

HOUSEHOLD.

Hints for the Dinner.

(Isabel Gordon Curtis.)

There are two great dinners of the year, and they follow each other so closely that the thoughtful housewife will try to make them as entirely different as it is possible to do. Don't set before the family on Dec. 25 the turkey, cranberry sauce, chicken pie and pumpkin pie they ate two months ago. They will clear the table off with a hungry gusto, no doubt, but not as they will enjoy an entirely different bill of fare. Some people choose goose as the special dish of the Christmas dinner, still I think duck is a more favored bird. I have given a menu which is an easy one to prepare, it is 'Christmasy,' it ought to be appetizing, it contains nothing which may not be bought in a country store and it may be shortened into a less pretentious dinner by cutting out the salad or croquettes; both may be spared if wished. Here it is:—

	Oyster soup.	
Celery	Crackers	Pickles
Chicken croquettes	Green peas.	
Bread	Butter	
Roast duck	Apple sauce	
Boiled onions	Mashed potatoes	
Celery and apple salad	Cheese straws	
Plum pudding	Mince pie	
Fruit Nuts	Cheese	
	Coffee.	

The housewife who sits down to dinner untired and unflustered is the woman who beforehand has prepared every dish that is not spoiled by twenty four hours' consignment to the pantry shelf. Make your plum pudding a week ahead, if you can, then set it where it will be perfectly cold. The day before Christmas prepare the croquettes, salad dressing, cheese straws and mince pie. Early in the morning make the salad and apple sauce and stuff the ducks. That gets a great deal of the hardest work out of the way. Set the table as soon as breakfast is over and make it as beautiful as your china closet and linen drawer will allow. Red and green are Christmas colors. They have a wonderful tone of good cheer in them. Christmas brings plenty of scarlet in gorgeous chrysanthemums, carnations or vivid geraniums. Even the time-honored holly may be pressed into service as a table bouquet.

I shall not readily forget a Christmas dinner I once ate in a New England farmhouse so far away from a city that holly was not obtainable. We ate breakfast in the kitchen, for the little mother kept the dining room door most jealously locked. But the beauty of it when good smells filled the house and the dinner bell rang! Brighter than any holly were the long wreaths of bittersweet and green hemlock. They were wreathed about pictures, over windows, they adorned the sideboard and made a splendid mass of scarlet twined about the chandelier over the table. No greenhouse blossoms could have surpassed the beauty of the table decoration, a deep platter of woodland things growing. There were delicate ferns, checkerberries, soft, many-colored mosses, the trailing partridge vine, with its scarlet berries and tiny uncurled violet leaves. About it were sprays of myrtle vine or Wandering Jew and sprigs of bittersweet. The dinner was good, but I remember best the beauty of the table. It showed that thought and fine taste could make home more lovely than money expenditure.

But to return to the kitchen. There are only three dishes in the menu I have given with which the average housewife is not well acquainted. The following recipe for croquettes is a standby in our household. You may use it for chicken, veal, beef, fish or a well chopped mixture of refrigerator remains: Heat a half pint of milk, into it stir two tablespoonfuls of flour and one of butter mixed to a smooth paste. Let it cook thoroughly until quite thick. If it seems lumpy when you take it from the fire whip it briskly with an egg beater for five minutes. Add a pint of chopped chicken or meat, season with a teaspoonful of

salt, a teaspoonful of onion juice, a table-spoonful of chopped parsley, a dash of pepper and celery salt. Let it stand until perfectly cold. Then roll into croquettes, dip in beaten egg and in fine bread crumbs. Fry in boiling fat and serve in a deep platter surrounded by green peas. The quantities given will make a dozen croquettes.

Some housewives fancy cheese straws are hard to make, instead they are the easiest thing imaginable and an excellent plan for utilizing the shreds of paste left after pie baking. Take all the scraps left on the baking board, roll them out lightly and cut into finger lengths. Lay them on a pan with half an inch of space between each. Grate rich cheese, season with salt and a dash of red pepper and scatter it thickly over the strips of paste. Bake ten or fifteen minutes in an oven where the greatest heat is at the top. They will come out flaky and crisp with the cheese unmelted and looking like a crust of brown shredded cocoanut. Serve them with the salad and pile the straws on the plate in the shape of a log cabin.

Many a housewife keeps a supply of salad dressing in a tightly closed can in her refrigerator. It is the handiest thing possible for a lunch or dinner emergency for those who are so fortunate as to like it. This cooked mayonnaise dressing, for which I give a recipe, is easily made and will keep for months:—Beat two eggs and pour over them four tablespoons of boiling vinegar. Beat well, then put in a small saucepan over the fire and cook slowly until the mixture is creamy. Add a tablespoon of butter, season with a teaspoon of sugar, a half saltspoon mustard, a dash of white pepper and a half saltspoon of salt. Add an equal quantity of whipped cream when you are ready to use it.

For the apple and celery salad, take two cups finely sliced, sour, mellow apples to one bunch of chopped celery and one cup of walnut meats. Cover with the mayonnaise dressing.

Woman's Trust.

'Good wife, what are you singing for? You know we've lost the hay,
And what we'll do with horse and kye is more than I can say;

While like as not, with storms and rain,
'we'll lose both corn and wheat.'
She looked up with a pleasant face, and answered low and sweet:

'There is a Heart, there is a Hand, we feel,
we cannot see;

We've always been provided for, and we shall always be!'

He turned around with sullen gloom. She said: 'Love, be at rest;

You cut the grass, worked soon and late,
you did your very best.

That was your work; you've naught to do
with wind and rain,

And do not doubt but you will reap rich
fields of golden grain;

For there's a Heart, and there's a Hand, we feel,
we cannot see!

We've always been provided for, and we shall always be!'

'That's like a woman's reasoning—we must
because we must.'

She softly said: 'I reason not; I only
work and trust.

The harvest may redeem the hay; keep
heart whate'er betide;

When one door's shut I've always found an
other open wide,

There is a Heart, there is a Hand, we feel,
but cannot see;

We've always been provided for, and we shall always be!'

He kissed the calm and trustful face; gone
was his restless pain;

She heard him, with a cheerful step, go
whistling down the lane,

And went about her household tasks, full
of glad content,

Singing to time her busy hands as to and
fro she went;

'There is a Heart, there is a Hand, we feel,
but cannot see;

We've always been provided for, and we shall always be!'

Days come and go—'twas Christmas tide,
and the great fire burned clear.

The farmer said: 'Dear wife, it's been a
good and happy year;

The fruit was gain; the surplus corn has
bought the hay, you know.'

She lifted then a smiling face and said:—
'I told you so;

For there's a Heart, and there's a Hand, we
feel, but cannot see;

We've always been provided for, and we
shall always be!'

—Pioneer.

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