

further orders; and Arthur went up to the excited professor with great deference.

"Though I have not the honour of your acquaintance, sir, I should feel it a privilege to be permitted to shake hands with a *savant* of such European renown. Don't think that we are all dolts and blockheads in Copington. I am sure that the treatment you have experienced to-night will be a cause of everlasting regret to the townspeople. I am a neighbour of yours, Arthur Hamilton, and I have the pleasure of knowing your daughter, who is my sister's friend."

And Superintendent Edwards sneaked downstairs and out of the house with his men, feeling about an inch high.

Though an attempt was made to hush the matter up, it nevertheless leaked out that it was Miss Rivers who instigated the searching of The Elms by the police. The malicious old maid found things made so unpleasant for her by "our set" that she had to leave the town, and everybody breathed more freely in her absence.

Copington now went to the opposite extreme, and could not make enough of the shy, retiring old man whom it had once believed capable of felony. Lions were

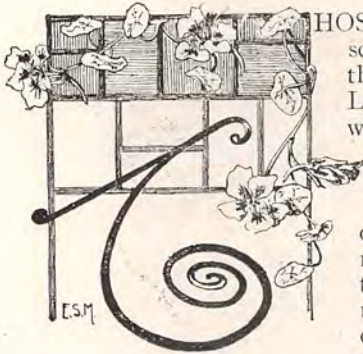
scarce in that neighbourhood, and they made the most of this one.

The police made another and successful attempt to trace the false coins, which was easy enough when once they discovered that many had been received at Armstrong's. The widow confessed, on being questioned, that one day when she was in the neighbourhood of Birmingham she found thrown aside in a field a canvas bag, containing about a hundred shillings, half-crowns, and florins. She was too elated with her find to consider the legality of keeping it, or to speculate how the money came there. The coins had been really thrown away by a notorious "smasher," who was being chased by the police. Mrs. Armstrong put the coins, a few at a time, into her till whenever change ran short, having no suspicion of their genuineness.

"Our set" had many a good laugh at the ludicrous mistake made by Superintendent Edwards; and two young people, at least, had cause to bless it. For, months afterwards, when Dora was the happy wife of Arthur Hamilton, she confessed that she had never known she cared for him until that night when the police invaded The Elms, and he strode in, full of indignation, to champion their cause.



## AN OLD ROMAN'S BILL OF FARE.



HOSE who in their school-days used the Public School Latin Primer, will probably remember an example of something or other—we cannot at this distance of time remember precisely what it was—which ran,

"De gustibus non est disputandum." It was Horace who was originally responsible for this remark, and though we do not know what it was that prompted him to make it, it appears to us highly probable, when we come to consider the dishes which they used to indulge in in those days, that he referred to the somewhat peculiar tastes of the Roman nobility in matters of eating and drinking.

Tastes in those days differed very materially

from ours, and though our modern French neighbours imitate the ancients to some extent in the mixing of their *plats*, their dishes are simplicity itself when compared with the marvels of complicated ingenuity which used to grace the tables of patricians in the palmy days of the Roman Empire.

The descendants of Augustus certainly liked things rich; and the more varied the component parts of their dishes were, the more they enjoyed them. Roast beef or roast turkeys were ultra-plebeian dishes, and a well-bred noble would have turned up his aristocratic Cæsarean nose at any course had it been much less complicated than a *salacacaby*.

The above-named dish was invented by one Apicius Coelius, a patrician who flourished in the time of Tiberius. This gentleman was the Beeton of the Latins; he wrote a book, which happily is still extant, called "De Re Coquinaria," wherein he treated the art of cooking from a scientific point of view, and expatiated upon the proper methods of

preparing all the fashionable nastinesses of the period.

As a sample of the recipes contained in this work, that for concocting a *salacacaby* might be mentioned here; and it will be seen that we have not exaggerated when we accuse the ancients of mixing. "Bruise in a mortar parsley seed, dried mint, dried pennyroyal, ginger, coriander, stoned raisins, mustard seed, and a few boned anchovies. Add salt, oil, wine, honey (the Roman equivalent for sugar), pepper, and vinegar, and stir up well. Then mix in a *cacabulum*, with three crusts of Pycintine bread, the flesh of two pullets, four goats' kidneys, and one goat's tongue, after which throw in vestine cheese, filberts, pine kernels, minced onions, cucumbers and garlic. Set aside in a warm place for three days, then pour a soup over it, garnish with snow, and serve up."

Apicius was a great glutton, too, for, if we are to take Seneca as an authority, he spent in the space of two years, the equivalent of nearly eight hundred thousand pounds of our money upon his food alone. Then he suddenly took it into his head to look over the state of his affairs, and, finding that he had only the equivalent of about a hundred thousand pounds sterling left, he came to the conclusion that such a pittance was not enough to live upon, and so ended his days by poison.

Another dish which seems to have owed its origin to him was a *Tetrapharmacon*. So far as we can gather, it consisted of four necessary ingredients—they were, a high peacock, a freshly-killed pheasant, the hock and udder of a wild sow, and a bread pudding which was baked over the whole. But this was not all by any means; these merely constituted the base of the dish, so to speak, for they used to throw in all manner of little trifles, such as nightingales, colipha (our collops), fragments of fat pork, etc., all of which tended to give the dish a somewhat rich and varied flavour, which in all probability would not recommend it to the modern-day stomach.

Ragoûts made from peacocks' brains, nightingales', swallows', or parrots' tongues (if the parrots were able to speak the value of the dish was quadrupled), were by no means uncommon *entrées* at the tables of the Emperors, whilst buzzards, ostriches, and phenicoptrices (presumed to be the ptarmigan from Norway) frequently adorned those of the wealthy citizens. Anything, in fact, that was uncommon, hard to obtain, or very expensive, was sure to find a place of honour upon the festive boards of the Court. Indeed, Suetonius says of Nero that, upon one occasion, he had a pheasant served up, over the surface of which was spread a quantity of diamond dust!

If a French cook of the present decade were asked his opinion upon the proper method of preparing venison for consumption, he would probably say that, unless the meat had been hung for at least ten days, it would not be fit to eat. Apicius Coelius, however, differs from this opinion. His method was to have the venison stewed with mustard, honey, wine, oil, pepper, salt, damsons, and oranges as soon after it was killed as could be—whilst the meat was still warm if possible. It had to stew for four hours at least, and whilst it was undergoing this ordeal, the cook had directions to take parsley-seed, juniper bark, juniper berries, garlic, rue, mint, honey, sweet chestnuts, pennyroyal, and one or two other herbs for which our dictionary does not give the English, chop them up very fine, thin the mixture down with hot olive oil, and serve it up as a sauce to the venison when it had stewed the appointed four hours.

As we are upon the subject of sauces, it might not be out of place to mention two kinds: one *Garum*, their famous green-black sauce which the Romans used to eat with fish, and the other a compound which they were in the habit of using as a flavouring to their fruit. Manufacturers of sauces might do well to study these two recipes, for it is said that history repeats itself, and so, perhaps, they might come into fashion again.

*Garum* was made as follows:—Fish of the proper kind—generally mackerel—were first selected, their entrails taken out and steeped in vinegar for several days. When these were properly pickled, they were taken out of the vinegar and dried. Then they were pulverised with frumenty, pepper, and a variety of other herbs, such as dandelion root, mint, thyme, etc., after which the resulting blackish powder was ground to a thick syrup with honey, put into jars for some weeks to ferment, and, when needed for the table, mixed with Falernian wine to a proper consistency.

Perhaps this classical concoction may not appeal very forcibly to the *gourmets* who frequent the fashionable restaurants. The Roman fruit sauce, however, will probably prove even less acceptable, and make them exclaim, like Peregrine Pickle, when he and his friends were trying a Roman course, "What beasts these Romans must have been!" We quite agree with him and them, for the following is an almost literal translation of the text of the recipe:—Take pepper, powdered rue, powdered dandelion root, hard-boiled eggs, and mix them well in a mortar. When thoroughly integrated, stir up with hot sour milk and pour over the fruit!

Of course, amongst the patricians under the

Empire, a particular dish was frequently fashionable for the time being, just as a particular style of bonnet would be fashionable for a time amongst the ladies of the present day. At one time it was the Tetrapharmacoon, at another the Salacacaby. Hares had their day in Nero's reign, and he made any slave who brought him one a free man. Then came the dormouse craze, and, as a natural consequence, dormice went up to a large premium. They had dormouse soup, dormouse ragoût, dormouse sausage and fritters—in fact, dormouse done in every conceivable way. A gentleman of Galba's time, who rejoiced in the simple name of Lucius Bambonselvergius, so our friend Apicius informs us, wrote a long and learned treatise upon dormice, their habits, and the best way of fattening them for the table. Unfortunately for the cooks of the modern school, however, this valuable book is lost, but it is some consolation to know that Petronius has touched upon the subject. He tells us that dormice get fat by sleeping, and he also gives us several recipes for preparing these little creatures for consumption. Three or four pages of his book are devoted to dormouse sausages, and he then tells us that these should be eaten with a sauce made of poppy seeds or honey. Personally, we should think that morphine and chloroform sauce would be equally good, whilst the effect would be about the same. Petronius, however, did not know of these drugs, or he might possibly have introduced them in the *Materia Coquinaria* of the time.

Julius Cæsar had a great *penchant* for that whitebait of the Romans, the lamprey. We find it recorded of him by Suetonius that, upon the occasion of his first triumph, he bought six thousand pounds of them; but our historian does not say whether he ate them all himself or not, nor even whether he paid for them.

Of the kitchen utensils which were used in those times we know very little; but one fact which has come down to us through the works of Apicius seems worthy of notice. It is that tinned saucepans were used in his

time by the moderately rich citizens, and silver ones by the very wealthy nobles.

Cleanliness in matters of cooking seems to have been a kind of *sine quâ non* to Apicius, and he says that on no account should such a thing as a steel or iron knife be used in a kitchen, for it gives a taste to whatsoever it touches. As a substitute, therefore, in patrician kitchens, a silver knife was always used for cutting up meat, and one made of amber for preparing the vegetables.

Though time and climatic influence have changed the tastes of man, especially of the Englishman, almost past recognition, we have still a few dishes amongst us which owe their origin purely to the Romans. Brawn, for instance, is made now in exactly the same way as was set forth in "*De Re Coquinaria*" eighteen hundred and odd years ago. Asparagus with egg sauce graced the tables of Pliny, Petronius, and Mæcenas, though the asparagus was much larger than ours. Pliny the Younger says in one of his epistles that of the large ones three, or even less, went to the pound, which is equivalent to saying that each stick weighed four ounces avoirdupois.

Apple dumplings seem to have been first introduced during the reign of Augustus by one Galladus, of whom nothing further is known; but Apicius devotes five pages to their preparation, and so they must have been fashionable in his time.

Apicius also invented sausages stuffed into skins, and one of the particular kinds of sausage which he tells us how to make may still be met with in England under the name of black pudding.

Twenty years ago cow-heel and calves'-foot jelly were quite common dishes in this country, as eighteen centuries ago they were common dishes in Rome. They were prepared in exactly the same way, and in all probability tasted the same. They fell into disuse, and became unknown in Rome, in the same way as half a century or so hence they will probably have become unknown to Englishmen, and will only exist in the memories of the "oldest inhabitants" as an unstable dream of the past.

HANS J. S. CASSAL.

