

incomprehensible energy. They endeavored by signs to tell you that they had come for kind purposes, but all in vain, and they were finally forced to conclude that you were out of your mind, when, fortunately, you called me to the rescue. Thus much my uncle has told me in sign-language, which I understand quite well. And now, my dear child, why did you treat these estimable people with such inhospitality?"

"I then gave Mr. Archer my version of the story. I told of my earnest appeal to the figures to speak, *if human*, and of my forced conclusion that they could be no other than the ghosts of the murdered old couple said to haunt the house in time of sorrow and death. Of the fact of my friend having deaf-and-dumb relatives who were Quakers I had never been made aware, consequently I thought my conduct under the circumstances excusable. Mr. Archer agreed with me, and promised to explain to his aunt and uncle the motives that impelled my extraordinary conduct, which he did most faithfully, and the old couple very generously forgave me. But from frequent shakes of the head and pitying glances that they bestowed upon me, I feel confident they never fully believed in my sanity. They returned shortly afterward to their suburban home, and I never heard any thing further about them.

"There is little more to tell. The house was sold at a great sacrifice, and, I believe, was torn down and rebuilt by its present owner. Old Dinah received a very liberal reward for her faithful services, and went back to the village, where she doubtless still tells to open-mouthed listeners about 'the ghosts the young *leddy* saw that awful stormy night in the haunted house;' for that I *did* see them was her firm and unshaken conviction.

"My young *leddy* wouldn't ha' tumbled down a-faintin' all in a heap if she hadn't ha' seen *real sperrits*, I'm sure,' she reiterated, and I could not but feel grateful for her confidence in me.

"Mr. Archer soon went abroad to live, to seek, amidst foreign scenes, distraction for his grief. Apparently he found it, for I heard some two years ago that he had wooed and won a blooming widow for his bride. There's nothing further to say, except that from that memorable night my hair assumed its present sober hue, and I have never since believed in ghosts—on principle.

"And now my story's done," said Miss Leniton, rising. "It has been a very long one, and I thank you all for your kind attention. Remember, Mr. Britton," she added, laughing, "on the next rainy evening I shall look for you to do your share in the entertainment. Do you know it is really very late? and so I will wish you all good-

night, and pleasant dreams, undisturbed by phantom figures in any shape."

Miss Leniton left us, amidst loud expressions of thanks, and then our comments fell freely and fast.

"So it wasn't a ghost story after all; I'm quite disappointed," said Miss Wister.

"But she told it uncommonly well, and really I became quite excited. How plucky she was!" commented Harry Britton, enthusiastically.

"It was as much as I could do to keep back a loud scream when the figures first appeared, I was so wrought up. It's a wonder she didn't faint then," said Mrs. Gray.

"It would have saved her considerable trouble if she had," responded Miss Wister, rather maliciously.

"I know I sha'n't sleep a wink to-night," said pretty Grace Arcott, in an aggrieved tone, "and I'm really afraid to go up stairs alone. I don't pretend to have strong nerves."

"Perhaps," chimed in the clear voice of Bernard Liston, who had not hitherto spoken, "you will not all of you entirely overlook the complete absence of vanity shown by Miss Leniton. She tells her story all as a matter of course, yet it seems to me that few young girls would dare, as she did, to brave contagion, and spend voluntarily such a terribly lonely vigil, and then speak of it as if it were merely an ordinary everyday sort of thing to do. Miss Leniton is a *trump*, I think, and I admire her immensely."

Mr. Liston was always noted for his straightforwardness, and this open and emphatic statement of his sentiments was most actively and indubitably re-enforced during the next few days. There was no "faint heart" about *him*, and I think that, from present appearances, ere the summer is over, the "fair lady" may be won, and Miss Leniton may be induced to become Mrs. Liston, braving the old adage about "changing the name, and not the letter." And may we all be invited to dance at the wedding!

THE ART OF DINING.

WE are by no means the first to acknowledge the weighty claim which the above subject has made good upon antiquity and civilization. Even in these later days Owen Meredith has sung melodiously in praise of a dinner, while from out of the musty past of old English proverbs there issues a voice warning us that the heart of man lies in the stomach! Be this as it may, it is true that a kind intent is oftentimes warped, a generous instinct repressed, a merry speech transformed into a biting criticism, by that awful American nightmare, dyspepsia. It is a fact as well known as it is lamentable that the "great American

nation" does not, as a rule, dine well. To cleverly combine the various elements of a repast so that each successive one shall play upon and harmoniously efface the last, is an art with which we are only just becoming acquainted.

It were curious, even interesting, for a student of his kind to note the effect of climate upon the characteristics of nations in this respect. In Russia, Sweden, and Norway, where prolonged and biting winters necessitate action and large supplies of animal heat, meals are frequent and of great duration. Five hearty repasts per diem, among which dinner is the chief one, are the common allowance in those Northern localities. This principal meal is heralded by a cold collation partaken of *en route* for the dining-room. In a small anteroom the guests pause before a small table spread with articles creative of appetite and thirst, such as red herring, sardines, caviare, cheeses, sharp pickles, and arrack, the native whisky. Thus stimulated, a much larger repast is made than would otherwise be possible. When this custom, however, is introduced regardless of climatic requirements, it is prone to conduce to sluggishness, as in some parts of Germany. Again, the glowing mother earth and ardent skies of Italy furnish her children with their best preservatives against their combined intensity of heat. Fruits and salads, succulent, refreshing, cooling, form the national breakfast and the chief staple of other meals, being freely partaken of with results which might be much less favorable under a cooler sky. Nature, amidst these wondrous adaptations, is not neglectful of the needs of animals, as may be briefly instanced by a Norwegian custom. Within the arctic circle, where the winters are a long twilight, and the high lands so barren that people subsist upon bread made from the tender bark of the birch-tree, the cattle are fed upon dried fish caught in those storied fords, whose waters, the Fortunatus purse of Norway, stretch far inland by dusky forests of pine.

We would not be understood as intending to dilate upon the pleasures of the table. Our plea is this: all things may be well or illy done; we may dine badly, just as we may act or work badly, and the three are closely connected. Thus, without treading upon the debatable land of epicureanism, or falling into that Slough of Despond ycleped gluttony, we desire to set down in order a few well-established rules for the inspection of American housekeepers. We only delay in order to add that the appetite may be taught to crave improper food, just as it is susceptible of being trained to do its proper share toward sustaining the physical well-being of man, and even affording him gratification. The purveyors of our rising generation should bear this well in

mind. Much more might be said upon this branch of the subject, but it lies beyond the scope of the present article, whose proposed limitations are the general rules of dinner-giving.

These rules take as a basis what is really the cosmopolitan dinner, known as the *dîner à la Russe*, in which the courses are handed in rotation to each guest without having been placed upon the table. The quick-witted Russians are the greatest appreciators of the sway which imagination has over appetite, both becoming speedily cloyed by the sight of dishes heaped with food covering the table. A tastefully adorned board pleases the eye, and such decorations may be carried to a great extent. Fruit and flowers are always obtainable; fine linen, glass, and china are almost necessities. In European families, whose china is an heirloom, graceful figures are placed along the table, sometimes useful (as when holding baskets with salt, or violets if you will), sometimes merely ornamental. Even huge vases worth their weight in silver are so placed, or flowers growing in Sèvres pots, or strawberry plants each with three or four berries, one plant before each guest, as fashion dictated for two winters at a certain European court. The chandelier may be hung with flowers, but wax-candles in china or silver candelabra give a richer look to the table, and a softer light as well. A round table is also more graceful, and tends to make the conversation more general, and hence more lively. To the personal supervision of the hostess the guests are most frequently indebted for such graceful suggestions of art as are but too rarely seen in this country upon similar occasions. This is chiefly to be deplored, because such artistic treasures challenge attention, and lead the conversation to a higher and more interesting ground than the ordinary chit-chat of the day.

The laws governing the repast itself are unalterable as those of the Medes and Persians. In countries where oysters abound they may be served before the soup, upon the half shell, with a slice of lemon cut lengthwise, to the number of four (small) upon each plate. These, and small crabs in summer, are alone admissible *before* the arrival of soup, and form the only course placed upon the table, being there when dinner is announced.

Soup.—In view of the many heavy courses to follow, the most elegant soup is a clear *bouillon*, although richer ones are seen. The better rule appears to be that the repast, beginning with an appetizer, should increase in richness to a certain point, and thence decline. Such a soup as mock-turtle, for instance, appears too rich between oysters and fish: the appetite should be gradually tempted.

Fish follows next, and with it the invariable boiled potato, mealy and white, "*au naturel*." With salmon, boiled rice is frequently used, served as a garnishing. Care should be taken to see that the fish chosen is in season.

Entrées to the number of one or two are *de rigueur* after fish. In serving, the courses should be handed from alternate ends of the table each time. A dinner may be made long or short by adding or retrenching *entrées* and *relevés*, as the lighter dishes are called. The soup and fish should never be omitted. A roast with vegetables follows the first *entrée*, and after a second the game course is in order. In this connection it is a mooted point whether to serve currant jelly, which harmonizes with the game flavor, or dressed salad, which accentuates, just as many hesitate between contrast and harmony in dress. Either is in good taste; both may be offered; only one should be accepted. The vegetables with game should be very delicate ones, so as not to predominate what is considered the finest course. Boiled celery with cream sauce, rice croquettes, and mushrooms are all suitable, the first being a favorite dish in France. The substantial part of the dinner may end here with one more *entrée*, which at the best tables is frequently some vegetable of decided flavor. Among those most used in this way are cauliflower, artichoke, green pease, *macaroni au gratin* (baked with cheese). In this connection it is well to state that olives may be passed about between the courses, their peculiar flavor renewing the delicacy of the palate, and throwing all others into strong relief.

In the cosmopolitan dinner, cheese is the line of demarkation between dinner and dessert, being served after the table has been brushed in preparation for the latter. Black German bread is suitable with strong cheeses, white with more delicate ones, but gentlemen prefer hard crackers. One of these should also be placed at each plate, with the orthodox roll, when the table is set.

Dessert usually opens with some hot dish, called in France *plat doux*, or, if pastry, *plat solant*. Ices, jellies, meringues, etc., etc., follow, fruit and nuts being last. When the ladies retire at this juncture, the gentlemen being left to their wines, coffee is served to the former in the parlor, and to the latter with brandy and *liqueurs* at the table. This coffee should be without cream. Such is the English innovation (approved in America) upon the cosmopolitan dinner. In other countries all the guests leave the table together, coffee, etc., being served in the drawing-room, after which gentlemen who wish to smoke retire to the library or conservatory. This is deemed much better taste, and is so, according to the French and the Swedes, most polite of nations. Occa-

sionally we see the coffee served at the table, but this should be confined to informal occasions.

We now enter upon the subject of wines, certain of which are assigned to each guest with precision. Thus:

With oysters, Sauterne.
 " soup, Madeira or sherry.
 " fish, Hock.
 " entrée, Claret.

It is customary, among those whose means are equal to their taste, to have two clarets—a good one for the first *entrée*, and a smaller supply of very fine (say, Lafitte or Clos Vougeot) to serve with game. Proceeding, therefore, upon this basis:

Roast, Champagne.
 Relevé, "
 Game, (best) Claret.

Hereafter the guests are offered their choice between the Burgundies and Champagne, until the coffee introduces *liqueurs*. With but one claret, it may be continued until the game course, when Champagne is served; or, as in England, a fine port may be passed with the roast, and continued until game and Champagne come on. Claret is the best wine in a small dinner where only one wine is to be offered, and a more liberal introduction of the excellent brands of Burgundy near the end of a dinner would meet with the approbation of connoisseurs. Tokay is a standard dessert wine in Europe; it is of Hungarian growth, and rarely met with in this country. Champagne should be cooled by being laid upon ice, but never by putting ice in the glasses, as no one desires to mix it with melted snow-water. A refined custom is that of offering Seltzer water with Champagne (napkins around both bottles), for at that stage of the dinner an increasing thirst is apt to require something cold and yet not strong. It is also preferable to see ladies weaken their Champagne. When *frappé*, this wine has been kept upon ice and salt until half frozen. Claret should be slightly warmed to remove all crudeness, either by being plunged into warm water or laid in a warm place, and should be about the temperature of a grape in the sun. We knew a gentleman, who had gained for himself the sobriquet of Lucullus, who was so particular upon this question of temperature as to carry a thermometer to test his wines. Such over-eagerness is only excusable when a host is solicitous about his guests. Sauterne should be cooled; all other wines are left to themselves. Vichy water, offered either after the game course or when the ladies have left the room, affords relief to those who may be annoyed by a light indigestion. At some tables (usually foreign) frozen punch is handed before the game course. This decided diversion renews the appetite, just as some color which has palled upon the eye recov-

ers all its brightness when one has turned for an instant to another.

The above rules are all that can well be given in the space of an article such as this. With regard to sauces, combinations, etc., where a cook has not a discriminating taste, the English edition of Mrs. Beeton and the French *Cuisinier des Cuisiniers* are the best guides to a housekeeper.

We subjoin two *menus*, which may interest and serve as examples. The first is a breakfast given by a queen dowager to the Prince and Princess of Wales. Ornaments of rare beauty in Sèvres and majolica adorned the table, and the musicians were concealed behind orange-trees in flower.

Windsor soup.	Madeira.
Fresh salmon garnished with raw oysters.	} Marcobrunner.
Roast beef.	
Belgian cabbages.	} Port.
Artichokes.	
Chickens in cream.	} Veuve Clicquot.
Mushrooms.	
Pheasants garnished with sweet-breads.	} Lafitte.
French pease.	
Harlequin ices.	} Tokay.
Cakes.	
Café noir. Liqueurs.	

The second *menu*, of a private American dinner, is selected from a mass of such for its dainty excellence, to point our moral and adorn our tale. It is dated April, 1871.

Frozen oysters.	Chevalier Montrachet.
Soup à la reine.	Château Yquem, 1864.
Salmon with lobster sauce.	“ “
Tenderloin with mushrooms. Green pease.	} Sillery, dry, 1867.
Tomatoes. Potatoes.	
English snipe, larded.	} Chambertin, 1864.
Saratoga potatoes.	
Dressed terrapin.	} Johannisberg, 1861.
Lobster salad.	
Roquefort cheese.	Port, 1825.
	Frozen coffee.
Cakes, fruit, cigars, and Chartreuse,	1864.
	Black coffee.

It will be seen at a glance that this is an original *menu*, and contrary to usual customs. Only those who possess old wines and are accurate judges of their respective flavors can combine them in unusual order with the courses, as above.

In conclusion, we would remind our housekeepers that in connection with the art of dining is another art upon which this first, as well as many others, is dependent for success. This is the art of self-forgetfulness. She who in planning her dinner has before her mental vision a high moral standard, a perception of the beautiful, a desire to please and interest her guests, she who will put on smiles which are truly cordial and wishes which are sincere to receive them as she puts on her laces and flowers, will indeed be the most desired hostess and the most perfectly accomplished lady.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

A Narrative Poem.

(LIEUTENANT SELFRIDGE'S EXPLORING EXPEDITION, CENTRAL AMERICA, 1869.)

I.

LEAVING our ships in the bay,
 We advanced (clearing our pathway day by day)
 Far through the forests and jungles of Central America.

II.

In time ('twas toward night-fall),
 After a long day's journey,
 A day of toil and danger, of hope and forlorn hopes,
 We reached a savannah,
 And in the distance saw signs of life and of man.

III.

Our coming stirred a group of Indians,
 The ancient red native, wild and naked,
 Who never yet had seen the white man's face,
 Who knew not of his ways or power:
 The white man, whose mysterious apparition
 Raised wonder, if not fear.

IV.

The group advanced to meet us:
 With it one who looked the chief, proud though a savage.