

Domestic Department.

A Little Dinner Party.

"More than nine, and less than three. No'er let guests at table be."

YET this old saw is probably only an expression of the time-honored partiality for odd numbers. In point of fact, at the usual oval extension-table an even number can be better seated, and from ten to twenty are usually invited.

At a large circular table, such as some modern elegant dining-rooms boast, any desired number can be placed easily; but as most families use the extension-table, we must consider this as the rule, and the other the exception.

When a lady issues invitations for a dinner of ten or twenty persons, she should do so a fortnight in advance, using the following formula, written or engraved on note-paper:

Mr. and Mrs. James Clyde request the pleasure of your company at dinner on seven o'clock.

the blanks to be filled up by the hostess with the name or names of the guests, and the necessary date.

The invitation should be answered by the favored recipient at once, and the engagement, if accepted, kept. If personal illness, the illness or death of relatives, or any other imperative reason for absence occurs subsequent to the acceptance, the hostess should be apprised of it as soon as possible.

A gentleman should never be invited without his wife, or a lady without her husband, unless one or the other is merely visiting the city or town where their hostess resides. A previous engagement might warrant either husband or wife in declining the invitation, while the other is free to accept and go alone.

A lesser number of guests—four or six—may be invited, with less ceremony, within the week, but always in writing. A pretty, informal note is written, somewhat as follows:

Dear Mrs. T.— Will you and your husband dine with us Friday evening? Quite by ourselves, except for the Johnsons, who will be with us also. At our usual hour—quarter to eight. Sincerely yours, L. S.—

A note like this should also be answered immediately, and the same obligation of keeping the engagement, if accepted, observed.

The usual hour for dinner-parties is seven o'clock, but it can well be a little later in order to insure punctuality; for, whatever the hour, the guests must be careful to be punctual to the minute, and no hostess is justified in keeping her dinner waiting, at the risk of its being spoiled, for any delaying guest, when all but one are assembled. When entering the drawing-room, the lady goes first, not on her husband's arm. At elegant dinner-parties, frequently the gentleman finds a card in the hall, on which his name and that of the lady whom he is to take in to dinner are written, and also a tiny spray of *boutonniers* of flowers, which he places in his button hole. At smaller entertainments, the hostess indicates to the gentleman, in the drawing-room, the lady he is to take in, and in any case, if they are not acquainted, introduces him to her.

When all the guests have arrived, dinner is announced by the servant. Then the host takes the eldest lady or if a bride is present, or any lady to whom the dinner is given, then that lady—and leads the way to the dining-room, and the others follow, the hostess last and on the arm of the gentleman to whom the entertainers desire to show most honor.

The dinner-table may represent a lavish display of wealth, if the circumstances of the entertainers indicate it, but small and inexpensive dinners are among the pleasantest of all simple entertainments, so no one need be deterred from offering a modest hospitality for fear of offending by lack of luxury. The true art of entertaining lies in the exercise of a graceful tact possessed by the hostess, who can with *debonnaire* cordiality supply all that fortune withholds. Indeed, nothing is more vulgar than the assumption of a fictitious splendor out of all keeping with one's means and social position.

French bills of fare sound fine, but when the dishes are divested of their foreign titles, they often prove to be some of our old acquaintances in new dresses. A simple menu, tastefully served, is quite as attractive to the average diner-out.

The dinner *a la Russe*, at which everything is handed by the servants, is the most popular style, and the courses succeed each other as indicated in the dinner for Sunday, in "Seasonable Bills of Fare. This dinner menu

is also intended as a suggestion for company dinners, although the choice of dishes is not arbitrary, and Sunday is not a day usually selected for entertaining. For dinners in the Lenten season, Monday, Thursday and Saturday are the proper days.

This bill of fare may also be extended two or three courses by the addition of various entrees, such as fillets of beef, curried kidneys, game, etc. Various sauces and relishes, also, are a part of all well ordered dinners, although they are not mentioned in the actual bill of fare.

The arrangement of the table is a matter of moment, but with care and taste much expense is not necessary. The table-cloth for dinner should always be of white damask, laid over an under cover of white Canton flannel. In the centre a long mat of colored velvet, edged with gilt or silver lace, may be laid, but this is not a necessity; the white table-cloth is. Colored cloths are used only for luncheon or tea. The colored centre-mat may be of velvet, which will look just as well as the velvet. A border of flowers arranged all around has a very pretty effect. Flowers all of one color, put in crystal glass, are most effective. Carnations, roses, violets, and ferns are the favorite floral decorations. Heavily-scented blooms, tuberoses especially, should not be used. But the dainty fragrance of the rose is never unwelcome.

The substitution of lamps and candelabra for the more glaring yet not more brilliant gaslight is attended with some annoyances. Yet no dinner table is thought complete in effect without one or two colored lamps and a certain number of candles or the pretty little fairy-lamps which adorn a table so beautifully.

At each place should be laid two knives, three forks, and a soup-spoon—all of silver, if possible; and before each plate a small salt-cellar, of fanciful design. The large dinner-napkins of white damask ought never to be arranged in fancy shapes, as frequently seen in hotels and restaurants. Let each be folded in a three cornered pyramid, to stand by the plate and hold the roll or piece of bread. Cut glass tumblers are used in preference to goblets; in either case the glasses or plates should never be reversed in laying the table, but set on in the position they are to be when in use. Menu or card holders may be placed before each plate to hold the dinner card and bill of fare, but these may be dispensed with, and, if decorated or engraved cards cannot be had, the menu and name of the guest can be written on separate cards and laid on each plate.

If the principal dishes are served or carved by the host or hostess, as must be done unless there are two servants to wait on the table, it will be best to have large carving cloths of fringed butcher's-linen laid on the table where the dish is to be placed, to preserve the table-cloth from splashes. These are removed when the dessert is served. The sideboard is arranged as tastefully as may be, and all the pretty pieces of china and silver not needed on the table can be displayed here. It is well, also, to have a small table at one side upon which the finger-bowls and reserve of plates, forks, and spoons, etc., are to be placed. After the fish has been removed, hot plates are brought on for the meats. The waiter or waitress should be directed to carry a napkin to cover the fingers when serving the guests, and all plates or dishes should be handed or set before the guest from the left.

After the coffee has been served (in small cups), the hostess slightly inclines her head to the lady whom her husband led in to dinner, and they both rise, and all then follow to the drawing-room. The English custom of leaving the gentlemen to cigars and their usual accompaniment, which the ladies are not supposed to care for, has in a great measure been ignored by American hostesses, and it is a most excellent innovation on their part.

On returning to the drawing-room, tea is sometimes served to those who care for it, and after a little the musical members of the party may be requested to favor the company with song or pianoforte solo. Any one having a favorite instrument on which he or she is known to be proficient, could be requested by the hostess to bring it. If there is a fine singer among the guests, it would not be amiss for the hostess to invite two or three musical young people to come in during the evening, among them one who could play the vocalist's accompaniments.

Cards may be brought out, and a table made up for the elder or most staid of the guests, although, of late, the young people, who were always supposed to be devoted to dancing, and voted cards a bore, have settled down to whole evenings of whist and

euchre, enlivened by music, and favors, and change of partners, and seem to find unlimited amusement in the artful combinations of hearts and diamonds.

Dinner favors—bouquets of flowers tied with ribbons, reticules of bonbons, surprise boxes and flower fans add greatly to the elegance and expense of the entertainment. It is the lady who profits most by these tasteful presentations; the gentleman usually has only a *boutonnier*. Where lavish outlay is not desirable it is yet a graceful fancy to present each lady with a flower or two tied with a ribbon, or accompanied by a fancy-headed pin so that she may attach them to her corsage.

Seasonable Bills of Fare.

SUNDAY. BREAKFAST: Hot Omelet, Ham and Eggs, Toast, Coffee. DINNER: Boiled Turkey, Potatoes, Green Peas, Stewed Celery, Asparagus, Lettuce Salad, Cheese Fondue, Fruit, Coffee. SUPPER: Fried Ham, Preserved Peas, Tea.

MONDAY. BREAKFAST: Oatmeal, Bacon and Eggs, Potatoes, Crepes a la Parisienne, Toast, Coffee. DINNER: Broiled Chops, Chicken Pancakes, Stewed Potatoes, Canned Peas, Mince Pie, Tea. SUPPER: Broiled Smoked Herrings, Corn Bread, Spiced Baked Peas, Gingerbread, Tea.

TUESDAY. BREAKFAST: Broiled Steak, Potatoes, Mashed in Cream, Buckwheat Cakes, Coffee. DINNER: Beef Steak with Spaghetti, Spinach, Celery, Baked Sweet Potatoes, Golden Pudding, Tea. SUPPER: Amourette, Baked Apples, Graham Flak, Fried Smelts, Sponge Cake, Tea.

WEDNESDAY. BREAKFAST: Fruit, Corn-Meal Mush, Mousse with Cream Gravy, Rice or Middle Cakes, Home. DINNER: Potato Soup, Roast Beef, Stewed Corn and Tomatoes, Mashed Potatoes, Brussels Sprouts, Apple Meringue Pie, Tea. SUPPER: Cracker and Milk Toast, Potato Croquettes, Cold Meat Cake, Baked Apples, Tea.

THURSDAY. BREAKFAST: Orange, Graham Bread, Minc'd Beef, Mashed Potatoes, Hominy Muffins, Coffee. DINNER: Stew'd All Soup, Canned or Roast Beef, Roasted Potatoes, Stewed Celery, Sour Apple Short Cake, Tea. SUPPER: Broiled English Bacon, Toast, Orange Marmalade, Cream Cake, Coffee.

FRIDAY. BREAKFAST: Broiled Southern Shad, Broiled Potatoes with Parsley, Hot Milk, Butter, Coffee. DINNER: Fried Oysters, Cabbage Sale, Stewed Fish with Tomatoes, Macaroni, Baked Potatoes, Lemon Jelly, Charlotte Russe, Tea. SUPPER: Potato Tea Cakes, Swiss Eggs, Cream-of-Tartar Muffins, Fresh Preserves, Tea.

SATURDAY. BREAKFAST: Corn Meal Mush, Baked Apples, Broiled Ham, Lyonnaise Potatoes, Mince Pie, Coffee. DINNER: Broiled Leg of Mutton, Caper Sauce, Potatoes, Mashed Turnips, Boiled Rabbit, Lettuce, Bread Pudding, Currant Jelly Sauce, Tea. SUPPER: Escaloped Mutton, Orange, Toast with Grated Cheese, Coconut Cake, Tea.

Receipts are given for the dishes presented by a star.

POTATOES WITH CREAM SAUCE. Six large potatoes, pared and boiled in salt water, then mashed fine and rubbed through a sieve. Heap loosely the mashed potato, making little hollows over it. Pour over it hot cream sauce, made by boiling together one pint of sweet milk, one tea-spoonful of butter, one table-spoonful of flour, and two stalks of finely chopped celery.

POTATOES CREPES A LA PARISIENNE (to serve with eggs and bacon). Cut the raw potatoes in very thin slices. Make a batter of one egg, well beaten, and a tea-spoonful of flour. Pour it into a flat pan, put the slices of potato in, cover them well with the batter, and fry in boiling lard or fat.

COTLETTES A LA SOUSSE. Have the cutlets of veal cut rather thick, trim and press them slightly, and lard them

with equal portions of fat bacon and ham. Put the trimmings of the cutlets in a stew-pan. Add to these three or four onions, two carrots, a bunch of parsley, and some chopped clives, and season with salt and pepper. Arrange the cutlets on top of these, moisten with some good stock, and cover with slices of bacon and a piece of heavy brown paper, buttered, then cover the saucepan and simmer on a gentle fire. When sufficiently cooked, strain off the gravy and leave the cutlets until cold, when they may be trimmed to make them all of equal size. Strain the gravy in which they were cooked through a hair sieve, and reduce it, by boiling, to the consistency of a glaze. Put the cutlets into this jelly; turn them that both sides may be glazed, then place them neatly in a circle on a dish, pour into the centre a *puree* of onions, and garnish with a few of the smallest onions, left whole. Arrange the cutlets so that a leaf of parsley may be laid at the end of each, so that the green may encircle each. This *entree* can be prepared on Saturday, and served cold the following day.

CRECY SOUP. This soup is a simple *puree* of carrots, and is not difficult to prepare. Pare and wash six fine carrots, a good-sized turnip, and a large onion, cut them all into fine slices, put a lump of butter, the size of an egg, into a saucepan, and add the minced vegetables, shake them over the fire until the vegetables are colored well, but not browned. Add three pints of water, and season. When the vegetables are cooked, press them through a sieve, then return them to the saucepan and add hot water or stock to give the desired consistency. Cut a number of small cubes of bread, about half an inch thick. Melt a table-spoonful of butter in a frying-pan, put in the cubes of bread and shake over the fire until they are a bright golden color. Pour the soup into a tureen, and serve with these *crotons*. Boiled rice may be substituted for the bread. If a richer soup be desired, soup-stock can be used instead of water; or a tea-spoonful of Liebig's extract can be added to the water.

SAVE-ALL SOUP. Cut the meat from a cold beef or mutton bone, break up the bone, put into a stew-kettle with six medium-sized potatoes, three pints of cold water, one large onion, minced fine, and one thin slice of salt pork, hashed; boil slowly two hours. Then strain, and add one quart of milk, boiling hot, into which one table-spoonful of butter and one of flour has been smoothly stirred. Season with salt, pepper, and crushed celery. To crush the celery, chop the stalks fine, then crush them with a rolling-pin. Serve the soup with cubes of bread as directed for Crecy soup, or broken bits of cracker fried brown in butter.

BEEF STEAK WITH SPAGHETTI. One and a half pounds of steak from the top round, cut into cubes one inch and a half square. Slice a good sized onion and fry in butter in a large frying-pan. Add a can of tomatoes, season with salt and pepper, put in the meat; cover the pan, and set on the back part of the range or stove, where it should simmer gently for one hour and a half or two hours. When the meat is nearly done, put in three or four potatoes. Put a handful of spaghetti or macaroni—broken up and boiled till done in salted water on a hot dish, and pour the stew over it. A can of peas may also be added.

CHICKEN PANCAKES. One pint of finely chopped cold chicken, freed from bones, seasoned with salt, pepper, and tomato or mushroom catsup. Pour over the meat one table-spoonful of flour, one table-spoonful of butter, mixed with one-half pint each of water and cold gravy, heated to boiling point; then heat the chicken. For the batter, beat two eggs until light, and mix with one and one-half cupsful of sweet milk, two full cups of flour, and one tea-spoonful of baking-powder. Heatily fry pancakes of the desired size to a light brown, spread some of the prepared chicken upon each pancake, fold once, and keep hot until all are ready for serving.

STEWED FISH WITH TOMATOES. Put a can of tomatoes in a saucepan with a tea-spoonful of finely chopped onion, a dessert-spoonful of salad oil, and a little cayenne pepper and salt, simmer for half an hour, then lay in the fish—a pair of flounders (usually called soles), or any white fish—adding a little water if there is not sufficient liquor to cook them. Beat up the yolk of an egg with the juice of a lemon, and five minutes before dishing the fish, pour it in and shake the saucepan to prevent curdling.

DELAIDE PUDDING.—To a pint of water add the juice and thinly pared rind of a lemon, and boil in a saucepan. Remove from the fire, and stir in half a pound of butter and a cupful of sugar; next—six in, very gradually and smoothly, half a pound of flour, and let it cool. Now add six well-beaten eggs and a tea-spoonful of baking-

powder. Half fill some buttered cups, and bake for twenty minutes in a quick oven. Serve with melted butter made with milk in which a dessert-spoonful of currant jelly has been dissolved. A drop or two of carmine will improve the color of the sauce.

SOUP APPLE SHORT-CAKE. Pare and stew four apples in a very little water until tender, then rub them through a sieve, use no sugar or flavoring, but spread over a cake made with one quart of flour, one and a half tea-spoonfuls of baking powder, one table-spoonful of sugar, one table-spoonful of butter, kneaded soft and baked quickly. Serve with the following sauce.

SAUCE FOR SHORT-CAKE.—One pint and a half of sweet milk, the yolks of four eggs, three table-spoonfuls of sugar, one table-spoonful of vanilla. Let the milk come to a boil, then add the well-beaten egg-yolks, sugar, and vanilla.

TOMATO OMELET.—Season a can of tomatoes with salt and pepper, add an onion finely minced, and spread over a hot plain omelet. "Those who eat will cry for more."

A RELIABLE OMELET.—Six fresh eggs, the yolks and whites beaten separately. One level table-spoonful of butter, one cup of new milk into which one even table-spoonful of flour has been smoothly mixed; season with salt and pepper, pour, without mixing, into a hot, buttered omelet pan. Shake vigorously until the egg begins to thicken. Let the pan rest on the stove for about five seconds; then roll up the omelet. Tip the pan forward and roll the omelet with a knife in the same direction. When rolled, brown for about a quarter of a minute. Serve at once.

SPICED PEARS, BAKED. Remove the blossom end from sound winter pears. Make a syrup of granulated sugar and vinegar, two-thirds as much sugar as vinegar. Tie in a thin muslin bag one tea-spoonful of bruised cloves, one tea-spoonful of crushed stick-cinnamon, and one fresh lemon-peel chopped fine, and throw into the stone vessel containing the syrup. Set the jar in the oven, and, when the syrup is hot, drop in the pears; leave in a moderate oven until tender.

POTATO TEA-CAKES. Take one pound of cold boiled potatoes, and mash them smooth with the rolling-pin. Add one pound of flour; half a pound of suet, very finely chopped; six ounces of currants, two ounces of moist sugar, and one tea-spoonful of baking-powder; a little grated lemon-peel may be put in if liked. Roll out to the thickness of half an inch; bake in a moderate oven for an hour or until nicely browned. Cut into squares, and serve hot.

AMOURTINS. This is a favorite supper-dainty in German nurseries. Soak slices of bread, from which the crust has been cut, in a custard made with two eggs beaten up in a pint of milk and sweetened. When well saturated, lay on a baking dish and set in the oven until they brown delicately. Sprinkle with powdered sugar, and serve hot. Jelly can also be spread on them, if preferred. *Demorest's Monthly Magazine.*



HEAR THE RAIL FENCE PHILOSOPHER.

My boy, I congratulate you on the fact that you are about to get married to the dearest girl in the universe, and I assure you I wish you the greatest prosperity and happiness. As a true friend, I wish to say a few words to you that the minister may not mention, but are implied in your promise to cherish and support. This, no doubt, you are most desirous to fulfill, and you have resolved to do so if your life is spared, but should the angel of death take you away, I ask you, have you made the necessary provision for your darling in fulfillment of your sacred promise.

Now, as a friend and one who knows the right thing for you to do, I would advise you to invest in the Instalment Bonds of the TEMPERANCE AND GENERAL LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY as they are superior to the endowment policy of any other company. In this that they have a guarantee cash surrender value after three years. This Company is one of our solid institutions having a substantial capital and full government deposit. It is exceedingly well managed and has obtained a larger business than any other Canadian Company in its second year of its existence.

My boy, the reason it is so prosperous is on account of the true and equitable principles upon which it is established, and the liberal bonds and policies it issues; in conclusion, I would warn you not to delay over this important matter but to decide at once, call on one of the agents of the Company and procure instalment bonds or policy and present to your bride.