

first course, the dishes are started on their progress about the table at the left hand of a lady, but not always with the lady seated at the host's right, for the same person must not invariably be left to be helped last. At a ceremonious dinner served à la Russe, the host does not carve any of the meats, none of the dishes are set upon the table and the hostess does not help her guests to anything. When a dozen or more persons are dining the serving of a course is expedited by dividing the whole amount of the course on two dishes, which the two servants in waiting would begin to pass simultaneously, from opposite sides and different ends of the table.

When dinner is announced, the host at once offers his right arm to the lady who is to sit at his right. If a dinner is given in honor of a married couple, the host leads the way to the table with his guest's wife, the hostess bringing up the rear with that lady's husband. If there is no particularly distinguished person in the party, the host takes in the eldest lady, or the one who has been invited to the house for the first time. Relatives, or husbands and wives are never sent in together. There should, if possible, be an equal number of men and women guests. If, however, there are eight ladies and seven gentlemen, the hostess should bring up in the rear walking alone; she should never take the other arm of the last gentleman. Those who go into the dining-room together sit side by side; and they can move gently about the table, discover their places by the cards bearing their names and lying at their respective covers. The host waits a moment until the ladies are seated, then the dinner proceeds. For a very large dinner, the hostess will find it most convenient to prepare beforehand small cards in envelopes, to be given the gentlemen by the butler at the door or in their dressing rooms. On each envelope is inscribed the name of the gentleman for whom it is intended; on the card inside is the name of the lady whom he is to take in to the table. On investigating his card, the recipient can easily identify his table companion, and if he knows her not, can appeal to his host or hostess to introduce him. A plan of the dinner table is often placed in the gentlemen's and ladies' tiring rooms, that all may have an idea of their location. Should one or more guests arrive after the company is seated, the hostess is expected to bow, smile, shake hands, and receive apologies amiably; but does not rise