

What shall we have for dinner today? A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Misses Carew's menu book 1880 to 1883

Introduction

One of the few family papers that I inherited from my mother was a menu book, a substantial hard-bound book, with marbled covers, and beautifully handwritten entries under the printed headings *Luncheon*, *Dinner* and *Servants' Hall*. The entries show what was eaten by the household each day at these meals. Menu books do not contain recipes, but rather list the menu for the meals eaten each day.

I wondered if there were many menu books still in existence. Presumably most menu books were disposed of once they had served their purpose. A search of the National Archives in the UK revealed the existence of several menu books, held in archives around the country. Further evidence that menu books were commonly used is that the books themselves were purpose-made, with printed headings, so clearly there was sufficient demand for stationers to produce them for sale. The other two examples I have examined are held in Staffordshire Records Office. One is the menu book of Lord Bagot covering the years 1860 and 1861, and the other is Lord Lichfield's menu book from Shugborough House, from 1919 to 1921. Lord Bagot's book is handsome and elaborate, with two pages for each day, one whole page being devoted to dinner which is served à la française. In contrast, Lord Lichfield's book records simpler meals, and does not have printed headings. This may be because at this period, after World War 1, menu books were on the decline and no longer published in printed form.

Menu books do not seem to be much used as a source of information about what people in upper class households ate in Victorian and Edwardian times. Information about meals seems to be derived mainly from recipe books. Although recipe books often contain menus, these are ideal examples or suggestions, and we have no way of knowing whether the recommended meals were ever eaten. In 1852, Charles Dickens's wife, Catherine, produced a book of menus called *What shall we have for dinner?* which was reprinted in 2005. In her introduction, Rossi-Wilcox says that

although Dickens's menus "do not verify that the author actually cooked or served the variety of courses they suggested, they do express views of ideal meals under favourable circumstances" (Rossi-Wilcox 2005, p. 77). Rossi-Wilcox goes on to analyse these menus, but I question the value of detailed analysis of an ideal, rather than a real, set of menus. Menu books, on the other hand, give an account of what meals were actually served in a household over the course of a year or years. I would argue that they are therefore a valuable historical source, worthy of more attention.

What is in the Misses Carew's menu book

This menu book covers almost three years, from 3 December, 1880 to 6 August, 1883, but there are also gaps of several weeks at a time, presumably because the two ladies were away on lengthy visits to other country houses. The book provides information on almost 700 days of meals over the period. It therefore provides a comprehensive and accurate picture of the daily and yearly diet of this Devonshire household, which at this time consisted of two unmarried sisters, Elizabeth (Bessie) and Beatrice (Bea) Carew, and their servants.

The menu book is in good condition, with each page divided in three by the printed headings: *Luncheon*, *Dinner* and *Servants' Hall*. The years are not printed, but there is a note, in Bessie's handwriting, on the first page, giving the year as 1880. The subsequent years, 1881, 1882 and 1883 are written by hand on the first day of January for each year.

All the entries for the meals are written in ink in the same elegant copper-plate handwriting. Although I have some information about the household at the time, I have not been able to identify the person who wrote the entries with any certainty. The duties of the housekeeper in a medium sized household included buying provisions, drawing up and discussing menus with her mistress, issuing foods to the cook, and making desserts and cakes in the stillroom (Sambrook and Brears 1997). So it would appear that the housekeeper, Mary Bollen, is the most likely candidate, but I have samples of her handwriting, and they do not match the menu book. On the other hand, the cook is described as having a daily interview with her mistress to agree the menus and discuss how many guests need to be catered for (Evans 2011, p. 29). From

the *1881 Census of England and Wales*, I have been able to identify the name of the cook, one Hannah Maydew, aged 40 in 1881, and born in Staffordshire.

The menu book tells us how many were catered for at dinner, and how many servants were there for the mid-day meal. It does not say how many were present for luncheon, although it seems likely that when there were house parties, they would have been given luncheon as well as dinner. The numbers are very useful, as it is possible to see a correlation between the elaborateness of the meals with the number of diners, ranging from the two ladies dining alone, to house parties of up to 15 guests.

The fact that the book covers the calendar year means that the seasonality of food can also be clearly seen.

What the menu book does not tell us

What the menu book does not tell us is what was served at breakfast or tea. There is also no mention of vegetables when served as an accompaniment to a meat or fish dish. Vegetables do occasionally appear as a dish in their own right.

Disappointingly, menu books do not mention what wines were served. This was the butler's province, and the consumption of wines would have been recorded in his cellar book. The servants' allowance of alcohol is not mentioned either. Typically, menservants were allowed 3 pints of beer a day, with 1 to 2 pints for women (Gerard1994).

There is no information in the menu book about the provenance of the food. Unfortunately, I do not have any food accounts which would show what was spent on food and what food was bought in. Sambrook and Brears (1997) say that food accounts show the emphasis moving from a mainly internal supply of raw ingredients to commercial supplies of high-quality foodstuffs and equipment over the course of the nineteenth century. As the Carews still had sizeable estates in the 1880s, they would certainly have had much of their own produce, including game and meat. Devonshire mutton was of high quality, and the Carews had grazing rights on Dartmoor. They also had had kitchen gardens, orchards, and glass houses, so much of the fruit and vegetables would have been home-produced.

French influence

The fact that the cook was English gives a clue to the standing of this county family: a grander establishment would have had a French or French-trained cook. It seems unlikely that Hannah Maydew was French-trained if the uncertain grasp of French terms used in the menu book is any indication. Even with the appearance of English cookery books, by writers such as Eliza Acton, Mrs Beeton and “Wyvern”, French influence is still strong in their use of French terms and recipes. Freeman (1989) comments that about one third of Eliza Acton’s recipes are French, and Acton often uses French terms in conjunction with English words, as in “French beef à la mode” and “Boudin of pheasant à la Richelieu”. Dallas, the opinionated and entertaining author of *Kettner’s Book of the Table*, published in 1877, makes scathing remarks about the pretention of using French names for dishes, and their inaccuracy:

At the present moment the vocabulary of dinner is a mass of confusion and ridiculous mistakes, which is every day becoming worse and worse through the ignorant importation of French names (originally themselves bad enough) into English bills of fare. It comes of abominable pretention. A leg of good English mutton – the best in the world – will be entered as a Gigot of Pré Salé. What on earth has become of the English Southdowns that they should be described as a French Salt Marsh?

Dallas 1877, reprinted 1968, p. 12

This leads me to mention some of the dishes in the menu book which appear in what can only be described as mangled French. Thus we have “crissey” (Crécy) soup; “sorrelosy soup” (this seems to be a mangle of English sorrel and French oseille); “bashmel” (Béchamel) sauce; and “rabbit a la fineherbs” (aux fines herbes). The majority of dishes, though, are given in fairly plain English, and are easy to understand.

It is interesting that the habit of using French terms persists into the 1920s, as Lord Lichfield’s menu book is also littered with French.

Difficulties of deciphering the handwriting

Apart from the difficulties presented by the uncertain grasp of French, a number of words proved difficult to decipher. Some were simply unfamiliar to me, such as the popular “kromeski” which I subsequently found mentioned in a number of Victorian recipe books and commentaries. Kromeskies are described in *Kettner's Book of the Table* as “the most seductive of all the forms of croquette” (Dallas 1877, reprinted 1968, p. 269). This croquette gets its distinction from being wrapped in a thin slice of the udder of veal, or failing that, a thin slice of boiled bacon, before being dipped in batter and fried. Kromeskies made of minced rabbit, chicken, sweetbreads, and even sand eels, all appear regularly in the menu book. Other dishes remain a mystery. The handwriting makes some words difficult to decipher, and the task is not helped if the word is unfamiliar and one therefore has no clue about what is intended. Thus, what appears to be “aal cunne jemme creffon soup” served on 10 December, 1880, defies interpretation. However, the majority of entries are clear and easy to read.

Who were the Misses Carew?

A brief background to the family gives a sense of time and place. In the 1880s, the Carews of Haccombe, from whom I am descended through my mother, had estates in Devon extending to some 14,000 acres. The annual value of the estates in 1883 is given as £15,148 in Bateman's *Great Landowners of Britain and Ireland*. In the period in question, the household consisted of two unmarried sisters, Elizabeth (Bessie) and Beatrix (Bea) Carew, who had inherited a life interest in the estates from their father, Sir Walter Carew, the 8th baronet, who died in 1874. After their deaths in 1921 and 1919 respectively, much of the land was sold to pay death duties and the debts of the male heir, Sir Walter's nephew, Sir Henry Carew, who was my great grandfather, and who had apparently lived beyond his means on the strength of his expectations. The family seat at Haccombe, where my mother spent part of her childhood, was also finally sold by my grandfather in the 1940s.

During the three-year period covered by the menu book, the two ladies divided their time between Haccombe where they spent the summer, and a second house, Marley, in Rattery, where they spent the winter. It appears that the two ladies lived a conventional country life as pillars of the Church, presiding over fêtes and bazaars, entertaining the local gentry, and enjoying riding, hunting and other outdoor country

pursuits. The 1881 census shows that apart from the two ladies, the household comprised 14 servants, including the butler, housekeeper, cook, lady's maid (one Louise Mengushausen, born in Hanover, Germany) footman, under-footman, three housemaids, a kitchen maid, a scullery maid and three grooms. However, the numbers of servants varies, never dipping below 14, and sometimes more than 20.

What did the servants eat?

The prominence of mutton in the servants' diet was doubtless monotonous, but at least it would have satisfied hunger. The servants' diet can be contrasted with the typical diet of an agricultural labourer at that time, who remained in a position of chronic poverty between 1850 and 1914 (Burnett 1979). Burnett quotes a survey undertaken by Francis Heath in 1880 which found that the average agricultural wage was 10 shillings a week. Heath reports that in Devonshire, the usual fare for an agricultural worker was: "for breakfast, 'broth' made of fat, bread and water; for the mid-day meal perhaps a little bread and cheese or potatoes and pork – sometimes, for a change, a little dried fish instead of pork; for the evening meal a cup of tea with dried bread" (Heath, quoted in Burnett 1979, p.162).

The servants in the Carew household fared somewhat better. Here are four typical dinners:

Roast leg of mutton	Hashed rabbit
Roast shoulder of mutton	Suet dumplings
Cold beef	Roast shoulder of mutton
Roast beef	Squab pie
Boiled suet pudding	Roast leg of mutton
Gooseberry tart	

Suppers are almost invariably listed as "cold meats". If I look at the totals for the servants over the three year period, I find that roast shoulder of mutton is served no fewer than 294 times, followed by roast leg of mutton (246), boiled mutton breasts (220) roast loin of mutton (115) and boiled leg of mutton (29). This does not include mutton in Irish stew, in pies, and served cold. The second most common dish is beef, served cold (102) and roasted (98). Rabbit comes next, served hashed (40), boiled (15), in pie (44), and in stew (6). Other dishes made rare appearances, and must have

been very welcome. Game would have been reserved for the family, but the servants did have pheasant pie (3), salmis of partridge (1), squab pie (6), toad in the hole (4), bubble and squeak (1), fried liver (2), and boiled chicken (2). The only appearance of fish is boiled cod (3) and pork appears occasionally, in the form of roast pork (11), boiled pig face (7), and boiled pork (5). The most common pudding served was suet pudding (114), followed by boiled pudding (30) and baked pudding (19). No clue is given as to what, if any, flavouring was used. Other sweets include apple tart (21), boiled jam roll (13) and rhubarb tart (21). Christmas Day is not particularly special, consisting in 1881 of :

Boiled round of beef
Boiled suet pudding
Plum pudding

Rook pie is perhaps the most unusual dish served in the Servants' Hall. Rook pie appears once a year around the end of May, and follows the annual cull of the young rooks as they leave the nests. I have found several recipes for rook pie, including the following, which comes from a collection of recipes from the Federation of Women's Institutes in Cornwall, first published in 1929:

Skin the rooks and cut up, using only the breasts and legs, and soak overnight in slightly salted milk and water. Lay strips of bacon along the sides and bottom of a pie-dish, fill up the dish with layers of rooks and bacon strips, seasoned with salt and pepper. Add 2 ozs. of cream and milk to cover. Cover top with short or puff pastry and bake about 1½ hours.

Cornish Recipes 12th ed. 1935

Analysis of the family's dinners

The dinners are more or less elaborate depending on the number of guests, but follow the same conventional structure of soup, fish, entrée, roasts and game, followed by pudding and a savoury.

The following dinner menu for six has some interesting features, and is a good example of the mish-mash of French and English terms:

DINNERS.	
DINNER.	DINNER.
<p>Sept 16th 6</p> <p>Profiteroles soup Bouchee of Rabbit Roast Duck Roast Partridge Sandrils Mulberry Pudding Cheese Fondants</p>	<p>Sept 16th 6</p> <p>vermicelli soup salmis of Duck Roast saddle Mutton Compote of Fruit Eggs en surprise</p>
LUNCHEON.	LUNCHEON.
<p>Roast Loin Mutton Cold Beef Cold Ham green peas Tark Chocolate Pudding</p>	<p>Mince Mutton Roast Beef Cold Ham Apple Tark Mustard Pudding</p>
SERVANTS' HALL.	SERVANTS' HALL.
<p>Roast Leg Mutton Boiled Breasts</p> <p>Supper Cold Meats</p>	<p>Roast Beef Boiled Mutton Boiled sweet Pudding Apple Tark</p> <p>supper Cold Meats</p>

1. 16 September 1881

Dinner, 16 September, 1881

Profitrolles soup
Boudin of rabbit
Roast duck
Roast partridge
Landrails
Mulberry pudding
Cheese foundows

There are a number of points that can be made about this dinner. The misspelt profitrolles soup is typical of a class of soups that have solids suspended in a clear liquid. The solids can be rice or pasta or tapioca, or in this case, small choux balls. Boudin of rabbit is typical in two ways. Rabbit appears often, both for the family and the servants. Rabbits would have been plentiful on the estate. The entrée course is usually a “made” dish, using minced meat in the form of a boudin as here (like a large sausage, boiled), or a croquette or a cream (as in crème de volaille). The duck on this day was probably farmyard duck, because a distinction is made between “duck” and “wild duck”. The game season opens on 12 August, so we have partridge, and more unusually, landrails. These are corncrakes, and it is strange to think that they were eaten whereas they are now critically endangered. Landrails appear 12 times over the three years, during September. Mulberries would have come from trees on the estate, and we find both mulberry pudding (3) and mulberry tart (5) during September and early October. Cheese, as the savoury course, is by far the most popular. Toasted cheese appears very often – 105 times in three years - but it also comes in other guises, such as the “foundows” here. Unlike what we think of as cheese fondue today, this is actually a cheese soufflé. Cheese foundows are only served when there are guests.

All in all, this dinner is a hearty, solid meal – not at all to our taste today. No mention is made of vegetables, but presumably they were served as accompaniments to the main dishes. Dinner followed a substantial luncheon as well – on average, three meat dishes and two puddings. On this day, luncheon consisted of:

Roast loin mutton
Cold beef
Cold ham
Greengage tart
Chocolate pudding

Christmas dinner for the family is more or less elaborate depending on the number of guests, but out of three Christmas dinners recorded, only one features turkey. The others have roast goose or roast pheasant. There was a house party of 14 for Christmas, 1882, at which the following dinner was served:

- Royal soup
- Palestine soup
- Patties
- Mutton cutlets
- Roast turkey
- Boiled leg mutton
- Roast wild ducks
- Plum pudding
- Ice pudding
- Cheese straws

Two soups, two entrées (patties and mutton cutlets) and ice pudding were only served to large parties.

DINNERS.	
December 25 ^{DINNER.} 14	December 26 ^{DINNER.} 14
Royal soup Palastine soup Pattes Mutton Cutlets Roast Turkey + Chuk Boiled Leg Mutton Roast Wild Ducks Plum Pudding Ice Pudding Chase Straws	Giblet soup Victoria soup Boiled Brill Crèmes de volailles Beef Fillets Roast saddle Mutton Roast Pheasants Diplomat's Pudding Chocolate Profiterols Toasted Cheese
LUNCHEON.	LUNCHEON.
Washed Hare Mince Cold Beef + Ham Boiled Round Beef Almond Cake Souffle Ginger Cake	Washed Beef Roast Leg Mutton Cold Beef + Turkey + Ham Compote of Oranges Plum Pudding, Cake
SERVANTS' HALL. 24	SERVANTS' HALL. 25
Boiled Round Beef Boiled Fish Pudding Boiled Plum Pudding Supper Cold Beef	Cold Beef Roast Shoulder Mutton Boiled Braised Mutton Meats For the Man 10 Supper Cold Meats

2. Christmas Dinner, 1882

How often, and when, were different dishes served?

By entering all the data in to a spreadsheet, it is easy to see the variety and seasonality of the food. It is also interesting to see what doesn't appear: there is no mention of apricots or venison. Pork makes very rare appearances, other than in the form of ham, which is served 19 times at dinner, and very often cold for luncheon. Pork cutlets (4)

and roast pork (4) are served to the ladies when they are dining alone, but never when there are guests. In a recent article in *Petits Propos Culinaire*, McKibben (2011) discusses the taboo on fresh pork in Scotland, and puts forward a number of theories for why this should be so. However, he makes no mention of a similar prohibition on the consumption of pork in England. It may be that as in England cottagers tended to keep a pig as a vital addition to their poor diet, pork was associated with the lower classes and shunned by the quality, at least in public. The entry for pork in *Kettner's Book of the Table* seems to support this theory: "Pork is so little to be seen at good tables, save in the form of ham and bacon, that it would seem to be a work of supererogation to refer to it. It is however eaten – indeed, largely consumed – on the sly and must have a word or two" (Dallas 1877, reprinted 1968, p. 355).

Soup

In entering the information from the menu book, I used headings for each course served at dinner and at luncheon. Dinner invariably started with soup of which there are no fewer than 79 kinds. This proliferation of soups is given short shrift in *Kettner's Book of the Table* which points out:

It has been reckoned that there are about five hundred kinds of soup; but this number is reached by giving the dignity of a separate receipt to every little variation. Thus there are a dozen sorts of Italian paste – vermicelli, macaroni, nouilles, lasagnes, and the rest. Each of these put into a clear gravy gives rise to a different soup.

Dallas 1877, reprinted 1968, p. 436

Certainly macaroni, vermicelli, sago, tapioca, and profiteroles soup appear frequently. The number of vegetable soups also suggests great variety: Palestine, or Jerusalem artichoke, (14), asparagus (8), sorrel (3) and green pea (4) soups were all served in season, and it is hoped that their individuality was preserved, but one suspects that many of the soups on offer, such as julienne, Colbert, bonne femme, italien, and so on were fairly similar. Homely names such as gilet soup (36) and mutton broth (13) appear side-by-side with the more grandiose titles, marred as they often are by the approximate grasp of the French language. Colbert soup is quite popular, making 38 appearances over the period. According to Dallas, Colbert soup is "a clear broth or double broth with poached eggs in it. Sometimes a few of the more delicate vegetables are added – as peas or asparagus points" (Dallas 1877 p. 137) Clear turtle

soup is served 4 times and mock turtle soup 7 times. Fish soups are rare, appearing only in the form of cockles soup (4) and crab soup (1). Clearly, many of the soups are made from the stock of meat and game, as there is a correlation between roasts served and soup of the same name appearing the next day. We have landrail soup, for instance, after roast landrails. Similarly, rabbit (11) hare (6) and wood pigeon (6) soup all clearly pronounce their origins.

Fish

23 species of fish appear over the three years. Fish was generally served after the soup if there were guests, but the fish course was sometimes dispensed with when the ladies were dining alone. They did like some fish, including fried trout (15) which was served in April, May and June. They also must have liked fried sand eels, because they were served 6 times when they were alone, and only once to guests. Sand eels are something of a curiosity, not being an eel at all, but a small fish of the family Ammodytidae, the sand lances, and the term “sand” refers to their habit of burrowing into sand to avoid tidal currents. In the menu book, they appear in May and August, once in the form of a kromesky.

Boiling was, as might be expected, a popular cooking method, but although boiled fish is often served, it appears very rarely when the ladies are dining alone. Brill, cod, haddock, john dory, mackerel, plaice, salmon, trout, turbot and whiting are all subjected to boiling. Salmon (21) and turbot (12) are only served when there are guests. Salmon is mentioned as being served with fennel sauce, and it is also served cold with tartare sauce. Shrimp sauce is specified as an accompaniment for turbot.

Fish are also subjected to the waterzootje, or water souchey, method of cooking. This involves simmering pieces of fish in a court bouillon and serving them in the cooking liquid which is flavoured with roots and leaves of parsley (Dallas 1877, p. 485). This rather insipid sounding dish appears simply as “fish water souchey” (12) and, more specifically, “plaice water souchet”(4), and “fillets of soles water souchey”(1). Sole is generally served fried (21) sometimes with sauce béarnaise (9), béchamel sauce (1) maitre d’hote (11) or au gratin (1). Next to sole, the most popular fish is trout, usually served fried (34), and fried whiting also appears quite frequently (12). Other fish which were served fried or broiled include hake, herrings, and plaice. Oysters and

lobster barely feature, showing up only as oyster patties, lobster patties and lobster vols au vent. Presumably this reflects the scarcity and expense of these items by the 1880s. Crab appears in vols au vent (1) and au gratin (1); and shrimps as patties (1) and as mayonnaise of shrimps (1). Eels spitchcocked are served three times, whitebaits twice, and scalloped cockles twice.

Entrée dishes

Following the fish course, the entrée usually takes the form of “made” dishes, which could be eaten with a fork, including kromeskies, croquettes, croustades, patties, rissoles, boudins, salmis, quenelles, fricasées, vols-au-vent, timbales, and dishes in aspic. Chicken and rabbit are often used for these dishes, perhaps because they are easy to chop finely. Chicken appears in crème de volaille (36), boudin of chicken (21) and in kromeskies (22). One suspects, rather like the perhaps misleadingly large variety of soups, that a lot of these dishes were rather similar. Meat is strongly emphasised, with only the occasional appearance of a timbale of macaroni à la truffe, rice milanese fashion, curried eggs, and plovers’ eggs, to provide some variety. Other entrée dishes included cutlets, with mutton cutlets being by far the most usual (97) sometimes in the guise of cutlets à la reforme (12) en robe de chambre (5) and soubise (2). Lamb and veal cutlets are also served. Sweetbreads are quite popular, appearing in boudins, quenelles and kromeskies, as well as in cutlets, larded, and à la Toulouse.

Roast meat and game

The next course is usually a roast, and although mutton appears most frequently, beef is also much in evidence. Beef appears in no fewer than 48 different cuts and guises, ranging from plain roast and boiled, to puddings, braises and ragouts. Roast veal is occasionally served, and calf’s head is served in seven different ways.

Similarly, mutton appears in many forms, but by far the most common cooking method is roasting. Mutton is much more commonly served than lamb: roast leg of mutton appears 97 times, while roast leg of lamb appears only 10 times. Roast loin of mutton is served 56 times and roast saddle of mutton 37 times. While boiled mutton is thought of as a mainstay of the Victorian diet, it was not popular in the Carew household, with boiled leg of mutton being served only three times in three years.

Roast chicken appears 68 times, and is also served boiled (32), but chicken is used most often for entrée dishes. Rabbit appears 24 times as a roast, but, like chicken, is more often used in entrée dishes. We also see roast turkey (12), roast goose (4) and roast duck (62).

There is a good variety of game. Pheasant is eaten most frequently, roast pheasant appearing 97 times. We also see wild duck (53), partridge (50) grouse (11), hare (14), leverets (2), landrails (12), pigeon (18), snipe (12), teal (1) and woodcock (34).

Vegetables

After the game course, a vegetable course is occasionally specified, but more usually no mention is made of vegetables, which presumably were served as accompaniments. Mushrooms and asparagus appear very often in season – 64 and 72 times respectively. Dressed tomatas (sic) are served 25 times and there are also rare appearances of artichokes (4), cauliflower au gratin (3), vegetable marrow (2), salsify à la crème (1) and dressed truffles (2).

Puddings

Like soups, there are many kinds of puddings, 159 in all. But the impression given is that they are more various. The variety of fruit that was at the cook's disposal gave a lot of scope. Fruits appear in many ways: as jellies, creams, puddings, fools, tarts, fritters, puffs, compotes, cheesecakes and stewed. All the fruits one might expect appear, with the exception of apricots and quinces. There is no mention of bananas, but that is not surprising, as according to Grigson (1985, p. 48), the first shipment of bananas to England arrived from the Canaries in 1882. Apples, blackcurrants (but not blackberries), cherries, damsons, figs, grapes, greengages, lemons, mulberries, oranges, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, raspberries, rhubarb and strawberries are all mentioned. At the more elaborate end of the scale, there are moulded puddings, like steamed cabinet pudding (8) and the set Queen Mab's pudding (19); as well as soufflés, of which we have chocolate (22), coffee (27), orange (1), peach (1), raspberry (1) strawberry (2) and vanilla (24). Ices are served at more elaborate dinner parties, usually described as "ice pudding" but coffee ice and pineapple ice are specifically mentioned.

Then there are the farinaceous puddings, like rice, sago, tapioca and arrowroot. There are a number of puddings which were likely to be steamed, such as carmel (caramel) pudding and chocolate pudding, which were particularly popular with Bessie and Bea, as were sweet omelettes and pancakes. There are a number of curiosities that are either hard to decipher, or for which I have been unable to trace recipes. What looks like “baffanwall” cream may be Bavarian cream, or bavaroise. I do not know what Dutch pudding is, or German pastry or Wynne’s pudding. I had been much perplexed by “waffes” or “waffers” pudding, served 28 times, but I have recently come across a recipe in Lady Clark’s recipe book, published in 1909, which may provide the answer. Disappointingly, waffer pudding seems to be a rather uninteresting pudding, baked in saucers, rather like individual baked pancakes. Devonshire junket is served 24 times, which is fitting for a Devonshire family.

Savouries

At the end of a very substantial dinner, the diners were faced with a heavy dish of boiled cheese (36), toasted cheese (105), cheese omelettes (10) or other cheese dishes, such as chester cakes, which are served 36 times. Eggs also featured as in eggs à l’aurore, eggs à la dauphinoise, and snow eggs. On the more piquant side were anchovy toast (50) devilled bloaters (4), and devilled sardines (20). Occasionally, one would get marrow toast (5), and oysters in the shape of anges à cheval (4). Ham croutes, (11) ham toast (26) and a bacon savoury (9) also appear. Scalloped salsify is served 6 times.

Conclusion

I found the Misses Carew’s menu book absolutely fascinating. It was a lot of work to transcribe all the data on to a spreadsheet but I feel it has been worthwhile, as a quantitative analysis is invaluable in providing a detailed picture of a household’s daily gastronomic life, above and below stairs. I have had to be selective in choosing what to highlight, and there is a lot more information that would be worth discussing. It would have been helpful to have been able to supplement the information from the menu book with household accounts, cellar books, and other family papers, but I hope that I have succeeded in conveying the richness of the menu book as a resource for the food historian.

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