

CARVING AND SERVING

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Carving and Serving by Mrs. D. A. Lincoln

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MRS. D. A. LINCOLN

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AND SERVING**

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MRS. D. A. LINCOLN

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AUTHOR OF "THE BOSTON COOK BOOK"



BOSTON
ROBERTS BROTHERS
1891

CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| GENERAL DIRECTIONS | 7 |
| SPECIAL DIRECTIONS | 15 |
| TIP OF THE SIRLOIN, OR RIB ROAST | 15 |
| SIRLOIN ROAST | 18 |
| THE BACK OF THE RUMP | 16 |
| FILLET OF BEEF OR TENDERLOIN | 17 |
| ROUND OF BEEF, FILLET OF VEAL, OR FRICANDEAU OF VEAL | 17 |
| BEEFSTEAK | 18 |
| LEG OF MUTTON OR LAMB, OR KNUCKLE OF VEAL | 19 |
| LEG OF VENISON | 20 |
| SADDLE OF MUTTON | 20 |
| SADDLE OF VENISON | 21 |
| HAUNCH OF VENISON OR MUTTON | 21 |
| LOIN OF MUTTON, LAMB, VEAL, PORK, OR VENISON | 22 |
| SHOULDER OF MUTTON OR VEAL | 22 |
| FOREQUARTER OF LAMB OR VEAL | 23 |
| NECK OF VEAL | 24 |
| BREAST OF VEAL | 24 |
| CALF'S HEAD | 25 |
| ROAST PIG | 25 |
| HAM | 26 |
| TONGUE | 27 |

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| CORNERD BEEF | 27 |
| CHARTREUSE, OR PRESSED MEAT | 28 |
| TO CUT UP A CHICKEN FOR A STEW OR FRICASSEE | 28 |
| BOILED FOWL OR TURKEY | 30 |
| BROILED CHICKEN | 32 |
| ROAST TURKEY | 33 |
| ROAST GOOSE | 35 |
| ROAST DUCK | 36 |
| PIGEONS | 37 |
| PARTRIDGES | 37 |
| LARDED GROUSE | 38 |
| RABBIT | 38 |
| SWEETBREADS, CHOPS, AND CUTLETS | 39 |
| FISH | 39 |
| BAKED FISH | 40 |
| SCALLOPED DISHES, MEAT PIES, ENTRÉES, ETC. | 41 |
| SALADS | 42 |
| VEGETABLES | 42 |
| SOUPS | 43 |
| TEA AND COFFEE | 43 |
| PIES | 44 |
| PUDDINGS | 45 |
| MOULDS OF PUDDING, CREAMS, CHARLOTTE RUSSE, ICE-CREAM, ETC. | 45 |
| FRUIT AND NUTS | 46 |
| THE THICKNESS OF SLICES | 47 |
| UTENSILS FOR CARVING AND SERVING | 48 |
| LAST BUT NOT LEAST | 52 |

CARVING AND SERVING.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS.

"Do you teach your pupils how to carve?"

"Please give us a lecture on carving; my husband says he will come if you will."

I have been so frequently addressed in this way that I have decided to publish a manual on the Art of Carving. Instruction in this art cannot be given at a lecture with any profit to my pupils or satisfaction to myself. One cannot learn by simply seeing a person carve a few times. As much as any other art, it requires study; and success is not attainable without much practice. There are certain rules which should be thoroughly understood; if followed faithfully in daily practice, they will help more than mere observation.

This manual is not offered as a guide for special occasions, company dinners, etc., nor for those whose experience renders it unnecessary, or whose means allow them to employ one skilled in the art. But it is earnestly hoped that the suggestions here offered will aid those who desire, at their own table in every-

day home life, to acquire that ease and perfection of manner which, however suddenly it may be confronted with obstacles, will be equal to every occasion.

Printed rules for carving are usually accompanied with cuts showing the position of the joint or fowl on the platter, and having lines indicating the method of cutting. But this will not be attempted in this manual, as such illustrations seldom prove helpful; for the actual thing before us bears faint resemblance to the pictures, which give us only the surface, with no hint of what may be inside.

It is comparatively a slight matter to carve a solid mass of lean meat. It is the bones, tough gristle, and tendons, that interfere with the easy progress of the knife. To expect any one to carve well without any conception of the internal structure of what may be placed before him is as absurd as to expect one to amputate a limb successfully who has no knowledge of human anatomy.

Some notion of the relative position of bones, joints, fat, tough and tender muscles, is the first requisite to good carving. All agree that skill in carving may be acquired by practice; and so it may. Any one can divide a joint if he cut and hack at it long enough, and so learn after a time just where to make the right cut. But a more satisfactory way is to make a careful study before the material is cooked, and thus learn the exact position of every joint, bone, and muscle. Become familiar with a shoulder or a leg of mutton; locate the joints by moving the bones in

the joints, or by cutting it into sections, some time when it is to be used for a stew. Or remove the bone in the leg by scraping the meat away at either end. Learn to distinguish the different cuts of meat. The best way to learn about carving poultry and game is to cut them up for a stew or fricassee, provided care be taken not to chop them, but to disjoint them skilfully.

Then, when you attempt to carve, do the best you can every time. Never allow yourself to be careless about it, even should the only spectators be your wife and children. But do not make your first effort in the art at a company dinner. Every lady should learn the art. There is no reason why she may not excel in it, as she has every opportunity to study the joint or fowl before cooking. Strength is not required, so much as neatness and care. A firm, steady hand, a cool, collected manner, and confidence in one's ability will help greatly. Children also should be taught this accomplishment, and should be taught it as soon as they can handle a knife safely. If parents would allow the children to share their duties at the daily family table, and occasionally when company is present, a graceful manner would soon be acquired. When called upon to preside over their own homes there would less frequently be heard the apology, "Father always carved at home, and I have had no practice." The only recollection that I now have of a dinner at a friend's some years ago is the easy and skilful way a young son of my hostess presided at the

head of the table, while the father occupied the place of guest at the mother's right hand.

One must learn first of all to carve neatly, without scattering crumbs or splashing gravy over the cloth or platter; also to cut straight, uniform slices. This may seem an easy matter; but do we often see pressed beef, tongue, or even bread cut as it should be? Be careful to divide the material in such a manner that each person may be served equally well. Have you never received all flank, or a hard dry wing, while another guest had all tenderloin, or the second joint? After a little experience you can easily distinguish between the choice portions and the inferior. Lay each portion on the plate with the browned or best side up. Keep it compact, not mussy; and serve a good portion of meat, not a bone with hardly any meat on it. After all are served, the portion on the platter should not be left jagged, rough, and sprawling, but should look inviting enough to tempt one to desire a second portion.

Care should be taken to carve in such a way as to get the best effect. A nice joint is often made less inviting from having been cut with the grain, while meat of rather poor quality is made more tender and palatable if divided across the grain. Where the whole of the joint is not required, learn to carve economically, that it may be left in good shape for another dinner.

After you have learned to do the simplest work neatly and gracefully, much painstaking will be