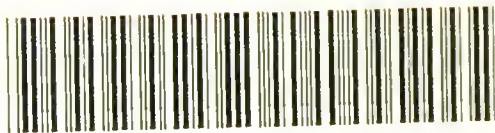


Delicate Dining

Theodore Child



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DELICATE DINING.

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BY

THEODORE CHILD

LONDON :

JAMES R. OSGOOD, McILVAINE & CO.,

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TO
MY DEAR FRIEND
AND INSEPARABLE DINING COMPANION

P. Z. DIDSBURY

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS

Dedicated

IN SOUVENIR OF
MANY GASTRONOMIC TRIUMPHS ENJOYED
IN HIS COMPANY

INTRODUCTION.



A LETTER FROM P. Z. DIDSBURY TO THE
AUTHOR.

MY DEAR AUTHOR,—

I have read your savoury little volume with interest, amusement, and satisfaction. So far as concerns myself, I cannot but feel flattered by your respectful quotation of my aphorisms, and by your very appreciative and useful comments upon them. You know that these aphorisms are the result of the experience of the many years which I have passed in the strenuous study of delicate dining—that art which, as Victor Hugo says in his Titanic way, consists

“ de faire aboutir

La mamelle du monde à la bouche d'un homme.

You dwell with laudable persistency upon the necessity of criticism in gastronomic matters,

and the usefulness of your book will consist largely in awakening a spirit of criticism, and in calling attention to the rôles of intellect and sentiment in the art of cooking. There is no severer and more conclusive test of a country's state of civilization than the way its inhabitants dine.

Certainly there is no lack of cook-books. Indeed, this special branch of literature is more flourishing in Great Britain than it is in the country where good cookery is not yet entirely a souvenir of the past. These books, however, are often merely compilations of recipes, and few of them are based on careful observation or on truly scientific and artistic principles. The writers of these works, too, are often led away by the mere love of novelty, as if the caprices of ephemeral fashion were to be allowed to perturb the immutable theories of scientific dining!

Much, therefore, remains to be done, and I am sure that your dainty volume—which is a sort of higher handbook of the kitchen and dining-room, if I may so express myself (and I think I may)—will greatly help to increase a knowledge of the true principles of delicate dining.

If the readers of your pages, so full of ideas—so suggestive, as the French modernists would say—do not become convinced, with that charming poet and gastronome, Théodore de Banville, that the hygiene of the stomach is also the hygiene of the mind and soul, and that delicate cookery develops the intelligence and the moral sensibility, the fault will not be yours. I approve you heartily and wholly, even in your paradoxes, which always contain a kernel of logical observation and judicious criticism.

Adieu, my dear author; macte virtute, by which I mean, continue in your efforts to win a glorious pair of gouty crutches, and believe me always your devoted and inseparable companion in gastronomy,

P. Z. DIDSBURY.

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DELICATE DINING.

I.

THE GASTRONOMIC ART.

HERE are some points which ought always to be borne in mind, both by those who cook and by those who eat. I quote them in the form of aphorisms, proverbs, epigrams, or dicta, accompanying each with the name of the author.

I. A man can dine only once a day.—P. Z. Didsbury.

This profound sentence should be written in flame-coloured letters on the walls of every kitchen, so that the cook may never forget the terrible responsibility of his functions. If the dinner is defective the misfortune is irreparable ; when the long-expected dinner-hour arrives, one eats but does not dine ; the dinner-hour passes, and the diner is sad,

for, as the philosopher has said, a man can dine only once a day.

II. Bad cooking diminishes happiness and shortens life.—Wisdom of Ages.

III. The art of cooking, like the art of dining, is exempt from the caprices of fashion. The principles of both these arts are eternal and immutable.—P. Z. Didsbury.

IV. The pleasures of the table may be enjoyed every day, in every climate, at all ages, and by all conditions of men.—Brillat-Savarin.

The author of the "Physiology of Taste" was a vigorous rather than a delicate eater, and a speculative rather than a practical gastronomer. We will not accept all he says as being gospel, but will listen gratefully to such liberal and broadly human maxims as the above. The arts of cooking and dining interest all sorts and conditions of men; they are not merely the privilege of the rich; they are philanthropic and democratic arts.

V. Those who get indigestion, or who become intoxicated, know neither how to eat nor how to drink.—Brillat-Savarin.

The same author has said, "Animals feed;

man eats ; the intelligent man alone knows how to eat." Strange to say, the stomach is the basis of our whole existence ; it is the source of strength and of weakness, of health and of disease, of gaiety and of melancholy ; we do everything for, by, or through the stomach ; and yet the two series of operations which most closely concern the stomach—I mean the operations of cooking and eating food—are those to which most people devote the least reasoning.

VI. A well-cooked and a well-served dinner implies, on the part of the host, a sense of the respect he owes to his guests, whose happiness he controls while they are under his roof. On the part of the cook, it implies, not only a thorough knowledge of his art, but also a sense of dignity and self-respect and a certain emotion. Good cooking comes from the heart as well as from the brain, and, therefore, it is not a science, but an art. The cook who is a real artist, and whose dishes are works of art, will experience over his saucepans emotion as poignant as that which Benvenuto Cellini felt when he was casting one of

his immortal bronze statues.—P. Z. Didsbury.

- VII. If there is anything sadder than unrecognized genius, it is the misunderstood stomach. The heart whose love is rejected—this much-abused drama—rests upon a fictitious want. But the stomach! Nothing can be compared to its sufferings, for we must have life before everything.—Honoré de Balzac.
- VIII. The gastronomer loves order and harmony of service, as the painter loves harmony of colours. Excellent food served in a coarse dish will seem less succulent than poorer food served on fine porcelain. Nevertheless the charm of glass-ware, lordly dishes, and delicate napery, must not be exaggerated. No splendour of service can compensate for inferior and badly-cooked viands.—P. Z. Didsbury.
- IX. A good restaurant is like a more or less epic poem—it cannot be improvised in a day. Tradition, knowledge, experience, and even genius, are necessary. A good cellar alone can only be formed with the aid of length of time and prodigious faculties of taste.—Magny.

The author of this aphorism is the famous cook who founded the Restaurant Magny in the Rue Contrescarpe, at Paris, and made a fortune by selling good food and real wine. George Sand, the great novelist, was one of Magny's most faithful admirers ; and as, in her quality of poet, she had the privilege of omniscience, she knew, as I have been told by the sweet poet Théodore de Banville, that wines and food are the best, and perhaps the only, medicines. And so, during a long and cruel malady, which nearly carried off her son, she insisted that Maurice Sand should drink only wines chosen by Magny, and eat only food prepared by Magny's own hands. The excellent *restaurateur* yielded to the mother's desire, and made for Maurice those *consommés*, or quintessences of nutriment, which are infinitely rarer than a good poem or a faultless sonnet. Thus Magny, impeccable doctor and perfect cook, saved George Sand the terrible grief of losing her son, and preserved for our pleasure an ingenious writer, the author of "Masques et Bouffons."

- X. In a restaurant when a waiter offers you turbot, ask for salmon, and when he

offers you a sole, order a mackerel ; as language to man, so fish has been given to the waiter to disguise his thoughts.—
P. Z. Didsbury.

The philosopher, I imagine, wrote this maxim after a varied and disastrous experience in European restaurants. The decadence of the restaurants of the Continent largely justifies the severity of the above warning. There are, however, exceptions, and in certain first-class restaurants in Paris—four at the outside—it is well not to be too ready to choose for yourself, without listening to the voice of the intelligent waiter. As a rule, in a restaurant, maintain your free will, but do not try to impose it. In matters of cookery, as in love, much confidence is needed.

On the other hand, if you become an *habitué* of a first-class Paris restaurant, it is preferable not to be on speaking terms with the *maître d'hôtel*, but to transmit your orders directly through the intelligent waiter, whom your experienced eye will have detected the very first day that you set foot in the establishment. The *maître d'hôtel*—important, fat, fussy, and often disdainful in his manner—serves mainly to create confusion ; he receives

your orders with deference, but rarely transmits them to the waiter with exactitude; and, as it is the waiter who communicates immediately with the cook, it is preferable to suppress, as far as possible, the useless intervention of the *maître d'hôtel*. For my own part, in the restaurants where I am in the habit of dining, I refuse to hold any communication with the *maîtres d'hôtel* until, perhaps, at the end of the dinner, when I graciously allow a favoured one to descend into the cellar in person and select for me, with his own podgy fingers, a creamy camembert cheese, the ripest and the richest of the lot. This concession I make, not because I admit for a moment that the *maître d'hôtel* is an infallible judge of camembert, but merely because, after dinner, I am more charitably disposed than before dinner, and, consequently, desire to show to the *maître d'hôtel* that I cherish no ill-feeling against him in my heart of hearts, although I maintain that his functions in relation to the public, as they are generally fulfilled, have no *raison d'être*.

XI. Cooking is generally bad because people fall into routine; habit dulls their appre-

ciation, and they do not think about what they are eating.

They fall into routine because they do not criticize.

They do not criticize because they have no ideal.

They have no ideal because they do not know, theoretically and practically, what cooking means, what is its object, and what are the conditions necessary for success.

The ideal is unattainable, but the aim of the cook should always be to reduce the interval which separates practical from ideal excellence.—P. Z. Didsbury.

XII. There is no perfect cook-book.—Experientia.

XIII. The art of cooking cannot be learned out of a book any more than the art of swimming or the art of painting. The best teacher is practice; the best guide is sentiment.—Louis XV., sometime King of France.

Louis XV. was an amateur cook, and amused himself, in company with the Prince de Dombes, by making quintessential stews

in silver pans.—See Goncourt, “La Duchesse de Châteauroux.”

XIV. There are innumerable books of recipes for cooking, but unless the cook is master of the principles of his art, and unless he knows the why and the wherefore of its processes, he cannot choose a recipe intelligently and execute it successfully.—Richard Estcourt, *Providore* of y^e original “Beefsteak Club.”

XV. The distinction of classical cookery and household cookery is a vain one. There are but two sorts of cookery, namely, bad cookery and good cookery.—P. Z. Didsbury.

XVI. The most artistic and the most wholesome ways of preparing food are the simplest.—P. Z. Didsbury.

XVII. The perfect cook is single-minded and disguises nothing. — Gamaliel Stubbs, Clerk of the Kitchen to Oliver Cromwell.

XVIII. Even in Mr. D’Urfey’s presence this I would be bound to say, that a good dinner is brother to a good poem ; only it is something more substantial, and

between two and three o'clock more agreeable.—Dr. William King.

Dr. King, the English bard, born in 1663, died 1712, wrote a poem on the "Art of Cookery," in imitation of Horace's "Art of Poetry," having remarked that,

"Tho' cooks are often men of pregnant wit,
Thro' niceness of their subject few have writ."

In the days of the learned and ingenious doctor, who, by the way, sided with Dr. Sacheverell, and had a hand in some of the political kites which flew about at that time, people rose earlier and dined earlier than they do nowadays. But whatever the hour at which a good dinner is eaten, it is, as the worthy doctor says, brother to a good poem; nay, more than that, it is a poem itself.

XIX. It is convenient to dine late, because you can then concentrate all your thoughts on your plate, think only of what you are eating, and go to bed afterwards.—Grimod de la Reynière.

The author of this sage maxim, Balthazar Grimod de la Reynière, born in 1758, was one of the fathers of the modern art of cookery, and a most enlightened and philosophical

gourmet, having thoroughly orthodox ideas on the subject of dining. The reason he gives above for dining late is the true one. Dinner is a matter of such importance that it cannot be treated lightly ; it is at once a source of health and a source of joy, and it is impossible to take joy hurriedly, or to dine hastily. A real gourmet would sooner fast than be obliged to eat a good dinner in a hurry. The mortal enemy of dinner is every meal taken before it in the course of the working day. Eat lightly during the day, and reserve your forces for the crowning meal of dinner. Remember, also, that a dinner without ceremony is as much to be dreaded as an amateur concert. "Small cheer and great welcome make a merry feast," said Shakespeare ; and a poor meal, I would add.

XX. He that will have a cake out of the wheat must tarry the grinding.—Shakespeare.

This axiom should be remembered by those who are ordering dinner for themselves and friends in a first-class restaurant. In such establishments, with the exception of the soup and the cold dishes, nothing is ready,

but everything is prepared specially for each order, and served directly in all the bloom of its savoury virginity. Therefore the menu must be composed with foresight in order that there may not be intervals of fifteen or twenty minutes between the several courses. If the dishes tarry too long in their coming, the diner grows impatient, and falls to reproaching the waiter, the result of all which is disastrous, for as Shakespeare again says, "Unquiet meals make ill digestions." Since there must necessarily be a waiting, let it come at the beginning, and last until the soup can be served with the certitude of the fish being ready to follow. As for the employment of this brief period of expectation, have we not the resources of genial conversation, and of the contemplation of the surroundings? Furthermore, is it not a fact that in a first-class restaurant we always find one or more women whose perfect costume and incomparable beauty form a spectacle of inexhaustible interest?

XXI. The gourmet is not a voracious eater; he chews his food more than another because this function is a true pleasure to him, and because a long stay of the

aliments on the palate is the first principle of happiness.—Grimod de la Reynière.

XXII. Sauces, like playing cards, should be seen only by artificial light.—P. Z. Didsbury.

The gourmet eats by candle-light because, as Nestor Roqueplan said, “nothing is more ugly than a sauce seen in sunlight.” For this and other reasons the true gourmet avoids breakfast-parties, lunches, high-teas, picnics and other analogous solecisms.

XXIII. In these days of progress, gas-stoves, sophistication, and democracy, the gourmet’s dream is to taste real meat cooked with real fire, and to drink wine made with real grapes.—P. Z. Didsbury.

XXIV. An exquisite host, however, pervasive his quality may be is no palliation of a poor dinner.—P. Z. Didsbury.

The superficial observer may imagine that, in a well prepared dinner, what is best and most indispensable of all is the exquisite and pervasive quality of the host himself. In reality the important thing in a dinner is the dinner itself. When I am invited to dine I presume that

the invitation is serious, and that dining is the object in view. The moment the dinner is served, the host becomes a simple diner like his guests. There are two factors, the dinner and the diner; these alone are essential. I can even conceive of an excellent dinner offered by a host, who would not be present, and ordered, not by the host, but by the guests. Of course, other things being equal, one prefers the company of an exquisitely pervasive host, who should be, if possible, a philanthropic and emotional epicure.

XXV. The man who pays no attention to the food that he consumes is comparable only to the pig, in whose trough the trotters of his own son, a pair of old braces, a newspaper, and a set of dominoes are equally welcome.— Charles Monselet.

By this selections of maxims and summings up of experience, I have sought to impress upon the reader's mind the high importance of the arts of cooking and of eating, and of all the operations connected with them. I have been careful to choose only general maxims, from which the thoughtful reader

will deduce for himself particular consequences. Until recently, the cook-book has been too often merely a collection of recipes printed pell-mell in bewildering abundance, and classified in the least methodical manner. Of such cook-books there are hundreds, and many of them are admirable in their way, but a cook must be already very learned in his art in order to know how to use them with advantage, and to adapt each recipe to a case in point. The consequence is, that many cook-books are bought, and few are read either by mistress or maids, by masters or by head-cooks.

The philosopher P. Z. Didsbury has told us that, nowadays, people fall into routine in matters of cookery because they do not criticize; but how can they criticize if they do not know the principles of the art of cooking? It is not a question of having at one's fingers' ends the composition of a hundred dishes, or the recipes for making ninety-nine soups. The knowledge indispensable to critic and practitioner alike is the why and the wherefore of each operation employed in the art of cooking; the conditions of success in each operation; the means of preserving, developing, and com-

bining flavours. Now these operations may all be reduced to a few main processes, the thorough comprehension of which is the first step in the art of cooking. All the subtleties and delicacies of the art depend on the perfection of these main and elementary processes ; and, to go even further, we may say that no one who is not master of these processes can use with advantage a book of recipes. Furthermore, both the cook and the critic will increase the lucidity of their reasoning, and the completeness of their comprehension of things, by acquiring a few elementary notions about the chemistry of cooking.

Let me insist once more upon the necessity of the application of logic and reason to these questions of gastronomy ; upon the importance of knowing the " why," and the " wherefore," if not the " how ;" and above all, upon the desirableness of cultivating the critical faculty as applied to the arts of cooking, of dining, and of serving food. The destiny of nations, it has been said, depends upon the manner in which they eat.

II.

THE CHEMISTRY OF COOKING.

ANIMAL CHEMISTRY is in a very backward condition, as compared with vegetable and mineral chemistry. Prof. Bloxam, for instance, tells us that the chemical formulæ of a great many animal substances are perfectly unintelligible, conveying not the least information as to the position in which the compound stands with respect to other substances, or the changes which it might undergo under given circumstances. Certain results, however, have been obtained, and will be here cited so far as they have significance in the operations of cooking, no pretension being made to originality, and the authorities being cited in each case.

For the general guidance of the cook, meat may be said to be composed of four elements, namely: muscular fibre, albumen, fat, and juice—the latter being, chemically speaking, a very complicated substance containing a number of proximate elements.

“In the juice of flesh,” says Prof. Bloxam (“Chemistry Inorganic and Organic,” London, 1883), “which may be squeezed out of chopped flesh, there are certain substances which appear to play a very important part in nutrition. The liquid is distinctly acid, which is remarkable when the alkaline character of the blood is considered, and contains phosphoric, lactic and butyric acid, together with kreatine, inosite, and saline matters.”

These names will convey little to simple minds, but the essential point to be remembered is that the juice of flesh contains a variety of nutritive substances.

Flint, in his “Physiology of Man” (N. Y., 1875), says: “Food contains many substances having an important influence on nutrition which have never been isolated and analyzed, but which render it agreeable, and give to the diet that variety which the system imperatively demands.

“Many of these principles are developed in the process of cooking.”

The same authority tells us that the effect of cooking on muscular tissue is to disintegrate, to a certain extent, the intermuscular alveolar or connective tissue, and so to facilitate the action of the digestive fluids.

“ The savours developed in this process have a decidedly favourable influence on the secretion of the gastric juice.”

To present the same fact in another light : “ All methods of preparation,” says Payen (“ Substances Alimentaires ”), “ which tend to render meat easier to divide or more tender, and often more agreeable to the taste, concur to increase its digestibility, or, in other words, its easy assimilation, and *often annihilate certain causes of unhealthiness existing in raw meat.*”

Fat and fatty substances are not digested in the stomach, inasmuch as the gastric juice has no action on them, further than setting them free from the albuminoid substances with which they may be entangled. This variety of food, together with the starch, is digested below the stomach, through the action of the pancreatic and intestinal juices. This explains why the saturation of food in general by fat during the process of cooking should be avoided, as the fat in this case acts as a varnish to the albuminous substances and prevents free access to the latter of the gastric juices, by which alone this class of food can be digested.

Albumen is a substance which becomes

more indigestible the longer it is cooked ; it is most easily digested in the raw state. The most familiar form of albumen is white of egg, which contains of albumen about 12 per cent., of water about 86 per cent., and about 2 per cent. of soluble salts.

III.

'METHODS OF PREPARING MEATS.

THE usual methods of cooking are Roasting, Broiling, Boiling, Frying, Stewing, and Decocting. We will consider each process briefly, from the point of view of practical chemistry.

In ROASTING, the exterior of the piece of meat is submitted brusquely to a temperature considerably above 212 degrees Fahrenheit or boiling-point, or at any rate not below boiling-point. *The result is that the albumen of the surface is coagulated, and in this state acts as a barrier against the escape of the juice inside, and against the infiltration of liquid from without.* After a few minutes' close exposure to a brisk, clear fire, the joint may be drawn back a little and roasted slowly. Thus the interior mass of the meat, enclosed in an impervious jacket, cooks literally in its juice, getting heated in the inside only to a temperature between 120 and 150 degrees Fahrenheit, which is not sufficient to coagu-

late and harden the interior albumen. By this outer dried layer the meat inside is protected from evaporation and desiccation, and, being acted on by the liquid juice, it undergoes a maceration at a temperature sufficient to disintegrate the muscular fibre, to gelatinize and render soluble the connective tissue that binds the fibres together, and to develop the aroma enough to make the meat agreeable to the taste. What the aroma is remains a mystery. All we know is that it comes from the brown sapid substance produced on the outer layer of the flesh by the operation of roasting. In this part of the meat, according to Bloxam, "some of the constituents of the juice suffer a change which gives rise to the peculiar flavour of roast meat."

England is the only country in the world where perfect roasting can be found.

BROILING requires a brisk fire, free from smoke, the combustible being either charcoal or coke. The fire should extend somewhat beyond the edges of the gridiron, in order that the sides of the meat may be acted upon by the heat at the same time as that portion which is in more immediate contact with the fire.

The albumen over the entire surface of the piece of meat, whether cutlets, chops, steak, kidneys, or what not, should be rapidly coagulated, so as to prevent the escape of the juice.

Always take care to have your fire brisk and clear at the beginning of the operation, so that you may be sure of rapidly setting the whole surface of your meat—glazing it, so to speak—for the coagulation of the surface albumen forms an impervious jacket for the grilled meat, just as it does for the roast and the boiled meat, as already described.

Let your gridiron be hot before you put your meat on it, otherwise the cold bars, conducting away the heat and preventing rapid coagulation of the surface albumen, will cause an escape of juice into the fire.

In order to prevent sticking, the gridiron, before the meat is put on it, should be rubbed over with suet. For grilling fish the gridiron may be rubbed with chalk.

The gridiron is made to incline gently towards the cook, who, being intelligent, and having comprehended all that we have said about the necessity of carefully imprisoning the juice of meat and never piercing the outside coating of coagulated albumen, will, of

course, never dream of turning his chops or steaks with a fork—he will grasp them with a pair of special tongs, or even with his fingers. In practical kitchen work one is constantly reminded of the truth of the familiar saying that fingers were made before forks, and also before tongs.

The operations of STEWING invariably begin by browning the meat in a little butter or dripping in a saucepan or a frying-pan. The object is precisely the same as in the operations of roasting, boiling, and broiling: namely, to coagulate the surface albumen of the meat, and so case-harden it and develop its flavour in accordance with the chemical principles already set forth.

FRYING is the process of subjecting food to a high temperature in a bath of hot fat, which, at the moment of beginning the operation, should be about 400 degrees Fahrenheit. During the operation the temperature of the bath should rise two or three degrees.

The best frying-bath is one composed of beef suet and veal fat, in equal proportions, melted down; the grease of the dripping-pan and of the *pot-au-feu* is also good; lard, too, may be used, although it leaves the surface

of the fried food less pure; a special oil is also sold for frying purposes, and butter may be employed for light frying only. Ordinary olive oil, when heated to a high temperature, contracts a strong taste, probably due to the charring of particles of the flesh of the olive that remain imperceptibly mixed with the oil.

Note that cook-books generally recommend the use of a beaten egg to make the flour, bread-crumbs, or *chapelure* adhere to a sole, for instance, which is to be fried. A simpler method is to dip the sole in milk and then roll it in your flour. Thus you avoid the thick lumps and patches of crust which are almost inevitable when an egg is used. This is a small detail, but small details all "make for" perfection, as Matthew Arnold would have said.

Experience will teach the cook to discover when the frying-bath has reached the required temperature by the peculiar hissing sound produced by allowing a drop of water to fall into it.

DECOCTION is the name that may be given to the process of extracting the juice from meat and separating it from the fibre and tissues; it is the reverse of roasting or

broiling and their derivative processes. In order to extract the juice of meat we place the flesh in cold water, the temperature of which is very slowly raised to the boiling-point: thus all the juice of the flesh is dissolved out and completely separated from the muscular fibre.

Bloxham says: "The object to be attained in the preparation of beef-tea is the extraction of the whole of the soluble matters from the flesh, to effect which the meat should be minced as finely as possible, soaked for a short time in an equal weight of cold water, and slowly raised to the boiling-point, at which it is maintained for a few minutes. The liquid strained from the residual fibrine contains all the constituents of the juice except the albumen, which has been coagulated."

The economical French, in making their *pot-au-feu* and *bouillon*, do not mince the meat, but leave it in a solid mass, the only reason being that thus the meat *may be* presented at table, although there is very little nourishment left in it after the process of decoction is over.

In BOILING, the meat is exposed to a high temperature in water. You wait until

the water has reached the boiling-point before you immerse the meat in it, and leave it to cook for about five minutes at that temperature. The heat of the water, 212 degrees Fahrenheit, at once coagulates the albumen in the external layer of flesh, which becomes thus a waterproof case in which the meat cooks, safe from the infiltration of water and from the escape of its juice. After the first five minutes the cooking should proceed more gently, at a temperature of 162 degrees Fahrenheit.

Both in roasting and in boiling, the result is similar, and is thus noted by Dalton on the preparation of meat for food :

“Firstly, the albumen which is present in the muscular tissue is coagulated, and the muscular fibres, therefore, become rather firmer and more consistent than they are in fresh meat.

“Secondly, the cellular tissue between the muscular fibres is softened and gelatinized, so that the fibres are more easily separated from one another, and the whole mass becomes more tender and easily digestible.

“Thirdly, the high temperature develops in the albuminous ingredients of the meat a peculiar and attractive flavour, *which they did*

not possess before, and which excites in a healthy manner the digestive secretion, thus serving not only to please the taste, but also to assist in the digestion of the food.

“Raw meat,” adds Dalton, “is usually insipid and unattractive. It is only after it has been subjected to a certain amount of cooking that the desired flavour makes its appearance, by which the appetite is stimulated, and the nutritive qualities of the food consequently improved.

“The preparation of meat in cooking should be carefully managed so as to accomplish the results above described. For if the heat be insufficient the proper flavour will not be developed ; and if the heat be excessive, the meat, instead of being cooked, will be burned and decomposed, and thus rendered useless for the purpose of nutrition.”

Notice how constantly science recurs to *the physiological advantages of delicate cooking, in that it stimulates the appetite, pleases the taste, assists in the digestion, and actually improves the nutritious qualities of food.*

Before cooking meat, a sufficient time must have elapsed since the slaughtering to have allowed the cadaveric rigidity to pass and the spontaneous reaction to set in which deter-

mines a primary disintegration of the tissues. The time which meat has to be kept varies according to the temperature. If cooked while in a state of cadaveric rigidity, that is to say, too fresh, meat is hard and indigestible.

The first practical lesson to be drawn from the above theory of roasting is that a joint should never be spitted by thrusting an iron rod through it. *The only reasonable and scientific spit is a sort of cage which clasps the meat around without piercing it anywhere. Thus there will be no loss of juice.*

The rational way of placing the spit is in a horizontal position, and care should be taken to have the fire in a somewhat convex form, so that the heat may be distributed over the ends as well as over the middle portions of the meat.

Baked meat is an abomination.

So-called "roast" meat, cooked in ovens, is a delusion and a snare.

Roast meat is roast meat, and in order to roast you must have an open fire, before which your joint is placed in such a manner that the air circulates freely around it.

The reason why it is objectionable to cook meat by baking it in an oven—unless it be a

big baker's oven—is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to keep an ordinary oven, in a cooking-stove, clean and well-ventilated. The sides, roof, and floor of the oven get bespattered with particles of fat and spots of gravy during the baking process, and these particles become charred, and thus fill the oven with ammoniac and with a foul atmosphere of empyreumatic oils, by which terrible word the chemists indicate the unwholesome vapours generated through the action of fire.

In the process of roasting before an open fire these empyreumatic odours are, indeed, generated, but they pass off up the chimney, whereas in the oven they are imprisoned, and there penetrate the meat, destroy its flavour, and render it more or less insipid.

Meat, however, may be baked in pies, because in this case its surface, being protected by the crust, cannot be charred and impregnated with the foul empyreumatic oils. The baking of meat in a pie-crust amounts, in reality, to a stewing operation, the paste forming, as it were, a stew-pan with its lid.

Frequent basting is essential to successful roasting. Otherwise, the coagulated surface

of the meat would crack and split open during the operation, and allow an escape of the juice. *The melted fat, poured over the meat, penetrates into every crevice, and by means of the higher temperature of the fat the surface of the meat is maintained in an impervious state.*

IV.

CONDITIONS REQUISITE FOR HEALTHY DIGESTION.

“THE healthy action of the digestive process must be provided for by careful attention to various particulars. First of all, the food should be of good quality and *properly cooked*. The best methods of preparation by cooking are the simplest; such as roasting, broiling, or boiling. Articles of food which are fried are very apt to be indigestible and hurtful, because the fat used in this method of cooking is infiltrated by the heat, and made to penetrate through the whole mass of the food. Now we have seen that fatty substances are not digested in the stomach, as the gastric juice has no action upon them. In their natural condition they are simply mixed loosely with the albuminous matters, as butter, when taken with bread or vegetables, or the adipose tissue which is mingled with the muscular flesh of meat; and the

solution of the albuminous matters in the stomach, therefore, easily sets them free, to pass into the small intestines. But when imbibed, and thoroughly infiltrated through the alimentary substances, they present an obstacle to the access of the watery gastric juice, and not only remain undigested themselves, but also interfere with the digestion of the albuminous matters. It is for this reason that all kinds of food in which butter or other oleaginous matters are used as ingredients, so as to be absorbed into their substance in cooking, are more indigestible than if prepared in a simple manner."—Dalton ("Treatise on Physiology," N. Y., 1878).

None of the immediate principles, taken separately, in the animal or vegetable kingdom, suffices for complete nutrition, even during a short time, and even with the addition of water to drink.

Payen ("Substances Alimentaires") considers that we can realize the most favourable chances of preserving for a long time health and strength, especially by maintaining a fair balance in the consumption of nutritive substances of an animal and of a vegetable nature, by varying our alimentary *régime*, and

by avoiding both insufficiency and excess of nourishment.

The flesh of the ox, according to all the authorities on alimentation, of all the kinds of muscular tissue, is that which possesses the greatest nutritive power, which represents the most renovating plastic aliment, which furnishes the most tasty and appetizing broth, and which can be used more constantly with profit than any other article of food of its class.

Incidentally let it be noted that salted meat is much less nutritious than fresh. It has been ascertained chemically that brine extracts from the muscular tissue much of its nutritive principle.

Dalton places next after beef, as being most valuable as nutriment, mutton and venison ; then the flesh of fowls, the various kinds of game-birds, and, lastly, fish.

The opinion of modern French scientists, as presented in the article on Food, in the "Nouveau Dictionnaire de Medicine," may be noted and read with interest. According to this authority, "Fish is only slightly nutritive, but easily digestible. Its exclusive use would soon produce a diminution of muscular force, paleness of the tissues, and

all the signs of an alimentation insufficient in quality.

“ Fish is more digestible than the white meat of fowl.

“ The flesh of shell-fish crustaceans is hard of digestion.

“ Roast meat is more digestible than boiled.

“ Eggs very slightly cooked and dairy produce are more digestible than white meats.

“ Of vegetables, the feculents are the most digestible.

“ New wheat bread is heavier than stale bread.

“ The aliments to which the cook's art gives a liquid or semi-liquid form are, in general, more digestible.

“ The more readily an aliment is dissolved by the juices of the stomach the easier its digestion.”

Add to these facts the remark of Dalton :
“ Cheese contains the nutritious elements of the milk in a condensed, but somewhat indigestible, form.”

Nevertheless you will eat a little cheese after your dinner, for, as Brillat-Savarin hath it, “ A dessert without cheese is like a beautiful woman with only one eye.”

Of the vegetable tribe, lentils, beans, and peas are the most nourishing.

Fruit, when perfectly ripe, is most easy of digestion, because the juice of fruit consists of pure grape-sugar (glucose) and water, and it is in the form of grape-sugar that all starchy food is finally absorbed into the system. It may be said that the starch of the fruit, having been already changed into glucose by the process of ripening, requires no digestion after it is eaten by man, inasmuch as it is already in the state in which this element of nutrition is immediately absorbed into the system.

V.

ON VEGETABLES.

IN order to have good dishes of cooked vegetables you must first obtain good vegetables grown rapidly and cleanly and gathered young. Unless the market-gardener has studied his business, and produced his wares in the best possible conditions, the cook will always be handicapped in preparing those wares.

Each vegetable has its good and bad seasons, and must be employed in consequence. In taste and quality spring carrots, for instance, differ widely from autumn carrots.

By the art of the gardener the seasons may be to a certain extent suppressed. At Paris, for instance, the fruits and vegetables of each season are anticipated to a great extent by forced culture, which is practised on a large scale in the outskirts of the capital. The Parisian *primeurs*, or first-fruits, are exquisite in quality and taste, and quite different from

the early fruits and vegetables sent to Paris from the south of France, Spain, Portugal, Algeria, and even Egypt, which supplies fresh tomatoes to the Paris and London markets in January. Lately the Belgians have taken to grape culture, and supply the Paris market with fruit from January to May; from July to October the grape supply comes from Algeria; from September to January the finest grapes are produced by the growers of Thomery, near Fontainebleau. Thus there are only two months out of the twelve when you cannot have fresh grapes at Paris. In all kinds of vegetables and salads the Paris market is unrivalled. The methods of culture employed by the gardeners who supply this market are worthy of careful study.

As a general rule, all dry vegetables are cooked by putting them into cold water, the temperature of which is gradually raised to boiling-point, while all fresh and green vegetables are cooked by plunging them into salted water already boiling.

The reason is that, as in the cooking of meat, so in the cooking of vegetables, it is desirable to protect them against the infiltration of water.

Starch is as constant a constituent of vege-

tables as albumen is of meat. Raw starch is practically not digestible by man, so that it is absolutely necessary that vegetables should be thoroughly cooked. In boiling, the starch granules absorb water, swell up, and burst, thus undergoing the first necessary step to their subsequent transformation into glucose through the action of the digestive fluids. Also, when starch, in the dry state, is heated to 302 degrees Fahrenheit, it is changed into dextrine, in which state it is thoroughly digestible. The potato is composed almost entirely of starch, and the necessary transformation in cooking is comparatively easy to effect. But in the case of dried beans and peas, prolonged cooking is necessary in order to soften and disintegrate the woody fibre with which this class of food is more or less entangled. The development of flavour by cooking is much less marked in vegetables than in meat. In boiling dried vegetables a method is adopted which is the reverse of that in cooking meat. The vegetables are immersed in cold water, which is afterwards brought to the boiling-point, and then the cooking proceeds at a temperature somewhat below 212 degrees Fahrenheit, so as not to destroy the form of the vegetables.

Starch in the digestive tube is changed first into dextrine, then into glucose.

Much has been written about the ways of preserving the green colour in cooked vegetables.

The French cooks, I have read in English cook-books, generally put a pinch of carbonate of ammonia into the water.

Dubois-Bernard and Souchay use a red copper pan to boil their vegetables in. The red copper, during the process of boiling, gives off a little oxychloride of copper, which is the same product that is used for giving a green patine to bronze statues.

In reality the great secret is simply to have abundance of water in the pot.

It will be found that string-beans, for instance, plunged into well-salted boiling water, in a pot of any material, provided it be large enough to allow the beans to float freely, each one careering round on its own account in the stream of ebullition, will retain their green colour perfectly.

The pot should not be covered.

It is needless to add that the same holds good of other green vegetables.

Another idea which is found in many cook-books, and which is indiscriminately practised by non-reasoning cooks—that is to say, by the majority—is a process of cooling or chilling, termed by the French cooks *rafraîchir*. This process consists in plunging the vegetables into boiling water for a few minutes ; then taking them out and throwing cold water on to them to cool them ; then, after they are cooled and drained, continuing the cooking in boiling water. This process is employed to prevent the vegetables turning yellow.

Experience in my own kitchen, confirmed by the experience and practice of many intelligent *chefs* whom I have consulted, has convinced me that *this cooling process is a mistake, except when the supplementary cooking operations justify it, and also when the vegetables have to be served cold, as for instance in the case of a macédoine or salad of vegetables.*

As a general rule green vegetables should be boiled in an abundance of well-salted boiling water, in a roomy pot and without a lid. As soon as the vegetables are cooked serve them rapidly. *Let as short a time as possible elapse between the cooking of vegetables and the eating of them.*

In cooking cauliflower, asparagus, string-beans, and any other vegetable which may sometimes have a slightly bitter taste, due to accidents of culture or what not, it is well always *to put a lump of loaf sugar into the water*. This precaution will effectually counteract the bitterness, if there be any.

To cook a cauliflower proceed thus : wash it carefully ; cut it into four if it is large ; pass each portion through a bowl of water with a dash of vinegar in it to drive the grubs out if there be any ; drain and plunge into a gallon of boiling water containing about one half an ounce of salt and a lump of sugar.

Take the cauliflower out of the pot as soon as it begins to feel tender to the touch. Pinch it with your fingers to feel whether it is tender or not. *The cooking of the cauliflower will continue for some minutes after it has been taken out of the water, thanks to the heat stored in it.*

Cauliflower thus cooked may be served with white sauce, or *au gratin*.

To make cauliflower *au gratin*, take one ounce of butter and a little more than one ounce of flour ; hold them in a saucepan over the fire for two minutes ; then add one and

a half pints of water, two pinches of salt, three pinches of pepper ; put on the fire and boil for ten minutes, stirring all the while with a wooden spoon. Then you add a good ounce of grated Parmesan cheese, and a good ounce of grated Gruyère, and reduce the whole for five minutes. (By "reducing" we mean applying very hot fire to the saucepan in order to bring about rapid evaporation, and so reduce the liquidity of the mixture. "Cooking," on the other hand, is produced by a slow and continuous fire.)

Next you take a shallow dish of porcelain or of crockery which will resist heat, the same dish in which the cauliflower will be served when cooked. You place a layer of cauliflower in the bottom of the dish, and spread over it a layer of the sauce. Then you pile up the rest of the cauliflower, pour over it the rest of the sauce, sprinkle another ounce of grated Parmesan and a spoonful of cracker-crumbs, and pour over the whole three quarters of an ounce of melted butter. Then you put the dish into an oven with fire above and fire below, and in twenty minutes it will be as brown and golden as a picture by Titian, a joy to the eye and a delight to the palate.

Cauliflower boiled as above may be eaten as a cold vegetable, with oil and vinegar, or employed as an ingredient in vegetable salads.

Another simple way of serving it is *sauté* with butter. In this case you must not boil the cauliflower quite so much. Take it out of the water while it is still quite firm ; break it up into small branches ; place in a saucepan with butter ; sprinkle on it some seasoning herbs or simply finely chopped chervil and a little pepper ; cook over a brisk fire, shaking the saucepan from time to time, and serve.

Asparagus should be grown carefully, and gathered when the head is violet or tinged with violet. The stalks should be very white. You prepare it by scraping the stalks, so as to remove the pellicule which has been in contact with the soil ; wash each piece ; cut the stalks of equal length, say six or eight inches ; tie them into bundles of eight or ten sticks, and put them to cook in a caldron of boiling salt water, with a lump of sugar. The water should be salted at the rate of one quarter of an ounce of salt per quart of water for a quantity of asparagus varying from

thirty to forty sticks, according to the thickness of the sticks. As soon as the asparagus begins to feel soft take it out of the water immediately. According to the quality of the asparagus the time of cooking will vary from ten to twenty minutes. If you leave the asparagus in the water a second after the cooking is finished it will suck in the water, become flabby, and be spoiled.

For cooking asparagus conveniently and satisfactorily a special caldron is necessary. The bundle of asparagus is laid on a drainer, which fits into the caldron, and enables you to lift the cooked vegetable out of the water without bruising or breaking the heads. This caldron has a lid, and may be covered. In cooking asparagus there is no question of preserving colour.

Asparagus may be served warm—not piping hot—or tepid, or even cold. Warm asparagus should be served with white sauce Hollandaise, *the sauce being served apart in a sauce-boat, and not poured over the whole dish.* The asparagus, after having been well drained, should be served in a dish on the bottom of which is placed a napkin neatly folded. *The object of serving the asparagus on a napkin is to insure perfect draining; the*

napkin absorbs whatever water may still cling to the stalks. In some unenlightened districts asparagus is served on a layer of toast, which fulfils the same object as the napkin and absorbs the water. If you do find asparagus served on toast, do not offer to eat the toast, any more than you would offer to eat the napkin.

Silversmiths and crockery-makers have invented various kinds of drainers and special rustic dishes for serving asparagus, but I have not yet seen one that approaches perfection. In table service, as in cookery, simplicity seems always more desirable than complexity.

Serve the asparagus on a long dish, arranging the bundle longitudinally on the napkin, just as it came out of the caldron.

For serving asparagus, broad silver tongs are made.

To eat asparagus, use your fingers. Grasp the stalk boldly ; dip the head in the portion of sauce that you have taken on your plate ; bite off the head and as much of the stalk as will yield to the pressure of the teeth.

Warm asparagus may also be eaten with a simple sauce of melted butter.

Tepid and cold asparagus requires a sauce

of oil, vinegar, pepper, and salt, which must be served in a sauce-boat apart. At a dinner without ceremony each one can mix this sauce for himself on his plate. But whether a small or a large quantity is mixed, the process is the same : you mix up the salt and pepper in a small quantity of vinegar ; then you add five or six times as much oil ; stir up and use, dipping each stick of asparagus into the sauce on your plate before conveying it to your mouth.

Artichokes are cooked in the same way as asparagus, and served with the same sauce—warm, with white sauce ; cold, with oil and vinegar. N.B.—You must use your fingers to eat artichokes, and a silver knife only to separate the flower from the heart, or *fond*.

In spite of cooks and cook-books I feel convinced that neither asparagus nor artichokes are so good cold as they are when just tepid ; freshly cooked and allowed to cool down so as to be *just not cold*, both these vegetables are peculiarly delicate when eaten with a sauce of oil and vinegar, mixed on your plate at the moment of eating.

Artichokes à la Barigoule.—Blanch your

artichokes—that is to say, parboil them in boiling salted water (one quarter of an ounce of salt per quart) ; then cool them off with cold water ; drain and remove the leaves of the heart, so that you may be able to pull out the woolly centre, or flower. Season with pepper and salt ; place them in a frying-pan, with a few spoonfuls of olive oil, and fry the tips of the leaves, laying the artichokes in the pan, bottom upwards.

Then you take a sufficient quantity of garnish, composed of mushrooms, parsley, shallots—the mushrooms and parsley in equal quantities ; the shallots only half as much—and chop very finely. Place on the fire in a saucepan—with butter and salt and pepper—the shallots first of all, and stir with a spoon for five minutes ; then add the chopped mushrooms and parsley, and stir over the fire another five minutes. Next take for each artichoke the value of one ounce of bacon. We will suppose that you are cooking four artichokes ; you will need about a wine-glassful of herb garnish, to which you will add four ounces of grated bacon, one quarter ounce of butter, one quarter ounce of flour, and a wine-glassful of good *bonillon*. Place all these ingredients in a saucepan over a

brisk fire for five minutes, and stir with a wooden spoon.

Then, in the cups formed by the four artichokes that you have prepared by hollowing out the woolly centre you place a quarter of your sauce; tie a string round each one, to hold the leaves together; put a speck of bacon on the top of each one; arrange them in a dish, with two wine-glassfuls of *bouillon*, and cook the whole for twenty minutes, with fire above and fire below, like a dish *au gratin*, or else in an oven. Before serving squeeze over each artichoke three drops of orange or lemon juice.

This dish is composed of simple ingredients, but it requires to be prepared with great care.

All good cooking is the result of care, undivided attention and love of the art.

Green Pease à la Française.—The French call green pease, *petits pois* or “little pease,” “young pease.” They must be gathered young. The English eat pease when they have grown hard as shot—that is to say, when they are no longer “young pease,” but about seed-pease. So, then, we will take a quart of young and tender pease, freshly

shelled ; put them in a two-quart saucepan, with a quarter of a pound of first-quality butter (N.B.—*You cannot achieve superfine cooking with poor butter. So called kitchen-butter is an abomination. In the kitchen you need the finest and most delicate butter*) ; a wine-glassful of water ; two ounces of white, small onions ; a little salt, or no salt if the butter is already salt ; one ounce of powdered sugar.

Cover your saucepan well, and stew over a moderate fire for half an hour. When they are cooked, taste and add more sugar if needful, and about a quarter of a pound more butter mixed with half flour. Work your pease round in the saucepan over the fire, so that the flour and butter may get thoroughly distributed, and then serve.

This is a dish to be served and eaten alone, and not messed up on a plate with meat, gravy, potatoes, and half-a-dozen other things.

String-Beans à la Française.—Prepare your beans, which should be young, with the bean just forming ; when eaten, the presence and shape of the bean or grain itself ought not to be felt ; what we desire to eat is the

green pod, the juicy envelope of the grain. Gather the beans young. The preparation consists in pinching off the ends, removing the stringy fibre lengthwise, and slicing the bean slantingly into two or three sections.

For one pound of green beans you want a pot that will hold nearly a gallon of water, in which you will put half an ounce of salt. When the water boils put in your beans, cook, and drain them. In a frying-pan for *sautéing*, you melt two ounces of butter ; then you put in the beans, fry them for seven or eight minutes on a brisk fire, add salt and pepper to taste, and sprinkle over with finely chopped parsley or chervil. A teaspoonful of lemon-juice may also be added with advantage before serving.

The French make great use of lettuce as a vegetable, and a most excellent vegetable it is. I will give you a few recipes of applications of the cooked lettuce which have come under my notice.

First of all, an amiable Parisian hostess, who has published some of her secrets in the "100 Recettes de Mlle. Françoise" (Paris : J. Renoult), introduced me to :

Laitues à la Crème.—Take the hearts of cabbage lettuces, wash them, and bleach them for a quarter of an hour in boiling salted water. (N.B.—Do not put the lid on your saucepan, remembering the general directions about cooking vegetables and preserving their green colour.) Next take the lettuces out of the boiling water, put them in a sieve, throw cold water over them, and let them drain thoroughly. Then, in a dish which will stand heat, put some cream, some small lumps of butter, and finally the lettuce hearts ; pour on more cream, seasoned with salt and pepper, and cover with a thin layer of cracker-crumbs. Cook for an hour and a quarter in a moderate oven, where the whole will simmer gently. Serve in the dish in which it has been cooked.

Laitues au Jus.—Take four or six, or more firm cabbage lettuces ; strip off the poor outer leaves ; wash them, and bleach them for ten minutes in boiling salted water, without any lid on the pan. Take them out of the pan ; cool them by throwing cold water on them ; drain them, and press them in a sieve until there remains not a drop of water. Season them with the least speck of salt on each let-

tuce; put them in a saucepan; cover them with *bouillon*, and add some of the skimming of the *pot-au-feu*, or some pieces of bacon, a savoury bouquet, a pricked onion, and two cloves. Cover the saucepan closely by tying paper over it, and let the whole simmer for two hours. Drain carefully, and serve with gravy.

VI.

ON RELISH AND SEASONING.

The fundamental principle of all
Is what ingenious cooks The Relish call ;
For when the market sends in loads of food
They all are tasteless till that makes them good.

The Art of Cookery.

THE worthy cook who is empress of my kitchen, queen of my stomach, and, therefore, mistress of my humour, won my confidence by a simple remark that she made the first time I had friends to dinner after she had entered upon her duties. "Monsieur," she said, for she is of Gaulish origin ; "monsieur, I am very pleased to see that none of the gentlemen last night touched the salt-cellar. I could not desire a finer compliment."

If I or my guests had found it necessary to ruffle the smooth surface of the salt-cellar, and add a pinch to any of the dishes, it would have been a proof that my cook had not succeeded in seasoning her dishes to the point.

A cook having any self-respect, and any respect for his art, has a right to feel insulted if a guest proceeds to powder his food with salt and pepper before having even tasted it. Such a barbarous proceeding implies disastrous social antecedents on the part of the guest, unaccustomedness to delicate eating, or a callousness and bluntness of palate which renders him unworthy to taste any but the rankest food and the most scarifying of spirituous liquors.

For such palates as these, deadened by the abuse of tobacco and whiskey, special relishes have been invented of a penetrating and fiery nature, fabricated according to recipes bequeathed by deceased noblemen or supposititious Indian officers, and sold in bottles decorated with strange labels and under titles which I will not enumerate.

In order to facilitate the use of these diabolical and dyspepsia-producing relishes the contrivance known as a cruet-stand has been elaborated, and now, for years and years, has figured on Anglo-Saxon dinner-tables as a hideous and ever-present reminder of the wretched state into which the art of cookery has fallen in Anglo-Saxon countries.

Let it be remembered, first of all and

above all, that seasoning is the business of the cook, and that *unless the relish is imparted to the food during the process of cooking it cannot be imparted afterwards*. When your meat or vegetables are served on the table and on your plate, you will vainly sprinkle them with salt and pepper and sauces ; you will simply be eating meat and vegetables and seasoning matter, but you will not be eating seasoned meat or seasoned vegetables.

The great superiority of French cooking over all other cookery lies in the thorough comprehension of the rôle and methods of seasoning in cookery.

The perfection of seasoning brings out the peculiar savour of each article of food, and never allows the seasoning to usurp the place of the savour. The skill of the cook is shown by the nicety with which he judges his proportions so as to form a suave whole, in which all the elements are harmonized and none allowed to dominate.

It is in the seasoning that the art and sentiment of the cook are shown. No book can teach how to make a sauce to perfection ; it is almost useless, not to say impossible, to work with scales and measures and accord-

ing to nicely figured formulæ ; the true cook works by experience and feeling. *A true cook, be it remembered, is an artist, and not a Johannes Factotum.*

Relish in food is produced by various means.

1. By the simple process of cooking, as in roasting, grilling, etc., where, as already explained, the cooking develops a peculiar aroma, agreeable to the taste and conducive to digestion, because it excites in a healthy manner the secretion of the gastric juices.
2. By the admixture in the process of cooking of aromatic condiments, spices, savoury herbs, and salt.
3. By sauces properly so called.

The *rôle* of condiments is to please the taste, to excite the physical energy of the digestive tube, and to increase to a notable extent the secretions of its different parts. Condiments, if properly used, assure digestion and hasten the absorption of food by the system.

The French cooks are constantly using a *bouquet garni* as a means of seasoning. This bouquet is composed in the proportions of one ounce of green parsley, one and a half

pennyweights of thyme, and the same quantity of bay-laurel. Wash your parsley, roll up your thyme and laurel into a little bundle, fold the parsley around, and bind the whole with thread or cotton into a little packet about two inches long. Three cloves may or may not be added to this bouquet, according to the tastes of the company. The same remark holds good also as regards the addition of a young onion.

A simple bouquet is composed of chives and parsley tied up into a little bundle.

All kinds of bouquets must be removed from the dishes in the kitchen before serving.

Gouffé gives the following mixture of all-spice for use especially in seasoning pasties, galantine, and other cold dishes.

Take one quarter ounce thyme,
one quarter ounce bay-laurel,
one eighth ounce marjoram,
one eighth ounce rosemary.

Dry these four herbs thoroughly by artificial heat, and when they are thoroughly dry pound them finely in a mortar with

one half ounce nutmeg,
one half ounce cloves,
one quarter ounce white pepper-corns,
one eighth ounce cayenne pepper.

Pound the whole finely, sift, and keep for use in a well-corked bottle. This allspice is used alone or mixed with salt, the proportion being four times as much salt as spice.

Supposing you have to season three pounds of galantine, the dose required, according to Gouffé, would be one ounce of salt and spice mixed in the above proportions.

The best way of seasoning fish whose flesh is not naturally full-flavoured or extremely delicate is to cook it in seasoned water, or, as the French call it, in a *court-bouillon*.

The real *court-bouillon* is made thus: On the bottom of your fish-kettle lay a bed of sliced carrots, sliced onions, green parsley, thyme, bay-laurel, a sliced lemon or a sliced orange, and some whole pepper, say twenty grains (not grains in weight, but grains in the botanical sense). On this bed lay your fish, and cover it with half white wine and half water (and if you have no white wine use vinegar or verjuice, two or three wine-glassfuls added to the water). Put your kettle on a moderate fire, and as soon as the liquid boils withdraw it immediately, and take out your fish, which you will find to be perfectly cooked.

Fish must always be put into cold *court-bouillon*.

The *court-bouillon* may be prepared beforehand, and cooled down before the fish is put in ; the *court-bouillon* may also be kept and used several times, provided it be reboiled every three or four days, a little water being added each time to supply loss by evaporation.

Naturally a *court-bouillon* prepared beforehand will savour more strongly of the aromatic ingredients in it than a new *court-bouillon*.

If wine is abundant, of course it may be substituted for water almost entirely.

Remark that in countries where wine is not commonly used for kitchen purposes the *court-bouillon* may be made quite satisfactorily with vinegar and lemons. Even in France many an economical housekeeper will not sacrifice a bottle of white wine to boil a fish. With wine, of course, the result is more delicate and richer. But wine is not absolutely necessary for success.

Both fresh-water and sea fish may be advantageously cooked in *court-bouillon*, with the exception, of course, of such fine kinds as the lordly turbot.

For a fish like pike, for instance, you can heighten the flavour of the *court-bouillon* by the addition of a little ginger and a few cloves; some cooks even add garlic, but to my mind garlic is too acrid a condiment to be used in cooking any kind of fish. On the other hand, garlic is to be commended in the knuckle of a roast leg of mutton, and in certain salads, especially when applied in the form of a Gascony capon, as we shall see further on. I do not guarantee that pike cooked thus is equal to a pike roasted according to the directions given by Izaak Walton, which is, as he says, "a dish of meat too good for any but anglers or very honest men." But Izaak Walton forbids the application of his recipe to a pike less than three quarters of a yard long, whereas a pike of only a quarter of a yard may be cooked in a *court-bouillon*.

Wine is of great utility to the cook; and by wine I mean fermented grape-juice, not necessarily Bordeaux or Burgundy wine, but also Australian wine, provided the sweeter kinds are avoided.

Even unfermented grape-juice may often be employed in developing flavour. A roast

partridge that has been basted with the fresh juice of *white grapes, of any but the muscat kind*, is a fine dish.

All game, without exception, requires the application of some sour, in order to develop the savour thoroughly. This is the theoretical explanation of the custom of serving salad with this course.

For making most of the fine sauces wine is as indispensable as butter, and success can only be obtained if both articles are good. "*Kitchen*" wine and "*kitchen*" butter are *fatal to good cookery*. The cook requires the best butter and good ordinary wine, but not Château Yquem or Château Lafitte or Tokay. Burgundy, for kitchen purposes, needs to be a strong and full-flavoured wine, and Bordeaux a sound and dry wine. The Madeira and Spanish wines used in cooking need to be simply unadulterated, but not necessarily fine and dear wines.

The *matelote* of fresh-water fish is a way of cooking in wine which is much practised in France, where at every river-side inn you may see the sign "*Matelote et Friture*." And a noble dish it is, when well made. The finest *matelotes* I have eaten were made in a skillet

hung over a blazing wood-fire in a farm-house on the banks of the Loire ; and half the secret of success seemed to be in the fact that the tongues of flame glided freely around the caldron, and set fire to the boiling wine just at the critical moment. Over an ordinary and comparatively cramped kitchen-fire success is only to be obtained by more careful manipulation, and this is the way you must proceed :

Take an eel and a pike, or a carp, or a perch, or a barbel, or any combinations of these fish which the larder may offer, even an eel alone, or, better, an eel and a pike ; clean them and cut them up into pieces about two inches square. Suppose that you have two good pounds of fish. First, take a saucepan into which you put two ounces of butter and twenty small onions peeled and blanched. Let your onions get browned over the fire ; then add one and a half ounces of flour, pepper and salt, and stir for five minutes, adding a few mushrooms previously browned in butter and a little lemon-juice, and a little water if the mixture needs it. Then add one pint of red wine, a *bouquet garni*, pepper and salt, and a pint of good *bouillon* or meat-juice. Some would add a clove of garlic, but we are

not of this view. Cover your pot, and let this mixture simmer twenty minutes.

Then put in your slices of eel and of the less tender fish (as carp, for instance), and cook for a quarter of an hour.

Last of all put in your tender fish, add a wine-glassful of brandy, and cook five or ten minutes longer. Take out the bouquet and serve on a dish with the onions and sauce poured over the fish. The sauce will be creamy, and of a bluish-brown colour.

(N.B.—Not the least essential thing in the above recipe is the meat-juice. If you have not meat-juice or good *bouillon* you must put in two pints of wine instead of one.)

Another way of making a *matelote* is to put the fish in the bottom of a pan with a *bouquet garni*, cover the fish with wine, and as soon as the wine boils pour in half a glass of strong brandy and fire the whole. Let the mixture blaze and cook for a quarter of an hour, and then serve on a dish with your *ragoût* of small onions, flour and mushrooms peppered, salted, and prepared apart in a pan, as described in the beginning of the above recipe.

The essence of the *matelote* lies in the employment of wine instead of water to stew

the fish in ; and, as already stated, complete success can only be achieved by the happy combination of wine and the juice of meat. The onions, mushrooms, etc., are merely details, but indispensable details, in the seasoning and thickening of the sauce.

(N.B.—Instead of, or together with, butter, little slices of bacon may be used to brown the onions.)

To the many ways of preparing oysters may be added the following recipes, copied from a rare and valuable seventeenth-century book called “*Les Délices de la Campagne ; où est enseigné à préparer pour l’usage de la vie tout ce qui croist sur la terre et dans les eaux. Dédié aux Dames ménagères*” (Paris, 1654). In those days oysters were eaten raw, with pepper ; fried in the half-shell, with a speck of butter and pepper on each oyster, and served, when cooked, with a drop of verjuice or vinegar and a bit of grated nutmeg ; *en étuvée*, that is to say, detached from the shell and placed in a pan with their liquor, some butter, a little pepper, some nutmeg, some chives, and a few bits of orange or lemon, and so boiled slowly, and served with grated bread-crumbs round the dish ; *en fri-*

cassée in a frying-pan with a *roux* of sliced onion and butter, the oysters being put into the *roux* with the liquor, and when they are almost cooked you add a few drops of vinegar, with some chopped parsley, and even a little mustard; drained on a napkin, peppered, dipped in batter, and fried in hot lard, then served with fried parsley round the dish and an orange squeezed over them. The same precious and practical little book tells us how to pickle oysters by taking them out of the shell, placing them in layers in a jar or barrel, peppering and salting each layer, and adding bay-laurel, cinnamon, green fennel, and, if you are rich enough, a little musk or amber. When you take them out of the barrel for use, soak them awhile if they are too salt, and then prepare them in the ways above described, or eat them with oil, or eat them as they are. These pickled oysters "may also be used for giving flavour to *ragouts* and roast fowl of various kinds, and for a thousand other seasonings which the cook shall judge fit."

Lamb or Mutton Cutlets breaded with Cheese.—Trim your cutlets neatly, remove superfluous fat, and make them dainty in

shape. Dip each cutlet in melted butter, and then roll it in bread-crumbs and very finely grated Parmesan cheese, the crumbs and the cheese being in equal parts. Cook over a clear fire, and see that the cutlets do not get burned or blackened.

Duck à la Portugaise.—This recipe is due to the eminent poet, critic, historian, and journalist, Charles Monselet, who is the author of divers succulent volumes on the gastronomic art, and of a famous sonnet on that encyclopædic animal, the pig.

The present dish is worthy of attention on account of the simplicity of the elements of which it is composed and of the short time needed to prepare it. Take either a wild duck or an ordinary duck; if the latter, wring its neck smartly, so that there may be as little blood lost as possible; dip it in hot water, so that you may feather it the more easily; then draw and clean it. Take the heart, the liver, and the gizzard, and chop them up fine with three shalots; pepper and salt liberally; add a lump of fresh butter; knead the whole well with a fork and stuff it into the carcase. Cut the duck's neck, reserving a piece of skin to sew up the aperture;

pack in the pope's nose, and sew up likewise ; then roll the duck in a cloth and tie it round and round with a string ; then plunge it into boiling salt water, and cook thirty-five minutes, or thirty minutes for a wild duck.

VII.

ACETARIA, OR CONCERNING THE DRESSING OF SALADS.

A SALAD is a dish composed of certain herbs or vegetables seasoned with salt and pepper, oil and vinegar, or some other acid element.

The term salad is also applied to certain cold dishes composed of cold meats, fish, etc., seasoned like a salad, and combined with salads.

You also speak of an orange salad when the fruit is cut into slices and seasoned in sweetened alcohol.

As an aliment, salads vary greatly in nutritious quality, according to their composition and constituent elements. The leaf salads, like lettuce, endive, sorrel, etc., contain little but water and mineral salts.

Of all the methods of seasoning a salad proper, the simple, so-called French dressing is the most delicate, the most worthy of the gourmet's palate, and the most hygienic.

Let it be remarked that a salad may be made a constant element in the alimentary *régime*; that it is an agreeable, amusing, and healthy thing to eat; that it is an economical and democratic dish, and not a dish merely for the fashionable world. Incidentally let it be remarked that the fashionable world enjoys no privileges in the art of cooking, except so far as concerns certain quintessential sauces, which can only be made in elaborately mounted kitchens and at considerable expense. Indeed, as a rule the fashionable world fares badly, more especially when the services of a "caterer" are used. The very name of "caterer" has something gross and crude about it which shocks the real gourmet. A man or a woman who invites you to dine is responsible for your health and happiness as long as the hospitality lasts, and even afterwards. But how few hosts have a right sense of the respect which they owe to their guests! How absolutely hard-hearted, uncharitable, and egoistic is the host or hostess who conceives a dinner-party merely as an occasion for show and ostentation, has his or her table set out with flowers and silver and crystal, and orders a "caterer," a purveyor of food, to serve a dinner at so much a

head. What a crude state of civilization this condition of things implies!

But, to return from this digression, let us consider, first of all, salads of uncooked vegetables and herbs. Such salads are made of lettuce—either cabbage or cos lettuce, which latter the French call *Romaine*, and which is the most delicate—endive, corn-salad—this is a species of *valeriana* or rather *valerianella locusta*, called by the French *Mâche*—chicory, both wild and curly, sorrel, celery, garden and water-cresses, little white radishes called in French *raiponce*, beet-root, tomatoes, cucumbers.

To give flavour to salads, you use the small and fine herbs that are in season, such as chervil, chives, tarragon, pimperl, balm, mint, etc. In the spring all or some of these seasoning herbs above mentioned may be combined and eaten as a salad by themselves. Such a salad bears the name of *Vendôme*.

The vegetables and herbs that are to be used uncooked must have been specially cultivated for the purpose ; that is to say, they must have been grown rapidly, abundantly watered, and properly bleached during growth. These conditions are necessary to render the leaves crisp

and tender. A salad that requires powerful and prolonged mastication is a nuisance, and to eat it is waste of time. Unless a lettuce is so tender that it seems to melt coolly in your mouth, you may just as well eat a cabbage salad.

The cultivation of vegetables and herbs for salads is a special branch of market gardening requiring constant care in watering, forcing, and bleaching the plants, and in regulating their ripening in such succession that there may be salads ready for market each day, neither undergrown nor overgrown, but just mature, juicy and tender. Salads left to grow by themselves in an ordinary kitchen-garden are usually tough and stringy ; the watering has been insufficient ; the sun has scorched the epidermis of the leaves ; the rain has splashed the soil up into the heart of the plant ; the fibre is dry and woody. The gardener who cultivates for the kitchen must tend his plants with extreme care, in order to grow them satisfactorily from the point of view of the cook and of the gourmet.

Having obtained a fine cos lettuce, we will say for an example, how are we to make it into a salad ? First of all, strip off and throw away the outer leaves, which are too green and tough, and which are often bruised and dirty. Then take your lettuce, and break off

the larger leaves one by one until you reach the heart, which you pick off the stalk, throwing the latter away ; carefully wash each leaf and drain the whole. (N.B.—Do not touch your lettuce with a knife, to cut it into quarters as some recommend. Use your fingers.) A spherical wire basket is useful for draining a salad ; you put the leaves in the basket and swing it violently to and fro, and so shake the water out. Get your leaves as dry as possible ; even wipe them with a towel after having shaken them in the wire basket—the reason being that whenever there is any water left on the leaves the dressing will not get distributed. The lettuce having been well washed and dried, you arrange the leaves loosely in the salad-bowl, which should be large and roomy, say about one and a half times the volume of the mass of the salad, in order that you may have plenty of room to turn it during the seasoning process. On the top of the salad you lay a handful of seasoning herbs, chervil and chives and a sprig of tarragon. In this state the salad is served if it is to be seasoned at table ; in any case the salad must not be seasoned until a few minutes before it is eaten, with the reserve to be made further on.

Now we come to the operation of season-

ing and mixing. The tools needed are a salad-spoon and fork, and the best are the simplest and the cleanest, namely, a spoon and fork of boxwood. Beware of the dreadful inventions of artistic silversmiths. *In table-service it often happens that the highest luxury is the extremest simplicity.* First of all, you take up with your fingers as much of the seasoning herbs as you think fit, and with a knife of silver cut them up finely over the salad-bowl; then you take your salad-spoon and put into it salt and pepper in sufficient quantity; then you pour a little vinegar into the spoon and stir the salt and pepper with the fork until the salt dissolves and the pepper gets well mixed with the vinegar; then you sprinkle this mixture over your salad and turn it with the spoon and fork in order to distribute the seasoned vinegar and the chopped herbs as thoroughly as possible over every leaf; finally, you measure out so many spoonfuls of oil and turn your salad again and again until the oil is fairly distributed over every leaf. The salad is then ready to be eaten. The turning of a salad should be done with delicate and dainty touch, so that the leaves may not be bruised or crushed.

As regards the quantities of salt, pepper,

oil, vinegar, and fine herbs, it is impossible to be precise, the delicacy of the human palate varies so widely, according to the climate and according to national and individual habits. It will always be best to gauge the seasoning by the most delicate palate at table. In short, the quantities of salt, pepper, and vinegar will vary greatly according to individual tastes, and also according to the strength of the salt, the pepper, and particularly of the vinegar. To my mind, any manufactured vinegar is too strong for fine lettuce salad, and, instead of vinegar, I use lemon-juice. Indeed, for all uncooked salads I prefer lemon-juice to vinegar; and unless one can make sure of obtaining real wine vinegar, I should certainly use lemon-juice for all salad dressing. Lemon-juice is the most delicate and deliciously perfumed acid that Nature has given the cook. As for the pepper, never use the powdered pepper that you buy at the grocer's, and which has generally lost its flavour before it reaches the depths of the pepper-castor. *The only pepper worthy to titillate the papillæ of a civilized man is that ground out of the pepper-corn, at the moment of use, in a little hand-mill.* Here, again, we must beware of the inventions of the silver-

smiths, none of which is so practical and handy as the simple wooden mill.

In describing the process of dressing a lettuce salad I mixed the salt and pepper in vinegar and poured the oil on last of all. This rule is not absolute. Some mix the pepper and salt in oil, but this, I am convinced, is a mistake, because the salt does not readily dissolve in oil, and the distribution of the condiments is less complete. But as regards oil first or vinegar first, the choice is difficult. In point of fact, a salad must always be a compromise: wherever a leaf is smeared over with oil the vinegar will not rest, and wherever the vinegar rests on a leaf the oil will not stay. If you pour your vinegar on first the salad will have a sharper and more piquant taste; if you apply the oil first the dressing will be more delicate.

In order to make a good lettuce salad you require good lettuce, good salt, good pepper, good vinegar or lemon-juice, and olive oil of the best quality; and then if you do not pay careful attention to every detail of the preparation, dressing, and mixing, your salad will not be a success. Good materials, good methods, intelligence, and attention are as

necessary in salad-making as in any other branch of the cook's art.

Note also that in cookery you cannot abbreviate the processes; for instance, I have read, in a cook-book written by an Anglo-Saxon woman, that the best way to operate is "to mix the pepper and salt, the oil, the chopped chives, and the vinegar all together, and when well mingled to pour the mixture over the salad, or place the salad over it and mix all together." This is rank heresy. The mixture thus produced would be a viscous liquid, a sort of half-made *mayonnaise*, utterly different in consistency and taste from the distribution of oil and vinegar each separately.

For convenience it may be noted that a salad may be oiled an hour or more before it is served. If you have plenty of hands in the kitchen you may have each leaf oiled separately with a brush, which is a very ideal way of proceeding. *Beware, however, of putting salt on the salad before it is served, or vinegar either; the salt would draw all the water out of the salad and leave it limp and flimsy, while the acid would eat into the leaves and reduce them to a pulpy state.*

A salad of *Romaine* lettuce is so delicate

that it admits of no mixtures or garnishings. A salad of ordinary cabbage lettuce may be garnished with hard-boiled eggs, shelled and cut in four, also with olives, beets, anchovies even, but such admixtures are not to be recommended on the score of delicacy.

Tarragon vinegar, that is vinegar in which a branch of tarragon is left to soak, may be used preferably to the fresh leaves of tarragon for salad-dressing.

Vinegar for dressing salads may be prepared also as follows: In the bottom of an earthen pitcher put a handful of tarragon, half as much garden-cress, half as much chervil, some fresh pimpernel leaves, and one clove of garlic. Over this pour one gallon of vinegar, let it infuse a week, clarify, and bottle for use.

In preparing a salad of curly chicory, beware of allowing the leaves to stand in water, otherwise they will become hard; the same remark applies to celery.

For seasoning a salad of curly chicory, proceed in the manner above described for the usual French dressing, omitting only the chives, but before turning the salad, put in a *chapon*, a Gascony capon as it is called. This is a small crust of bread about an inch

square, rubbed over with garlic. During the mixing, this crust, impregnated with the perfume of garlic, but without its rankness, comes into light contact with every leaf, and communicates to the whole a slight aroma of the onion, so dear to the Gascons, and to all Latin men. You may or may not like this aroma, but, in any case do not forget the *chapon*, the perfumed crust, as a means of communicating flavours very lightly.

In cookery we learn the eternal principles, and each one composes according as he has more or less imagination. I have explained the way of preparing and dressing a lettuce salad with oil and vinegar in the French style. This description will serve as a type and basis, which may be applied to various simple and compound salads of uncooked, and also of cooked, vegetables, some of which I briefly note.

One of the finest salads, to be eaten either alone or with game, especially partridges, woodcock, snipe, or wild duck, is a mixture of celery, beet-root, and corn-salad—if corn-salad cannot be obtained, water-cress will make a very poor substitute, when broken into small tufts. The beets are cut into slices one sixteenth of an inch thick, the

celery, which must be young and tender, and thoroughly white, should be cut into pieces an inch long, and then sliced lengthwise into two or three pieces. (N.B.—Select only the slender inside branches of celery.) This salad will require plenty of oil, and more acid than a lettuce salad, because of the sweetness and absorbent nature of the beet-root. The general seasoning, too, must be rather high, because the flavours of the celery and of the beet are pronounced. In the Parisian restaurants nowadays, even in the best, the waiters, unless they have been duly terrorized beforehand, will add mustard to the seasoning of this salad, and so spoil it for the delicate palate.

A potato-salad ought not to be made with cold boiled potatoes, as the cook-books generally state, even the best of them. A potato-salad ought not to be made of potatoes that have remained over from a previous meal. The potatoes must be boiled in salt water expressly for the salad; allowed to cool, sliced into the salad-bowl, and seasoned in the French style with oil and vinegar, served and eaten while still almost tepid. A potato-salad should be abundantly garnished with finely chopped herbs, chervil, chives, and a

suspicion of tarragon; furthermore, as the floury nature of the potatoes absorbs the vinegar rapidly, in order to make up the quantity of acid liquid needful for success, throw in a little white wine, say three or four times as much white wine as you have used of vinegar or lemon-juice.

The Japanese salad invented by the younger Dumas, and celebrated in his play of "Francillon," is a potato-salad as above described, with the addition of some mussels cooked in a *court-bouillon* flavoured with celery. This salad is served with a layer of sliced truffles on the top, and the truffles ought to have been cooked in champagne rather than in Madeira.

Another potato-salad worthy of respectful attention consists of potatoes thinly sliced, a pound of truffles cooked in white wine and thinly sliced, two red herrings boned and broken up into small flakes. The dressing is a good white *mayonnaise*, with a dash of mustard. The constituent elements of this salad require to be combined some six hours before it is served, so that there may be complete interpenetration of the flavours. The addition of the *mayonnaise* should immediately precede the mixing and serving.

For a salad of cooked vegetables, or, as it is also called, a *macédoine*, you need freshly and expressly cooked vegetables: potatoes, string-beans, lima or haricot beans, pease, cauliflower, carrots, turnips, parsnips, beet-root, hearts of artichokes, asparagus tops, or as many of these ingredients as you can command. These different vegetables must, of course, have been cooked, each separately, in salt water; then plunged into cold water in order to prevent them from turning yellow; and then carefully drained before being arranged ornamentally in the salad-bowl. (N.B.—Drain carefully, for any residue of water impairs the success of the salad.) Certain of the above vegetables may be cut into dice or lozenges before being put into boiling water to cook.

A *macédoine* may be seasoned either with oil and vinegar, with a white *mayonnaise*, or with a green *mayonnaise à la ravigote*.

For fish and meat salads, for which recipes abound, the mayonnaise dressing is to be used. In America, the mayonnaise dressing seems to be used for all kinds of salad; in England, too, there is a ready-made white abomination sold in bottles under the name of salad-dressing. I call attention to these

facts only to disapprove. The gourmet will make a distinction between salads proper and mixed salads containing flesh and strong elements, and the former he will prepare with oil and vinegar, while he will season the more heavy and substantial compounds with a heavier and more strongly spiced dressing.

The making of *mayonnaise* sauce has been frequently described in Anglo-Saxon cook-books, and yet in two that I have before me, the recipes are either incomplete or wanting in clearness, so that I think it advisable to recapitulate the directions, seriatim.

Take a soup-plate or shallow bowl, a wooden or a silver fork, fine olive oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, mustard already mixed, fresh eggs, and some one to help you at the critical moment. You will fix the number of eggs according to the quantity of sauce you desire, the proportion being a quarter of a pound of oil to each egg. In your soup-plate put the yolk of one or more eggs, *taking care to remove the germ and all the white*; beat your yolk well for nearly a minute by stirring it *always in the same direction*; then add oil, drop by drop, about a teaspoonful at a time, and never adding more oil until

the preceding quantity has become thoroughly amalgamated with the egg; remember that the stirring must go on absolutely *without interruption, and always in the same direction*; at every eighth spoonful of oil add a few drops of vinegar, a pinch of salt, a pinch of pepper, a spot of mustard. The person who is helping you will drop these ingredients into the sauce at the word of command, while you keep on turning assiduously. You continue this process, adding vinegar, condiments, and oil until you have exhausted your quantity of oil; then you taste and heighten the seasoning or the piquancy, as occasion may dictate.

Some people whose palates are jaded add cayenne pepper to the seasoning. To this latter addition I am absolutely opposed.

If, by ill-luck, the *mayonnaise* curdles while you are making it, stop at once; start another egg in a clean plate, and add your curdled sauce by degrees to the new sauce, and the whole will come out good, yellow, and with the consistency of very rich, thick cream. Provided the oil and the eggs used are in normal conditions of freshness, the curdling or decomposition of the amalgam can only be due to sudden excess of oil or of vinegar,

so that in remixing you must moderate the one or the other accordingly.

Green *mayonnaise* is the above sauce with the addition of three tablespoonfuls of *ravigote* for each quarter of a pound of oil. *Ravigote* is chervil, tarragon, common garden-cress, and pimpernel, cooked for two minutes in boiling salt-water, then plunged in cold water, drained, pounded in a mortar, and strained.

A less perfect green *mayonnaise* may be made by simply adding to the sauce a handful of very finely chopped chervil mixed in a spoonful of tarragon vinegar.

To colour *mayonnaise* green, do not use boiled and mashed green pease, as I have seen recommended in a cook-book which I need not mention. The reason is, that in a creamy sauce of the nature of *mayonnaise*, we should be offended if we felt the roughness of any farinaceous matter intruding itself upon the palate. Spinach would be a less objectionable colouring matter. But unless you can do the thing properly, by means of a *ravigote* which has its special flavour and season, why attempt to colour your *mayonnaise*? Mere colouring, by make-shift means, will impair your sauce, instead of improving

it. To the eye, a yellow *mayonnaise* is just as pleasing as a green one.

Some one may object that we have a red *mayonnaise*. True, but red *mayonnaise* is not a decorative fancy, it is a quintessential compound made by pounding the coral of a lobster, and mixing the red *purée* thus obtained with ordinary white *mayonnaise*. This red *mayonnaise* is intended to make the serving of the lobster more complete, and not for show or table decoration.

In good cooking everything has a reason.

VIII.

THE THEORY OF SOUPS.

“SOUP,” says Brillat Savarin, “rejoices the stomach, and disposes it to receive and digest other food.”

The gourmet looks upon soup as a preparatory element in a refined dinner ; he takes a small quantity of it only, and does not ask for a second helping ; he requires it to be served *hot*, and not lukewarm, and in deep soup-plates, and *not in bowls*. A bowl of soup may be welcome to a traveller or to a simple *eater*, who wants merely to satisfy his hunger by quantities of nourishment. Remember always that there is a difference between *dining* and *feeding*.

The great fault with the most popular English soups, such as ox-tail, turtle, mock-turtle, mulligatawny, etc., is their strength and heaviness. To begin dinner by absorbing a large portion of these preparations implies coarseness of conception and prodigious digestive powers.

When I hear the voice of the Anglo-Saxon waiter pronouncing behind my chair the laconic formula, "Thick or clear, sir?" my heart sinks as I think of the poverty of his wit and the grossness of the distinction he makes. Are there, then, but two soups in the world? What kind of thick soup? What kind of clear soup? Know, good Anglo-Saxon waiter, that although I take only a ladleful of soup, I require it to be perfection of its kind—a poem, a dream—something suave and comforting, exceedingly pure in flavour. I neither want slops nor heavy messes charged with catsup and spices and salt and pepper. "Thick" and "clear" is, certainly, a broad distinction that may be made, but, as we have to borrow so much from the French in this gastronomic art, we cannot do better than employ their terms for extracts, compounds, and reductions, and classify our soups, or *potages*, as *consommés*, *purées*, or *crèmes*.

Soup, we must never forget, is intended to prepare the stomach for the dinner that is to follow. *Heavy soups are, therefore, inadmissible, because they constitute meals in themselves, and encroach upon the domain of the dinner proper, which, as we have seen in pre-*

vious pages, is the grand event in our material daily life.

In no branch of cookery has the imagination of fanciful cooks been so industrious as in the combination and naming of soups. As we have over one hundred fairly distinct varieties of soup, it is desirable to avoid fancy names that convey no meaning, such as the names of princes and statesmen, and to call these soups by titles that give some idea of their composition. In this matter clearness and simplicity are desirable, and the example of Gouffé is to be followed by always mentioning the characteristic ingredient of the soup, thus : *potage à l'oseille, consommé aux pâtes d'Italie, soupe aux choux, purée d'asperges*, etc.

Potage, or soup, is the generic term, though in French *soupe* is reserved for such soups as are served with bread in them, while *potage* is applied to soups without bread.

Potages are divided into *gras* and *maigres*, according as they have been prepared with or without meat.

Potages gras are made with *bouillons* or decoctions of all kinds of butchers' meat, fowl, fish, and crustaceans. In the same way *potages maigres* are made from all sorts of vegetables.

The name *purée*, or *crème*, is given to thick soups made of alimentary substances crusted or pounded, such as game, pease, beans, lentils, asparagus, etc. Such soups are generally very nourishing, but not easily digestible.

Consommé is the name given to the supreme result of the decoction of animal and vegetable matter ; it is a perfect *bouillon*, a *bouillon consommé*. In the cook-books you will find directions for making the ordinary *consommé*, composed of the juices of beef, veal, and fowls decocted in *grand bouillon*, or fine *stock*, and also for making *consommé de volaille*, *consommé de gibier*, and *consommés* of vegetables.

Consomme is necessary for making fine soups, but for household cookery the good ordinary *stock* is sufficient. (N.B.—Without good beef-stock it is impossible to make a dinner worthy of the name.) Stock is constantly required in the most simple operations of cookery. The aversion of the Anglo-Saxon cook to making stock is one of the main sources of his or her inferiority.

Extract of meat does not take the place of stock. Extracts of meat should be very sparingly used in a well-regulated kitchen, and extracts of coffee never.

As a rule, in cookery, avoid new inventions, scientific improvements, and everything that recommends itself in the name of Progress.

Good cooking, like good painting, is a question of genius and sentiment.

Note that stock, or *bouillon*, is not an aliment; the so-called *potages gras*, which have a basis of *bouillon*, are not essentially aliments; in general, the soups that are served at a scientific dinner are not aliments. As we have said above, soup is, theoretically, merely a preparation for the dinner; it is a consolation to the hungry stomach, and at the same time an appetizer and a stimulant.

The decoction of meat and vegetables which, under the names of *consommé* or *bouillon*, forms the basis, if not the whole substance, of meat-soups, or *potages gras*, is simply an aromatic and exciting liquid of agreeable flavour, very poor in organic alimentary matter, but very rich in mineral salts.

In the long process of cooking needed to make *bouillon* the eminently nutritious principles of the meat have been annihilated, and deprived of all their qualities of organic

nutriment. *Bouillon* contains, in the way of assimilable substances, only a small quantity of grease, some mineral salts, and a certain quantity of gelatine.

The researches of modern chemistry have shown that gelatine has little or no alimentary virtues, but that it is certainly "peptogenic," that is to say, it excites the stomach to activity.

The stimulating power of *bouillon* is chiefly due to *creatine*, which has almost the same chemical composition as *cafféine*, and passes through the system without being absorbed at all.

Bouillon is also rich in salts of potash. The chemists tell us that *osmazôme* consists, as far as we can find out, of creatine, inosic acid, and mineral salts, lactates, phosphates, chlorures of potassium, calcium, sodium, etc.

Bouillon restores a man immediately after drinking it, like tea or coffee. It is thus essentially an appetizer and a stimulant, but not an aliment.

In devising a *menu* and in regulating one's desires, the above-mentioned points should be borne in mind. By the addition of all kinds of alimentary products, and by the various combinations to which *purées* and *crèmes* lend

themselves, the soup may be made a meal in itself. But in our "Art of Delicate Dining" the theory of soups is that they should play the *rôle* of stimulants, of appetizers, of soothers of the impatient stomach.

At a dinner of any ceremony two soups ought to be served, one of the liquid kind and the other of a creamy nature. In the meat-soups—the simple *bouillon* or the more quintessential *consommés*—the qualities which the gourmet demands are limpidity, succulence, and purity of aroma, unimpaired by violent or piquant seasoning. *In the early stages of the feast the palate is offended by too ardent appeals.* The qualities required in *purées* and *crêmes* are smoothness and lightness, fineness of taste, perfect material, amalgamation of all the elements, and the preservation and development of the distinctive savours of the different constituent substances.

The Englishman proverbially says, "I don't like slops;" by which he expresses a general disapproval of soups. If his experience has been limited to England I agree with him heartily. With the exception of the very heavy national soups of the turtle or ox-tail kind, the English soups are often, if not generally, nothing but "slops." Soups

require care, method, and intelligence on the part of the cook who undertakes to make them, and also that quality which I have so frequently insisted upon as necessary for the highest achievements in the kitchen, namely, *sentiment*.

The cookery-books contain multitudes of recipes for making soups. We need not repeat them. In general, a cook who has the sentiment of his art will rarely follow precisely any recipe given in a book; he will content himself with seeking ideas in books and carry them out according to his skill and feeling. Practice, experience, and work under good masters make the best cook. In Paris the women cooks often take lessons in the kitchens of the great clubs.

The life and soul of household cookery, the basis of a good, plain dinner, and of a host of stews, sauces, *purées*, etc., is beef *bouillon*.

The first thing to learn is how to make the *pot-au-feu*.

The result of the *pot-au-feu* must be savoury, clear, and free from grease.

The operations of skimming and straining through a sieve are most important.

Soup is really good only when it is eaten *hot*. Its warmth is an essential part of its excellence, and prepares the stomach for the important functions of the digestion of the succeeding and more substantial courses.

The soup-plates should be hot, and the soup-tureen should be heated before the soup is poured into it. At a truly scientific table the spoons and ladles ought to be heated.

Now, let us suppose a dinner of nine persons. If the host or hostess serves the soup, the last guest served will begin to use his spoon when the first served has finished, unless, out of politeness, all wait until the last is served, and then attack all together. If the soup is served from the side, and one or two servants pass the plates, the result will be the same. In both cases, during the time required to fill nine plates and pass them, there will be a loss of heat, and the beginning of the dinner will be wanting in unison. The best way is to serve the soup in hot plates immediately before the dinner is announced. Then the guests enter the dining-room, take their seats, and begin to dine all at the same time and in perfect unison.

IX.

ABOUT SAUCES.

Household Sauces.

By sauces, let it be understood that we do not refer to the products sold in drug or grocery stores, and corked up in bottles, but to the sauces that are prepared simultaneously with the dishes that they are intended to accompany and complete. Furthermore, we do not consider such vain messes as mint sauce and bread sauce to be worthy of the name.

We may divide sauces into two categories, household sauces and the classical sauces, the latter belonging to grand cookery. There are several household sauces, which a person of ordinary intelligence can learn to make. The first condition requisite is to have a kitchen supplied with stock, and with the usual seasonings and relishing herbs; the second condition is care and practice in making the *liaison*, or "thickening," with

flour, butter, eggs, or cream, in their various combinations and developments.

The household sauces are drawn butter, *sauce blanche*, *maître d'hôtel*, *beurre noir*, melted butter, *sauce piquante*, *sauce poivrade*, *sauce au vin blanc*, *sauce poulette*, *sauce Tartare*, green and white *mayonnaise*, *remoulade*, *Hollandaise*, and others of a derivative nature.

Fine *Hollandaise* sauce and fine *sauce blanche* are exceedingly simple in their composition, and both are great tests of a cook's skill. Then why do we so rarely find them well made? This problem is as mysterious as the rarity of good dinners on this earth. The two chief causes of failure, or mediocrity, which is just as bad, are the use of inferior materials and want of attention. Cookery, especially when we enter the domain of sauces, is a very delicate art, requiring the exercise of many qualities of delicate perception. The cook who makes a perfect *sauce blanche* must take pleasure in his art, and perform every detail of the operation with extreme attention, vibrating over his sauce-pans as a painter vibrates over his picture, delicately sensitive to the changes of consistency which take place as the flour and butter

become transmuted into a velvety liquid that has to the eye an aspect as of the surface of fine porcelain, close in texture, exquisite in glaze. In the cook-books you may read how to mix the materials of this sauce, but no books will teach you how to mix those materials in perfection.

Once more, in all questions concerning sauces, we cannot insist too much upon the necessity of using fine materials, and, more especially, butter of the finest and freshest. Let all the pans be scrupulously clean, and always use *wooden spoons* for the manipulation and stirring of sauces. Metal spoons may spoil a sauce by giving it a chill. Metal, also, is liable to be attacked by the acids used in preparing sauces.

In addition to the many sauces for the preparation of which directions are given in easily accessible cook-books, I would call attention to the following, which are apparently less known on Anglo-Saxon tables.

Sauce Béarnaise.—A delicate piquant sauce to be served with roast fillet of beef, with the small, marinated steaks called by the French *tournedos*, with a simple grilled steak of small dimensions, with roast fowl or fish,

is the sort of warm *mayonnaise* called by the French *Béarnaise*.

In the first place, get some fine butter, and set it to melt over a gentle fire. When the butter is just tepid, beat into it, with a fork, yolks of eggs; add aromatic herbs, finely chopped, a dash of garlic, and a spoonful of good vinegar or lemon-juice, turning regularly with a wooden spoon until the mixture is of the consistency of a *mayonnaise*.

Mlle. Françoise's Béarnaise Sauce.—Put into a stewpan a dozen shalots, a seasoning bouquet, a little muscade, and a teaspoonful of freshly ground pepper, the whole moistened with a glassful of vinegar. Boil down, and then strain through a sieve. Now take a small saucepan, and put into it a big lump of butter of the best quality, three yolks of very fresh eggs; add two tablespoonfuls of the liquid already prepared as above, and put the whole over a very gentle fire; turn it briskly with a wooden spoon, until the sauce gets thick, and take it off the fire very sharply, before it turns oily.

Gouffé's Béarnaise.—Take five yolks of eggs, one ounce of butter, a pinch of salt, a

pinch of pepper. Put the above into a pan and turn it over the fire with a spoon. As soon as the yolks begin to set, take off the fire, and add another ounce of butter. Then stir again over the fire, and add another ounce of butter. Take off the fire, and add yet another ounce. Then stir again over the fire. Now taste to see if the seasoning is sufficient, and add a teaspoonful of chopped tarragon and a teaspoonful of tarragon vinegar.

The finest and purest *Béarnaise* has a dominant perfume of tarragon. Of the above three recipes, the most correct is Gouffé's, but the others are good for convenience and variety.

A green sauce for use with all kinds of cold fish and meat.—Take a handful of chervil, tarragon, chives, pimpernel, and garden cress; wash in cold water; blanch by putting the herbs into hot water for a while; to deprive them of rankness or bitterness of taste; refresh them by plunging them in cold water. Now add four yolks of hard-boiled eggs and two anchovies, and pound the whole well in a mortar. Strain the result through a fine wire sieve, and turn the compound with olive oil, adding from time to time drops of lemon-juice, as in making a *mayonnaise*. Turn the

sauce always in the same direction. Season with pepper, salt, even a little mustard, and a teaspoonsful of anisette.

The above is a first-rate and delicate sauce, and requires none of the complicated bases employed by the grand cooks.

Maître d'Hôtel.—Take butter of the size of an egg ; chop parsley, chives, and even a sprig of tarragon, very finely ; add freshly ground pepper and salt ; knead the whole well together, and spread it over the broiled meat or fish the moment before serving on a hot dish.

N.B.—Never put your dish into an oven “to allow the butter to penetrate the meat,” as some recommend. As soon as the meat is off the gridiron it wants to get to table with the least possible delay.

In hot weather a few drops of lemon-juice may be added to the *maître d'hôtel*, and even a tinge of nutmeg.

Chateaubriand à la Maître d'Hôtel.—As an instance of the use of *maître d'hôtel* sauce, here is the way to serve a *Chateaubriand* :

The *Chateaubriand* is a beefsteak, a piece of fillet one and a half and even two inches

thick, grilled and served with *soufflé* potatoes and *maître d'hôtel* sauce ; that is to say, you put on the dish in which you intend to serve your *Chateaubriand* a good lump of sweet butter kneaded with some very finely chopped parsley, salt, pepper, a speck of nutmeg, a suspicion of chives, and a drop or two of lemon-juice ; melt the whole by warming the dish, mix, and then set your *Chateaubriand* in the middle of the dish, all hot from the gridiron ; heap round it the *soufflé* potatoes, using your fingers, and send up to table as quickly as possible.

A really triumphant *Chateaubriand* is two inches thick after it is cooked, and it is cooked rose right through ; the outside is neither burned nor dry ; and when you cut it with the knife the red juice flows out and mixes with the *maître d'hôtel*, and makes it, as it were, something living and animated.

The inventor and baptizer of the *Chateaubriand*, I have been told, was Magny, and the name was given to it by mistake, for, according to Magny, it was christened, not after Chateaubriand, the author of the "Génie du Christianisme," but after a M. de Chabrillan, who is not otherwise famous.

II.—THE CLASSICAL SAUCES.

The classical sauces are the innumerable derivatives of the four primary sauces known as *Espagnole*, *Allemande*, *velouté*, and *Béchamel*. All these primary sauces, or *sauces mères*, are sublimated decoctions or quintessences of the most savoury and succulent meats, whether of quadrupeds, fowl, or fish. In a modest household it is impossible to make them ; they require professional skill, expensive materials, and extensive apparatus. People who have princely establishments may prepare the finest sauces in their own kitchens, but the vast majority of mankind must depend upon the first-class *restaurateurs* for their preparation.

The great authority Dubois-Bernard, speaking of this branch of his art, says : “ Sauces, by the care and labour they require, by the costly sacrifices which they necessarily involve, ought to be considered as the essential basis of good cookery. The gourmet would not think much of an elegant and sumptuously served dinner of which the sauces are wanting in that fineness of taste, that succulency, and that purity which are indispensable.

“ A man is never a great cook if he does not possess a perfect knowledge of sauces, and if he has not made a special study of the methodical principles on which their perfection depends.

“ Two causes contribute to the imperfection of sauces—defective knowledge or defective materials. An incompetent man, disposing of the finest resources, only obtains a mediocre and doubtful result ; but a clever practitioner, if he has not the necessary materials, or if those materials are insufficient or of bad quality, does not attain the desired end. Experience, practice, knowledge, become powerless in such circumstances ; the cleverest cook can correct and attenuate, but he cannot struggle against the impossible, nor make prodigies out of nothing.

“ Consequently, in order to make perfect sauces, the cook must not only know how to go to work, but he must know how to make the sacrifices that are required. These considerations, which we cannot too strongly impress both upon amphitryons and upon cooks, have already struck more than one observer. True gourmets are not accustomed to make parsimonious calculations ; they know that good cooking is incompatible with insufficient means.”

We must, therefore, conclude that the finest sauces are inaccessible to modest purses, because the cost of establishing the primary bases is too great to be undertaken in modest households. The same remark applies to the *grands bouillons* of flesh, fish, and fowl. The production of these quintessences can only be successfully achieved by sacrificing large quantities of primary and often costly material.

The fine sauces referred to are the outcome of the high French cookery, the so-called *cuisine classique* of the first quarter of this century, a cuisine which could only operate with a profusion of ingredients. The secret of this cuisine consisted in quintessencing the taste, whether of meat, fish, or fowl, by means of similar comestibles sacrificed for purposes of decoction or distillation, and the perfumes and flavours obtained by this process were added as condiments to the piece of meat, fish, or fowl served on the table. Fish, flesh, or fowl, heightened by the addition of its savoury quintessence, such is the theory of the grand, or, as we may call them, the classical, sauces.

The era of fine cookery began in the reign of Louis XIV., when Vatel lived, and left a

name as famous as that of Boileau, and when the grand seigneurs immortalized themselves by combining delicate dishes. Such was the Marquis de Béchamel, who has given his name to a fundamental sauce : such the regent who invented *pain à la d'Orléans* ; such the Marshal de Richelieu, who invented *mahonnaises*, or *mayonnaises*, and attached his name to a score of noble recipes ; such the smiling and imaginative Madame de Pompadour, who created the *filets de volaille à la Bellevue*, the *palais de bœuf à la Pompadour*, and the *tendrons d'agneau au Soleil* ; such were the grand ladies who invented quails *à la Mirepoix*, *Chartreuses à la Mauconseil*, *poulets à la Villeroy*. The name of Montmorency has received additional lustre from a dish of fat pullets. The dukes of La Vallière and Duras, the Prince de Guéménée, the Marquis de Brancas, even the princes of the royal family, the Comte d'Artois and the Prince de Condé, did their best to cherish the sacred fire of culinary art ; and whatever satirical writers may have found to say against the financiers and farmers-general, none of them, whether hungry or gorged, dared to write a single word against the cooks and the tables of these heroes of incommensurable appetite.

However, the idea of quintessential cookery, be it remembered, is due primarily to the cooks of the latter part of the eighteenth century who provided for the delicately voluptuous stomachs of the grand seigneurs of the reign of Louis XV. dishes of a sublimated chemistry, or, as a writer of the time says, dishes which consisted only of "quintessences raisonnées, degagées de toute *terrestréité*."

This ethereal cookery, these fine suppers whose menus suggest the repast of the princes in the "Arabian Nights," lasted even during the early years of the Revolution, when the cooks of the ruined nobles, notably Méot, Robert, Roze, Véry, Leda, Legacque, Beauvilliers, Naudet, Edon, became *restaurateurs* and sellers of good cheer to all who could pay the price. Beauvilliers, who established his restaurant about 1782, was for fifteen years the most famous *restaurateur* of Paris, and provided literally such delicate and sublimated dishes as those which had hitherto been found only on the tables of the king, of the nobles, and of the farmers-general. The great *restaurateurs* of modern Paris are nearly all direct successors of one or other of the famous cooks above mentioned. And it is only in

such establishments, much as they have degenerated, or at the tables of the Cræsus of the world, that one can hope to taste in almost satisfactory conditions the finest products of the cook's art.

X.

MENUS.—HORS D'ŒUVRE.—ENTRÉES.

HOWEVER modest the dinner and however few the guests, it is always desirable to have a menu giving the detail of the repast. Let there be at least one menu for every two guests, so that all may know what joy or disappointment is held in store for them, and so that each one may reserve or indulge his appetite as his tastes and his digestive interests may dictate. Nothing is more irritating at table than a surprise of a too material nature. For instance, it is unpleasant to find that you have devoted to a simple fillet of beef the attention which you would have preferred to reserve for quails, had you known that quails were in prospect.

Never forget that a menu is not merely a total of dishes. In an eating-house there will be found a list of dishes which the Anglo-Saxon brutally calls the "bill of fare." In a restaurant like the *Café Anglais* there is

a "carte" which forms a thick volume, and contains the enumeration of all the dishes that a cook can make ; there is also a "carte du jour," which is the menu of the restaurant, the dinner of the day, with its noble order of *potage, hors d'œuvre, relevés, entrées, roasts, entremets*, etc.

The theory of a menu and of the composition of a dinner is simplicity itself ; in general terms, it begins with an excitant, namely, soup, satisfies hunger gradually by fish, savoury dishes, and roasts, with which latter a salad comes in to excite the digestion once more, and prepare the way for a vegetable, which will be followed by the dessert. In composing your menu you must consult first of all the market, and, secondly, the number of guests to be served ; and, in selecting the dishes, the chief things to avoid are such gross errors as the repetition of the same meats and the same sauces, or sauces of the same nature. If you serve a *turbot sauce Hollandaise* you must not serve after it a *poulet sauce suprême* or even a *blanquette de veau*.

The use of French words in a menu is not indispensable. The delicate diner is not bound to know French.

Hors d'œuvre are either cold, or, in professional language, *hors d'œuvre d'office*, or warm, that is to say, *hors d'œuvre de cuisine*. Formerly warm *hors d'œuvre*—always without sauces—were served side by side with the *entrées*, only on smaller dishes. Nowadays many warm *hors d'œuvre* are reckoned as *entrées* or light *entremets*, and passed round rapidly, so that they may lose none of their delicacy by standing on the table.

At dinner cold *hors d'œuvre* offer but little interest to the gourmet, with the exception of the canteloupe melon and the water-melon, but especially the canteloupe, when just ripe, and with the aroma fully developed. Cut the melon immediately before serving, so that none of the perfume may evaporate; and let there be powdered sugar within the reach of those who wish it, and salt, and for the more refined palates, white pepper served in little wooden mills so that each one may grind his pepper fresh from the corns. The canteloupe, in my opinion, should be eaten before the soup, while the palate is absolutely fresh, and not at the end of the dinner.

As for rosy radishes, olives, anchovies, sardines, *saucisson*, marinated tunny or

herrings, young artichokes *à la poivrade*, tongue, sprats, cucumbers, gherkins, pickled walnuts, etc., what place can such insignificant trifles claim in the menu of a serious dinner? At midday breakfast it may be amusing and appetizing to nibble at these toy dishes, but, except at the family table it is preferable to banish cold *hors d'œuvre* from the dinner menu.

An exquisite cold *hors d'œuvre* is fresh figs, served at the beginning of the repast. In Southern Europe you get this *hors d'œuvre* in perfection. Anywhere round the Bay of Naples a dish of figs, a slice of smoked ham, and a flask of red wine make a delicious morning meal.

Warm *hors d'œuvre*, properly speaking, consist of small, dainty dishes, without sauces, such as little pasties, *croustades*, *croquettes*, *bouchées*, *cromesquis*, *timbales*, *orly*, or *fillets* of fish, *coquilles* of fish or fowl, *rissoles soufflés*, and delicacies served *en caisses*. The preparation of many warm *hors d'œuvre* requires the resources of a first-rate kitchen, and a professional cook; for, although they are without sauce, nevertheless they require to be artistically presented. The warm *hors d'œuvre* are served after the soup or after the

fish; they ought to be pretty to look at, and to furnish two or three delicate mouthfuls. Several such *hors d'œuvre* may be served on the same dish, which makes at once a handsome arrangement to the eye and offers greater choice to the guests, while at the same time it simplifies the service.

For household cooking, however, the less said about warm *hors d'œuvre* the better, for few private kitchens and few family cooks are equal to the task of preparing and serving these small dishes as they should be served. It is true you may get many of them from the neighbouring pastry-cook's, but the gourmet distrusts dishes provided by pastry-cooks and caterers. Exception must, of course, be made for certain artists who have achieved fame for special things. In Paris, for instance, one of Bontoux's *timbales* is a dish which it is a privilege to taste and which no private or professional cook can surpass. But, as a rule, it is well to avoid getting dishes from outside, and therefore I advise the amphitryon to dispense as much as possible with warm *hors d'œuvre*. Let them be reserved for parade dinners, where there is necessarily more show than there is delicate eating.

In the highest kind of cookery we distinguish two kinds of warm *entrées*; simple *entrées*, which owe their value to the rareness or fineness of the component elements whose original character must be carefully preserved, and in no manner disguised by the processes of dressing; and *entrées travaillées*, which are often less remarkable than the former, so far as concerns their component elements, but more elegant and decorative in aspect and more varied in composition. In the mounting of *entrées* the cook likes to show his taste in ornamentation, but he often goes beyond the mark, and awakens the distrust of the gourmet by the excess of his arabesques and combinations of line and colour.

The more refined the gourmet is, and the more closely acquainted he is with the secrets of the culinary art, the stronger his preference for simple dishes, and certainly for simple *entrées* as compared with the *entrées travaillées*.

With the warm *entrées* the real artistic interest of a fine dinner begins, for it is with the *entrées* that the fine sauces are served. Here it is useless to disguise the simple truth; household cookery cannot undertake the

making of the finest sauces, and therefore none but the simplest *entrées* can figure on the menu of a private individual who has not a first-rate kitchen and a skilled professional cook. *Entrées* may be cooked to a turn, tastefully mounted, and served piping hot, but, unless the accompanying sauce is perfection, these are only a delusion and a snare. Let amphitryons and cooks alike meditate the words of the wise.

“The science of sauces,” says Dubois, “does not belong to everybody and anybody, for it can only be acquired in the grand school of practice. We cannot, therefore, too strongly recommend cooks to study profoundly this part of the art. . . . Warm *entrées*, by their nature, are varied; their number is infinite; but the number of those which are suitable for a grand dinner is not so unlimited that they can be chosen at hazard. In a luxurious, rich, and elegant dinner there ought to be served none but choice *entrées*, carefully prepared, ornamented, garnished, representing at once, in their *ensemble*, wealth, skill, and competent attention. *But in order to achieve this difficult result, the cook must operate in conditions where abundance and resources are unlimited.*”

XI.

ON PARATRIPTICS AND THE MAKING OF TEA AND COFFEE.

TEA, coffee and tobacco come under the heading to which scientific men have given the name of Paratriptics. The demand for them is based upon their power to prevent waste in the body, so that by their help and stimulus men can do more work and endure more privation with a smaller amount of actual food. Tea, coffee, and tobacco are not food, although temporarily and continuously they supplement it. The physiologist Moleschott calls them the "savings banks" of the tissues.

As in the case of most articles of food, very little thought has been devoted to the preparation of tea and coffee for the table. In a great country like England it is impossible to obtain really well-made coffee except in a few private houses, while English tea is generally a rank and astringent decoction in-

stead of a delicate infusion. The traditions of the preparation of these beverages have become corrupted.

When both tea and coffee were comparatively newly introduced into Europe, the methods of preparing them were simple and logical. In his rare volume, "La Maison Réglée et l'Art de Diriger la Maison d'un Grand Seigneur et Autres, etc. Avec la véritable méthode de faire toutes sortes d'essences, d'eaux et de liqueurs fortes et rafraîchissements à la mode d'Italie" (Paris, 1692), the author, Audiger, who was the first *limonadier-glacier* that Paris boasted, records two recipes for making tea and coffee which he learned in Italy in 1659.

"Take a pint of water and make it boil; then put in it two pinches of tea, and immediately remove it from the fire, *for the tea must not boil*; you let it rest and infuse time enough to say two or three paters ("*l'espace de deux ou trois pater*"), and then serve it with powdered sugar on a porcelain dish, so that each one may sugar to his taste."

"Tea," adds Audiger, "comes from the kingdom of Siam, and is prepared as above; its properties are to settle the fumes of the brain and to refresh and purify the blood.

It is generally taken in the morning, to wake up the spirits and give appetite, and after meals to help digestion."

Audiger prepares his coffee by first of all pounding the freshly roasted berries in a mortar or grinding them in a mill. Then he boils a pint of water in a coffee-pot, takes the pot off the fire when the water boils, puts in it two spoonfuls of coffee, stirs, and boils it up to foaming, withdrawing it from the fire each time the moment the foam rises. This operation of foaming he repeats gently ten or twelve times, and then precipitates the grounds, and clarifies the coffee by pouring into it a glass of cold water.

"Coffee," remarks this excellent authority, "is a grain that comes from Persia and the other countries of the Levant, where it is the natural and most common drink. When prepared as we have described, its qualities are that it refreshes the blood, dissipates the vapours and fumes of wine, aids digestion, enlivens the spirits, and prevents sleepiness in those who have much business."

These recipes are founded upon true principles. Chemical analysis shows that tea contains poisonous elements, whereas coffee is innocuous, and the whole of the berry good

to eat. In preparing tea we must beware of setting free the poisonous elements which the leaves contain, and that is the reason why a decoction of tea is deleterious. In coffee, on the other hand, where the whole is eatable, a decoction is admissible and even desirable ; for instance, in coffee *à la Turque*, in which the liquid is not clarified, but served with the grounds and all.

The proper and only truly hygienic manner of making tea is to infuse the leaves in boiling water, either by pouring the water over the leaves or by throwing the leaves into the boiling water. The time necessary for the infusion depends on the quality and quantity of the tea used and on the taste of the drinker. Some persons advocate pouring a small quantity of boiling water over the leaves at first, and a moment afterwards putting in the remaining amount desired. This method may be advantageous when a large quantity of tea is to be made ; but for two or three cups I do not believe that it enhances the quality of the beverage.

The points to be insisted upon are that the tea should be freshly made, and not left to "brew" for an indefinite period.

The teapot must be hot when the boiling

water is poured in, otherwise the temperature of the boiling water would experience a sudden change, and the infusion would taste flat.

Tea should be prepared daintily, in small quantities, and drunk immediately. If it be needful to prepare tea in large quantities, the infusion should be decanted in a warmed earthen teapot as soon as it has acquired the appropriate strength.

The object of decanting the infusion is to prevent the liquid from becoming impregnated with tannic acid and other acrid and noxious principles which the tea-leaves contain.

Tea, as it is usually made in England and in America, where the process of infusion is allowed to continue indefinitely until the teapot is emptied, is a rank decoction of tea-leaves which can only be drunk after it has been softened by the addition of milk or cream and sugar. I make this statement with full consciousness of its heterodoxy, according to received English ideas. They who demand "strong" tea know nothing of the charms of delicate tea. They who drink tea mixed with cream never know the joy of the real taste of tea.

The infusion of tea made as Audiger directs is a suave drink, soft to the palate, and tasting only of the delicate aroma of the tea-leaves. The time required for the infusion can only be determined by experience and individual taste. The equivalent in modern parlance of Audiger's "two or three pater-nosters" would be five to ten minutes. Remember that the longer the tea is infused the more acrid it becomes, because the leaves give forth more and more tannic acid.

For tea-making and for all delicate cooking operations the water should be caught at the first boil. Nickel or silver pots are unobjectionable, provided they be kept scrupulously clean; but ordinary earthen or porcelain pots are preferable on all accounts.

Tea made as above described will be drunk with or without loaf-sugar sweetening, and *needs no softening and spoiling with milk or cream.*

The custom of adding cream or milk to tea and coffee doubtless originated in ignorance or bad brewing. The coffee-drinking nations and the tea-drinkers of the East do not know this custom. The Russians put in their tea a slice of lemon.

If the tea or coffee be good, the addition

of milk spoils the taste. Furthermore, the tannic acid which is contained both in tea and in coffee changes the nature of the albuminous part of milk, and, so to speak, tans the globules of the milk, and renders them indigestible. Coffee and milk and tea and milk are difficult to digest. Pure cream is less objectionable, because pure cream is really butter or grease, and contains very little of the albuminous part of milk.

Tea and coffee both excite the nerves. Coffee acts more on the nerve-centre or brain ; tea excites the peripteral nerves. Coffee, therefore, produces brain excitement, while tea provokes rather muscular excitement.

There are many ways of making coffee to suit the tastes of various nations. The English like a mixture of chicory and coffee, and also brew a horrible black liquid with artificial essence of coffee. In America some beat up an egg in the coffee to make it thick and rich. Various systems of filters and distillers have also been invented. But, after all, the simplest methods are the best. In order to make fine black coffee, you need first of all excellent berries, or a mixture of berries of different plantations. These berries ought to be freshly roasted and freshly ground, and

put into the filter with all their aroma. The best filter is of earthenware, in two pieces, a pot with a spout surmounted by a perforated filter, in which the ground coffee is placed and into which the boiling water is poured. Care should be taken not to have the coffee-berries too finely ground ; otherwise the filter will become obstructed, and the coffee get cold by the time it is ready to drink. In order to preserve all the aroma, it is better to grind the coffee and put it into the filter when the water has reached a boiling-point. Then begin by pouring the water into the filter slowly, and only a little quantity at a time. Do not make the fatal mistake of filling up the filter and waiting until the water has passed through before you add any more ; in this case you will have not only cold coffee, but poor coffee. As soon as you have poured the first small quantity into the filter, replace the water over the fire, and always have it at boiling-point when you pour it into the filter ; thus, by gradually pouring a very small amount of boiling water at a time, it will pass through the ground coffee just quickly enough to extract all the strength and preserve all its heat. There are persons who first filter the coffee-grounds left over

from the previous meal, and then pass this liquid, after bringing it to a boiling-point, over the freshly ground berries; but this method is not to be recommended, as it produces a strong, muddy mixture, without aroma. If you are a lover of very strong coffee, the best way to obtain it is to increase the amount of ground berries in the filter. For making moderately strong black coffee, a tablespoonful of ground coffee per cup is sufficient.

The only other way of making coffee worthy of our notice is that employed by the Turks. Byron's friend Trelawney has described the process in his "Adventures of a Younger Son," where he says that good Musulmans can alone make good coffee; for being interdicted from the use of ardent spirits, their palate is more exquisite and their relish greater. "Thus it is," writes Trelawney. "A bright charcoal fire was burning in a small stove. Kamalia first took for four persons four handfuls of the small, pale Mocha berry, little bigger than barley. These had been carefully picked and cleaned. She put them into an iron vessel, where, with admirable quickness and dexterity, they were roasted till their colour was somewhat dark-

ened and the moisture not exhaled. The over-roasted ones were picked out, and the remainder, while very hot, put into a large wooden mortar, where they were instantly pounded by another woman. This done, Kamalia passed the powder through a camel's-hair cloth, and then repassed it through a finer cloth. Meanwhile a coffee-pot, containing exactly four cups of water, was boiling. This was taken off, one cup of water poured out, and three cups full of the powder, after she had ascertained its impalpability between her finger and thumb, were stirred in with a stick of cinnamon. When replaced on the fire, on the point of over-boiling it was taken off, the heel of the pot struck against the hob, and again put on the fire; this was repeated five or six times. I forgot to mention she added a very minute piece of mace, not enough to make its flavour distinguishable; and that the coffee-pot must be of tin, and uncovered, or it cannot form a thick cream on the surface, which it ought to do. After it was taken for the last time from the fire the cup of water which had been poured from it was returned. It was then carried into the room, without being disturbed, and instantly poured into the cups, where it

retained its rich cream at the top. Thus made its fragrance filled the room, and nothing could be more delicious to the palate. So far from its being a long and tedious process, as it may appear in narrating, old Kamalia allowed herself only two minutes for each person ; so that from the time of her leaving the room to her return no more than eight minutes had elapsed."

For making coffee in the Turkish fashion the berries require to be ground to a very fine powder. The Turks have small hand-mills for private use, but in the cafés the berries are crushed in big iron mortars with long pestles, whose ringing sound is one of the characteristic noises of the streets of Stamboul. Turkish mills and the dainty little tin pans containing one, two, three, or four cups, are now easily obtainable in Western shops, and, with the aid of a spirit-lamp, Turkish coffee may be prepared on the table more expeditiously and with less trouble than black coffee made by the Western filter system. *The refinements mentioned by Trelawney of stirring the coffee with a cinnamon-stick, and of adding a minute piece of mace, are not commendable.* The ideal in making tea and coffee, as in all delicate cookery, is to

develop the taste peculiar to each article of food or drink. If the flavour of the coffee is fine in itself, it will not gain anything by the added suggestion of a spicy flavour.

Black coffee needs to be served piping hot, and the cups and even the spoons should be heated before the coffee is poured out. Nothing is more saddening after dinner than tepid coffee.

For sweetening both tea and coffee, loaf-sugar is to be used. There is no objection against powdered sugar, provided it be free from adulteration. For sweetening cold coffee, which is sometimes a grateful beverage in hot weather, syrup of gum is more convenient than any form of sugar.

Finally, whatever method you employ to make your tea or coffee, *start with good materials, manipulate them delicately and with care in every detail.*

XII.

THE DINING-ROOM AND ITS DECORATION.

IN these days of "decorative art," it is necessary to say something about the aspect of a dining-room and its ornamentation. Doubtless the best ornament for a dining-room is a well-cooked dinner, but that dinner will taste all the better in a room that is rationally furnished, agreeably decorated, and heated just to the right point.

As regards the furnishing and decoration, much must be left to individual taste ; at the same time there is reason to protest against two influences which are equally irrational, the one French and the other English, and both result in making a dining-room a sombre and severe place. There is no reason why the darker shades of green, brown, and red, should be reserved for dining-rooms ; I have eaten delightfully in a room where the panelling was painted pale lilac, picked out with blue and salmon red ; and against this

background the ladies, with fresh flowers in their hair, stood out like a spring meadow against a vernal sky. It is not forbidden to make a dining-room gay in tone. The furniture is not necessarily of dark mahogany or oak. The Henri II. dining-room, now so fashionable, with its heavy curtains and *portières*, its monumental fire-places, mantels, and andirons, and its walls decked out with arms, tapestries, and what not, is the most unreasonable of all dining-rooms. All tapestry, *portières*, hangings, *bibelots*, and other such things are objectionable, because they absorb the odours given forth by the drinks and viands. The display of armour on the walls is a silly affectation. There is no excuse whatever for converting a dining-room into a museum, and for this reason one does not wish to see the walls hung over with plates and dishes. The proper place for plates and dishes when not in use is in a cupboard, or on the shelves of a dresser. All archaic decoration is peculiarly out of place in a dining-room, where the principal object, the table, when laid out for breakfast or for dinner, is radically and absolutely modern. This room seems to me peculiarly worthy of the attention of our modern decorative

artists, who might deliver us from the heavy and pompous splendour of the English, and of the silly feudalism and baronialism of the French Henri II. room, if they would only consent to neglect fashion, and apply their reasoning powers to the solution of the problem.

A host may show his personality and his taste in the arrangement of his dining-room as much as in his dress, or in his conversation, and yet nowhere do we see so little originality. People are singularly conservative in all that concerns the art of entertaining. The finest dinners nowadays are terribly monotonous; over and over again the same menu is served in the same way and in the same conditions of *milieu* and decoration. The dining-room need not be a dark-toned, impersonal place of immutable aspect. That correct gentleman, Comte Molé, when he received one of his friends of the diplomatic corps, would place in his *salle à manger* plants, flowers, and pictures which reminded the guest of his fatherland. I know an amiable hostess in London whose dining-room walls are covered with a rose-coloured Louis XVI. striped silk, and who has the two maids who serve at table dressed in

colours and patterns that harmonize with the walls of the room.

In a dining-room the aim of the decorator should be simplicity and gaiety of aspect ; and the materials which he may best use are wainscoting, or *lambris*, of the styles of Louis XIII., XIV., XV., and XVI., or of modern design, if he can find a designer, stucco, lacquered woodwork, panelling filled in with stamped leather, or decorative painting, neo-Greek decoration, simple panelling, either of natural wood or of wood painted in plain colours, or, finally, simple wall-paper, only let it be remembered that the paper need not be of dark hue.

Madame de Pompadour's dining-room at Bellevue was decorated with hunting and fishing scenes by Oudry, and the attributes of these sports were repeated on the woodwork carved by Verbreck.

In a little novelette by Bastide, called "La Petite Maison," we find a curious contemporary description of a dining-room in one of those elegant villas where the rich Frenchmen of the eighteenth century indulged their tastes for refinement and luxury of all kinds. "The walls," we read, "are covered with stucco of various colours, executed by the

celebrated Clerici. The compartments, or panels, contain bass-reliefs of stucco, modelled by the famous Falconet, who has represented the fêtes of Comus and of Bacchus. The trophies which adorn the pilasters of the decoration are by Vassé, and represent hunting, fishing, the pleasures of the table, those of love, etc. ; and from each of these trophies, twelve in number, springs a candelabrum, or *torchère*, with six branches." I recommend architects and amateurs to read the great architect Blondel's two volumes on "La Distribution des Maisons de Plaisance" (Paris, 1737), where they will see how great was the refinement of the French in the eighteenth century, and, above all, how delicate the tonalities of lilac, blue, rose, and bright grays which they preferred to give to the walls of their dwellings. At the end of the eighteenth century the influence of the discovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum naturally made itself felt, and the dining-rooms of the Directory and of the First Empire were arranged in the antique fashion with stucco or marble, adorned with columns and pilasters, and friezes, either with bare walls or with walls decorated with stucco bass-reliefs, or Pompeian arabesques. The

neo-Greek or Pompeian style still has its advocates. During the second empire, Prince Napoleon had a Pompeian palace built in the Avenue Montaigne, at Paris, from designs by M. Alfred Normand. In this palace, which is in reality only a very modest villa, the dining-room is lighted by a large window divided into three sections by two pilasters; the ceiling is panelled in caissons, and the walls are panelled in red, blue, and yellow, which colours serve as the ground for the most delicate ornamentation that the Pompeian style created—slender columns, trellises, long filaments of plants, light garlands, blond or vermeil fruits, bows of ribbon, birds, cups, musical instruments, *chimères*, intermingled discreetly with ears of corn, fish, and game, which reveal the intention of the room without satiating the eyes before satiating the stomach, as is often the result of our modern game and fruit pieces, fitter to serve as a sign for a butcher's shop than as a vision to be placed before the eyes of delicate gourmets.

Some of the dining-rooms of the Directory epoch which still remain, or of which we have drawings, must have been very pleasant to the eye. A typical house of that period was

one designed by the architect and decorator Bellanger, for a celebrity of the epoch, Mademoiselle Dervicux. The basis of the decoration of her dining-room was gray, white, and yellow stucco ; the over-doors were bass-reliefs of white stucco on Wedgwood blue ground, the doors of unpolished mahogany with medallions and panels in yellow wood, framed with silver fillets and painted with arabesques and subjects, the pilasters of Sienna yellow covered with silver arabesques. Some elaborate specimens of this style of decoration may be seen in several of the Russian imperial palaces. I do not absolutely recommend the Directory style for imitation, but there are valuable hints to be obtained from the tender-coloured and often tasteful arrangements of that period. In England, the painter Whistler has contributed his mite of influence towards emancipating people from the traditional dinginess and sombre tones of dining-room furniture and decoration. The painter's own dining-room is canary yellow, with blue and white china as a decoration. A famous dining-room, designed and painted by Whistler, for Mr. Leyland's house, is pale blue and pale gold, covered with arabesques that suggest peacocks and

their feathers, while on the shutters and across one wall are magnificent groups of peacocks conceived in the Japanese taste, and as it were stencilled in gold on the blue ground. The remaining decoration of the room consists of a picture over the fireplace, and of a collection of blue and white Chinese porcelain arranged on gilt shelves. This intrusion of the museum element is regrettable.

XIII.

ON DINING-TABLES.

HOW true is that maxim of Paulus Æmilius, when he was to entertain the Roman people, after his glorious expedition into Greece: "There is equal skill required to bring an army into the field and to set forth a magnificent entertainment, for the object in the first case is to annoy your enemy as far as possible, and in the second to give pleasure to your friends." In the art of feasting, *l'art des festins*, as the gastronomic writers of the eighteenth century call it, the arrangement of the table is as important as the preparation of the food itself, for a good dinner badly served is a good dinner spoiled.

The first object that requires our attention in the dining-room is the table. It is the table that ought to regulate everything, the table itself being regulated by the normal stature of the people who are to use it. Whether round, rectangular, or rectangular

with round ends, telescope table or table with inserted leaves, its size should be based on the fact that each person should be allowed thirty inches of space in width, and, in order to insure free circulation and perfect waiting, a space of six feet is demanded between the wall and the backs of the diners' chairs. The proportions to be observed in making the table are that the length may exceed the breadth by one quarter, one third, one half, and very exceptionally by three quarters for a large company. Outside of these proportions the equilibrium is destroyed and the service loses its fine order and unity ; we then fall into those long tables which are a series of tables juxtaposed—the unsociable tables of public banquets and monastic refectories. The above measures have been fixed by the experience of those who are most interested in a dinner, namely, those who *eat* it and those who *serve* it, and it is in accordance with these proportions that the dining-room ought to be constructed, for the object of the dining-room is to contain the dining-table and its accessories, that is to say, the chairs, dumb-waiters, side tables, and dressers strictly necessary for the service. These measures, ample as they are, do not imply an

immense room, for, be it remembered, from the remotest antiquity the number of guests that can be admitted to an artistic dinner-table ought not to exceed that of the Muses, nor to be fewer than that of the Graces. The dining-room—the shape of which should be suggested by the shape of the table—needs two doors, one communicating with a drawing-room, and one with a butler's pantry, or indirectly with the kitchen.

Generally the modern dining-table errs on the side of too great solidity. The first quality of a table obviously is that it should be firm on its legs, but there is no reason for exaggerating its strength into clumsiness. Furthermore, the dining-table of richly carved oak, walnut, rosewood, or mahogany is a useless luxury ; the ornamentation is misplaced, and often fatal to knees ; the richness of the material itself is lost, inasmuch as the table is always covered with a cloth. A table, according to Dr. Johnson, is “a horizontal surface raised above the ground and used for meals and other purposes.” Roubo, in his treatise on joinery and cabinet-making, written in the latter part of the eighteenth century (1770), says that tables are all composed of a top and of one or more feet which

are fixed or movable or folding. Of all the furniture ever made, the French furniture of the eighteenth century seems to me the most rational, the most convenient, and the most tasteful. Of all the cookery ever achieved, that of the time of the Regent was probably the most exquisite. A contemporary of the *petits soupers* of the eighteenth century, Grimm, the author of the famous "Correspondance Littéraire," questions very much whether "the sumptuousness of the Roman tables could enter into any comparison with the studied refinement of the French." We may therefore ask with curiosity what kinds of tables were used, and we shall find in Roubo's "Art du Menuisier Ébéniste" the following excellent theoretical remarks on the subject:—

"Eating-tables," says Roubo, "are not susceptible of any decoration; they consist simply of several planks of pine or some other light wood joined together with tongue and groove, and bound with oak at the ends. These tables, or rather these table-tops, are almost all of one shape, that is to say, a parallelogram larger or smaller according to the number of covers. Formerly eating-tables were made round or oval, but at present

these forms are little used. The size of tables is determined, as I have just said, by the number of guests, to each of whom ought to be attributed at least two feet of room, or, better still, three feet, especially when there are many ladies at a meal, because their dresses take up much more room than those of men."

Roubo calculates his small, medium, and large tables on the basis of two feet for each cover, and his largest table for ten persons is six by five feet. When a larger number of guests was to be accommodated, recourse was had to leaves or flaps and to composite or juxtaposed tables. Grand feasts were always served on composite tables. Roubo thus sums up the practices of the eighteenth century in the matter of tables :

"Large tables are those which can not only accommodate a large number of guests, but also the middle of which is large enough to hold a *surtout de décoration*, of flowers, sweetmeats, etc., which, with the number of covers given, determines precisely the size of these tables, on the principle that there should be two feet of room around the *dormant*, tray or plateau which forms the basis of the decorative centre-piece. As these tables are

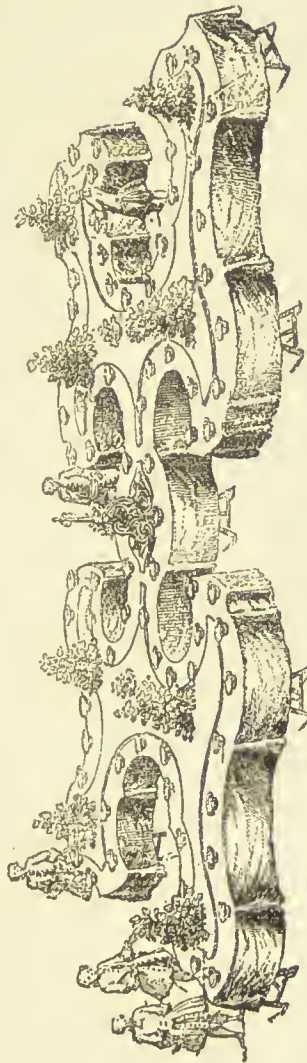
ordinarily very large; they are made up of a number of tables joined together with tongue and groove and held by clamps placed at intervals. These tables are placed as solidly as possible on trestles in such a manner that the trestles may be about a foot inside from the edge of the table so as not to inconvenience those who are seated around.

“ Besides the large tables I have just mentioned,” continues Roubo, “ there are also hollow tables, commonly termed horse-shoe tables, either with the upper end round or forming simply an elbow. Tables of these forms are very convenient, inasmuch as the service can be performed from the inside without interfering with those who are seated around. Their only disadvantage is that they can only receive artificial surtouts of moderate size, which is in my opinion no great misfortune, for in point of fact the enormous surtouts with which the tables of the great are loaded serve only to render the waiting more difficult and even inconvenient, and to obstruct the view of all the guests, who can, only with difficulty and manœuvring, see the other side of the table.” The breadth of Roubo's horse-shoe table is three feet, and

the height of all his eating-tables twenty-seven to twenty-eight inches.

A rare volume called "Le Cannaméliste Français," published at Nancy in 1761 by Gilliers, who was head butler, or *chef d'office*, and distiller to King Stanislas, may be consulted with profit by those who are curious as to the service and aspect of eighteenth-century tables. It is a big volume, where, in the midst of charming copper-plate engravings representing desserts laid out in toy-gardens, with grass-plots of chenille, and walks of *nonpareille* to imitate gravel, you find recipes for pomegranate jam, syrup of jasmine, candy of violets, roses, and jonquils—odorous and ethereal quintessences which remind one of the sweetmeats of a feast in the "Arabian Nights." Gilliers's book is a complete manual of the art of delicate feasting according to the received ideas of the time of Louis XV. About this matter of tables, Gilliers has the most delightfully fantastic notions. The classification of tables into round, square, oblong, and horseshoe forms does not satisfy him; he maintains that a table may have any form that we please to give it, and in a cut which we here reproduce he shows us a table of most amus-

ing and capricious contour, suggestive of the influence of contemporary rocaille forms. This table is built up by means of composite tops, keyed on trestles. In his book, Gilliers gives a dozen plans of tables of capricious arabesque and rocaille forms, accompanied by minute directions for drawing the figures and sawing them out of deal boards. To make such tables is very easy and simple, and I have no doubt that if some lady would take the trouble to give a grand feast at a table such as the one figured in our



DINING-TABLE OF GILLIERS.

cut, she would not regret her elegant initiative.

It seems to me that in this matter of dining-tables we might with advantage struggle against tradition and devote just a little reasoning to the question. Let us take, for instance, the large round tables used in many club-houses, particularly in New York. These tables are monuments; their diameter enormous; their centre quite beyond the reach of those who are seated around the periphery; the "horizontal surface raised above the ground" is greater than is needed, and much of it remains waste to be encumbered only by massive and useless ornaments, plate, or what not. And yet there are doubtless many who imagine that these round tables are similar in all essentials to those which the Arthurian legend and the romances of chivalry have rendered famous. This is probably a mistake; the round tables of chivalry were, I imagine, hollow or broken circles like the table shown in the accompanying cut taken from an illuminated manuscript of the fourteenth century. With the exception of the fixed seats or stalls, which seem difficult of access, this round table is perfectly convenient; it is no wider

than is necessary ; it is covered with a fair and beautifully embroidered cloth, and is most convenient for the service, which is



ROUND TABLE OF FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

performed by the little pages whom we see in the centre, discreetly attentive to the wants of the quaint old magnates who are seen in the act of dining.

With our modern round or square tables the service is always inconvenient. What can be more disagreeable than the ordinary modern system of service executed by waiters who approach the diner treacherously from behind, pass the dish over his left shoulder, and occasionally pour a few drops of gravy over his coat-sleeve? Curiously enough, this question of serving feasts has not occupied the attention of many writers. Books on the duties of the *maître d'hôtel* are rare, and the matter has only been touched upon incidentally in the regular treatises on the culinary art, which were themselves rare until modern times; for, as the gastronomic poet, Dr. William King, has remarked,

“Tho’ cooks are often men of pregnant wit,
Thro’ niceness of their subject few have writ.”

In the Middle Ages, which were far more refined in manners than most people believe, the general disposition of the dining-table was borrowed from the usage of the abbeys and convents, and it was precisely the disposition still maintained in the English universities at the present day. The principal table was laid on a raised platform or floor at the upper end of the dining-hall, and

received the name of "high table," a term still in use at Oxford and Cambridge. The guests sat on one side of the table only; the place of honour was in the centre; and the principal personage sat under a canopy or cloth of state, hung up for the occasion, or under a permanent panelled canopy curving outwards.

At Florence, in the time of the Renaissance, the guests appear to have sat on one side of the table and at the ends. Such is the arrangement in Pinturrichio's pictures of the Story of Griselidis, now in the National Gallery at London. One of these pictures represents a feast served under a portico built in a garden. The guests are seated along one side and at the ends of a long and narrow table. The waiters carry long napkins thrown over their shoulders or streaming in the wind like scarfs as they walk. In the collection of Mr. Leyland, at London, there is a beautiful picture by Sandro Botticelli, representing a feast served in a lovely green meadow under a portico having five pillars on each side. In the background, at a short distance off, is a sort of triumphal arch, and beyond it you see a landscape and a lake with boats and islands crowned with castles.

In the foreground is a dresser richly draped with precious stuffs and laden with massive gold plate and parade dishes and ewers. There are two tables, arranged parallel and in perspective, and the guests are seated on one side only, at one table the women, and at the other the men, the former against a background of garlands of verdure and flowers stretched from pillar to pillar behind the bench on which they are seated. Remark this separation of the women from the men, and read an account of a bachelor's supper-party at Rome, given by Benvenuto Cellini, in his fascinating autobiography. "When the banquet was served and ready, and we were going to sit down to table, Giulio asked leave to be allowed to place us. This being granted, he took the women by the hand, and arranged them all upon the inner side, with my belle in the centre ; then he placed all the men on the outside, and me in the middle. As a background to the women there was spread an espalier of natural jasmines in full beauty, which set off their charms to such great advantage that words would fail to describe the effect."

In the frontispiece of my copy of Andreas Klett's "Neues Trenchir-Büchlein," published

at Jena in 1657, the women are represented sitting on one side of the table and the men on the opposite side. On the other hand, in the frontispiece of my "Vollständiges und von neuem vermehrtes Trincir-Buch," by Georg Harssdörfer (Nuremberg, 1665), the very distinguished-looking guests are seen seated in the modern style; after the manner of the alternation of the sexes. A precedent could be found for all imaginable arrangements, and even for the complete banishment of the fair sex from the scientific dinner table, for there are some who hold Oriental views as to the capacities of women for actively appreciating the most exquisite refinements of delicate feasting. But into the discussion of this question politeness forbids us to digress.

Both in Pinturricchio's and Botticelli's pictures, the costume, the manner of carrying the dishes, and the stately rhythmic walk of the waiters is particularly noticeable, and on this point I would refer the curious to Francesco Colonna's "Hypnerotomachia," first published in 1499, where there is a most minute account of a feast given in the palace of Queen Eleutherilde. At this feast, where, with the exception of Poliphilo, only

the queen and her maidens are present, the diners are seated on one side of the tables only, exactly as we see in Botticelli's picture above noted, on benches placed along the walls. The manner of carrying the dishes and napkins is described exactly, and corresponds in all points with the attitudes and bearing of the waiters in the two pictures in question.

The art and the literature of the past would furnish many other proofs of the refinement of our ancestors in their table-service, but perhaps the above-mentioned instances will suffice to suggest to some hosts the idea of rebelling against too rigid traditions. Our modern system of alternating men and women at table, side by side, is an ancient one also, but the plan noticed by Benvenuto Cellini might be tried occasionally, and it would be a very refined fancy to arrange a background especially to set off the beauty of a bevy of fair ladies arranged at table in a group, for their own pleasure, of course, but also for the delectation of the eyes of the men. As regards the guests being seated on one side of the table only, and being served from the front and not from the back, I consider this reform, or

rather this return to the practices of the past, to be very desirable.

The necessity of having waiters at table is regrettable. Male waiters are often, if not generally, dreadful phenomena. There is nothing more shocking to the gourmet than the vision of the waiter's abominable thumb grasping the rim of a plate and threatening at every moment to come into contact with the soup or the meat that he is passing. Even when this thumb is veiled in a spotless white cotton glove, it still remains objectionable; on this point I agree with the painter W. P. Frith, who says in one chapter of his "Reminiscences": "I think if I were ever so rich, I should as much as possible avoid men-servants; not that I have a word to say against a highly respectable portion of the community, but being, like the Vicar of Wakefield, an admirer of *happy* faces, I am also an admirer of *pretty* ones, only they must be of the female order."

The delicate gourmets of the eighteenth century devoted much ingenuity to solving the problem of waiting at table, and several of them invented costly apparatus for raising and lowering the table through the floor already served. Grimod de la Reynière was

the sworn enemy of servants, and the dream of his life was to discover some machine to replace those human machines which have always too many eyes and too many ears, and render all expansiveness impossible or imprudent. In 1728 the Margravine of Bayreuth speaks in her curious memoirs of a *table de confiance* which was worked by means of pulleys. "No servants are needed," she says; "they are replaced by drums placed at the side of the guests, who write what they want on a tablet; the drums descend into the kitchen, and ascend again with the objects required." Forty years later, Lorient, an ingenious man who had discovered a means of fixing pastel, invented for Marie Antoinette's service, at the Trianon, a table far superior to the Margravine's system of lifts. It was a table which rose through the floor, all served, and accompanied by four little tables, or dumb-waiters, on which were placed the various utensils necessary. A similar arrangement is described in Bastide's "La Petite Maison," already mentioned.

Hitherto, however, mechanical table-service has remained a rare exception in the annals of gastronomy, and human waiters are the rule, and, at the same time, a necessity.

Now, as the abolition of slavery has prevented us from selecting male subjects that might have been trained to wait at table rhythmically, harmoniously, and with adequate intelligence, let us rather eschew men waiters and accept service only at the hands of women. For, in serving food, as in cooking it, there is needed sentiment and delicacy, and these are qualities that we find oftener in women than in men, more particularly in men of the category of Jeames Plush. In table-service as in the liberal arts we must exact perfection in order to obtain something even tolerable. Therefore is it good to dwell upon the ideals and dreams of those who have gone before us if, haply, we may find therein suggestion and guidance. With this end I would fain present to the reader a summary of the rare feast of which Poliphilo partook at the court of Queen Eleutherilde, as it is related in Francesco Colonna's book; for if I contented myself with giving the reference by chapter and page, not one reader in a thousand would verify it. The strangely named *Hypnerotomachia* is not a common book, nor was its author any common gastronomer.

So then, Queen Eleutherilde invites Poli-

philo to witness the display of her table luxury and domestic splendour as manifested in the friendly commerce of a banquet in the noble company of her royal self and her maids of honour. We pass over the description of the dining-room, noting only that on each side of the entrance door stood seven young women, clad in very elegant and precious nymphs' garments, who played upon instruments at each service, and, while the banqueters ate, other music maids sang sweetly like the angels and the sirens. Now in a moment ebony tripods fitted with movable table-tops were set up without noise. The table-tops were of ivory and each of a diameter of three feet. Over each table was spread a perfumed cloth of light silk with a fringe of gold and silver threads and a border of embroidery inworked with pearls. Then came a girl carrying a large basket full of gilliflowers, purple, yellow, and white, such as the sweet-smelling spring gives, and she spread some on all the tables. Poliphilo mentions also an elaborate and curious fountain of perfumed water for scenting the hands, and an incense burner of rich design for perfuming the air. Each guest was waited upon by three maidens dressed in

magnificent garments of the same colour as the table-cloth, and with each course the table-cloth and the flowers were changed, and new attendant maidens came to serve with garments to match the table-cloth, which was successively of sea-green, blue, rose, purple, yellow, and amethyst, while the flowers were roses, jasmine, cyclamen, violets, lilies of the valley, etc.

Of the three servants attached to the service of each guest, the first offered the food, the second held the plate, and the third wiped the lips of the eater with a very fine white napkin. After each of these actions the curtsey was made, and for each mouthful a clean and perfumed silk napkin was used, the servants having as many napkins as might be needed. Thus no guest had to touch the dishes; everything was offered opportunely by the servants. When the viands were changed the servants dragged in an admirable buffet mounted on four wheels, shaped in front like a ship and behind like a triumphal chariot, the whole of solid gold, marvellously wrought and enriched with precious stones. This buffet contained all that was needed for each service, and from it the tables were served and into it they were

cleared. When the buffet was wheeled into or out of the room the nymphs blew trumpets, and every time the service was changed they played varied airs, and when they were not playing the singers sang with a sweetness extreme enough to make the sirens sigh. Thanks to this organization, the banquet was a combination of music, perfumes, and delicious meats. So Colonna describes eight courses of unparalleled sumptuousness, eight varieties of table-cloths, eight costumes of the attendant nymphs, eight strewings of varied flowers, and eight dishes each with its sauce, the latter always strongly perfumed according to the taste of the times. Then the table-tops and the tripods were carried out of the room, and the dessert was served, and after the dessert the guests were sprinkled with sweet-smelling water by means of wonderful inventions of the mechanic's and goldsmith's art; and so with courteous and ceremonious salutations the feast ended, the sweet-smelling flowers were swept from the floor on to which they had been thrown after each course, and the pavement appeared clean and shining, ready for the ballet, danced by thirty-two virgins of matchless beauty, which formed the noble and delectable

conclusion of this marvellously sumptuous feast.

Certainly this banquet is wonderfully conceived, and there are in its organization excellent ideas and other ideas that are contrary to our modern aspirations. The perfumery element is unendurably obtrusive both in the sauces and in the table decoration. But how fascinating the colour scheme of each service! How charming the triple attendance of ministering maidens! How pleasant and practical the rapid installation of the feast by means of tripods and round tables, and the speedy removal of all traces of the banquet, and the clearing of the floor for the ballet, all without the guests having to lift a finger or even rise from their seats!

In this truly civilized banquet, it will be remarked, Colonna says nothing about the conversation, for the excellent reason that there could be no conversation, but only ejaculation, seeing that everything was perfect in its way and the attention of the guests completely occupied by the banquet itself and its accessories. The food, the music, the perfumes, the spectacle of the banquet itself and of the service, were sufficient to satisfy and charm each guest's senses and

intellect; and at the moment when these delights might have begun to cloy behold they were at an end and the spectacle of the ballet succeeded. How much is this banquet of Colonna's dream superior to the London dinner party, where there is no spectacle of varied and amusing domestic splendour, where the guests are expected to converse at least with their immediate neighbours, and where each man has to wipe his own mouth!

XIV.

ON TABLE-SERVICE.

What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft is not unwise.

JOHN MILTON.

THE desirable thing, in the words of the poet, is a "neat repast." There is not only an art of preparing a delicate feast, but an art of eating one, and this latter art is not so advanced as it might be. Method in eating is all-important, and the only method is the English, for the English eat with ease and without embarrassing their neighbours. Dubois, who had long experience at the court of Berlin, says, in his "Cuisine de Tous les Pays," that it seems difficult and embarrassing to eat according to any method except the English, but as he probably had seen many Germans eating differently, he proceeds

to expound the English method, the whole theory and practice of which consists in using the fork always with the left hand and the knife and spoon with the right. The fork is to be held with the index finger stretched out so as to maintain it in an almost horizontal position. Nothing seems clumsier than to grip the fork with clenched fist and to hold it perpendicular as the Germans often do. These points seem so simple and elementary that it would appear useless to put them down in writing, and yet a little experience of *tables d'hôte*, particularly on the European continent, will show that there are still many well-dressed people in this world who eat like savages and not at all according to the English method. At a *table d'hôte* in Hanover I remember once sitting beside a German lady, a banker's wife, who borrowed my scarf-pin to pick her teeth with after dinner. This was not only a proof of bad manners, but also of hygienic imprudence, because a metal toothpick spoils the enamel of the teeth. For toothpicking purposes a lentisk stick is best, though a quill is not harmful, as Martial says in one of his epigrams :

“Lentiscum melius : sed si tibi frondea cuspis
Defuerit, dentes, penna, levare potes.”

In order to be comfortably seated at table the chair must be neither too high nor too low, and above all it should not be so heavy that it needs an effort to move it an inch, nor should it be rough with carving that sticks into your shoulders when you lean back, or catches and tears the dresses of women. These details also may seem unworthy of being written down, but experience has hitherto revealed to me very few reasonably constructed dining-room chairs.

The table-cloth should be laid, not directly on the table, but over a thick cotton blanket. The cloth itself should be spotlessly clean, and if this condition exist much will be pardoned; it may be of pure white linen or damask, or it may have a coloured pattern woven or embroidered along the edges. The use of colour in the pattern of table-linen is by no means novel. In the miniatures of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the table-cloths and the long, narrow dresser-cloths are constantly represented with rose or blue stripes and borders. Some luxurious table-cloths nowadays are not only richly embroidered, but also adorned with inserted bands of lace, which give you the sensation of dining off a petticoat. Such excess is to be avoided.

The starching and stiffening of table-linen as practised in England is not to be recommended. The ideal table-cloth is smooth and fair to the eye ; it has no obtrusive glaze ; it is soft to the touch, and its folds are not hard or rigid.

As regards the nature and shape of the tables, we have already suggested the advisableness of rebelling against the tyranny both of tradition and of the furniture-makers. There are hints for hostesses to be found in Paul Veronese's "Noces de Cana," and in Lippo Lippi's "Herod's Feast." Lippi's fresco in the cathedral of Prato might be reproduced easily in the dining-room of an English country seat as a gastronomic *tableau vivant*.

A most important article absolutely necessary for happiness at table is the napkin. The napkin should be soft and ample, and absolutely devoid of glaze or starch. The English restaurateurs have a detestable habit of stiffening table-napkins so that they are utterly indetergent and therefore useless. In all the details of table-service the chief consideration is appropriateness to the end. Napkins are used to wipe the lips and the fingers, and to cover the lap. They should be

fair pieces of linen of generous dimensions, say thirty-four by twenty-five inches. The English table-napkin generally errs on the side of smallness.

The table-napkin made its appearance in the civilized world towards the middle of the fifteenth century, the table-cloth having hitherto rendered common napkin service to the guests, who placed it over their knees as they took their seats. At first the napkin was thrown over the shoulder or over the left arm, as Erasmus directs. Subsequently when ruffs were in fashion it was tied round the neck, an operation not easy to accomplish, given the exuberance of the ruffs. Hence the proverb about the difficulty of making both ends meet, *nouer les deux bouts de sa serviette*, which has survived, together with the custom, at least at unceremonious French tables, where you will see stout men with short arms struggling to tie their napkin, just as Artus d'Embry describes in his "Isle des Hermaphrodites" [1605]. Afterwards the gentlemen in waiting and the valets only continued to carry their napkins on the shoulder, as we see in the Italian pictures of the time of the Renaissance, an usage which was observed until the end of the reign of

Louis XIV., when they began to carry them on the left arm. The modern waiter should carry his napkin in this manner on the left fore-arm, and not stuffed under the arm-pit as negligence and indelicacy often suggest.

From the beginning, the napkin was made an object for the display of luxury and nicety of service. Montaigne, in his third book of essays, regrets that in his day the custom of changing the napkins with the plates had gone out of use—*un train que j'ay veu commencer à l'exemple des roys qu'on nous changeast de serviette selon les services comme d'assiettes*. The custom, however, was soon resumed, and has been continued in some few exemplary houses, as it is fitting, for the usage is truly delicate. Great attention was paid in the old days to the beauty and the fineness of the table-linen, which was perfumed with rose-water and other soft odours, while the art of folding the napkins into quaint forms was practised and much esteemed. Artus d'Embry speaks of a different design for each guest, and says: "*Les serviettes estoient desguisées en plusieurs sortes de fruicts et d'oyseaux.*" Those who collect cook-books, and are learned in gastronomic literature have contemplated with

respect and envy Messer Mathia Giegher's three treatises, of which the first teaches how to fold napkins according to designs shown in queer woodcuts. *Li tre trattati di messer Mathia Giegher. Nel primo si monstra con facilita grande il modo di piegare ogni sorte di panni.* This book, an oblong 18mo., was published in 1639 at Padua, fully twenty years before the French entered the field with Pierre David's *Maistre d'hostel qui apprend l'ordre de bien servir sur table*, and which is preceded by familiar instructions for folding all sorts of table-linen into all kinds of figures. *Instructions familières pour bien apprendre à ployer toutes sortes de linges de table et en toutes sortes de figures.* Pierre David gives directions for folding napkins into twenty-seven different figures, including such fancies as a hen and chickens, two rabbits, a dog with his collar, a sucking-pig, a Lorrain cross, a double or single shell, etc.

Nowadays few butlers possess so varied a talent as the excellent Pierre David. Our modern fine linen is, as a rule, wanting in daintiness; nevertheless, by dint of a little attention, we can obtain table-cloths and napkins that are soft to the touch, unstiffened, and free from the smell of rank soap.

The napkin will of course match the cloth, and if it is embroidered or ornamented in any way, let this decoration in no way interfere with its usefulness. Above all things, let there be no mottoes or inscriptions "charmingly worked in all kinds of odd places, in one corner, or across the middle, or along one or all the sides," as Mrs. Loftie suggests in her little book "The Dining-Room." "Not only are such devices pretty and appropriate," continues Mrs. Loftie, "but they may sometimes afford a subject for dinner conversation when the weather has been exhaustively discussed." Mrs. Loftie has made many excellent suggestions in her pages about laying the table, but this one is too cruel and too ironical. If people's conversational powers are so limited that they require the motto of a table-napkin to help them out, it were better to prohibit conversation at table altogether, and have some one read aloud, as was the custom in the old monasteries, and also at the court of Frederick di Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, who used to have Plutarch, Xenophon, and Aristotle read to him while he was at table, and thus maintained that serene frame of mind which is necessary for happiness at meals.

The knives and forks used at Anglo-Saxon tables are generally larger and heavier than comfort requires. French knives and forks are smaller and quite strong enough for dealing with all food that figures on a civilized table. The knife never exceeds nine and three quarter inches in length, the small knives seven and three quarter inches, and the large forks eight and one quarter inches. Simple knives and forks seem to me to be desirable, and all heavy and elaborate ornamentation should be avoided, especially ornamentation in high relief, which is irritating to the touch. On the other hand, variety may be charming. At a dainty dinner I would have knives and forks of a different pattern with every dish.

The glasses that figure on a table will depend on the wines served ; they should be convenient and elegant in form, and owe their charm simply to the purity of the crystal and the beauty of their silhouette. Engraved glass, cut glass, and coloured glass is used very sparingly by people of taste. Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne wines should be drunk out of nothing but the purest crystal glass, which conceals none of their qualities of colour or scintillation. It is the

custom to drink German wines out of coloured glasses. Liqueur glasses are often coloured also, but it seems absurd to mask the purity and delicate tones of whatever nectar we may be drinking by serving it in obfuscating glasses of green, blue, red, or any other colour. For my part, I would admit to the gourmet's table only pure and very simply decorated crystal glass.

Decanters play a very limited *rôle* on the real gourmet's table ; they are used only for such heavy wines as Port and Sherry or for light ordinary Bordeaux. To decant real wines is barbarous ; they should be served directly from the bottles in which they have sojourned while their qualities were ripening ; in the course of being poured from a bottle into a decanter a wine loses some of its aroma, gets agitated, and often catches cold. If the wine served is not real wine, you may decant it and do whatever you please with it except serve it to your guests.

The great difference between an English table and a French table, whether in a private house or in a restaurant, is, so far as the aspect is concerned, the complication of the former and the simplicity of the latter. The French use fewer utensils, and know nothing

of that multiplicity of special apparatus—cruet-stands, sardine-boxes, pickle-forks, sauce-boxes, butter-coolers, biscuit-boxes, pepper-casters, trowels, toast-racks, claret-jugs—and a score of other queer inventions which are the pride of English housekeepers, and which tend to encumber an English table to such a degree that there is hardly room left for the plates. The number of objects that figure on an English table is most confusing. You sit down with the contents of a whole cutlery-shop before you, and in the centre rises a majestic, but not immaculate monument, containing specimens of all the condiments that Cross & Blackwell ever invented. It is an awful spectacle.

In a French house, the articles for table-service are knives, forks, spoons, soup-ladles, salad spoon and fork, a *manche à gigot* (or handle to screw on to the knuckle-bone of a leg of mutton, so that the carver may hold it while he cuts), a *hors d'œuvre* service, some bottle-stands, oil and vinegar stands, salt-cellars, pepper-mills, mustard-pots, hot-water dishes, oyster-forks, asparagus servers, ice-pails, nut-crackers, grape-scissors, crumb-brush and tray, a salver or tray, with a sugar-basin, etc., for tea, and there will be an end

of the silver articles. With this apparatus, and the necessary supply of plates, dishes, crockery, glass, and linen, the most delicate and complicated repast may be perfectly served.

Nowadays, gold or silver plate is very little used except in a few princely houses. Its absence from the table is not to be regretted ; the noise made by the knife and fork coming into contact with gold or silver ware is irritating to the nerves ; the glare and reflections cast upon the face of the diner by his gold or silver plate are disagreeable to the eyes. The gold or silver that figures on modern dining-tables should be limited to candlesticks, dessert-stands, and centre ornaments, if such are used. But in this matter it is preferable to follow the example of our ancestors, and if we are the lucky possessors of fine silver, *soupières* by Pierre Germain, or ewers by Froment Meurice or the Fannières, to exhibit them on our buffet or dresser rather than on the table. Remember that the table should be always free for the needs of the service.

Let the plates and dishes off which we eat be as fine as our purses can afford. One of the great errors made at some of the best Parisian restaurants, is to serve fine food on

comparatively coarse plates. A simple cutlet tastes all the better if it is served on a porcelain plate of beautiful form and tasteful ornamentation. A refinement in table-service is to have many sets of porcelain, and to serve each course on dishes and plates of different design; and, above all things, see that the plates are warm—not burning hot, but sufficiently warm not to diminish the heat of the food that is served on them.

The gourmet will prefer the exclusive use of ceramic dishes and plates in serving a dinner, because a metal dish when heated communicates a slight flavour of its own to the natural flavour of the viands. In the Parisian restaurants, even in the best, they have a vile habit of serving a duck, for instance, on a metal dish, and, while the *maître d'hôtel* cuts up the duck and deposits the pieces on the dish, he has a spirit-lamp burning beneath it. The dish thus becomes hot, the gravy bubbles, the pieces of duck get an extra cooking and absorb the taste of the heated metal, and the result of the whole operation is *not roast duck but oxidized duck*. This barbarous operation is practised daily, but only very few diners protest, to such a low level has the art of delicate dining

fallen in the country where it once flourished most brilliantly. Indeed, far from protesting, people demand oxidized food, and speak with admiration of the "wonderful *petite sauce* that fellow at Paillard's makes." Well, here is the way the wonderful *petite sauce* is made. The duck or the woodcock is cooked *insufficiently* with a view to the diabolical operations which the *maître d'hôtel* intends to perform upon it. The waiter makes a wave offering of the duck to the diner, who approves. The *maître d'hôtel* carves the bird deliberately and places the pieces on a metal dish. Then he takes the carcass and puts it in a screw press. In the more primitive days the carcass was placed between two plates upon which the *maître d'hôtel* or a fat butler would sit momentarily, in order to squeeze out the juice. Now, a nickel-plated double-acting screw press is used to extract the blood and juices from the carcass. This liquid is run on to the dish, which is placed over a spirit lamp; salt, pepper, cayenne pepper, and a dash of lemon juice are added; and the pieces of the duck and the blood are cooked over the spirit-lamp until the red blood becomes of a rich brown colour. Then the mess is served and the *maître d'hôtel* expects to be com-

plimented. This is a truly vile dish. Every objection is to be made against it. Thanks to the fashionable *petite sauce*, great precautions are needed in order to obtain a duck or a woodcock simply roasted to the point with real fire, and served honestly without sophistication.

The manner of serving a dinner is a question easily settled, provided we bear in mind the fact that it is desirable to let as little time as possible elapse between the cooking of food and the eating of it. This consideration militates against the service *à la Française*, and favours the service *à la Russe*. In the former system each course is served on the table, and afterwards removed in order to be cut up, while in the latter system the dishes are cut up before being passed round. The service *à la Française* allows a dish to cool on the table before it is served; the service *à la Russe* is incompatible with the art of decorating and mounting dishes, and suppresses altogether the exterior physiognomy of the French *grande cuisine*, which is, after all, no great loss. The modern system, dictated by reason and by convenience, is a compromise. The table is decorated simply with fruit, sweetmeats, flowers, and such

ornaments as caprice may suggest ; the *entrées* are handed round on small dishes ; the important pieces, such as roasts and *pièces de résistance*, are brought in, each by the *maître d'hôtel*, presented to the mistress of the house, who makes a sign of acknowledgment, and then taken off to be cut up by the *maître d'hôtel* on a side table. The carved dish is then handed round by the waiters, and, when all the guests are served, it is placed, if the dish be important enough, on a hot-water stand in front of the host or hostess, or in the same condition on a side table awaiting the needs of the guests. I am speaking always of dinners where the number of the guests is wisely limited ; no other dinners can be well served, so that it matters little whether they be served *à la Russe* or *à la Française*. By the fusion of the two systems, as above indicated, it is possible to give full and entire satisfaction to the cook, who always has a right to demand that his creations shall be presented for judgment in the most favourable conditions, while, at the same time, the guests have their eyes satisfied by an agreeably arranged table, and their palates respected by being enabled to taste the delicate masterpieces of the cook

in all the freshness of their savoury succulence.

The inconveniences of our modern system of waiting, where the dishes are presented between the guests and to each one's left, have been noticed already, and the remedy indicated, namely, the substitution of narrow tables arranged as convenience may dictate, but with the guests seated on one side only, so that the dishes may be presented to them from the front. If such tables were used, their decoration would necessarily be very simple, and composed mainly of candlesticks and vases for flowers. With our modern tables, at which the guests are seated on all the sides, the simpler the decoration the better. It is essential that the view should not be obstructed, and that opposite neighbours should not have to "dodge" in order to catch a glimpse of each other.

At a feast the guest and his comfort should be first considered, and the guest should never be made the slave of the ornaments and accessories of the table.

All floral decoration, however it may be arranged, should be kept low, no flowers or foliage being allowed to rise to such a height above the table as to interfere with the free

view of each guest over the whole table from end to end, and from side to side.

Let the floral decoration be as much as possible *without perfume*. Nothing is more intolerable to some sensitive natures than an atmosphere impregnated with the odour of violets, roses, or mignonette, particularly during meals. Most disagreeable, too, is the mortuary smell of fresh natural moss often used in the arrangement of fruit and flowers for the table. Let the moss be dried and free from smell, or, better still, let it be altogether banished from the civilized table.

In future, when the reformed table shall have been introduced, and the custom of sitting on one side only shall have been restored, it will be possible to banish the floral decoration from the table itself, and to place it in the form of a wall of verdure and flowers as a background to the guests. For examples, see the various pictures of feasts by the old Florentine painters already mentioned.

For lighting a dinner-table there remains to my mind but one illumination, namely, candles placed on the table itself in handsome *flambeaux*, and on the walls in sconces. Gas and electricity are abominations in a dining-

room. Any system of lighting which leaves no part of a room in soft shadow is painful to the eye and fatal to the artistic *ensemble*. For the woman who wishes to show her beauty in the most advantageous conditions, and for the gourmet who wishes to feast his palate and his eyes in the most refined manner possible, a *dîner aux bougies* is the ideal. At the Rothschild houses in Paris the dinners are served by candlelight, and, if the viands and the wines were as fine as the candlesticks, the dinners would be perfect.

In the Baron Edmond de Rothschild's dining-room the air is kept cool in the summer by two columns of crystal ice placed in a bed of flowers and foliage, one at each end of the room, and the floral decoration of the table is composed exclusively of cut orchids.

The above remarks about the necessity of avoiding the presence of perfumed flowers in the dining-room also apply, of course, to artificial perfumes. If ladies are to be admitted to a grand artistic dinner, let them be content with their natural odour and eschew the essences of Atkinson and Rimmel.

XV.

ON SERVING WINES.

IT is the opinion of some that we ought not to drink wine. A mediæval monk, preaching about the miracle of the changing of water into wine at the wedding-feast of Cana, added that this was not the most exemplary of Christ's doings. That the monk put into his words any cryptic and prophetic allusions to the advantage which the œnopolistic commerce of the nineteenth century might take of this precedent, I cannot believe. The good monk was doubtless a teetotaler. However, as no one hitherto has declared peremptorily that wine-drinking is an unchristian act, I see no reason for not making a few remarks on the subject, the more so as my doctrines tend towards simplicity and moderation. I will even venture to place this chapter under the patronage of the pious author of that most delightful and living of allegorical romances, "The Pilgrim's Progress," for in the course of describing the

adventures of Christian in his toilsome journey from this world to that which is to come, John Bunyan has spoken incidentally, and yet most memorably, of the serving of wines. When Christian reached the stately palace called Beautiful, it may be remembered, he was first questioned by a grave and comely damsel called Discretion, who soon called out her kinswomen Prudence, Piety and Charity, and they, after a little more discourse with him, had him into the family. So when he was come in, and set down, they gave him something to drink, and consented together that until supper was ready, some of them should have some particular discourse with Christian for the best improvement of the time; and they appointed Piety and Prudence and Charity to discourse with him. Then follows a delightful conversation, written in admirable English, simple and edifying. And John Bunyan continues as follows: "Now I saw in my dream, that there they sat talking together until supper was ready. So when they had made ready they sat down to meat. Now the table was furnished with fat things and *with wine that was well refined.*"

In another part of his book I find evidence

that John Bunyan appreciated the importance of good food perfectly prepared as well as of good wine well refined and unsophisticated by chemical subterfuges ; for, while in his enumeration of things reprehensible and sins that are abominable in the pages devoted to the description of Vanity Fair, he omits all mention of wine-drinking or delicate feasting, a little further on he says categorically :

“ Will a man give a penny to fill his belly with hay ? Or can you persuade the turtle-dove to live upon carrion like the crow ? ”

The classical theory of serving wines at a dinner is the following :—

Immediately after the soup dry white wines are offered, such as French wines, Marsala, Sherry, Madeira, dry Syracuse, etc.

With the fish dry white wines are also served. With oysters Chablis is preferred.

With *relevés* of butcher's meat and warm *entrées*, red wines, Burgundy or Bordeaux.

With cold *entrées* and other cold pieces, fine white wines are served.

With the roast come the fine Bordeaux or Champagne wines, or both. With the *entremets*, Champagne alone. With the dessert, *liqueur* wines, such as Frontignan, Lunel,

Alicante, Malvoisie, Port, Tokay, Lacrima-Christi, etc.

The red wines ought to be drunk at a temperature of about 55 degrees Fahrenheit. White wines should always be served cold.

When a selection of wine figures on the menu in the order above indicated, the table requires to be loaded with wine-glasses, at least half a dozen by the side of each plate, and during the whole dinner the waiters are continually inserting a bottle surreptitiously between every two guests, and murmuring as they fill the glasses, "Château-Lafitte, 1865," "Clos Vougeot, 1873," etc.

Now it seems to me that, among the many practices which interfere with comfort, we must note both the attendants who pass dishes over the shoulders of the guests and the attendants who help the company to wine. The handing round of dishes can be rendered less disagreeable by modifying our current ways of sitting at table. As for the custom of having an attendant to help wine, it might be abolished with advantage if men could be convinced that the drinking of many wines during one meal is a gross form of luxury, and one disastrous to the digestive organs.

The multitude of wines, like the multitude

of dishes, served in succession, however carefully that succession may be ordained, wears the palate and fatigues the stomach. If six fine wines are served in succession in the course of one repast, at least half of the number are not fully appreciated. As we advocate simplicity in the number and in the preparation of the dishes, so we recommend simplicity in the serving of the wines, for our object in dining is neither to gorge and guzzle nor yet to get drunk. When we rise from the table we wish to feel our heads clear, our papillæ clean, and our tongues free, and above all, we wish to sleep calmly, and to wake up the next morning fresh and rosy.

For my own part, I prefer to drink one wine throughout my dinner, either red Bordeaux or Burgundy, or a dry Champagne, unsophisticated by the addition of liqueurs or excess of caramel. These wines I drink poured into the glass directly out of their native bottles, and the Champagne, being of the right quality, I do not pollute it by contact with ice. Really good natural Champagne should be drunk *cool, but not iced*. To decant Champagne, whether into jugs with an ice-receptacle in the middle, such as modern progress has invented, or into a *carafe*

frappée, as is the custom with the less civilized French drinkers, or to freeze the bottle in the ice-pail, or to put lumps of ice into the glass, are equally barbarous operations. The only Champagne that may be iced is poor and very sweet Champagne, whose sugary taste is masked by coldness.

At a truly scientific feast, where all the conditions of success exist, both as regards the limitation of the guests to the number of the Muses as a maximum, and also as regards the perfection of the viands, both in quality and in dressing, it is easy to dispense with the attendants who would be required to help wine at an ordinary dinner. At this scientific feast each man would have his bottle.

I will even go further, and say that not only would each man have his bottle of Champagne or his bottle of whatever other wine there might be, but also each man would have his leg of mutton, his duck, his partridge, his pheasant. This method alone is truly satisfactory, because it renders envy and favouritism impossible. A partridge has only one breast, and a leg of mutton has only a few slices which are ideal. Evidently, if the partridge or the leg of mutton has to be divided between several guests, one or more

of them will be sacrificed for the benefit of the other or others. This is undesirable ; you do not invite people to dinner in order to subject them to martyrdom ; you do not accept an invitation to dinner with a view to displaying moral qualities, such as self-abnegation. The Russians have noble views on this point. Once I was invited to dinner by a Russian gentleman, who had asked me previously if he could serve me any special dish. I begged that I might taste a certain Russian mutton. When the dinner was served a whole sheep was carried in steaming hot on the shoulders of four Tartar waiters, and I was asked to select the part that pleased me best, the whole dish being at my disposal.

So with this question of wine : if we have wine, let it be served in' abundance, and let each guest have his bottle, and as many bottles as his thirst demands.

The above remarks do not apply without reserve to family life and quotidian domestic repasts ; they are addressed to gourmets and to men who wish to do honour to their friends by giving them a real dinner.

In order to feast delicately, it is perhaps necessary to be an egoist. The company of friends, or at least of one friend, is indispen-

sable. A man cannot dine alone. But the happiness of each guest must be ministered to independently of the happiness of the others, and for that reason we advocate the service by unities—a complete dinner for each guest, so far at least as the chief dishes are concerned. This idea is not novel. For that matter, there are no novel ideas worth talking about. Tallemant des Réaux, in his “*Historiettes*,” relates that the French poet Malherbe, who flourished at the end of the sixteenth century, one day “gave a dinner to six of his friends. The whole feast consisted merely of seven boiled capons, one for each man, for he said that he loved them all equally, and did not wish to be obliged to serve to one the upper joint and to another the wing.”

The smaller the dinner the better will be the chance of its being well cooked. In these days of wealth and parade the “*aristologist*” craves after simplicity.

The late Mr. Walker, author of “*The Original*,” wrote a series of papers on the “*Art of Dining*,” which contain many good hints. Walker was a partisan of simplicity. “*Common soup*,” he says, “made at home, fish of little cost, any joints, the cheapest vegetables, some happy and unexpensive introduction,

provided everything is good in quality, and the dishes are well dressed and served hot and in succession, with their adjuncts, will insure a quantity of enjoyment which no one need be afraid to offer."

Thus we see that delicate eating and delicate drinking are not questions of many kinds of wines, multitudes of dishes, or great state of serving-men, but rather of fineness of the quality of all that is offered, simplicity and daintiness in its preparation, rapidity and convenience in the serving of it, and appreciativeness on the part of the guests.

That marvellous story-writer, Guy de Maupassant, says : "A man is a gourmet as he is a poet or an artist, or simply learned. Taste is a delicate organ, perfectible and worthy of respect like the eye and the ear. To be wanting in the sense of taste is to be deprived of an exquisite faculty, of the faculty of discerning the quality of aliments just as one may be deprived of the faculty of discerning the qualities of a book or of a work of art ; it is to be deprived of an essential sense, of a part of human superiority ; it is to belong to one of the innumerable classes of cripples, infirm people, and fools of which our race is composed ; it is, in a word, to have a stupid

mouth just as we have a stupid mind. A man who does not distinguish between a *langouste* and a lobster, between a herring, that admirable fish that carries within it all the savours and aromas of the sea, and a mackerel or a whiting, is comparable only to a man who could confound Balzac with Eugène Sue and a symphony by Beethoven with a military march composed by some regimental band-master."

On this matter of wine-drinking there is a French proverb of which we have no good translation: *Pain tant qu'il dure, vin à mesure*. The French observe this proverb; for no people eat more bread, nor have better to eat; and for wine, most of them drink it well diluted and not in excess, although they serve it in big hearty glasses. One of the curious and inexplicable phenomena of modern times is the persistent backwardness of British panification. On the Continent, from Brest to Vienna, you get good bread, sweet in flavour, light, perfectly cooked, crisp-crust, pleasant to the eye and grateful to the stomach. In England the cottage loaf and the tin bread prevail in spite of everything, sour, indigestible, irrepressible, the disgrace of a great country.

XVI.

THE ART OF EATING AT TABLE.

ERASMUS of Rotterdam, towards the end of his career, in 1530, wrote, for the use of the young prince, Henry of Burgundy, a little treatise in Latin, "De Civilitate Morum Puerilium," which was very soon afterwards translated into English by Robert Whytington, and many times into French, under the title of "Traité de Civilité Puérile et Honnête." This little treatise, which has remained until almost our own times a text-book in French schools, is the first special and complete book of etiquette composed in modern Europe, the first distinct study of good manners as a humble branch of philosophy. In this little book we shall find the elements of our modern table-manners formulated in a few brief axioms, such as the following :—

"Do not pick your teeth with the point of your knife, nor with your finger-nail, as dogs

and cats do, nor with your napkin ; make use of a splinter of lentiscus wood, or a quill, or of those small bones which are found in the legs of fowls.

“Gaiety is becoming at table, but not effrontery. Do not sit down without having washed your hands and cleaned your nails. When you wipe your hands drive away all morose thoughts; at meals you ought not to seem sad yourself nor to sadden others. *Nam in convivio nec tristem esse decet nec contristare quenquam.*”

Erasmus further recommends children not to put their elbows on the table; not to wriggle on their chairs, but to sit upright; and to lay their napkin on the left shoulder or the left arm. “The drinking-glass should be placed on the right, also the knife for cutting meat, nicely wiped (*cultellus escarius rite purgatus*); the bread on the left.

“To begin a meal by drinking is the act of drunkards, who drink from habit and not from thirst. It is not only bad manners, but bad for the health. Before drinking, finish what food you have in your mouth, and do not approach your lips to the glass until you have wiped them with your napkin or your handkerchief.

“To lick your greasy fingers, or to wipe them on your clothes, is equally bad manners ; it is better to make use of the table-cloth or of your napkin.

“Do not gnaw bones with your teeth, like a dog ; pick them clean with the aid of a knife.

“Help yourself to salt with the aid of a knife.

“It is good that varied conversation should create some intervals in the continuity of a meal. *Mulieres ornat silentium, sed magis pueritiam.*” (These Latin words may be translated by some bold man who will preface his remarks by declaring that he does not agree with Erasmus, so far at least as the ladies are concerned.)

“In placing a dish on the table, and in filling up a glass, never use your left hand.

“To speak with your mouth full is both impolite and dangerous.”

Now, from the above maxims, and from the whole treatise, as well as from other writings of Erasmus, we may justly conclude that he was a refined and urbane gentleman ; and those who followed his precepts would certainly be charming hosts and agreeable guests, for in his remarks on table-manners

he has touched upon all the points that are essential to decency, comfort, and good feeling. These points concern three matters, namely, the laying of the table, the serving of the meats, and the behaviour and frame of mind of the guests.

A veteran writer, Théophile Gautier, who uttered that famous axiom so saddening to journalists, "Daily newspapers are published every day," also fathered a paradox in contradiction to the lamentation of the Preacher. "There is nothing new under the sun," said the pessimistic Hebrew. "Everything is new and hitherto unpublished," replied Gautier, "*tout est inédit.*" For this reason I have quoted some observations of Erasmus of Rotterdam on table-manners, and now beg leave to gloss and comment upon them, beginning with the very important detail of toothpicks and picking teeth. The use of fine chicken-bones, which Erasmus recommended, we should now consider rustic. The only toothpick that hygiene and convenience admit are wooden splinters or quills. Gold or silver toothpicks are dangerous, because the metal may scratch or chip the enamel of the teeth. On this point there can be no hesitation.

Joseph Duchesne, who was the doctor of Henri IV. of France, says: "*Ayant disné faut laver la bouche avec vin tout pur, et en après les mains avec de l'eau; et curer ses dents, non avec le fer, ains avec curedent de lentisque, romarin, ou tel autre bois aromatique, mais sur toutes choses il faudra rendre après les repas grâces à Dieu.*"

With the words of Joseph Duchesne, especially those of the last sentence, we entirely agree, and at the same time would add that, apart from the question of aptitude, the use of the precious metals for making such a mean instrument as a toothpick is an example of snobbishness. An ivory toothpick is also objectionable, because the ivory is absorbent, and in the course of use becomes unclean.

A table-knife is to be used to cut food, and never to convey food to the mouth, which is the function of forks and spoons. Nevertheless, you constantly see people eating cheese with a knife. The treatise on "*Civilité Puérile et Honnête,*" used in the ancient and well-mannered school where I was brought up, expressly forbade this usage. Dry cheese, I was taught, should be cut into small pieces on your plate as need

requires, and each piece taken up delicately with the fingers and so conveyed to the mouth ; soft cheese should be spread with the knife on each mouthful of bread ; frothy cheese, like cream-cheese, should be eaten with a spoon.

The Anglo-Saxons are afraid to use their fingers to eat with. Thanks to this hesitation, I have seen, in the course of my travels in the Old World, many distressing sights. I have seen ladies attempt to eat a craw-fish (*écrevisse*) with a knife and fork and abandon the attempt in despair. I have also seen men in the same fix. I have seen—oh, barbarous and cruel spectacle!—otherwise apparently civilized people, cut off the points of asparagus and, with a fork, eat only these points, thus leaving the best part of the vegetable on their plates. As for artichokes, they generally utterly defeat the attacks of those who trust simply to the knife and fork.

Fingers must be used for eating certain things, notably asparagus, artichokes, fruit, olives, radishes, pastry, and even small fried fish ; in short, everything which will not soil or grease the fingers may be eaten with the fingers. For my own part, I prefer to eat lettuce salad with my fingers rather than

with a fork, and Queen Marie Antoinette and other ladies of the eighteenth century were of my way of thinking. If the ladies could only see how pretty is their gesture when their diaphanous forefinger and thumb grasp a leaf of delicate green lettuce and raise that leaf from the porcelain plate to their rosy lips, they would all immediately take to eating salad *à la Marie Antoinette*. Only bear in mind, good ladies, that if you do wish to eat lettuce salad with your fingers you must mix the salad with oil and vinegar, and not with that abominable, ready-made white "salad-dressing," to look upon which is nauseating.

May Heaven preserve us from excessive complication in matters of table-service and eating! Let us beware of having too many forks for comfort, and of forms too quaint for practical utility. Certainly, silver dessert knives and forks are very good in their way, because they are not susceptible to the action of fruit acids, but it is vain and clumsy to attempt to make too exclusive use of the knife and fork in eating fruit. Eating is not a thing to be ashamed of. To thoroughly enjoy a peach you must bite it and feel the juicy, perfumed flesh melt in your mouth.

But there is no necessity for sticking a fork into the peach and peeling it while so impaled, as if it were an ill-favoured and foul object. A peach is as beautiful to the touch as it is to the eye; a peach held between human fingers has its beauty enhanced by the beauty of the fingers. However dainty and ornate the silver dessert knife and fork may be, it always irritates me to see people cut up their peaches, or pears, or apricots, or what not, into cubes and parallelepipeds, as if dessert were a branch of conic sections. Imitate Marie Antoinette, ladies: use your fingers more freely. To eat a pear or an apple conveniently cut it into quarters, and peel each quarter in turn as you eat it. The peach, too, can be cut into quarters if the eater is timid. Apricots do not need peeling, nor plums either. Who would be bold enough to peel a fresh fig, or even to touch such a delicate fruit with even the purest silver instruments?

I have referred to the disastrous discomfiture of Englishmen and women by a dish of crawfish. This dish, being served but rarely in England, might be neglected by an unthoughtful writer, but as many thousands of my countrymen visit the Continent every

year, and as I could wish them all, when in France or Belgium, to taste this meat, I will add a note on the way of tackling it. The three chief forms in which you will find the crawfish served are as a *coulis* in *potage bisque*, generally, alas! much adulterated with carrots and rice-flour; boiled in a *court-bouillon* and served as *écrevisses en buisson*; cooked in a rich and highly spiced sauce which produces *écrevisses à la Bordelaise*. In all these forms the crawfish is excellent. The soup you eat, naturally, with a spoon. Of the *écrevisse en buisson* you help yourself, with your fingers, to a bunch of half a dozen; take them one by one; pull off and crack and suck the claws; break the shell with your teeth or with nut-crackers, and extract the dainty flesh of the tail. After this dish it is necessary to pass round finger-bowls and to change the napkins. *Écrevisses à la Bordelaise* must be eaten in the same manner; finger-bowls and clean napkins, if not a complete bath, are necessary after the consumption of a good dish of this succulent crustacean.

. It being desirable that people's table-manners should be equal to any emergency, whether they are in their own country or

engaged in foreign travel, I will add that the use of salt-spoons is not universal in this world. If you happen to be at a table where the host, recalcitrant to progress, has not invested any capital in vermeil, silver, or bone salt-spoons, help yourself to salt with the point of your knife, as Erasmus of Rotterdam tells you, having previously wiped it on your plate or on a bit of bread. *Do not attempt to help yourself to salt with the handle of your fork or spoon.* In countries where salt-spoons are not held in honour, such an attempt would be esteemed a mark of ill-breeding.

XVII.

ON BEING INVITED TO DINE.

IN the grammar in which I learned the elements of the Spanish tongue, one of the exercises, I remember, began as follows: "I like to dine always at home; an invitation inconveniences me. Nevertheless, it is necessary to take account of the requirements of society. I have never desired to appear rude, nor have I been wanting in the consideration that is due to friends."

An American lady, who has devoted much time to the study of the social habits of Europe, and who has imparted to her countrymen the results of her observations in lectures which have given her rank as an authority on matters of comparative civilization, once confided to me her disappointment at the reception that she had met with at the hands of the Spaniards during a holiday tour in the Castilles and Andalusia. "I started," she said, "with many letters of introduction

to the best people in Madrid and Seville. I presented my letters. The people returned my call ; that is to say, the men did. They also placed their carriages and servants at my disposal and obtained for me permissions to view libraries and to touch relics of the greatest sanctity. But none of them invited me to dinner, or even to take so much as a cup of tea."

From this fact the amiable sociologist concluded that the Spaniards are inhospitable and disagreeable people, without reflecting that there was no reason why the Spaniards should change their habits for her sake, and that though her desire to pry into their home-life might be legitimate from an absolute point of view, it was the height of indiscreetness from the semi-Oriental point of view of Moorish Spain, which still retains all its force in contemporary Spain. The Spaniards, it is true, are chary of invitations. Their home is very sacred. They do not ask the new acquaintance to dine with them five minutes after being introduced. Like the man in the Spanish grammar, they consider an invitation as an inconvenience, not so much because they are of inhospitable nature or because they have no spare cash to speak of, but

because, like the patriarchs of old, they look upon hospitality as a very grave matter, and a duty in the discharge of which no sacrifices are to be spared. Consequently, if they cannot entertain in a satisfactory manner, they prefer to shirk the task rather than perform it in a halting and make-shift way.

This sentiment is thoroughly laudable, and in conformity with the best traditions of those ancient civilizations of the East from which we derive our own. Never lightly invite a man to dine, as you would ask him to take a cigarette. As P. Z. Didsbury remarked, once for all, in terms of unforgettable laconism, "A man can dine but once a day." How great, then, is the responsibility of him who ventures to take upon himself the providing and serving of this dinner!

Furthermore, whenever, for reasons which we need not examine, you are invited to dine, and you accept the invitation, do not be in too great a hurry to return the compliment. In nine cases out of ten the blackest ingratitude of which you could be capable would be to invite your Amphitryon and inflict upon him a return dinner.

Doubtless, in an ideal state of things, it would often be delightful to accept an in-

vation to dinner. As it is, an invitation from people with whose hearts and minds I am not familiar fills me with terror. If I accept, I say to myself, What will befall me? In their wish to do me honour and give me pleasure, have my would-be hosts realized the gravity of the deed they are about to perpetrate? Have they devoted thought to the subject of dining? Having invited me to dine, do they know how to dine themselves? Will the temperature of their dining-room be neither too high nor too low? Will the lights be so arranged that my eyes will not be dazzled, and that restful bits of shadow will remain soothingly distributed about the room? Will the chairs be the outcome of reason, or merely of the furniture-maker's caprice? Will there be a draught under the table or over it? Will the table-service be agreeable to the eye? Will the food be real food? These and a score other interrogations rise to my lips, and finally I put to myself the clinching question, "Shall I be sick before or after the ordeal?" And, as a rule, I prefer to be sick before the dinner, and send an excuse, thus making sure of avoiding sickness after it. My feigned indisposition often deprives me of charming company, but

it does not prevent me repairing to a restaurant where I am sure of combining a menu to suit my palate and where I have the right to criticize and refuse whatever is unworthy.

This confession may seem to imply an unsociable nature. On the contrary, it is the lamentation of a victim of sociability. My experience, which, without having extended over many lustres, has perhaps compensated for its brevity by extreme application and untiring assiduity, has demonstrated, generally speaking, that the people who have invited me to dine with them would have done better to have had themselves invited to dine with me.

By dint of pondering over gastronomic disasters for which kindly disposed friends and acquaintances were responsible, I have conceived certain projects of reform, all more or less chimerical. I have wondered for instance, why, in countries where rational governments exist, and where a minister is appointed to attend to the interests of the fine arts, with, under him, directors, deputy-directors, inspectors, and a dozen grades of minor functionaries, no emperor, king, or republic has yet thought of creating a

Minister of Gastronomy. Hitherto the sad fact remains that the Art of Delicate Dining does not receive state encouragement in any country on the face of the whole earth.

Not only do governments ignore or neglect the gastronomic art, but even private initiative and private endowment are wanting. Benevolent citizens leave money for the foundation of institutions of all kinds; important sums are bequeathed for the endowment of research; but no one has ever yet thought of instituting a permanent Gastronomic Academy or of endowing a chair of gastronomic criticism in our existing educational establishments. Criticism, this is what we need. It was criticism and the incessant exigencies of competent critics which made the great cooks and the great restaurants of the past. Criticism alone can save private and public cookery from irremediable decadence and restore the art of delicate dining to the eminent place it deserves in the preoccupations of civilized humanity. With this conviction at heart, I conceived an idea which seemed to me quite practical, namely, the formation of an International League for the protection of diners-out and for the general advancement of the art of

delicate feasting. Considering the misadventures that befall one in private houses, and the slovenly and inartistic ways that are rapidly becoming traditional even in some of the oldest and best restaurants of the world, it is desirable that measures should be taken to make criticism effectual and productive of reform. It might be going too far, perhaps, to suggest that a man has a right to ask for references when he is invited to dine in a strange house. On the other hand, it would be a great boon if one could obtain some information not only about private houses, but also about public restaurants, in the various cities of the world where civilized men do most congregate. Hence the idea of a league of diners-out and of an information and inquiry office, where notes about hosts and hostesses might be centralized and communicated to the members of the league in the interests of the culinary art as well as of public health in general. Here, for instance, are some samples of the entries which an information-office of this kind might catalogue :—

“Mrs. A.: Sauces dangerous, red wines fair, Champagne third rate, company good. Robust members of the league only can

venture to sit at Mrs. A.'s table. This hostess has been warned, but has hitherto disdained criticism.

"Mrs. B.: Soup always bad; plates insufficiently heated; claret dangerously adulterated; coffee-cups cold.

"Mrs. C.: Serves tepid coffee, made with essence, in cups that have not been previously warmed. Dinner elaborate; nothing but *entrées*; nothing to eat. This table is pretentious and hopeless. Mrs. C. is an old offender. Two *habitués* of her Tuesday dinner-parties died last year. (N.B.—These unfortunate victims were not members of the league.)

"Mrs. D.: In this house the pepper-mill is unknown; uses ready-made salad-dressing; the fifth chair to the hostess's right hand is in a violent draught.

"Mrs. E.: Cooking excellent; service fair; cellar not deleterious, but far from ideal; Champagne good. This lady, unfortunately, insists upon decorating the table with strongly smelling flowers. Her case is interesting, and recommended to members of the league who have persuasive talent and a taste for evangelizing.

"Mrs. F.: Serves game on silver dishes,

with spirit-lamp burning beneath ; result, oxidized snipe.

“ Mrs. G. : Member of the league ; makes great efforts to satisfy the requirements of high gastronomic art ; coffee perfect ; both the cups, the spoons, and even the sugar, are warmed.”

I gave publicity to this, as I thought, brilliant and original idea of an International League, in an article published some years ago in a most influential London newspaper, *The World* ; but, to my sorrow, nobody offered to become a member, although I did not suggest that any subscription would be levied.

In presence of such indifference, what is to be done ? How can we revive the spirit of criticism which alone can rescue the art of cookery from its actual state of decadence ? The case seems almost hopeless, for the men of the present generation do not appear to have the sentiment of the table ; they know neither its varied resources nor its infinite refinements ; their palates are dull, and they are content to eat rather than to dine. The delicate diner is, nowadays, a rarity, and a man of thirty or thirty-five years of age who knows how to order a dinner

scientifically, and to avoid even elementary solecisms, is a still greater rarity. In modern Paris, formerly the Mecca of gourmets, it is becoming most difficult to dine, and everywhere, even in the best restaurants—we will say no more about private houses—we see the disastrous consequences of the absence of criticism. Both cooking and service suffer. At the *Café Anglais*, while the cooking remains excellent, the waiters are inadequate both in number and in intelligence; the buttons of their waistcoats are frequently denuded of cloth, and their threadbare dress-coats are covered with grease-spots. And yet nobody complains. Our European contemporaries devote no thought to such important details as the training and dressing of waiters, thereby showing themselves to be less civilized than the Russians, whose Tartar waiters are exemplary both in noiseless attention and in appropriate costume of spotless purity.

Furthermore, is it not curious that so far as the rooms are concerned there is not a single restaurant in Paris adequately located? All the establishments have been fitted up in more or less inconvenient premises, generally in shops, where the tables are crowded

together in disagreeable conditions and where draughts are dangerously frequent. No architect has yet exercised his genius in devising a perfect palace of gastronomy.

In the Parisian and European restaurants of the present day the tendency is to prepare the food and to organize the service as if a restaurant were a buffet. The *cartes* of old, so infinitely varied, have disappeared, to make way for the summary *carte du jour*. In other words, cookery has become an industry rather than an art, and the object of the cook is to furnish rapidly large quantities of "portions" rather than to prepare daintily a few dishes that will win for him the compliments of *connoisseurs*. The reasons of this phenomenon are manifold. The hurry and unrest of contemporary life do not conduce to the appreciation of fine cooking, nor is fine cooking possible where it is necessary to prepare food in very large quantities. But why are the restaurants of the very highest class declining in excellence? Can they not count upon the patronage not only of the *élite* of the gourmets of Paris, but also—thanks to club-trains and swift communications of all kinds—upon the patronage of the gastronomers of the whole world? This is

true, but with important reserves. The decline of the art of cookery in the Parisian restaurants is due chiefly to the development of club-life ! The men of fashion, leisure, or wealth who would formerly have lived at the restaurants now dine at the *table d'hôte* of their clubs, between two feverish *séances* at the baccarat-table, and thus the restaurants have lost that nucleus of regular and fastidious customers which, by its readiness to criticise and appreciate, obliged and encouraged the *chef* to keep up the traditions of the dainty palates of the past. At present the great restaurants of Paris depend for support as much on foreigners as on resident Parisians ; their patrons are, therefore, unstable, and the criticism of their cookery less constant and less rigorous than it used to be. Once more the word "criticism" flows from the point of my pen, and sums up the whole gist of the preceding pages. Without criticism there can be no delicate dining.

How often you hear people say, "Oh ! I am not particular. I do not pay any attention to what I eat." Certainly we can conceive that there are men devoid of the senses of taste and smell, just as we can conceive men for whom exquisite flowers, beautiful

women, fine pictures, or incomparable statues have no charm. But such men are to be pitied, supposing that we deign to accord them any manifestation of interest whatever. Whether our object be to get out of life the greatest amount of pleasure or the greatest amount of work, or both together, it is good policy to pay great attention to what we eat, and to strive in this, as in all that we undertake, to attain perfection.

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