

OUR TRAVEL CLUB, AND HOW WE MANAGE IT.



THE papers in the July and August parts of the "G. O. P." last year on "Books before Travel" suggested the idea that a short account of our "Travel club, and how we manage it," might be interesting to your readers. We are now entering upon the fourth year of our existence, so we feel qualified to speak from experience, and some of our members have gone to travel in Europe over the very route that we had taken in imagination, and they bear witness to the great advantage it has been to them. The Club consists of about twenty young women, married and single, and we meet one afternoon each week at the houses of the members in rotation in the afternoons.

We are supposed to be, and try to imagine we are, a party going to travel in some foreign country, which we have previously decided upon. (We have already travelled in Spain, Italy, Germany and France, and we hope soon to visit England and Scotland.) The plan of our meetings is as follows: The Club is divided into Committees; every member must be on one Committee at least, and may be on more than one. There are a Business Committee, a Literary Committee, a Musical and Art

Committee, and an Entertainment Committee. This last is not required until the end of the season, and is chosen from the others. We have also a President, on whom much depends of the success of the Club. She should have some experience of travelling, and a good deal of bright, intelligent tact, to keep the members up to their work; then we have a Recording Secretary, whose minutes of the previous meetings are a marvel of accuracy and interest. The various Committees are supposed to meet before the meetings to arrange their business, but in a small town as this is, the young people meet so frequently that, as a matter of fact, there are very few formal meetings held by the Committees. The work of the Business Committee is to get all possible information about the route to be taken, in order to make the best use of our time and see the most interesting things in the country. In order to do this, they borrow or otherwise obtain Baedeker's, and the railway time tables which can always be obtained by application to Cook's tourist offices. They then find out and put down exactly the best route to be taken, the expense of the trip, the most comfortable hotels, and any other information of a strictly business character. This is read by the convener of the Business Committee immediately after the roll-call at our weekly meetings.

The Literary Committee find out all that is most interesting and worth seeing in the cities and towns in the country, and read papers from magazines and any other information about them. They also prepare papers on various subjects of interest connected with the country. Thus we had an excellent paper on Spanish literature, and many excellent papers on the celebrated men born in the various towns we have visited.

The Art Committee then tell us all they have been able to find out about the architecture, pictures, etc., in the place, and our President, who is herself an artist, gives us some general and most interesting information about art, which is a great help to all in their endeavours to appreciate the pictures and other objects of interest. If anyone has or can obtain good photographs or engravings of any pictures, they are brought and shown.

The Musical Committee not only tell us about the music and musicians, but give us practical examples of their work. At every meeting we have an instrumental and vocal piece of music, if possible connected with our country. But in the case of Spain this was difficult, as there was a difficulty in obtaining suitable Spanish music.

The Musical Committee also write papers. There was a most interesting paper on Chopin, which was beautifully written and practically illustrated by playing some of his waltzes. After this programme is over, we have a social cup of tea and very slight refreshments, about which we are very strict. At the close of the season, usually in May, we have an open meeting, to which every member has the privilege of inviting two friends, and we entertain them by a short *résumé* of the work of the season. To begin with, every member answers the roll-call by a short sentence, telling something that struck her particularly about the last place we visited. The President then gives her address, the Recording Secretary reads a condensed account of every place visited, of the books read, the music played, the objects of interest observed, etc. The musical members play and sing, one or two poems and papers are read, and the whole winds up with the usual tea and cake.

One great help to keeping up the interest in a Club of this kind is to insist upon everyone doing her share. It is wonderful how the timid girl who could not bear the sound of her own voice in reading aloud, becomes quite brave, and after a time will help in a discussion over some knotty point. It is also very desirable to do everything in a business-like way, even if there is only a small attendance at any particular meeting, and to keep strictly to the programme. This paper is written with some detail, because it is hoped that it may lead others of our sisters in the old land, who have far more leisure than we have, to go and do likewise, assuring them of a rich reward in the interest they will feel in other lands, even if unable personally to visit them, and still more benefit, if they are so fortunate as to be able to travel.

C. L. G.

AN AMATEUR DINNER.

By "EVE," Author of "Little French Dinners."



WHEN girls first leave school they often take up cookery as their next study, and after they have had time to attain a certain amount of proficiency, there is

nothing which will cause such pride and pleasure to all parents as to be able to give a little dinner-party cooked entirely by one or more of their daughters. With the following dinner the little amateurs can, if wished, join the guests in the dining-room and leave the dishing up of the dinner to quite an

inexperienced cook, as all the dishes have the advantage of being able to be almost entirely prepared before the dinner-hour.

MENU.

Potage Dubarry
(Cauliflower Soup).
Soles aux Crevettes
(Soles with Shrimps).
Poulets à la Bonne Femme
(Chickens with White Sauce).
Escalopes de Veau aux Epinards
(Collops of Veal with Spinach).
Croustades à la Marjorie
(Cheese Croustades).
Gâteau aux Abricots
(Apricot Gâteau).

RECIPES.

Potage Dubarry.—Melt two ounces of butter in a large stewpan, mix with it thoroughly two and a half ounces of flour and a little salt and pepper; stir over a slow fire, then add very

gradually and slowly three pints of white stock. When on the point of boiling, add two medium-sized cauliflowers broken up into small pieces. Let the whole cook for forty minutes, then pass all through a hair-sieve into a clean basin. Re-heat the soup about a quarter of an hour before serving, and just at the last add two or three tablespoonfuls of boiling cream. Hand round with the soup small square *croûtons* of bread fried a golden colour.

Soles aux Crevettes.—Take two medium-sized soles, fillet them, chop up the bones and the trimmings and put them into a saucepan with a pint of water, one or two sliced onions, a bunch of sweet herbs and some whole pepper. Bring to the boil and then simmer for an hour or more. In the meantime take a pint and a half of pink shrimps (the brown ones will not do), pick out all the meat from the tails, put them on one side and pound half a pint of the shells in a

mortar with an ounce and a half of butter; then warm it up in a saucepan and pass through a hair-sieve. When this is done, put one ounce of butter in a saucepan, fry it with a spoonful of flour without letting it take colour, and add gradually rather more than half a pint of the strained liquor in which the bones, etc., of the soles were boiled; stir over the fire till the sauce is quite smooth and sufficiently thick, then take it off the fire and add a little cayenne pepper and some or all of the shrimp-butter, being careful not to add so much as would make the sauce too salt. Colour if necessary with one or two drops of liquid carmine and add at the last the yolk of an egg beaten up with a teaspoonful of lemon-juice. Ten minutes before the fish is wanted, season the filets of sole with a little white pepper and salt, tie them in knots, place them in a well-buttered tin, cover them with a sheet of buttered paper and put them in the oven. While the fish is being cooked, warm up the shrimps in a small saucepan with a small quantity of the sauce. When dishing up, arrange the filets in a circle, strain the sauce over them, sprinkle a little finely-chopped parsley on the top and put the shrimps in the centre.

Poulets à la Bonne Femme.—Have ready two chickens trussed for boiling; rub them with lemon and place them in a stewpan lined with slices of fat bacon. Then add a bunch of sweet herbs, two large carrots, three onions, three or four slices of lemon, cloves, mace, whole pepper and salt. Add sufficient water to reach half-way up the fowls, the breasts of which must be covered over with a sheet of buttered paper. Put on the lid of the saucepan and let the fowls boil very gently for about forty minutes. They should be rather underdone. Then cut up the chickens into neat joints, making two pieces out of each leg, two out of the breast and one out of each wing. Trim the pieces very carefully, removing all skin and superfluous bone, and put them on one side. Then melt

one ounce of butter in a saucepan, mix with it one ounce of flour, stir well and strain on to it slowly from three-quarters to a pint of the liquor in which the fowls have been cooked, and bring to the boil. Put the pieces of fowl in this sauce and let the whole simmer gently for ten minutes or so. In the meantime beat up in a basin the yolks of three eggs with the juice of half a lemon, add gradually some of the prepared sauce and then pour all back into the saucepan containing the chicken. Season with more pepper and salt if necessary, and let the whole get thoroughly hot at the side of the stove without boiling, adding a little of the chicken broth if the sauce should be too thick. Arrange the pieces of chicken pyramidically on a hot dish, pour the sauce all over them and serve.

Escalopes de Veau aux Epinards.—Take a slice of veal cut from the fillet about half an inch thick; from it cut out some *escalopes* by means of a round cutter two and a half inches in diameter and a sharp knife. Sprinkle them with pepper and salt and place them in a *sauté* pan in which an ounce of butter has been melted on a very brisk fire. Let them brown lightly on both sides. Then remove the *sauté* pan to the corner of the stove and let the veal cook very slowly for another fifteen minutes or till the time of serving. Prepare some spinach as follows: Pick and wash about three pounds of spinach and put it in a saucepan with a little salt and without any water to cook for about fifteen minutes. When done, drain it in a colander, squeeze out all the water and pass the spinach through a hair-sieve into a clean saucepan with two ounces of butter, a grate of nutmeg and pepper and salt. Stir well over the fire, then add a sprinkling of flour, and lastly a spoonful or two of gravy. Let it all get thoroughly hot; keep it warm at the side of the fire till the time of serving, then pile it up in the centre of a dish, and arrange the *escalopes* of veal all round it, pouring the gravy at the bottom of the dish.

Croustades à la Marjorie.—Make about a quarter of a pound of short pastry, roll it out into a large square, sprinkle all over it two ounces of grated Parmesan cheese, a very little salt and a pinch of cayenne pepper, then fold it up into a small square, roll it out again and line some little oval patty pans with the paste. Fill these with raw rice, bake them in a good oven and turn them out. Then fill them with the following preparation, dust all over with finely-grated Parmesan cheese and serve as hot as possible: Take about two ounces of dried haddock previously cooked, and pound it in the mortar with the hard-boiled yolks of two eggs, one or two drops of anchovy essence and pepper and salt to taste. Put the paste into a saucepan and moisten with milk till of the consistency of jam, then finish with a tablespoonful of cream.

Gâteau aux Abricots.—Buy a shilling Madeira cake and hollow out the inside, leaving a good rim all round and a depth of about an inch at the bottom. Make some holes in the cake with a skewer, and soak it with a wineglass and a half of some flavouring. This must be done the day before the dinner-party. Then melt two or three tablespoonfuls of apricot jam in a saucepan with a little water, pass the jam through a hair-sieve and with a brush glaze the whole of the outside of the cake with it. Then have some desiccated cocoanut on a piece of paper and roll the cake in it so that it sticks all over the sides of the cake. On the rim at the top of the cake sprinkle thickly one ounce of pistachio nuts, blanched and very finely chopped. Place the cake now very carefully on to the dish on which it is going to be served and fill the inside with some tinned apricots. Heap on the top a gill of whipped cream, add a sprinkling of dropped pistachios and the *gâteau* is ready.

N.B.—It is recommended that as much of the dinner as possible should be prepared the day beforehand.

VARIETIES.

NO FAREWELL REMARKS.

A commercial traveller on his journey called at Perth on a well-known chemist. He was nervous as he put his hand in his pocket and handed out a card.

"I represent that concern," he said.

"You are fortunate," replied the chemist.

The commercial traveller was encouraged, and said—

"I think so, sir, and the chemist who deals with us is even more fortunate. My firm has the finest line of cosmetics in the country."

"I shouldn't have thought it," slowly responded the man of medicines. "Her complexion looks natural."

And he handed back the photograph, which the young man had given him by mistake. He took it and left without wishing to make any farewell remarks.

GOOD NIGHT.

"Good night! The hawk is in his nest,
And the last rook hath drooped to rest;
There is no hum, no chirp, no bleat,
No rustle in the meadow-sweet:
The woodbine, somewhere out of sight,
Sweetens the loneliness of night:
The Sister Stars, that once were seven,
Mourn for their missing mate in heaven:
The poppy's fair frail petals close,
The lily yet more languid grows,
And dewy-dreamy droops the rose:
Good night!"

Alfred Austin.

A LEGEND FROM BRITTANY.

One of the most widely-known legends in Brittany is that of the pretended city of Is, which, at an unknown period, is said to have been swallowed up by the sea. Various places on the coast are pointed out as the site of the fabulous city, and the fishermen tell you strange stories about it. On stormy days they assert you can see the top of its church steeples in the hollow of the waves: on calm days you can hear the sound of its bells ringing out the morning hymn.

"It often seems to me," says a well-known writer, "that I have at the bottom of my heart a city of Is, which is persistently ringing its bells to call the faithful to prayers, but they heed them not. Sometimes I stop to listen to these trembling vibrations, which seem to ascend from infinite depths like the voices of another world."

HOW TO TEST PRECIOUS STONES.—A good diamond is much colder than an imitation, and the lapidaries say that the best way to detect this difference in temperature is to touch the stones to the tongue. Sapphires, emeralds, rubies, garnets, and other precious stones may be tested in the same way—the real stone is invariably colder than the imitation. The lapidaries do not give a reason for the difference, but it may be found perhaps in the greater density of the real stones, which makes them better conductors of heat.

THE RULING PASSION.

Mr. Hunter (seeing his wife off): "Just sit down here for a minute, dear, while I go and buy your ticket."

Mrs. Hunter: "Very well, John. By the way, how much is the fare?"

Mr. Hunter: "Nine and elevenpence halfpenny. I'll be back in a minute."

Mrs. Hunter: "Oh, wait a second, John! You watch the luggage and let me buy the ticket, please."

Mr. Hunter: "But, my dear—"

Mrs. Hunter: "Please, John, I want to."

Mr. Hunter (smiling): "To show how self-reliant you are?"

Mrs. Hunter: "No. But nine and elevenpence halfpenny sounds so much like a bargain."

IN HEALTH.—A good conscience is to the soul what health is to the body.

ANSWER TO ACROSTIC II. (p. 211).

- E. Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 4).
- B. Benjamin (Genesis xxxv. 19).
- E. Esther (Esther iv. 16).
- N. Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1).
- E. Emmanuel (Matthew i. 23).
- Z. Zedekiah (Jeremiah ii. 11).
- E. Elim (Exodus xv. 27).
- R. Ruth (Ruth i. 16-17).
- Ebenezer (1 Sam. vii. 12).