

The Last Course.
NUTS.



NATURE certainly favors the fashion of numerous entrées, and, like one of the *Elite*, she brings on the nuts after the fruit. The last peach with its perfect bloom has dropped, the plums are gone, and even the grapes, crown of the fruit harvest, have quite disappeared; and our eyes, so long bewildered with the lovely variety of crimson, gold, purple, orange, rose, and scarlet, are now at liberty to observe the more subtle, but no less lovely, tints of russet, olive, and Vandyke browns, which show themselves in the nut harvest, with added graces of form and gleam and gloss of polished surfaces.

The last-mentioned charm often adds the gratification of another sense—that of touch, for who can pass the hand over a heap of polished chestnuts, or rounded filberts, without receiving a special pleasure from the contact.

We have placed at the head of this article the Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*) and the shell-

bark Hickory nut, showing the mode of growth of the leaves, and of the Butternuts. We chose these two because they are perhaps upon the whole the most generally used, and for more numerous purposes. But, to make this good, we must include with the butternut the Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*), which is, indeed, only a member of the same genus, the two so closely resembling each other, that the butternut is often vulgarly called "Long Walnut." The fruit of the two is also very similar, but that of *Cinerea* is richer in oil—a fact from which it takes its name. The nut is inclosed in a thin, green envelope, or husk, very tough, and of a dark olive brown when ripe, is ridged, deeply furrowed, and sharply cut. When opened by its natural sutures, it presents the appearance of an oval walnut of rather deeper and richer color. This richness of color, owing probably to the presence of so much oily matter, extends to the wood, and makes it valuable in cabinet work of an ornamental kind, it being often used for trimmings upon darker and less brilliant kinds, especially in connection with black walnut, with which it forms a striking contrast. Its oily nature renders the nut particularly liable to become rancid, and they should therefore be kept in a cool place, in order to preserve their rich flavor. This very wealth of flavor is, however, found objectionable by some who prefer something less tangible, and more delicate.

The whole tree may be said to be useful to man, for the acrid leaves have an irritating property, and are sometimes used as a substitute for Spanish flies. The shell of the nut makes a rich and durable dye, while the kernel serves the housewife and the confectioner in adding flavor to cake and many kinds of

confectionery, though for these last the walnut is often preferred. One of the most excellent uses to which the nut can be put is that of pickling, as they not only make a delicious pickle, one of the finest in the world, but keep better than any other, without exception, being much better the second year than the first. If kept much longer than that, they entirely dissolve in the vinegar, and form that most excellent of sauces, walnut catsup. Many persons consider this greatly improved by the addition of the best olive oil in such proportion as to be perfectly assimilated. The oil should be poured upon the nuts as soon as they have begun to pickle well. All that is required to pickle them is to place them in a stone jar and pour over them sufficient boiling vinegar, well spiced, and cover them tightly; in three or four weeks they will be found ready to use, though not by any means so good as they become in as many months.

The most important point about obtaining the nuts for pickling is that they be gathered before the woody portion of the nut has become hard. About the fourth of July they are as mature as it is safe to use them. The test is to run a darning needle through them. If it does not pass through easily, they are too old. At that time the outside will be found quite sticky with a resinous substance, which holds the fine aroma which distinguishes this nut and the walnut alike, and forms so large a part of the odor of woods which give us such pleasant greeting when we draw near their skirts.

What I have said applies in most particulars to the black walnut, which is too well known to need description here. Both are American trees, and found in all parts of the United States, but far more abundantly west of the Alleghany Mountains, where the black walnut is the principal lumber tree, and largely used for cabinet work, which are sent to the Eastern cities at lower rates than it can be made there.

The hickory and chestnut are dear to youthful memory, and redolent of sweet associations of nutting days, when we watched for the first frost as the signal of the commencement of delightful excursions after nuts, in the

still golden days of an American autumn, when the crisp, clear air exhilarates like wine. The hickory nuts were generally the favorites, because they are defended by no burr bristling like a porcupine, and no husk like the walnut, staining pink fingers with unsightly blotches of dark brown. The hickory genus, *Carya*, is the common-name of several species, of which the shell or shag-bark, *C. alba*, is the most valuable. It is this that is represented in the plate. The shape of the nut is different from that of the other species, such as the pig nut, which is worthless, and is rather oval than round, and the Western shell-bark, *C. sulcata*, which is twice the size of the *Alba*, and an excellent nut, though not so well flavored.

The pecan nut is a cousin of the hickory, and is very popular in the South-west, where it grows abundantly; and North Carolina boasts a sort which is something of a curiosity, being confined to a limited area, and closely resembling the nutmeg. But for our dessert, the shell-bark has no rival, it being no slight accommodation that the shell is thin and very brittle, and therefore easily cracked. The principal use of these nuts in cookery is as an addition to fruit cake, which they greatly improve, and for making a kind of macaroon, for which purpose they are scalded and pounded like almonds.

The hickory tree is one of the most valuable we have, as is well-known, for timber and fuel, and as a forest tree it has few rivals in beauty and stateliness.

The compound leaves are exquisitely marked, and in the autumn assume a rich brown, which harmonizes well with the brighter colors of October.

Only two other American nuts make their appearance at our dessert, the hazel (genus *Corylus*) and the chestnut (genus *Fagus*). Both are common and well known. The glossy chestnut imprisoned in its stinging envelope is a prize well worth some risk of sharp thorny prickles.

Its glossy coat gives name to one of the richest and most delicately blended colors in the world. It seems to be a threefold chord of color, blended of red, gold, and brown; and the crisp but leathery pericarp has an exquisite gloss when ripe that is not surpassed by any other nut. It is seen in its perfection in the unedible horse-chestnut, but is conspicuous also in all fine specimens.

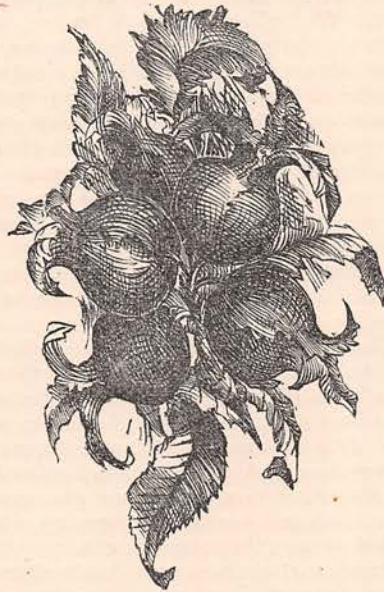
The chestnut has been used for food from ancient times, and the chestnuts of Italy, are justly celebrated for their superior qualities. At one time they furnished a large part of the sustenance of the poorer classes, and were highly esteemed by all. Those of our own country are excellent, and are not so plentifully distributed as to at all impair their value, as they always bring a good price in the market. Every one fancies having a store of chestnuts for Christmas, when the roasting becomes an attractive pastime seasoned with sufficient flavor of superstition to make it piquant.

We believe the only way in which they are cooked is by boiling and roasting, though it is matter of wonder that it is not more used as a confection.

All the nuts that we have spoken of have been the fruit of stately trees which are found

among the monarchs of the wood, but the last is in this instance also the least, the "little one." the hazel, growing only upon a low bush which seldom aspires to the height of a tree, but is found rather growing thickly over large spaces in the form of a low coppice, which generally excludes all other growths, and is the favorite haunt of rabbits, and an oft chosen nesting-place for unambitious birds, who are not shy of men and animals, and rather enjoy a neighborly call from their four-footed friends, the sheep, who browse upon the leaves of the hazel, and sometimes leave a lock of wool behind for them. There is no prettier green thing than hazel clusters in July, when they have become perfect in form, and are yet freshly colored. The shape of the nut's leafy husk is fit for an Etruscan vase, and the shading exquisite. The pretty brown nuts cannot be seen until Jack Frost has quite spoiled the vase and made it look rusty and ragged. When this change has come, the hazel copse becomes the resort of Master Bun, who frisks up and down the slender branches in an ecstasy of glee, and knows very well how to dispose of the shining treasure offered as his easy prey.

The hazel is abundant in all the Middle and South-western States. On the rolling prairies of Missouri it makes pleasant islands of ver-



ture raised above the long sweeps of grass, and showing green when all around is brown. The botanical name comes from a Greek word signifying helmet, referring to the shape, and the English, hazel, from the Saxon *hasel*, a bonnet, implying the same idea—a pretty coincidence, which may make our nuts more interesting. The American hazel is of the same genus as the European filbert (*C. avellana*), and perhaps, if it was carefully cultivated as it is in England and on the Continent, might rival it in excellence; but at present it is far inferior. By careful training the filbert tree sometimes attains thirty feet in height, while ours seldom exceeds six, yet naturally it is, like ours, only a bush. It is not so classic in shape, but of delicious flavor. The finest kind is the Cosford, a very long nut with a very thin shell.

From Barcelona alone 140,000 bushels have been exported in a single year.

There are several varieties. One is Asiatic, and is a large tree; and another, which has beautiful purple foliage, is cultivated as an ornamental shrub. We have no native varieties which are worthy of notice. The hazel is associated with many old superstitions, one of them being the discovery of water by use of a hazel switch, and the wood has always been favored by witches and fairies.

We are afraid that our patriotism will not be strong enough to enable us to prefer a dish of hazel nuts to one of filberts, but nevertheless we may find them an excellent substitute, and cannot but hope that they may be improved so as to make them a worthy addition to our dessert.

Clocks, Past and Present.

BY CADMUS.

DOUTLESS one of the first problems the solving of which engaged the attention of primitive man was the measurement of time. Apart from the divisions of day and night which were ready to his hand, there must soon have arisen a want for a still further subdivision of the passing hours. To the shepherd or the tiller of the soil this purpose was served by the shadows of the rocks and trees cast by the ascending or declining sun; and for greater periods the moon, as with all savages even in our day, marked the months and years. Copied after shadows on the earth was the first instrument for reckoning time made by human hands—the sun-dial. This was an invention of the Babylonians, and the first one mentioned was that of King Ahaz, who lived seven hundred years before Christ. Four hundred years later the Romans still measured time by the motions of the heavenly bodies; but about 300, B.C., a sun-dial constructed according to scientific rules was set up in one of the public squares of Rome. But the most perfect sun-dial was useless in cloudy weather or in the hours of the night, and so human ingenuity produced successively the hour-glass and the clepsydra or water-clock. The first is familiar to all, and has not varied materially in form in two thousand years, but the forms of the latter were as varied as are the timepieces of to-day. One was constructed by Vitruvius, an Alexandrian, which consisted of a perforated vessel, the interior of which had the hours marked upon it, and these were indicated by a little boat which pointed to them as the water fell. So far as we can learn, however, the ancients used only the most primitive forms of clepsydra, and not until A. D. 800 have we record of a complicated water-clock. About that time Charlemagne received one as a present from the caliph of Bagdad, which struck the hours by means of mechanism which threw up the requisite number of metallic balls which fell upon a cymbal, and at the