

THE CHILDREN'S PARTY-SUPPER.



HE children clamoured for a party; father groaned as he thought of the call it would make upon his already overstrained pocket, and mother sighed at the prospect of having her orderly house turned into a bear-garden; neither

encouraged the project, although it must be said in their favour that they did not actually quash it. The children turned to Pollie—she was always a refuge and strong tower to them; if there was a way of possibility Pollie could always find a means of treading in that way, she had an open sesame wherewith to charm apparently closed doors. In this instance she was entirely on the children's side; a frolic on a winter's evening was quite to her own taste, and she even initiated the proposal of a party-supper. This was attacking the enemy's camp with a boldness that was almost effrontery, but she gained her point all the same.

"Have it your own way, only don't turn me out-of-doors entirely, and make that cover all your expenses," father said, and "that" proved to be a five-pound note. Pollie gave him a grateful kiss and the others ventured a cheer.

Approached on the subject of supper, mother said, "You are quite able to manage it yourself, Pollie; I will give you what help I can, but don't ask the servants to do more than their regular share of work." So, left to her own resources, Pollie, as directress, wisely pressed everyone, even the little ones, into service.

After much debating it was decided that supper should be laid in the nursery upstairs, partly because this was one of the largest rooms in the house, and as everything save the chocolate would be served cold, the table could be left finished in every detail before the guests' arrival; also, as the supper was to conclude the festivities there seemed something appropriate in mounting upwards in order to reach it.

The staircases were to be lighted with Chinese lanterns, as the subdued light from these quite hid from view the shortcomings of well-worn carpets, while a few plants here and a draped curtain there, completed the illusion. In the banqueting-hall itself a good deal of this illusory work was required, but it was wonderful how much was accomplished by a few yards of art muslin, some flags and evergreen boughs, when ingenuity set to work upon them.

The long table down the middle of the room consisted of boards laid over trestles, the barrenness of these was hidden by having a blanket laid over before the cloths were put on. Over the white cloth to form a lattice-work pattern, ribbons were laid in diagonal lines crossing each other, very cheap ribbons and very narrow ones, but of bright colours—scarlet, green, and yellow, and the effect was brilliant. Small feathery ferns and palms in white and green pots broke up the uniformity. Two dozen cane chairs had been hired for this room, also a little crockery and glass.

The maids were by no means unwilling to help in waiting upon the guests, so the business of serving coffee and chocolate was left to their hands; the boys being pressed into service, were drilled by their sisters,

and became deft at removing and carrying plates, etc.

Home-made lemonade with split ice in it filled several glass jugs on the table, and was found refreshing by even those fascinated by sweet chocolate in dainty blue and white cups. Ices were vetoed, not only for their unwholesomeness, but for the difficulty of making them, as the establishment did not boast a freezer, but there were two iced puddings, besides jellies on the table, so the absence of other kinds was not noticed.

As the viands were all cold they were all placed upon the table, but when meat plates were removed the principal meat dishes were taken away also, and the sweets which required serving were taken in their place. These latter were a Crystal Palace pudding, a *Duchess gateau*, a chocolate mould with cream, and a prune jelly. In the spaces between came moulds of jelly of different colours, some with fruits and some without, mince pies, and cheesecakes, *éclair*s, custards, and small cakes. A beautiful dish of fruit, bright oranges, apples, bananas, and grapes, tastefully arranged, was in the centre of the table.

The plain gas brackets belonging to the nursery had their ugliness veiled by crinkled paper covers of different shades, while the lighting of the table itself was done by the somewhat old-fashioned but ever-charming fairy lamps. The soft light which these afforded gave just the touch of mystery that was needed to make an enchanting whole when all arrangements were completed, and even father was compelled to admiration when he peeped in and saw what a transformation had been effected.

Mother had helped to choose the more substantial dishes belonging to the feast, and she undertook to make the galantines of rabbit and the chicken patties, also seeing to the boiling of the ham. A tongue was purchased ready cooked, as its cost thus was not any more and was a saving of trouble. Perhaps we might note down the way in which mother proceeded with regard to the—

Galantine.—One rabbit cut into joints was gently stewed with seasoning and a little salt bacon until just tender, then the flesh was removed from the bones and sliced. A pound of lean veal cutlet was also sliced after being sufficiently cooked, and two eggs were boiled hard, then shelled and cut through. A large breakfastcupful of clear strong gravy was made from stock and bones, and in this half an ounce of isinglass was dissolved; then a fluted mould was taken, a little gravy put in the bottom, some strips of egg to form a star pattern next, then slices of rabbit, veal and ham alternately; more egg whenever it seemed well, and the rest of the meat until all was used up. The remainder of the gravy was poured over, then a cover to fit inside the top of the mould and a weight upon that, after which it was set in the oven and very gently cooked for about an hour. This was left undisturbed until thoroughly cold, when, after removing weight and cover it could be turned out on to a dish and garnished. Cut into very thin slices this was most savoury.

For the *Chicken Patties* a little veal and ham were minced with the flesh of a boiled fowl, some grated lemon peel, a few bread-crumbs and a pinch of aromatic seasoning, then sufficient white sauce to moisten the whole. Some patty-pans were lined with very light pastry, but not "puff," a spoonful of the mince and an upper crust to cover, brushed over with milk, then baked for thirty minutes in a moderate oven.

The sweets were all left to Pollie's care, and she strove to excel herself in their making, and the result was almost—if not quite—professional. The first thing to be made was the

Duchess Gateau.—The cake part of this consisted of four ounces of ordinary flour and two ounces of Paisley, three ounces of fresh butter, three ounces of castor sugar, the whites of four eggs beaten to a snow, and a few drops of almond essence. The butter and sugar were beaten together, then the mixed flour and the whites of eggs were beaten in alternately, the cake was then baked in a buttered tin in a quick oven for twenty minutes. The tin was a round one, and, when the cake had grown cold, it was cut into three and spread first with apricot jam, then with a layer of cream whipped until stiff between each division, the whole covered with cream just before taking to table and ornamented with crystallised fruits.

The *Crystal Palace Pudding* was simple enough.—A mould was filled with alternate layers of macaroons, sponge fingers and ratafias, a layer of greengage jam between each layer of biscuits. A custard made with the yolks of the four eggs used for the *gateau*, with a pint of new milk, half an ounce of isinglass and two spoonfuls of sugar, and the strained juice of half a lemon added after the custard had been boiled. This was poured into the mould and set aside in a cold place for several hours.

The *Chocolate Mould* was made at the same time as this pudding as it also required a good while to set. A pint and a half of new milk, an ounce of cornflour and two of ground rice, two ounces of grated chocolate and as much sugar, were all boiled together for five minutes after boiling-point was reached, then the saucepan was taken from the fire, the yolk of an egg was stirred in together with an ounce of fresh butter and a spoonful of lemon-juice, then the mixture was poured into a fancy mould previously made wet with cold water. When turned out this was surrounded with fresh cream. So also was the

Prune Jelly, which took a place on the opposite side of the table. The prunes for this had been soaked overnight in cold water, then cooked very slowly for several hours, and afterwards rubbed through a sieve until a pulp was obtained. This pulp was sweetened with sufficient lump sugar, flavoured with lemon-juice, a little water added to it and a good ounce of isinglass, then it was boiled for a few minutes and poured into a wet mould.

The mince pies and cheesecakes belonged to the Christmas batch, and simply required re-heating to make them fresh. The orange and lemon jellies were made from fresh fruit with gelatine to stiffen them, but the currant and raspberry jellies were made from Rizine flakes. The smaller cakes and biscuits with other sweetmeats were bought, as they scarcely paid for the time and trouble entailed when made at home. Some plates of fruit, oranges cut in halves, sliced pine-apples, figs, and nuts, were laid ready down-stairs for passing about while games were in progress and between the dances, but these had apparently not spoiled the appetites which the company brought to the feast when at last the signal was given to go up higher. Although the hour was still early as ball hours go, it was perhaps as well for some of the guests that a sharp trot in the air awaited them when supper was over, for Pollie's sweets found many an appreciative "tooth."