

ALL ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF THE HOUSEWIVES

HAVE A CONSCIENCE IN COOKING

By ANNE HUTTENHOUSE.

AMERICAN women naturally have the delicate palate. They are quick to recognize artistic cookery and to improve their own cooking, but—

Antoine Dupraz, the chef of the Colony Club, who is distinguished for his membership in the society of women of fame and fortune, painted pictures. He who prepares each day wonderful menus for leaders in society, in the artistic professions and in great philanthropic enterprises, could not bring himself to the point of criticizing the feminine characteristics without an effort. His Gallic soul was disturbed by the idea that he might be misjudged as one of the fine arts and as persons who are supreme in any line of achievement he is modest. With a gesture that indicated how much he regretted to find fault with anything here in the United States, he went on:

But American women, in fact all Americans, are wasteful. In cooking the American women demand always the best, but they have only recently been gently concerned about making the best of the best. There should be the grand conscience in cooking."

"The grand conscience in cooking," said the Frenchman, had uttered a common truth when he discerned the importance of the ethical side of preparing food.

The idea is to provide just enough for each meal, to associate the right dishes and to have everything cooked at the last possible moment before serving, so that nothing may be spoiled," he explained. "Cooking is a science first. Each process must be timed so that there will be no chance of having meats wait for the vegetables. All should be placed on the table the instant that the fire has completed the cooking.

Which waste is due to indifference to the cook as well as to poor estimates of what will be eaten at a meal. And this when the food is left after a dinner or a dinner that is often cast away instead of being made into tempting entrees. For the domestic cuisine a knowledge of how to combine materials into truly savory dishes is most imperative. It is that knowledge that Americans lack, but they are awake to their deficiencies and their colleagues of domestic science are doing great things.

It is the mode now to strive in all things pertaining to dining for that simplicity that stands for real elegance which always distinguishes the haute monde. Even this may be said to be a protest against the national tendency to ask for more and more toward wastefulness. But the simplest dinner may, of course, cost a great deal. Even then it has more elegance, since the dollars have been concealed, since they have been spent for rare importations prepared for epicures.

A good dinner means first, a well-balanced menu in which are assembled the dishes which associate well together, second, cooking that is above the ordinary, superlative in its perfection, and third, flawless service. The idea of simplicity should be carried out even in the decorations. Thus a long, low bed of rare orchids or roses is to be preferred, instead of any elaborate scheme of ornamentation. The guide should be common sense, which teaches that above all things ease and comfort, pleasure for the eye and for the palate should be sought."

When it is known that for twenty years Antoine Dupraz has studied what constitutes a good dinner this dictum concerning simplicity means a great deal. Before he went to the Colony Club he was at Delmonico's and he has had a chance to learn the tastes of the eating at other restaurants, where the way dine demand the highest achievements in culinary talents.

After he became acquainted with the demands of Americans he returned to Paris to learn whatever might be new in European ideas and there he found out what every chef knows, that the really successful cook is a creator as well as an imitator. So now he originates novelties and improves on old favorites. He develops individuality and in a hundred subtle ways impresses his personality upon what he produces each day. Like the great designers of costumes he studies his clientele and it is conceded that his employers are discriminating diners, for they bring to their club the fastidiousness, the fine taste and the critical sense which belong to women of large social experience and extended acquaintance in the world's centres of culture.

A menu which Antoine Dupraz considers typical of present day standards is as follows:

Menu d'hiver
Clams or Oyster Cocktail
Caviar
Cold asparagus, chicken gumbo or consommé
Roulet
Filet of English sole, Marguery sauce
Filet of beef tenderloin, Richelieu
New asparagus, Mouseline sauce
Grand-froid of chicken, Renaissance
Sauté of lamb, French Dressing
Ice cream
Coralles de fantasia
Café noir

It is in the cooking of the filet of English sole that the chef reveals himself. The Dupraz recipe for preparing fish for the table is famous. Each is original, and for the benefit of women who desire to learn the new year by adding to their knowledge of cookery he gives the following directions:

After the fish has been boned and the skin taken off put it into a saucepan with butter, salt and pepper and a glass of good white wine. Place the saucepan in the oven where the fish can cook evenly for a few moments. Boil the fish bones in a quart of water with a little spice, half a lemon and a few onions and carrots.

Another saucepan a quarter pound of butter and the same amount of flour should be mixed and cooked slowly for ten minutes. Strain out the fat and butter, add the liquid to the flour and butter, rectify this and add to it one-eighth of a pound of lobster butter. The sauce is now ready to pour over the fish, which should be placed on an oval dish. But the dish should be garnished with a border of potatoe paste, and when the sole has been laid in the centre it should be decorated with a bouquet of poached oysters and of cooked turnips.

After the sauce has covered the fish a last touch is given by putting a

costliest of wares will be employed in the kitchen. There will be fewer utensils and they will be scientifically constructed.

It is wise counsel that the "savage" Frenchman gives with such kindness. He repeats again and again that he would not presume to make conspicuous our national shortcomings in cookery; he refrains from pointing out our specific offences against the laws that govern digestion. He does not mention our pies or our hot backbones, cakes, our fried meats or our baking powder biscuits.

But when American women study waste, they cultivate the "grand conscience of cooking" and this way opens to wisdom in food values.



From his vantage ground at the Plaza Pierre Lafage, chef de cuisine of the hotel at which many New York city women entertain guests at dinners long to be remembered, has a chance to study the American taste. For seven years he has been preparing menus for

often and more. Where the food is delicate fine contrasts is only an average dinner.

"Each course must be satisfying in its cooking, it must be in the right sequence. Each must prepare for the one that follows. It is well not to have any-

thing to distract attention from the piece de resistance. The importance of cooking is not recognized. Now that famous men and fashionable women are boasting of their knowledge of cookery Pierre Lafage thinks all the younger generation will be interested. It is not an uncommon experience for a financier or a society leader, a clubman or an opera star to send for a recipe. A menu arranged for a dinner party at the Plaza, and which is suggested by the chef for private houses, is as follows:

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Every woman who follows the Dupraz recipe for cooking sole will have the satisfaction of knowing that she is receiving a lesson from the chef who last year won the gold medal at the exhibition of the Société Culinaire Philanthropique with his salmon moderne, and if it is a little trouble to elaborate sauce and decoration it is well to remember that what makes the difference between the commonplace achievement and that which is unusual is the power to take infinite pains. And to cook well one must have the work one must have the gift for it. Then one does not stir up the kitchen, use too many utensils and make a mess of things.

In the midst of his most intricate "creations" Antoine Dupraz will stop to say that order and cleanliness are the most imperative laws of the kitchen.

"Most kitchens are too crowded," he declares. "The tendency is to want too many utensils, great numbers of pots and pans used seldom and always occupying valuable space. It should not be the boast that one has a complete assortment of kettles and tins; it should be the pride that few are needed."

"Shelves lined with aluminum, granite ware and pottery are difficult to keep clean. They collect dust and are a nuisance. The adept in cookery does his work easily without many utensils. He knows exactly what he wants and he never lets the things he uses collect so that he has the sense of being crowded."

Here again is another instance of waste, waste of room and waste of money. The day is coming when the

cost of being clean is the employment of preventive methods, the housekeeping should be made the most of as a time to use putty on the windows to keep out dust, to apply paint that is light and therefore cannot be neglected in the weekly ministrations of the charwoman. How strange to replace dark paint, which does not show dust, for pale gray and cream whited, that will be the first thought, but economy in being clean means that there shall be constant thought of cleanliness and therefore the watchfulness which prevents neglect. That leads to education for reform, the last step, for when the rooms are all so bright and so dainty, so spacious and so attractive that each member will rejoice in them, lessons in avoiding careless habits will be the last step in the campaign to reduce the cost of being clean.

But to go back to the first step—elimination. When all the superfluous objects have been removed, all dust-collecting carpets have been replaced by rugs and heavy curtains have been replaced

by silk or chintz it will be found that even with the aid of the housewife's hands the cost of daily labor have been reduced one-third. In other words, at the end of 1912 the expense account which at the end of 1911 showed \$200 as the amount spent in the care of the house will have \$100 or \$200 as the sum total. And it will be realized that the campaign of economy has led to a unrelenting campaign of cleanliness.

The cost of being clean can be further reduced by the employment of all the new devices for reducing labor and improving sanitary conditions. The vacuum cleaner will be used and the dustless duster will replace the square of cheesecloth. The floors will be gone over with dustless mops and brushes of every size and shape will be found necessary.

The radiator brush will prevent accumulations between the gilded coils, which are always collectors of dust and dirt, and dentally germ of all sorts. Other small brushes will be indispensable for the curved furniture, which has survived the elimination. Window brushes will be in demand and all these brushes will have been treated so that they belong to the class of dustless articles.

There is not much economy in buying all sorts of new mops and brushes, the average housekeeper will tell herself, and she will frown as she remembers the scientific method of reducing the cost of being clean. Then she will remember that her domain has not been really clean after all her expense.

It does require courage to take radical steps in changing household methods. That is the reason that these reforms which the progressive thinkers have tested will be adventures. There must dwell a brave spirit in the woman who experi-

menting its triumphant presentation on the table. Here are the Lafage directions:

Boil a pullet. Let it cool and then shave the breast in nice, even slices. Cut out the breast bone, using scissors for the purpose. Stuff the fowl with two pounds of mouseline chicken force meat, to which has been added one-half pound of pieces of fine grass. Spread the force meat in layers, placing slices of the chicken breast between the layers. Stuff the fowl, reconstructing it exactly, smoothing the surface and decorating with truffles. Lastly, place it on a plate in a deep browning pan, containing a little water and brown in a moderate oven.

When cooked serve on an oval dish with garnishing of quenelles of chicken force meat, slices of sweetbreads, small white heads of fresh mushrooms, slices of truffles, cocks combs and slices of kidneys, all of which have been covered with squiggle sauce.

The "Sablées." Fondantes aux Amandes, the delicious little almond cakes that melt in the mouth, will be a treasure to every woman who learns to make them, for nothing could be more delicate. The Lafage recipe for them is as follows:

One pound of flour.
Three-quarters of a pound of butter.
One-half pound of almond powder.
Three ounces of sugar.

Mix with the whites of eggs. Flatten the paste and cut with fancy paste cutters. Bake in a hot oven.

One of the desserts that are especially good for dinner parties is "Fishes Sultanes." Cover the bottom of a dish with a little pistachio ice cream, making a layer about half an inch thick. Place two peaches, which have been peeled, cut in two and cooked in a strong syrup, on top of the ice cream and pour over them the syrup, which has been lightly thickened with arrowroot. Add a little kirsch and put a veil of sugar around the dish.

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