

**A BOOK OF
DORCAS DISHES:
FAMILY RECIPES**

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A Book of Dorcas Dishes: Family Recipes by Kate Douglas Wiggin

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KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

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The old Congregational Church at Buxton Lower Corner which the Dorcas Society has painted, decorated, shingled, carpeted, cushioned, kept in repair, and provided with new hymn and service books.

**A BOOK OF
DORCAS DISHES**

FAMILY RECIPES

*Contributed by the Dorcas Society
of Hollis and Buxton*

EDITED BY
KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

"This woman... called Dorcas...
was full of good works and
alms deeds which she did."



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1911

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THE PRAISE AND PROPERTIES OF A GOOD WIFE

"She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar."

"She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household."

"She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard."

"She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."

"She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

"Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

"Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

PROVERBS xxxi.

INTRODUCTION

DO not suppose we "Dorcases" fancy that the world is waiting for another cookery book, nor that we believe we are supplying a long-felt want with this little pamphlet. One could have no illusions on that subject when the monthly and weekly magazines, and even the daily papers, have pages in every issue devoted to recipes, together with columns upon columns of suggestive bills of fare. Everybody reads these regularly, remarking to the person sitting near: "That sounds good!" "I must paste that in my book." "Let's try that some time." My private opinion is that we need cooks much more than books, and that one housekeeper who will experiment on appetizing novelties is worth a dozen of those who buy books, cut out, pin up, paste in, and hoard recipes, but continue to serve their families with the same dishes they used when they began housekeeping.

This modest volume does not aim to be a complete compendium of scientific cookery nor a practical guide to the young housekeeper; neither can we claim for it any startling originality. It has been compiled because we have many enterprises in hand for which we need money, and we believe the book may be one of the ways in which we can fill our treasury. But although we disclaim all intention of surprising

and instructing the culinary world, and avow our hope of financial profit, we take honest pride in our little book, as we do in all our endeavors, large or small. Every dish in it has been made hundreds of times by the particular Dorcas whose name is attached to it; but I sometimes think Dorcas should accompany her own recipe and stand over it until it is cooked and eaten, for the cake labelled "Delicious" sometimes turns out a sorry failure in your opposite neighbor's kitchen. There is a hard hand and a light one in cooking as well as on a horse's rein, and it almost seems as if butter and eggs knew their mistress and instinctively obeyed her orders, feeling themselves in the grasp of a superior power.

"Oven-judgment" never comes to some women in the course of their lives (and we certainly hope that they will feel no need of it in another world!) nor does the faculty of deftly combining the necessary ingredients. The terms "stiff," "thin," "hard," "soft" are very flexible and depend on the cook's point of view, while the art of perfect seasoning and flavoring is all too seldom attained.

Women are largely in the majority in New England, and because that is so it follows necessarily and naturally that they should take a considerable share of civic as well as domestic responsibility.

In church, school, garden, and farm work we women are as much needed as in the home, and we shall never be able to make our vil-

lages pleasant and prosperous places to live in, nor provide the proper environment for the younger generation unless we apply ourselves earnestly and intelligently to the task.

The cooking in small hotels and boarding houses along our countryside does not compare with that in England or on the Continent, and we are constantly criticised for the small amount of nourishment and large amount of dyspepsia with which we furnish our farming and laboring classes.

The devising of a good liberal diet, simple but varied, is one of the most important ends to which the mistress of a household can devote her energies. Is Dorcas doing all she might in this matter? How can we inspire and help our brothers, husbands, fathers to bring back the old garden to its once noble estate? Where are the rows of currant and raspberry bushes we used to see at the side or back of the house? We need not raise small fruits for the market if we lack time or strength, land or labor, but how about raising things for the family and the growing children?

When I was a girl there were always a few black and red currant bushes in the garden, with blackberries, raspberries, or strawberries. There was a single pear, or crab apple, quince, or plum tree in the orchard, and a Concord grape-vine over a porch. Citron melons were grown then, and there was a barberry bush planted by the kitchen door; and what delicious preserves for the long winter came from