flowers of the snowdrop, the violet, and the rose.

So she took them reverently, and waited with patience till they should bloom.

The days passed, one by one, on their way up to God, and pale spring sunshine fell, like His smile, upon the frozen earth, but the maiden could scarcely rejoice that the winter was growing old; for the mother she loved so dearly seemed fading away as the snow-drifts faded, and the shadow of death lay upon the house.

"Oh! take her not away," prayed the maiden. "Spare her to me a little longer; let it be Thy will that she should live."

And as she wept, her tears fell upon the snowdrop that the New Year had brought her, and its petals stirred a little in their green sheath.

"His blessing is coming," said the maiden, awe-struck; "God's blessing, more than we can ask or think! What will it be?"

And all night long she watched beside her mother, till at the dawning the summons came.

The snowdrop opened wide its petals, and trembled with a new-born joy, and the tired soul, like a bird set free, soared up into the Infinite!

So God had given His servant "the blessing of peace!"

But the shadows deepened round the maiden, and her sorrow overwhelmed her. Lonely and anguish-stricken, she refused to be comforted.

"Is this His blessing?" she cried in her misery. "Oh, would I had never lived to see this New Year enter with such a gift!"

Presently, Spring reigned over the earth, and the sky was full of the glory of her presence. The trees that had stood so bare and patient in the winter storms grew radiant