



HOUSEKEEPING IN MAY.

THIS month we begin to feel that summer is truly "y comen in," for our markets begin to show a plenteous store of every sort of good. Salmon is cheaper than it was and is abundant, trout are fine, turbot also, halibut is very fine, and, in fact, the fish market is unusually varied and fully supplied.

Lamb and veal are the two meats we most favour now, partly because they are both at their best, partly because the vegetable accompaniments suited to them are at their best also.

Look at the delicious young spring cabbages (tempting us to try real farmhouse fare), at the crisp succulent spinach, the bundles of asparagus, the lettuces, the *finer herbes*, delightful all of them, while our old favourite, green mint, tempts us to make it into sauce, whether we need it or not.

Fruit is still scarce, although forced strawberries and apricots, pines, grapes, etc., are in the shops; but they are at prohibitive prices for slender purses. We can, however, wait for the gooseberries that will appear with the end of the month, for with such excellent vegetables we do not feel the need of so much fruit. Old potatoes are rapidly going out and new ones taking their place; splendid "earlies" come to us from the Canary Isles, Malta, and from Jersey a little later.

In the flower-market Nature has been most bountiful; such a wealth of bloom greets us on every side that it is now a question of "what shall we choose," not of "what can we afford." Hostesses are critical of colour and shade who, a short time ago, were glad to take anything; but there is abundance of choice to satisfy even the most fastidious.

Let us imagine we are giving a "little dinner" this month to a party of friends, and we wish to strike an original note without committing ourselves to great expense.

To begin with the table—that is, with its decoration. If a round one, we might take a square—or, if a long or oval table, we had better have a piece twice as long as wide—of deep gold-coloured silk; only it must be of a rich shade. On the centre of this, place a bowl (not too large) of silver, if we have it, or of cut glass (a salad-bowl will do), and fill this with damp moss. Then arrange to branch out of this fair yellow daffodils, white and purple iris, with their own green, and a little feathery spirea. Have about a dozen small dark-green glass tubes, and fill these with a few jonquils, and some sprays of lily of the

valley, also half-a-dozen saucers containing wet moss and compactly filled with Neapolitan or Empress violets. Arrange these according to your own design around the centre-piece and at the corners of the table, and trail a few pieces of asparagus fern from the centre to each corner. Light up this table with candles under yellow shades.

Now for the menu:—

Potage printanier.
Filets de saumon. Sauce mousseline.
Côtelettes d'agneau aux petits pois.
Poulets au cresson.
Asperges en branches. Sauce tartare.
Crème suédoise.
Dessert.

Anglicé.

Spring Soup.
Filets of Salmon. Muslin Sauce
Lamb Cutlets and Green Peas.
Roast Chicken and Salad.
Asparagus. Tartar Sauce.
Swedish Cream.
Dessert.

Spring Soup.—Take a pint of freshly-shelled peas, a shred lettuce, cress, parsley, a sprig of mint, a few leaves of sorrel, a few fresh onions, and cook them till tender in fresh butter. Press all through a colander, and add clear stock to make up the required quantity, slightly thicken with a spoonful of fecule (potato flour), and boil up, then just before serving take off the fire, season to taste, and stir in the beaten yolks of two eggs. Serve with fried croûtons.

The salmon filets should be neatly shaped, coated with egg and white breadcrumbs, and fried in butter. For the sauce, the yolks of two eggs, the juice of a fresh lemon, a little salt and pepper, and a quarter of a pint of good melted butter—that is, nearly all butter. Mix well, and stir over the fire, but do not let it boil.

Trim the lamb cutlets and broil them delicately on both sides, then serve them around a mound of green peas that have been cooked in the following manner: Place the peas in a stewpan with a sprig of mint, a small onion, and a lettuce, add a good large lump of butter, and replace the cover tightly. Let the peas cook very fast, in the steam that a quick galloping will create, and in about

ten minutes they will be done, and ready to serve. The butter should be poured over them.

Roast the fowl and dish it with a garnish of picked water-cress, serve new potatoes, gravy, and a well-dressed salad as its accompaniments.

Sauce Tartare.—Put the yolk of an egg quite free from white into a basin, and beat it for a minute or two with a pinch of salt, a pinch of pepper, and a tablespoonful of dry mustard. Stir into this, first in drops and afterwards in spoonfuls, four large tablespoonfuls of salad oil, and carefully beat the sauce every time—its excellence will depend on the thorough beating. After half the oil has been added, stir in a spoonful of vinegar. Mince very finely three shallots, two small gherkins, and a tablespoonful of mixed chervil and tarragon. Add these to the sauce with a pinch of cayenne. Mix very thoroughly and serve, or, if not wanted at once, keep in a cool place, and then give it another beating before using.

Crème Suédoise.—For a moderately large mould take a quart of milk and boil it with a quarter of a pound of lump sugar and the part of a pod of vanilla. When it has cooled a little, stir into it eight eggs lightly beaten, whites and yolks together, then pour this cream into a buttered mould in which a few ratafia biscuits soaked in sherry have been put, set the mould in a *bain-marie* or in a cool oven. When the cream has become quite firm, set the mould aside in a cool place, and when required turn it out on to a dish, and place currant jelly around it as a garnish.

As the asparagus with its sauce, and the cream are both served cold, they may be prepared hours beforehand, and this greatly lightens the trouble of serving the dinner. The soup also could be made ready for re-heating, and the salmon filets would take no harm if treated likewise.

With a little judicious forethought and management, even the most elaborate menu comes within the capabilities of an ordinary home cook.

It will perhaps be thought that eggs have been rather lavishly used in the composition of the dishes given above; but we may reflect that eggs are very cheap and good this month and they need not be begrudged on the score of expense; but if any whites of egg remain from the sauces, these might take the place of two eggs in the cream.