

The Savory Christmas Goose Boasts of Traditions Which Might 'Make the Red Head of the Boastful Turkey Pale with Envy

Here Are Some of the Improved Recipes for Cooking This Festive Bird, as Well as Many Other Appetizing Delicacies.



HERE never was such a goose. Its tenderness, flavor and size and cheapness were the themes of universal admiration. Eaten out by the apple sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family.

The savory goose which so delighted the Cratchit family has been the inspiration of any amount of good cheer provided off small capital for special occasions.

It is an appetizer better than the rarest hors d'oeuvres to read about the Christmas goose at the Cratchits.

"You might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds," chronicles Charles Dickens; "a feathered phenomenon to which a black swan was a matter of course. And in truth it was something like that in that house. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigor; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set their heads together, not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their posts crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving knife, prepared to plunge it into the breast; but when she did, and when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all around the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife and feebly cried 'Hurrah!'"

Traditions of the Goose.

This is as it should be. The Christmas goose, although in these days somewhat overshadowed by the showier turkey, is still pre-eminently the bird of festivity for many families. For those who have come from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and some parts of Germany Christmas would be incomplete without the goose to occupy the place of honor on the festive board. The goose boasts of traditions and history which might make the red head of the boastful turkey pale with envy. Not only in the cottage but in the hall it had a place just after the boar's head, which was borne with chants of honor to the place of feasting.

One of the old time songs placed the goose in the menu with other noble Christmas dishes:

"All you that to feasting and to mirth are inclin'd, Come here is good news for to pleasure your mind; Old Christmas is come for to keep open house, And scorn to be guilty of starving a mouse. Then come, boys, and welcome for diet the chief, Plum pudding, goose, capon, mince pies and roast beef."

Poets Sing Praise of Dainty Mince Pie

MINCE pie, which nowadays is regarded simply as a Christmas dainty, suitable for the table of any household which can afford it, was once a subject of religious controversy and a bone of contention between political parties.

The English Puritans considered mince pie as distinctly anti-Christian, or at least as anti-Puritan. They refused to refer to it by the name of Christmas pie, by which title it had been called from its first appearance on the Christmas board, and first gave it the name of mince pie. One poet writes of the prohibited pie as follows:

"All plums the prophet's sons deny,
And spice broths are too hot,
Treason's in a December pie
And death within the pot."

Another poet thus celebrates the Puritan point of view:

"The high-shoe lords of Cromwell's making
Were not for dainties-roasting, baking;
The chiefest food they found most good in,
Was rusty bacon and bag pudding;
Plum broth was popish, and mince pie—
O, that was flat idolatry!"

The Quakers later adopted the prejudice of the Puritans, and many persons believed that clergymen, at least, should not partake of the mince pie.

As early as 1396 mince pies, then known as nutton pies, were a part of the Christmas banquetting. Nutton-tongue was later used in place of the nutton in these pies, which otherwise included much the same materials as those which make up the mince pie of to-day. Nowadays the meat part of the mince pie is supplied by lean beef and best suet, instead

of mutton or neat's-tongue. One of the verse writers of the period thus chants of the pastry:

"Without the door lay sorrow lie,
And if for cold it help to die,
We'll bury it in Christmas pie
And evermore be merry!"

Herick tells about the watch that had to be set on the toothsome Christmas pie to save it from marauders:

"Come guard the Christmas pie,
That the thief, though never so sly,
With his flesh-hooks don't come nigh,
To catch it,
From him, who all alone sits there,
Having his eyes still in his ear,
And a deal of nightly fear,
To watch it."

Modern cooks in making mince meat frequently leave out some of the ingredients which were used by the women whose mince pies were considered the highest pinnacle of perfection in this luxury. But mince meat to be worth while at all must be rich, and it is not well to economize too much in its mixing. Here is a recipe which has served some famous cooks to the contentment of their families:

Two pounds beef heart or lean fresh beef boiled; two pounds beef suet chopped fine; four pounds apples, preferably greenings, chopped fine; two pounds raisins, also chopped, and seeded before chopping (the seedless raisins are now much used, of course); two pounds currants; two pounds sugar, preferably brown sugar; one quart brandy; one quart white wine; wineglassful rosewater; two gnatc omelets; one-half ounce cinnamon; one-quarter ounce cloves; one-quarter ounce mace; two large oranges, the juice and grated peel; one teaspoonful salt.

Mince meat is always the better for being kept some time before it is used. Put away in stone jars and it will last nicely throughout the winter. It is already time to make it ready for the holidays, so that its many ingredients may be properly blended on the day of the feast.

one jealous for the honor of the goose wrote the plaint:—"The geese who used to be fattened for the honest neighbors have been of late sent to London and the quills made into pens to convey away the landlord's estate."

Goose in Sweden.

However, the goose fairly well maintained his place as the bird of the people in many countries, and does so to this day. If one is prejudiced against the goose the probability is that he has never tasted it cooked in the approved manner of those who have maintained its best traditions. In Sweden, for instance, where the goose is the Christmas dish of greatest importance, nothing could be more delicious than the time honored bird stuffed and roasted with almost the care and reverence due a festive rite. The tradition has been handed down to descendants who have emigrated to America. In the countries of Northern Europe the Christmas Eve festivities are as important as those of Christmas Day. One who was born in Sweden gives this account of the

Christmas celebration in his native land:—"The social side of Christmas celebration in my country receives more attention than the religious one. The season commences with Christmas Eve, the most important day socially, and lasts until well into the new year, ending usually on the day after Twelfth Night.

Swedish Christmas Menu.

"Good cheer and good will are in abundant evidence everywhere. Originally the entire household, including the servants, took late dinner together on Christmas Eve, which was served in the kitchen. According to one custom—still in use in some parts of Sweden—every member of the household dipped a piece of bread in a big iron pot suspended over the range in which ham, sausages and salt pork were being cooked. It was also customary to set out a sheaf of grain in the yard for the birds.

"Nowadays the gifts are first passed around, early

thin strips of fat salt pork over the breast and place on the rack in the dripping pan. Put in a hot oven and bake two hours, basting every fifteen minutes with the fat in the pan. Place on a platter, cut and remove strings and skewers and garnish with apple baskets and dress.

"POTATO STUFFING.—Force eight boiled potatoes through a potato ricer. Add one-third cup melted butter, one cup cream, three eggs well beaten together and two medium sized onions finely chopped. Beat two minutes and season with pepper and salt.

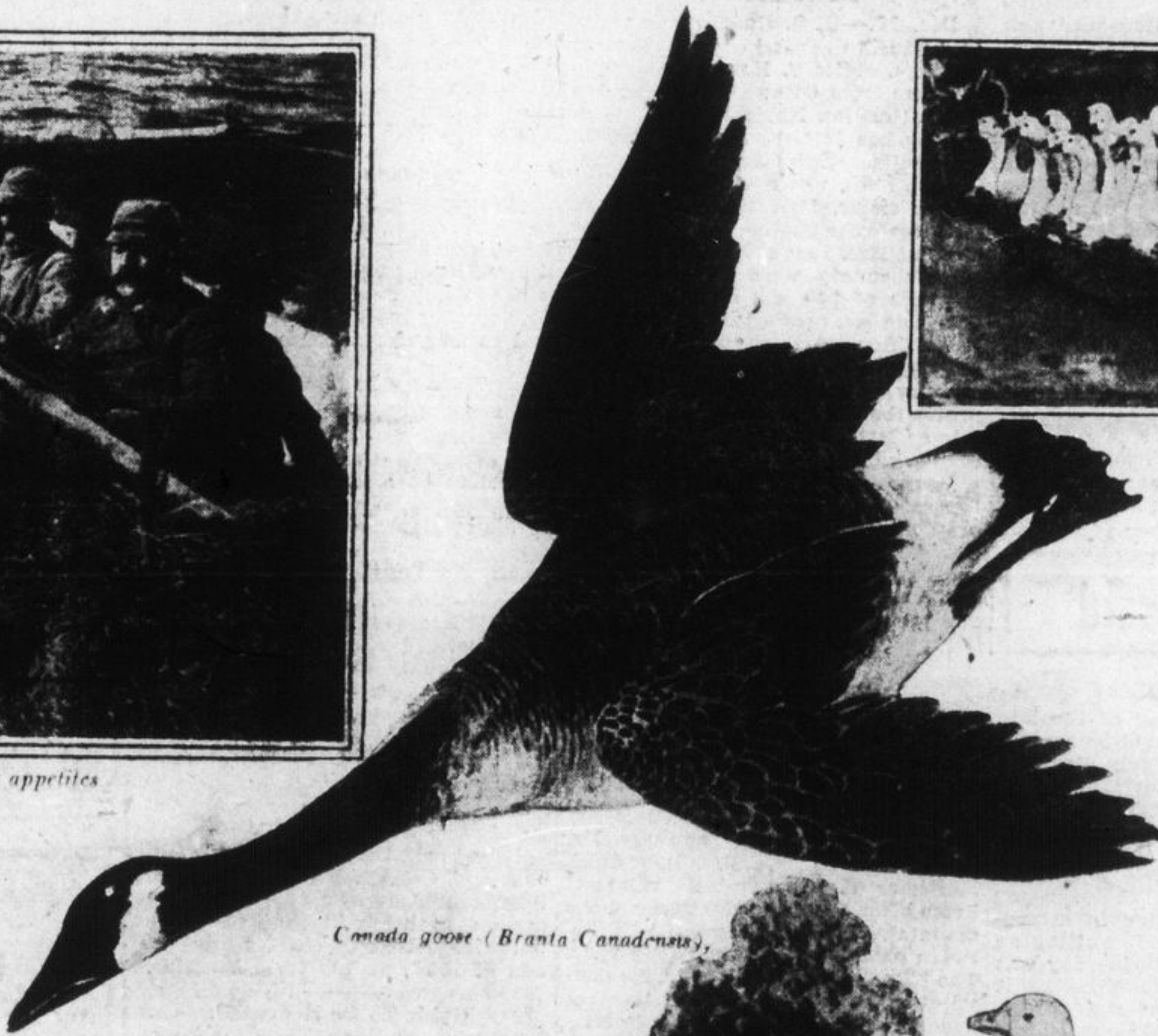
"APPLE BASKETS.—Cut two pieces from each apple, leaving what remains in the shape of a basket with a handle, after cutting out the pulp. Put in the stew pan and add three-quarters of a pound of light brown sugar, the juice and rind of one lemon, one ounce of ginger root, a few grains of salt and enough water to prevent the apples from burning. Cover and cook slowly four hours, adding water as is necessary.

to get a young or green goose, as it usually called, for roasting. A goose over three years old should never be used. To tell a young goose, look for the down on the legs. This is a sign of a gosling. It also has soft yellow legs, while in an older bird the color is reddish.

Carving the goose is almost as much of an art as roasting it. The bird should be placed on the platter with the head at the left. The carver should insert his fork firmly across the ridge of the breast bone, begin at the wing and cut down through the meat to the bone the whole length of the breast. Cut down in the same way in parallel slices as thin as they can be cut until the ridge of the breast bone is reached. Slip the knife under the meat at the end of the breast and remove the slices from the bone. In the same way cut the other side of the breast. To remove the stuffing cut through the skin below the breast and insert the spoon.



Shooting geese and growing appetites



Canada goose (Branta Canadensis)



Coming in for Christmas dinner.

Green goose pie is a time honored dish. To make it, bone two geese, first singeing and removing every trace of the feathers; wash and season high with salt, mace, pepper and pimento. Put in plenty of butter and bake in a dish, with or without crust. This can be made in advance.

If the giblets are not used for the gravy they may be boiled until tender with onion, black pepper and sweet herbs, and when cool put in a baking dish with steaks of beef, veal or mutton, the liquor and a small cup of cream being poured over. Put over this a crust and bake a delicate brown.

in the evening, and then the Christmas supper is served. The average menu at this meal is:

"Sun dried codfish, boiled, with cream sauce or melted butter and green mustard.

"Roasted ham (first cooked in wine), boiled potatoes, cabbage.

"Rice, boiled in milk, flavored with cinnamon, sugar and chopped almonds; eaten with cream and milk mixed.

"Coffee, Christmas cakes and pastry. Apples, nuts and raisins.

"In Southern Sweden and Denmark the roasted ham is substituted by or, still better, supplemented with roast goose, stuffed with apples and dried bread, sometimes also with prunes.

"After supper there is general conviviality, wine, punch and toddy being served. Christmas Day is the occasion of family reunions. The great gala dinner is served early in the afternoon. The menu is something like this:

"Smorgasbord, consisting of bread and butter, cheese, cold meats, lobster patties, &c. 'Brannvin' and beer.

"Clear soup with patties; sucking pig, roasted whole, or roasted ham, or roasted goose, or two of these together; boiled potatoes, cranberries, pickles; apple pudding (made of grated black bread and apples), flavored with cinnamon and sugar, served with whipped cream; coffee, Christmas small cakes and pastry; assorted fruit, nuts, raisins, confitures.

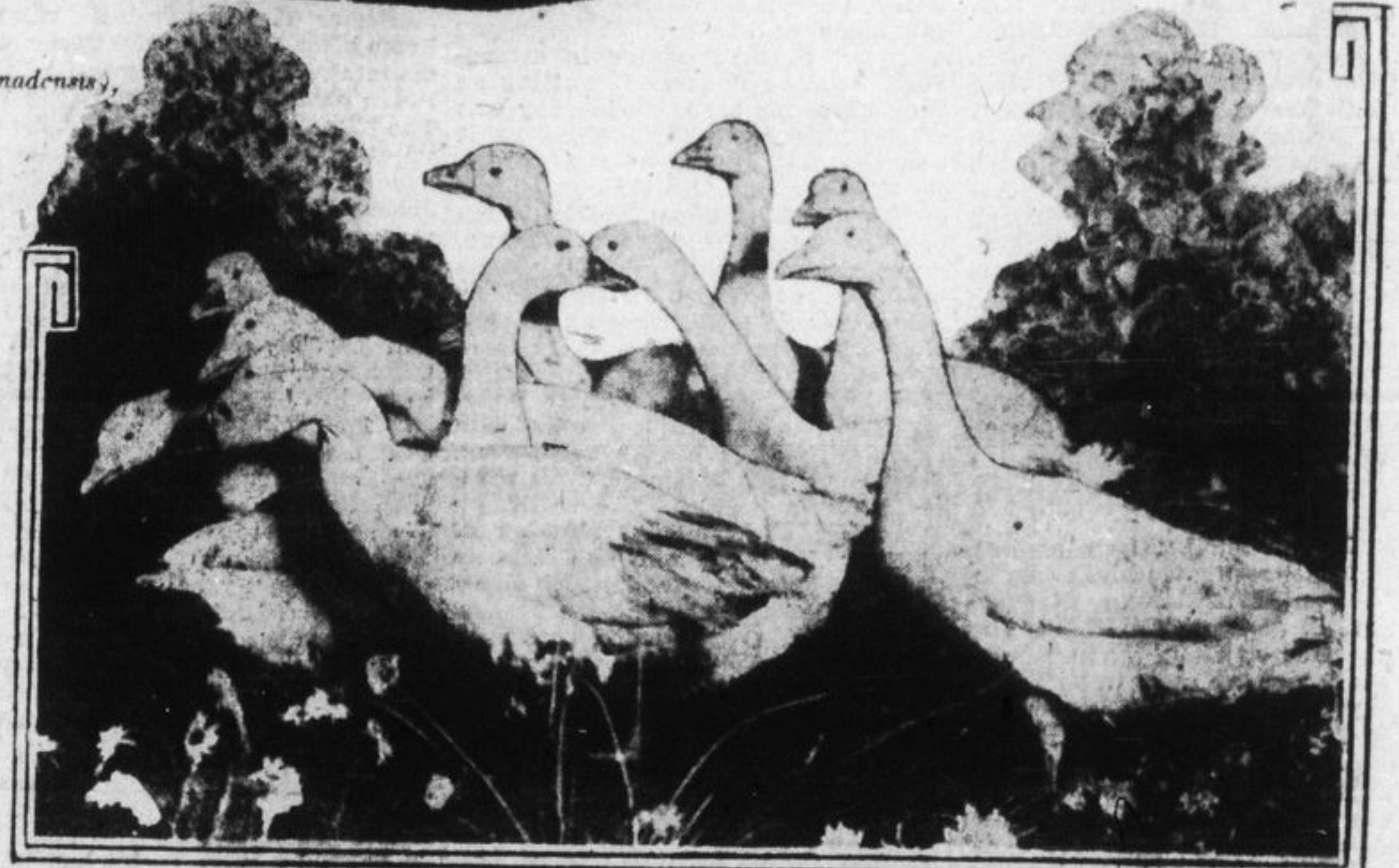
"The wines are sherry, Burgogne, Bordeaux and port and the liqueurs, Benedictine, anisette, Swedish punch and French brandy.

"This is an approved Swedish recipe for roasting the Christmas goose.—Draw and singe. Rub inside with salt and pepper. Stuff with mixture of apples cut in small pieces, stoned prunes, also cut up, and dried bread crumbs. Sew up and put in very hot oven. Pour a cupful of boiling water with level teaspoonful of salt in pan. Roast until well done, about twenty-five minutes being required for each pound.

Apple Stuffing.

Americans use the apple in some form as an adjunct to the roasted goose, but seldom as a stuffing. A recipe by Miss Farmer is an excellent one for preparing the goose and for making the apple a decorative as well as an appetizing feature.

"Singe, remove pin feathers and scrub with soap suds; draw, wash with cold water and wipe dry; stuff, truss, sprinkle with salt and pepper; lay six



Fattening up to do their duty

"SWEET POTATOES WITH SHERRY WINE.—Boil sweet potatoes until soft, mash, season with salt, pepper and sherry wine. Moisten with rich milk, beat vigorously and pile lightly on a hot vegetable dish."

New England Recipes.

These recipes come from New England, and, by the way, the best geese in the New York markets are the Boston goslings, which weigh from ten to eighteen pounds and sell for from twenty-eight to thirty cents a pound. In the South, where the goose is much cheaper, there are many good recipes for cooking this fowl. One of these provides for a stuffing made of a pound of onions cut up fine, a teaspoonful of powdered sage, a teaspoonful of salt and the same of brown sugar and pepper. This is boiled for fifteen minutes, stirring frequently, and the goose stuffed while the onions are hot. Another recipe calls for a wine glass of port wine and a teaspoonful of mustard to be poured in at the last moment before serving. A hint is given about roasting which will prove helpful. When the goose is half done fasten a piece of paper over the breast with a skewer. When the breast rises take off the paper and serve before it flattens.

Ware Old Geese.

Wild geese is better without stuffing. If one is used, potato is best. Rub the breast with onion before roasting, and the addition of a few cranberries placed inside is liked by some persons.

GOOSE WITH SAUERKRAUT.—Stuff the well washed goose with sauerkraut, sew it up, tie it in shape, place in a large kettle, cover with water and simmer for about two hours. Then take it out and put it in the oven, basting with butter and dredging with flour. When nicely browned take from the oven and serve in a bed of sauerkraut. Geese live to a great age, and care must be taken

Here is a menu which includes roast geese, and which can be provided for a family of six persons for about six dollars:

- Grapefruit.
- Oxtail or Mock Turtle Soup.
- Roast Green Goose with Apple Sauce.
- Mashed White Potatoes or Baked Sweet Potatoes
- Boiled Onions with Cream Sauce.
- Orange and Endive Salad.
- Cheese.
- Plum Pudding with Brandy Sauce.
- Syllabub, Nuts and Raisins.
- Coffee.

Some persons may not know how the syllabub is made. It is one of the things that may be prepared the day before Christmas. Make a jelly from the quick process gelatine powders if in a hurry. Otherwise scald and clean pigs' feet, split and break the bones and put over the fire in a kettle with four quarts of water. Heat slowly, skim and simmer until the liquid has been reduced to about three pints. Strain and set aside until cold. Then remove the fat and return to the kettle with one cupful sugar, the juice and grated rind of two lemons, a blade of mace and three sticks of cinnamon about an inch long. Put over the fire, and as it begins to heat add whites of three eggs beaten and their crushed shells. Cook five minutes until a thick scum has risen. Remove, add one pint of wine and strain through a napkin into a shallow dish. When ready to serve cut into blocks and pile up lightly in a pretty glass dish.

Whipped cream, adding two tablespoonfuls of powdered sugar to each cupful of cream, flavor with sherry and when frothy pour over the jelly.

When you have partaken of this dinner you will be ready to say with Tiny Tim, "God bless us, every one!"