

Marion Garland's Page

UNDER MY FOREIGN VINE AND FIG TREE FRANCE, THE LAND OF NOTED COOKS AND DAINTY SERVICE

China
Relish
Dish

Attractive Dish for Hors d'oeuvres

AN AMERICAN nomad—of the genus that has won for us the reputation of being a nation of globe-trotters—claims boastfully that his practice is to adopt the diet of each country visited by him, and to eat none but national dishes while he is in that region. In pursuance of this system, he has, he would have us believe, acquired a positive fondness for foods the thought of which was a disgust when he was introduced to them. He is especially vain of the victory over prejudice and custom displayed by the fact that he actually learned to eat blubber and to drink train oil while sojourning with the Esquimaux, and became a connoisseur in the quality of birds' nests, served to him in soup by Chinese Mandarins.

MUCH TO LEARN

Without imitating his palpable affectations, or going to the opposite and more common vanity of the typical traveling American, who loudly proclaims his disavowal of "foreign kickshaws," sensible people appreciate that American cooks have so much to learn from their transatlantic seniors, that it behooves them to set about the tasks intelligently and candidly.

I diverge here to observe that the American cuisine is so sharply criticised by visitors to the land of hog and hominy, buckwheats and baked beans, that we may well lower our crest when cookery, as a fine art, is the theme of conversation. Hundreds of us have heard the true anecdote of the comment passed upon a buckwheat cake by the wife of a distinguished poet-philosopher upon a recent visit to the United States:

"Dear! you need not be afraid to eat it!" (This to her husband, who awaited her verdict.) "It is really not so nasty as it looks!"

Lady B., another tourist, was less complimentary after a sip of tomato soup:

"B—! I say! Don't eat your soup! It is quite filthy! It has tomatoes in it!"

CULINARY SKILL NEEDED

The frankness of the average Briton, of whatever rank, is, and will ever be, a cause of amazement to the well-bred Americans. If he may think that he has as little occasion to go to school to Britons in cookery as in manners, the belief should not blind him to the truth of his inferiority to other civilized peoples in the preparation of his daily food. His raw materials are not equalled by those of any other country in abundance, variety and excellence. He needs nothing but culinary skill to make his menus the finest ever known to the world.

The consciousness of this has been forced upon me by object lessons in the course of much travel in foreign lands. In some measure, following the example of our gastronomic nomad, I have taken pleasure in gratifying my curiosity with respect to culinary enterprise in all countries visited in our tours. The history of certain dishes is marvelously interesting, apart from their appeal to the palate. I have room for but one instance. In a Bedouin's camp we were set down to a mess of "red pottage," so hot

and savory that the rising steam wrought in us charity for hungry Esau. The base of the pottage, or stew, was beans of a color we called "Spanish brown," known to the Syrians as "red." It was easy to credit the tradition in that oldest of lands, that the composition of the tempting bowlful was the same with that practiced by deft Jacob to his brother's undoing.

During a residence abroad, covering several years, I "kept house" in France, Italy, Switzerland and England. I recall little of culinary lore that I learned in the last-named country, except how to make Yorkshire teacakes, Melton pies and Banbury tarts; also that I made the pleasant acquaintance with vegetable marrow and white-bait. From my French cook I gained much that was valuable which has stood me in good stead ever since. A longer sojourn in Italy, repeated at intervals of years, taught me to prefer Florentine cookery to Parisian in many respects. Although but a boarder in Germany, I made it my business to inquire closely into the housewifely methods of the several "Hausfräus" who ministered to our material wants.

It was in my mind to utilize the mass of recipes collected in these wanderings and sojournings by arranging them in book form under the title of "THE INTERNATIONAL COOK BOOK." But life is short and duties many. Pending the arrival of the day when I shall have leisure to carry out this, with other cherished projects for the improvement of the national cuisine, it is my purpose to share my store with the members of our beloved EXCHANGE.

And since the genius of our body domestic and economic is expressed by that one word, I ask the co-operation of our foreign-born constituents in our enterprise. Will they not unlock their treasure houses of practical recipes for the

common weal? I invite contributions from all nationalities.

IN THE FRENCH KITCHEN

It goes without saying that France leads the culinary world. In no other country is cookery so serious a business. Nowhere else is the "blue ribbon" (cordon bleu) awarded to the cook who has mastered his profession.

The very peasants study how to evolve savoriness from the simplest materials, and garnish as a matter of course.

I shall never forget my dismayed astonishment at the first survey of the kitchen in the furnished "apartment" engaged for us in Paris by a friend long resident in that city. It was barely six feet square, and the planing matched the dimensions of the room. A tiny range, heated by a charcoal fire built in one of the four holes in the top,

said fire being blown into liveliness by a turkey-feather fan wielded by Marie, a bouncing figure that yet further dwarfed her surroundings; a miniature dresser that reminded one of a d.C.'s house; a folding table and one chair left just room enough to pass from stove to door, and from door to dresser. Floor and walls were covered with white tiles; a white curtain veiled the solitary window; a brilliant array of copper and porcelain saucepans hung against one wall, and Marie wore a blue gown, a wide white apron and a high white cap, starched and frilled.

Nothing was wasted in that tiny realm where she reigned supreme. She did the marketing. It was her prerogative. If I knew that she expected a commission from every merchant upon each purchase, I also knew that, when the levy was paid by me, she laid in our stores at least 5 per cent. less than I

should spend, let me haggles never so wisely. And what miracles of gustatory deliciousness were brought forth for our wonder and delectation, day by day, week after week, until we exhausted our stock of laudatory adjectives!

I have said that she wasted nothing. One plain-spoken writer says:

"The Frenchwoman is so economical that the insides of everything, from a horse to a rabbit, go into the frying pan or kettle, and most of the out-sides, from the comb of a cock to the feet of a sheep."

I had not heard that disdainful comment when the remark of a Hibernian, "who had not lived to do French cookery" in my kitchen, was reported to me by one of my children.

"Your mamma is the bestest of all ladies ever I saw!" for cooking wild things and innards." Which, being interpreted, meant sweet-breads, kidneys and game. "Who of us," asks another critic, "would dream of scalding the feet of chickens to remove the skin and then turning them into soup stock that makes an especially firm jelly? Or, would cooks' combs ever appeal to one as an excellent filling for a vol-au-vent or pate shell, or as a separate entree with

a highly-seasoned creamed sauce?" Yet I recollect that in Old Virginia, even in lavish ante-bellum days, the heads, necks and feet of chickens were skinned and used for broth.

To get the cock's combs ready for use they should be put in a cloth with rubbed between the hands until the skin comes off easily. They should then be soaked in cold water for at least six hours and cooked until tender before they are dressed.

The water in which meat, fish or vegetables are cooked is utilized by our housewife French cook as palatable soup when mixed with a roux of butter and flour, herbs, onion, carrots, rice or barley, and the whole well seasoned. Peasopods are never thrown away; they give flavor to a puree for the next day.

Meat from the famous national soup, "pot-au-feu," or bouillon, is always served, with the vegetables that season it, either plain with a tomato sauce, or sometimes wrought into a ragout. So daintily is this served with garnishings of parsley, pickles and mustard that it appeals even to the American who would scorn the leavings of the stock pot at home.

A very good, cheap bouillon is made by using the heads of meat, carcasses of giblets, necks, heads and feet of chickens and turkeys, adding a quart of water to a pound, and adding a leek, carrot, turnip, a small piece of celery, a small onion, a few sprigs of parsley, a clove or two and salt. Prepare as one would ordinary clear soup.

Left-over vegetables, when not turned into the stock pot, are utilized for dainty salads; stale bread is cut into croutons or rolled; all grease from roasts and soups is saved, clarified and reclarified for frying; a little cold stewed tomatoes will make a sauce for next day's chops or spaghetti, and left-over fish is sure to turn up in salads, croquettes or in some of the purées of fish that are so popular.

No dinner in France would ever be complete without soup. Even the poorest workman has the national favorite pot-au-feu in the evenings, and there is no skimping of material in it, either.

Purées of vegetables and greens are favored, sorrel soups being especially well liked. The sorrel is chopped and cooked in butter for a quarter of an hour, then thickened with two tablespoonfuls of flour, passed through a sieve, and cooked again with one pint each of hot milk and stock. After it has come to a boil, season with salt, pepper and a little nutmeg, and add the yolk of an egg just before removing from the stove.

An ordinary French family dinner consists of soup, a roast or fish, one vegetable or salad, cheese or fruit, for company, and a vegetable soup, fish, an entree, a vegetable, roast, salad, fruit and cheese, with black coffee later in the drawing room.

POT-AU-FEU.
Four pounds of beef.

Left-over vegetables, when not turned into the stock pot, are utilized for dainty salads; stale bread is cut into croutons or rolled; all grease from roasts and soups is saved, clarified and reclarified for frying; a little cold stewed tomatoes will make a sauce for next day's chops or spaghetti, and left-over fish is sure to turn up in salads, croquettes or in some of the purées of fish that are so popular.

No dinner in France would ever be complete without soup. Even the poorest workman has the national favorite pot-au-feu in the evenings, and there is no skimping of material in it, either.

Purées of vegetables and greens are favored, sorrel soups being especially well liked. The sorrel is chopped and cooked in butter for a quarter of an hour, then thickened with two tablespoonfuls of flour, passed through a sieve, and cooked again with one pint each of hot milk and stock. After it has come to a boil, season with salt, pepper and a little nutmeg, and add the yolk of an egg just before removing from the stove.

An ordinary French family dinner consists of soup, a roast or fish, one vegetable or salad, cheese or fruit, for company, and a vegetable soup, fish, an entree, a vegetable, roast, salad, fruit and cheese, with black coffee later in the drawing room.

POT-AU-FEU.
Four pounds of beef.

Left-over vegetables, when not turned into the stock pot, are utilized for dainty salads; stale bread is cut into croutons or rolled; all grease from roasts and soups is saved, clarified and reclarified for frying; a little cold stewed tomatoes will make a sauce for next day's chops or spaghetti, and left-over fish is sure to turn up in salads, croquettes or in some of the purées of fish that are so popular.

No dinner in France would ever be complete without soup. Even the poorest workman has the national favorite pot-au-feu in the evenings, and there is no skimping of material in it, either.

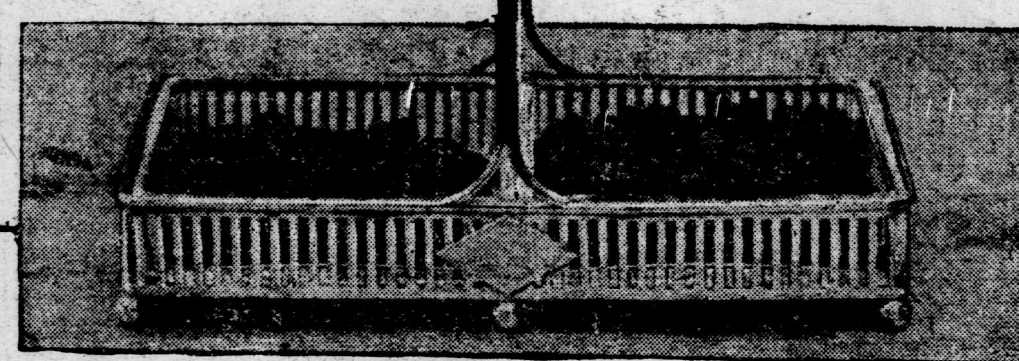
Purées of vegetables and greens are favored, sorrel soups being especially well liked. The sorrel is chopped and cooked in butter for a quarter of an hour, then thickened with two tablespoonfuls of flour, passed through a sieve, and cooked again with one pint each of hot milk and stock. After it has come to a boil, season with salt, pepper and a little nutmeg, and add the yolk of an egg just before removing from the stove.

An ordinary French family dinner consists of soup, a roast or fish, one vegetable or salad, cheese or fruit, for company, and a vegetable soup, fish, an entree, a vegetable, roast, salad, fruit and cheese, with black coffee later in the drawing room.

POT-AU-FEU.
Four pounds of beef.

Left-over vegetables, when not turned into the stock pot, are utilized for dainty salads; stale bread is cut into croutons or rolled; all grease from roasts and soups is saved, clarified and reclarified for frying; a little cold stewed tomatoes will make a sauce for next day's chops or spaghetti, and left-over fish is sure to turn up in salads, croquettes or in some of the purées of fish that are so popular.

POT-AU-FEU.
Four pounds of beef.

French Breakfast of
Rolls and Coffee

Dainty Way of Serving Raisins

Kitchen
Window
Savory Box

A shillibone.
One-half of a cabbage.
Two leeks.
One large onion.
Four carrots.
Bunch of soup herbs, thyme, bayleaf, leek.

Four cloves.
Twelve peppercorns.
One tablespoonful of salt.
Six quarts of cold water.

Put the meat and water into a stock pot, especially kept for the purpose, and let it come gently to the boiling point and skim carefully. Wash and clean the vegetables, stick the cloves in the onion, tie up the cabbage and leeks, and put all in the meat. Add the carrots, cut in small pieces, the herbs, peppercorns and salt. Simmer gently for four hours. Just before serving, have the bread, which has been cut into very small thin slices about as big as a dollar and browned, put in the bottom of the tureen, with some of the carrot, leeks and onion cut into small pieces. Remove the meat from the pot, season the broth to taste, let it boil hard a minute, and then strain into the tureen. Sprinkle the chopped parsley on the top. The meat and vegetables are served as a separate course. The rest of the broth is strained and put in a cool place for future use.

BOUILLABaisse

("Chowder" in American English.)

Three or four pounds of different kinds of fish.

One small eel.

One lobster.

One quart of water or fish stock.

One-quarter pint of salad oil.

One-eighth pint of claret.

Three tomatoes cut in pieces.

Two small onions (chopped).

One ounce parsley, thyme, bayleaf, garlic (chopped).

Five cloves.

One teaspoonful each of saffron, spinach, salt and pepper.

A pinch of cayenne.

Clean, wash and cut the fish in square pieces. Cut the lobster into sections and retain the shells. Put all the ingredients into a saucepan and boil gently for thirty minutes. Fry slices of stale bread in a golden brown in butter, put them into a deep dish or tureen, put the fish stew over it and serve very hot.

BROCHES

Two pounds of flour.

One pound of butter.

One yeast cake.

One ounce sugar.

Eight eggs.

One cup of salt.

Cold water for soft dough.

Put one-half pound of the flour in a bowl, hollow it in the centre, stir in the yeast dissolved in warm water, mix to a soft dough and set in a covered pan near the fire to rise. Add the butter, salt, sugar and well-beaten eggs to the risen dough, and knead it gradually, till the paste is smooth. When the dough has expanded to double its original size, mix the paste with it and set to rise for three hours. Put the dough on a board, knead it well, divide it into three pieces and set it to rise for two hours. Once it is on the ice till firm, mould into large or small cakes and bake on a hot oven about three-quarters of an hour. Glaze the top with egg to make it glossy when baked and dust with sugar.

CURRIED RABBIT EN CASSEROLE

One rabbit.

Two ounces of butter.

One finely chopped onion.

One-half teaspoonful of curry powder.

One clove of crushed garlic.

One-half teaspoonful of ground cinnamon.

One-half tablespoonful of ground ginger.

A little ground mace.

One-half pint of brown stock.

Six mushrooms.

Boiled rice.

Cut and slice the rabbit, wash and wipe, and dip each piece into flour seasoned with salt and pepper. Fry in a large casserole in the butter. When nicely browned remove the rabbit. Add a finely-chopped onion to the fat in the pan and fry with the curry and garlic. Then put in the rabbit and spices, moisten with the stock, and boil, stirring occasionally. Skin well, add the mushrooms, peeled and let the whole simmer gently, with the lid on the casserole, for about an hour and a half.

Vol-au-Vent of Chicken

Butter small pate pans and line them with a good puff-paste. Bake in a steady oven, having first set the paste shapes in a very cold place for an hour. Make a savory mince of roast, or boiled chicken, stir into a good drawn butter, and let it come to a boil while the shells are baking. Turn these out carefully from the tins, and fill with the mince. Serve at once.

Mince sweetbreads, mushrooms, fish, oysters, veal—in fact, almost any kind of meats or fish—may be converted from uninviting "left overs" into a

"Dainty dish."

To set before the king—

By learning how to prepare and serve the vol-au-vent. If you prefer, you may bake it in one large pastry shell.

Marion Garland