

Or is it, perchance, a dear little child  
Crowned with a chaplet of cowslips wild,  
With innocent joy in its angel-face  
At the sight of its own sweet childish grace?

Or is it (forgive me) one dearer still,  
To whom thou hast promised thy clear "I will"?  
Aye, *that* is the picture that pleaseth thee best;  
And he? Oh, *he* is simply blest!

W. A. GIBBS.

## SALADS, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM.



HERE can be no doubt that the last ten or fifteen years have witnessed, if not a revolution, at any rate a very great change in the domestic habits of the middle classes of this country. Persons now-a-days drink wine every day, who twenty years back looked upon a glass of port after a Sunday's early dinner as a rare luxury. There are probably more cases of champagne consumed in a month now, than bottles in a week of the time of which we speak. In many households we regret to see brandies-and-sodas have taken the place of less seductive but more wholesome beverages. But in the general management of the table the universal increase in the undoubtedly luxurious habits of the age is still more marked. In every class of society dinners are served in the present day which would have simply astounded our forefathers. Now, were we to inquire into the cause of this change, our subject would be political rather than domestic economy. The freer intercourse, not merely amongst ourselves, but with our foreign neighbours, the alteration in the value of money, the great increase in the importation of foreign goods of various description, have all had their effect. Again, it must be borne in mind that increased luxury in one sense, does not necessarily mean increased expenditure. We have before had occasion to contrast the old-fashioned heavy English dinner with a modern one *à la russe*, and have endeavoured to explain that the latter, while far more luxurious, is at the same time far more economical.

If there is any dish in the world that varies more than another, probably it is a salad, and at the same time it may be considered as one of the cheapest of modern luxuries, which by some is considered almost an essential to the every-day dinner. Contrast what we may call the early English style with the modern French. First, that huge lettuce, sliced up, saturated in a pint or two of vinegar; it never even reached the dignity of being eaten alone, but was considered a proper accompaniment to a strong cheese, the unavoidable noise made in masticating it unfortunately invariably drowning what little conversation there was. Secondly, the *salade à la française* as one gets it in Paris: soft, delicious, digestible, and somehow or other containing some subtle flavour that seems at present to have baffled the research of the most intelligent foreigner with the astutest taste. Of course, too, tastes differ and require training. Many of the lower orders in this country, were they to see a Frenchman in humble life dress a salad, using the

oil as he does, would regard him with feelings somewhat akin to what the Frenchman would feel were he to witness the monstrous feat of drinking off a quart of adulterated beer as an appetiser before breakfast. Each countryman would regard the other as a curiosity. But we must come to the practical part of our subject, and endeavour to improve upon the lettuce and vinegar, though by preface we would state that that by no means small class who think the best part of the salad is the vinegar, which they keep to the last, like a child with the jam part of a tart, and lap up finally with the assistance of a blade of a steel knife, will find but little instruction from our remarks.

We will commence with giving simple instructions for dressing an ordinary salad, composed of plain lettuce.

First, have ready a salad-bowl sufficiently large to enable the salad-dresser to toss the lettuce lightly together. Next, the lettuce should be crisp, but not too hard, and we would advise that hard stalk part (which, by the way, many persons think the best part) not to be put in. This of course, however, is a matter of taste. Then, if possible, don't wash the lettuce at all; examine every leaf carefully and wipe it clean, and remove any specks of garden mould that may be on it, and in wiping be particularly careful not to crush or bruise the lettuce. Sometimes, and indeed often, washing is absolutely indispensable; when this is the case, however, bear in mind the importance of leaving the lettuce to soak in the water as little as possible; next, when the lettuce has been washed, it must of course be dried; the best plan being to shake it in a little wire basket, which can be swung round in the open air. These wire baskets are sold in the streets by men who go about with skewers and penny gridirons, and are well worth buying. If you possess a white-bait basket, that will answer the purpose admirably. Another method of drying the lettuce is to put it in a clean dry cloth, and take the cloth by the four corners and shake it lightly; the drops of water shake off and are absorbed by the cloth, but the lettuce does not get bruised.

Next chop up finely about enough parsley to fill a small salt-spoon, and with it one or two leaves of fresh tarragon (we will suppose you are mixing salad enough for four persons); sprinkle this over the lettuce in the bowl, which, if the flavour is liked, may be first rubbed inside with a slice of onion, or better still, a bead of garlic. In giving this onion or garlic flavour to a salad, too great care cannot be taken to avoid overdoing it. Sydney Smith wrote a receipt on dressing salad, so well known that we will not

repeat it, with the exception of the two admirable lines which every one should know by heart:—

“Let onion's atoms lurk within the bowl  
And, scarce suspected, animate the whole.”

There are various ingredients used in cooking which can only be used as here directed, viz., “scarce suspected.” Garlic is essentially one of these, as well as nutmeg, all-spice, mace, &c. But to return to the salad which requires dressing. Place in a table-spoon a small salt-spoonful of salt, about half of pepper, then fill up the spoon with good fresh Lucca oil, stir it quickly with a fork and pour over the salad, and toss it lightly about, add another table-spoonful of oil, and continue the mixing, and finish by adding about half a table-spoonful of English vinegar, or rather less of French white wine vinegar. We ought in this country to be very careful before we set up our opinions on such a subject as cooking before the French. Now some French cookery books I have seen maintain that in dressing a salad it does not matter whether you put in the oil first or the vinegar. For my part I think it does; if the vinegar be put in *before* the oil, it is apt to be absorbed by the lettuce-leaves, and consequently one part of the salad will taste sharper than the other; while if the oil be put in first and the salad well mixed, each leaf gets coated with oil, and the small quantity of vinegar when added is generally diffused. To my taste the king of salad dressings is Mayonnaise sauce, but before refreshing your memories as to how to make it, I will first describe two exceedingly nice salads, which have the advantage of using up cold vegetables. The first is asparagus salad, and as absolutely no oil is used in compounding it, a description may raise the hopes of some of my readers, who somehow “never will believe in oil.” We will suppose some properly boiled asparagus has been left from dinner. All that is necessary is to dip the eatable parts or tops in the following sauce. Place the asparagus on a dish, and if any remains over from the sauce pour it on the tops; the sauce being made as follows:—Melt, but do not heat too much, a little butter, say an ounce, and pour it on to a plate; mix in with a fork a good tea-spoonful of made mustard, a little pepper and salt, and nearly a dessert-spoonful of English vinegar; stir it all up quickly, and dip in the ends of the asparagus as directed. This is a capital way of using up asparagus, and the salad makes an excellent dish at a supper confined to cold meats.

The other salad to which we refer is the old-fashioned dish, potato salad, and is best made from new potatoes, or rather from potatoes not too old and floury. Considering the number of houses where potatoes are left from the early dinner, and where there is afterwards a supper, it seems strange that potato salad does not form a more frequent dish than it does. The way in which it is compounded is extremely simple. The “suspicion of onion”—which can be brought about as before by simply rubbing the bowl, or if a rather strong flavour of onion is not objected to, by chopping up a small piece of onion finely and adding to the salad—is one requisite; then slice the potatoes, place them in the bowl, add a little

chopped parsley, and if liked, as before, tarragon, and dress the salad exactly as the lettuce was directed to be dressed, adding a little more or less vinegar according to taste.

We must not, in enumerating the various rarer kinds of salad, omit to mention the ordinary English salad and its dressing. The ordinary English salad is a mixture of lettuce, mustard and cress, beet-root, radishes; to which are sometimes added endive and celery. If in season, a little celery is certainly an improvement to a mixed salad of this kind; and some even recommend a few slices of boiled potatoes. The usual dressing to a salad of this description is made by mixing three or four table-spoonfuls of cream with half a table-spoonful, or more, of brown sugar, two table-spoonfuls of vinegar, about a tea-spoonful of made mustard, pepper and salt, and some add a little oil, though when cream is used there is no occasion for oil, and those who prefer this kind of salad generally object to it.

In dressing mixed salads, the variety of receipts is almost innumerable. Yolks of hard-boiled eggs are mixed up with a little milk, and when cream is liked and yet cannot be obtained, this is a very good substitute. Of course, in winter the choice of salad is limited, though of late years it is possible to obtain French lettuces nearly all the year round. Still a very nice salad can be made from mixed endive, beet-root, and celery, which can be dressed in any of the ways I have mentioned.

An exceedingly nice salad can be formed from mixed boiled vegetables, the most important ones being cauliflower, French beans, peas, summer cabbage, and new potatoes; a little chopped parsley and young onions should be added, and the salad dressed exactly similar to the potato salad.

A variety of herbs are used abroad for salads, which are not often used in this country, the chief being dandelion-leaves. These herbs, however, are difficult to obtain except in the neighbourhood of Soho, where a knowledge of French is requisite in addition, in order for you to obtain exactly what you want; and as there are herbs closely resembling those used, some of which are absolutely poisonous, caution should be used by amateur herbalists. The fact, however, remains that French peasants would gather many a delicious salad from our ditches, whereas the only creature in the country sufficiently educated to appreciate these delicacies at present is the British pig.

By far the best form of sauce for salads is Mayonnaise sauce, especially when the salads consist of some green vegetable, such as lettuce, mixed with meat or fish. For instance, we can have chicken salad, lobster salad, or salmon salad, &c. Now with salad of this description no sauce can approach, either in appearance or flavour, the Mayonnaise sauce. As I have already given full instructions as to the best method of preparing this sauce, in an article entitled “How to make Dishes look Nice,” I will briefly remind you that the one great secret in getting the sauce thick is to drop the oil on the yolk of egg very slowly, drop by drop at starting, and also not to put the vinegar in the

basin with the yolk at the commencement, as is often erroneously taught. By dropping the oil one drop at a time, and by patiently beating up the yolk of egg, the sauce will gradually assume the form of custard, and by adding more oil and continuing the beating, can be made as firm as butter. A little salt and white pepper, and French white wine vinegar, can then be carefully added; but it will be often found best to defer adding the pepper, salt, and vinegar till the salad is all mixed up together.

As Mayonnaise is, when properly made, a firm sauce, it is found to be particularly useful in masking over salads, thereby rendering them very ornamental dishes. For instance, suppose you have a few slices of smoked salmon—and smoked salmon, lettuce (especially small French ones), and Mayonnaise sauce make one of the nicest salads that can be got—the following is the best method of preparing a really ornamental dish:—Pile the lettuce up in the centre of the dish as high as possible, and so arrange it that the outer leaves are smooth and uniform; cover these leaves entirely with the sauce, using if possible a silver knife, or ivory paper-knife, for the purpose; place

the slices of salmon neatly round the base of the salad, which ought in appearance to resemble a mould of solid custard. Ornament the sauce by dropping on little pieces of finely-chopped parsley, and sticking in a few dried capers, and stick a little sprig of bright green parsley on the top; a few olives and anchovies are a great improvement. A dish of this description makes a very pretty addition either to the supper-table or at lunch. I need scarcely add that hard-boiled eggs cut up form a capital garnish to almost every kind of salad. The eggs to taste nice should be new-laid. They should be placed in a saucepan in cold water, and allowed to remain in a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes after the water boils; they should then be taken out and placed in cold water, and had better not be peeled and cut up till within, say, half-an-hour of the salad being eaten, as hard-boiled egg is apt to change its colour if exposed to the air too long. When a silver dish is used the egg will discolour it very much, so bear in mind to clean it as soon as possible. Mayonnaise sauce will keep two or even more days, if kept in a very cool place.

A. G. PAYNE.

### THE HARVEST MOON.

At eventide, when the moon is full,  
And, down in the west below,  
The sun has set in the harvest time,  
While heaven is all a-glow;  
When the air is filled with the scent of flowers,  
And coo of the soft-voiced dove,  
How pleasant to sit in the ghostly light,  
And dream of youth and love,  
While sweet and clear peal the evening bells,  
Rising and falling in chiming swells!

Sweet harvest moon! how soft and fair  
The earth smiles in thy light;  
How pleasant to stray in the dewy fields,  
'Neath the harvest moon at night!  
The sun may shine with his golden beams  
In autumn and summer and spring,  
But give me the light of the harvest moon,  
When the bells at evening ring,  
When sweet and clear peal the evening bells,  
Rising and falling in chiming swells.

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### A PEEP AT THE JELLY-FISH.

BY PROFESSOR ANDREW WILSON, PH.D., EDINBURGH.



BEROE PILEUS.

PROBABLY there are no objects, either in nature or in art, which more perfectly represent the refinement of delicacy and beauty of form, than the graceful beings which swim in such numbers through the calm summer seas, and which are known as "Jelly-fishes" or *Medusa*. The body in each of these organisms consists of a clear jelly-like bell or disc, which to the eye of the observer appears to be traversed by small canals; whilst around the margin or rim of the bell we may note the presence of tentacles, or feelers, of various lengths, as well as of other organs to be presently noted. The exceeding delicacy of these

creatures may best be tested by attempting to lift one of them from the water in which it swims so gracefully by expanding and contracting its bell-shaped body. The fingers utterly fail to grasp the organism—so slim and soft are the tissues of its body; and, indeed, the attempt to lift a jelly-fish appropriately illustrates how near akin the substance and the shadow of some things may be. Such a being, looking so beautiful and elegant in all its lightness and azure hues in its native depths, literally defies all attempts to raise it by the hand from the water, to which, in the instability of its body-substance, it seems so near akin. And the preservation of these organisms in our museums still constitutes a problem for naturalists to solve; since the delicacy of their organisation utterly defeats the efforts of the zoologists in the attempt to insure their stability as specimens. Thus it is in their natural *habitat* alone, or