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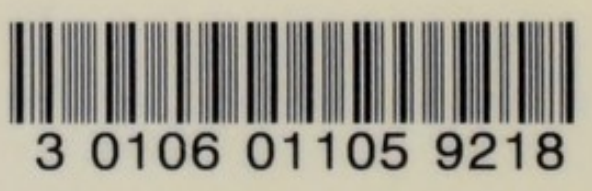

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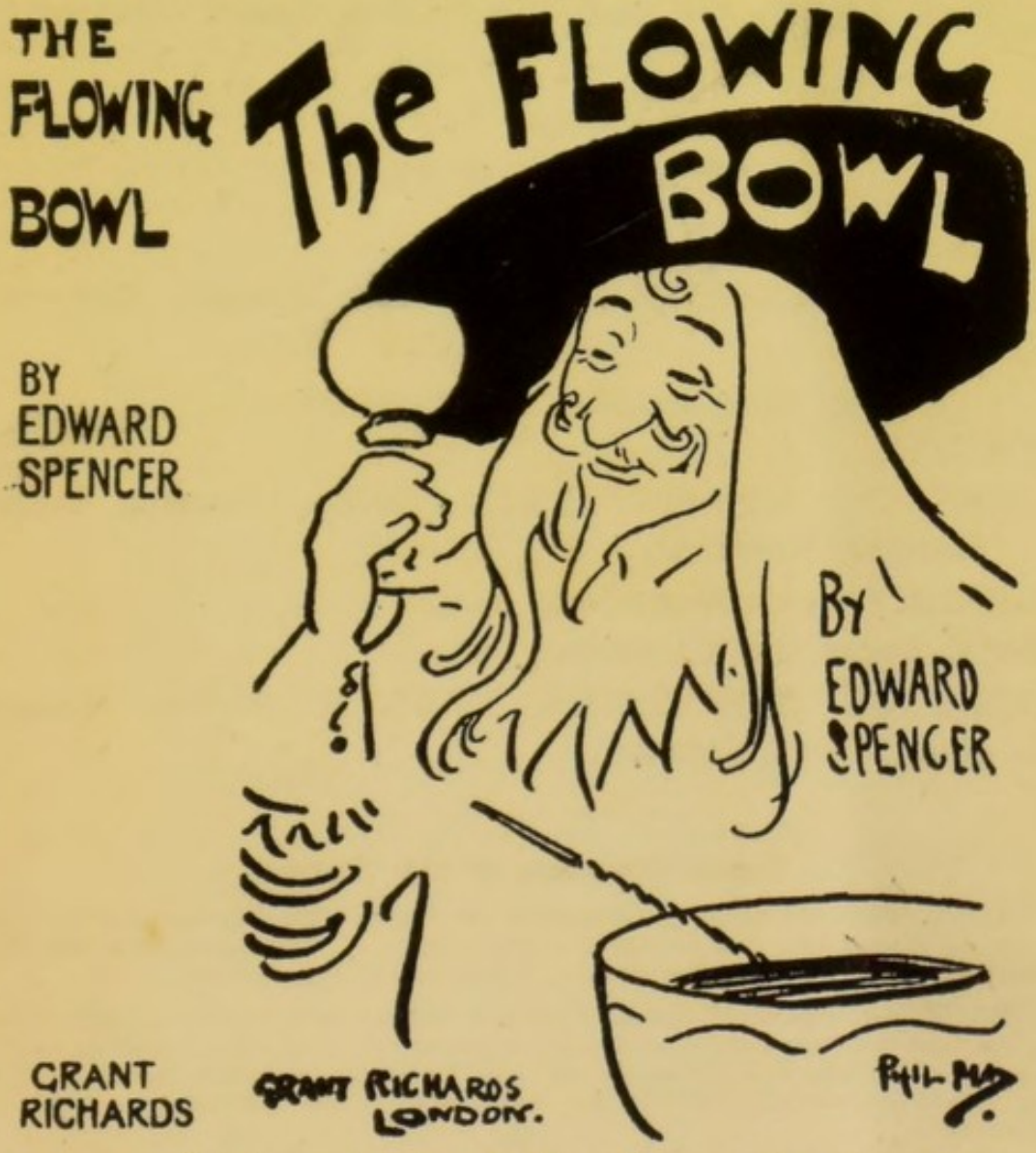

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DINNERS AND DINERS

DINNERS AND DINERS

WHERE AND HOW TO DINE IN LONDON

BY

LIEUT.-COL. NEWNHAM-DAVIS

London

GRANT RICHARDS

9 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

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To all the gentlemen, the managers of the various restaurants and the masters of the culinary art, who have assisted me in the making of this little book, I give my most grateful thanks.

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

When the series of articles now collected in this volume was first discussed between their author and myself in the early part of 1897, we found it a matter of no slight difficulty to determine what range they should take, and to what class of establishments they should be confined. There is no accounting for the variety of people's tastes in the matter of eating and drinking, and among the readers of the *Pall Mall Gazette* persons no doubt could be found ranging from the Sybarite, who requires Lucullus-like banquets, to him of the simple appetite for whom little more than a dinner with Duke Humphrey would suffice. Consequently, the choice of places to be visited had to be made in a catholic spirit, with the necessary result that a formidably long list was prepared. In selecting Colonel Newnham-Davis to carry out this commission for the

Pall Mall Gazette, I knew I was availing myself of the services of a thoroughly experienced, trustworthy, and capable commissioner, who would deal with the task entrusted to him in a pleasantly mixed anecdotal and critical spirit, while at the same time supplying useful guidance to persons wanting to know where to dine and what they would have to pay. In the following pages it will be seen how well he carried out the duty he undertook, and I am able to add that "Dinners and Diners" had a great vogue and very wide popularity among the readers of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. There were very many requests from various quarters that they should be collected into book form, and this has now been done with some valuable additions included in the shape of recipes and other information. In these days, when the taste for dining at restaurants is so largely on the increase, I have little doubt that the republication of these articles will be welcomed, and that they will supply not only interesting but useful information.

THE EDITOR OF THE
Pall Mall Gazette.

March 1899.

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FOREWORD

THE DIFFICULTIES OF DINING

I WOULD be willing to make you, my dear sir, a very small bet, that if in the early afternoon you go into the restaurant where you intend to dine in the evening and disturb the head waiter, who is reading a paper at one of the side tables, suddenly breaking the news upon him that you want a simple little dinner for two at eight o'clock, and wish to commence the repast with clear soup, he, in reply, after pulling out a book of order papers and biting his lead pencil, will, a moment of thought intervening, suggest *petite marmite*.

It is not his fault. Hundreds of Britons have taken the *carte de jour* out of his hands, and, looking at the list of soups, puzzled by the names which mean nothing to them, have fallen back upon *petite marmite* or *croûte au pot*, which they know are harmless homely soups which the lady they are going to bring to dinner cannot object to.

It requires a certain amount of bravery, a little consciousness of knowledge, for the ordinary man

looking down a list of dishes to put his finger on every third one and ask, "What is that?" He is much more likely, the head waiter, who has summed him up, prompting him, to order very much the dinner that he would have eaten in his suburban home had he been dining there that night.

Every good cook has his little vanities. They are all inventors; and when any one of them, breaking away from the strict lines of the classic *haute cuisine*, finds that a pinch of this or two drops of that improves some well-known dish, he immediately gives it a new name. It is the same with explorers. Did any one of them find a goat with half a twist more in its horns than another explorer had noticed, but he called it a new species and christened it Ovis Jonesi, Browni, or Robinsoni, according to his surname. If you see *filets de sole à la Hercules John Jones* on the *carte* do not be afraid to ask what it is. It is probably some old acquaintance slightly altered by the chef, who has had a flash of inspiration when preparing it for Mr. Hercules John Jones, a valued client of the restaurant.

I should have begun this foreword by warning all experienced diners to skip it and go on to Chapter I. It is not too late to do so now. I, who have gone through all the agonies that a simple Briton struggling in the spider web of a *carte de jour* can endure, am only trying to warn other simple Britons with a liking for a good dinner by an account of my experiences.

If you or I, in the absence of the *maître d'hôtel* and the head waiter, fall into the hands of an

underling, Heaven help us. He will lure you or me on to order the most expensive dinner that his limited imagination can conceive, and thinks he is doing his duty to the *patron*. Luckily, such ill-luck as this rarely occurs. The manager is the man to look for, if possible, when composing a menu. The higher you reach up that glorious scale of responsibility which runs from manager to *marmiton*, the more intelligent help you will get in ordering your dinner, the more certain you are to have an artistic meal, and not to be spending money unworthily.

That you must pay on the higher scale for a really artistic dinner is, I regret to say, a necessity. No doubt the luxurious surroundings, the quick, quiet service appear indirectly in the bill; but the material for the dinner is costly. No pains are spared nowadays to put on the table of a first-class restaurant the very best food that the world can produce. Not only France, but countries much farther afield are systematically pillaged that Londoners may dine, and I do not despair of some day eating mangostines for dessert. All this costs money; but the *gourmets*, like the dilettanti in any other art, do not get a *chef-d'œuvre* for the price of a "pot-boiler."

I, personally, always prefer a dinner *à la carte* to a *table-d'hôte* one. The *table-d'hôte* one—which is a misused word, for the *table-d'hôte* was the general table presided over by the host—has advanced, with the more general appreciation that dining does not mean simply eating, and at a good restaurant the dinner of the day is

cooked to the minute for the groups at each separate table ; but it has the disadvantage that you have to eat a dinner ordered according to somebody else's idea, and you have no choice as to length or composition. With a friendly *maître d'hôtel* to assist, the composing of a *menu* for a small dinner is a pleasure. To eat a *table-d'hôte* dinner is like landing a fish which has been hooked and played by someone else.

Mr. Echenard, late of the Savoy, in chatting over the vagaries of diners, shook his head over the want of knowledge of the wines that should be drunk with the various kinds of food. No man knows better what goes to make a perfect dinner than Mr. Echenard does, and as to the sinfulness of Britons in this particular, I quite agreed with him. In Paris no man dreams of drinking champagne, and nothing but champagne, for dinner ; but in London the climate and the taste of the fair sex go before orthodox rules. A tired man in our heavy atmosphere feels often that champagne is the one wine that will give him life again ; and as the ladies as a rule would think a dinner at a restaurant incomplete without champagne, ninety-nine out of a hundred Englishmen, in ordering a little dinner for two, turn instinctively to the champagne page of the wine-card. It is wrong, but until we get a new atmosphere and give up taking ladies out to dinner, champagne will be practically the only wine drunk at restaurants.

On the subject of tips it is difficult to write. I have always found that a shilling for every pound or part of a pound, or a shilling for each

member of a party brings a "thank you" from the waiter at any first-class restaurant. I should be inclined to err a little on the liberal side of this scale; for waiters do not have an easy life, are mainly dependent on the tips they get, and have it in their power to greatly add to, or detract from, the pleasure of a dinner. I always find that the man who talks about "spoiling the market," in this respect is thinking of protecting his own pocket and not his neighbour's.

Finally—and I feel very much as if I had been preaching a sermon—I should, to put it all as shortly as possible, advise you, my brother simple Briton—not you, the experienced diners, who have been expressly warned off from this lecture—in ordering your dinner to get the aid of the manager, and failing him the *maître d'hôtel*, never to be hustled by an underling into ordering a big dinner when you want a small one, and never to be afraid of asking what the composition of a dish is.

THE following little essay on the duties of a maître d'hôtel which Mons. Joseph has sent me speaks most eloquently for itself:

MON CHER COLONEL—

Vous me demandez pour votre nouveau livre des recettes. Méfiez-vous des recettes. Depuis la cuisinière bourgeoise et le Baron Brisse on a chanté la chanson sur tous les airs et sur tous les tons. Et qu'en reste-t'il; qui s'en souvient? Je veux dire dans le public aristocratique pour qui vous écrivez, et que vous comptez intéresser avec votre nouvelle publication, cherchez le nouveau dans les à propos de table, donnez des conseils aux maîtresses de maison, qui dépensent beaucoup d'argent pour donner des dîners fatiguants, trop longs, trop compliqués; dîtes leur qu'un bon dîner doit être court, que les convives doivent manger et non goûter, qu'elles exigent de leur cuisinier ou cuisinière de n'être pas trop savants, qu'ils respectent avant tout le goût que le bon Dieu a donné à toutes choses de ne pas les dénaturer par des combinaisons, qui à force d'être raffinées deviennent barbares.

On a beaucoup parlé du cuisinier. Si nous

exposions un peu ce que doit être le Maître d'Hôtel.

Le Maître D'Hôtel Français

La plus grande force du Maître d'hôtel français, je dis maître d'hôtel français à dessein, car si le cuisinier français a su tirer parti des produits de la nature avec un art infini, pour en faire des aliments aimables, agréables, et bienfaisants, le Maître d'hôtel français seul est susceptible de les faire accepter et désirer. Or voilà pour le Maître d'hôtel le champ qu'il a à explorer. Champ vaste s'il en fût, car déviner avec tact ce qui peut plaire à celui-ci et ne pas plaire à celui-là, est un problème à resoudre selon la nature, le tempérament et la nationalité de celui qu'il doit faire manger. Il doit donc être le conseil, le tentateur, et le metteur en scène. Il faut pour être un maître d'hôtel accompli, mettre de côté, ou du moins ne pas laisser percer le but commercial, tout en étant un commerçant hors ligne (je parle ici du maître d'hôtel public de restaurant, attendu que dans la maison particulière, le commerce n'a rien à voir, ce qui simplifie énormement le rôle du maître d'hôtel. Pour cela il faut être un peu diplomate, et un peu artiste dans l'art de dire, afin de colorer le projet de repas que l'on doit soumettre à son dîneur). Il faut donc agir sur l'imagination pour fair oublier la machine que l'on va alimenter, en un mot masquer le côté matériel de manger. J'ai acquis la certitude qu'un plat savamment préparé par un cuisinier hors ligne peut passer

inaperçu, ou inapprecié si le maître d'hôtel, qui devient alors metteur en scène, ne sait pas présenter l'œuvre, de façon à le faire désirer, de sorte que si ce mets est servi par un maître d'hôtel qui n'en comprend pas le caractère, il lui sera impossible de lui donner tout son relief, et alors l'œuvre du cuisinier sera anéanti et passera inaperçu.

Ce maître d'hôtel doit être aussi un observateur et un juge et doit transmettre son appréciation au chef de cuisine, mais pour apprécier il faut savoir, pour savoir il faut aimer son art, le maître d'hôtel doit être un apôtre.

Il doit transmettre les observations qu'il a pu entendre pendant le cours d'un dîner de la part des convives, observations favorables ou défavorables, il doit les transmettre au chef et aviser avec lui. Il doit aussi être en observation, car il arrive le plus souvent que les convives ne disent rien à cause de leur amphitryon mais ne mangent pas avec plaisir et entrain le mets présenté : là encore le maître d' hôtel doit chercher le pourquoi. Il y a aussi dans un déjeuner ou un dîner un rôle très important réservé au maître d' hôtel. La variété agréable des hors-d'œuvre, la salade qui accompagne le rôti, le façon de découper ce rôti avec élégance, de bien disposer ce rôti sur son plat une fois découpé, découper bien et vite, afin d' éviter le réchaud qui sèche. Savoir mettre à point une selle de mouton, avec juste ce qu'il faut de sel sur la partie grasse, qui lui donnera un goût agréable.

Pour découper le maître d' hôtel doit se placer

ni trop près ni trop loin des convives, afin que ceux-ci soient intéressés, et voient que tous les détails sont observés avec goût et élégance, de façon à tenter encore les appétits qui n'en peuvent presque plus mais qui renaissent encore un peu aiguillonnés par le désir qu'a su faire naître l'artiste préposé au repas, et qui a su donner encore envie à l'imagination, quand l'estomac commençait à capituler.

Le maître d'hôtel a de plus cette partie de la fin du dîner, le choix d'un bon fromage, les fruits, les soins de température à donner aux vins, la façon de décanter ceux-ci pour leur donner le maximum de bouquet ; le maître d'hôtel ne peut-il encore être un tentateur avec la fraise frappée (à la Marivaux) ? La pêche à la cardinal, qu'accompagne si bien le doux parfum de la framboise, légèrement acidulé d'un de jus de groseille, notre grand carême qualifiait.

Certains plats de "manger des Dieux," combien l'expression est heureuse.

Depuis que je suis à Londres j'ai trouvé un nombre incalculable "d'inventeurs de ma pêche à la cardinal." Il me faudra leur donner la recette un jour que j'en aurai l'occasion.

N'est-ce pas de l'art chez le maître d'hôtel qui tente et charme les convives par ces raffinements, et qui comme un cavalier sur une moture essoufflée sait encore relever son courage et lui faire faire la dernière foulée qui décide de la victoire ? Après un bon repas le maître d'hôtel a la grande satisfaction d'avoir donné un peu de bonheur à de pauvres gens riches, qui ne sont pas toujours des heureux.

Et comme l'a dit Brillat Savarin "Le plaisir de la table ne nuit pas aux autres plaisirs." Au contraire, qui sait si *indirectement* je ne suis pas le papa de bien des Bébés rieurs, ou la cause au moins de certaines aventures que mes jolies clientes n'évoquent qu'en souriant derrière leur éventail ?

JOSEPH

Directeur du Savoy Restaurant, Londres,
et du Restaurant de Marivaux, Paris.

CHAPTER I

PRINCES' HALL (PICCADILLY)

SHE is a charming little lady, and her husband, to tell the truth, spoils her just a little. Most married dames would have been content, if they wished to dine at a restaurant on the occasion of their birthday, with one dinner; but Mrs. Daffodil—if I may so call her, from her favourite flower—insisted on having a dinner out on Saturday, and another on Sunday, and another on Monday, because, though her twenty-first birthday really fell on Saturday, she was going to keep it on Monday, when a great party of her husband's people were to meet at the Savoy, and on Sunday her people were organising a feast at the Berkley; but Mrs. Daffodil said that unless she dined out on the evening of her *real* birthday she was sure she would have no luck during the coming year, and I was told that I was to have the privilege of being the third at the little dinner which was to be the veritable birthday dinner, and that, as a return for this great favour,

I was to order the dinner and choose the restaurant.

I was too wise to take the full responsibility of anything so important, and in a council of three we ran down the list of dining places. Of those we paused over in consideration, the Princes' Hall was the nearest to Mrs. Daffodil's flat, and the little lady remembered that she had not dined there this year, and suddenly decided that it was the very place for a birthday dinner; and should she wear her new white dress, or would the black dress with the handsome bit of lace suit her better? Her husband looked a little helpless at the mention of dress, and I at a venture suggested the black, for I remembered that the roof of the grand salon of the Princes', with its heavy mouldings, was white picked out with gold, while the great panels of brick red, powdered with golden fleurs-de-lys and the palms filling-in the corners, would show up a black dress just as well as a white one.

Black it was to be, and, this important matter decided, I was sent off as an advance messenger in a hansom cab to order the best table available and a dinner, not too elaborate and not too small, which was to be ready by the time little Mrs. Daffodil had dressed and could drive down to the restaurant in her brougham.

My hansom was a fleet one. A party of guests at one of the tables by the windows, evidently bound for a theatre, had finished their dinner and were just off and away as I arrived, and I pounced like a hawk upon the table they left vacant. The first preliminaries were soon over,

for the little dapper *maître d'hôtel*, whom I had known in previous days at the East Room of the Criterion, had the table cleared at once, found some yellow flowers which, if they were not daffodils, were very like them, and had big bouquets of them put upon the table. Then came the important question of the dinner. *Hors-d'œuvre variés*, suggested the little *maître d'hôtel;* but I moved as an amendment that it should be caviar, for the caviar at the Princes' is Benoist's, and no man imports better. "Turtle," suggested the *maître d'hôtel*, a little doubtfully, after being defeated in his first venture, and as I passed the suggestion with a nod *potage tortue* went down on the slip of paper. Mrs. Daffodil had made a suggestion as to salmon which she withdrew as soon as made, but I had remembered it, and *saumon à la Grenobloise* was scribbled down. "Now," said the *maître d'hôtel* a little decisively, "since the soup and the fish are brown, we must have a white *entrée*," and as I was not prepared at the moment with any practical suggestion, having thought of *noisettes de mouton* and a woodcock as the rest of the solid part of the dinner, I allowed the proposal to go by default, and *fricassée de poulet à l'Ancienne* was ordered. "A tiny saddle of lamb?" was the next suggestion, and although I regretted my prospective woodcock I let the matter go, for we had a bird already in the menu. "*Pommes nouvelles risolées. Salade de mâche, céleri, betterave. Asperges anglaises*," reeled off my mentor, and I nodded at the mention of the English asparagus; and then to show that I

was going to have a word in the ordering of the dinner I added *macédoine de fruits à l'orientale* and *friandises* without requiring any prompting.

I waited in the bright, French-looking entrance hall, with its mirrors and screens decorated with painted flowers, and watched the people coming in and going out. A party of smart young men from the Stock Exchange, most of whom I knew, on their way to a row of stalls they had taken at the Gaiety, passed and chaffed me for my waiting; but the sound of the band within in the great white railed-in musicians' gallery was cheerful—and an excellent band it is, each artist in it being a soloist of some celebrity—and presently M. Fourault, the manager, who is the brother-in-law of M. Benoist, came out and talked to me, saying that M. Azema, the *chef*, was personally superintending the cooking of the dinner, to which I replied that I was much obliged that the great artist from the Café Anglais should have paid me the compliment. Then M. Fourault launched forth into details of the service and the building: how the dishes are brought direct to the guests by hand so as to avoid the chance of draughts in lifts; of the beauty of the kitchen; the arrangements to keep in touch with and co-operate with the Royal Institute on the top floor, and a variety of other topics. And as he talked Signor Bocchi's band inside was softly playing, and I was growing hungry waiting for little Mrs. Daffodil, for I knew that it would not be her husband who caused the delay.

The brougham drew up before the glass portico with its brass ornamentations, and Mrs. Daffodil in the wonderful black dress was helped out. She would bring her ermine cape in with her, she thought; and having arrived at the table smiled graciously at seeing her name-flowers there. I explained that the table by the door protected by the glass screens was my favourite one, and that I should have taken it if possible, but that it had been engaged for days, and Mrs. Daffodil was pleased to think the one we had obtained was quite as nice. Didn't she think the room, with its big panels, its few long mirrors, its clusters of electric lights and electric candles on the tables, and its musicians' gallery over the entrance to the offices and kitchen, very handsome? I asked. And as she helped herself to the caviar, each little ball as separate as if they had been pellets of shot, she assented; but to show that she was critical, thought there ought to have been more palms. Then the little lady took up the questioning, and wanted to know who everybody was who was dining. I was able to point out a well-known artist taking a quiet meal with his wife, who at one time was an ornament of the comedy-stage; a party of soldier officers up from Aldershot (and I had a story of the gallantry of one of them, and how he should have won by right a Victoria Cross); an ex-Gaiety girl who was the heroine of a breach of promise case, and who had at the table she occupied quite a crowd of gilded youths; a youngster whose good looks have won him a very rich but not too young wife—and there I

had to pause, for though the room was full of well-dressed, smart-looking people, I knew no more of them by name.

I was reproved for not knowing my London better, and tried to turn the conversation by telling my host that I would sooner share the burgundy with him than drink the champagne which Mrs. Daffodil thought a necessary part of her birthday dinner, but at that moment, the soup being brought, we all relapsed into serious criticism. The turtle soup was good undoubtedly, as good as at any City dinner, with its jade-coloured semi-solid floating in the darker liquor, and we praised that unreservedly, but I was told that I was in a carping mood because I stated that I like my salmon as plainly cooked as possible. As to the *fricassée*, I liked it immensely; but Mrs. Daffodil, because her shoe pinched, or for some other good reason, said that she hated truffles. The lamb, the most delicate little *selle d'agneau de lait*, with the potatoes and the dark green salad relieved by the crimson of the beet-root, was admirable. English asparagus never can be anything but good, and though my hostess insisted on my eating a cherry from among the *friandises*, I left the sweets, as is my custom, alone.

And the bill. I asked my host to let me look at it, and here it is:—three couverts, 3s.; caviar, 3s.; tortue, 6s.; saumon, 6s.; fricassée de poulet, 7s.; selle d'agneau, 8s.; pommes risolées, 2s.; salade, 1s. 6d.; asperges, 10s. 6d.; macédoine de fruits, 4s. 6d.; one '67 (Burgundy), 12s.; ½140 (champagne), 7s. 6d., three cafés special,

1s. 6d.; three liqueurs fine champagne (1800), 6s.; total, £4 : 0 : 6.

1st February.

*** This was a dinner ordered in a hurry and without perhaps due consideration. Talking over it some days later on with Mons. Fourault, I asked him to give me a suggestion as to what he considered a typical Princes' Hall dinner for a larger number, and I also asked him to be my ambassador to M. Azema, the *chef*, for the *recette* of the *poulet à l'Ancienne*, which I had liked so much.

This is the *menu* for a dinner of six covers, a very admirable dinner of ceremony. As to its cost, I am not prepared to guess.

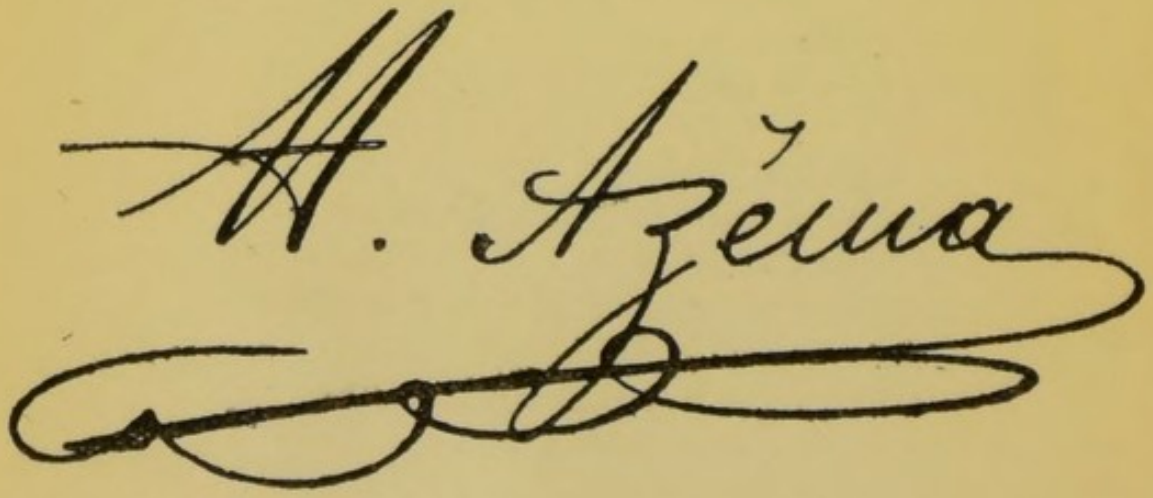
Le Signi du Volga.
Les petits coulibiacs à la Czarine.
La crème Ste-Marie.
Les suprêmes de truites à la Princesse.
Les poulardes à la Georges Sand.
Le Baron de Pauillac aux primeurs.
Les bécasses au champagne.
La salade Impériale.
Les asperges d'Argenteuil Ste-Mousseleine.
Le soufflé chaud succès.
La glace Leda.
Une corbeille de friandises.
Les canapés Diane.
Dessert.

Mons. Azema thought the *fricassée Ancienne*, the *recette* of which I had asked for, too simple a dish, and instead sent me the *recette* for the *poularde Georges Sand*, which is a very lordly dish. Here it is as Mons. Azema wrote it, and a translation for

any good people who, like myself, are puzzled sometimes by the terms employed in la Haute Cuisine.

Recette de la poularde G. Sand

Lever les membres d'une belle poularde très blanche bien régulièrement. Faire la tomber à blond, avec un oignon émincé, une bonne pointe de paprika, et deux verres de vin blanc, environ quarante-cinq minutes. Retirer la poularde et passer le fonds à l'étamine, le monter avec un bon beurre d'écrevisse, et garnir avec queues d'écrevisse, belles truffes, en olives, et croûtons de feuilletage. Servir très chaud.



Dismember a large white fowl very carefully. Stew it in white stock, with a chopped onion, a good pinch of paprika, and two glasses of white wine, for about forty-five minutes. Take out the fowl, and pass the stock through the tammy. Flavour with a good cray-fish butter, and garnish with tails of cray-fish, large truffles, olives, and croûtons of French puff-paste (*feuilletage*). Serve very hot.

CHAPTER II

THE CHESHIRE CHEESE

I HAD been kept late in Fleet Street on Saturday, and at a little before seven I woke to the fact that it was near the dinner hour, that I was in the clothes I had worn all day, that I was brain-weary and tired, and not energetic. I should be late for dinner if I went home, half across the width of London; I could not well dine at a club without evening clothes, and a smart restaurant was equally out of the question, for I felt, being in the state of humiliation which weariness and London grime bring one to, that I could not have held my own as to the choice of a table or the ordering of a dinner against even the least determined *maître d'hôtel.*

The easiest way was to dine at one of the Fleet Street hostelries, and I ran such of them as I know over in my mind. How they have changed since Herrick rang them into rhyme! Then they were the Sun, the Dog, the Triple Tun. Now they are the Rainbow, the Cock, Anderton's, the Cheshire Cheese, and a host more. It was a pudding day at the Cheshire

Cheese, not the crowded day, which is Wednesday, but a day on which I was sure to get a seat in the lower room and be able to eat my meal in comfort and content; and that finally decided me in favour of the hostelry in Wine Office Court.

It is not a cheerful thoroughfare that leads up to the Cheshire Cheese. It is a narrow and dark passage, and the squat little door of the tavern itself is not inviting, for it is reminiscent of a country public-house. It is not until one is through the sawdusted passage and into the lower room that one is in warmth and comfort.

I was a little late. The man who loves the Cheshire Cheese pudding is in his place at table a few minutes before the pudding is brought in at 6.30 P.M., a surging billow of creamy white bulging out of a great brown bowl, and then when the host begins to carve—and there is a certain amount of solemnity about the opening of this great pudding—the early guest gets the best helping. By a quarter-past seven, when I made my entry, the pudding had sunk down into the depths of the bowl.

Most of the tables were full, but the long table, at the head of which Dr. Johnson is alleged to have sat with Goldsmith at his left hand, had some vacant places, and I took one of them. "Pudding?" said the head waiter. I assented, and Mr. Moore, the host, a dapper gentleman, with a wealth of dark hair and a dark moustache, who had been chatting to a clean-shaven young gentleman who had the seat opposite to mine, moved to the great bowl to

give me my helping, for no one but the host touches the sacred pudding. The clean-shaven young gentleman relapsed into a newspaper, and while I waited the few seconds before the brown mixture of lark and kidney and oyster and steak was put before me I looked round at my neighbours. A gentleman, bald of head and with white whiskers, who was addressed as "Doctor," sat in the great lexicographer's seat, and talking to him was a bearded gentleman whom I put down at once as a press-man, a sub-editor probably. The only other guest at our table was a good-looking, middle-aged man in clothes that had the gloss of newness on them, a flannel shirt, a white collar, and a gaudy tie. He had finished his meal, was evidently contented with the world, and there was a conversational glint in his eye when he caught mine that made me look away at once; for I was hungry and downcast and not inclined for cheerful converse until I had eaten and drunk.

"Pudding, sir," and the head waiter put the savoury mass before me; "and what else?" I ordered a pint of beer and stewed cheese. I ate my pudding, and being told that the cheese was not ready, ate a "follow" afterwards, for there is no limit to the amount of pudding allowed, and some of the "followers," as the host of the tavern calls them, have been known to have half a dozen helpings; and then the brown and fizzling cheese in its little tin tray, with a triangle of toast on either side, was put before me. The cheese, mixed with mustard and neatly spread on the toast, according to custom,

eaten, the last drops of the bitter beer poured from the pewter tankard into the long glass which is supposed to give brilliancy to the malt liquor ; and then, feeling a man again, I looked across at the flannel-shirted gentleman who had been smoking a pipe placidly, with a look which meant "Come on."

The ripple of conversation broke at once. He had been out in Australia for fifteen years, went out there as a mere lad, and to-day was his first day in town after his return. He had been used in past times to come to the Cheshire Cheese for his mid-day meal, and the first place he had sought out when he came to London was the old hostelry. He missed the old waiters, he said, but otherwise the place was much the same and as homely as ever.

I recognised in the attraction that had brought this wanderer from the antipodes to the old-fashioned tavern, first of all places, the same force that had made me, the *blasé* man about town, unconsciously decide to dine there in preference to any other Fleet Street hostelry—its homeliness. The old-fashioned windows with their wire blinds, the sawdusted floor, the long clay pipes on the window-sill ; the heirloom portrait of Henry Todd, waiter ; the "greybeard" and leather-jack on their brackets (both gifts from Mr. Seymour Lucas the artist) ; the piles of black-handled knives, the willow-pattern plates and dishes ; the curious stand in the centre of the floor for umbrellas ; the great old-fashioned grate with a brass kettle singing merrily on it ; the pile of Whitaker's almanacks putting a touch of

colour into a dark corner; Samuel Johnson's portrait over his favourite seat, and a host of prints, relating to the great man, on the walls; the high partitions, one particular square pew being shielded by a green baize curtain; the simple napery; the ruin of the great pudding on its little table; all carried one back through the early Victorian times to those dimmer periods when even coffee-houses were unknown, and every man took his ease at his inn.

The floodgates of the friendly stranger's speech once unloosed, he told me of his life in Australia, and the hard times he had had, and how matters had come so far right that he was able to come home to England and enjoy himself for six months; and the clean-shaven young gentleman—he was going on later to assist in an entertainment to the poor of Houndsditch, he told us—emerged from his newspaper, and we all found a good deal to say. Nothing would satisfy the returned wanderer but that he must be allowed to ask us to join him in drinking a bowl of the Cheshire Cheese punch, and Mr. Moore, the host, must make one of the party. The other guests—most of them, I should think, connected in some way or other with the Fourth Estate—had gradually drifted away, and Mr. Moore, who had been going from table to table, came and sat down. "No celebrities here to-night, Mr. Moore," I said somewhat reproachfully, and he admitted the soft impeachment, but Irish-wise told us of the great men of the present day that we had missed by not dining at the Cheese on any night but the present one. Every journalist of fame,

every editor, has eaten within the walls of the old hostelry, and there is no judge that sits on the bench who has not taken some of his first dinners as a barrister in the little house up Wine Office Court.

The hot punch was brought in in one of the china bowls, of which there are three or four in a little corner cupboard in the old-fashioned bar across the passage, and an old silver ladle to serve it with; and the talk ranged back from the great men of the present day to those of the past. Thackeray knew the "Cheese" well; Dickens used to come in his early days and tell the present host's mother all his troubles, and so we got back to Goldsmith and Johnson, the latter of whom is the especial patron saint of the hostelry, for when he lived in Gough Square and Bolt Court the Cheshire Cheese is said to have been his nightly resort.

The punch ended, the time came for the reckoning. Of old the head waiters were all clean-shaven, like Henry Todd, whose portrait hangs aloft, and all the reckoning was done by word of mouth. But the present head waiter has introduced innovations; he wears a moustache, and makes out his bills on paper. This was mine—Ye rump steak pudding, 2s.; vegetables, 2d.; cheese, 4d.; beer, 5d.; total, 2s. 11d.

8th February.

CHAPTER III

THE HOLBORN

THE American Comedian and myself stood at a club window and looked out on London. He was rehearsing, and so enjoyed the rare privilege of having his evenings free to spend as he liked. I had no business, except to get myself a dinner somewhere, so we agreed to eat ours in company.

The difficulty was to decide where to dine. The Comedian dined at one club or another every day of his life before going to the theatre, so a club dinner was out of the question. Not having a lady to take out we agreed that we did not care to go to any of the "smart" restaurants: we wanted something a little more elaborate than a grill-room would give us, and more amusing company than we were likely to find at the smaller dining places we knew of.

I think that the suggestion to dine at the cheap *table d'hôte* dinner at one of the very large restaurants, to listen to the music, and look at the people dining, came from me. Our minds made up on this point, there was the difficulty of selecting the restaurant, so we agreed to toss

up, and the spin of the coin eventually settled upon the Holborn Restaurant.

In the many-coloured marble hall, with its marble staircase springing from either side, a well-favoured gentleman with a close-clipped grey beard was standing, a sheet of paper in his hand, and waved us towards a marble portico, through which we passed to the grand saloon with its three galleries supported by marble pillars. "A table for two," said a *maître d'hôtel*, and we were soon seated at a little table near the centre of the room, at which a waiter in dress clothes, with a white metal number at his buttonhole and a pencil behind his ear, was in attendance waiting for orders. The *table d'hôte* dinner was what we required, and then I noticed that I had to ask for the wine list, and that it was not given me opened at the champagnes, as is usually the custom of waiters.

The menu, which on a large sheet of stiff paper peeps out from a deep border of advertisements, is printed both in French and in English. This is the English side of it on the night we dined :—

SOUPS.

Purée of Hare aux croûtons.
Spaghetti.

FISH.

Suprême of Sole Joinville.
Plain Potatoes.
Darne de saumon. Rémoulade Sauce.

ENTRÉES.

Bouchées à l'Impératrice.

Sauté Potatoes.
Mutton Cutlets à la Reforme.

REMOVE.

Ribs of Beef and Horseradish.
Brussels Sprouts.

ROAST.

Chicken and York Ham.
Chipped Potatoes.

SWEETS.

Caroline Pudding. St. Honoré Cake.
Kirsch Jelly.

ICE.

Neapolitan.

Cheese. Celery.

DESSERT.

We agreed to drink claret, and I picked out a wine third or fourth down on the list.

The Comedian said he was hungry, and I told him that I was glad to hear it, for it might check the miraculous tales which he generally produces at meal-times.

With the Spaghetti soup, which was brown and strong, the Comedian told me the tale of the mummy of one of the Ptolemies who lived some thousands of years B.C. which was revivified in the Boston Museum by having clam soup administered to it. It was not one of the Comedian's best efforts, and I capped it easily by a tale of the Japanese jelly-fish soup which is supposed to confer everlasting life, and which tastes and looks like hot water.

The *darne de saumon* was rather a pallid

slice, which I attributed to package in ice ; but which the Comedian said was owing to its having overgrown its strength. "And that reminds me," he had just begun when I had the presence of mind to anticipate him, and to tell the story of the 140 lbs. mahseer which it took my uncle, on my mother's side, three days to land from the Ganges. I felt bound to tell him that the anecdote he subsequently related of a tarpon, that his first cousin, twice removed, had hooked, towing a steamer's lifeboat from the Floridas to Long Island, sounded like an invention.

To avoid friction we talked of our neighbours. Next door to us was a merry little party of three ladies, one a widow, and a gentleman in a red tie, and the Comedian invented quite a storyette, after the manner of Dickens, of the kindly brother taking his three sisters out to dinner on the birthday of one of them—no brother would order champagne for his sisters except on the occasion of a birthday, he said. A couple, in mourning, were husband and wife, and the Comedian, being in the vein, wove a pathetic little story round the unconscious couple. Two young men, in spick-and-span black coats, with orchids in their buttonholes, dining with two pretty girls, were groomsmen from some wedding entertaining two of the bridesmaids. Some nodding plumes showing over the second balcony the Comedian declared must belong to the "principal boy" of some provincial pantomime.

The cutlet of mutton that was brought to each of us was small, and had suffered from having to journey some way from the kitchen ;

but it was well cooked, and there was unlimited sauce with it. When I told the Comedian the established fact that at the Cape the sheep have to have wheels fitted to their tails, he pretended that in New England there is a breed that draw their tails in miniature waggons. I flatter myself, however, that my tale of the Ovis Polii, the perpendicular shot and the three thousand feet fall down a Cashmerian gully left him breathless. To save the Comedian from brain-weariness caused by invention I drew the waiter into conversation, and, beginning with the band—a good band, but much too loud—learned that we should find the time each piece was played on the programme which was on the back of the menu. It was not a full night, our waiter told us, but we were early, it was only 7.15, and the saloon would fill up presently; and then he drifted into wonderful figures of the number of guests the Holborn could hold at one time. We wondered inwardly, but sent him off to get us our beef and Brussels sprouts. "When I was out with Buffalo Bill——" the Comedian began as the waiter returned; but as my only story to go with beef is a Wildebeeste story, not one of my best, I mentioned somewhat austerely, that our helpings were growing cold. Then the Comedian, who was invincible in appetite, ate a helping of chicken and ham and reported favourably. Encouraged by this, I ate a slice of the ham which, with a dash of champagne for sauce, was good. The Comedian told rather a foolish story of a nigger robbing a hen-roost, which gave me an opening to relate my celebrated anecdote

of the Naval Brigade and the chickens during the Zulu War, an anecdote which has been known to make a rheumatic bishop and a deaf Chairman of Quarter Sessions laugh.

The sweets we took as read, and finished up our dinner with an ice, a trifle too salt, I thought. The waiter had been disappointed at our taking no sweets, but when we refused the offer of cheese and celery and dessert, he was afraid that something must be the matter with us, for most people at the Holborn eat their dinner steadily through.

The saloon had filled up as our waiter had predicted. There was a howling swell with tuberoses in the buttonhole of his frock-coat and a lordly moustache. There were two youngsters in dress clothes and "made-up" ties making merry with two damsels. There was a pretty actress—"she's going to play in our new piece. It's her first night off from playing at the Frivolity, and she has come here to be quiet," said the Comedian. There was a business man from the north being entertained by two City friends, and a host more diners whose history we had not time to invent, for our waiter had taken the pencil from his ear and was standing ready with a little book in his hand.

"Dinners, 7s.; attendance, 6d.; one bottle claret, 4s. 6d.; total, 12s." That was the bill our waiter gave us, and he said "Thank you" very heartily for a shilling for himself.

I should have appreciated my dinner more if the Comedian had confined his conversation to facts.

I regret to hear that the Comedian permitted himself to say, next day, at the Club that it was a thousand pities that I could not tell a story without exaggeration.

15th February.

CHAPTER IV

ROMANO'S

SOMETIMES after a period of depression one wants a tonic in dinners, as one does in health. My gastronomic malady had been a family feast at which I had sat next to a maiden aunt who, after telling me that I was getting unpleasantly fat, recounted anecdotes of my infancy and childhood all tending to prove that I was the most troublesome baby and worst conducted small boy that ever was. Something had to be done to banish that maiden aunt and her anecdotes from my memory. The happy thought came to me that, as the antidote, I had better, as I wanted cheering up, ask Miss Dainty, of the principal London theatres, to be kind enough to come out and dine at any time and at any restaurant she chose to name. I sent my humble invitation by express early in the day, and received her answer by telegram:—"Yes. Romano's. Eight. See I have my pet table. I have been given a beautiful poodle—Dainty. Be good, and you will be happy."

At luncheon time I strolled down to the

restaurant, the butter-coloured front of which looks on to the Strand, and the proprietor, "the Roman," as he is called by the habitués of the establishment, being out, I took Signor Antonelli, his second in command, into my confidence, secured the table next to the door, sheltered by a glass screen from the draught, which I knew to be Miss Dainty's pet one, and proceeded to order dinner. Antonelli—I must drop the Signor—who has all the appearance of a cavalry colonel, led off with *hors-d'œuvre*. I followed with, as a suggestion for soup, *crème Pink 'Un*, a soup named after a light-hearted journal which practically made "the Roman's" fortune for him. Then, as there were some beautiful trout in the house, the only question was as to the cooking of them. *Truite au bleu*, my first thought, was too simple. *Truite Chambord*, the amendment moved by Antonelli, was too rich; so we compromised by *Truite Meunière*, in the sauce of which the lemon counteracts the butter. *Côtelettes de mouton Sefton* was Antonelli's suggestion, and was carried unanimously; but I altered his pheasant, which sounded greedy for two people, into a *perdreau en casserole*. Salad, of course. Then, taken with a fit of parsimony, I refused to let English asparagus go down on the slip of paper, and ordered instead *artichauts hollandais*. Vanilla ice *en corbeille* and *petits fours* wound up my menu.

When the handsome lady arrived—only ten minutes late—she swept like a whirlwind through the hall—past the flower-stall, where I

had intended to ask her to pause and choose what flowers she would—in a dress which was a dream of blue with a constellation of diamonds on it, and as she settled down into her seat at the table, not quite certain whether to keep on the blue velvet and ermine cloak or let it drop, I was told the first instalment of her news at express speed. I need not look a crosspatch because she was late, the pretty lady said. It was the fault of the cabman, who was drunk, and had driven her half-way down Oxford Street. What was a good name for a poodle? The one she had been given was the dearest creature in the world. It had bitten all the claws off the Polar bear skin in the drawing-room, had eaten up a new pair of boots from Paris, had hunted the cat all along the balcony, breaking two of the blue pots the evergreens were in, and had dragged all the feathers out of the parrot's tail. Was Sambo a good name? Or Satan? Or what? Why couldn't I answer?

My humble suggestions as to a name for a poodle having been treated with scorn, Miss Dainty turned her attention to the *hors-d'œuvre*. There were no plain sardines among the numerous little dishes on the table, and the ordinary tinned sardine was what her capricious ladyship wanted —and got. The *crème Pink 'Un* was highly approved of, and I did my best to explain at length how the combination of rice with a Bisque soup softened the asperity of the cray-fish. Miss Dainty, changing the subject, demanded to know what the seascapes, which are framed all round the room, in mauresque arches, were. I told her

that the distemper paintings of deep blue sea and castles and islands and mosques, which are the principal features of the room, a room in which everything, the clock, the musicians' gallery, the electric light brackets, are of Eastern type, were views on the Bosphorus ; and, thinking to amuse, related how when the paintings were first put up, a celebrated battle-painter and myself had volunteered to give an up-to-dateness to them by adding some Armenian atrocities to lend life to the pictures, and of "the Roman's" horror, under the impression that we really meant to do as we said. My humorous anecdote fell rather flat, for Miss Dainty, who did not care much for her trout, though I thought it very excellent, but a trifle too buttery, said that that was just the sort of silly thing I would do.

The quiet person with a silver chain round his neck had brought our bottle of *St-Marceaux*, and the clean-shaven little Italian waiter in a white apron had replaced the trout with the cutlets *à la Sefton*. For these Miss Dainty had nothing but praise, which I echoed very heartily.

"Your dinner — everything go right, eh, Mister Esquire?" and "the Roman," a dapper little Italian in faultless dress-clothes, with a small, carefully tended moustache, a full head of black hair, turning grey at the temple, and talking English with a free admixture of Italian, stood by our table, going his round to see that all the diners were satisfied. Miss Dainty did not ask for the deep-red carnation that was in "the Roman's" button-hole ; but before he had passed on she was pinning it into her dress, and

when I ventured a very mild remark I was told that if I had not been mean enough to let her pass the flower-stall without offering her a button-hole she would not have had to accept one from anybody else—a retort which was scarcely fair.

I asked Miss Dainty if she knew who the pretty lady dining with a good-looking grey-haired man at a table at the end of the room was. She did know and gave me a full account of the lady's stage career, and while the *perdreau en casserole* was being cut up we ran over the professions of the various diners who occupied the triple line of little tables running down the room. The two men dining by themselves were powers in the theatrical world. "May I ask them to come and take their coffee and old brandy at our table?" I asked, and Miss Dainty graciously assented. There were as well a well-known theatrical lawyer talking business with the secretary to a successful manager; a dramatic author, who was proposing plays to a colonial manager; a lady with golden hair and a permanent colour to whom a small Judaic youth was whispering with great earnestness; a well-known sporting lord, dining by himself; a music-hall agent laying down the law as to contracts to a journalist; two quiet ladies in sealskin coats; and many others, nearly all connected with the great army of stage-land.

A little too much onion with the *perdreau en casserole* we both thought, otherwise admirable. Salad good, artichokes good, though we preferred plain vinegar as a dressing to the *hollandais* one,

and the ice delicious. Then Miss Dainty trifled with cherries cased in pink sweetness and sections of oranges sealed in transparent sugar, and our two friends from the table at the far end came across and took coffee and liqueurs with us, and talked of the old days when Romano's was but a quarter of the size it is now, when it was far more Bohemian than it is now, when there was a little aquarium in the front window into which the sons of Belial used to try and force each other late at night, much to the consternation of the gold-fish, when everybody who took his meals there knew everybody else and the chaff ran riot down the single line of little tables, and when every Sunday morning a devoted but Sabbath-breaking band were led across the Strand by "the Roman" to see his cellars, "best in London," as he used to say.

All of a sudden Miss Dainty, whom these reminiscences did not interest very much, remembered that the door of the parrot's cage had been left open. She was quite sure that the poodle would be trying to kill the bird, and she must go back at once to see to the matter.

I put Miss Dainty, who said that she had enjoyed her dinner, into a hansom, two brown eyes full of laughter set in a pretty face looked out at me as she told me to be good and that then I should be happy, the cabman cried "Pull up" to his horse, and the pretty lady was off to the rescue of the parrot.

Then I went back and paid my bill: Two couverts, 6d.; hors-d'œuvre, 2s.; crème Pink 'Un, 2s.; truite, 2s. 6d.; côtelettes de mouton, 2s. 6d.;

petits pois, 1s.; pommes, 1s.; perdreau, 6s.; salade, 1s.; artichauts, 2s.; glace, 2s.; champagne (107), 13s. 6d.; café, 3s.; liqueurs, 5s.; total £2 : 4s.

22nd February.

When I asked Antonelli for a specimen menu of a dinner of ceremony such as is often given in the pretty Japanese room on the second floor he looked pleased and said that I should certainly have it; but when I asked for the *recette* of the *crème Pink 'Un* he looked as doleful as if he had just heard of the death of his grandmother. But Signor Romano came to the rescue. "The *chef* he say that soup what-you-call-a *secret du maison;* but I tell him no matter *secret* or not he just write it out for you." So I got my *recette.* This is the dinner, and a noble feast it is, that Antonelli recommends for a party of twelve. The *Homard sauté à la Julien* is a speciality of Romano's; but I have some respect for the feelings of Antonelli and the *chef,* and did not ask for a *recette* of *that.*

Huîtres natives.
Petite bouchée norvégienne.
Tortue claire.
Crème Dubary.
Homard sauté à la Julien.
Aiguillete de sole. Sauce Germanique.
Zéphir de poussin à la Brillat-Savarin.
Selle d'agneau à la Grand-Veneur.
Petits pois primeur à la Française.
Pomme nouvelle persillade.
Spongada à la Palermitaine.
Jambon d'York braisé au champagne.
Caille à la Crapaudine.
Salade de saison.
Asperges vertes en branche. Sauce mousseuse.

Timbale Marie-Louise.
Bombe à la Romano.
Petits fours assortis.
Dessert.
Café.

Pink 'Un Potage

The *recette* of the *crème Pink 'Un* is as follows :—

Mettez dans une casserole deux onces de beurre, deux cuillères-à-bouche d'huile d'olive ; coupez en petits morceaux une carotte et un oignon, que vous laisserez cuire pendant cinq minutes tout doucement. Avez ensuite vingt-quatre écrevisses vivantes, un livre de crevettes et six tomates fraîches, que vous mettrez ensemble ; ajoutez une demi-bouteille de Chablis, et, après avoir assaisonné de sel et poivre cayenne, couvrez votre casserole et donnez vingt minutes d'ébullition.

D'autre part prenez une livre d'orge perlée que vous aurez faite cuire pendant trois heures dans un bouillon ordinaire, brayez dans un mortier vos écrevisses et crevettes, ainsi que l'orge, mélangez, délayez avec un litre de bouillon, passez ensuite à l'étamine ; ceci fait, remettez votre potage à chauffer sans lui donner de l'ébullition ; additionnez une réduction de cognac où vous y aurez mis une branche de tym, deux feuilles de laurier, un petit bouquet de persil, d'estragon et cerfeuil. Finissez votre potage en y ajoutant six onces de beurre frais et servez avec croûtons.

Julien Gonnet

Put in a saucepan two ounces of butter and two teaspoonfuls of olive oil. Cut a carrot and an onion into small pieces, and let them cook gently for five minutes. Then take twenty-four live cray-fish, a pound of prawns, and six fresh tomatoes. Put these in altogether, and then add half a bottle of Chablis, and after having seasoned with salt and cayenne pepper, put the lid on the saucepan, and let it boil for twenty minutes. Have ready a pound of pearl barley which has been cooked for three hours, in ordinary stock. Pound in a mortar the cray-fish and prawns, with the barley, dilute with a pint and three-quarters of stock, and pass through a fine sieve. This done, put the soup back to warm again, without letting it boil. Add then a little cognac, in which you have steeped a bunch of thyme, two laurel leaves, and a little bunch of parsley, tarragon and chervil. Finish your soup by adding six ounces of fresh butter, and serve with sippets of fried bread.

CHAPTER V

SIMPSON'S

THE battle-painter and I were walking down the Strand, uncertain where to lunch, when just by the theatrical bookshop a man in a shabby suit of tweed and a billycock hat, drawn rather low down on his forehead, passed us quickly, looking into our faces for a second as he did so. "It's Smith," said the battle-painter. "Poor fellow!"

It was the man we had been talking about only that morning, the good fellow who had been at school with me, who had made a voyage on board a P. and O. in which both the battle-painter and I had gone out to India, and had been the life and soul of the ship; with whom we had spent a week in his station on the Bombay side, and who had come on a return visit to me in the Punjab when the battle-painter honoured me with his company at the quiet little garrison where I was quartered at the time. We knew he had left his cavalry regiment, and had heard vaguely that he had come to grief through some financial smash. Here was our

man, and we turned at once and went after him.

"I didn't think you fellows would know me in this kit," he said, when we caught him up and laid friendly hands on him. "Most people don't seem over-anxious to recognise me now." He certainly did not look flourishing, though he had the smart carriage of the soldier about him, was as carefully shaved, and his light moustache as carefully trimmed, as if he were going on parade, and had the old buoyancy of manner. "Where will you come and lunch with us?" we both asked in a breath. "It's my dinner hour now," he told us, and somehow there was a touch of pathos in the way he said it. We proposed the Savoy grill-room to him, or Romano's across the way; but he said that, if we were anxious that he should come and eat with us, he would sooner have a cut from the saddle of mutton at Simpson's than anything else.

We turned back and went into the entrance to the old-fashioned eating-place, with its imitation marble columns, its coloured tile floor, its trees in tubs, and its two placards on either side, one announcing that a dinner from the joint is to be had for 2s. 6d., and the other that a fish dinner for 2s. 9d. is served from 12.30 P.M. to 8.30 P.M. Smith changed his mind. The last fish dinner he had eaten was at Greenwich more than half a dozen years ago, when he had asked a party of thirty down to celebrate an investment that was going to make his fortune, and if we didn't mind he would eat another now.

We took three seats at the end of one of the tables in the downstairs room. Smith looked round with an air of recognition. Nothing had changed, he said, since the days when he used to come to get a cut from the joint after a day's racing. And, indeed, Simpson's does not look like a place that changes. The big dumb-waiter in the centre of the room, almost as tall as a catafalque, with its burden of glasses and decanters, and four plated wine-coolers, one at each corner as ornament, the divisions with brass rails and little curtains that run down one side of the room; the horsehair-stuffed, black-cushioned chairs and lounges, the mirrors on one side of the room and ground-glass windows on the other; the painted garlands of flowers and fish and flesh and fowl, mellowed by age and London smoke, that fill up the vacant spaces on the wall, the ormolu clocks, the decoratively folded napkins in glasses on the mantelpieces, the hats and coats hanging in the room, the screen with many time-tables on it, the great bar window opening into the room, framing a depth of luminous shadow, all are old-fashioned. Only the two great candelabra that stand, a dozen feet high, on either side of the room have been modernised.

The waiters at Simpson's are Britannic and have that dignity which sits so well on the chairman of a company addressing his shareholders, or an M.P. entertaining his constituents, or the genuine English waiter taking an order. It is an undefinable majesty; but it exists.

Rubicund gentlemen of portly figure, dressed

in white, the carvers, leisurely push carving dishes, with plated covers, running on wheels, from customer to customer.

A benignant waiter with a grey beard had stood and accepted our order, which was, to begin with, turbot and sauce; and while with becoming dignity he conveyed the news to one of the white-coated gentlemen, Smith gave us a résumé of his history since we had all three parted at a railway station in the Punjab. He had almost been a millionaire, he had ridden as a trooper in a squadron of American cavalry, he had fought in Matabeleland, he had tried gold-mining without success; and now he was going this afternoon down to the City to meet a man who was going to finance a marvellous invention of his, and presently he would make the fortunes of the battle-painter and myself. The battle-painter and myself smiled, and fell-to on our turbot and its rubicund sauce, for we knew Smith of old. A fine big slice of firm turbot it was, but I fancy the sauce owed its deep colour and some of its substance to the artistic methods of the cook. Next Smith voted for a fried sole, while the battle-painter and I ordered stewed eels, and as the first bottle of Liebfraumilch, which Smith had preferred to any other wine or spirit, was getting near low-water mark, I asked our waiter, who somewhat resembled the ex-Speaker, to bring us another. Smith having for the moment exhausted his historical reminiscences, we could look round at our neighbours. Half a dozen country gentlemen up to see the shire-horses at Islington, most of them confining

their attention to those saddles of mutton which are the pride of Simpson's, a barrister or two, the good-looking husband of a popular actress, and four or five well-known bookmakers, for Simpson's is essentially sporting. Then our eels and the sole were brought. Smith said the sole was excellent; and except that I like my sauce with the eel a little richer than I got it at Simpson's, neither the battle-painter nor myself could find the slightest cause to grumble. The Liebfraumilch was pleasant and soft, and we were in the best of tempers when the whitebait, a trifle large, and the salmon for Smith—salmon which looked beautiful, and which we both secretly envied—arrived. A little group of men who bore the stamp of racing men about them had congregated round the bar window while we had been at table, and were being attended to by a rosy-faced maiden. Cheese and celery we paid but little attention to, for Smith, now quite the cheery, confident cavalryman of old, said that he must not miss his appointment in the City, but that when the splendid fortune that was in his grasp came to him he would give the battle-painter and myself, in return for our mid-day meal, a dinner at the Savoy that would outdo the celebrated *rouge-et-noir* one. It was pleasant to see the good fellow himself again, and we wished him success in his venture. Then, after seeing him off, we paid the bill. Dinner, 8s. 6d. (Smith's salmon was 3d. extra); two Liebfraumilch, 12s.; attendance, 9d.; total, £1 : 1 : 3.

Afterwards the battle-painter and myself went upstairs into the ladies' dining-room, a fine

room, which is lighter and fresher than the gentlemen's dining-room below, and there we had coffee and chatted with Charles Flowerdew, the head waiter, one of the real head waiters as they knew them in the old days, and listened to his stories and took a pinch of snuff out of his presentation snuff-box. And here Mr. Crathie, tall, clean-shaved, except for narrow side whiskers, with a white head of hair in which a ruddy tint still lingers, found us, and under his guidance we went farther upstairs and peeped through the glass doors into the room where half a dozen games of chess were being played. Mr. Crathie, who has been proprietor and, later, managing director of Simpson's for half a long lifetime, told us something of the history of the place, how it originally consisted only of a cigar-shop on the ground floor and the chess divan above, how he purchased it and formed it into a small company, and how now a larger company was to have control of it.

Before we left the old-fashioned house, about which the steam of saddles of mutton seems to cling, we looked in on the Knights of the Round Table, who have their club-room at Simpson's, who possess a wonderful collection ot portraits of past worthies of the club, and a unique book of playbills, whose motto is, "I will go eat with thee and see your Knights," and who once a week dine together off plain English food at the round table, one piece of mahogany, from which they draw their name.

1st March.

*** Since I wrote the above, Simpson's has been acquired by a company which has also taken over The Golden Cross Hotel, Trafalgar Square. The old place has in no way been altered by its new masters, who believe in letting well alone. Charles Flowerdew has left the upper room, and retired with, I trust, a comfortable competency; but William, who for many years was head waiter at the Cock, and has as fine a store of reminiscences as any old-fashioned waiter to be found in London, now serves in the lower room, and is in himself a mine of amusing information.

CHAPTER VI

THE HANS CRESCENT HOTEL

If I had to set an examination paper on the art of dining, one of the questions I should certainly ask the examinee would be: "What occupation or amusement would you suggest for your guests after a dinner at a restaurant on Sunday?" The Hans Crescent Hotel management have answered this question in a practical way; and not the least pleasant part of a dinner at the smart hotel Sloane Street way is the coffee and liqueur and cigarette taken under the palms in the winter garden, where the red-shaded lamps throw a gentle light, and M. Casano's band playing Czibulka's waltz-whisper, "Songe d'amour après le bal," sends one back in a dream to the days when an evening of dancing was a foretaste of the seventh heaven, and every woman was a possible divinity.

The Editor does not write long letters, but the card with his initials at the bottom gave me place and time, and told me that I should find myself one of a *partie carrée*. What was the exact reason of the dinner that the good Editor

gave to the gracious lady and the handsome niece and myself, I do not know ; but I rather think that it was a propitiatory offering made for non-appearance on the editorial tricycle when warned for escort duty to the gracious lady, who had gone that day for a long bicycle ride. If it was so, the dinner at the Hans Crescent Hotel, plus the excuse given, whether it was church-going or letter-writing, did not save the Editor during the evening from little barbed conversational shafts as to sloth and laziness and the evil habit of lying late in bed on the Sabbath morning.

I never commit the unpardonable offence of being late for dinner, and three minutes before my time I was waiting in the oak-panelled hall, which, with its stained-glass window, big staircase with a balcony at the back, its palms and great fireplace, always looks to me like an elaborate "set" for a scene in some comedy. The hands of the clock stole on to eight o'clock, and that feeling of righteousness which comes to the man who is in time when he believes that his fellow-creatures are late fell on me, when, on a sudden, M. Diette, the manager of the hotel, grey of hair and moustache, a black tie under his "Shakspeare" collar, and a faultless frock-coat, appeared, and recognising me, asked me whether by chance I was the gentleman for whom the Editor and two ladies had been waiting some ten minutes in the drawing-room. So it came that when I went into the drawing-room, where the two ladies were looking at the brocades in the panels and the editorial eye was fixed on the clock on the mantelpiece, it was I who had to

stumble through apologies, and I felt conscious that my tale of waiting in the hall sounded hideously improbable.

M. Diette himself showed us to our table in the dining-room, which is as near a reproduction of an old baronial hall as modern comfort, electric light, and civilisation will allow. The baron of old, in the days when each man cut his own portion off the roast meat with his dagger, might have been able to boast of the open fireplace in green Connemara marble and the panelled walls, but the handsome frieze and the carved oak pillars would have been beyond his artistic dreams. He would probably have preferred rushes to the Oriental rugs that half cover the oak floor, and he would certainly have thought the palmery seen through the open French window in a glow of rosy light a vision called up by some magician.

The Editor, stroking his pointed beard with satisfaction, was reading through the menu, the gracious lady and the handsome niece were noting, one by one, the celebrities dining at the other tables, and the head waiter was standing watching the Editor with the calm but deferential confidence an artist shows when an important patron is inspecting his work. A minor servitor, a thin tape of gold on the collar of his livery coat and wearing white gloves, was also in attendance, and the overture in the way of *hors-d'œuvre à la Russe* was before us.

In quick succession our ladies had named the tall, slim, titled lady in black, who had come in leaning on a stick; the good-looking young

musical critic, who was entertaining "Belle" and a very pretty girl; a newly-married Earl and his wife; the handsome stockbroker and his wife, who in the summer are to be found not far from Maidenhead Bridge, and at whose table were sitting the most hospitable of up-river hostesses and her son; a millionaire, who was entertaining a tableful of guests; and one or two titled couples whom the gracious lady knew, but whose names meant nothing to me. I was able to add my quota by pointing out a steward of the Jockey Club, at whose table was the owner of the good horse Bendigo.

The Editor, having learned that we all preferred for the moment claret to champagne, put down the menu with a little sigh of anticipatory gratitude, and ran his finger half-way down a page on the wine list. This was the menu which the gracious lady looked at, and then handed on to me:—

Hors-d'œuvre à la Russe.
Consommé Brunoise à la Royale.
Potage en tortue.
Suprême de saumon à la Chambord.
Tournedos à la Montgador.
Poularde à la Demi-Doff.
Caille rôti sur canapé.

SALADE.

Flageolets M^tre^ d'Hôtel. Bombe Chateaubriand.
Corbeilles de friandises.

The handsome niece had approved of the people at the other tables as being most of them interesting and good-looking, had said she liked

the table with its decoration of a ring of yellow flowers and leaves drawn round the basket of *friandises*, and we began dinner with good appetite and good temper.

The clear soup with its patchwork ground of minutely chopped vegetables seen through the amber of its liquid was excellent and hot; the fish deserved a special word for its sauce, in the making of which an artist's hand had been employed; and the *tournedos* with their attendant "fixings," to use an Americanism, a symphony in rich browns with the scarlet of the tomato to relieve it, gave no loophole for captious criticism. We had been talking of the respective merits of houseboats and cottages as summer residences, and from that had drifted on to the subject of the wonderful steam launch that the Editor owns, and inventions generally. The gracious lady had said her say on the wonders she knew of; and the handsome niece, not to be outdone, described the invention of the age through which by means of a little metal case half the size of the smallest pill box, every man is to make his own soda-water, which is to supersede all other inventions as a fuse for big guns, and is going to drive dynamite out of the field; and I, fired by the spirit of healthy emulation, had just started an account of the flying machine by which I hoped to reach Mars, to which the ladies, not noticing the twinkle in the Editor's eyes, were listening gravely, when the waiter brought the *poularde à la Demi-Doff*. The Editor was the only one of us who took any, and he, in very excellent French, told the head waiter, who was

hovering round, that he thought it good. Whether it was that the gracious lady had caught the tail-end of the editorial smile at my Munchausen flying-machine story, or whether the non-appearance of the tricycle was remembered, it matters not; but the Editor was gravely warned not to talk Hindustani at the dinner-table.

The quails were a trifle over-cooked, and the artistic hand which had made the sauce for the salmon had not mixed the salad, which was too vinegary. I think our negative criticism must have hurt the feelings of the waiter, who probably paused on the way from the kitchen to wipe away a tear, for the *flageolets*, excellently cooked, were not quite as hot as they should have been. Then the dinner got into its stride again, for the *bombe* was admirable.

The band had been making music for the past half-hour in the winter-garden, and the diners at the various tables had gradually left the oaken hall for the tables, each labelled with the number of the corresponding dining-tables and name of the host, reserved under the rosy lamps and the palms. The violins played with a delightful softness, the rings of cigarette smoke curled and vanished up towards the glass dome. From table to table the men went, saying a word here, staying for a chat there; and at last, when the little band had played Gounod's "Ave Maria," and ended with the wail of Miska's "Czardas," it was time to gather in the hall to say good-night and be off homewards to the land of Nod. This was the bill that I asked

the Editor to let me glance at:—Four dinners at 10s. 6d., £2 : 2s.; three bottles claret, £1 : 10s.; cafés, 3s.; liqueurs, 3s.; total, £3 : 18s.

8th March.

*** Mr. Francis Taylor has now taken Mons. Diette's place as manager. Mons. Heiligenstein, as chef, rules the roast, and boiled, and fried.

CHAPTER VII

THE BLUE POSTS (CORK STREET)

"NONE of your d—d *à la's*, and remember I won't get into dress clothes for anybody." That was what the old gentleman wrote, and it was not an easy matter to find a dining place and a theatre to go to afterwards that would suit my prospective guest.

The old gentleman lives his life in a little country town which is favourable to the growth of characters; he always wears a plain, double-breasted broadcloth coat; a bird's-eye cravat, taken twice round his old-fashioned collar, folded in a manner that would puzzle a modern valet, and secured by a fox-tooth pin; his waistcoats, the irreverent youths of the club say, descended to him from his great-grandfather, and his watch chain is a leather chin-strap. He has a particular chair by a particular window of the county club on which he sits in the afternoon of non-hunting days, and drinks one stiff glass of brandy-and-water. He has never worn a greatcoat, never missed a day's hunting for the last fifteen years, will walk a mile, run a mile, and ride a mile

against any man of his own age, and he is near seventy, dislikes the French on principle, and has never been to France, and comes to London as rarely as he can—very pressing business, the Cattle Show or a horse show being the only matters that would ever bring him up even for the day. The son, the grandson, and great-grandson of comfortable country solicitors, he preferred entertaining clients to advising them, always shut up his office on hunting days, and having a surplus of the world's goods, for a bachelor, he lives a very comfortable life in the beetle-browed old house in the High Street, with its great garden behind, its dark dining-room with a glint of reflected lights from polished mahogany and massed silver, its crooked oak staircase, its panelled passages, and bedrooms, each with a huge four-poster bed, its carved chimney-pieces and uneven floors; with, as servants, a prim housekeeper, a fat cook—the only woman, he says, in the county who can make a vension pasty—and an old butler, with whom he argues as to the port to be drunk after dinner.

I know the old gentleman's tastes, for he has asked me often enough to the wonderful oyster and woodcock lunches he gives, and the solid English dinners in which haunches of venison, saddles of mutton, great capons, turkeys almost as big as ostriches, cygnets, sucking pigs, and such-like dishes generally are the *gros pièces*, and it was not easy to select a suitable dining-place for him. He was up for the Hackney Show; had, after much pressing, consented to dine and

go to the theatre, and where to take him I did not know.

The melodrama of the moment at the Adelphi was the play I thought he would like, and, after passing by mentally my clubs, because he might not care to be the one man in morning dress among a white-cravated crowd, and the "smart" restaurants for the same reason, and also because nothing but brute force would keep a maître d'hôtel from putting an *à la* on the menu, the happy thought came to me that at the Blue Posts the fare would suit my guest well.

I went down in the early afternoon through the Burlington Arcade, with its scent of perfumers' shops and its Parisian jewellery, into Cork Street, where the tavern hides itself modestly.

I have but vague remembrances of the old house which was burned down. To-day, if one did not know that the house holds still to its reputation of being one of the very best places where old-fashioned British food is to be obtained, it might, with its tiled floors, its stained-glass windows and doors, its wall-papers of quiet artistic shades, its electric light, be one of those small restaurants where the Parisian art of cooking is cultivated. Past the stained-glass doors leading into the wine-bars, upstairs and into the dining-room, sacred to the male sex, with its six or seven little square tables, and two round ones, I went, there to find Frank, the head waiter, not yet in his evening garb, sitting and reading a paper. Frank, who, with his white moustache and whiskers and white hair parted in the centre, has still about him a suggestion of the soldier

who fought under the old Emperor William, has been for fifteen years head waiter at the Posts, and is a person to be confided in ; so I told him particulars as to the old gentleman who was to be my guest, and asked for suggestions. The bill of fare, on a long slip of paper, which Frank put into my hand would have gladdened the old gentleman's heart. There was not an *à la* on it—not a word of French, "sauce *tartare*" excepted, and entrées were rigorously excluded. Frank advised soup, saying that all the soups were made from stock, no sauces of any kind being used ; but I mistrust the Britannic soup, for we are not a nation of soupmakers, and would have none. "Grilled or fried?" was the question as to the fish, and after due discussion I ordered a grilled sole. I was all for a porterhouse steak, but at this Frank put his foot down. Rump steaks were the specialty of the house, he said, and explained how the cook kept the great joint of beef intact, only cutting a steak just before he put it on the grill, and this being so, a rump steak it had to be, with potatoes in their jackets, a salad, and cauliflower. Marrowbones completed the dinner. For wine I ordered a bottle of Beaune supérieur and a pint of port.

At 7.45 to the second my old gentleman, his clean-shaven, ruddy face bringing a breath of country air with it, appeared, and as we sat at our table and waited for the sole, of which the cook had started the cooking as soon as I set foot within the dining-room, I was given much information as to the hackneys, told of some marvellous runs that the county hounds had had

lately, and was lectured on the iniquity of the farmers wiring their fences. Then we looked at the room and the company. The proof print of the coronation of Her Majesty which hangs on the soft green-coloured wall was approved of as being patriotic, the frieze with its little tablets bearing the names of authors and composers and the stained-glass windows and skylight were considered Frenchified, and the Parian statuettes on the mantelpiece were dismissed as fal-lals. I wished that some of the stately bucks, habitués of old days, had been dining there — Mr. Weatherby in his blue coat and brass buttons, and a great publisher with his black satin stock; for the young gentlemen who sat at the other tables, most of them in dress clothes, though irreproachably correct, were not picturesque.

Frank brought the sole, piping hot, still sizzling, from the bars. The cook had given it the necessary squeeze of lemon, and, watching my guest, I could see that the first item of my dinner was a success. The Beaune, warmed to just the right temperature, was as good a Burgundy as a man could wish with his dinner. Then came the steak, not a thin slab of meat, but a fine, impressive solid mass of beef, great of depth and size, the typical dish for Englishmen. I cut it, and in the centre there was the ruddy flush which is as pleasing to the devout diner as the blush on a maiden's cheek is to the devout lover. The great potatoes, cooked in their skins, were so hot that they burned our fingers, the cauliflower was excellent, and there was a delicious beetroot salad powdered with spring

onion. "Damme!" said the old gentleman, "they understand what a steak is, here." Then came the marrow-bones, each swathed in its napkin with its attendant square of toast leaning up against it. Now the first essential in a marrow-bone is that it should be hot, and the second that it should contain at least a fair amount of marrow. Our bones were so hot that they could hardly be held in spite of the protecting napkin, and from each gushed forth a flood of the steaming delicacy.

We sat and sipped our port, and trifled with a Cheddar cheese. My old gentleman had objected to the waiters in such a Britannic house being of foreign birth; but I comforted him by telling him of the battles against the French in which Frank had taken part, and of the history of his maimed hand. "Fought the French, did he?" said the old gentleman. "That's good. Damme, that's very good!" He had put a date to the port, and opened his eyes when I told him how little I was charged for it. Indeed, all the items of my bill were small. Dinners, 10s. 6d.; Burgundy, 7s.; port, 5s. 6d.; total, £1 : 3s.

"I hope you have not dined badly?" I asked my guest as we rose to take cab for the Adelphi. "Well, my boy; *very* well," said the old gentleman.

15*th March.*

CHAPTER VIII

VERREY'S (REGENT STREET)

THE little curly-headed, light-haired page, who is the modern Mercury, in that he gives warning when one is rung up at the telephone in the club, came to me in the reading-room and told me that a lady at the Hotel Cecil wished to speak to me.

"Hullo! Are you there?" was answered by a "Yes" in a lady's voice, and in a few seconds I was informed that Myra Washington was in London, that she would like to see me, that she would be busy all the afternoon shopping, but that if I was not otherwise engaged I might take her out to dinner and to a show afterwards.

Mrs. Washington is a lady whom it is a liberal education to have the honour of being acquainted with, for she knows most people who are worth knowing in Europe, has been to most places worth seeing, and is in every way cosmopolitan. She is generally taken for a Russian, until she speaks, chiefly, I think, because of her hair, which is so light that it is

almost white, and because she smokes cigarettes at every possible moment. She is to be found in Paris, where she has a flat in one of the avenues branching from the Arc de Triomphe, and where she is kind enough, most years, to give me *déjeuner* on the morning of the Grand Prix. But her movements are always erratic. I first made her acquaintance at Suez, where I had the honour to be recorded on the tablets of her memory as having delivered her from some impertinent Arab hawkers, and she showed me what American hospitality is during the exhibition at Chicago, in which city her husband, John P. Washington, is always making or losing fortunes in the wheat pit.

I was glad, therefore, to hear the pretty lady's voice again, even though filtered through a telephone, and I proposed innumerable plans to her. She had come to London from Cannes to meet John, who was running over from America for a couple of days on business, and wanted to do as much as possible in the shortest time. She had been to the Gaiety after dining at the Savoy her first night in London, had lunched at Willis's and seen a matinée at Daly's, dined at the Princes' Hall and spent the evening at the Palace on the second, and now I was to be responsible for her evening's amusement on the third evening.

Did she know Verrey's? And as a reply I was asked whether I thought she knew her own name. Then would she dine with me at the restaurant in Regent Street, and I would have a box for her at the Empire afterwards? and Mrs.

Washington said she would. "If I may, I will come and call for you at a little before eight," I said promptly, and Mrs. Washington wanted to know whether there were bandits in Regent Street. Eventually, I was told that if I was cooling my feet in the entrance at 8 to a second I should have the felicity of helping her out of her cab.

To give Mrs. Washington a satisfactory dinner is not one of the easiest things in the world, for she understands the art of dining, and is, as well, a most excellent cook herself when she chooses ; so it was with a full sense of the responsibility I had incurred that I sought Mr. Krehl, the elder of the two brothers in whose hands Verrey's now is, and found him in the café. He knew Mrs. Washington, of course, and hearing that it was she who was to be my guest, he called in his brother Albert, almost a twin in resemblance to him, who now devotes all his time to the management of the restaurant, and we held a solemn council of three. I am a very strong believer myself in small dinners, but it was difficult to make up a menu which would be sufficiently substantial, without appearing gluttonous, for two. I held out against the second entrée ; but the sense of the house was distinctly against me, and the *pouding Saxon* was an addition that I did not approve of, but gave in, being outvoted. This was the dinner that we settled on before I started home to dress :—

Petite marmite.
Œufs à la Russe.
Soufflé de filets de sole à la Verrey.
Timbale Lucullus.
Noisettes d'agneau à la Princesse.
Petits pois à la Française.
Pommes Mirelle.
Aiguillettes de caneton à l'Orange.
Salade Vénétienne.
Pouding Saxon.
Salade de fruits.

Mrs. Washington, enveloped in a great furry white cloak, and with a lace covering to her head, was punctual to the second, and as we settled down to our table in the dining-room, with its silver arches to the roof, caught and reflected a hundred times by the mirrors, and its suave dark-green panels, which formed an excellent background to the cream-coloured miracle of a dress that Mrs. Washington was wearing, she told me a few of the events of the last few weeks. She had stayed in New York for the second Assembly, and had gone from New York to the Riviera, where Cannes had been her headquarters, and I incidentally was given full particulars as to doings of the ladies' club there. Now, pausing for one night in Paris to see the new Palais Royal piece, which is a play, so Mrs. Washington says, that no respectable girl could take her grandmother to see, she had run over to England to meet John, and afterwards was going to leisurely travel to Seville, getting there in time for the Holy Week processions.

The soup, admirably hot, had been placed

before us by the waiter, in plain evening clothes, while Mrs. Washington talked and pulled off her long white gloves, and before using her spoon she took in the company dining at the many little square tables, lighted by wax red-shaded candles, in one comprehensive glance ; smiled to the well-known journalist whose love for dogs forms a bond between him and the Messrs. Krehl, themselves powers in the dog world ; thought that the ruddy-haired prima donna looked well and showed no signs of her recent illness ; wanted to know if it was true that the celebrated musician, who was dining with his wife, was to be included in the next birthday list of honours ; and nodded to a gentleman with long black whiskers, her banker in Paris, who was entertaining a party of a dozen.

The *œufs à la Russe*, with their attendant *vodkhi*, met with Mrs. Washington's approval : there were no flies on them, was her expression. We did not quite agree as to the *soufflé*, I daring to say that though the fish part of the dish was admirable I thought the *soufflé* covering might have been lighter, a statement which my guest at once countered, and, by her superior knowledge of culinary detail reduced me to silence, overcome but certainly not convinced. As to the *timbale*, with its savoury contents of quenelles, foie gras, cocks'-combs, and truffles, there could be no two opinions ; it was excellent, and the same might be said of the *noisettes*, each with its accompanying *fond d'artichaut*, and the new peas with a leaf of mint boiled with them. Mrs. Washington would have preferred *pommes soufflées*

to *pommes Mirelle*, but I could hardly have known that when ordering dinner. The Venetian salad, a little tower of many-coloured vegetables, looking like poker chips, Mrs. Washington said, peas, beans, truffles, potatoes, beetroot, flavoured by a slice of *saucisson* and dressed with whipped white of eggs, was one of the triumphs of the dinner, and so was the *salade de fruits*. For Mrs. Washington to praise a fruit salad is a high honour, for she is one of the favoured people for whom François, late of the Grand Hotel, Monte Carlo and now of the Hotel Cecil, deigns to mix one with his own hands. The gourmets of Europe say that as a salad maker no man can approach François. I personally uphold the fruit salads that Frederic, of the Tour d'Argent, makes as being perfection, but Europe and America vote for François. I was told that the *pouding Saxon* was an unnecessary item, and I was rather glad, for I had shied at it when ordering dinner.

I reminded Mrs. Washington, who was sipping her Perrier Jouet lazily, that the Empire ballet begins comparatively early, and to be in time for it, which she insisted on, we had to hurry over our coffee (which is always admirable at Verrey's) and liqueurs, and the cigarette, which is a necessary of life to the lady. Then, while Mrs. Washington drew on the long white gloves again, I paid the bill:—hors-d'œuvre, 1s.; potage, 1s. 6d.; poisson, 3s.; entrées, 2s. 6d. and 3s.; pommes, 6d.; légumes, 1s.; rôti, 10s. 6d.; salade, 1s.; entremets, 3s.; café, 1s.; liqueur, 2s.;

cigarettes, 2d.; Perrier Jouet, 1889, 13s.; total, £2 : 4 : 2.

22nd March.

*** I asked Mr. Albert Krehl to give me an idea of any special dishes which Verrey's is proud of, and pausing by the way to tell me how the house has always tried to wean its patrons from the cut from the joint at déjeuner time, and to induce them to eat small and light dinners, he said that entremet ices were one of the delights that Verrey's prides itself on, dwelt lovingly on a description of an *entrecôte Olga*, and then reeled off *œufs à la Russe*, *omelette foies de volaille*, *sole Polignac*, *filets de sole à la Belle Otero*, *glace Trianon*, *sole à la Verrey*, which has a flavouring of Parmesan, *moules à la Marinière*, *poulet Parmentier en casserole*.

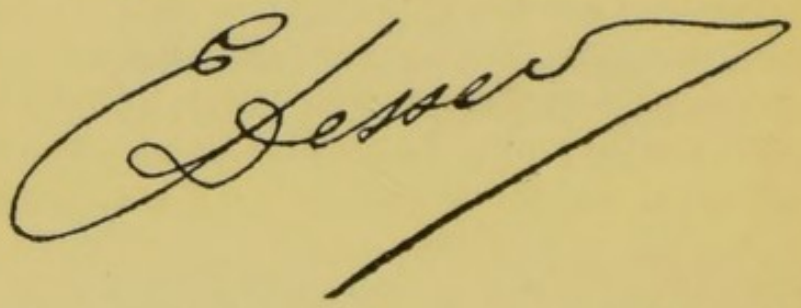
If the Messrs. Krehl counsel small dinners in the salle, they do not always do so for the private rooms upstairs. This is the menu of a dinner at which H.R.H. the Prince of Wales was present :—

Œufs à la Kavigote
(Vodkhi).
Bisque d'écrevisses. Consommé Okra.
Rougets à la Muscovite.
Selle de mouton de Galles.
Haricots panachés. Tomates au gratin.
Pommes soufflées.
Timbale Lucullus.
Fonds d'artichauts. Crème pistache.
Grouse.
Salad Rachel.
Biscuit glacé à la Verrey.
Soufflé de laitances.
Dessert.

Mr. Krehl gave me the *recette* of the *timbales à la Lucullus*. Here it is—

Timbale Lucullus

La garniture Lucullus se compose de : crêtes de coq, rognons de coq, truffes en lames, quenelles de volaille truffées, champignons, foie gras dans une demi-glace bien reduite, un filet de madère, et un jus de truffes.



The Lucullus garnish is composed of cocks' combs, cocks' kidneys, truffles cut in slices, chicken quenelles, made with truffles, mushrooms, foie-gras well stewed down in a semi-liquid glaze,[1] with just a suspicion of Madeira, and a gravy made from truffles.

[1] Or a glaze which has not been boiled down so as to make it a very stiff jelly.

CHAPTER IX

THE HOTEL CECIL (THE STRAND)

It was in the noble cause of conversion of fellow-man that I dined at the Hotel Cecil. One of my uncles, the Nabob—so called by us because he spent many years in the gorgeous East—affects the belief that there is no good curry to be had outside the portals of his club, the East India ; and for that reason, when he is not dining at home, dines nowhere but there. I would not dare to trifle with the Nabob's digestion, for I have reason to believe that he has remembered me in his will ; but I also thought that he should not be allowed to go to his grave with the erroneous impression that curry can only be made out of India in St. James's Square. I have eaten good curry at the Criterion, where a sable gentleman is charged with its preparation, and I also remembered that at the Cecil they make a speciality of their curries.

The Nabob, doubting much, said that he would dine with me ; and, with the possibility of the alteration of the terms of that will always before me, I went down to the Hotel Cecil to

interview M. Bertini on the morning of the day of the dinner.

Three gentlemen in gorgeous uniforms, and with as much gold lace round their caps as a field-marshal wears, received me at the door. A clerk in the reception bureau took my card, wrote something mysterious on a slip of paper, and sent a page-boy in blue off on the search for M. Bertini, while I stood and contemplated the great marble staircase.

M. Bertini would see me directly, I was told ; and I went down a floor or two in the lift and was shown into a comfortable room, the big table in the centre covered with papers, a telephone at either side of the armchair by the table, and on the walls sketches for the uniforms of the gentlemen with gold-laced caps who had received me, a caricature of M. Bertini, and drawings of various Continental hotels. A yellow dog which had been asleep under the chiffonier rose, stretched himself, inspected me, and apparently thought me harmless, for he went to sleep again. Presently in came M. Bertini himself, looking cool and neat, his beard closely clipped, his moustache brushed out. I had interfered with his morning round of inspection ; but he could spare a minute or two to talk over my needs for the evening. I told him at once what I wanted : a dinner for two with the curry course as the most important item, and M. Bertini, who is an expert in cookery, took a slip of paper and sketched out a menu. Here it is :—

Hors-d'œuvre variés.
Consommé Sarah Bernhardt.

Filet de sole à la Garbure.
Côtes en chevreuil. Sauce poivrade.
Haricots verts à la Villars.
Pommes Cécil.
Mousse de foie gras et jambon au champagne.
Curry à l'Indienne.
Bombay Duck, etc. etc.
Asperges.
Bombe à la Cécil.
Petites friandises choisies.

We had a table in the corner of the great restaurant, with its dozen marble pillars, its walnut panelling, its tapestries, the gilt Cecil arms on a great square of red velvet, its great crystal lamps that hold the electric light, its fireplaces of Sicilian marble, its gilt ceiling, its musicians' gallery in one corner. The waiters with their white aprons bustled silently about setting down the *hors-d'œuvre*, the important person with the silver chain round his neck took the order for a bottle of Deutz and Gelderman, and the curry cook, clothed in white samite, and with his turban neatly rolled, came up to make his salaam, and was immediately tackled by the Nabob, who in fluent Hindustani put him through an examination in the art of curry-making, which was apparently satisfactory, for he was dismissed with a *Bot atcha*.

Then the Nabob, hook-nosed, clean-shaven, except for two thin side-whiskers, turned to me. "When I was at Mhow, in '54, Holkar—not the present man, but his grandfather, had a curry cook named Afiz, who——" and just then the waiter brought the soup, which I was glad of,

for I knew my uncle's story of Holkar and Afiz, and how the cook was to have been beheaded for giving his Highness a mutton curry instead of an egg one, and was saved by the Nabob's interference, and I knew that it took half an hour in the telling. The *consommé Sarah Bernhardt*, which has a foundation of turtle, to which is added *consommé de volaille*, *quenelles* and parsley, was worthy of M. Coste, erstwhile of Cubats', the gorgeous restaurant in the Champs Elysées, who has deserted the banks of the Seine for those of the Thames ; and the *filet de sole à la Garbure*, over the description of the cooking of which M. Guy Gagliardelly, the most attentive of *maîtres d'hôtel*, waxed eloquent, was another masterpiece of the kitchen. It is a variation of the *filet de sole Mornay*, having vegetables added to it.

Then came a pause, and with it the Nabob's opportunity. "Holkar never gave a great curry feast without asking me to it, for he said that I was the only European who understood what a curry should be——" and just then the waiter put down our cutlets before us, and M. Gagliardelly was at my elbow to explain that the *haricots verts* were prepared with flour and egg and then fried like a sole, and M. Laurent, the *chef du restaurant*, who had been going the round of the tables, told us the secret of *pommes Cécil*.

My uncle drew a long breath, and I knew what was coming, when luckily a lady with a great dog-collar of diamonds passed and attracted his attention, and I staved off the dissertation on curries for a few minutes by telling him of the

wonderful diamond stomacher the lady possessed, which made the collar look only like a row of brilliants. I called the Nabob's attention, too, to a quiet, almost shabbily-dressed gentleman, dining with his wife and two little girls, for he is a man with an estate in Australia big enough to form a principality in the Balkans, and people talk of the revenue he gets from his flocks and herds with a sort of awe. A little French chansonnette singer; the editor of a Society newspaper; a well-known musician and his daughter, who is a rising young actress, were other people of interest to be pointed out; and by that time our two wedges of the delicately-coloured *mousse*, with its flavouring gained from tongue and champagne and old brandy, were before us. The *mousse* was the only dish in the dinner that was really open to criticism, and I do not think that I am captious when I say that I prefer it made less solidly than M. Coste's creation at the Cecil.

Then came the dish of the evening, a tender spring-chicken for the foundation of the curry, and all the accessories, Bombay duck, that crumpled in our fingers to dust, paprika cakes, thinner than a sheet of note-paper, and chutnees galore, to add to the savoury mess. It was a genuine Indian curry, and the curry cook, his hands joined in the attitude of polite deference, stood and watched rather anxiously the Nabob take his first mouthful. I myself think the Malay curries the best in the world, those wonderful preparations of prawns, fish, fowl, meat, or vegetable, with one great curry as the foundation

swimming in the delicious semi-liquid, which has always the taste of fresh cocoa-nut, with half a dozen subsidiary curries, and then a host of *sambals*, little dishes of *ota-ota*, which is fish brains pounded in cream, fresh cocoa-nut and chili, beans, shredded ham, Bombay duck, and a hundred other relishes; and I put next to it the Ceylon curry. But the Nabob swears by the curries of India, and even the old Quai Haies of his club pay attention when he gives his decision on a question of feeding. "Er, um, yes, good," said the old gentleman, and the cook salaamed. "Good, decidedly. I don't say as good as we get it at the club"—he was bound to say this—"but decidedly good." The success of the dinner was made, and I felt relieved in my mind as to the will. The asparagus and the *bombe*, with an electrically illuminated ice windmill as a background, were but the skirmishes after the pitched battle had been won.

As I lighted a cigarette, the Nabob, who does not smoke, began again. "Holkar always invited me and a fellow Aziz, whose life I saved—that's a devilish good story that I must tell you some day—used to make one special curry of lambs' tongues, which he called after me." "Pardon me, uncle, while I pay my bill," I said as a last resource, and this was the bill I paid:—Soup, 2s.; filet de sole, 3s.; côte de mouton, 3s.; haricots verts, 1s. 6d.; pommes, 1s.; mousse, 4s.; curry, 3s. 6d.; asperges, 7s. 6d.; bombe, 2s.; two cafés, 2s.; liqueurs, 3s.; cigarettes, 1s.; wine, 15s.; total, £2 : 8 : 6.

29th March.

*** M. Bertini has left the Cecil and Mr. A. Judah, young, alert, with something of the cavalry officer in his appearance, reigns in his stead. Mons. François has deserted Monte Carlo and the Grand Hotel for the Strand and the Cecil, and now has charge of the restaurant. François has seen the rise of Monte Carlo, having been a dweller in Monaco before Mons. Blanc turned a rocky hill into a paradise by establishing a hell in the centre of it. To hear him tell the story of the early days of the Casino is very interesting. Mons. Laurent is now the *maître d'hôtel* at the Continental.

Mr. Judah was kind enough to give me the *recette* for the *consommé Sarah Bernhardt*, the soup I thought so excellent when I dined at the Cecil, and I also asked him to suggest a dinner for six people, with some specialities of the Cecil included in it.

Here is the *recette*, and here the menu, with an asterisk against the dishes which are specialities of the Cecil cuisine :—

Caviar frais de Sterlet.
Consommé Sarah Bernhardt.
* Suprême de truite Astronome.
* Poularde soufflée Cecil.
Selle d'agneau de Pauillac rôtie.
Petits pois nouveaux.
Caneton de Rouen à la Presse.
Salade de cœurs de Romaine.
Asperges de Lauris. Sauce mousseline.
Pêches rafraichies au marasquin.
Comtesse Marie glacée.
Paniers de petits fours.
Fruits.

Consommé Sarah Bernhardt

Il faut d'abord avoir un bon consommé de volaille; le lier avec du tapioca grillé, que l'on jette dedans pendant qu'il bouille, et laisser cuire environ trois quarts d'heure; y ajouter une infusion de cerfeuil, estragon, coriandre, avec une pointe de cayenne, ainsi qu'une ou deux eschalottes et un ou deux champignons émincés revenus au vieux Madère sec; verser le tout dans le consommé et laisser cuire environ dix minutes. Passer au linge fin ou à l'étamine; garnir de peluches, de petites quenelles d'écrevisses et de ronds de moëlle coupés à l'emporte, pièce d'environ un centimètre d'épaisseur.

You must first have a good stock, made from poultry, then add to it roasted tapioca, which you throw in while the stock is boiling. Let it cook for about three-quarters of an hour, then add to it an infusion of chervil, tarragon, coriander, and a pinch of cayenne pepper, as well as one or two shalots, and one or two minced mushrooms, which have been soaked in old dry Madeira. Pour the whole into the stock, and let it cook for about ten minutes. Pass through fine muslin or a sieve; garnish with little quenelles of crayfish, grated bread-crumbs, and rounds of marrow, cut out with the cutter, about three-quarters of an inch in thickness.

CHAPTER X

GATTI'S (THE STRAND)

I WAS somewhat in a quandary. I was going to the new play at the St. James's, and had made up my mind to dine at a little club not far from Charing Cross, of which I have the honour to be a member. I went into the sacred portals. I found the hall without a hat or coat hung up in it, and entering the big room of the club I disturbed the meditation of the club servants. There was, for a wonder, nobody in the club, no one had ordered dinner, and as I do not like being a solitary diner at a long table, with three guardian angels in white jackets hovering round me, I made up my mind to go and have my chop elsewhere. My time was short, for I was anxious not to miss a word of the first act. Any of the dinners of the hotels in Northumberland Avenue would be too long for my time; but I was within a stone's throw of Gatti's and thought that I would revisit an old haunt and revive memories of my days of subalternhood.

When I had a large crop of curly hair on my head, and just enough down to pull on my upper

lip, when a small allowance and a sub-lieutenant's 5s. 3d. a day were all my wealth and I never entered the portals of Cox's Bank without trembling, I used to go much to Gatti's. If I had the felicity of entertaining a lady at a *tête-à-tête* dinner my ambition did not rise to the Café Royal—the Savoy and Princes' Hall, and Willis's and the rest did not exist at that time—where I should have fingered the money in my pocket and should have been desperately nervous when the waiter appeared with the bill. I went instead to Gatti's. One could get a large amount of good food at a very easy tariff there, one knew exactly the price of everything from the card, and there was no smiling head waiter with a nest of plovers' eggs at 7s. 6d. apiece, or a basket of strawberries for a guinea, to set one's poverty against one's gallantry. *Asti spumante*, too, is much cheaper than champagne, and I think most of the fair sex really like it better. Be that as it may, the financial question was the prominent one, and I sometimes found myself standing waiting at the Strand entrance alongside a gigantic porter and a huge hound. I made great friends with both the big man and the big dog, and, if after a quarter of an hour's waiting, my fair guest did not appear the big man invariably consoled me with, "Do not despaire, saire. Perhaps the lady 'as a dronken cabman."

Gatti's was not then as it is now. There was the straight run in from Adelaide Street, where strange-looking foreigners sat at the marble-topped little tables and made the most of one portion of some dish piled high with macaroni,

and there was the curving entrance-hall leading in from the Strand, with its white-clothed tables, and its steps up to the biggest room, and between the long gallery with its clothless tables and the aristocratic end of the restaurant the Messrs. Gatti sat at an oval desk to which each waiter brought every dish that was to be served, and there was a mysterious interchange of what looked like metal tokens. All the theatrical demigods of my subalternhood used to be at the tables too. There I first (off the stage) saw Nelly Power, whose photograph had adorned my room at Harrow, and a gay young fellow called Toole, and another named Lionel Brough, and H. J. Byron, and half a hundred more. The modern lights of the stage and the dramatists go to Gatti's still, and no doubt are furtively stared at now by youngsters such as I was then. There were many interesting people at Gatti's in those days, as there are now, and most fascinating to me was an old aide-de-camp of Garibaldi, a fine, white-moustached old man in a slouch hat and voluminous cloak, with something of the look of his great chief about him, who always ordered only one dish, and that of the cheapest. The halfpenny he gave the waiter as a tip was always received with as many thanks as a reckless young swell's half-sovereign would be.

The entrance from King William Street is new since those days, and so is the room it leads into, making Gatti's, with its triple entrances, rather like the crest of the Isle of Man. I went in by this new entrance, noticing that the house

next door had also been absorbed into the restaurant, and found myself again in the familiar scene of bustle. Every table was taken ; here a single gentleman, pegging away at his cut from the joint, there a family party, the father with a napkin tucked under his chin, the child with one tied round its neck. There was a party of girls in much-flowered hats who unmistakably belonged to some theatre ; two dramatists with a bundle of brown-paper-covered manuscript on the table between them ; a little costumier in blue spectacles eating silently, while a light-bearded gentleman, who is the best-known perruquier in London, was telling him volubly of the wonderful wigs that Mdme. Sarah Bernhardt had ordered for her new piece. The dramatists would have had me stay and eat at their table ; but I wanted to go if possible to my old seat, and so went on to the largest room, the centre of the restaurant, where I used to retain a corner table. Not a seat was to be had, everywhere were parties of respectable citizens and their wives in broadcloth and stuff, and the bustling waiters in dress clothes and black ties could only look round helplessly when I asked them to find me a table. I was the one man in dress clothes in the room, the waiters excepted, and I began to think, as I stood rather desolately amid all the bustle and clatter, that I should have done more wisely to dine in solitary dignity at the club, when I looked towards the table where the two Messrs. Gatti in old days, when they were not at the desk, used to sit, for they were always together, and there was the survivor of the two sitting in

his accustomed seat. The author of *Captain Swift*, who had been sitting opposite to him, talking, no doubt, about a coming play for the Adelphi, rose at that moment, and Mr. Gatti, seeing my dilemma, motioned me to the vacant seat. We none of us grow younger, and as I shook Mr. Gatti's hand I thought that, though his hair, brushed straight back from the forehead, and his moustache are hardly touched with grey, he was looking very careworn.

One of the managers, in frock-coat and black tie, was at my elbow with the bill of fare. *Croûte au pot*, printed in bigger letters than the rest of the dishes, first caught my eye, and I ordered that; and, skipping the long list of fish and entrées, I was puzzling as to which of the many joints to have a cut from, when the manager suggested braised mutton, which I thought sounded well, and for drink I would have a big glass of cold lager-beer.

I looked round the rooms. Except for the new rooms and a new serving-room, everything seemed very much the same as of past times. The crowd at the marble-topped tables was not quite so picturesque as that I remembered of old; but the great counter, with its backing of dark wood and looking-glass, its lager-beer engine, and its army of bottles, was there, the oval desk with its two occupants was there, the carvers with the big dish-covers running up and down on chains were there. The decorations of blue and gold were of the same colours that I recall, the stained window I remembered, but a new portrait of the late Mr. Terriss, the actor, in the

well-known grey suit, looked down on me from the wall.

The soup, strong and hot, with its accompanying vegetables on a separate plate, was brought, and, having disposed of it, I thought that it was a good opportunity to interview Mr. Gatti as to the transformations of the restaurant and as to his theatrical speculations. I learned that the first state of the Adelaide Gallery was a long entrance leading to one big room, that the floor of the restaurant was where the cellars are now, and that two balconies at that time ran round the room. Bit by bit the various changes were explained to me, until the advent of the braised mutton, with white beans and new potatoes, brought a pause. Capital mutton it was—a huge helping too—and the lager-beer delightfully cold and light. "A concert season at Covent Garden was your first theatrical speculation, was it not?" I had begun, when my eye caught the clock over the arch. I wanted to hear about Covent Garden and the Adelphi and the Vaudeville, and I wanted to eat cheese and drink coffee and some of the excellent old brandy the restaurant has; but the hands of the clock pointed to twenty minutes to eight, and at a quarter to eight the curtain would rise at the St. James's, so I called for my bill. Soup, 1s. 6d.; entrée, 1s. 4d.; vegetable, 4d.; bread, 1d.; beer, 6d.; total, 3s. 9d.

5th April.

CHAPTER XI

THE SAVOY UNDER MONS. RITZ (THAMES EMBANKMENT)

THE first information that I received as to Mrs. "Charlie" Sphinx having returned from Cannes was in a little note from the lady herself, delivered on Sunday at lunch-time, to the effect that Charlie had been asked to dine that evening with his official chief, and that if I was not otherwise engaged I might take my choice between dining quietly with the pretty lady at her home, or taking her out somewhere to dinner.

I went to the telephone at once.

"No. 35,466, if you please"; and being switched on to the Savoy, and having asked for a table, I received the answer I expected, having applied so late, that every one was taken, but that the management would do what they could to find space for me in a supplementary room. This meant dining in one of the smaller dining-rooms, and as at the Savoy the view of one's neighbours and their wives is no unimportant part of the Sunday dinner, I went to head-quarters at once, and asked if M. Echenard, the

manager, was in the hotel, and if he was, would he come to the telephone and speak to me.

M. Echenard was in the hotel, and as soon as I had secured his ear I made an appeal to him that would have melted the heart of any tyrant. I wanted to take Mrs. Sphinx out to dinner, and he must be aware that it would be quite impossible for her to dine anywhere except in the big room of the restaurant.

"If it is possible, it shall be done," said M. Echenard, and, telling him that I would come down by cab at once and order dinner, I switched off the telephone, wrote to Mrs. Sphinx that I should like to have the felicity of taking her out, and would call for her a little after eight, and then went down by cab to the Savoy.

In the office on the ground-floor, an office crowded up with books and papers, I found M. Echenard—who, with his little moustache with the ends turned upwards and carefully trimmed beard, always has something of the look of the Spanish señores that Velasquez used to paint—and his spectacled secretary.

I could have a table in the big room, I was told, and, having achieved this, I wanted to be given one of the two tables on either side of the door of entrance, tables from which one can see better than any others the coming and going of the guests. This was impossible. There was, however, a table for two which had been engaged, but the taker of which had given up his claim at the last moment; and though dukes and scions of Royalty would have to feed in the supplementary rooms, Mrs. Sphinx should have that table.

The ordering of the dinner came next, and to take on one's self the responsibility of this with such a chef as Maître Escoffier in the kitchen is no small matter.

Hors-d'œuvre, of course, and then I suggested *Bortch* as the soup, for of all the restaurants where they make this excellent Russian dish the Savoy takes the palm.

Timbales de filets de sole à la Savoy, hinted M. Echenard, and though I didn't quite know what that was, it sounded well, and went down on the slip of paper. I wanted a *mousse* for the entrée, for I know that there are no such *mousses* to be got elsewhere as the Maître can make ; and then M. Echenard suggested *Poulet de grain Polonaise*, and as he described the method of cooking, and how the juices of the liver soaked into the bird, and the essence of the chicken permeated the liver, I gave up my first idea of the celebrated *canard en chemise*. That was my idea of a little dinner, but M. Echenard insisted on the finishing touches being administered by a *parfait de foie gras*, English asparagus, and *pêches glacées vanille*. It was a dinner that had, perhaps, an unusual amount of cold dishes in it ; but it is one of the customs of Savoy cookery to have, if possible, one cold dish at least in the menu, for, the hot dishes being served scrupulously unadorned, the cold ones give M. Escoffier and his staff a chance of showing what they can do in the way of decoration.

Mrs. "Charlie" Sphinx, being a soldier's wife, was ready to the second when I called for her, and during the few moments that I had to wait

in the ante-room of the restaurant, with its two fireplaces, its white-and-gold paper, great palms in pots, comfortable armchairs of terra-cotta colour, and Satsuma china, I could look with a comfortable superiority on the less lucky men who were sitting staring at the door and looking disappointed each time that the African gentleman, whose place is there, swung it back to admit some lady who was not the much-expected guest.

Mrs. Sphinx was in blue and white, and was wearing diamonds and turquoises. She had on for the first time a new diamond crescent, and looking round the room where everybody was smart I was pleased to be aware that the lady I had the honour of squiring was quite the smartest there.

And the company in the restaurant, the great room with mahogany panels, golden frieze and gold and red ceiling, of the Savoy on a Sunday night is as fine a society salad as any capital in the world can show. There was on this particular evening in our immediate vicinity, a lady who once won celebrity on the stage, which she left to take a title, and then become the chatelaine of one of the great historical houses of England; there was a good-looking fellow who was one of the best-known men about town and left fops-alley at the opera for the green-room of a comedy theatre; there was an Indian prince, the first swallow of the dusky, jewelled flight that comes each summer to our shores; there was the manager of one of the best-known of our comedy theatres, with whom was dining one of the most

beautiful of our actresses and her husband ; there was a lady who has the notoriety of having nearly ruined the heir to the throne of one of the kingdoms of Europe, and whose brown diamonds are the envy of all the connoisseurs of the world ; there was a party of South African stockbrokers, who from their appearance did not suggest wealth, but whose united incomes would make the revenues of half a dozen Balkan principalities. And around the tables the waiters in their white aprons and the *maîtres d'hôtel* and the silver-chained *sommeliers* moved noiselessly, and the master-spirit of the whole, M. Ritz, just back from Rome, with his hands clasped nervously, almost, with his short whiskers and carefully-clipped moustache, a duplicate of the present Secretary of State for War, went from table to table with a carefully graduated scale of acknowledgment of the patrons. M. Echenard was there also, and there is no restaurant in the world in which the chain of responsibility from manager to waiter is carried out with greater thoroughness. Mrs. "Charlie" Sphinx was doubtful as to trying the caviar. I should have remembered that she did not care for it ; but the grey-green delicacy in its setting of ice tempted her, and she owned to almost liking it. About the *Bortch* soup there could be no two questions, and the cream stirred into the hot, strong liquid makes it, in my humble opinion, the best soup in the world. The fish, a fish-pie, with its macaroni and shrimps, was delicious, and then came the triumph of the dinner. Cased in its jelly covering, served on a great block of ice,

melting like snow in the mouth, Maître Escoffier's *mousse* was an absolute masterpiece. The *poulet*, too, was as good to eat as it had sounded when M. Echenard had described it to me, and the *parfait de foie gras* was another delight. The asparagus and the ice were but the trifles of the dinner; but the ice swan that bore the little mock peaches was a very graceful piece of table decoration.

Mrs. Sphinx through dinner, while sipping her glass of Clicquot, had told me all the gossip of southern France; of the dance at the club at Cannes at which she had arranged the cotillon and led it; of the races of the big yachts for the various cups; of a magnificent scheme she had evolved, by which, now that the Guards have been sent on foreign service, Gibraltar was to become a second Monte Carlo or Nice, a scheme which would involve a few batteries and case-mates being removed to make way for a casino, and when we had drunk our café Turc, brought by the brightly clothed Asiatic, and when I had smoked my cigarette and my guest had despoiled the great basket of roses on the table, the band, which plays delightfully, softly, and unobtrusively, had come to the end of its programme, and it was time to be moving. This was the bill, a moderate one for such an admirable dinner:— Two couverts, 1s.; bortch, 3s.; sole savoy, 6s.; mousse jambon, 6s.; poulet polonaise, 8s.; salade, 2s.; foie gras, 6s.; asperges verts, 7s. 6d.; pêches glacées vanille, 7s.; one bottle champagne 133, 15s.; café, 2s.; liqueurs, 2s.; total, £3 : 5 : 6.

When I put Mrs. Sphinx down at her house-door, her last words were, "That *mousse* was an absolute dream."

12*th April.*

*** The following are the *recette* of the *timbale de filets de sole Savoy*, kindly written out for me by Maître Escoffier, and two menus of typical Savoy dinners for a party that numbers six or eight, a dinner-party in fact.

Timbale de filets de sole Savoy

(*Proportions pour six couverts*)

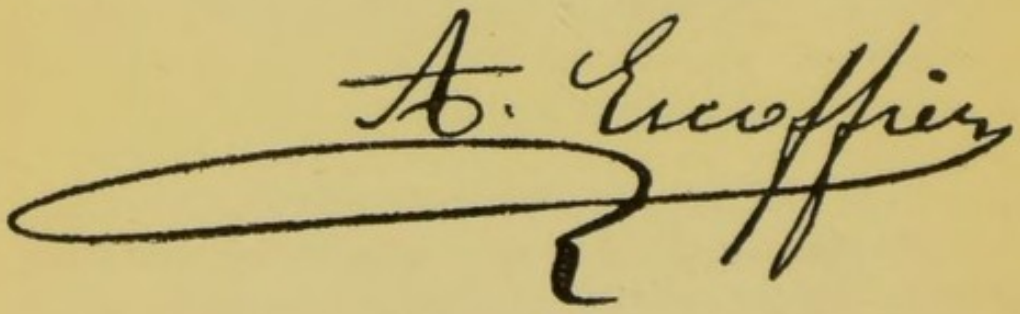
Avec de la pâte à foncer, préparez et cuisez une croûte à timbale ; après l'avoir vidée glacez-la intérieurement et tenez à l'étuve. Préparez une petite garniture de bon macaronis cuit tendre, lié avec de la béchamelle et parmesan rapé, beurré et pincée de poivre rouge.

Prenez huit filets de sole moyenne, tendre et bien blanche, aplatissez-les légèrement, salez-les, masquez-les avec une mince couche de farce de poisson aux truffes ; roulez-les sur eux-mêmes en forme de petit baril, entourez-les d'une bande de papier beurré. Rangez les filets de sole dans une casserole ou plat à sauter, en ayant soin que la casserole soit juste de grandeur pour les maintenir serrés ; mouillez-les avec un bon court bouillon au vin blanc, faites partir le liquide en ébullition, couvrez la casserole, laissez pocher sans bouillir douze à quinze minutes.

Mettez dans une casserole dix-huit écrevisses moyennes avec beurre, un demi verre de vin blanc, sel, et poivre ; couvrez la casserole et cuisez les écrevisses dix à douze minutes sur un feu vif ; aussitôt vif retirez la chair des queues ; mettez-les dans une casserole avec deux bonnes truffes

coupées en lame, un morceau de beurre, tenez au chaud. Avec les carapaces préparez un beurre d'écrevisses.

Faites réduire quelques cuillerées de bonne béchamelle avec addition de crème double, passez la sauce à l'étamine et ajoutez le beurre d'écrevisses, tenir au chaud; au moment de servir garnisser le fonds de la timbale avec le macaronis; dressez sur le macaronis les filets de sole à la garniture de truffes et queues d'écrevisses, saucez le tout avec la sauce préparée au beurre d'écrevisses; recouvrez la timbale et servez bien chaud.



Make a crust (*pâte à foncer*) for the timbale. Bake it and scoop out the inside, then glaze the inside, and keep it on the stove. Get ready a little garnish of good macaroni, cooked until it is soft, add Béchamel sauce, grated Parmesan cheese, butter and a pinch of red pepper. Take eight fillets of medium-sized soles, tender and very white. Bat them out lightly, salt them, and just cover with a thin layer of fish stuffing made with truffles. Roll the fillets into the shape of little barrels, and put a band of buttered paper round each.

Arrange them in a saucepan, or a shallow pan (*à sauter*), taking care that this saucepan is of such a size that the fillets are all packed quite closely together, moisten them with a good strong stock, made with white wine, and then let all the liquid boil away. Put a cover on the saucepan, and let it simmer but not boil for twelve or fifteen minutes.

Put in another saucepan eighteen medium-sized crayfish, half a glass of white wine, salt and pepper, cover the saucepan, and cook the crayfish, from ten to twelve minutes, on a brisk fire. Then take the flesh of the tails, put it in a saucepan with two nice truffles, cut in slices, and a piece of butter, and keep warm. With the shells of the crayfish, prepare a crayfish butter.

Boil down a few teaspoonfuls of good Béchamel, with (double) cream, pass the sauce through a tammy, add the crayfish butter and keep warm. Just before serving, put the macaroni at the bottom of the timbale, arrange the fillets of sole on the macaroni, a garnish of truffles and tails of crayfish. Pour over it all, the sauce already prepared with the crayfish butter. Cover the timbale again, and serve very hot.

Canapés Moscovites.
Pommes d'amour.
Consommé aux nids d'Hirondelles.
Filets de truite aux laitances.
Désirs de Mascotte.
Caneton de Rouen en chemise.
Petits pois aux laitues.
Suprêmes d'écrevisses au Château Yquem.
Ortolans Cocotte au suc d'ananas.
Cœurs de Romaine.
Asperges à l'huile vierge.
Belle de nuit aux violettes.
Friandises.

Caviar.
Canapés aux crevettes rouges.
Consommé Nurette.
Paillettes au Parmesan.

Mousseline d'éperlans aux truffes.
Filets de poulet au beurre noisette.
Artichauts aux fines herbes.
Agneau de lait à la broche.
Petits pois frais.
Nymphes glacées au champagne.
Cailles aux feuilles de vigne.
Salade Mignonne.
Asperges d'Argenteuil.
Pêches de Vénus voilées de l'Orientale.
Mignardises.

Joseph at the Savoy

"Drive to the Strand entrance of the Savoy, but don't go into the courtyard," I told my cabman; but he insisted on driving down, and his horse slid the last ten yards like a toboggan.

It was in the afternoon and few people were about, and I looked into the grill-room to find a *maître d'hôtel*, and to ask him if he could tell me where M. Joseph was at the moment. Smiler, the curry cook, appeared instantly. Because I talk a little bad Hindustani, Smiler has taken me under his protection, and thinks that I should not go to the Savoy for any other purpose than to eat his curries.

It was not Smiler, however, whom I wanted to interview, but M. Joseph; and messengers were sent to various parts of the hotel to find the director of the restaurant.

A little man, with rather long grey hair, bald on the top of his head, with very dark brown eyes looking keenly out from under strong brows, with a little grey moustache, Joseph arrests

attention at once, and his manner is just the right manner. In a short black coat, white waistcoat, and dark trousers, he came to meet me, and put himself entirely at my service. I very soon told him what I wanted. Since the change of dynasty at the Savoy, Joseph, who temporarily left his Parisian restaurant, the Marivaux, to come to the banks of the Thames, has been the dominating personality among the Savoyards. That being so, I wanted him to tell me something of his climb up the ladder of culinary fame, I should be much obliged if he would take me through his kitchen, and as I proposed dining in the restaurant that evening, I should be glad if he would think me out a dinner of the cuisine Joseph. I ended by saying that I had invited a lady to dine with me.

"A lady!" said Joseph, in rather a startled tone; but I assured him that the good angel who was to be my guest knew as much of good cooking as any male gourmet, and was aware that there are some culinary works of art in the presence of which conversation is an impertinence.

"I will give you soup, fish, roast—nothing more," said Joseph; and misinterpreting my silence, he went on: "In England you taste your dinners, you do not eat them. An artist who is confident of his art only puts a small dinner before his clients. It is a bad workman who slurs over his failures by giving many dishes." This is exactly what I have been preaching on the housetops for years, and, being thoroughly in accord on that subject, we settled down on a sofa in the corridor for a chat.

I am the worst interviewer in the world. I had been told that Joseph was born in Birmingham of French parents, that he is an adept at *la savate*, and that the one amusement of his life is pigeon-flying; and when I accused him of all this he pleaded guilty to each count. Directly we began to talk cookery I had no cause to ask leading questions. It is the absorbing passion of Joseph's life. "If I had the choice," he said, with conviction, "between going to the theatre to see Coquelin or Mme. Bernhardt and watching the faces of six gourmets eating a well-cooked dinner, I should choose the latter." When I referred to the dinner at which some of the great lights of the theatrical world were present, and he cooked a considerable portion of the dinner in their presence, Joseph replied that as it is the art of actors and actresses to make an effect on the public, he wished to show them that there could be something to strike the imagination in his art also.

Since '67, when Joseph entered the kitchen at Brébant's as a marmiton, he has given all his mind to cookery. He has been in every position that goes to the making of a real artist, and even when he walks the streets "looking at my boots" he is waiting for some flash of inspiration. "I cannot sit down in my office and create a new dish to command. An idea comes to me, and when I am free I try it in my own kitchen at home. I never experiment on the public." Many other things he told me, of how as a schoolboy he used to peep into the kitchens of the Anglais and other big restaurants in envy of

the cooks, and of the genesis of some of the dishes in the long list of the specialities of his cuisine. With a sudden turn to the subject of literature, Joseph wrote down for me his contribution, made the day before, to a young lady's album. This is it:—

C'est la première côtelette qui coûta le plus cher à l'homme — Dieu en ayant fait une femme."

Then, passing the table-d'hôte room, with its great marble chimney-piece and walls with an Oriental pattern on them, on our way we went to the kitchens, where M. Henri Thouraud, the chef, a tall, plump, good-looking Parisian, with a light moustache, received us.

First, I was shown the means of communication between the kitchen and various parts of the hotel, and the close touch kept between M. Joseph in the restaurant and the chef in the kitchen, each knowing the other's methods, for they have worked together off and on for twenty years; and then my attention was turned to the arrangement of the kitchen and the battalion of cooks, every man having his duty assigned him, every man having his place in that chain of responsibility which runs from chef to marmiton.

Every master of the culinary art has his own ideas as to the arrangement of his kitchen, and M. Joseph has made some changes from the arrangements of Maître Escoffier in the great white-tiled room in which the roasting and boiling is done.

Two plump fowls were spinning and dripping before the roasting fire, there was a steamy heat

in the air, and I was rather glad to move into the cooler atmosphere of the rooms on a lower floor, where I was shown all the good things ready to go to the fire or the buffet.

It was explained to me that though the English beef is good for roasting, the French beef only is used for *bouillon*, and looking at the two I could understand the reason. The vegetables and all the poultry for the Savoy come from France, and I was beginning to feel quite ashamed of England as a food-producing country, when a handsome compliment to the English mutton restored my confidence. The long array of birds, from turkeys to snipe, resting on a bed of crushed ice with a free current of air round them, looked appetising, and so did the fish and the score of varieties of cold entrées, most of them embedded in amber jelly, and the *petits fours* and sweetmeats fresh drawn from the oven. The carving of the harps, and birds, and Prince of Wales's feathers out of a solid block of ice to form pedestals for ices is artist's work, and so is the making of baskets and flowers from sugar.

M. Joseph slightly went beyond his three dishes in the menu I found awaiting the good angel and myself:—

Petite marmite.
Sole Reichenberg.
Caneton à la presse. Salade de saison.
Fonds d'artichauts à la Reine.
Bombe pralinée. Petits fours.
Panier fleuri.

We were among the familiar surroundings,

the walls of mahogany panelling, the golden ceiling; but there was one novelty, and that was that pushed up to our little table was another one, with on it a great chafing-dish, some long slim knives, and a variety of little plates containing lemons, grated cheese, and a number of other condiments, and while we drank our soup, made with the famous *bouillon*, of which I had been told the secret, Joseph mixed the delicate liquid in which the slices of sole were later to be placed, soaked the croûte in the savoury mixture, and, finally, on the white filets placed the oysters, pouring over them also the foaming broth.

The good angel was equal to the occasion. Not only was she radiantly handsome, but she appreciated the special beauties of this most excellent sole; and when Joseph came back to the table to carve the duck, he knew that his audience of two were enthusiasts. In an irreverent moment I was reminded of the Chinese torture of the Ling Chi, in which the executioner slashes at his victim without hitting a vital part in the first fifty cuts, as I watched Joseph calmly, solemnly, with absolute exactitude, cutting a duck to pieces with a long, thin knife; but irreverence faded when the rich sauce had been mixed before our eyes and poured over the slices of the breast—the wings and legs, plain devilled, coming afterwards as a sharp and pleasant contrast.

The Panier Fleuri, which ended our dinner, a tiny fruit-salad in a basket cut by Joseph from an orange, was a special compliment to the good angel. The bill was: Two couverts, 1s.; champagne, 18s.; marmite, 2s. 6d.; sole Reichen-

berg, 5s.; caneton à la presse, 18s.; salade, 1s. 6d.; fonds d'artichauts, 2s. 6d.; bombe, 3s.; café, 1s. 6d.; liqueurs, 4s.; total, £2 : 17s.

It was no empty compliment when on leaving I told M. Joseph that the dinner was a perfect work of art.

*** The following are the *Créations de Joseph* :—

Sole de Breteuil—Sole à la Reichenberg—Filets de soles Aimée Martial—Sole d'Yvonne—Pomme de terre Otero—Pommes de terre de Georgette—(dédié à Mlle. Brandès)—Sole Dragomiroff—Pilaff aux moules—Homard à la Cardinal—Homard Ld. Randolph Churchill — Queue de homard Archiduchesse — Homard d'Yvette — Darne de saumon Marcel Prévost—Filets de maquereau Marianne—Filets de sole Duparc—Côte de bœuf Youssoupoff —Poularde Marivaux—Poularde Vladimir—Poulet Gd. Maman—Poulet Archiduchesse—Caneton à la Presse—Caneton froid Jubilé—Foie gras Souvaroff (chaud ou froid) — Bécasse au Fumet — Filet de laperau à la Sorel—Cailles à la Sand—Aubergines "Tante Pauline" — Crêpes du Diable — Crêpes Christiane—Pêches Cardinal—Pêches Rosenfeld—Le Soufflé d'Eve—Fraises à la Marivaux—Ananas Master Joe—Ananas de Daisy—Les paniers fleuris aux quartiers d'Orange.

CHAPTER XII

THE ST. GEORGE'S CAFÉ (ST. MARTIN'S LANE)

WHENEVER I have come across a Philistine who has eaten a vegetarian dinner, he always professes that he narrowly escaped with his life. Now this I knew must be an invention, and I was anxious to try for myself whether a dinner of herbs meant contentment or whether it did not, so I approached one of the high priests of the order, and asked which would be the restaurant in London at which it would be wisest to try the experiment. The answer I received was not of the most encouraging. The high priest had no very great faith in the cooking at any of the restaurants, and very kindly suggested that, if I wanted to try vegetarian diet, I should come and pay him a visit. If, however, I preferred the restaurants, the two he would suggest were the Ideal Café, 185 Tottenham Court Road, or the St. George's Café, St. Martin's Lane.

Before trying either I thought I would reconnoitre both. I passed the Tottenham Court Road café early in the morning, when neither people nor cafés look at their best. On the

brown brick front was a gilt device telling that it was a social club for gentlemen and ladies, and I gathered from legends on the windows that there was a ladies' chess club, and that the café was a restaurant as well; indeed, was all things to all eating men and women; for on the bill of fare exposed in the window there were the prices of fish and fowl, as well as such entirely vegetarian dishes as haricot and potato pie and mushroom omelette. There was something of the appearance of a pastrycook's about the windows on the ground floor, and a damsel was "dressing" one of them with yellow cloth, to act no doubt as a background to the delicacies presently to be exposed. I caught sight through the window of a counter with tea appurtenances on it.

It was in the afternoon that I made my second reconnaissance, this time in the direction of St. Martin's Lane, and I found the St. George's Restaurant to be a red brick building of an Elizabethan type, with leaded glass windows and with a sign, whereon was inscribed "The famous house for coffee," swinging from a wrought-iron support. The windows on the ground floor had palms in them, and the gaze of the vulgar was kept from the inner *arcana* by neat little curtains. From the bill of fare I gathered that I could obtain such luxuries as grilled mushrooms and seakale cream, which cost 10d., or mushroom omelette and young carrots sauté, which were 1s., or Yorkshire pudding with sage and onions and new potatoes for 7d. Before I moved on I ascertained that here also was a ladies' chess club, and that on the first floor was a ladies' room. I

made up my mind that the St. George's should be my dining place, and the next question was how to secure some one to dine with me.

I had to be present that afternoon at a committee for a benefit theatrical performance, and found half a dozen of my fellow committee-men assembled. During a pause in the business one of them remarked that the Savoy dinner about which I had written seemed to have been an excellent feast. This gave me my opportunity, and mentioning that I was going to do another dinner for publication that evening, asked if any one would care to dine with me. A pleased look came to at least four faces, but all were too polite to speak first. Then I said what the dinner was to be. One man had to go to a Masonic banquet; another was dining at a farewell feast to a coming Benedick; another had promised his dear old aunt to spend that evening with her: the guests bidden to the scriptural feast were not more prompt in excuses.

I went on to my Service club and found there a subaltern who, in old days, had been in my company, and who would have followed me, or preceded me, into any danger of battle without the tremble of an eyelid. Him I urged to come with me, telling him that a man can only die once, and other such inspiriting phrases, and had nearly persuaded him when old General Bundobust joined in the conversation and told a story of how Joe Buggins, of the Madras Fusiliers, once ate a vegetarian dinner and swelled up afterwards till he was as big as a balloon. That finished the subaltern, and he refused to go.

I had to go by myself. I opened the leaded glass door of the St. George's and found myself in a long room with plenty of palms and a general look of being cared for, with a counter and many long white-clothed tables, with seats for about half a dozen at each. There were little black-dressed waitresses flitting about, and at the tables a fair sprinkling of men, neither obtrusively smart nor obtrusively shabby, who were dining, and who nearly all kept their hats on. I drifted down to the end of the room and sat at a table and told the waitress in rather a feeble way that I should like the best vegetarian dinner that the house could give me. The waitress suggested that I had better go upstairs to the table-d'hôte room, and I gathered up my goods and chattels and went like a lamb.

The room on the first floor was a nice bright little room, with white overmantels to the fireplaces, with one corner turned into a bamboo arbour, with painted tambourines and little mandolines and pictures, and an oaken clock on the light-papered walls, with red-shaded candles on the tables set for four or six. Two pretty girls in black, one with a white flower, one with a red, were in charge, and another girl peered out from a little railed desk by the door. In the background was a glimpse of a kitchen, behind a glass screen where some one was whistling "Sister Mary Jane's Top Note," and the two little waitresses were constantly hurrying to this screen with a "Hurry up with that pigeon's egg," or a "Be quick, now, with those flageolets." My table was beautifully

clean, with a little bunch of flowers on it, with a portentously large decanter and an array of glasses.

The waitress with the red flower put down a little bill of fare before me, and I learned that my dinner was to be—

Hors-d'œuvre.
Mulligatawny soup or Carrot soup.
Flageolets with cream and spinach.
Fried duck's egg and green peas.
Lent pie or Stewed fruit.
Mixed salad.
Cheese.
Dessert.

Some olives in a small plate were put down before me, and through force of habit I took up the black-covered wine list on the table. The first items were orange wine, rich raisin wine, ginger wine, black currant wine, red currant wine, raspberry wine, elderberry wine. I put it down with a sigh, and ordered a bottle of ginger-beer. Then while I munched at an olive I looked round at my fellow-guests. There was a sister of mercy in her black and white, with her gold cross showing against her sombre garment; there was a tall, thin gentleman who would not have done for any advertisement of anybody's fattening food; there was a young lady in a straw hat with a many-coloured ribbon to it, who was so absorbed in an illustrated paper that she was neglecting her dinner; there were two other ladies enjoying their stewed fruit immensely; and there were two other gentlemen of the type I had seen below, but who were not wearing their hats.

The carrot soup, which was the soup I chose, was quite hot and was satisfying. The spinach was not up to club form and the flageolets topping it did not look inviting, but I made an attack on it and got half through, not because I wanted to eat it, but because I did not want to hurt the waitress's feelings. The duck's egg was well fried, and I enjoyed it, though the peas were a trifle hard. Then I fell into disgrace with the waitress, for I would have neither Lent pie nor stewed fruit, pleading that I never ate sweets. "What, not stewed fruit?" said the little girl with the red rose; and I knew that in her opinion I had missed the crown of the feast. A little bowl of lettuce and cucumber, with a bottle of salad dressing, was put in front of me, and I mixed my own salad. Then I ate a slice of Gruyère cheese, and finished with some almonds and raisins that were grouped on a platter round an orange. It being, as the sign-board had told me, a noted coffee-house, I ordered a small cup of the liquid, and said "Black," in reply to the waitress's question.

It was capital coffee undoubtedly, and, having finished it, I asked for my bill. The waitress pulled out a little morocco-covered memorandum book, and presented me with this:—Ginger-beer, 2d.; coffee, 2d.; dinner, 1s. 6d.; total, 1s. 10d. I paid at the desk, and went forth feeling rather empty.

As I am writing, twenty-four hours after the event, I may conclude that Joe Buggins's, of the Madras Fusiliers, fate will not be mine.

19*th April.*

CHAPTER XIII

WILLIS'S ROOMS (KING STREET)

I WAS getting to the end of a tiring day in a dingy office in Fleet Street, and the little printer's devil, who was sitting on a chair in the corner by the fire playing cat's-cradle, had brought word that all that was now wanted from me were a few short notes.

It is not easy when one is brain-tired to be playfully humorous as to the European Concert, and I had struggled through a few lines, only to lay down my pen and take up a bundle of exchanges and a pair of scissors, when one of the clerks in the outer office brought me in a card and a letter. The card was that of Miss Madge Morgan, with below in a feminine handwriting "George Swanston Clarke," and the letter was from an old schoolfellow and friend, a banker in a country town, asking me to put Miss Morgan in the way of seeing one or two places in London which she wished to visit. Somehow the "George Swanston Clarke" seemed familiar, so I told the clerk that I would be out in a moment, the scissors went "click, click, click," the printer's

devil was dispatched with a silent malediction, my day's work was done, and I went out to greet Miss Morgan and bring her into the office.

She was a very neat and very tidy little person, of a neatness of dress that was almost primness ; but she had dark-brown hair parted in the middle, with a shine of gold where it rippled, and dark-brown eyes with a glint of fun in them that were a relief to her general sense of earnestness.

I gave her our best chair and asked what I could do for her. It had been my bad luck, it seems, to have to send "George Swanston Clarke" back a short story ; but I had added a few words, which were not unkind, to the usual formula and that had emboldened her to ask our mutual friend for an introduction. She had come up from the country town where she was one of the chief teachers at the ladies' college to get some local colour for a novel she was going to write.

I murmured that I should be delighted to do anything I could to help her, and she explained : The novel is to be called "The Education of an Angel." The principal characters in the book are to be two good angels and two bad angels sent again to earth, and, as she wished to be up-to-date, she particularly wanted to see behind the scenes of a variety theatre, where the temptation was to take place, and the Amphitryon Club, where the hero and heroine first meet at dinner.

I promised her an introduction to Mr. Hitchens, of the Empire, and Mr. Slater, of the

Alhambra, smiling mentally at the disappointment in store for her, for "behind the scenes" at the two big variety theatres is ruled with an iron discipline, and told her I was sorry that, as the Amphitryon had ceased to exist, I could not help her in that.

Miss Morgan looked very blank; evidently the Amphitryon chapter was one of her pet ones, and I told her, hoping to comfort her, that a number of the former patrons of the Amphitryon now dine regularly at Willis's rooms; that M. Edouard Fayat, who was once at the Amphitryon, is manager; and that if she did not mind a very dull dog as host, and if 8.30 was not too late, I should be very glad if she would dine with me there that evening, and Miss Morgan smiled again and said, "Thank you very much."

I called at Willis's on my way homeward to dress and saw M. Fayat, clean-shaved and rotund, with a touch of the *P'tit Caporal* about him and tried to order dinner; but I found my tired brain had no more imagination for a menu than it had for a paragraph, and when M. Fayat asked whether I would leave the dinner to him I was glad to do so, premising that it must not be an expensive one. All the tables in the upstairs rooms were taken, but there was a comfortable one downstairs for two which I could have, and to be sure of the celebrities who usually dined I looked through the book where the names of the givers of dinners are recorded.

At half-past eight to the second my guest drove up in a hansom. I was prepared for a primness of attire, but instead found the little

governess looking very nice in a low-necked black silk dress, with a tiny diamond heart hung round her neck by a little gold chain.

Our table had a cross of flowers on it and a two-branched silver candlestick, the wax candles in which had red shades. We settled ourselves in our places, the head-waiter placed a mossy nest of plovers' eggs upon the table, Miss Morgan began to look rapidly round her surroundings, while I took up the menu and glanced down it. This was it :—

Œufs de pluviers.
Soupe Henri IV.
Barbue au vin de Bourgogne.
Noisettes de pré-salé à la Dubarry.
Haricots verts nouveaux de Poissy.
Pommes nouvelles.
Poulet de grain polonaise.
Cœurs de romaine en salade.
Asperges d'Argenteuil. Sauce mousseline.
Fraises à l'orange.

Miss Morgan would have none of the plovers' eggs, nor would she be tempted by the other delicacies offered her in their place.

"Have you begun to absorb your local colouring?" I asked, and she was anxious in return to know if it would seem *outré* to take notes, and being encouraged thereto produced a workmanlike note-book. "Did you notice, as you came in, the window, six arched, with its 'Déjeuners, dîners, soupers, patissier,' etc., on it? and the tall commissionaire and the little page?" Miss Morgan nodded her head and jotted all these

down. Then the soup was brought. A simple soup enough, as its name would promise, but excellently hot. "Now for the interior," and Miss Morgan picked up her pencil again. "You might note that it is as close a transcript of a Parisian restaurant as could be found in London, the white walls with great mirrors let into the shining wood, the scarlet couches by the wall, the chairs with their quaint backs and scarlet seats all savour of Paris," and Miss Morgan jotted all this down. Then the brill, reposing in its brown sauce, with little hillocks of mushrooms around it, was shown to us, a bottle of old hock, carefully decanted, was put on the table, and I, at least, cared for the time nothing for local colour, for the sauce vin de Bourgogne was delicious, and the hock was golden.

But Miss Morgan was trifling with her pencil, and, looking over her page, I found that she had noted the dumb-waiter in the centre of the restaurant piled high with fruit and bundles of asparagus, with the duck press of shining silver, the *dame de comptoir* in black at her little desk with a little clock above it, and the great clock of enamel and ormolu, the principal ornament of the room. The *noisettes* I thought a little too dry; but I could get no opinion from Miss Morgan except that she thought the little potato-filled open cases on which they were served were pretty.

I pointed out to her, as a purely French touch, the black apron of the wine waiter, the distinguishing mark from the others, all white-aproned; explained the position of the room upstairs, and

where the distant music of the band came from; gave her some reminiscences of Willis's in past days, and then waxed eloquent over the *poulet polonaise*, which, with its savoury accompaniment of rice and chicken liver, was excellent.

But Miss Morgan wanted now to know who all the guests at the tables were. There were two *grandes dames*, Lady A. and Lady B., there were a couple of Guardsmen I knew, there was Sir George Lewis, the British Fouché—Miss Morgan noted that—there was a handsome lady in black with many black sequins, there was an ex-soldier, now a power on the Stock Exchange, and a number of other well-groomed men whom I did not know. But this I was aware would not satisfy Miss Morgan, so my previous glimpse at the book of the tables came in useful, and the unknown men became minor members of the Ministry, lords, poets, editors, and composers. Miss Morgan wrote them all down, and was happy.

The asparagus and the strawberries were excellent, and over the latter, served in a silver dish over a silver bowl of ice, Miss Morgan for the first time became enthusiastic. The coffee, too, and the liqueurs were good.

I paid the bill—two dinners, £1 : 5s.; one bottle 131, 6s.; café, 1s.; liqueurs, 2s.—total, £1, 14s.; and in explanation of the lack of detail, told Miss Morgan that in the old days of the Amphitryon we who were not over-wealthy used, when we gave a dinner, to go to Emile and ask him to do the best he could for us at 12s. 6d. a head. But though I told her this I was

perfectly aware that I had been treated too kindly by the management, and that the bill should have been of larger proportions.

I put Miss Morgan into a cab, amid thanks on her part and many messages to our common friend on mine.

I shall be interested to read the Amphitryon chapter in "The Education of an Angel," by "George Swanston Clarke."

26th April.

CHAPTER XIV

LE RESTAURANT DES GOURMETS (LISLE STREET)

THE superior person and I were chatting in the club as to eating generally, and he was holding forth on the impossibility of discovering any dining place, as Kettner's was discovered by our fathers, where a good meal could be had at a very small price.

I turned on him and rent him figuratively, giving him a list that commenced with Torino's and ended with the Hôtel Hanover, and asked him if he had been to any of them. He had not. His system was to go to the Savoy or Willis's, or the Princes' Hall, and then to grumble because he could not get his meals at those places at grill-room prices. I finally pinned him by asking him whether he would, as a man and a discoverer, come with me that evening and dine at the Restaurant des Gourmets. The name seemed to tickle him, and he said something about going home to change into dress clothes, which I assured him was unnecessary, and he then asked where this restaurant was.

Did he know the stage door of the Empire? And the superior person looked at me in answer to that question with a look that showed me that he had a full-blown Nonconformist conscience. I explained that the Restaurant des Gourmets was in Lisle Street, as was the stage-door of the Empire, that I was not trying to lure him to meet any fairy of the ballet, but that if he came with me he would very probably find some members of the Empire orchestra dining, and as likely as not M. Wenzel, the conductor, himself. Six was the hour I proposed to dine, changing afterwards into dress clothes, to go to a first night at the Duke of York's, but the superior person sniffed, and said that that was too early for any one to eat an evening meal. So I left him, and my ideas having been turned towards the little Lisle Street restaurant, I wandered down there.

Lisle Street is not exactly an aristocratic locality. There is next door to the Restaurant des Gourmets another restaurant which has been newly painted, and which posts its bill of fare upon its front, and there is the office of a musical publication; but most of the rest of the houses are dingy private residences. The outside of the restaurant is not too inviting either. It has a double window with a yellowish curtain hiding the inside from view, and the woodwork is painted a leaden gray.

It is well to be early at the Restaurant des Gourmets, for by half-past six there is rarely a seat to be had at any of the tables.

At six to the stroke I pushed back the door

with its whitened glass panel, whereon is inscribed "Entrée," and was in the humble home of the connoisseur. A burly Frenchman with a beard, another with his hair combed over his forehead in a fringe, and a third with a slight beard and wearing a little grey cap, were drinking vermouth at one of the tables; otherwise the room was empty.

I sat down at one of the tables, and a waiter in dress clothes and a clean shirt put a bill of fare, written in cramped French handwriting on blue paper, in front of me. The first item on the blue paper was *hors-d'œuvre* — hareng, saucisson, sardines, radis, beurre, 2d., and I ordered these delicacies and some *soupe*, *paté d'Italie*, which also cost 2d., and then proceeded to look round.

The Frenchmen, talking volubly, had gone out. Another waiter with a light moustache had joined the first one, and both were regarding me with the interest the waiter always has in a chance customer whose tip may be lordly or the reverse. Up against the window were piled little bowls of salad, the green and white telling well against the yellow of the curtain, and a great stack of long French loaves of bread cut into sections which, with their white ends and brown crust, had something of the appearance of a pile of little logs. In front of the window was a counter covered with green baize, on which were some long uncut loaves, an earthenware bowl, a kettle, and a bright metal machine that had a lamp under it, and contained either coffee or soup. A comely Frenchwoman in black,

with an apron, was behind this counter, and as the waiters gave her an order she shouted it down a little lift, and the dish was presently hoisted up from the depths below.

At the far end of the room is a sloping glass roof, with panes to lift up for ventilation. The pink paper on the wall under this gives the touch of colour to the picture. The other walls are of plain panelling painted a greyish white with pegs all round to hang up hats and coats upon, and an occasional mirror in a dark wood frame. Placards with "Toutes les boissons doivent être payées à l'avance," and "La pipe est interdite" are posted round the walls, and there were some flowers in vases on the mantelpiece. The little tables to hold two or four were round three sides of the room, with coarse but clean napery, glass bowls for the pepper and salt, with little bone spoons, and thick glasses, and decanters of water. The couches against the walls were covered with black leather, the chairs were of Austrian bentwood. The waiter had put *L'Eclair*, a French newspaper printed with the usual abominable French type, in front of me.

I nibbled at the bit of herring in a little saucer, and drank my soup, which was just as good as if it had cost two shillings instead of twopence, and then proceeded to order the rest of my dinner, a proceeding which was regarded with mild interest by the little Frenchman with a slight beard wearing the grey peaked cap, who had returned.

"C'est le patron," said one of the waiters, and I promptly introduced myself to him, and began

to cross-examine him as to the identity of his clients, for the room was filling very quickly. M. Brice sat on a chair by my table, which now had its full complement of diners, for the burly, bearded Frenchman, the other with the hair combed down on to his forehead, and a third with a carefully curled moustache, had taken the three vacant places.

"That," said M. Brice, indicating a dark gentleman with a curled moustache, "is Chaudoir, the *chef d'orchestre* at Sergeant Sole."

"What?" I said, bluntly enough.

"At Sergeant Sole, where they are blacked."

A sudden inspiration that Sergeant Sole was St. James's Hall came to me.

"And that," pointing to a gentleman with a red tie, "is the gentleman who does the socialistic writing for the *Pall Mall*."

Three clean-shaven gentlemen were vaguely described as "artists," and after gazing at a lady in black with white hair for some time, M. Brice said, "That is an old woman." The two gentlemen sitting opposite this lady were the Messieurs Chose, of a firm in Old Broad Street, and the three Frenchmen at my table were big men in the greengrocery line, who come over two or three times a year to Covent Garden.

A clean-shaven, prosperous-looking gentleman, with a young lady in black, entered just then, and a note of admiration came into M. Brice's voice as he told me that this was the coachman of the Baron Alfred de Rothschild.

The turbot and caper sauce, which was the most expensive part of my dinner, costing as

much as 8d., I did not care for very much; but, on the other hand, the *gigot haricot*, which followed it, was excellent. M. Brice, who kept up a running accompaniment of conversation to my dinner, told me that all the meat cooked at his restaurant was English.

There is no such thing as a wine list at the Restaurant des Gourmets, and I had ordered at a venture a pint of *vin ordinaire*, which the waiter told me would cost sixpence. It is a rough, strong wine, and I suggested to M. Brice that it probably was of Corsican or Sardinian growth. M. Brice shrugged his shoulders and from somewhere produced a pint of claret, with the name of the late M. Nicol of the Café Royal, on it, and told me that he was able to sell that at a very moderate price.

The omelette that I had ordered was as light as a French cook always makes them, and the slice of *brie* that closed my repast was as *coulant* as it should be.

Then M. Brice, still talking, made me out my bill on the back of one of the cards of his restaurant. Hors-d'œuvre, 2d.; pain, 1d.; potage, 2d.; poisson, 8d.; entrée, 6d.; omelette, 4d.; fromage, 2d.; half ordinaire, 6d.; total, 2s. 7d.

1st May.

CHAPTER XV

THE TROCADERO (SHAFTESBURY AVENUE)

I DINED one day early last week at the Trocadero, a little specially-ordered *tête-à-tête* dinner over which the chef had taken much trouble—his *Suprêmes de sole Trocadéro*, and *Poulet de printemps Rodisi* are well worth remembering—and while I drank the Moet '84, cuvée 1714, and luxuriated in some brandy dating back to 1815, the solution of a problem that had puzzled me mildly came to me.

An old friend was sending his son, a boy at Harrow, up to London to see a dentist before going back to school, and asked me if I would mind giving him something to eat, and taking him to a performance of some kind. I said "Yes," of course; but I felt it was something of an undertaking. When I was at Harrow my ideas of luxury consisted of ices at Fuller's and sausages and mashed potatoes carried home in a paper bag. I had no idea as to what Jones minor's tastes might be; but if he was anything like what I was then he would prefer plenty of good food combined with music and gorgeousness

and excitement to the most delicate *mousse* ever made, eaten in philosophic calm. The Trocadero was the place; if he was not impressed by the dinner, by the magnificence of the rooms, by the beautiful staircase, by the music, then I did not know my Harrow boy.

Jones minor arrived at my club at five minutes to the half-past seven, and I saw at once that he was not a young gentleman to be easily impressed. He had on a faultless black short jacket and trousers, a white waistcoat, and a tuberose in his buttonhole. I asked him if he knew the Trocadero, and he said that he had not dined there; but plenty of boys in his house had, and had said that it was jolly good.

When we came to the entrance of the Trocadero, an entrance that always impresses me by its palatial splendour, I pointed out to him the veined marble of the walls and the magnificent frieze in which Messrs. Moira and Jenkins, two of the cleverest of our young artists, have struck out a new line of decoration; and when I had paused a while to let him take it in I told him that the *chef de réception* had been a gallant Australian Lancer. Then I asked him what he thought of it, and he said he thought it was jolly good.

Mr Alfred Salmon, in chief command, and the good-looking *maître d'hôtel*, both saw us to our table, and a plump waiter whom I remember of old at the Savoy was there with the various menu cards in his hand. The table had been heaped with roses in our honour, and I felt that all this attention must impress Jones minor; but he unfolded his napkin with the calm of

unconcern, and I regretted that I had not arranged to have the band play "See the Conquering Hero Comes," and have a triumphal arch erected in his honour.

I had intended to give him the five-shilling *table-d'hôte* meal ; but in face of this calm superiority I abandoned that, skipped the 7s. 6d. *table d'hôte* as well, and ordered the half-guinea one. I had thought that three-and-sixpennyworth of wine should be ample for a growing boy, but having rushed into reckless extravagance over the food I thought I would let him try seven-and-sixpennyworth of wine. I personally ordered a pint of 277, which is an excellent wine. I told Jones minor that the doctor told me not to mix my wines, and he said something about having to be careful when one got old that I did not think sounded at all nice.

While we paused, waiting for the *hors-d'œuvre*, I drew his attention to all the gorgeousness of the grand restaurant, the cream and gold, the hand-painted ceiling-panels, on which the Cupids sport, the brocades and silks of the wall panels, the broad band of gold of the gallery running round the room, the crimson and gold draperies, the glimpse of the blue and white and gold of the *salon* seen through the dark framing of the portières ; I bade him note the morocco leather chairs with gold initials on the back, and the same initials on the collars of the servants. It is a blaze of gorgeousness that recalls to me some dream of the Arabian Nights ; but Jones minor said somewhat coldly that he thought it jolly good.

We drank our *potage vert-pré* out of silver plates, but this had no more effect on Jones minor than if they had been earthenware. I drew his attention to the excellent band up above, in their gilded cage. I pointed out to him amidst the crowd of diners two ex-Lord Mayors, an A.D.C. to Royalty, the most popular low comedian of the day, a member of the last Cabinet, our foremost dramatic critic and his wife, and one of our leading lawyers. Jones minor had no objection to their presence, but nothing more. The only interest he showed was in a table at which an Irish M.P. was entertaining his family, among them two Eton boys, and towards them his attitude was haughty but hostile.

So I tried to thaw him while we ate our whitebait, which was capitally cooked, by telling him tales of the criminal existence I led when I was a boy at Harrow. I told him how I put my foot in the door of Mr. Bull's class-room when it was being closed at early morning school time. I told him how I took up alternate halves of one exercise of rule of three through one whole term to "Old Teek." I told him how I and another bad boy lay for two hours in a bed of nettles on Kingsbury racecourse, because we thought a man watching the races with his back to us was Mr. Middlemist. And I asked him if Dr. Welldon had habitually worn a piece of light blue ribbon at Lord's.

This for a moment thawed Jones minor into humanity. The story about Dr. Welldon was jolly rot, and before the boy froze up again I

learned that Bowen's had licked some other house in the final of the Torpid football matches, and that Eaton Faning had composed a jolly good song about the Queen.

The *filets mignons*, from his face, Jones minor seemed to like ; but he restrained all his emotions with Spartan severity. He did not contradict me when I said that the *petites bouchées à la St-Hubert* were good ; but he ate three *sorbets*, and looked as if he could tackle three more, which showed me that the real spirit of the Harrow boy was there somewhere under the glacial surface, if I could only get at it.

Mr. Lyons, piercing of eye, his head-covering worn a little through by the worries of the magnitude of his many undertakings, with little side whiskers and a little moustache, passed by, and I introduced the boy to him, and afterwards explained the number of strings pulled by this Napoleon of supply, and at the mention of a "grub shop in every other street" Jones minor's eyes brightened.

When Jones minor had made a clean sweep of the plate of *petits fours*, and had drained the last drops of his glass of Chartreuse, I thought I might venture to ask him how he liked his dinner, as a whole. This was what he had conscientiously eaten through :—

Hors-d'œuvre variés.
Consommé Monte Carlo. Potage vert-pré.
Petites Soles à la Florentine. Blanchailles au citron.
Filets mignons à la Rachel.
Petites bouchées à la St-Hubert.
Sorbet.

Poularde de Surrey à la broche.
Salade saison.
Asperges nouvelles. Sauce mousseux.
Charlotte Russe.
Soufflé glacé Pompadour.
Petits fours. Dessert.

He had drunk a glass of Amontillado, a glass of '89 Liebfraumilch, two glasses of Deutz and Gelderman, a glass of dessert claret, and a glass of liqueur, and when pressed for a critical opinion, said that he thought that it was jolly good.

Impressed into using a new adjective Jones minor should be somehow. So, with Mr. Isidore Salmon as escort, I took him over the big house from top to bottom. He shook the chef's hand with the serenity of a prince in the kitchen at the top of the house, and showed some interest in the wonderful roasting arrangements worked by electricity and the clever method of registering orders. He gazed at the mighty stores of meat and vegetables, peeped into the cosy private dining-rooms, had the beauties of the noble Empire ball-room explained to him, and finally, in the grill-room, amid the surroundings of Cippolini marble and old copper, the excellent string band played a gavotte, at my request, as being likely to take his fancy.

Then I asked Jones minor what he thought of it all, and he said that he thought it jolly good.

I paid my bill: Two dinners, £1 : 1s.; table-d'hôte wine, 7s. 6d.; half 277, 7s.; liqueur, 2s. 6d.; total, £1 : 18s.; and asked Jones minor where he would like to go and be amused. He

said he had heard that the Empire was jolly good.

10*th May.*

*** I bearded Mr. J. Lyons in his den one fine spring day and told him that "Dinners and Diners" was going to appear in book form. He showed no visible sign of emotion. Next I asked him if he would tell me what the *plats* were that the Trocadero kitchen prided itself on, and if he would give me the *recette* of *suprême de sole Trocadéro* of which I had a pleasant memory. He kindly said that I should have a list of the dishes, and not one but two *recettes* if I wanted them. My remark was "Thank you."

Caviar glacé, *huîtres à la Orientale*, *potage Rodisi*, *soles à la Glover*, *côtelettes de saumon à la Nantua*, *chapon de Bresse à la Trocadéro*, *poularde à la Montique*, *selle d'agneau à la Lyon d'or*, *salade d'Orsay*, *asperges nouvelles Milanaises* form a little list from which an admirable dinner could be designed.

These are the *recettes* of *suprême de sole Trocadéro* and Saddle of Lamb *à la Pera*—

Suprêmes de Sole Trocadéro

Take two fillets of soles and stuff them with fish forced meat, put one slice of smoked salmon on the top of each, roll them together, then take a small sauté pan well buttered, and place the fillets in it, with salt, pepper, half a wineglassful of white wine, and the juice of half a lemon, cover it and let it simmer for from eighteen to twenty minutes. Dress them on a silver dish, and cover one fillet with real Dutch sauce mixed with some of the fish gravy, the second fillet you cover with real lobster

sauce. Place one slice of truffles on each fillet and serve very hot.

Saddle of Lamb à la Pera

Take one saddle of lamb, and place it in an earthenware roasting-dish and cook for about three-quarters of an hour. Prepare carrots, turnips, and potatoes in fancy shape, and half cook them, place them in bouquets round the saddle and put it back in the oven for twenty minutes. Prepare some stuffed aubergines in rows on the top of the saddle, the peas and French beans between each. To be served with a strong sherry sauce.

CHAPTER XVI

THE AMERICAN BAR, CRITERION (PICCADILLY CIRCUS)

It was half-past seven, or it may have been even a little later, when I encountered the recorder of racing romances wandering along the eastern half-mile of Piccadilly, and both he and I had been too indolent to get into the conventional sables. To him it was a matter of no moment. Many racing campaigns had so "taken the corners off" him that, like that excellent warrior, but distinctly casual diner, Frederick the Great, he could sit himself down in any garb and return grateful thanks to Heaven for enough salt beef and cabbage for a meal—which may go to prove either that Frederick should have been enshrined among the martyrs, or that salt beef has monstrously degenerated.

A very good place in the old days for an undress dinner, the romancer declared when the subject was broached, was the American Bar at the Criterion, and further than this he went by telling me of the men who "knew their town," who swore by the succulent grilled pigs' feet

to be had there at supper-time; so there we went.

Managers come and managers go at the big caravanserai at Piccadilly Circus, but the American Bar remains the same. The ceiling had been recently renovated, and the fine patriotic design of the national eagle, with its talons full of forked lightning, had been embellished with some extra gold-leaf; otherwise there is little change. There are the little carved cupids on the outside portals, the marble-topped tables which are deftly covered with table-cloths by the waiters in the usual French garb of white aprons and short jackets when the meal-times approach, the partitions of brass rail, the marble columns, the panels of glazed tiles, and, at the end of the room, the grill with a clock above it, where, shielded by a transparent screen, a stout cook all in white stands and turns the chops and the steaks on the great gridiron where the fat drips through and fizzles on the coals beneath. The great janitors, both of mighty girth, who stand at the outer doors, look in occasionally to give a message, for from about twelve in the morning to midnight the American Bar is as busy as a beehive, and each edition of the evening papers is anxiously bought and scanned by most of the habitués, who have, as a rule, a tinge of the racing man about them.

After ordering our soup, a *consommé Nevers* that proved good, though we waited an unconscionable time for it, my guest fell to pointing out some of the many celebrities who were there, either sitting at the tables or standing at

the bar, where the many bottles on the shelves make a fine show, where the lager-beer engine is surmounted by a silvered statuette, and three white-coated tenders seem continually employed in mixing drinks in tumblers half-filled with crushed ice; and foremost amongst them was a Mr. Cockburn, a florid man of distinctly sporting appearance, whose cheeks still bore the unsightly scars that their wearer got in the now almost forgotten brawl with cutlasses in a house in Munster Terrace, Regent's Park. Near him was a spare, dark man, dressed in grey, wearing his bowler hat very much over one ear. This was Saville, Cockburn's fellow-sufferer in the battle of the blades, who, when the chief assailant, a Mexican card-cheat named Tarbeaux (now in penal servitude), was about to return to the attack on Cockburn, made the extraordinary appeal, "That's enough; don't *twice* him!"

Then there was sitting at one of the tables a burly fellow, broad of back and lavishly bestudded with diamonds, who the romancer informed me was a redoubtable bookmaker. He it was, said my philosopher, who headed the Birmingham contingent at most of the prize-fights of recent years, and particularly in evidence were they at the Smith and Greenfield and the Smith and Slavin encounters at Le Vesinet and Bruges respectively. The names of the other prosperous-looking people who formed a group round the hero of the diamonds have slipped my memory, but they all seemed to have a nickname of some kind, and the racing romancer, when I asked for information about any of them, invari-

ably began, "What, not know old—whatever the name might be?"

For our second course we took *saumon, sauce Gervoise*, and very good and well-cooked it was, though again we had some time to wait for it; and here it was that many eyes noted the entrance of a well-known Oriental banker, a gentleman of great wealth, and one of the last personages one would have expected to see dining solus and in the plainest manner possible. That it was a favourite resort of his seemed apparent from the fact that he walked straight to a table at which a chair had been turned up, and the manager of the room himself came forward to proffer those few words of advice which relieve the diner of so much hazardous speculation. Yet other newcomers were a stalwart ex-major of the Royal Artillery, and a music-hall agent, who in the halcyon past had half the proprietors of variety theatres in London at his feet. To each and all of them "Charlie," the well-groomed head barkeeper with the accurately-parted and immaculately plastered hair, had something of paramount interest to impart, and he seemed so bland that one wondered how he ever survived the friendly raids of the olden days when a certain festive youth and his companions were wont to take the place by storm, and on one occasion escaladed the bar, took possession of the tills, and scrambled the shillings among the chronic needy. What wild extravagances were they not capable of! It was here that the undefeated racing man who used to be known as the best-looking youth in London, and was to be seen daily in Piccadilly

with a black poodle decorated with bows of yellow ribbon, once mixed, for the entertainment of his friends, his fearful and wonderful "fruit-salads"—generally a couple of sovereigns' worth of hothouse fruit steeped in the oldest cognac of Justerini and Brooks, and *liqueurs variées*, the effects of which the friends aforesaid found the greatest possible difficulty in sleeping off by dinner-time.

But our entrée arrives, a *filet sauté Béarnaise*, than which I desire to eat no better. A new arrival of guests, most of them fresh from Kempton, with their racing-glasses hung over their shoulders, included a young man with a familiarly known nickname, who in the first Jubilee years galloped through his money and earned his jubilant title; another racing man, with the name of a philanthropist of a past generation, who at one time owned a property with two racecourses on it; and a gentleman who used to drive a yellow-bodied coach with four piebald horses, which he alluded to humorously as his mustard-pot and guinea-pigs, who having run through one fortune seems likely to make another. A sporting baronet, who takes an interest in yachting; a dramatist, who has written more than one racing play, and no doubt finds the American Bar useful for his local colour; our cleverest caricaturist, and a dozen or two less well-known people, formed a solid mass before the bar, and occupied all the available tables. We had finished our Burgundy, which for its price was exceptionally good, and my guest had eaten some cheddar cheese, when the roving disposition of the racing

romancer asserted itself, and for our coffee and liqueurs we must needs go to the hospitable Eccentric Club across the way, so I called for the bill: Two consommé, 2s.; two salmon, 4s.; two filets sautés, 6s.; cheese, 6d.; Burgundy, 5s.; total, 17s. 6d.

17th May.

CHAPTER XVII

THE HOTEL CONTINENTAL (REGENT STREET)

"So you are the man who is writing those articles about 'Dinners and Diners,'" said old Sir George, when I dined quietly last week with him and Lady Carcanet. "Good Lord! Who'd have thought it!"

This sounded rather a dubious compliment; but pretty Miss Carcanet, "Brighteyes" as her family nickname is, began to take more interest in me than she had ever shown before.

Did I go alone, or did I really take the people I said I did? she asked. And I told her that I really did take the people I described. "Why don't you take Brighteyes to do one with you," said Sir George. "It's her first season, and she is seeing everything that London has to show. She has figured in print after the Drawing-Room, and one of the ladies' papers has had a portrait of her as a débutante of the season. Now you might lend your aid to immortalise her."

Miss Brighteyes said she would like it immensely, and though Lady Carcanet did not think it at all the thing for a young girl to dine at

a restaurant alone with a gentleman, Sir George said something about there being no harm in being seen with an old buster, old enough to be her father—which was a doubtful compliment to my grey hair. I, of course, was delighted, and asked Miss Brighteyes to choose her day and her restaurant. There was the Berkeley, which had then just been reopened, the Avondale, which is going ahead with its new managers, Dieudonné's, the Continental. I wanted to dine at all of these, and would she take her choice.

"Is the Continental the hotel with a ruddy face and red pillars to its portico at the bottom of Regent Street?" Miss Brighteyes asked, and when I said that it was, she made that her choice.

"Dear me! Isn't that restaurant considered a little—well, a little fast?" came from Lady Carcanet, who very evidently disapproved of the whole of the proceedings; but I was able to reassure her on that subject. The ladies who sup in the upstair rooms may not all be duchesses and countesses in their own right; but there is no more respectable place to dine at, and there is no better *table d'hôte* than is served in the downstairs room. I told Miss Brighteyes that if she wanted to see the restaurant at its best we should have to dine early, for most of the guests were sure to be going on to the theatre either as spectators or players.

On Thursday Miss Brighteyes was going to the Opera to hear the "Huguenots," and was to join her aunt there, so I was asked if Thursday would suit, and said "Perfectly." Lady Carcanet looked discouragingly on the whole matter; but

said, very freezingly, that in that case we had better have the brougham, which could wait and take Miss Brighteyes to the Opera afterwards.

"Why didn't you come to my Drawing-Room Tea?" was the beginning of the cross-examination that I went through in the brougham, on our way to the restaurant; and I explained that as a recorder of dinners I considered myself exempt from teas, an answer which did not satisfy Miss Brighteyes, who pouted, and said that I might have made an exception in her favour.

Miss Brighteyes' cloak was deposited in a side room, my coat and hat were taken from me and put in a locker in the hall, and we settled ourselves down at a corner table in the room, dimly lighted by electric globes and by the red-shaded candles on the tables. It is a most effective room, as I pointed out to Miss Brighteyes, with its oil-paintings of figure-subjects framed in dark wood over the mantelpieces, its line of muslin-draped windows down one side, and on the other mirrors and the *comptoir* of dark wood, where between two palms one catches a glimpse, under the glow of a red-shaded lamp, of the pretty face of the lady enthroned there. A screen of old gold comes pleasantly into the scheme of colour. "Isn't it *delightfully* improper to be dining alone with a gentleman in a restaurant! I do wish Madame Quelquechose could see me now," Miss Brighteyes remarked, as I looked through the three menus, one at 10s. 6d., one at 7s. 6d., and one at 6s. 6d. Madame Quelquechose was, I may state, the

head of the celebrated Parisian school at which Miss Brighteyes had finished her education.

As the young lady had to be at Covent Garden at eight, and it was now seven, I thought the shortest of the menus—the 6s. 6d. one—would suffice. Besides, I hold that the best dinners are always short ones. Here it is :—

Hors-d'œuvre variés.
Consommé Sévigné.
Paupiettes de merlans Héloïse.
Tournedos grillés Judic.
Poularde rôtie.
Salade.
Asperges au beurre fondu.
Soufflé glacé Victoria.
Petits fours.

As Miss Brighteyes ate her plovers' eggs she wanted to be told who the different people dining at the tables might be. The bearded gentleman was one of the best-known singers, and his name a household word. The other man with the impress of the artist strong upon him was, I was able to tell her, the well-known Wagnerian conductor, who at the time was constantly travelling backwards and forwards between Bayreuth and Covent Garden. A pleasant-faced gentleman with a dark moustache, who had smiled at me as I came in, was a well-known comedian and manager ; the gentleman dining with two ladies was a cricketer of fame. There was the London correspondent of the *Figaro* dining with another French gentleman.

Our soup was excellent. There was in it a savour of the sea which reminded me of the

birds'-nest soup of China, and by that alone I should have judged M. Baptiste Commaille, the chef, to be an artist.

Before the fish arrived my cross-examination was continued. "Had I been to a Levee?" I was asked; and when I said I had not, and that the reason of the not having done so was that my practical study of the art of dining had made my tunic too tight for me, and that I was not sufficiently wealthy just at present to buy another to use for one occasion only in the year, I was told that I should learn to bike, and that if I did I might come sometimes and take Miss Brighteyes to the Park in the morning. Was I going to the big charity fancy ball at the Empress Rooms, and if so, as what? I was not, I regretted to say, my tunic not suiting better for balls than for levees, and my figure not being quite in keeping with a Romeo costume from Nathan's; but I learned that Miss Brighteyes was, and that she was going in a copy of a costume of one of her ancestresses, all light blue with the front laced across with pearls. The ancestress had real pearls, but Miss Brighteyes was only to have imitation ones.

The fish I did not care for much, a *merlan* being rather a tasteless denizen of the sea, but Miss Brighteyes admired the cream and pink of the *plat* immensely, and thought that there was a suggestion for a dress in it. Then I heard all about the recent balls, how charming the pink peonies were at one house, and the lilies and palms at another, and so on; and was given a disquisition on the dresses at the Drawing-Room,

of which all that I can recall is that one lady wore muslin with roses painted on it, and ropes of wonderful pearls.

The *tournedos*, with their accompanying quarters of artichokes in batter and scarlet tomatoes, were excellent, very excellent indeed, and so was the chicken, delightfully brown, and done to a turn. The *soufflé glacé Victoria*, which was brought in triumph by M. Garin, the *maître d'hôtel*, was encased in a little summer-house of sugar, with the names of various papers blazoned on it—that of the *Pall Mall* being over the door, I had finished my pint of excellent champagne and Miss Brighteyes had sipped her lemon squash, a sinful drink, even for a girl in her first season. I was selfish enough to take my coffee and liqueur before I told Miss Brighteyes that it was ten minutes to eight, which put her in a flutter, for she was anxious not to lose the overture.

This was the bill;—Two dinners, 13s.; half 88, 7s.; one lemon squash, 1s.; half tasse, 6d.; one liqueur, 1s.; total, £1 : 0 : 6.

*** There have been changes at the Hôtel Continental since I dined there with the intention of putting my experiences in print. There is a new board of directors, and the dining-room has put off its rather sombre livery of deep reds and browns, and has adopted instead a bright dress of white and gold and delicate greys. The curtains to the windows are pink, and the room is as bright now as a flower-garden. Mons. Laurent has replaced Mons. Garin as *maître d'hôtel*.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE AVONDALE (PICCADILLY)

WHILE I sat in the anteroom of the Hôtel Avondale and waited for the Epicure, whom I had asked to come and dine with me, as a general practitioner would call in a specialist in a delicate case, I pondered over the vicissitudes which, during the past few years, have befallen the hotel that has now come into the hands of the two young and energetic men from the Savoy.

It opened with a great flourish of trumpets, I remember, as the Cercle de Luxe, just at the time that Society seemed inclined to take to dining clubs, and the Amphitryon was always full, and the Maison Dorée glittered scarcely a stone's-throw away. I was much impressed then with the gorgeousness of the staircase, with the walls of reddish marble, topped by white, veined with black, and above that a broad painted frieze, red in tone, studded with portraits of Elizabethan worthies, which marbles and frieze and portraits remain to this day. There were gorgeous pictures then in the smoking-room, downstairs, of Elizabeth, or her nobles, going in State on

the Thames, and hawking and setting out to war, which pictures, when I peeped into the room before going upstairs, seem to have vanished. The room in which I was waiting for the Epicure was in those days a drawing-room of excessive gorgeousness, and I can recall that I thought that it was not for a simple ordinary man like myself to sit on yellow satin sofas that shone like looking-glasses. Now the room has nice panels of old-gold brocade and the sofas and curtains are in deep blue velvet. An American flag, draped over the principal piece of furniture in the room, shows of what nationality most of the guests at the Avondale at present are.

What was the cause of the non-success of the Cercle de Luxe, I do not know, for the dining-room was charming, and the cookery was undeniable. The next development of the house was as a cosy hotel, with the big rooms broken up into little suites of apartments, the anteroom turned into a dining-room, where a very good *table-d'hôte* dinner was served, and a bid made to attract well-to-do couples who liked hotel life. I looked over the hotel at the time of this transformation, and thought that if ever I married I would spend my honeymoon in No. 9, which was a particularly charming suite of apartments. I am, however, still in a state of single blessedness, and No. 9 has been converted into the kitchen of the restaurant, for Messrs. Garin and Eugene have broken down the partitions, restored the dining-room to its former proportions, and are trying to make the Avondale a little Savoy in Piccadilly.

The Epicure arrived on the stroke of the hour, and we went into the dining-room, where I had retained a table by the window. It is a pleasant room now, and will be even better when the new decorations have toned down under the influence of the London climate. There are pillars of black and white marble with gilded capitals and marble mantels, and the walls are frescoed by some modern artist. Opposite to us on the broadest space of wall a Diana worked in high relief in plaster was backed by a view of the falls of the Rhine, and on either side in panels were a lady in an Empire dress and a gentleman of the same period teaching a *merveilleuse* how to look through a telescope. There was an appetising show of fruit on the table in the centre, the strawberries being on the summit of a great block of ice. A Moorish gentleman, who I expect does nothing more ferocious than make coffee, made a fine splash of colour in his crimson and gold.

The Epicure having announced that he was not hungry, and that he could not drink champagne, I felt that the menu which had been devised by the management, and had met with my entire approval, might be too long for him, and I thought regretfully of the bottle of Moët and Chandon which I had ordered to be put in the ice-pail just long enough to get a chill into the wine. This was our dinner :—

Hors-d'œuvre.
Bortsch.
Soles bonne femme.
Selle d'agneau de lait.
Petits pois française.

Pommes nouvelles.
Rouen Rouennaise.
Cœurs de Romaine.
Asperges de Paris.
Macédoine de fruits au Kirsch.

The Epicure looked at it, but said nothing ; and I felt that so far I, in company with Messrs. Garin and Eugène, had at least escaped censure. The Epicure approved of the lights on the table, which were like a bunch of three pink lilies, the cups all pointing inwards, but thought that the globes suspended from the ceiling were too bright and might dazzle the eyes, thereby interfering with the full enjoyment of a dinner. M. Garin, who stood by in an immaculate frock coat, gave the Epicure to understand that this should be put right at once.

The *hors-d'œuvre* the Epicure passed without any remarks, and I felt that they at least were satisfactory.

Bortsch is a soup of which I am very fond, and I like the softness that the spoonful of cream mixed with it gives. The Epicure did not take cream in his, and I wondered why, but thought it wiser not to ask. He said that the soup was good, and I began to feel reassured as to my dinner, while the good-looking *maître d'hôtel*, who was hovering round our table, positively beamed on him.

The *Soles bonne femme*, with their sliced mushrooms and excellent sauce, I thought very good ; but the Epicure felt that it was time to assert himself, and said that though the dish was undeniably well cooked, still it was not in

sufficient contrast to the soup to be exactly the right *plat* for a perfect dinner. I did not exactly understand what he meant; but I shook my head and said that no doubt that was so.

Meanwhile, the room had been filling up. A well-known newspaper proprietor who is also a celebrity in the hunting-field, was giving a dinner to two pretty ladies, one of whom wore a beautiful necklet of diamonds and the other a three-fold rope of pearls, and to two other men. A magnate of the Stock Exchange had brought another member of the House to dine, two or three couples—Americans, I think—the ladies mightily smart, had come in and taken their places, and a well-known explorer, who was giving a dinner-party, but whose guests had not arrived, looked in to see that his table was all in order.

The saddle of lamb was excellent, and as the Epicure ate the delicate white meat, cooked to a turn by the excellent M. Dutruz, the chef, he launched out into anecdotes as to the great love that real epicures have for these babes and sucklings, and of the personal inconvenience to which they have even been known to put themselves to obtain their flesh. The peas, with the suggestion of sugar and onion with them, also met with high approval. But the Epicure would not pass the duck. I should have eaten it and seen no harm in it; but not so the Epicure. "C'est un peu faisandé," he said, and would not touch it. A cut was brought from another duck; but he would have none of that either. Both Messrs. Garin and Eugène were on the scene at once, and explained. All their poultry came from

Paris, a fresh stock each day, and they could not imagine how such a thing could possibly be. The Epicure was stern. He pointed out to them that it was a judgment on them for going to Paris for their ducks instead of to London, and incidentally lectured us on the method of preparation of the Rouen Rouennaise. I wanted to eat my slice of duck, so I scraped off the luscious brown sauce, and suggesting that it might be the sauce and not the duck that was at fault, left a bare platter. The Epicure looked at me as a traveller does at an Earthman, but said nothing.

The asparagus, the Epicure said, was delicious, and the atmosphere cleared again, and he also approved highly of the *macédoine*. His claret, he said, was good, and I know that my champagne was excellent; but just as a parting salute to Messrs. Garin and Eugène, he rubbed some of the liqueur brandy on the palms of his hands, smelt it, and used it as a text on which to discourse of the failure of the grape vine in Cognac and the ravages of the phylloxera.

When I asked for my bill I told Messrs. Garin and Eugène that I thought they had given me an excellent dinner, and not to distress their minds too much about the duck, as an epicure, if he was not severely critical, would not be an epicure. This was the bill: Two dinners at 10s. 6d., £1 : 1s.; one 127, 16s.; half 44, 3s. 6d.; one seltzer, 6d.; two café double, 1s. 6d.; liqueurs, 3s.; cigar, 1s. 6d.; total, £2 : 7s.

31*st May*.

*** Since writing the above the Avondale has firmly established itself as one of the fashionable

dining-places, and, following the example of most of its elder competitors, has become a company with Hachett's, the Whitehorse cellars, as a second asset of the company. Hachett's, of which the dining-room, underground, has always had a good cheap *table d'hôte*, is now managed by M. Eugène, while M. Garin is in command at the Avondale. Amongst interesting dinners I have eaten at the Avondale, one of the most interesting was a "Household Brigade Magazine" one, a dinner which the staff of the Magazine, written by Guardsmen for Guardsmen, hold from time to time. This was the menu of the feast, and it is a good example of a dinner, not a very expensive one, for some twenty guests—

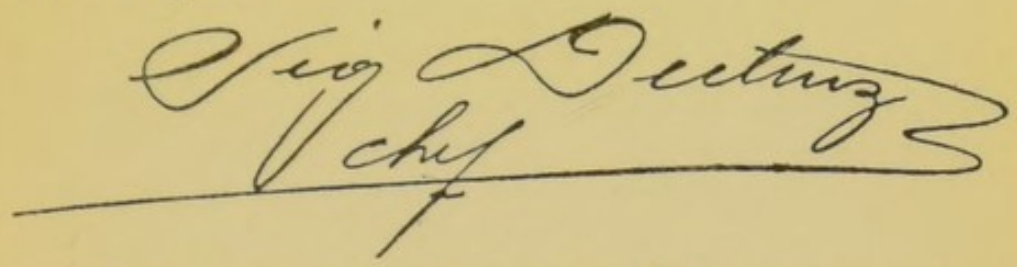
Canapés à la Russe.
Petite marmite. Bisque d'écrevisses.
Turbotin. Sauce mousseline.
Volaille Derby.
Selle d'agneau Richelieu.
Bécassines rôties.
Salade.
Asperges vertes.
Bombe Martinique.
Ananas glacés.
Petits fours.
Soufflé Viennois.

I asked M. Garin to give me the recipe of Bortsch Soup, which I always think the best soup in the world, and here it is, as written out by M. Dutruz, the chef—

Bortsch Soup

Ayez un bon consommé avec lequel vous manquez un morcelle la marmite comme il est l'usage pour le consommé extra, faites blanchir un morceau de poitrine de bœuf que vous ajoutez et une caneton que vous faites rôtir pendant

quelques minutes, le tout étant cuit, coupez les filets du canard et le maigre du bœuf en petit carré d'un dessin centimètre, passez votre consommé à la serviette, ayez d'autre part une Julienne de légumes, avec beaucoup de choux. Servez notre potage en ajoutant aux légumes les morceaux de bœuf et canard plus un jus de betterave rouge de façon de lui donner une couleur rougeâtre et un peu de poivre moulu frais; envoyez une saucière de crème à part.

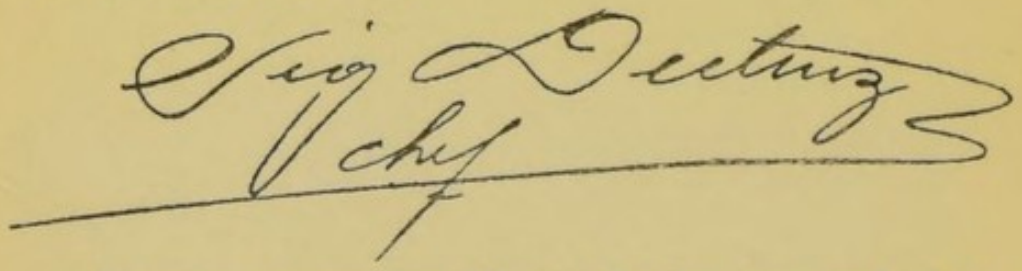


Take a good stock, and nearly fill the saucepan with it, as is usual in the case of a rich soup. Blanch a piece of brisket of beef, add this, with a duckling which has been roasted for a few minutes. When all is cooked, cut some slices off the duck and cut them up into little squares of less than a quarter of an inch, cutting up the lean part of the beef in the same way. Pass your sauce through a linen strainer. Have ready some Julienne made with vegetables, with plenty of cabbages. Serve your soup, after adding the vegetables, the pieces of beef and duck, and also the juice of a beetroot so as to give the soup a red colour, and a pinch of freshly ground pepper. Send up a sauceboat of cream separately.

Not only did M. Garin give me the soup recipe, but he sent me the *recette* of *soufflé de filet de sole à la d'Orléans*, a dish invented by the Duc d'Orleans, who is one of the best patrons of the Avondale. It has a double interest, through being an interesting dish, and showing Monseigneur le Duc as being an expert in the detail of the *haute cuisine*.

Soufflé de Filets de Sole à la d'Orleans

Choisissez des filets de sole bien blancs, les parer et ciseler, les farcir d'une farce de poisson aux truffes et rouler en forme de paupiettes, faites pocher doucement avec du vin blanc, faire reduire la cuisson, ajouter trois cuillères de béchamelle, le toute étant bien réduit lier avec deux jeaunes d'œufs et mélanger à votre appareil en ajoutant de belles lames de truffes fraîches chauffées au beurre assaisonné de sel et beaucoup de mignonette, placez vos paupiettes sur un croûton très mince dans une timbale en argent et recouverte de l'appareil à souffler, faites cuire pendant quinze minutes au four en soupoudrant de parmesan (cheese) dessus de façon à prendre belle couleur.—Ce plat doit être servi de suite.



Choose very white fillets of sole, cut and shape them to the proper size, stuff them with a fish stuffing made with truffles, and roll them up *en paupiettes* (in thin pieces, with the force-meat inside). Well boil down the liquor, add three spoonfuls of Béchamel sauce, and when the whole is well reduced add two yokes of eggs, and mix in your soufflé pan, adding some nice slices of fresh truffles, warmed in butter, seasoned with salt, and plenty of mignonette pepper. Place your *paupiettes* on a very thin crust in a silver timbale. Place in the soufflé apparatus, cover over, and cook in the oven for fifteen minutes, first having sprinkled it on the top with Parmesan cheese so as to make it a good colour. This dish must be served immediately.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MERCERS' HALL (CHEAPSIDE)

It is not the least pleasant part of writing of dinners and those who eat them that it brings me some varied correspondence, and perhaps the pleasantest letter I have received was one asking me if I would like to dine with the Company of Mercers; for if I would, my correspondent offered to send me an invitation.

If there was one City Company that I was anxious to dine with it was the Mercers, for most of my forebears had been of the guild. My great-great-uncle, who was Lord Mayor and an M.P., and who fell into unpopularity because he advocated paying the debts of George IV., was a Mercer; my great-uncle was in his turn Master of the Company, and my grandfather, who was a very peppery and litigious old gentleman, has left many pamphlets in which he tried to make it warm for everybody all round because he was not raised to the Court of Assistants when he thought he should have been. I had looked out Mercers' Hall in the Directory, and found

its position put down as 4 Ironmonger Lane, Cheapside; so a few minutes before seven o'clock, the hour at which we were bidden to the feast, I found my way from Moorgate Street Station to Ironmonger Lane, and there asked a policeman which was the Mercers' Company Hall. He looked at me a little curiously and pointed to some great gates, with a lamp above them, enshrined in a rather dingy portal. I passed a fountain, of which two cherubs held the jet and three stone cranes contemplated the water in the basin, and found myself in a great pillared space. A servant in a brown livery, of whom I asked my way, pointed to some steps and said something about hurrying up. At the top of the steps a door led me into a passage, on either side of which were sitting gentlemen in dress-clothes. I looked at them and they looked at me, and I thought for a second that the Mercers' guests were rather a queer lot; and then the true inwardness of the situation burst on me. I had come in by the waiters' door.

I was soon put right, my hat and coat taken from me, and my card of invitation placed in the hands of a Master of the Ceremonies, who in due time presented me to the Master, to the Senior Warden, and to the House Warden, who stood in a line, arrayed in garments of purple velvet and fur, and received their guests.

The ceremony of introduction over, I was able to look around me and found myself in a drawing-room that took one away from the roar of Cheapside to some old Venetian palace. The painted ceilings, the many-coloured marbles, the

carved wood, the gilding and inlaying make the Mercers' drawing-room as princely a chamber as I have ever seen.

While the guests assembled my host's sons took me away into another room, which, with its long table, might have been a council chamber of some Doge, and here were hung portraits of the most distinguished of the Mercers. Dick Whittington looked down from a gilt frame, and Sir Thomas Gresham, and there was Sir Roundell Palmer in his judge's robes. But, preceded by some one in robes carrying a staff of office, the Master was going into the hall, and the guests streamed after him. "It only dates from after the Fire," said my host as I gazed in admiration at the magnificent proportions of this banqueting house, the oak almost black with age, relieved by the colours of the banners that hang from the walls, by the portraits of worthies, by some noble painted windows, by the line of escutcheons which run round the room, bearing the arms of the Past-Masters of the Company, and by the carved panels, into all but two of which Grinling Gibbons threw his genius, while the two new ones compare not unfavourably with the old. At the far end of the hall is a musicians' gallery of carved oak. A bronze Laocoon wrestles with his snakes in the centre of one side of the hall, and on the other, on a mantel of red marble, a great clock is flanked by two bronzes. Three long tables run up the room to the high table, at the centre of which is the Master's chair, and behind this chair is piled on the sideboard the Company's

plate. And some of the plate is magnificent. There are the old silver salt-cellars, there are great silver tankards, gold salvers, and the gold cup given to the Mercers by the Bank of England and the Lee cup and an ornamental tun and waggon, the first of which is valued at £7000, and the second at £10,000.

"Pray, silence for grace," comes in the deep bass tones of the toastmaster from behind the Master's chair, and then all of us settle down to a contemplation of the menu and to a view of our fellow-guests.

This was the dinner that Messrs. Ring and Brymer, who cater for the Mercers, put upon the table:—

Madeira.	Tortue. Tortue claire. Consommé printanière.
Hock. *Steinberg*, 1883.	Salade de filets de soles à la Russe. Saumon. Sauce homard. Blanchaille.
Sauterne. *Château Yquem*, 1887. *Champagne.* *Pommery*, 1884.	Ortolans en caisse. Mousse de foie gras aux truffes.
	Ponche à la Romaine.
	Hanches de venaison. Selles de mouton.
Burgundy. *Chambertin*, 1881.	Canetons. Poulets de grain. Langues de bœuf. Jambons de Cumberland. Crevettes en serviette.

Claret.	Macédoines de fruits.
Château Latour, 1875.	Gelées aux liqueurs.
	Meringues à la crème.
	Bombe glacé.
Port.	
1863.	Quenelles au parmesan.

I always rather dread the length of a City dinner, but in the case of the Mercers the House Warden has just hit on a happy compromise, the dinner being important-enough to be styled a banquet, and not so long as to be wearying. Messrs. Ring and Brymer's cook is to be congratulated, too, for his *Mousse de foie gras* was admirable.

There were some distinguished guests at the high table. At the far end, where Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, the Senior Warden, sat, there were little splashes of colour from the ribbons of orders worn round the neck, and the sparkle of stars under the lapels of dress-coats.

The Master had on his right a well-known baronet, and on his left Silomo. Next to the friend of the Turk was an ex-M.P., and next to him again one of the humorists of the present House of Commons—an Irish Q.C., with clean-shaven, powerful face.

At the long tables sat as proper a set of gentlemen as ever gathered to a feast; but with no special characteristics to distinguish them from any other great assemblage. The snow-white hair of a clergyman told out vividly against the background of old oak, and a miniature volunteer officer's decoration caught my eye as I looked down the table.

The dinner ended, the toastmaster's work began again, and first from the gold loving-cup and from two copies of it, the stems of which are said to have been candlesticks used when Queen Elizabeth visited the Company, we drank to each other "across and across the table." The taste of the liquor in the cup was not familiar to me, and when my host told me how it was compounded I was not surprised. It is a mixture of many wines, with a dash of strong beer.

Grace was sung by a quartet in the musicians' gallery, and then the company settled down to listen to speeches interspersed with song. By each guest was placed a little cigar case, within it two cigars ; but these were not to be smoked yet awhile. While we sipped the '63 port, we listened to Silomo gently chaffing himself as he responded for "The Houses of Parliament." Later the Irish Q.C., who spoke for "The Visitors," caught up the ball of fun, and tossed it to and fro, and Madame Bertha Moore and Miss Marian Blinkhorn, and others sang songs and quartets, and my host told me, in the intervals, of the great store of the old clarets and ports that the Mercers had in their cellars, which was enough to make a lover of good wine covet his neighbour's goods. And still later, after the cigars had filled the drawing-room with a light grey mist, I went forth, this time down the grand oaken staircase, with its lions clasping escutcheons. I passed into Cheapside with a very lively sense of gratitude to the Mercers in general, and my hospitable host in particular.

7th June.

CHAPTER XX

IN —— STREET

YET another invitation to dine from an unknown friend, and this time with a tinge of mystery to give it piquancy. My would-be host offered to give me what he believed to be one of the cheapest obtainable dinners in London, as well as one of the most amusing; but as an introduction is required before any guest is able to use this dining-place, I was asked, should I describe it, to give no clue as to its whereabouts.

As I waited for my host at a club which happened to be not far from the district in which I was to dine, I had vague ideas that I might be blindfolded and conveyed to our destination in a four-wheeled cab, and that some blood-curdling oath as to secrecy might be demanded of me. There was none of this. My host and I walked through a labyrinth of streets, and in due time, in an unpretentious locality, came to a wine-shop, the exterior of which somewhat resembled the good bottles of wine to be found within, in that it was dusty and had a suggestion of crust about it. Inside, the piles of

bottles reaching up to the ceiling, seen in a half-light, had something of a Rembrandtesque effect.

No sooner had my companion opened the door than we were faced by a lady in black, her hair parted in the centre, whom we had caught in a moment of arrested motion, for she had a bottle in either hand and was going towards the staircase at the corner of the shop. "Is the dinner to-night at six o'clock or at seven?" my host asked in French; and he was told that it was at six, and that he was in excellent time, for as yet there were only three up above; and then I was introduced to Madame, and we three climbed the narrow staircase in company.

I had been warned that I would have to bring into use such French as I was master of, for the guests at this dinner were cosmopolitan, and the language of diplomacy was the currency for conversation; and so when on entering the room I was presented to a French lady and her husband, and to an Italian gentleman, and shook hands with them, I expressed my gratification at being admitted into this friendly circle with my best Parisian accent.

I looked round the room. In the centre was a dining table with a clean coarse tablecloth upon it, knives and forks and spoons and glass salt-cellars—and my attention was called later on to the excellence of the crystals of salt—and an array of black bottles, which those in the hostess's hands went to join, and siphons. There were two windows, with clean muslin curtains, looking out on the dingy street. Through an open door could be seen an inner room, a bedroom, with a

very large bed showing as the principal object in it. The walls of the dining-room were covered with a brown paper with a little pattern on it. By the fireplace were hung some photographs, amongst them one of the little French gentleman I had just been introduced to, who is a member of the Covent Garden orchestra, and had been taken holding in his hand his musical instrument; and on the wall opposite were some good portraits, the work of the Italian gentleman, who is an artist. There were lithographs and photographs of scenes in Paris, and a print of the head of Napoleon III. Photographs and china figures were on the mantelpiece, a cottage piano between the two windows; a chiffonnier with glasses on it and a glazed cupboard completed the furniture of the room.

The guests were punctual, each lady as she came in, after the preliminary hand-shaking, going into the bedroom and putting her wraps upon the big bed; and soon Madame cried, "À table!"

We settled down into our places, leaving space for some late-comers who were expected. At the head of the table was a dark lady with wavy hair, an actress in a company of French comedians playing in London. Next to her sat on one side the *monsieur d'orchestre* and his wife—and every newcomer made a point of inquiring after the musician's health, for he had been, it seemed, ill, and was now convalescent—and on the other side an English major, with a waxed moustache and a flower in his button-hole, mighty fine, as old Pepys would have had it, and his good-looking

wife. Other guests at table were a lady with white hair, who was the mother of a bright-eyed, good-looking young Frenchman with a velvet collar to his coat, who was playing with a troupe of mimes at one of the variety theatres, and who faced his mother at table; and the Italian artist who, with carefully brushed white hair, waxed moustache, and ample cravat, was as great a beau as the English major.

Under Madame's superintendence a servant, bare of arm and in a print dress, brought in through the bedroom a great soup-tureen, and we at our end of the table, who had been drinking vermouth with my host, soon found platters of excellent *croûte-au-pot* before us.

The evening was warm, and at the request of Madame la Majoresse, as the Major's wife was called, one of the windows was opened. The little bustle caused by this was subsiding when a good-looking French lady in green made her entrance, kissed Mdme. la Majoresse, shook hands with the rest of us, settled into a place next to the bright-eyed Frenchman, and immediately felt a terrible *courant d'air*. This, of course, had to be obviated; and after some discussion—and we all had our say—it was thought that if the door giving on to the staircase was shut the draught might vanish. The lady in green, who was a comédienne, had brought some tickets for stalls for the Opera, which she gave to Madame la Majoresse; and this turned the conversation to the Opera and the artistes singing this year. The bright-eyed little Frenchman had an anecdote to tell of how Noté,

on the evening of the Derby Day, had from the promenade of the Empire joined in the refrain of one of the beautiful Cavalieri's songs, and how the house recognised his voice and applauded. Both the Italian artist and myself had been at the Empire that evening, and while we ate the boiled beef that succeeded the soup we discussed the matter, the Italian gentleman not having noticed the incident, I having an impression that something of the kind had happened.

Then the lady in green made the terrible discovery that we were thirteen at table, and Madame, who had been hovering between the bedroom and the dining-room, with one eye on the dinner table and the other on the kitchen beyond, was prayed to sit down at table, which she did till the arrival of the two other guests—a lady, who had forsaken the operatic stage for matrimony, and her husband, who came in and so broke the spell.

A great bowl of macaroni succeeded the beef, and brought a volley of light-shafted chaff upon the Italian artist in whose honour it was supposed to be provided, and then we chinked glasses full of the excellent red wine, and interchanged international courtesies.

A third actress looked in for a moment or two just for a little chat with her friends amongst the diners, and then, to Madame's great grief, for there was a most excellent poulet to come, the Major and the Majoresse had to depart to dress for the Opera, and the bright-eyed young Frenchman had to be off to the variety theatre. To make up for this deprivation, however,

another guest made his appearance, and was hailed with joy. A most merry little Frenchman, with a very pretty wit, the wag of the party, was the newcomer, a *fumiste* into whose hands had been given the rearrangement of the Savoy kitchen, and who had also seen to the kitchen of the Cecil. He was a person of much importance, but he joked with the bare-armed serving-maid and made her blush, and threw Madame into a fit of laughter, and chaffed all the rest of us just as if he had been an ordinary individual and not a European celebrity.

The chicken was as admirable as Madame had said it would be, and a great bowl of salad accompanied it; and then there came a sweet of some kind and cheese and excellent coffee—"all this we get for two shillings," the Italian artist told me—and eventually when, after much hand-shaking, the greater portion of the guests had left, the *fumiste* came down to my end of the table and talked soldier's talk, for he had been through the Great War, calling me "Mon vieux colon," while my host played the piano softly, and the lady who had sacrificed fame for the wedding-ring sang gently an old-fashioned French *berceuse*.

14th June.

CHAPTER XXI

A REGIMENTAL DINNER (HOTEL VICTORIA, NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE)

THE honorary secretary of the Regimental Dinner Club, who is the gentleman who, in one of the little rooms, somewhat resembling loose boxes, of Cox and Co., the military bankers, presides over the ledgers containing the accounts of Ours, had sent six weeks ago to every member of the club, and that means nearly every officer past and present, a notice that the annual dinner of the regiment would take place at the Hôtel Victoria, on a certain day in Ascot week, at 8 P.M.

"Regimental dinner, sir? Yes, sir. Cloak-room third door to the right," said the impressive porter who, in gold-banded hat and with gold buttons to his blue coat, stands at the front door; and farther on, at the corner where the long corridor joins the passage, a waiter with a cherubic face waved a cotton-gloved hand in the direction one was to go.

Hat and cloak left, an oval piece of pasteboard taken in exchange, and a monetary transaction

concluded with a gentleman at a little table, another white-gloved hand was waved towards the drawing-rooms, and there in the farthest room of the long suite was assembled a collection of gentlemen in dress clothes, of all ages, most of them bronzed and clean-shaved, though a beard here and there belonged to some one who had left the colours. There was a glint of silver from miniature medals and the sparkle of a couple of orders. It was not the ordinary assemblage that waits patiently with legs apart and hands under the coat-tails for dinner to be announced; it was an assemblage in which much shaking of hands was going on, and intermingled with greetings were such scraps of conversation as, "Haven't seen you for years"; "Yes, a fortnight's leave from Ireland to do Ascot"; "Home on sick leave, but feel fit enough now"; "A big dinner to-night: thirty-three dining."

There was so much talk that dinner was announced three times before any one took any notice, and then there was a little block at the door, for the Generals hung back for a moment from leading the way, and the subalterns were not, before dinner, sufficiently assertive to take precedence.

The stream of black coats set at last down the corridor, and on our way we caught a glimpse of the bright scene in the *table-d'hôte* room, where all the little tables were occupied, and where the band was playing. We passed some pretty girls coming out of the drawing-room — one subaltern audibly regretted that the presence of the fair sex was tabooed at

the feast—and we turned into the oak banqueting-room.

There was a long table down the middle of the room, and at the centre of this the General who is the colonel-in-chief of the regiment seated himself, with, on either hand, two Generals who have in their time held the regimental command. The getting into their places of the other guests at the banquet was rather like the game of musical chairs, and three unfortunates were left seatless. This, however, was soon rectified; there was a general squeezing up to make more room, and it was found that there was plenty of space at either end of the table for two places to be laid. Some one, beyond the original thirty-three, had been able to run over at the last moment from Ireland, and somebody had come up unexpectedly from the depot, and somebody else had thought that he had sent in his name to the secretary when he really had not.

It is an impressive room. There is a very broad frieze, on which rosy cupids gambol against a gold background, above the panels and carving in deep-toned oak. Across a large stained-glass window some warm-coloured brown curtains were almost drawn-to; a tall chiffonnier, bright with glass and napery, cut off the serving-room; clusters of electric lights sparkled in the skylight which forms the roof. A centre-piece and some great silver cups stood among the flowers, banks of which ran the whole way down the table, and which were of the colours of the regimental ribbon, with scarlet poppies to suggest the tint

of Her Majesty's uniform. There was a button-hole of the same coloured flowers by each guest's plate, and the cover of the menu repeated again the familiar colours. This was the list of the feast :—

	Hors-d'œuvre variés.
	Tortue claire.
	Darne de saumon à la Mathilde. Suprêmes de filets de sole glacés Danoise. Blanchailles au Kari.
Vins. *Milk Punch.*	
Fine old East India Madeira.	Nageoires de tortue Washington. Coquilles de foie gras Mireille. Poularde à la Matignon.
Château Carbonnieux.	
Boll and Co., 1884.	Selle d'agneau. Sauce menthe. Haricots verts sautés au beurre. Pommes nouvelles fondantes.
G. H. Mumm and Co. Ex. Qual., Ex. Dry, Cuvee '65, 1889.	
Haut Bages, 1875. *Feuerheera's Zimbro* 1884 *Port.*	Jambon de York à la Kalli. Fèves de marais Maître d'Hôtel.
	Sorbet.
	Cailles de vignes et ortolans sur toast. Salade Romaine.

	Asperges en ranches. Sauce Argenteuil.
Otard's Old Liqueur Brandy.	
	Fruits à la Créole. Bombe Japonaise. Petits fours.
Johannis Water.	
	Dessert. Café noir.

As a privileged grumbler I began the dinner with finding fault, for there were no finger-glasses as an accompaniment to the *crevettes*, which were among the *hors-d'œuvre*, and the Boll, which was the champagne I tried, had not been iced sufficiently—if, indeed, it had seen the ice-pail at all. But the turtle-soup was soothing, and the next supply of champagne that came round was of the right temperature.

In the pause between the soup and the fish one could gather better than in the crowded dining-room who were present. On the chairman's right was a General who had been knighted by Her Majesty for his services in an African campaign; on his left the commander of the forces in an island fortress, who in his time had led a battalion of the regiment on active service; opposite to him was the lieutenant-colonel, who has added to the sheaf of the regiment's honours in the latest Indian campaign. A couple of majors, home from India, sat together; a group of retired officers, now most of them squires on their country estates, had gathered at a corner to talk over old times, the Governor of one of Her Majesty's gaols was being much chaffed as to his present employment; and the rest were

chiefly the bronzed, healthy, light-moustached young Englishmen, cast in the mould that tells the world at once that a man is a soldier, and fresh from manœuvring in Ireland or guarding the marches at a great Indian frontier station.

The turtle fins and the saddle of mutton were excellent, and the ortolan I secured was as plump a little fellow as ever found the shelter of a vine leaf; but when we came to the asparagus I was constrained to ask the head waiter confidentially what the hard sticks were with a little soft place at the end, tasting more like a Brussels sprout than any vegetable that I knew of. The poor man, who wore a worried look, said that they were the best procurable in France, and turned for confirmation to a manager of many inches, who, his hair brushed up to a point, and wearing a pointed beard, was leaning with folded arms on the top of the chiffonnier, and contemplating the scene. Our little difference of opinion as to the quality of the *asperges d'Argenteuil* concluded, the fruits and ice handed round, the General in the chair rose, and in a few well-chosen words—for soldiers neither care to make long speeches nor to listen to them—proposed the health of the Queen, which was drunk standing; and as loyal subjects who wore, or had worn, the scarlet, we applauded the suggestion of our Colonel that a telegram should be sent to the proper quarter, and that Her Majesty should know that the officers of one of her oldest regiments had saluted her at their annual gathering. Then the diners broke up into groups, for every one had much to say and much to hear,

and there were more speeches, and the healths of "officers past and present" were drunk, and courtesies exchanged with another regiment dining in the same hotel, and it was near the stroke of midnight when most of us remembered that we had to be up betimes to go to Ascot on the morrow.

21st June.

CHAPTER XXII

DIEUDONNÉ'S (RYDER STREET)

"I THOUGHT your Galatea a superb creation, and flatter myself I gave an entirely new reading of the part of Chrysos's slave," I said; and our leading lady was kind enough to say in reply that through force of genius I raised the part of Chrysos's slave into a principal character.

I never inflict the fact upon my friends, but I am an amateur actor. I do not play Hamlet or Othello, for owing to the jealousy of "casting" committees, those parts are never offered me. I have some original readings which the world will be startled by when I *do* play Hamlet; but I can, I believe, get more expression into such sentences as "My lord, the carriage waits," than any other amateur who has ever trodden the boards of St. George's Hall.

The leading lady of a troupe of which erstwhile I was a member—a little difficulty over the allotment of the part of Young Marlowe was the cause of my ceasing to assist them—was anxious to see Réjane as Gilberte in "Frou-Frou." Her husband, a worthy man, but with

no taste for the higher dramatic art, and in the habit of saying sarcastic things as to amateurs and amateur acting, preferred the Empire to the Lyric ; hence I had the honour of escorting our leading lady to see Réjane, and asked her to dine with me at Dieudonné's as a preliminary.

It was while she trifled with a sardine at the commencement of dinner that I remarked that her Galatea was a superb creation—it really was not at all bad—and she complimented me very justly on my Chrysos's slave.

We had a table close to the window, and looked over a bank of flowers across to the rather sombre houses on the opposite side of Ryder Street. But if the look-out is not of the brightest, the inside of the room on the first floor is charming—the perfection of a room to dine in on a hot day. It is all in white. The two pillars in the centre of the room are white, the great dumb-waiter is white, the walls are white. There are delicately-painted panels, with gentlemen and ladies in powder and silk and brocade limned upon them ; the ceiling is the work of an artist, and there is here and there a touch of gold in the framing of a screen or the capital of a pillar. One little shade on each of the bunches of three electric lights, that are held by brackets from the wall, is pink, the others white. On the tables there were flowers in vases of silver. The downstairs room, which is smaller, is equally cool-looking and tastefully decorated.

M. Guffanti, the proprietor, slim, and with a moustache that a cavalryman might envy,

had come to ask whether the table he had reserved for us was to our liking, the bottle of Pol Roger was in the ice-pail within reach of my hand, and I was just going to tell our leading lady with what pleasure I recalled her Lady Teazle when we played in the schoolroom at Tadley-on-the-Marsh, and to ask her candidly what her opinion was of my rendering of the part of Joseph's valet, when Giovanini, the *maître d'hôtel*, came up with a bunch of flowers in his hand. Giovanini, bushy of eyebrows, and with whiskers that are almost Piccadilly weepers, evidently regarded our leading lady with much respectful admiration ; for he presented her with the bunch of roses. And indeed our leading lady might well compel admiration, for she was looking superbly handsome, and was wearing all her diamonds. Her appearance reminded me, as I told her later, of that evening when she made such a hit as the heroine of "Plot and Passion," at Slopperton, and I played, with some distinction, I trust, the part of Grisbouille.

What our leading lady's impressions were of my rendering of the valet in "The School for Scandal" I shall never know, for the arrival of the *consommé Nelson* turned the conversation, and I was asked as to the identity of all the people who were dining. There were two ladies at a table by themselves—Dieudonné's is one of the places where ladies can dine by themselves, without fear of any inconvenience—whom I put down as country cousins who had come up for a fortnight's shopping and sight-seeing in town. There was a family party : husband,

wife—a stern lady with spectacles, who took immense interest in the leading lady when she overheard me call her the Ellen Terry of the amateur stage—and two children. There were two colonels and an admiral, who were going to escort two ladies to the theatre; there was a large party of French people, a very pretty dark-eyed girl among them; there were a handsome American lady and her husband; there was a Royal Engineer just off to Malta, who had played hero's parts with the leading lady—I should not wonder if he was the fellow who cut me out of the part of Young Marlowe; and there were a dozen other people whose identity I could not determine. This was the menu of the dinner, the customary *table-d'hôte* meal, a menu to which the leading lady seemed more inclined to devote attention than to my remarks on my own rendering of various characters:—

Hors-d'œuvre variés.
Consommé Nelson.
Crème Brésilienne.
Saumon du Rhin bouilli. Sauce mousseline.
Caneton braisé Fermière.
Noisettes de Béhaques Romaine.
Poularde de Surrey à la broche.
Salade.
Haricots verts à l'Anglaise.
Bombe favourite.
Petits fours.
Laitances sur toast.
Salade de fraises.

When the creamy-pink salmon was put upon the table, M. Guffanti, going the rounds of the

tables, came and asked if everything was to our satisfaction, and as I thought it might interest the leading lady, I asked him what had become of Madame Dieudonné's little room and the pretty things that were drawn and written on its walls.

Before Dieudonné's became the handsome hotel and restaurant that it is now, it was a boarding-house which stood in high favour with such of the French artists and sculptors and singers and actors who crossed the silver streak to perfidious Albion. The *table-d'hôte* dinner, at which Mdme. Dieudonné took the head of the long table, was a celebrated institution. No one could come without being vouched for by some of the habitués, and most of the people who might be found at the board were of European celebrity. Madame had a little parlour, which was a kind of holy of holies, and on the walls of this all the most celebrated of the celebrities who were the *amis du maison* either drew a sketch or wrote a quatrain, or dotted down a bar or two of some favourite air, and the names that were signed below the sketches and the scribblings were some of those that stand highest on the roll of fame. M. Guffanti told us that in spite of all precautions the walls were spoilt, and that Madame's little parlour was now the ante-room downstairs with the Watteau panels, where people sit after dinner and drink coffee.

The duck was excellent, but to be absolutely critical I thought that the vegetables had lingered a thought too long by the fire, and if the weather had not been as muggy and stifling as it was I

might have suggested that the lamb from which the noisettes were cut would have been better for a little longer hanging. For the rest of the dinner I had nothing but praise, and the salad of strawberries, as cold as ice could make it, was delicious. I ordered coffee and some chartreuse in crushed ice for the leading lady, and some *fin champagne* for myself and asked for my bill.

While disposing of the coffee I thought that my chance had come to get the leading lady's real opinion of my conception of the character of Joseph's valet, and began explaining at length my method of entry to announce the arrival of Charles Surface; but the leading lady rather brusquely asked for her cloak, and said we should miss part of the first act of "Frou-Frou."

I paid the bill—Two dinners, 15s.; one bottle 89, 13s.; two cafés specials, 1s. 6d.; two liqueurs, 2s.; total, £1 : 11 : 6—and helped the leading lady on with her cloak. I think she might have listened to my ideas as to the valet's entrance. These amateurs—all but myself—are so inordinately selfish.

5th July.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE BERKELEY (PICCADILLY)

THE white-faced house with gilded balconies that stands at the corner of Berkeley Street and Piccadilly is an old friend with a new face, for in the year of grace '97 the old hotel was much altered, the restaurant almost doubled in size, and the Berkeley may now, in its latest development, be said to be the blonde beauty among London hotels.

The Editor invited me to dinner, a little dinner for three, the Gracious Lady, himself, and myself—the handsome niece who completed the *partie carrée* on a previous occasion was at her cottage in the country and was reported to be accomplishing wonderful feats of cookery with her chafing-dish—and suggested that I should interview Jules as to the menu.

When I sent in word to Jules that I should like to see him, I had plenty of employment, during the few moments I was kept waiting, in looking at the new ante-room to the right of the entrance-hall, a very handsome apartment, with old gold as the dominating colour everywhere.

First, there came to me Emile, the *maître d'hôtel* whom I remember of old at the Bristol. M. Jules would not keep me waiting a moment, he said; and even as he spoke M. Jules, in frock-coat, with a little sheaf of papers in his hand, came in. "The Editor is coming to dine here to-morrow night, and wants a little dinner for three," I began, and M. Jules selected one of the papers from his sheaf and handed it to me. He had heard in some way of the Editorial advent, and had put his suggestions as to a little dinner upon paper. They ran as follows:—

Melon Cantaloup.
Crème d'or.
Truite froide au court bouillon. Sauce verte.
Caneton Nantais à la Drexel.
Selle de pré-salé rôtie aux légumes.
Petits pois à la Française.
Salade à la St-James.
Ananas glacé Sibérienne.
Corbeille de petits fours.
Croustade Victoria.

I read the menu down, and when I came to the *caneton à la Drexel* I paused, and looked interrogatively at M. Jules. "It is new," he said; "it will be the second time that I have served it"; and I thought how honours were reserved for editors which are not given to simple correspondents. I should not wonder if some day Jules actually named a dish after the Editor.

The Gracious Lady and the Editor arrived on the stroke of eight—punctuality is the preliminary courtesy to a good dinner—and there

was M. Jules waiting to show us to the very best table in the dining-room, the table by the corner window which looks out to the Green Park across the road. Emile was there also, smiling, and a waiter, with a thin line of gold edging his collar, placed the slices of iced melon before us as we sat down.

M. Jules regretted that we had not dined at the Berkeley the night before, for it had been an evening on which the restaurant had been full of interesting people—so full, indeed, that a noble lord who had given a dinner party in honour of a prima donna could only be accommodated with a table in the ante-room. We did not altogether share in Jules's regret, for we might have had to dine in the passage, and looking round at the diners at the other tables we came to the conclusion that though there were no lords, so far as we knew, nor prima donnas among them, they were, on the whole, a very smart and good-looking set. A pretty little grass widow was being entertained by a young soldier—we invented quite a Kiplingesque story about the pair; a rector up for the Oxford and Cambridge match was having his last dinner in town before he went down to his country parsonage again; two ladies going on to the opera were dining by themselves—the Berkeley is a place where ladies can dine and lunch without an escort; two gentlemen, who from their speech were Australian—Colonial Premiers the Gracious Lady called them—were giving a dinner to two very smart ladies; there was another lady with six men at her table, all of whom she was keeping

amused; there was a pretty girl, with hair of the sheen of copper and a great spray of roses, dining *tête-à-tête* with a bored-looking man with a bald head (*un mariage de convenance* was the Gracious Lady's decision); and there was a family party commanded by a stern lady with spectacles.

"Very good soup indeed," said the Editor, as he laid down his spoon, and Jules, who was within hearing, smiled as if the wish of his life had been accomplished, while Emile beamed as if he had come in for a fortune.

And indeed it would have been difficult, if we had been in a fault-finding mood, to have discovered the slightest matter to carp at in either room or dinner. The room, with its light oaken boarding, topped by a deep red frieze, its tall fireplaces with blue tiles, its white ceiling ornamented with strange devices, somewhat resembling Whistler's butterfly signature, its wooden pillars and beams, its clusters of electric lights and revolving fans, is a perfect banqueting-room. Our table, gay with orchids and with sweet peas strewn in the shape of a heart, and lighted by electric globes held by a stand of wrought iron, was the best in the room, as I have written above, and nowhere in England or abroad could we have been given a better dinner. Indeed, from my point of view, it was too good a dinner, for there was no weak spot in it to fasten a criticism on. The trout, in a silver boat cased in ice and ornamented with paper-paddles and a flag at bow and stern, was delicious, and Jules, with enthusiasm, described its cooking:

the white wine, the pepper, the little drop of vinegar, the method of cooling.

But the dish of the evening was the *caneton à la Drexel.* No great bird of Rouen, but a delicate little fellow from Nantes was this duck, the breast cut into fillets and the inside full of a glorious mixture in which *foie gras* played a leading *rôle.* "It is the second time only that I have served it," said Jules again, when we complimented him; and we all fully appreciated the great honour that was being paid.

The *salade St-James*, of hearts of lettuce, tomatoes, and French beans, pleased the Gracious Lady much, and she told us to notice how the beans absorbed the flavour of the tomatoes. The ice made its appearance as a pineapple with something which looked like a bridal veil over it, and with a base of transparent ice fashioned to represent a snake among leaves. Inside the pineapple was the ice. The snake set the Editor a-telling tales of the gorgeous East. "The biggest snake I ever saw," he began, "was killed in my house at Allahabad under the ice-box." I glanced across to the Gracious Lady, who sat unmoved, apparently used to the Editor's snake stories. I glanced at the jug of hock cup, but the Editor had only had his fair share. Then I clenched my teeth and settled down to listen, for one has to stand anything, even snake stories, from one's Editor.

The dinner ended, the coffee and old brandy absorbed by the Editor and myself, a long cigar, which he said was very good, placed in the Editor's mouth, and one of Savory's cigarettes

in mine, a passion for exploring came upon us, and, with Jules as guide, we set off on a tour of the basement, the Gracious Lady holding up her skirts out of the way of the sawdust with which the floors were strewn. We went through the beautifully clean kitchen, lustrous with white tiles, over which M. Herpin holds sway, through the pantry with its glass-fronted cupboards, through the cool rooms where the meat and fowls are stored, and through the bakery where three batches of bread are baked each day. We reascended, and then the Editor, who was going on to a theatre, paid the bill:—Three dinners at 10s. 6d., £1 : 11 : 6; two hock cups, 16s.; three cafés, 2s. 3d.; liqueurs, 2s.; cigars, 1s.; total, £2 : 12 : 9.

12th July.

*** I am bound to say that I think that the Editor was let off very lightly in his bill; but then editors are always better treated than the ordinary everyday man. M. Jules has been kindness itself in noting for me the dishes that are specialities of the Berkeley, indicating their construction in all cases, and in most giving complete *recettes*. If in some cases the English of the lady who assisted me by translating the *recettes* has quailed before some of the technical terms, I trust that she and I may be excused, for the French of the *haute cuisine* requires some equivalent in English which our barbarous tongue does not possess.

These are some of the specialities of the Berkeley —*Poule au pot à la Française, Crème d'or, Petites marmites à la Russe, Truite en gondole au court bouillon, sauce verte, suprême de sole Alice*—a very dainty

dish named after M. Jules's little daughter—*selle d'agneau de Pauillac aux primeurs, homard à l'Américaine, noisette d'agneau Berkeley, caneton à la Drexel, poularde Berkeley, salade St-James, asperges vertes à la Milanaise, ananas glacés Sibériennes, soufflé Mercédès (diablé), croustade Victoria, canapés Berkeley.*

Herewith the *recettes*, commencing with

Petite marmite à la Russe

Julienne de légumes composée de carottes, navets, poireaux, oignon, céleri et choux (braisés selon le règle), mouillez avec un bon consommé de canard clarifié, ajoutez des morceaux de canard fortement blanchis, faites bouillir doucement pour dépouiller, cuire et amener la petite marmite à un goût parfait. Servir de la crème aigrette en même temps.

A Julienne made with carrots, turnips, greens, leeks, onions, celery. The vegetables should be braised as usual, then moisten them with stock in which there is plenty of duck. Add the pieces of duck, and let it boil gently, so that it can be well skimmed, and the delicious flavour brought out carefully. Serve cream at the same time.

Crème d'Or

D'un fond de sole et volaille faites un velouté bien dépouillé, et le tenir leger; lier avec un beurre de homard, le passer crème et beurre extra fin pour finir, le goûter (il doit être de haut goût comme le bisque), garnissez d'une Royal au beurre de homard et huîtres fraîchement pochées, et leur cuisson.

Stock made with sole and poultry, rich and smooth to the taste. Skim very lightly, and mix with lobster butter, cream, and a little fresh butter. Pass it

through a silk sieve, taste it, and garnish it with a *royale* made with lobster butter, oysters freshly stewed and their own liquor.

Truite en gondolier à la Monseigneur

Pocher au vin du Rhin avec légumes et aromates, dresser dans un gondolier assez large pour contenir la garniture suivante : œufs pochés glacés, petites truffes, pommes au naturel, grosses quenelles, crevettes piquées sur la truite même, bouquet de queues de crevettes, champignons tournés, écrevisses dressées ; tenir le tout très chaud, glacez la truite et la garniture, saucez à part une sauce genevoise faite avec le fond du poisson.

Stew the fish in Rhine wine, with vegetables and spices, arrange in a *gondolier* large enough to hold the following garnish : poached eggs glazed, little truffles, boiled apples, large quenelles, prawns (*piquées sur la truite même*). Flavour with shrimps' tails and mushrooms, and arrange crayfish on it. Keep it all very hot. Glaze the trout and the garnish. Serve separately a Genevoise sauce, made with the liquor in which the trout were cooked.

Selle d'agneau de Pauillac aux primeurs

Selle d'agneau de lait rôtie et garnie de légumes nouveaux.

Saddle of lamb (young), roasted and garnished with young vegetables.

Homard à l'Américaine

Homard vivant, découpé ; les pattes cassées, sautées au beurre clarifié flambé au cognac, éteint au vin blanc (très sec), réduire et ajoutez échalotte, civette, un verre de vin blanc, tomates concassées, persie, sel, poivre

frais moulu, piment haché très fin, une pointe de cayenne, trois cuillerées de sauce tomate, demi litre de fond (thim et lauriers), moitié poissons et moitié veau. Cuire pendant vingt-et-cinq minutes, sortez les morceaux de homard en les dressant, et rendez le plat aussi élégant que possible. Réduisez la sauce, liez au dernier moment, avec le corail gardé à cru, et manier avec beurre de homard, civette hachée, un petit morceau de glace de viande. Goûtez avant de servir.

A live lobster, cut up; the claws cracked and fried (*sauté*) in clarified butter. Boil down, and add shallot, chives, a glass of white wine, crushed tomatoes, parsley, salt, pepper (freshly ground), allspice chopped very fine, a pinch of cayenne, three teaspoonfuls of tomato sauce, a little less than a pint of stock, thyme and laurel leaves, the stock to be made partly with fish and partly with veal. Cook for twenty-five minutes, take out the pieces of lobster, arrange them and make the dish look as elegant as possible. Boil down the sauce, and add at the last minute, with the uncooked coral of the lobster, mixed with lobster butter, chopped chives and a little piece of meat glaze. Taste before serving.

Poularde à la Berkeley

(*Pour une jolie poularde*)

Deux cents grammes de riz Caroline revenu au beurre mouillé au fond blanc, assaisonnez de bon goût (bouquet garni); cuire dix-huit minutes, alors le riz doit se trouver à sec; le lier avec un velouté réduit et legèrement monté à la crème, un peu de glace de viande; ajoutez gros dés de truffe et foie gras. Vider la poularde par le haut, l'assaisonner et la farcir du riz

déjà préparé, brider soigneusement pour éviter que la poularde garde une jolie forme, la citroner, la barder et la rouler dans une petite serviette. Cuisez à grand fond blanc quarante-cinq à cinquante minutes, finissez de cuire en la laissant pocher dans le cuisson. Débarassez de la serviette, la barde, dressez sur un plat rond orné d'une bordure en pain du Argent du Nouilly, saucez suprême et envoyez une saucière de sauce à part.

A young fowl, drawn, well-seasoned, garnished with Carolina rice; place the rice in butter, with a little water, so that it is covered to twice its height. Cook seventeen or eighteen minutes, add some glaze and cream, and let it cool. Add *foie gras* and truffles cut in large dice, or in quarters, mix well with the rice, and season with salt and pepper freshly ground. It should be well seasoned. Stuff the fowls with this preparation, tying them up very securely. Cover the birds with thin strips of bacon, and flavour with lemon. Wrap them in little serviettes. Cook in good white stock for forty-five minutes, and let them finish stewing in their own liquor. Take off the cloths and the bacon, and arrange the birds on a round dish, *avec couronne*, pour over them a good "sauce supreme," and serve the rest of the sauce separately.

Caneton à la Drexel

Bridé en entrée, le passer de cinq à huit minutes à four vif pour rafermir les chairs, enlever la poitrine, et bien parer la carcasse, l'assaisonner, la remplir d'un appareil à soufflé de canard à cru, garni en abondance de gros quartiers de truffes et foie gras de façon à reformer le canard en y ajoutant la poitrine enlevée; cuire vingt-cinq minutes, découpez les aiguillettes du caneton; et servez avec le propre fond, dégraissé et

réduit au madère et porto; legèrement lié avec un peu de demi-glace garnissez de tranches de citron.

Place the duckling in a quick oven for from five to eight minutes, to make the flesh firm. Take off the breast, clean the inside well, season it, fill it with a soufflé preparation garnished with truffles cut in quarters and *foie gras*. In order to give the duckling its original form put back the breast. Cook for twenty-five minutes. Cut the duckling in slices, and serve with its own stock and a little Madeira and port.

Ananas glacé Sibérienne

Ananas frais, enlevez la tête, videz l'ananas à l'aide d'une cuillère, mettez au rafraichissoir, d'autre part avec les chairs de l'ananas faites une glace ananas kirsch et marasquin, remplissez l'ananas, ajoutez la tête comme couvert, servez sur un rocher de glace, et garni de fleurs naturels.

Take a fresh pineapple, remove the crown. Clear out the fruit with the help of a spoon, and put it in the refrigerator; then with the flesh of the pineapple make a pineapple ice with kirsch and maraschino. Fill up the pineapple again, replace the head as a cover, serve it on a block of ice, and ornament it with natural flowers.

Rocher de mandarines glacées

Dressez sur un socle en glace, videz les mandarines, faites une glace avec l'intérieur, regarnissez les mandarines et bien dressez sur le socle.

Arrange on a block of ice. Take out the insides

of the mandarin oranges, make them into an ice-cream. Put back the insides again into the oranges, and arrange upon the block of ice.

Soufflé diablé à la Mercédès

Un soufflé glacé au parmesan avec laitance d'harengs à l'intérieur garnie de petites lames de truffes, passer au four.

A soufflé glazed with Parmesan cheese, with the soft roes of herrings in the inside, garnished with little slices of truffle, baked in the oven.

Timbale Parisienne

Pâté à brioches levé dans des moules à Charlottte cuite, regarnir de la pâté intérieur, en réservant le couvercle, que l'on glace à la glace Royale, et décore aux fruits de clemont (ou confis) ; d'un autre côté vous cassonez vos timbales au sucre coloré de couleurs ardentes. Coupez des fruits frais tel que ananas, poires, bananes, abricots, muscat, cerises, mettez ces fruits dans une sauce abricots au kirsch et marasquin, chauffez bien et remplissez vos timbales, servez sans faire attendre la timbale.

chef - Victor Herpin

Pâté à brioches (puff pastry?), baked in Charlotte moulds. Remove the paste from the inside, leaving a lid, which must be glazed with "Royale" jelly, and decorated *aux fruits de clemont*, or preserved fruits. Sugar over your timbales on the other side with coloured sugar, choosing very brilliant colours.

Cut up some fresh fruits, such as pineapples, pears, bananas, apricots, cherries, and grapes. Put these ruits into an apricot sauce, with kirsch and maraschino. Heat well, and fill your timbales. Serve without any delay.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SHIP (GREENWICH)

It was pleasant to see Miss Dainty's (of all the principal London theatres) handwriting again. She had read all the "Dinners and Diners," she told me, and did not think that any of them were as good as the one when I had the inspiration of her presence. She had been very ill—at the point of death, indeed—owing to a sprained ankle, which prevented her going to Ascot, for which race-meeting she had ordered three dresses, each of which was a dream. Why did I take out to dinner nobody but Editors and Society ladies now? The parrot was very well, but was pecking the feathers out of his tail. She had some new pets—two goldfish, whose glass bowl had been broken and who now lived in a big yellow vase. The cat had eaten one of the lovebirds, and was ill for two days afterwards. The pug had been exchanged for a fox-terrier—Jack, the dearest dog in the world. Jack had gone up the river on the electric launch and had fought two dogs, and had been bitten over the eye, and had covered all his mistress's white piqué skirt

with blood; but for all that he was a duck and his mother's own darling.

This, much summarised, was the pretty little lady's letter, and I wrote back at once to say that the pleasure of entertaining a princess of the blood-royal was as nothing to the honour of her company, and if the foot was well enough, would she honour me with her presence at dinner anywhere she liked? And, as the weather had turned tropical, I suggested either Richmond or Greenwich or the restaurant at Earl's Court.

Greenwich the fair lady gave her decision for, and then I made a further suggestion: that, if she did not mind unaristocratic company, the pleasantest way was to go by boat.

This suggestion was accepted, and Miss Dainty in the late afternoon called for me at a dingy Fleet Street office. I was delighted to see the little lady, looking very fresh and nice as she sat back in her cab, and I trust that my face showed nothing except pleasure when I perceived a small fox-terrier with a large muzzle and a long leash sitting by her side. Miss Dainty explained that as she had allowed her maid to go out for the afternoon she had to bring Jack, and of course I said that I was delighted.

We embarked at the Temple pier on a boat, which was as most river boats are. There were gentlemen who had neglected to shave smoking strong pipes; there were affable ladies of a conversational tendency, and there were a violin and harp; but there were as a compensation all the beautiful sights of the river to be seen, the cathedral-like Tower Bridge, the forest of

shipping, the red-sailed boats fighting their way up against the tide, the line of barges in picturesque zig-gag following the puffing tugs; and all these things Miss Dainty saw and appreciated. There was much to tell, too, that Miss Dainty had not written in her letter, and Jack was a never-failing source of interest. Jack wound his leash round the legs of the pipe-smoking gentlemen, was not quite sure that the babies of the conversational ladies were not somethings that he ought to eat, and at intervals wanted to go overboard and fight imaginary dogs in the Thames.

Arrived at Greenwich, at the Ship (the tavern with a rather dingy front, with two tiers of bow windows, with its little garden gay with white and green lamps, and with its fountain and rockery which had bits of paper and straws floating in the basin), I asked for the proprietor. Mr. Bale, thickset, and with a little moustache, came out of his room, and whether it was that Fleet Street and the Thames had given me a tramp-like appearance, or whether it was that he did not at once take a fancy to Jack, I could not say, but he did not seem overjoyed to see us. Yet presently he thawed, told me that he had kept a table by the window for us, and that our dinner would be ready at 6.30, as I had telegraphed.

In the meantime I suggested that we should see the rest of the house. "Would it not be better to leave the dog downstairs?" suggested Mr. Bale, and Jack was tied up somewhere below, while we went round the upper two stories of

dining-rooms—for the Ship is a house of nothing but dining-rooms. It is a tavern, not a hotel, and there are no bedrooms for guests. We went into the pleasant bow-windowed rooms on the first floor, in one of which a table was laid ready, with a very beautiful decoration of pink and white flowers, and in the other of which stand the busts of Fox and Pitt. We looked at the two curious wooden images in the passage, at the chairs with the picture of a ship let into their backs, and at the flags of all nations which hang in the long banqueting-room; and all the time Jack, tied up below, lifted up his voice and wept.

I asked if Jack might be allowed to come into the dining-room and sit beside his mistress while we had dinner, giving the dog a character for peacefulness and quiet for which I might have been prosecuted for perjury; but it was against the rules of the house, and Mr. Bale suggested that if Jack was tied up to a pole of the awning just outside the window he would be able to gaze through the glass at his mistress and be happy.

A fine old Britannic waiter, who looked like a very much reduced copy of Sir William Vernon-Harcourt, put down two round silver dishes, lifted up the covers, and there were two souchés, one of salmon and one of flounder. I helped Miss Dainty to some of the salmon and filled her glass with the '84 Pommery, which, after much thought, I had selected from the wine list. But she touched neither; her eyes were on Jack outside, for that accomplished dog, after doing a maypole dance round the pole, had now arrived

at the end of his leash—and incipient strangulation. Miss Dainty went outside to rescue her pet from instant death, and I, having eaten my souché, followed. Jack wanted water, and a sympathetic hall porter who appeared on the scene volunteered to get him a soup-plateful, and tie him somewhere where he could not strangle himself.

The souchés had been removed, and some lobster rissoles and fried slips had taken their place. Miss Dainty took a rissole and ate it while she watched the hall porter put Jack's plate of water down, and I made short work of a slip and was going to try the rissoles when Jack, in a plaintive tone of voice, informed the world that something was the matter. His mistress understood him at once. The poor dear would not drink his water unless she stood by; and this having been proved by actual fact, Miss Dainty, with myself in attendance, came back to find that whiting puddings and stewed eels had taken the place of the former dishes.

Miss Dainty took a small helping of the eels, looked at it, and then turned her eyes again to Jack, who was going through a series of gymnastics. I ate my whiting pudding, which I love, in fevered haste, and had got halfway through my helping of eels, when Miss Dainty discovered what was the matter with Jack. The boys on the steps below were annoying him, and the only way to keep him quiet would be to give him some bones. The sympathetic hall porter again came to the rescue, and Jack, under his mistress's eye, made fine trencher play with two bones.

There was a look of reproach in the veteran waiter's eye when we came back and found the crab omelette and salmon cutlets *à l'Indienne* were cooling. I tried to draw Miss Dainty's attention away from Jack. I told her how Mr. *Punch* had called her Faustine, and had written a page about her; but when she found there was nothing to quote in her book of press notices she lost all interest in the hump-backed gentleman.

With the advent of the plain whitebait a new danger to Jack arose. A turtle was brought by three men on to the lawn and turned loose, and Miss Dainty had to go out and assure herself that Jack was not frightened, and that the turtle was not meditating an attack upon him.

The turtle was found to be a harmless and interesting insect, and having been shown, with practical illustrations, how the beast was captured by savages, Miss Dainty took great pity on it, collected water in the soup-plate from the fountain, poured it over its head, and tried to induce it to drink, which the turtle steadfastly refused to do.

The veteran waiter was stern when we returned and found the devilled whitebait on the table. I told him to bring the coffee and liqueurs and bill out into the garden, because Miss Dainty, having been separated from her dog so long, wanted to nurse and pet him.

This was the bill:—Two dinners, 14s.; one Pommery '84, 18s.; two liqueurs, 1s. 6d.; coffee, 1s.; attendance, 1s.; total, £1 : 15 : 6.

We sat and watched St. Paul's stand clear

against the sunset, and Miss Dainty, her dog happy in her lap, suddenly said, "If you give this place a good notice, I'll never speak to you again."

"Why?" I replied. "The whitebait was delicious, the whiting pudding capital, the omelette good. I liked the fried slips and the rissoles."

"Yes, perhaps," said Miss Dainty, with a pout. "But they wouldn't let me have my dog in the dining-room!"

19th July.

CHAPTER XXV

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

I HAVE a vague remembrance of having as a small boy been taken round the Houses of Lords and Commons as a holiday treat. The Houses cannot have been sitting at the time, and the only thing that I remembered was the fact that the Lords sat on red seats, the Commons on green.

I did once, in later years, make an attempt to gain admission to hear a debate ; but, after some waiting, the legislator to whom I had sent in my card came out with rather a long face. He had moved heaven and earth, he said, to find a place for me, but it was impossible. However, he suggested, brightening up, there was nothing to prevent our going together to the Aquarium over the way, which we should find much more amusing.

The House of Commons was, therefore, quite new ground to me, and I was very pleased when the Rising Legislator asked me if I would not dine some night with him in the House and hear a debate afterwards.

The House of Commons is a nice comforting

address to give a cabman, and as I drove down Westminsterwards I felt that in the eyes of one individual I was that glorious person, an M.P.

But, if my cabman thought I was the member for somewhere or another, he was soon undeceived. We bowled into Palace Yard as if the place belonged to me, and pulled up at an arched door, where a policeman was on guard. I mentioned the Rising Legislator's name, but the policeman, who, though hard-hearted, had excellent manners, could not admit me except on the personal appearance of my host.

"Then where am I to go?" I said, appealing to the better side of that policeman's nature, and he told me to go out of the yard and turn to the right, and I would be admitted at the first door. The cabman, who had been listening, must have been satisfied with the fare I gave him, for he invited me to get into the cab again, and said he would take me round to the right place in a jiffy. Though friendly, there was a distinct familiarity now in the cabman's manner. I had ceased to be an M.P. in his eyes.

The policeman at this other door was not hard-hearted, and directed me up a long lobby, on either side of which were gentlemen of various periods, in very white marble. Every policeman I passed I mentioned the Rising Legislator's name to, just as a guarantee of good faith, and I was passed on to a central lobby, where a small selection of the public, looking very melancholy, were sitting patiently on a stone bench, and where gentlemen of noble appearance—I do not wish to be brought up at the bar of the House

for saying anything disrespectful of any member of the House—were in converse with others, whom I took to be influential constituents. Some ladies in evening dress were being shown about by smart gentlemen. There were policemen guarding an entrance, and whenever anybody of the outside crowd approached it they were warned away with a kind of "stand out of the draught" motion. It is, no doubt, some deadly crime to get in the way of an M.P. in his own House.

A policeman directed me to write the Rising Legislator's name on the back of my card, and, having scrutinised it to see whether I had spelled the name correctly, handed it over to a gentleman in dress clothes with what looked like a gilt plate with the Royal arms on it at the V of his waistcoat. I waited some little time and inspected the statues, some of which were rather comic, in the Lobby.

Presently the Rising Legislator appeared, and apologised for being somewhat late. A chat with a Cabinet Minister was the cause. I felt a sort of reflected glory in this. We passed the sacred portals, and, as we did so, I gave the policeman a glance as much as to say: "You see, I didn't deceive you ; I really do know him!" And I set my hat on the side of my head with more of a cock. "It is the custom for no one except the members of the House to wear their hats here," said the Rising Legislator ; and I relapsed again into humility.

We peeped through a door and I was shown the Speaker in the chair, whom I looked at with

due awe; and then we went down a long, panelled passage, the panels being the lockers, of which each member has one, and presently we were in a lofty room with three great windows, and the Rising Legislator was asking for the table that had been reserved for him.

It is a fine room, this Strangers' Dining-Room. The ceiling is nobly ornamented, and the clusters of electric lights dropping from it illumine the room cheerfully. On the walls is a paper with a pattern in which heraldic roses and fleurs-de-lys play the principal part; the curtains to the windows are of a soft green, and at about the height of a man's head, topping the oak panelling, is a fine work of art, a broad border of carvings of such things as furnish the good fare of the table. The great windows, looking out on the Terrace and the river, have massive stone frames, and inside they have as well a second wooden framing, with all the modern appliances for letting in fresh air. There is a little desk, with an accountant sitting at it. Beyond him, through an open door, there is a glimpse of the Members' Dining-Room. The chairs are covered with green leather, and have stamped on their backs a gilt portcullis. It is in most things just like the dining-room of some big club.

I had asked to be given the ordinary dinner; but the Rising Legislator insisted on our having either a duck or a chicken in our menu. He ordered *consommé Brunoise*, which, looking at the bill of fare with him, I saw would cost him 5d. a portion; whitebait; *noisettes de mouton aux haricots verts*, two portions of which would cost him half

a crown. From the price list I gathered, too, that hon. members can have a dinner, at fixed price, of two courses for 1s. 9d., three for 2s. 3d., four for 3s.

There was a difficulty about the duck, or chicken, and the waiter had to go from the table to the desk a couple of times before it was discovered that the Rising Legislator could have a duck; and a fine fat duck it was when it appeared. "I have got to speak to-night," said the Rising Legislator, "and therefore we must have champagne," and he ordered some '89 Clicquot to be put on ice. While the *pourparlers* as to the duck were in progress I had time to look round at the little tables and the people dining at them. There were but few diners yet; but two of the faces at the table next to ours caught my eye at once as being familiar. The hair, with a streak of grey in it, the long face, the spectacles, the straight beard, belonged to Mr. Dillon, and the man opposite to him with the penthouse brows and the sleeve pinned up on to his coat was Michael Davitt. The little stout gentleman with a moustache, fingering his pince-nez, who came up presently to speak to them, was Dr. Tanner.

Just as the duck difficulty was settled and our soup put before us, somebody entered the room and mumbled something in a loud voice. "Speaker has left the chair," said the Rising Legislator in explanation, and immediately the tables began to fill. Mr. Walter Long and two friends were the first to enter; then, in succession, baldish of head, bearded, and in a very long frock-coat, Sir

William Wedderburn; Mr. Morrell, broad of face; Mr. Yoxall, champion of the N.U.T., thin and lightly bearded; Mr. Sam Smith, with a big white beard; and burly Mr. Henniker-Heaton, the Imperial Postmaster-General of time to come — all familiar public figures easy to recognise. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, in a grey Ascot suit and a blue-and-white shirt, hovered about the desk by the entrance, as if waiting for some one who did not appear.

The whitebait was excellent, the duck in life must have been a bird of aldermanic figure, the *noisettes* in size would have satisfied a hungry man and in tenderness have pleased a gourmet, and we had come to the strawberry-ice stage when again there was a loud mumble, and the Rising Legislator told me that the Speaker was in the chair.

From strawberry ice we had progressed to coffee and old brandy, when behind the wainscotting there was a ringing as of many bicycle bells, and about half of the diners rose, grasped their hats, and ran as swiftly as if they were going to a fire.

"It is a count," said the Rising Legislator. "*We* will go down on to the Terrace and smoke a cigar before I find you a place to listen to the debate." Down a staircase with beautiful dark old panelling of the napkin pattern we went until we came to the dimness of the Terrace, where a policeman stood at ease to mark the spot sacred to members only, and where the ladies who had dined in the House formed the centres of groups. We watched the lights twinkle in

the great hospital across the dark flood, and the red and green eyes of a launch that came slipping down the river. Presently, with a sigh, the Rising Legislator threw away his cigar. "I suppose we must go in and hear what they are talking of," he said.

26th July.

CHAPTER XXVI

EARL'S COURT

In the morning, with my shaving water, was brought a note in a dashing feminine handwriting. It was from the little American prima donna to say she was sorry that she had forgotten, but she was engaged to dine with some friends who were leaving England, and would I take her out some other night instead; and she considerately suggested two evenings on which she should have known that I would be out of town for Goodwood.

I felt inclined to reply, like Uncle Gregory, that I knew those friends—"they cum fr' Sheffield"; but I did nothing worse than to write that of course I would take her out with pleasure on the first evening she had vacant when I came back to town.

I had arranged to drive her down to Earl's Court to give her dinner at the Quadrant, to take her on to the lawn of the Welcome Club for coffee and liqueurs, and then to go the round of the side shows. It is not easy in August to find a lady to take out to dinner at twelve hours'

notice. Mrs. Charlie Sphinx was at Carlsbad, and Miss Dainty was taking a holiday from the wear and tear of "resting" at some French watering-place. I sent a note round by a cab to Sir George to ask if I might take Miss Bright-eyes out to dinner; but the man came back saying that the house was all shut up, and that he could make no one hear.

At the worst, I thought, I could pick up a man at the club; but the few men in the smoking-room had either to go back to their wives or had some dinner engagement. So it came that I started alone for Earl's Court.

I had written for a table to be kept for me at eight o'clock, and a few minutes before the hour I disembarked at the entrance by the lake. It was between the lights, and the great white globes aglow with electricity looked garish against the delicate opal of the sky, and cast strange reflections on the water. I paused for a moment to listen to the blue-coated musicians on their island bandstand commencing the march from "Aïda," and then went past the bronze Gordon on his camel, past a buffet where a little crowd were dining frugally off sandwiches and pale ale, over the long bridge, through the gardens, and at last to the restaurant. In front of the broad awning which stretches before the restaurant, standing by a red rope, which keeps the public from coming too near, are two janitors, who, in their dark blue and peaked caps, look rather like warders: a clerk at a desk, with a big open book before him, sits opposite to the entrance.

Had I booked a table? the clerk asked me as I came up. Certainly I had. I had written that I wanted a particularly good table at eight o'clock. The clerk looked up at a tall gentleman with a reddish beard and moustache who stood behind him, M. Gerard, Messrs. Spiers and Pond's manager, and the gentleman with the beard looked at his watch. It was a quarter-past eight. M. Gerard explained that no tables were kept after eight, and drew a vivid picture of a well-dressed but famished crowd standing outside at the red ropes and threatening to tear down the place if they were not admitted to the vacant places. My table had been given to an eminently respectable couple who did not look as if they would tear down anything, and I was about to go over the way to the Welcome, in wrath, when it was found that there was a table for four, right up against the barrier, vacant; and I settled down in solitary dignity at one of the best tables in the place. A smart young waiter, in white apron and brown coat with pink facings, put the menu in front of me. I ordered a pint of Deutz and Gelderman to be put in ice, and then looked round me.

Immediately behind me a party were being entertained by two young barristers. I could hear but not see them. They were telling legal stories, and there was one as to Inderwick and the House of Lords that set their table in a roar. Opposite to me was a little family of father, mother, and son, and a pretty girl came bustling in to complete the party, with, from her manner, a tale of misadventure and delay to be told.

A bald-headed, smart-looking soldier, a cavalryman from his bearing, was giving dinner to a youngster who might be at a crammer's—they were among the few men wearing evening dress; there was an engaged couple who gazed into each other's eyes across the table, and there was a fat gentleman, who I should think was a Jewish financier, who was giving dinner to a girl with many rows of pearls round her throat and a glint of diamonds on her dress. The financier was drinking the girl's health, and as he held back his head to drain his glass she made, lightning quick, a face at him, which said more than pages of history.

I had eaten my *hors-d'œuvre*, and the waiter brought me the clear soup I had chosen. It was not as hot as it should have been; but the kitchen is some way off from the tables at the far edge of the awning, and, with one of the most wonderful outlooks in the world, one is not prepared to be over particular as to cookery.

The opal tints in the sky had died out and had left it a sheet of steel. On the right the tall white building in which is the panorama was already shining with electric light; the canvas buttresses and towers, looking solid enough now, stood black against the grey. In the bandstand in the centre of the promenade Dan Godfrey and his crimson-coated musicians were playing a waltz air, and a crowd, dimly seen, was moving round and round this centre of attraction. The Welcome Club, with its lighted windows, was away to the left, and, above all, the Great Wheel, starred with lights, moved its circle very gently

and silently. Men in the half light were running hither and thither with long sticks with a flame at the end, and lights green, white, and rose began to twinkle on all sides.

The choice had been given me between *saumon, sauce Rubens* and *filet de merlan frit, sauce Ravigote*. I chose the whiting, and had the cook only been more careful in boning his fish I should have called it excellent.

The engaged couple had left their table, and a merry party, two nice-looking girls, a young, clean-shaven man, and a grey-haired *bon vivant*, had taken their places. The girls, who had evidently come out to enjoy themselves thoroughly, were laughing already.

The financier had ordered another bottle of champagne; the girl with the pearls opposite to him, her chin on her fist, was gazing out at the sky from which the light had faded. A big party, the men in evening dress, passed through under the awning to the big room of the restaurant, a room decorated with paintings of Indian gods and heroes and rajahs, and the red shades of the candles on their table made a pleasant note of warm colour.

My waiter brought the *pigeon braisé Démidoff*. I looked at it and it appeared nice; but I sent it away, for I was not hungry, and there were other dishes still to come.

The sky now was all light indigo, with the clouds deeper patches of the same colour. All the little lamps in the garden were alight, twinkling in great curves against the black of the battlements. The bandstand was outlined

with rose: the Welcome Club was ablaze with green: the trees under all this light had a strange metallic shine. The rays from the searchlight came sweeping overhead: the Wheel with its circle of stars still turned solemnly. Amidst all the lights one inscription in green and white lamps, "Infant Incubator," fixed itself on my attention, and I found myself wondering what an infant incubator could be like.

The crowd outside had increased in number. There seemed to be many ladies in white with white hats amongst it; there was occasionally a gleam of white shirt fronts; little boys in straw hats and Eton collars dived into the thick, and then reappeared; the programme boys, in grey Early Victorian dress, came and went. The band was hammering away at the "Mikado." Two pretty girls in black dresses with wide white collars, one with a white sailor hat, one with a black one, paused outside to watch us dining. I should have liked to ask them in to dine, for I was feeling very lonely, but I remembered British conventionality, and forbore. The *côtelette d'agneau à la Bellevue* which the waiter brought me was hot and well cooked, but I do not think that the chicken, a wing of which succeeded the cutlet, could have lived a very happy life. I think it must have been consumptive.

The restaurant was beginning to empty now, the guests filing out in twos and threes, and vanishing into the parti-coloured crowd; and still the Wheel, with its silent power, turned, and still the "Infant Incubator" danced before my eyes.

The beans, the ice, and the peach with which I finished my dinner were all good—I refused the *pouding Victoria* which was on the menu; and after sipping my coffee and paying my bill —one dinner, 7s. 6d.; one pint 239, 6s. 6d.; liqueur, 2s.: total, 16s.—I obeyed an irresistible impulse and went over to see what an infant incubator was like.

3rd August.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE STAR AND GARTER, RICHMOND

THE little American prima donna was not so faithless as I thought, for when, Goodwood being over, I wrote to her and asked her if she would not take pity on a poor bachelor stranded in a deserted town, and drive down to Richmond and dine, she telegraphed back a "Yes," and told me that I might come and pick her up at the Hôtel Cecil.

The covered-in space before the big caravanserai in the Strand in June and July, is almost as representative of English life as is church parade in the Park. In August it is more like the hall of an hotel at some big American watering-place, for our cousins from across the herring-pond take possession of all the seats, and sit all day long drinking iced drinks through straws, and listening to the band.

I found the little prima donna, looking very fresh and cool in pink, rocking herself in a chair, and was immediately denounced for being in dress clothes when I had wired to her not to change into evening dress. I explained that

dress clothes with a man are a very different thing from evening dress with a lady, and also that it was the custom. "Some of your English customs do tire me," was the remark with which the prima donna closed the discussion, and then told me that I might have a cocktail if I thought that it would make me feel good. This libation in honour of the great republic performed, we started. The little prima donna, once the dress clothes forgiven, was prepared to be pleased. She had a remark to make as to everything that we passed, and reconstructed for me the Fulham Road as it would be in an American city. In time she thought we might learn how to build a town. The groups of ponies coming back from Ranelagh, where the last match of the season had been played between the Butterflies and a home team, interested her immensely, as also did some of the players driving back in their neat little carts at a great pace, and later on a glimpse of the club grounds with the great elms, the glint of water through a thicket, and the smooth green of the polo ground, set her talking of American polo grounds, Myopia, and other names which were strange to me; and though she was quite sure that the boys over in America could whip our British players every time, still she allowed that they had nothing there quite like the grey old house with its elms and its water. The conversion of the little prima donna was commencing.

The sun set, a red ball dipping into the brown heat mist, as we passed over Barnes Common, and when the little prima donna said that we

had nothing in England like the sunsets over the Hudson, I felt that on this day, at least, the sun was not behaving well in his manner of setting.

We came to Richmond Park in the afterglow, and going in through the Sheen gate, drove through the Park, which was glorified by the rosy dimness which lingers so long at the close of a hot August day. The mysterious light was on the great trees and the stretches of bracken and the rolling distances of sward. The deer were moving through the fern, and there was a drowsy silence, broken only by the calling of the birds and the faint hum of the outside world shut away beyond this fairy paradise. The little prima donna sat with parted lips and wide-open eyes, drinking in all the scene and whispering at intervals, "Beautiful! beautiful!" I had no need to ask her whether there was anything like this in her country across the ocean.

Presently the bicyclists came drifting down the road in shoals. These swift, silent travellers put a modern note into the picture of old-time woodland, and suddenly we came to the iron gates, and the tall, grey house, and the little prima donna said that her drive through fairyland had given her an appetite.

The Star and Garter has as many appearances and moods as a pretty woman. On a Sunday afternoon, when the bicycles are piled in tens of scores outside the building, when the gravel is crunched continuously by carriages coming and going, when every table in both dining-rooms

has its full complement of guests, and little groups stand outside the glass panelling watching for their turn to come, when the coffee-drinkers sit at the round tables in the passage, and the terrace is bright with girls' dresses, and rings with laughter, when far below, the face of the river is crowded with boats, and a crowd streams along the towing-path, then the Star and Garter is frankly, merrily Cockney. But on a summer night when the moon is at the full, when the windows of the ball-room are alight, and the whisper of a waltz tune comes down to the terrace, when the river runs a ribbon of silver through the misty landscape, then the Star and Garter becomes an enchanted palace.

It was a quiet evening on the day that I drove down with the little prima donna, but had I not telegraphed early in the day we should not have got the table for two by the open window that looked out on to the terrace and to the Thames in the valley below.

The little prima donna stood by the window and gazed out. She felt the charm of the scene, but fought against it, for she was a little piqued that she had never seen anything quite like it before, that the United States did not hold its exact parallel. "I guess it is that your landscapes are so small and so easily filled up that makes them so different from ours," was her explanation; but that was not what she meant.

The manager of the restaurant had told me that he had ordered a little dinner for me, some *hors-d'œuvre*, *petite marmite*, red mullet, *tournedos*, *pommes sautées*, a duckling, salad, and some ices;

and I told him that that would do very nicely. The *hors-d'œuvre* were on the table, but it was difficult, hungry as she was, to induce the little prima donna to leave her first view of the river, a river now grown steel-colour in the growing darkness, and to turn to the prosaic side of life, and dinner.

It is a comfortable dining-room, with its green curtains to the big bow-window, its paper with a flower pattern, its mirrors and its great panes of glass through which the arched looking-glasses of the hall can be seen. Of our fellow-diners there was no one whose face is well known to the world. There was a young man with gold buttons to his coat and a suggestion of the Georgian period in his full head of hair, who was dining *tête-à-tête* with a pretty dark-haired lady; there was a bald-headed gentleman entertaining a family party; there were three young gentlemen dining by themselves very merrily; the rest were the people one sees at any good hotel.

The soup was excellent — though why managers of restaurants always seem to think that *petite marmite* is the only soup in existence I do not know; but the prima donna was glad to put down her spoon and look out of the window again. She had read that morning, she told me, all the descriptions she could find of Richmond, in prose and verse; but the real thing was more beautiful than any description of it had prepared her for. I felt that the conversion of the little American was progressing.

The fish was not a success. The weather

was very hot, and, as the prima donna put it, "this mullet, I guess, has not been scientifically embalmed." The waiter, deeply grieved, spirited the fish away, and put the tournedos, which were excellently cooked, in their place.

The pine outside the window was black now against the sky, and a chilly breeze came up from the river. The little prima donna felt the chill, and drew her cloak over her shoulders.

The duck was plump and tender, and when she had trifled with a wing, the prima donna, hoping that nobody would be horrified, asked for a cigarette. The ice and coffee and liqueurs finished, I called for the bill—hors-d'œuvre, 2s.; marmite, 1s. 6d.; tournedos, 4s.; pommes, 1s.; caneton, 8s. 6d.; salade, 1s.; ices, 2s.; coffee, 1s.; one bottle Deutz and Gelderman, 12s. 6d.; cigarettes, 1s.; liqueurs, 2s. 6d.; couverts, 1s.; total, £1 : 18s. — and then suggested that we should go down on to the terrace. The prima donna leant over the balustrade, her cigarette making a point of light, and gazed in silence at the darkened landscape. The river, visible still amidst the darkness, had caught and held in its bosom the reflections of the summer stars and of a newborn moon. Presently she threw away the little roll of paper and tobacco, and began quoting in a low voice—a speaking voice as musical as singing—the lines of poor Mortimer Collins's swan song:—

Stern hours have the merciless fates
Plotted for all who die;
But looking down upon Richmond aits,

Where the merles sing low to their amorous mates,
Who cares to ask them why ?

The conversion of the little American was complete.

9th August.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE CAVOUR (LEICESTER SQUARE)

I FIRST met Arthur Roberts in the buffet of the Cavour, and first heard there the tale of "The Old Iron Pot." On that occasion I was taken by a friend into the buffet, a long room with a bar decorated with many-coloured glasses, a broad divan running along the wall, and many small tables by it. Seated on the divan was a thin, clean-shaven little man, talking to a very tall man, also clean-shaven. So immersed in their conversation were the two that they hardly acknowledged me when I was introduced to them; "they" being Messrs. Arthur Roberts and "Long Jack" Jervis, both of them then playing in "Black-eyed Susan" at the Alhambra, almost next door. As far as I could make out, the entrancing story that Mr. Arthur Roberts was telling, had as its central figure an old iron pot. He was in deadly earnest in his recital. Mr. Jervis and my friend were thoroughly, almost painfully, interested, and accompanied the story with little exclamations of surprise and sympathy, but for the life of me I could not

follow the narrative. All sorts and conditions of people suddenly were introduced into the tale by name, and as suddenly disappeared out of it. Arthur Roberts finished, and the other two broke into speeches of congratulation, saying how thoroughly interested and affected they had been. I, in a bewildered way, commenced to ask questions, when the mouth of the merry comedian began to twitch up on one side, and his eyelids to blink. Then I understood. I was another victim to the tale of "The Old Iron Pot."

It was in this buffet, which remains now as it was then, that Arthur Roberts invented the game of "spoof,"—but that is a very long story.

There has always been a savour of Bohemianism around the Cavour, and therefore it was only right and proper that the six of us who sat down to dinner there one August evening, should all in our time have wandered through the pleasant paths of the country of free-and-easiness. With grey hairs has come ballast, and one of the party is now a great landowner, doing his duty as high sheriff of his county; two of the others are chairmen of boards controlling great theatrical enterprises; a fourth, who won renown originally as a Jehu, now coins money in successful speculation; and the fifth is the trusted adviser of a well-known plutocrat. One of the chairmen, who can claim the title of successful dramatic author as well, and is not unknown on the Stock Exchange, was the giver of the feast. Our gathering came about through an argument on the relative merits of

cheap and expensive restaurants, and whether there was value received for the difference in the price of the dinners. The chairman was a warm upholder of the cheap dinner, and concluded the argument by saying, "When I go to the Savoy or Princes' I am prepared to pay for my surroundings and company; when I want food only I go to Philippe of the Cavour, and ask him to add something to his three-shilling dinner, and to give me five-shillings-worth, and if you fellows will come and dine with me there you shall try for yourselves." And "we fellows" said like one man that we would.

The Cavour, which shows its clean white face, adorned with golden letters, to Leicester Square, has grown immensely since I first made its and M. Philippe's acquaintance. There comes first a narrow little room, with a big counter on which fruit and flowers and cold meats are displayed, and behind which a lady in black stands. Here M. Philippe, shortish, grey-haired, with a little close-clipped moustache, black coat, and turned-down collar, with a black tie, generally waits to usher his patrons in, and find them seats. Then comes the big room, the walls in light colour, brass rails all round to hold hats, on the many mirrors a notice pasted, "Our table d'hôte Sundays, 6 to 9"; in the centre a big square table with a palm in the middle of it, the table at which, when the room is crowded, lone gentlemen are set to take their dinner, and around the big table a cohort of smaller tables. The ceiling mostly consists of a skylight, the windows in which always keep

the room cool. Beyond this room is another one, newly built, also light in colour, and with many mirrors.

As soon as we were seated, M. Philippe came bustling up. He is a very busy man, for he believes in the adage as to doing things well; and, therefore, he is up at five every morning, and goes the round of the markets, and in his own restaurant is his own *maître d'hôtel.* Yet, busy as he is, he finds time to devote much attention to Freemasonry, and his list of subscriptions to the various Masonic charities has generally the biggest total of any sent in. He was supposed in this charitable competition to have been, on one occasion, outstripped by another worker in the cause, and we immediately began to chaff him on the subject. M. Philippe acknowledged that a march had been stolen on him; but to make up for it he had been eminently successful in securing the admission of a little girl to one of the masonic institutions. "She got in on top of our poll," was his way of putting it. The feast he had prepared for us was as follows:—

Hors-d'œuvre.
La petite marmite.
Filets de soles Mornay.
Whitebait.
Poulet sauté Portugaise.
Côtes de mouton en Bellevue.
Canetons d'Aylesbury.
Petits pois Française. Salade. Haricots verts.
Fromages.
Dessert.

I noted that the *petite marmite*—I seem doomed always to be given *petite marmite*—was good, and was more enthusiastic than that over the fillets of sole, for those, I thought, were "very good." The whitebait, erring on the right side, were a trifle too soft. The *poulet sauté Portugaise* was a triumph of *bourgeois* cookery, but so rich that I was glad that the good doctor who takes an interest in the state of my liver was not one of our party. The Aylesbury ducklings were fine, plump young fellows, who must have lived a youth of peace and contentment. We drank with this substantial dinner some '89 Pommery.

There is always a bustle at the Cavour, and a coming and going of guests. Directly a table is vacated plates and glasses are whisked away, fresh napkins spread, and in a few seconds M. Philippe has personally conducted some incoming guests to their seats. The *table d'hôte* is served from five to nine. First to the feast comes a sprinkling of actors and actresses, making an early meal before going to the theatre. Then comes an incursion of white-shirt-fronted gentlemen and ladies in evening dress, dining before going to the play. Lastly comes the steady stream of ordinary diners, good *bourgeois* most of them, who choose to dine as they have come from their City offices, in frock-coats or other unostentatious garb.

As we settled down to our meal, a theatrical manager, who had been giving one of the prettiest ladies of his company dinner, was leaving. A well-known amateur coachman, just up from

the country, had time to give his wife something to eat before going off to catch another train; a white-bearded gentleman was entertaining two pretty daughters in evening dresses, and was desperately afraid that they would not get to the theatre in time to see the curtain rise. A very pretty lady, with a hat of peacocks' feathers and a great bow rising from it, was an actress "resting." The rest of the diners who filled the room were all good, respectable citizens and citizenesses, in fine broadcloth and silk, but none of their faces was familiar to us through the pages of the illustrated papers.

This was the bill paid by the chairman:— Six dinners at 5s., £1 : 10s.; three bottles Pommery, '89, £2 : 2s.; one seltzer, 6d.; five cafés, 2s. 6d.; six liqueurs, 4s. 6d.; total, £3 : 19 : 6.

M. Philippe has a little pleasure-ground attached to the restaurant, a plot of kitchen garden and an orangery, the vegetables and herbs and fruit from which must cost him about a thousand times their value at Covent Garden. But it is Philippe's hobby, and he likes to be able to give any favoured customer a bunch of mignonette grown in a garden within thirty yards of Leicester Square. At night the blazing cressets of the Alhambra and the gas decorations of Daly's light this strange little bit of *rus in urbe*, and when one wonders at a practical man keeping such desirable building land for such a purpose, M. Philippe shrugs his shoulders and says, "The earth he grow every day more valuable."

16th August.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CAFÉ ROYAL (REGENT STREET)

My sister-in-law is the daughter of a dean. I do not make this statement through family pride, but because it is pertinent to what follows.

Man and boy, these six years or so, I have known little Oddenino, who now rules the destinies of the Café Royal. The little man, with his quiet, rather nervous manner and big serious eyes, went from the management of the East Room at the Criterion to the Washington in Oxford Street, then to the big hotel at Cimiez, and has now put the Café Royal into shape.

During the summer of 1897, I was one day, towards lunch-time, pacing up and down the passage which leads from the pillared door in Regent Street to the café and grill-room portion of the big establishment, a passage which has on one side the bookstall where the French papers are on sale, and on the other the manager's offices, when a door opened and Oddenino appeared. I asked him what he was doing in the Café Royal, and he told me that he had come as manager. Then he put his head on one side and considered

me. With the utmost politeness he suggested that I was waiting for a lady, a soft impeachment which I admitted, and that I was not in the best of tempers, which was also true. He was deeply grieved, but tried to console me by saying that when I came back to town in the autumn I should find a comfortable room upstairs to wait in, and went on to tell me of the other improvements he intended to make. One great grief he had, and that was that some people thought that the company that frequented the restaurant was rather Bohemian. How anybody could think so, I told him, I could not understand, and as a triumphant proof of this I told Oddenino that the first lady whom I would bring to dine in the redecorated restaurant should be my sister-in-law, the daughter of a dean.

In the autumn the opportunity arrived for carrying out my promise. My brother was away slaughtering many driven partridges in Wiltshire, and my sister-in-law—did I mention that she is the daughter of a dean?—was left in solitary dignity in town. I went in the afternoon of the day we were going to dine to apprise Oddenino of our impending visitation — that word has a comforting clerical sound—and to order dinner.

My sister-in-law is not partial to shell-fish, so the oysters with which I should have begun the feast were not to be thought of, nor were most of the most delicate ways of cooking a sole to be considered. My sister-in-law has always said that my idea of a perfect dinner is semi-starvation, so I included two entrées instead of one in the

menu. This was the dinner which I, in consultation with Oddenino, settled upon :—

Hors-d'œuvre Russe.
Pot au feu.
Sole Waleska.
Noisette d'agneau Lavallière.
Haricots verts à l'Anglaise.
Parfait de foie gras.
Caille en cocotte.
Salade.
Pole nord.

When I suggested an ice, and Oddenino wrote down *pole nord*, I asked him what particular ice that meant. It was only a cream ice served on a pedestal of clear ice, he said ; but he thought that *pole nord* to end a menu sounded grand and mysterious.

I should, out of compliment to my sister-in-law, have liked to have driven up to the Café Royal in an equipage such as dignitaries of the Church use, with a hammer-cloth and a white-wigged coachman ; but a humble coupé had to suffice.

We went up the staircase, which has been regilt and refurbished, and has more flowers and plants than of yore, and into the little waiting-room at the top of the stairs, which Oddenino had promised to have built for me to save wear and tear of my temper. It is not a very large waiting-room, a promise only of better things to come, a slice of the first of the big rooms partitioned off by a screen of mirrors. Some easy-chairs look comforting even to a hungry man, and, no doubt, not only my temper, but

that of others, will profit by it in the future. A table had been kept for us in the first room, and when my sister-in-law had settled down she began looking carefully at the diners at the other tables. I asked if there was any one whom she expected to see, and was told that she was looking for the actresses I had promised to point out to her. Our table commanded a fine view of the room we were in and the big room, the windows of which look on to Glasshouse Street. There was scarcely a vacant table, but nowhere could I see an actress to point out to my sister-in-law. There was a celebrated doctor, clean-shaven and with white hair, dining *tête-à-tête* with his wife; there was a well-known barrister, invincible in licensing cases, who was giving a dinner to his wife and daughter; there was a big dinner-party of men all hailing from the Stock Exchange; there was a smart little lady talking hunting to three entranced youths; but nowhere could I see a face that I recognised as belonging to an actress.

My sister-in-law thought that she had been defrauded, but luckily the fat waiter, an old ally of mine, appeared at the right moment with the caviar, and the *sommelier* was anxious to know whether I would have the Clicquot vin rosée, which poor M. Nicol used to say was the best champagne in the cellar, iced. My sister-in-law approved highly of the soup, and indeed it was excellent, simple and strong. Then came the *sole Waleska*, and I was anxious to see whether my sister-in-law—who, I have omitted to state, is the daughter of a dean—appreciated the delicacy of the sauce and the almost imper-

ceptible flavouring of cheese. She did, and I forgave her on the spot for not liking oysters. The *noisette d'agneau* was not quite on a par with the glory of the remainder of the dinner, for the tiny morsels of lamb, the foundation of the *plat*, might have been more tender; but I am sure that if the dear departed geese of Strassburg could have looked upon their livers, placed snugly in a great *terrine*, to which the blocks of truffle gave a half-mourning effect, and covered decently with a fair coating of transparent jelly, they would have been consoled for all their over-eating and subsequent demise.

At this period of our dinner little Oddenino came up, and I asked him to point out some of the alterations to my sister-in-law. He showed her the new lamps, which cast a pleasant rosy light on the tables; the new carpet; sent the *maître d'hôtel* to fetch samples of the new china and glass and silver which by now have been taken into use; explained how the kitchen, which is under the rule of M. Charles, has been doubled in size; and how the serving arrangements, which of old were *coram populo*, and carried out with an accompaniment of shrill female voices and much clashing of plates, were now safely concealed behind a wall of mirrors. I told Oddenino that I thought that even now too much noise came through the open door which leads to the serving-room; for I hold a really good dinner to be so sublime a thing that the homage of absolutely silent attendance is due to it; and the little man, looking suddenly as sorrowful as if he had lost a near relation,

promised to have swing doors put up, so that not a whisper should penetrate to the dining-rooms.

The quails were delicious. Their flesh almost melted in one's mouth, as my sister-in-law remarked. When the *pole nord* came the ice proved not to be an ordinary one, but a semi-fluid delicacy cased in harder cream ice. The ice pedestal was in the shape of a bird resting on rocks, and when I made a feeble little jest about Andrée's pigeons my sister-in-law laughed. I reproved her austerely, telling her that if she laughed thus she would be taken for an actress. Whereon she retorted that she did not want to be taken for an actress, but that she wanted to be one. I opened my eyes in a query, and she said that if actresses were given every night such a dinner as she had eaten she wanted to be an actress.

I paid my bill while my sister-in-law admired the beautiful flower-decked Minton china, a trayful of which was brought to her, the glasses with a golden N and a crown on them and the heavy silver. The bill was: two couverts, 1s.; hors-d'œuvre, 2s.; pot au feu, 2s.; sole Waleska, 3s. 6d.; suprême d'agneau, 3s. 6d.; haricots verts, 1s. 6d.; parfait de foie gras, 4s.; caille cocotte, 5s.; salade, 1s.; pole nord, 2s. 6d.; café, 1s. 6d.; one bottle '67, 15s.; liqueurs, 2s.; total, £2 : 4 : 6.

I told my sister-in-law that if we were not to miss the first act of the play we were going to see, we had better be going, so she laid down the straw through which she had been sucking her *crème de menthe*, and with a sigh, a tribute of remembrance to the quails, put on her gloves.

I have now a sister-in-law who is the daughter of a dean, but who wants to become an actress.

1st November.

*** Since writing the above the Café Royal has definitely taken its place once again as one of the first-class restaurants of London. Little Oddenino has continued making improvements, putting in a lift, making a cloak-room, and adding generally to the comfort of the place.

I asked the little man to send me the menu of a dinner given to the late Mr. "Barney" Barnato before he started on his ill-starred journey to the Cape, and also to ask M. Charles to give me the *recette* of the *soles Waleska*. M. Oddenino sent me a menu, which is a good specimen of a Café Royal dinner for a large party; but which I do not recognise as the Barnato menu, and also the *recette* for *filets de sole St-Augustin* — named after him, for his "front name" is August — the very latest delicacy in fish.

Here are menu and *recette*—

Solera 1852	Hors-d'œuvre Russe
	Huîtres natives
	Consommé Prince de Galles
	Turbotin à la Polignac
Veuve Clicquot 1889	Suprême de volaille à la Montpensier
	Côtelette d'agneau de lait à la Regence
	Corbeille de pommes soufflée
Giesler 1884 Extra dry	Parfait de foie gras
	Bécassine rôtie sur canapé
	Salade de cœur de laitue

Château Lafite 1875	Nageoires de tortue à l'Américaine
Martinez 1863	Asperges nouvelles Anglaise. Sauce mousseline
Grande Fin Champagne, Waterloo 1815	Ananas glacé Soufflé au fromage Corbeilles de fruits Café

Here is the *recette* of the *filets de sole St-Augustin*, to which both M. Charles, the *chef*, and M. Oddenino, its godfather, have set their signature—

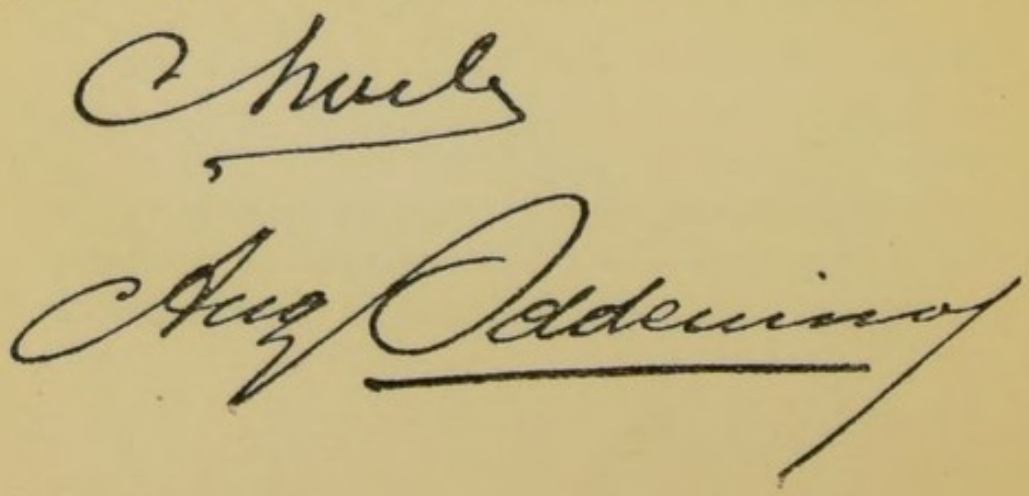
Recettes de filets de sole St-Augustin

Prenez une belle sole bien fraîche, enlevez-en les filets, pliez-les en deux, mettez-les dans une casserole avec un morceau de beurre, sel, poivre et un bon verre de champagne.

Faites cuire les filets de sole, aussitôt prêts retirez-les et faites réduire la cuisson aux trois-quarts, ensuite ajoutez-y une demie-pinte de crème et laissez réduire un moment le tout ensemble.

Mettez à part dans une casserole vingt-quatre queues d'écrevisses avec une truffe fraîche emmincie, un peu de beurre, sel et poivre, faites chauffer le tout doucement et mélangez ensuite votre sauce avec la garniture.

Dressez les filets de sole sur un plat rond, saucez par dessus, ajoutez un peu de fromage rapé pardessus, faites glacer au four et servez très chaud.



Take a large, perfectly fresh sole. Fillet it. Fold the fillets in two, and put them in a saucepan, with a piece of butter, salt, pepper, and a glassful of champagne. Let the fillets cook until they are done, then take them out, and boil down the stock to three-quarters, then add to it half a pint of cream, and boil it all down together, for a moment. In another saucepan (a silver one), put the tails of twenty-four crayfish, with a truffle, freshly cut up, a little butter, and a little salt and pepper. Let this get hot very slowly, and mix your sauce with the garnish. Arrange the fillets of sole on a round dish and glaze them over. Serve very hot.

CHAPTER XXX

FRASCATI'S (OXFORD STREET)

I AM beginning to flatter myself that I am a success in clerical circles. One week I took out to dinner my sister-in-law—who, I omitted to state, is the daughter of a dean ; and the next week I successfully entertained a dear, simple-minded, white-haired old clergyman who had come from his parish in the North to London on business.

Two little boys home from Harrow are sitting at a table by an open window, looking through the frame of rose sprays and streamers of virginia-creeper to the turn of the road in the foreground, where the black wood of the sun-dial, put up to commemorate the battle of Waterloo, stands out against the rose red of the old brick wall behind it, where one of the posts of the village stocks still exists as a warning to evildoers, with beyond, in the middle distance, the great horse-chestnuts and the village cricketing ground, which serves as a promenade for the postmaster's geese. The whole landscape is closed in by a great forest of firs, on the outskirts

of which red roofs and the tarnished gold of thatch chequer the dark green. Behind the two little boys stands a curate fresh from Oxford, who is trying to hammer into their thick little heads the translation of

——cur apricum
oderit campum——

his own thoughts all the time, like theirs, being on the cricket-ground, and not with Quintus Horatius Flaccus. That is the picture that always comes to me when I think of my old clerical friend.

He was a keen cricketer, and bowled underhand with a cunning break from the off which was too much for the yokels of the teams that our village eleven annually held battle with ; and those daily two tiresome hours over, our holiday task done, he would bowl, at the net put up in the neighbouring field, as long as we chose to bat. His one dissipation now is a visit to London annually to see the Oxford and Cambridge cricket-match, and he always stays when he comes to London at my mother's house. Unexpected business had brought him south last week, and one evening he would have been alone had I not offered to take him out somewhere.

Where to take him was a puzzle. I did not think that he would appreciate the delicacy of Savoy, or Cecil, or Prince's, or Verrey's cookery ; the refinements of the Berkeley and the Avondale, and the light touch of M. Charles's hand would be as naught to him. Luckily I remembered

that last July he had been taken to dine at Frascati's, by a friend and old parishioner of his, and that the place and the dinner had made so great an impression on him that his conversation for the next day consisted chiefly of praise of the gorgeous palace in which he had been entertained. If Frascati's had proved such a success once, I saw no reason why it should not be so again, and suggested that we should dine there, a suggestion which met with decided approval; so I telegraphed to ask that a table might be reserved for me upstairs.

My previous experiences of Frascati's had been chiefly confined to the grill-room, a gorgeous hall of white marble, veined with black, with a golden frieze and a golden ceiling, where I often eat a humble chop or take a cut from the joint before going to listen to Dan Leno or some other mirth-provoker at the Oxford next door; but looking at the great restaurant after we had settled down into our seats I could quite understand that the building would appear as gorgeous as a pantomime transformation-scene to the eyes of any one not *blasé* by our modern *nil admirari* London. There are gold and silver everywhere. The pillars which support the balcony, and from that spring up again to the roof, are gilt, and have silver angels at their capitals. There are gilt rails to the balcony, which runs, as in a circus, round the great octagonal building; the alcoves that stretch back seem to be all gold and mirrors and electric light. What is not gold or shining glass is either light buff or delicate grey, and electric globes in profusion,

palms, bronze statuettes, and a great dome of green glass and gilding all go to make a gorgeous setting. The waiters in black, with a silver number in their button-holes, hover round the tables; somewhere below a string band, which does not impede conversation, plays. My old tutor rubbed his hands gently and smiled genially round at the gorgeousness, while I told the light-bearded manager that what I required was the ordinary *table-d'hôte* dinner, and picked out a Château Margaux from the long lists of clarets.

This was the menu of the *table-d'hôte* dinner:

Hors-d'œuvre variés.
Consommé Brunoise.
Crème Fontange.
Escalope de barbue Chauchat.
Blanchaille.
Filet mignon Victoria.
Pommes sautées.
Riz de veau Toulouse.
Faisan rôti au cresson.
Salade.
Pouding Singapore.
Glacé vanille.
Fromage. Fruits.

A platter divided into radiating sections held a great variety of *hors-d'œuvre*, the rosy shade of the lamp threw its light upon a magnificent bunch of grapes on the summit of a pile of other fruits, and the manager in the background kept a watchful eye upon the waiter who was putting the *consommé Brunoise* on the table. I could not help wondering whether my telegram had not in

some way divulged the fact that I carried a fork under the banner of the Press, and that I was getting in consequence a little better treatment than the ordinary. Certainly my bunch of grapes looked like the one that the Israelitish spies brought back from Canaan, in comparison with the ones on the other tables, and the *chef* had no niggard hand when he apportioned the truffles and little buttons of mushrooms to our dishes of the *escalope de barbue* and the *riz de veau Toulouse*.

My old tutor was considering the diners at the other tables benignantly, and having quite an unjustifiable belief that I know the face or everybody in London, asked me who they were. Whether we had come to dine on an exceptional night I do not know, but all our fellow-guests were in couples: the men, I should fancy, principally gentlemen who spend their days in offices in the City, or in banks, fine specimens, most of them, of young England; and the ladies with them, either their wives or ladies who will eventually honour them by becoming so, as handsome representatives of British womanhood as I have ever seen collected under one roof. Out of all this gathering of stalwart men and pretty ladies there was not a single face that I recognised, and I am afraid I went down in the good old man's estimation as being a walking dictionary of London celebrities. My old tutor said that the *escalope de barbue* was excellent, and it certainly looked good. I tried the whitebait, and found it too dry. The fillet was good. The *chef* had surrounded the *riz de veau* with

truffles and tiny mushrooms and many other good things, and my old tutor, who ate it, said that it was excellent.

The little tables on the ground floor had all filled by now, and the lady behind the long bar, with piles of plates on it, and with a long line of looking-glasses behind it reflecting many bottles, was very busy. A subdued hum of talking and the faint rattle of knives and forks against crockery mixed with the music of the band.

The pheasant was a fine plump bird; the ice was excellent. I insisted on my old tutor having a glass of port to end his dinner, and after much pressing—for one glass of wine is all he allows himself as a rule at a meal—he was over-persuaded. Then he rubbed his hands and beamed, and told me stories of his own schoolboyhood: how he once fought another boy, now a Colonial Governor, and smote him so severely on the nose that it bled; and of a dreadful escapade, which still weighs on his mind—nothing less than going to see a race-meeting, and being subsequently soundly birched.

This was the bill I paid:—Two dinners at 5s., 10s.; one bottle 6A, 7s.; half-bottle 61, 5s. 6d.; total, £1 : 2 : 6.

My old tutor went away with his enthusiasm of the summer still unimpaired; and when next I have a country cousin to take out to dinner I shall go to Frascati's.

8th November.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE FREEMASONS' TAVERN (GREAT QUEEN STREET)

THE Victory Chapter of the Knights of the Pelican and the Eagle, perfect and puissant princes of Rose Croix, has been closed, and gentlemen in evening clothes are being helped into their great-coats in the entrance corridor of Mark Masons' Hall by the rotund sergeant who keeps guard there in a glazed box. Most of these gentlemen have mysterious flat tin cases, which they hand over to the sergeant or another official to be taken care of for them until spring brings round again another meeting of the Chapter.

There is no unnecessary waiting in the Mark Masons' Hall, for it is now a quarter-past seven, and dinner has been ordered next door, at the Freemasons' Tavern, at seven. A few yards of pavement only lie between the lamps of Mark Masons' Hall and the glass shelter before the doors of the Tavern, and in twos and threes the gentlemen in evening dress hurry from one door to the other.

Great Queen Street is quite a Masonic quarter, for opposite to the Tavern are two shops in which there is a brave show of Masonic jewellery, great candelabra, pillars, swords, highly-coloured pictures, and other adjuncts of Masonry. A humble house of refreshment, which also appeals to Freemasons for custom, faces the Tavern. The Tavern is not what the name implies. It is a restaurant, with a public dining-room, with a fine ballroom, and with many private dining-rooms. Its outside is imposing. Two houses stand side by side. One is of red brick, with windows set in white stone, and is Elizabethan in appearance. The other, of grey stone, is of a style of architecture which might be called "Masonic." From the pillars of the second story there rises an arch on which are carved the figures of the zodiac. In front of this are stone statues representing four of the Masonic virtues, of which Silence, with her finger on her lip, is the most easily identified. In all the details of the building there is some reference to Freemasonry and its attributes.

At the entrance to the Tavern stand two great janitors. Facing the doorway, at the end of a wide hall, is a long flight of stairs broken by a broad landing and decorated with statues. Up and down this ladies and gentlemen are passing, and I ask one of the janitors what is going on in the ballroom. "German Liederkranz. Private entertainment. What dinner, sir? Victory Chapter. Drawing-room," is the condensed information given by the big man, and he points a white-gloved hand to a passage branching off

to the right. On one side of the passage is a door leading into a bar where three ladies in black are kept very busy in attending to the wants of thirsty Freemasons. On the other side is a wide shallow alcove in the wall fitted with shelves and glazed over, and in this is a curious collection of plate, great salvers, candelabra, and centrepieces. Beside the alcove is a glass door, and outside it is hung a placard with "Gavel Club. Private" upon it. At the end of the passage a little staircase leads up to higher regions, and on the wall is an old-fashioned clock with a round face and very plain figures, and some oil paintings dark with age.

On the first landing there is a placard outside a door with "Victory Chapter" on it, and higher up outside another door another placard with "Perfection Chapter" on it. From the stream of guests and waiters which is setting up the stairs it is evident that there are many banquets to be held to-night.

The drawing-room is white-and-gold in colour. Four Corinthian pillars, the lower halves of which are painted old-gold colour, with gold outlining the curves of their capitals, support a highly-ornamented ceiling, the central panel of which is painted to represent clouds, with some little birds flitting before them. The paper is old-gold in colour with large flowers upon it. There is some handsome furniture in the room—a fine cabinet, a clock of elaborate workmanship, and some good china vases. The curtains to the windows are of red velvet. At the end of the room farthest from the door is a horseshoe table

with red and white shaded candles on it, ferns, chrysanthemums, and heather in china pots, pines, and hothouse fruits, and at close intervals bottles of champagne and Apollinaris. At the other end of the room, where stands a piano, with a screen in front of it, the gentlemen in evening clothes are chatting, having put their coats and hats on chairs and piano wherever room can be found. The waiters, in black with white gloves, are putting the last touches to the decorations.

Dinner is announced; a move is made to the table, and each man finds his place marked for him. There is a precedence in Freemasonry, as at Court, and this is adhered to in arranging the places at table.

The Victory is a Chapter which is very much in touch with the army and navy, and looking round the table, the company, but for the sombreness of their attire—for one or two Orders at the buttonhole, and here and there a decoration at the throat, are the only spots of colour—might be hosts and guests at some military mess dinner. The "Most Wise," who sits at the head of the table, does not belong to either of the services, but on one side of him is the heir to a dukedom, who led at one time a troop of the Household Cavalry, and on the other one of the most popular of our citizen soldiers, equally at home on parade as in his civic chair when Master of one of the City Companies. These are flanked again by a well-known brigade-surgeon and a cheery Admiralty official. The gentleman who has just said grace, in two Latin words, left very pleasant recollec-

tions behind him when as ex-Lord Mayor he left the Mansion-House. All round the table are faces with the sharp soldierly cut or naval bluffness.

The "Grand Secretary" has ordered the dinner, and in the whole length and breadth of the world that hospitable Freemasonry covers, no man knows better how to construct a menu than he does :—

Crevettes.
Tortue clair.
Filets de sole Meunière.
Vol-au-vent aux huîtres natives.
Faisan Souvaroff.
Selle de mouton.
Céleri braisé Bordelaise.
Laver. Pommes Parisienne.
Poularde rôtie.
Lard grillé. Salade.
Bombe glacée Duchesse.
Os à la moëlle.
Dessert. Café.

I have eaten some good dinners at the Freemasons' Tavern, and others not so good. To-night the cook is not up to his best form, and has not responded to the inspiration of the meuu. The turtle soup is not like that of the excellent Messrs. Ring and Brymer, or that of Mr. Painter; the *faisan Souvaroff* is dry, and the cook's nerve has failed him when the truffles had to be added; but, on the other hand, the *sole Meunière* and the *vol-au-vent* are admirable, and the marrow-bones are large and scalding-hot.

The genial old custom of taking wine is part of all Masonic dinners, and after the "Most Wise" has drunk to the other guests, much friendly challenging takes place. The marrow-bones having been disposed of, the ex-Lord Mayor, the Chaplain of the Chapter, says a grace as short as that before meat, and then follow the loyal toasts. It is the custom of the Chapter that speeches should be short, and the toasts of Her Majesty and the Prince of Wales, and the few Masonic toasts that follow, occupy very little time. Then the cigars are lit, and the formal order at table is broken up and little knots are formed.

One by one the guests who have an appointment elsewhere, or who are going to the theatre, say good-night and go off; but a remnant still remain, and these make an adjournment to a cosy little clubroom on the top story of Freemasons' Hall, where good stories are told, and soda-water-bottle corks pop until long after midnight.

15*th November*.

*** There is a small Masonic dining-club, called the Sphinx Club, which dines at the Freemasons' Tavern, and which I mention because the dinner I last ate in company with my brother Sphinxes was one of the best efforts of the chef and of the manager Mons. Blanchette—which means that it was very good indeed. The club was founded as an antidote to the large amount of soft soap that Freemasons habitually plaster each other with in after-dinner speeches. No Sphinx is allowed to say anything good of any brother Sphinx, and when a

candidate is put up for the club his proposer says all the ill he knows or can invent about his past life. A candidate can only become a member of the club by being unanimously blackballed. It is needless to say that the best of temper and good fellowship is the rule amongst the Sphinxes, and the Freemasons' Tavern seems to always have a very good dinner for them. This was the menu of their last banquet—

Huîtres.
Tortue clair.
Rouget à la Grenobloise.
Caille à la Souvaroff.
Agneau rôti. Sauce menthe.
Choux de mer. Pommes noisettes.
Bécasse sur canapé.
Pommes paille. Salade de laitues.
Os à la moëlle.
Petit soufflé glacé rosette.
Fondu au fromage.
Dessert.
Café.

CHAPTER XXXII

SCOTT'S (PICCADILLY CIRCUS)

HE was the junior subaltern when I commanded H company in the old regiment, and a very good subaltern he was. It was only the other day that I read how in one of the first skirmishes in an Indian trouble he had distinguished himself by standing over a wounded man and keeping off the hillmen till assistance came; and it seemed strange to meet him now in crumpled, sun-scorched clothes, with a soft handkerchief round his neck, and with a very thin white face, walking up the Haymarket.

"They hit me, you know," he said, in answer to a question. "The wound in my shoulder healed directly, but the wound in the neck gave a lot of trouble, and the doctors packed me home as soon as they could."

I particularly wanted to hear of the deed that the boy had done, and asked him to come and dine at a club; but his dress clothes were stored away somewhere in the Punjab—where, he did not know—with the heavy baggage of the regiment, and his London tailor had not made him new

ones yet. Besides, he would not be able to put on a collar for weeks, perhaps months, and though he would be glad to dine quietly with me, he asked that it might be somewhere where he would not feel uncomfortable at not being in dress clothes. We were standing at the top of the Haymarket, my eye caught the two great smoked salmon hung up in Scott's window, and I asked the junior subaltern if oysters and a lobster *à l'Américaine* were to his taste.

He had not eaten any oysters, except the Karachi ones, which are brought in ice to the towns of the Punjab, since he left England six years ago; and though he did not know what his surgeon and doctor would say to his eating lobster, he was prepared to risk their wrath. Half-past seven was the hour I appointed to meet him, and then I went into Scott's to secure a table and to order dinner.

Scott's, springing from its ashes, has become a gorgeous place, with pillars of some material which looks like black marble inlaid with mother-of-pearl, with stained glass and much ornamentation in worked brass, and with a great plate-glass window which displays a show of ice and fish and lobsters and crabs and salad-stuff that looks most appetising.

Inside, it may be said to be divided into four parts. There is the wide entrance hall, at either side of which are marble counters with many plates and little bottles upon them, and piles of sandwiches made with fish delicacies, and piles of slices of brown bread and butter. Behind the counters stand men in white samite, who are

constantly opening oysters, and behind them are mirrors with, on shelves above the glass, piles of little kegs which suggest how suitable a small barrel of oysters is as a Christmas present. In the midst of this entrance hall sacred to the oysters a staircase leads down to the lower regions, "The Dive," as it is labelled, where there are comfortable curved divans with a little table as the pearl in the midst of these brown leather shells, and on the walls a Japanese fantasy in tiles where strange fish swim in and out of weeds. Upstairs on the first floor are the regular dining-rooms with red blinds, red shades to the electric lamps, and a warm red paper ; and behind the hall, with its oyster bars, is the grill-room, shut off from draughts by a great screen of glass and brown wood which reaches from floor to ceiling.

I ordered our dinner in the grill-room. A dozen of oysters, some mock-turtle soup, *homard à l'Américaine*, and a steak.

At 7.30 to the second the junior subaltern was there, and I smiled inwardly as I recognised the cut of the Calcutta tailor in his black coat, well creased by having been jumped on to make it fit into a bullock trunk.

I took him into the grill-room, where the manager had kept a corner table for us, and after a look round at the neat little room, with its mirrors framed in white marble veined with black ; its red marble pilasters with gilt capitals ; its grill, at which the white-clothed cook, with a table of chops and steaks at his elbow, stands ; its little glass case in the corner, in which a lady

in black keeps accounts in big books ; its stained glass skylight ; its yellowish-brown cornice with many figures upon it ; its many little tables at which stolid and respectable citizens were giving their wives dinners, or, if alone, were reading the evening papers : he turned his attention to his oysters.

The first time that a man tastes a native oyster after six years of exile is a solemn moment, and I would not disturb him while he ate them ; but when there were only empty shells on his plate, and he had drunk his glass of Chablis, I began to ask questions.

"Tell me all about that day on the spur I have read of, and how you came to be recommended for the V.C.," I said.

The junior subaltern took a great gulp of the mock turtle and began. "You remember J. Smith—he was a lance-corporal when you commanded the company." "Corporal," I amended. "Well, corporal. He did ripping well that day. He's colour-sergeant of the company now, and there was one time when, as we were retiring, some of the devils got right on our flank and enfiladed us. Well, Colour-Sergeant Smith just gave one yell and went for them, and old Kelly, who used to be your bat-man, and Pat Grady went with him, and they killed six of the Mamunds."

"My boy," I said, "I want to know what *you* did, and not what Colour-Sergeant Smith did."

"This is ripping good soup," said the subaltern.

It was very good soup. The cook, divining that I had an invalid as a guest, had put a liberal

mixture of real turtle with the mock turtle, and it was practically turtle soup. I had sipped the Beaune, and found it a little tart, and the manager brought us a fresh bottle before I opened my second parallel with the advent of a really splendid dish of lobster.

"I want to know now," I said, with a touch of the manner with which I used to ask him if all the entries in the small books of his half-company were brought up to date, "what happened when you stood over that wounded man, and three big hairy hillmen all made a rush at you at once, and got to close quarters before the men could get back to bayonet them."

The junior subaltern was very much occupied with his steak. "Old Major So-and-So was just senior to you in the regiment?" he asked at last, and I said that that was so. "Well, he was ripping cool that day, and he made a joke that the men talked about afterwards. We had destroyed the mud huts that they called a village, and we were waiting till the wounded had got well to the rear before retiring. The Major was in command of our companies that day, for the Colonel was with the companies in reserve. Well, the Major was sitting on a great rock, looking at the country ——" "What sort of country is it?" I interposed. "Oh, just mountains and ravines and nullahs, and that sort of thing—a beastly sort of a place," the subaltern said, believing that he was conveying the fullest information, and then went on. "Well, the Major was sitting on the rock smoking that old meerschaum of a nigger's

head which he'd had for years. A bullet came and smashed the pipe to atoms. He spat out the pipe-stem and then shook his fist at the place where the shot had come from. 'You blackguards,' he said, 'you're not fit company for a gentleman to smoke a meerschaum with; I'll only treat you to clays in future.' Well, the men were amused by this, and——"

"Young man," I said severely, "I knew that pipe, and it is a good thing it is gone. That steak you have disposed of was good, and these herring-roes I have ordered for you while you were blathering are excellent. Eat them, and then get to business at once."

The junior subaltern ate the roes, which were perfect; and when the coffee and the brandy were brought, he looked at me to see if I was really in earnest, and began again, "Do you remember James Pilch, who was the company's cook?"

"No, my boy," I said, "I do not remember James Pilch, nor do I want to. Waiter, my bill."

The bill was brought. Oysters, 3s.; lobster, 8s.; soup, 2s.; grill, 3s.; vegetables, 6d.; wine, 7s.; bread and butter, 4d.; coffee, 1s.; liqueurs, 5s.; roes, 2s.; total, £1 : 11 : 10.

This paid I turned to the subaltern. "Young man," I said, "I am now going to personally conduct you to the club smoking-room, and if I have to sit up with you all night with a stick I intend to be told how you came to be recommended for the V.C."

The junior subaltern groaned.

22nd November.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE EAST ROOM (CRITERION, PICCADILLY CIRCUS)

"I WANT father to take me to see 'The Liars,'" said pretty Miss Carcanet ("Brighteyes" to her friends), "but he says that he sees too many of them as it is in his club smoking-room, and won't go with me."

There was naturally only one thing to do, and that was to offer to take Lady Carcanet and Miss Brighteyes to the play at the Criterion.

Sir George was evidently relieved at not having to go to the theatre, and thanked me. "It is just the play that ought to suit you," he added, "for I hear it's all about menus and sauces."

Lady Carcanet, however, could not go to the play. She was retiring to Brighton to escape the fogs, and did not know when she would come back. Sir George settled it all, however, over the walnuts and the port. He had to preside at a political dinner one day in the coming week, and if I would take Miss Brighteyes out to dinner and to the play that night

it would take a responsibility off his shoulders. "Let the old woman get away to Brighton, and don't say anything till she's out of the way. I am all for letting the girl enjoy herself freely; but Maria thinks that no unmarried girl should stir without two chaperons and a maid to guard her." I nodded assent to Sir George's opinions, but I knew that he would never have dared to call Lady Carcanet "the old woman" to her face.

I bought the tickets for "The Liars," and on the morning of the day I was to have the responsibility of chaperoning Miss Brighteyes I went to the Criterion, to the East Room, to order my dinner and choose my table.

M. Lefèvre, the manager, is an old acquaintance of mine, for once before the East Room was under his direction, and now, with M. Node and Alfred as his adjutant and sergeant-major, he still keeps a watchful eye over all that takes place there. He is an enthusiast on cookery, and should one day write a book on the introduction of good foreign cookery into England, for he talks of M. Coste and Maître Escoffier, and the other great pioneers of culinary progress, with real enthusiasm.

There are three tables, one of which I always take, if possible, when I dine in the East Room. One is the little table in the corner by the entrance from the ante-room, another a table sheltered by a glass screen, and the third a table in the corner at the far end of the room. I told Alfred to keep me the table at the far end of the room; and then M. Lefèvre—tall, with a

thin beard, with strong, nervous hands, that he clasps and unclasps as he talks—arrived, and we talked over our menu. Caviar I preferred to oysters, for I did not know whether Miss Bright-eyes cared for shellfish, and then we passed to the consideration of the soup.

I suggested that it should be a consommé, as I did not want a heavy dinner, and M. Lefèvre hit on exactly the right thing, a *consommé de gibier*. Next came the fish, and as the details of the fillet of sole with soft herring-roe, and the sharp taste of prawn and crayfish to make the necessary contrast were unfolded, I nodded my head. *Cailles à la Sainte Alliance* we settled on at once, and then came the difficulty of the *entrée*. I wanted a perfectly plain dish, and in a grilled chicken wing and breast we found our way out of our difficulty. There was a novelty, a method of cooking bananas that M. Lefèvre, who believes that bananas are not sufficiently appreciated, wanted us to try.

The menu completed read thus :—

Caviar.
Potage consommé à la Diane.
Filets de sole aux délices.
Suprêmes de volaille grillés.
Carottes nouvelles à la crème.
Laitues braisées en cocotte.
Cailles à la Sainte Alliance.
Salade de chicorée frisée.
Croûtes à la Caume.
Soufflé glacé à la mandarine.

Then, having nothing in particular to do for a quarter of an hour, I walked round the building

with M. Lefèvre, looked in at the Great Hall where the statue of Shakespeare gazes contemplatively down upon the chairman's head at big public dinners; the hall next to it, which is only one degree smaller in size; the Masonic temple and the Chapter-room; and the prettiest room of all, the room in which the French dinner is served, on the walls of which is an Oriental design of roses which would not have been out of place in one of the pleasure chambers of Akbar at Agra.

In the evening, before Miss Brighteyes, who was to be escorted as far as the ante-room to the East Room by Sir George, arrived, I had a few minutes in which to go and see that all was ready at my table, and to look round to see whether there was anybody whom I knew dining. It was, I should think, the first occasion on which I have dined in the East Room and have not recognised a single face; but all the ladies appeared very smart, all the men were well groomed, the usual type of diners at a good restaurant. If I had looked at the book in which the names of people ordering dinners are noted, I should no doubt have found that there were a dozen people among the well-dressed diners whose names are familiar in our mouths as household words.

The little ante-room, with its green and cream walls, its mirrors, its big fireplace, and its comfortable chairs, is cosy enough to have a soothing effect on a worse-tempered man than myself; and my patience was not much tried, for Sir George formally handed over Miss Bright-

eyes to me not five minutes after the time at which I had ordered dinner.

Miss Brighteyes looked very delightful in a dress of some white gossamer material with spangly adornments, which resembled diamonds, scattered over it. She wore a diamond brooch and a necklet of pearls with a diamond clasp, which had been her birthday presents from her father on her seventeenth and eighteenth birthdays.

When Miss Brighteyes gets up on her society high horse she reduces me to comparative silence. While I was being given some details as to beautiful decorations at St. George's on the occasion of her cousin's wedding, I tried in vain to make Miss Brighteyes understand that the caviar she was eating deserved some attention, but she was not to be turned from her account of an aisle decorated with chrysanthemums and palms.

Had a man dared to talk to me about the Grafton Supper Club while he was drinking the delicious consommé I should have reproved him, and asked him to reserve conversation for the interludes of the repast; but Miss Brighteyes, not thinking in the least of the serious responsibility of eating a good dinner, chattered gaily of Miss Mary Moore's black and white dress at the supper a week gone by, and reeled off a catalogue of names from the Peerage of the men who had been her partners at the little informal dance that followed the supper.

While I ate with appreciation the *délices de sole*, I was told why Miss Brighteyes preferred Princes' to Niagara as a skating-rink, or *vice versa*, I forget which.

With the *suprême de volaille* I was given a short account of a party at the Bachelors' Club to see a magic-lantern entertainment, and when the *cailles à la Sainte Alliance* were brought up Miss Brighteyes was beginning to tell me of some charades, at her aunt's house, acted by children. But the quails were a dish in the presence of which I felt that small talk must cease. "Miss Brighteyes," I said gravely, "cast your eyes around this room. You see dainty panels of dark green traced over with gold, you see red and gold cornices, a ceiling of cream and gold studded with lights innumerable, bronze velvet curtains, yellow-shaded lamps, fine napery, glass, and silver. All this is but the framing to what is contained in this little earthen *terrine*. Into the interior of a little ortolan M. Gastaud himself, the *chef cuisinier*, has introduced a little block of truffle and other delicacies. That little ortolan has been imbedded in a quail, and this sacred alliance, over which M. Jeannin, *chef des cuisiniers*, has smiled, has been served up cooked to the instant for your delectation. Is this a moment, then, young lady, to talk of children's charades? Is not thankful silence better?"

Miss Brighteyes appreciated the solemnity of the moment, and also ate the bananas—which she said were very good—in silence. It was not until she had begun her soufflé that she found voice to tell me about a new and very smart cycling club of which she had been asked to be an original member.

I paid the bill: couverts, 2s.; caviar, 4s.; potage, 2s.; filets de sole, 3s.; suprêmes de

volaille et légumes, 8s.; cailles, 10s.; salade, 1s.; croûtes à la Caume, 2s.; soufflé glacé, 2s.; vin, "'62" (a capital bottle of claret), 5s.; eau minérale, 6d.; liqueurs, 3s.; café, 6d.; total, £2 : 3s.

"Now," I said to Miss Brighteyes, "we will go down to the theatre and listen in comfort to a discussion as to *sauce Arcadienne* and *sauce Marguérite*."

29th November.

*** Since I wrote the above Mons. Lefèvre has had, through temporary ill-health and overwork, to resign his position as manager at the Criterion, being succeeded by Mons. Gerard. Mons. Cassignol has succeeded Mons. Jeannin as the king of the kitchen.

The decorations of the East Room have been altered, and it is now resplendent in white, gold, and moss-green. The West Room is now all pink, and a gilt musicians' gallery has been put up in the redecorated entrance-hall.

Mons. Lefèvre being an enthusiast on the subject of bananas in cookery, I asked him if he would give the *recette* of the *croûtes à la Caume*, and as he said "certainly," and seemed pleased to do it, I put in a request for the *recette* of the *filets de sole aux délices*, and that was given me as well.

I also asked Mons. Lefèvre to draw out for me two menus of what he would consider distinctive east-room dinners for four people and for ten. They were sent to me and admirably thought out dinners they are. This is the feast for four—

Caviar.
Consommé Prince de Galles. Crème de santé.
Truites de rivière à la Cléopâtre.
Epaule d'agneau de lait à la Boulangère.

Petits pois nouveaux à la crème.
Caneton Nantais farci à la Rouennaise.
Salade Victoria.
Soufflé glacé à l'orange.
Friandises.

And this for ten—

Huîtres natives.
Potage clair à la tortue. Crème Raphaël.
Darne de saumon au court-bouillon.
Cassolettes de laitances à l'Américaine.
Cailles à la Mascotte.
Noisettes de chevreuil à la Cumberland.
Haricots verts nouveaux.
Purée de champignons.
Chapons du Mans à la truffe.
Salade à la crème.
Asperges d'Argenteuil. Sauce mousseline.
Glacé Alaska.
Diablotins à la Joinville.
Dessert.

Suprêmes de soles aux délices

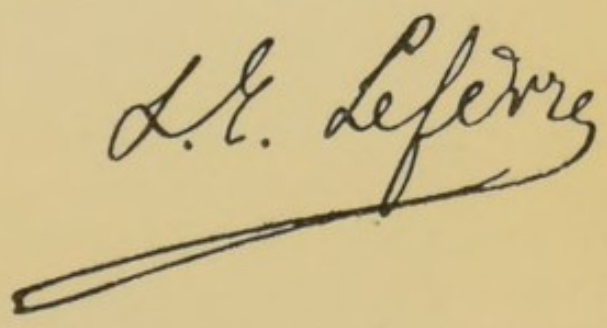
Rangez vos filets de soles dans un plat beurré; arrosez-les de vin blanc et faites-les pocher pendant dix minutes. Egoutez ensuite vos filets et dressez-les sur un plat oval. Faites réduire rapidement la cuisson avec un peu de bon velouté et un morceau de beurre d'écrevisses. Quand votre sauce est prète, jetez-y des queues d'écrevisses et recouvrez en vos filets de soles. Dressez aux extrémités du plat des quenelles d'écrevisses décorées à la truffe, et servez.

Arrange your filleted soles on a buttered dish, sprinkle them with white wine, and cook them for ten minutes. Then drain the fillets, and arrange

them on an oval dish. Boil down the liquor rapidly, with a little good *velouté* sauce and a piece of crayfish butter. When your sauce is ready, throw into it the tails of the crayfish, and cover the fillets of sole with it. Round the edge of the dish place quenelles of crayfish decorated with truffles, and serve.

Croûtes à la Caume

Vous préparez vos croûtes avec de la brioche en tranches d'un centimètre d'épaisseur, que vous faites rôtir légèrement au four après les avoir saupoudrées au sucre. Vous les dressez en couronne sur un plat rond, au milieu, mais avec quelques losanges d'ananas au centre. Vous prenez des bananas pas trop mûres, mais surtout bien saines. Vous les jetez avec leur peau dans de l'eau froide que vous mettez à bouillir. Après deux minutes d'ébullition, les bananes sont cuites. Vous les retirez, vous les épluchez, et les rangez sur votre plat autour des croûtons. Vous arrosez l'ananas et les bananes d'une sauce abricot parfumée au Kirsch, et vous servez bien chaua, après avoir décoré de quelques fruits confits. C'est très simple. Toutes les ménagères peuvent faire ça. C'est cependant la façon la plus exquise de manger la banane.



You prepare your pieces of bread, or brioche, in slices about half an inch in thickness, and bake (or toast) them lightly in the oven, after having sprinkled

them with sugar. Arrange them in the form of a crown upon a round dish, placing them in the middle, but with some pieces of pineapple in the centre. Take some bananas, not too ripe, but perfectly sound and good, throw them into cold water with their skins on, and let them boil. After boiling for two minutes the bananas will be done. Take them out of the water, peel them, and arrange them on the dish, round the croûtons. Sprinkle the pineapple and the bananas with apricot sauce flavoured with kirsch, and serve very hot, after having ornamented the dish with preserved fruits.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE MONICO (SHAFTESBURY AVENUE)

He, a gentleman on the Stock Exchange, who has generally a stock of good stories, mentioned in the course of a letter to me that he had heard a really good tale of the last bye-election, and would tell it to me the next time that we met, as it was too long to write. Now, that particular election is fast becoming ancient history, and if that story had to be retailed to my circle of country friends, it would have to be done quickly. Therefore I wrote to my stockbroker, who lives in Shaftesbury Avenue, and asked him to name a day to come across the way, and dine at the Monico.

The day settled, I went to the Monico and interviewed the manager, Signor Giulio C. Nobile, a gentleman of stalwart figure, with a pleasant smile, and a small but carefully-tended moustache. I wanted to kill two birds at a stone —to hear the story and to see what the Monico and its cooking were like, for it is a restaurant which somehow or other has not fallen within the circle of my usual dining-places.

I asked Signor Nobile what he considered the speciality of the great restaurant over which he presides ; and though he was anxious to give me a specially ordered dinner, I came to the conclusion that I could best test what the establishment could do by trying the 5s. *table d'hôte* in the Renaissance room on the first floor.

"Dinner at 7.30 for two, if you please, and pray remember that I want exactly the *table d'hôte* dinner that all your customers get," was my last request to Signor Nobile, and he smiled and said that that should be so.

At 7.30 my facetious stockbroker friend, ruddy of face, his moustache carefully curled, and his expansive white waistcoat garnished with gold-and-coral buttons, appeared on the scene. As the lift, engineered by a smart page, took us up to the first floor he began : "It's the funniest story you ever heard, and will make you die of laughter. There was a doubtful elector and ——" But the lift stopped, and there was Signor Nobile bowing and smiling on the landing.

"We have five minutes to spare, Signor Nobile," I said, "and while they are putting the *hors-d'œuvre* on the table, will you take us round the house and show us the different rooms ? "

The Signor led, I followed, and my friend the stockbroker brought up the rear. First we went into a great hall on the first floor, where a smoking-concert was in progress, and thunders of applause were greeting a gentleman in evening dress who had just concluded a song. "It is some one going abroad, and they are giving him

a send-off," was Mr. Nobile's explanation. Next we went down to the ground-floor through a hall, where people were sitting at little round-topped tables drinking various beverages, and down some steps into a German beer saloon, with pigmies and other strange creatures painted on the walls. Up again to the first floor, through a long grill-room with little white-clothed tables in four rows, then a peep into a restaurant, and a flight in the lift up to the second floor, where solemn gentlemen in black were eating a dinner of ceremony in a very pretty saloon with an Egyptian room as a reception-room next door. Our five minutes were over, we had seen most of the big rooms of the house, and, descending, we took our places at a table by one of the windows in the Renaissance Saloon.

"Now for that story," I said; but my stock-broker was puffing and blowing. "Give a fellow a few minutes to get his breath, after rushing him up and down stairs at racing pace," he said; so I turned my attention to the room, the menu, and the company. The room is a symphony in old gold and grey. The paper has a gold pattern on a grey ground, the long line of windows have soft grey curtains. At one end of the room is a great clock above a large mirror. The ceiling is a series of square frames enclosing circular painted panels. The orchestra is in a balustraded balcony, with an arch above it, held high by two pillars. In the centre of the room, among the little tables, a palm grows out of a great vase. There are blue glass shades to the electric globes that drop from the ceiling, and the silver lamps

that stand on the table are curtained with crimson. Waiters in white waistcoats and black coats, and white-aproned sommeliers, with great silvered badges, come and go past the clerks' desk, which stands below the orchestra.

The diners, mostly in pairs, were fitting occupants of the handsome room. There was a very beautiful lady with a big diamond where the centre parting of her hair left her forehead ; and another lady in a mantilla, who would have many gallants with guitars below her windows had she lived in Seville. Most of the couples were evidently going to the theatre, and left soon after we arrived. This was the menu :—

Hors-d'œuvre variés.
Consommé Bortsch.
Crème à la Reine.
Soles à la Nantua.
Poularde Valencienne.
Tournedos Princesse.
Canards sauvages. Sauce Port wine.
Salade.
Biscuits Monico.
Petits fours.
Dessert.

When my stockbroker had drunk his Bortsch, which was well made, he began : "It is rather a long story, but it will make you die of laughing. There was a——" but at that moment Signor Nobile, who had been smiling in the distance, came up with a leaflet on which was inscribed the names of the Royalties who have from time to time honoured the Monico with their presence.

There are evidently some regiments with Royal colonels who always go to the Monico for their annual dinner.

"Go on with your story," I said, when Signor Nobile had once more smiled himself into the background; but a waiter had just then shown us a tempting dish of *filets de sole à la Nantua*, a *plat* really admirably cooked, and as my stockbroker took up his fork he said, "Yes, and be pilloried by you in print for talking to you while you are eating. Not me."

The poularde, a fine fat bird reposing in a bed of rice, satisfactorily disposed of, I told the waiter not to bring the tournedos for a few minutes, and settled back in my seat to hear the story of the doubtful elector.

"It's a long story; but you'll die with laughing when you hear it," my stockbroker began again. "There was a voter, and he would tell nobody ——" Just then the band commenced the overture to "Guillaume Tell." Now, it is an excellent band, and M. Paul Bosc, the conductor, is an admirable soloist on the violin; but when it gets to work at a Rossini overture the music takes the place of conversation, and my stockbroker stopped abruptly and waited for a better opportunity. Before the band had concluded the waiter had given us our tournedos.

The wild duck we were given *à la press*, and when we had eaten our slices of the breast I said, like Demetrius, "I wonder"; for I was wondering whether all the pretty ladies and good-looking gentlemen had been treated as well as we had been. Five shillings is not a very large sum. Chickens

and wild-duck cost money, even when bought wholesale, and we had been given a whole chicken and a whole wild-duck. "If I were you," said the stockbroker, philosophically, "I shouldn't trouble to wonder. I should either eat my dinner —and it has been a good one so far—or else I should listen to an interesting story as to the doubtful elector."

I took his advice, in so far as eating my dinner was concerned, for the *biscuit* was capital.

Signor Nobile came up to ask if the dinner had been satisfactory, and I had only pleasant words to say to him. Then my stockbroker drew a long breath, and was about to begin, when once more I interrupted him. "Pardon me," I said, "let me order coffee and liqueurs, and pay my bill. The orchestra is enjoying ten minutes' interval, and there will be, once the bill is paid, nothing to interrupt the flow of your discourse, nothing to mar my enjoyment of it."

This was the bill :—Two dinners, 10s. ; one bottle 210, 16s. 6d. ; liqueurs, 5s. ; coffee, 1s. ; total, £1 : 12 : 6. This paid, I prepared to enjoy a really good story. "There was a voter who would tell no one on which side he was going to vote," I commenced, to gently lead my stockbroker up to his story. But he looked at his watch. "Very sorry, my dear boy," he said, "but I have an appointment in two minutes' time I daren't break. I must tell you the story another day. It's a bit long, but you'll die with laughter when you hear it."

I have not as yet heard that voter story, and am still alive.

6th December.

CHAPTER XXXV

GOLDSTEIN'S (BLOOMFIELD STREET)

Hors-d'œuvre.

Smoked Salmon. Solomon Gundy.
Olives.

Soups.

Frimsell. Matsoklese.
Pease and beans.

Fish.

Brown stewed carp. White stewed gurnet.
Fried soles. Fried plaice.

Entrées.

Roast veal (white stew).
Filleted steak (brown stew).

Poultry.

Roast capon. Roast chicken.
Smoked beef. Tongue.

Vegetables.

Spinach. Sauerkraut.
Potatoes. Cucumbers.
Green salad.

SWEETS.

Kugel. Stewed prunes.
Almond pudding.
Apple staffen.

When I looked at the above I groaned aloud. Was it possible, I thought, that any human being could eat a meal of such a length and yet live? I looked at my two companions, but they showed no signs of terror, so I took up knife and fork and bade the waiter do his duty.

The *raison d'être* of the dinner was this: Thinking of untried culinary experiences, I told one of the great lights of the Jewish community that I should like some day to eat a "kosher" dinner at a typical restaurant, and he said that the matter was easily enough arranged; and by telegram informed me one day last week that dinner was ordered for that evening at Goldstein's restaurant in Bloomfield Street, London Wall, and that I was to call for him in the City at six.

When I and a gallant soul, who had sworn to accompany me through thick and thin, arrived at the office of the orderer of the dinner, we found a note of apology from him. The dinner would be ready for us, and his best friend would do the honours as master of the ceremonies, but he himself was seedy and had gone home.

On, in the pouring rain, we three devoted soldiers of the fork went, in a four-wheeler cab, to our fate.

The cab pulled up at a narrow doorway, and we were at Goldstein's. Through a short passage we went towards a little staircase, and our master

of the ceremonies pointed out on the post of a door that led into the public room of the restaurant a triangular piece of zinc, a Mazuza, the little case in which is placed a copy of the Ten Commandments. Upstairs we climbed into a small room with no distinctive features about it. A table was laid for six. There were roses in a tall glass vase in the middle of the table, and a buttonhole bouquet in each napkin. A piano, chairs covered with black leather, low cupboards with painted tea-trays and well-worn books on the top of them, an old-fashioned bell-rope, a mantelpiece with painted glass vases on it and a little clock, framed prints on the walls, two gas globes—these were the fittings of an everyday kind of apartment.

We took our places, and the waiter, in dress clothes, after a surprised inquiry as to whether we were the only guests at the feast, put the menu before us. It was then that, encouraged by the bold front shown by my two comrades, I, after a moment of tremor, told the waiter to do his duty.

I had asked to have everything explained to me, and before the *hors-d'œuvre* were brought in the master of the ceremonies, taking a book from the top of one of the dwarf cupboards, showed me the Grace before meat, a solemn little prayer which is really beautiful in its simplicity. With the Grace comes the ceremony of the host breaking bread, dipping the broken pieces in salt, and handing them round to his guests, who sit with covered heads.

Of the *hors-d'œuvre*, Solomon Gundy, which

had a strange sound to me, was a form of pickled herring, excellently appetising.

Before the soup was brought up, the master of the ceremonies explained that the Frimsell was made from stock, and a paste of eggs and flour rolled into tiny threads like vermicelli, while the Matsoklese had in it balls of unleavened flour. When the soup was brought the two were combined, and the tiny threads and the balls of dough both swam in a liquid which had somewhat the taste of vermicelli soup. The master of the ceremonies told me I must taste the pease and beans soup which followed, as it is a very old-fashioned Jewish dish. It is very like a rich pease-soup, and is cooked in carefully-skimmed fat. In the great earthenware jar which holds the soup is cooked the "kugel," a kind of pease-pudding, which was to appear much later at the feast.

Goldstein's is the restaurant patronised by the "froom," the strictest observers of religious observances, of the Jewish community, and we should by right only have drunk unfermented Muscat wine with our repast, but some capital hock took its place, and when the master of the ceremonies and the faithful soul touched glasses, one said "Lekhaim," and the other answered the greeting with "Tavim." Then, before the fish was put on the table, the master of the ceremonies told me of the elaborate care that was taken in the selection of animals to be killed, of the inspection of the butcher's knives, of the tests applied to the dead animals to see that the flesh is good, of the soaking and salting of the meat, and the drawing-out of the veins from it.

The many restrictions, originally imposed during the wandering in the desert, which make shell-fish, and wild game, and scaleless fish unlawful food—these and many other interesting items of information were imparted to me.

The white-stewed gurnet, with chopped parsley and a sauce of egg and lemon-juice, tempered by onion flavouring, was excellent. In the brown sauce served with the carp were such curious ingredients as treacle, gingerbread and onions, but the result, a strong rich sauce, is very pleasant to the taste. The great cold fried soles standing on their heads and touching tails, and the two big sections of plaice flanking them, I knew must be good; but I explained to the master of the ceremonies that I had already nearly eaten a full-sized man's dinner, and that I must be left a little appetite to cope with what was to come.

Very tender veal, with a sauce of egg and lemon, which had a thin sharp taste, and a steak, tender also, stewed with walnuts, an excellent dish to make a dinner of, were the next items on the menu, and I tasted each; but I protested against the capon and the chicken as being an overplus of good things, and the master of the ceremonies—who I think had a latent fear that I might burst before the feast came to an end—told the waiter not to bring them up.

The smoked beef was a delicious firm brisket, and the tongue, salted, was also exceptionally good. I felt that the last feeble rag of an appetite had gone, but the cucumber, a noble

Dutch fellow, pickled in salt and water in Holland, came to my aid, and a slice of this, better than any *sorbet* that I know of, gave me the necessary power to attempt, in a last despairing effort, the kugel and apple staffen and almond pudding.

The staffen is a rich mixture of many fruits and candies with a thin crust. The kugel is a pease-pudding cooked, as I have written above, in the pease and beans soup. The almond pudding is one of those moist delicacies that I thought only the French had the secret of making.

Coffee—no milk, even if we had wanted it, for milk and butter are not allowed on the same table as flesh—and a liqueur of brandy, and then, going downstairs, we looked into the two simple rooms, running into each other, which form the public restaurant, rooms empty at 9 P.M., but crowded at the mid-day meal.

Mr. Goldstein, who was there, told us that his patrons had become so numerous that he would soon have to move to larger premises, and certainly the cooking at the restaurant is excellent, and I do not wonder at its obtaining much patronage.

What this Gargantuan repast cost I do not know, for the designer of the feast said that the bill was to be sent to him.

I think that a "kosher" dinner, if this is a fair specimen, is a succession of admirably cooked dishes. But an ordinary man should be allowed a week in which to eat it.

13*th December.*

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE TIVOLI (THE STRAND)

La Princesse Lointaine was passing through town on her way to Rome, to her husband's palazzo—to the great grim building where the big suisse stands on guard by the entrance, and soft-footed servants in black move noiselessly about the high tapestried rooms. Her note with the tiny monogram and the coronet on it said that she was at the Savoy for a few days, and would I come and dine, on her last evening in England, and talk of old days?

I always call the pretty lady who has the honour of bearing the name of one of the oldest families of Italian nobility, "la Princesse Lointaine," for the glint of sunlight her presence brings comes so rarely and vanishes so quickly. It was at the old Delmonico's, at one of the assemblies, that I first met her, an American heiress in her second season, light-haired, large-eyed, with that perfect tact that comes naturally to American and French women. I had letters of introduction to her father, and she, taking entire charge of me as the stranger in the land,

made me feel at home, and stamped that ball in my memory as one of my pleasantest recollections. She was married a year later in Rome, and I thought never to see her again; but one day at Fort William, in Calcutta, I got a note with a little monogram and coronet, brought by a peon from the Great Eastern Hotel, and I found that my Princesse Lointaine and her husband, travelling round the world, were making a fortnight's stay in the city by the Hugli, before going on to China and Japan. I showed her and her husband the forlorn grandeur of the empty palaces of the dead King of Oude, the spot where the Black Hole was, the church by the river where the first sturdy British traders left their bones, and all the other sights of Calcutta. They sailed away, and the next time that I saw her was at Venice one summer when Queen Marguerite had gone there for the bathing, and the grave husband, in some office about the court, had gone there also. Once again I saw her in her Roman home. And now, passing through from New York to the grim palazzo in Rome, she had written me a couple of lines to tell me to come and talk to her.

I would not let her give me dinner at her hotel; for in London she was the stranger and my foot was on my native flagstones, and I suggested that if she would not mind a very quiet dinner she should do me the honour of dining with me almost next door at the Tivoli, where I knew we should be quiet, where the dining-room is a very charming one, where the

music is not loud enough to interfere with conversation, and where, with M. Aubanel in supreme command, I felt sure that the cooking would be good. If she cared to go on to a theatre, I would take a box somewhere. A line in reply told me that I might pick her up at the Savoy and take her on to dinner, but that after dinner she would sooner sit and talk than go to a theatre, for there was much packing to be superintended before bedtime.

I could not, as I was taking la Princesse Lointaine away from the Savoy and Maître Escoffier's masterpieces of cookery, leave my dinner to chance, so in the afternoon I went and interviewed M. Aubanel, the manager, who, mustachioed, with a full head of black hair brushed off from his forehead, is as well known on the Riviera, where he has an hotel, as he is in town.

As one of the cooks under M. Racoussot, the chef, is a Russian, and was one of the great Cubat's assistants, I knew I was safe in ordering Russian *hors-d'œuvre*. A very plain soup, sole (cooked in any fashion that did not include *moules*, of which shellfish I remembered that the Princesse was afraid), a very plain entrée of meat, snipe, asparagus, and an ice, were my requirements, and the menu, as M. Aubanel sketched it out, ran thus :—

Zakouski.
Poule au pot.
Filets de sole Florentine.
Côte de bœuf aux légumes printaniers.
Bécassines rôties.

Salade Romaine.
Asperges vertes. Sauce mousseline.
Bombe Princesse.
Dessert.

The Princesse was waiting for me when I drove up to the Savoy. She was wearing a magnificent cloak lined with ermine, and I could catch the glint at her throat of the diamonds and pearls which had been heirlooms in her husband's family for many generations. I felt at the sight of so much grandeur almost ashamed at the simplicity of the dinner I had ordered.

The Palm Room at the Tivoli has been decorated so as to form an excellent background to a pretty and well-dressed woman. The walls are panelled with some soft material of two shades of dark green which looks like stamped velvet. There is a breast-high decoration of soft coloured marbles. The pillars are chiefly of gold, and the ceiling, the pattern of which is formed by palm leaves, is white and gold. There are soft dark green portières and curtains, and the chairs are upholstered in dark green velvet. Orange shades to the electric globes which hang from the ceiling diffuse a soft warm light over everything. And no prettier subject for a handsome background to show up could be found than the Princesse when she had shed her furs. Two little light curls came down upon her forehead, the pearls and diamonds were her throat ornaments, and her dress was all white and silver. The lace of the bodice looked to me as if it were one of the wonders of Benares make, and round her white arms were three broad bands of silver lace.

The *hors-d'œuvre*, on a second small table, were placed alongside the round table, prettily decorated with flowers, which had been arranged for us in one corner of the room, and one of these delicacies, a soft, creamy pâté, in which the taste of anchovies dominated the other ingredients, was excellent.

The Princesse was in high spirits and brimming over with gossip about New York. I heard all about the glories of the latest mammoth hotel, and was told of the lovely decorations of the new Delmonico's, and of the dinner-party the Princesse gave there on its opening night. I was given a description of most of this year's débutantes in the city of Gotham, and was entrusted with the whole truth as to the anonymous letter scandal. Many other things also I was told, most of which I have forgotten.

The soup was plain and good. The *filets de sole*, with the taste of parmesan, the thin slices of truffle, the thick green sauce and fried soft roe were excellent, though, to be severely critical, the taste of the cheese in the *plat* was just a little too pronounced.

From New York the Princesse jumped to Rome. She dilated on all the pleasures of the coming season in the City of the Seven Hills, trying to induce me to make holiday after Christmas and exchange Bond Street for the Corso. Rome, it seems, is to be exceptionally gay this winter, and I assured the Princesse that it was not the will that was wanting to change the sight of fog-blurred streets for the view of the swell of snow-topped Soracte through the sparkle of the Roman air.

The *côte de bœuf*, served like a gigantic cutlet with a paper frill on the bone, was very tender, and the snipe were succulent morsels. The asparagus was rather hard, but asparagus in December is not a dish to be captious about. The *bombe* was a magnificent erection, looking like a wedding-cake, and the Princesse, accepting its name as a compliment to herself, insisted on taking the sugar flowers it was decorated with back to her hotel with her as a trophy.

We sat and sipped our coffee and Curaçao Marnier and chatted, while the band, behind a gilt grille, played pianissimo music, and the diners at the other tables gradually went off to theatres and music-halls. Our fellow-diners were not very smart. Indeed, the *monde qui dîne* does not seem yet to have taken to the Tivoli, which deserves a trial, for the cook is first class and the dining-room a beautiful one.

At last the Princesse Lointaine said that she must go home and pack, so I asked for my bill. I am afraid that M. Aubanel treated me too kindly in the matter of prices, but I could hardly argue that matter out while the Princesse waited to be taken back to her hotel. One Moet, cuvée '36, 13s.; hors-d'œuvre, 1s.; poule au pot, 2s.; filets de sole, 2s. 6d.; côte de bœuf, 4s.; bécassines, 4s.; salade, 1s.; asperges, 5s.; bombe, 2s.; café, 1s.; liqueurs, 2s.; total, £1 : 17 : 6.

"You won't come to Rome, then, this winter?" said la Princesse Lointaine as she bade me good-bye, and I sorrowfully answered that I only wished I could.

20th December.

*** Mr. A. A. Tate is now manager and proprietor of the Tivoli restaurant, and a 3s. *table-d'hôte* dinner in the palm-room and good plain cooking in the grill-room seem now to be the specialities of a restaurant which at one time entered into competition with the Savoy, the Princes', the Cecil, and the other restaurants of *la haute volée*.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE GORDON HOTELS (NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE)

My Dear Aunt Tabitha—First, let me thank you for the tracts entitled "The Converted Clown" and "The Journalist Reclaimed"; they will have my attention. It was no doubt your nephew John's conscience which impelled him to place my devotion to Shakespeare, and other dramatic authors of like calibre, and my efforts to improve humanity through the press, before you in the light he has done. When I have an opportunity of a personal interview with him I shall attempt to change his opinions.

That I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in London soon after the New Year is indeed good news. My cousin Judith I shall have the honour and privilege of meeting for the first time. It must, indeed, be a pleasure for a young lady, the curriculum of her studies in Switzerland at an end, to be returning *via* Paris; and your notion of meeting her in London, receiving her from her escort, conveying her to an hotel near the station of arrival, and affording her the

delight of witnessing such entertainments in London as may be edifying, is, I think, an admirable one.

There are, as you rightly suppose, hotels in the Northumberland Avenue, which is within a stone's-throw of Charing Cross, and in answer to your request I will give you, to the best of my power, a short description of each. I am not aware of Miss Judith's disposition, whether it be lively or of a serious complexion ; but if I write to the utmost of my ability the characteristics of the three hotels—the Grand, the Victoria, and the Métropole—you should be the best judge as to which would most thoroughly suit your needs.

I regret that I cannot inform you as to whether the new-fashioned or the old-fashioned doctrines are favoured by the three managers. As to the distribution of tracts, I would very dutifully suggest that you should mark out the persons in the hotel whom you think should be so benefited, and allow me, after your departure, to see that the tracts reach a suitable destination.

The Grand Hotel, with which I will begin, as it lies nearest to Charing Cross, presents a curved face both to Trafalgar Square and Northumberland Avenue, and from its windows a fine view can be seen of the pillar erected to the hero Nelson, whose deeds you have been good enough to admire while reprobating the frailties of his life. I inspected the sitting-rooms on the first floor, and saw some, notably a room decorated in white colour, with a fine view over the Square,

and well within hearing of the bells of the neighbouring church, which would suit you admirably. But Miss Judith might prefer the stir and gaiety of the public rooms to a private apartment, and the great dining-room with its white marble pillars with gold capitals, its mirrors set in a frame of deep-coloured velvets, its roof of stained glass, its many tables covered with white napery, is a most chaste yet withal cheerful apartment. A smaller dining-room in which alabaster pillars support the roof, is also a delightful room. The hall, which has pillars of white and black marble, is handsome, and has absorbed what was once the reading-room. Should you desire to give a family dinner during your stay—for which I am not anxious, as I can hardly imagine how I could meet at present my cousin John with those feelings I should like to entertain towards him—there is a very delightful suite of rooms, known as the Walnut Rooms, where the head cook of the hotel—who previously cooked for the members of that politically misguided, but excellently appointed club, the Reform—has had the honour of serving meals to princes of the Royal blood. As for the company at the Grand, I should take it that it is chiefly of old country families, or the heads of great firms in the North.

Somewhat farther down the Avenue towards the river, and on the side opposite to the Grand, is the Victoria Hotel, and should Miss Judith be of a lively disposition, the coming and going of well-dressed and polite folk in this hotel would please her mightily.

Most of the road coaches—the continuance

of the mode of travelling by which does much to sustain the high perfection of that noble animal the horse—start from the Victoria Hotel, and it is a stirring scene at eleven in the morning to view the passengers depart. The hall is gorgeous with brown and yellow and green marbles, and many of the guests of the hotel sit there to watch the coming and going of the ladies of fashion and their cavaliers. Many Americans and Australians, liking the brightness of the place, give it their custom.

The long line of drawing-rooms is on the ground floor, and is profusely decorated with that tint known as old gold. But if Miss Judith is an amateur of music, the dining-room will please her most, for here, in a great and really splendid apartment, which has pillars of white and gold with fine foundations of brass, a band of stringed instruments plays most excellent music during the dinner, and many people of distinction come here — as indeed also to the other two hotels — from great distances in London to partake of the dinner of the *table d'hôte*. There is a very cosy little sanctum for serious conversation on the first landing of the great staircase, and the private sitting-rooms on the first floor, decorated in a variety of styles, are very comfortable.

The Métropole Hotel, which is built in the form of a triangle, one of the points of the angle touching the Thames Embankment, is the largest of the three hotels, accommodating as many as 800 guests. It is an hotel the solid comfort of which attracts many of those

fortunate people who have acquired large sums of money in business ; and indeed it is no rare news to be told of some family who have made this hotel their home for years. The especially delightful nooks and corners, filled by lounges, with which this hotel abounds, have always pleased me much ; and there is, on the ground-floor, a drawing-room with a most dignified decoration of painted silk panels, a very noble room, with a fine view over the Thames, where ladies who are pleased to do so make their own dishes of tea.

The great dining-room may be thought by some to be a whit gloomy ; but the saloon, in which the dinners are served, to use a French term, *à la carte*, is a bright and withal handsome apartment, panelled to the ceiling with oak, and with tapestry spread on the walls. I fear that you do not approve of the game of billiards ; but there is a very delightful room for the pursuit of that game in this hotel, and an ante-room of much comfort, from whence ladies watch the strokes and cannons. The private rooms are most excellently appointed.

After your strictures as to excessive addiction to writing of, and partaking of, rich and delicate food—strictures prompted, I fear, by my cousin John—I feel some diffidence in writing of the dinners served at these hotels. Yet I must say that from experience I have found that at all three hotels the tables are well served ; the dinner of the *table d'hôte* being in each case five shillings in price.

For an instance, at the Grand Hotel on the

day of my inquiry, among other delicacies, whitebait, and the curry of Madras, pheasants, and the toothsome pigeon were served; while at the Métropole *dominos de foie gras* would have tempted your appetite, and you would have ended a capital dinner with partridges and various sweets. This is how you would have fared at the Hotel Victoria:—

Canapés de caviar Moscovite.
Consommé Marquise. Crème Chantilly.
Sole Montreuil.
Blanchailles à la Diable.
Zéphires de faisan Princesse.
Tournedos Ventadour.
Selle de mouton au laver.
Dindonneau Baltimore.
Haricots verts sautés au beurre.
Pommes fondantes.
Pluviers dorés bardés sur croûtes.
Salades panachées.
Mince pies.
Biscuits glacés vanille. Langue de chat.
Dessert.

I need scarcely say, my dear aunt, how pleased I shall be to be of any service to you and my cousin Judith during your stay in the Metropolis, and remain, your very dutiful and obliged NEPHEW.

30th December.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE QUEEN'S GUARD (ST. JAMES'S PALACE)

"THE best dinner in London, sir!" was what our fathers always added when, with a touch of gratification, they used to tell of having been asked to dine on the Queen's Guard at St. James's; and nowadays, when the art of dinner-giving has come to be very generally understood, the man who likes good cooking and good company still feels very pleased to be asked to dinner by one of the officers of the guard, for the old renown is still justified, and there is a fascination in the surroundings that is not to be obtained by unlimited money spent in any restaurant.

Past the illuminated clock of the Palace, the hands of which mark five minutes to eight, in through an arched gate, across one of the courts, and in a narrow passage where a window gives a glimpse of long rows of burnished pots and pans, is a black-painted door with, on the door-jamb, a legend of black on white telling that this is the officers' guard.

Up some wooden stairs with leaden edges to

them, stairs built for use and not for ornament; and, the guests' coats being taken by a clean-shaved butler in evening clothes, we are at once in the officers' room.

It is a long room, lighted on one side by a great bow-window, flanked by two other windows. At the farthest end of the room from the door is a mantel of grey and white marble. The walls are painted a comfortable green colour, and there are warm crimson curtains to the windows. There are many pictures upon the walls; and a large sofa, leather-covered armchairs, and a writing-table in the bow of the window give an air of comfort to the room. A great screen, which, in its way, is a work of art, being covered with cuttings of all periods, from Rowlandson's caricatures to the modern style of military prints, is drawn out from the wall so as to divide the room into two portions. On the door side of the screen stands in one corner the regimental colour of the battalion finding the guard, and here, too, are the bearskin head-dresses of the officers.

On the fireplace side of the screen is a table ready set for dinner, the clear glass decanters at the corners being filled with champagne, a silver-gilt vase forming the centre-piece, and candles in silver candelabra giving the necessary light. By the fireplace the officers of the guard, in scarlet and gold and black, are waiting to receive their guests.

In addition to the officers of the St. James's guard, the adjutant and colonel of the battalion that finds the guard, the two officers of the

Household cavalry on guard at the Horse Guards, and some of the military officials of the Court have a right to dine. But it is rarely that all entitled to this privilege avail themselves of it, and the captain and officers of the guard generally are able to ask some guests.

As, on the stroke of eight, on the evening I am writing of, we sat down to dinner my host told me that he had ordered a typical meal for me. This was the menu :—

Potage croûte au pot.
Eperlans à l'Anglaise.
Bouchées à la moëlle.
Côtelettes de mouton. Purée de marrons.
Poularde à la Turque.
Hure truffée. Sauce Cumberland.
Pluviers dorés.
Pommes de terre Anna.
Champignons grillés.
Omelette soufflée.
Huîtres à la Diable.

The hand of M. Gautier, the messman, was to be recognised throughout; and the spatchcocked smelts, the boar's head, with its sharp-tasting sauce, and the *soufflée*, I recognised as being favourite dishes on the Queen's Guard.

On this evening the wearers of the black coats, as well as the red, had served Her Majesty, at one time or another, in various parts of the world, and our talk drifted to the subject of the various officers' guards all over the British world. In hospitality the Castle Guard at Dublin probably comes next to the guard at St. James's,

for the officers of the guard fare excellently there at the Viceregal expense. The Bank guards, both in the City and at College Green, have compensating advantages, and the officer's guard at Fort William, Calcutta, has helped many an impoverished subaltern to buy a polo pony. The story goes that some rich native falling ill close to the gate of Fort William, the subaltern on guard took him up to the guard-room and treated him kindly, and in consequence, in his will, the native left provision for a daily sum of rupees to be given to the subaltern on guard. These rupees are paid every day minus one, retained by the *babus* as a charge for "stationery," and though all the little tin gods both at Calcutta and Simla have exerted themselves to recover for the subaltern that rupee, the power of the *babu* has been too strong, and the stationery item still represents the missing rupee. We chatted of the Malta guard, with its collection of pictures on the wall; of dreary hours at Gibraltar, with nothing to do except to construct sugar-covered fougasses to blow up flies; and of exciting moments at Peshawar, when the chance of being shot by one's own sentries made going the rounds a real affair of outposts.

Then I asked questions about the gilt centre-piece, which is in the shape of an Egyptian vase with sphinxes on the base, and was told that the holding capacities of it were beyond the guessing of any one who had not seen the experiment tried. Some of the other plate which is put upon the table at the close of dinner is of great interest. There is a cigar-lighter in the shape of a grenade

given by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, a silver cigar-cutter, a memento of an inter-regimental friendship made at manœuvres, and a snuff-box made from one of the hoofs of Napoleon's charger Marengo. Which hoof it was is not stated on the box, but the collective wisdom of the table decided that it must have been the near hind one. Excepting on days when the Scots Guards are on guard, Her Majesty's health is not, I believe, drunk after dinner—though I fancy that H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, dining on guard, broke through this custom. The regiment from across the Border was at one time suspected of a leaning towards Jacobitism, and while the officers were ordered to drink His Majesty's health they were not allowed to use finger-glasses after dinner, lest they should drink to the King over the water.

Dinner over, the big sofa is pulled round in front of the fire, and a whist-table and a game of drawing-room cricket each claims its devotees. I asked my host to be allowed to inspect the pictures which pretty well cover the walls. The most important is an excellent portrait of Her Majesty in the early part of her reign. It is the work of "Lieut.-Col. Cadogan," and was begun on the wall of a guard-room—at Windsor, I fancy. The surface of the wall was cut off, the picture finished, and it now hangs, a fine work of art but a tremendous weight, in the place of honour. There is an admirable oil-colour of the old Duke of Wellington, showing a kindly old face looking down, a pleasant difference from the alert aquiline profile which most

of his protraits show. There are prints of other celebrated generals, mostly Guardsmen, and an amusing caricature of three kings dining on guard. It is a very unfurnished guard-room, with a bare floor, in which their Majesties are being entertained, but the enthusiasm with which the officers are drinking their health makes up for the surroundings. A key to the print hangs hard by, but the names attached to the various figures are said to have been written in joke. Many of the pictures are sporting prints and hunting caricatures; but the original of *Vanity Fair's* sketch of Dan Godfrey is in one corner; and a strange old picture of a battle, painted on a tea-tray, hangs over the door.

On either side of the looking-glass, above the mantelpiece, are the list of officers on duties and the orders for the guard, the latter with a glass over them, which is supposed to have been cracked in Marlborough's time. Some very admirably arranged caricatures, with explanatory notes, are bound into a series of red volumes and kept in a glazed set of shelves, and these, with a number of blue-bound volumes of the *Pall Mall Magazine*, form all the library available for the officers on guard.

As the hands of the clock near eleven, the butler, who has been handing round "pegs" in long tumblers, takes up his position by the door. Military discipline is inexorable, and we (the guests) know that we must be out of the precincts of the guard by eleven o'clock. We say good-night to our hosts, and as we go down-

stairs we hear the clank of swords being buckled on.

Outside in the courtyard a sergeant and a drummer and a man with a lantern are waiting for the officer to go the rounds.

3rd January.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE COBURG (CARLOS PLACE)

THERE were some portions of my aunt Tabitha's letter from the North which were distinctly satisfactory. She was kind enough to say that both she and my cousin Judith, the most delightfully demure little lady possible, had enjoyed their short stay in London, and had appreciated the oratorio, the museums, and the picture galleries I had escorted them to. She animadverted on the strange conduct of my cousin John, who went to call on the old lady after being up all night at a Covent Garden ball, where I detected him clothed as a monk, with a false nose and spectacles. She sent me half a dozen works of the fiercest fire-and-brimstone type, asking me to forward them to him—which I shall be delighted to do, and also sent a bundle of miscellaneous tracts for the servants of the Northumberland Avenue Hotel, at which hostel she stayed, and some specially selected ones for some of the guests staying at the hotel—these, I fear, may be mislaid. The principal item of news in her letter, however, was that Simon Treadwell,

her solicitor, was coming to London on business for her, and that she wished him to consult me as to certain investments she intended to make.

There was a decidedly comforting sound in this, and I was only too ready to do all honour to Mr. Treadwell. I had memories of him as a very grave gentleman, clean-shaved, with a wealth of long white hair, and with gold-rimmed pince-nez attached to a broad black ribbon. He came of Quaker stock, and though I wished to entertain him, for it is so much easier to talk business over the dinner-table than anywhere else, I felt perplexed as to where to ask him to dine with me. The bustle and the music of the fashionable restaurants would not be in keeping with the staidness of this grave old gentleman.

The Coburg occurred to me. The name in itself commands respect, and there is dignity in the appearance of the red brick Elizabethan building that shows a curved front to Carlos Place. From previous experience I knew that I might expect good cooking, and that we should dine with unhurried calm in the panelled dining-room. So in writing to my aunt Tabitha to say that I should be delighted to meet Mr. Treadwell again, I suggested that he should dine with me at the Coburg, and named the date and time.

Mr. Simon Treadwell, my aunt wrote, would be delighted to dine on the date named. Thinking of our after-dinner entertainment, I looked out in my morning paper the most classical concert I could find advertised for that date, and took tickets for it. Then I went to the Coburg,

and in consultation with the manager ordered a dinner which I thought should suit my guest, accepting the item of *petite marmite* with resignation :—

Caviar.
Petite marmite.
Filets de soles Waleska.
Tournedos Niçoise.
Pommes Anna.
Perdreau Périgourdine.
Salade Victoria.
Bombe Patricienne.
Friandises.

On the appointed evening I waited in the lounge which leads off from the entrance-hall, rather wondering as to whether my stock of conversation would last out a dinner with the very grave person I had to entertain. The lounge is a very comfortable room, painted oak-colour, with warm red curtains and a warm red carpet. From it one looks through a white arch into the white panelled hall, with its dead gold roof and the oak staircase, which, through its white arch, with a plentiful supply of palms to break the straight lines, would appeal to any artist's eye.

I heard my name spoken in the hall, and went out to receive my venerable guest. I was astonished, however, to find a young gentleman, black of hair, clean-shaven, with an eyeglass, and in the most modern cut of dress clothes. I am afraid that my face showed my astonishment, for my guest said, "I am Mr. Simon Treadwell, junior. Did you expect to see my father ?"

I wondered how the classical concert would suit my new acquaintance, as I piloted him down the white-panelled passage, where a little fountain in a recess lets fall a tinkling stream of water, and into the dining-room. We were quiet, as I expected to be. The room, with its panelling of deep red wood, with a frieze of tapestry, its pillared overmantel, its recess curtained in, its soft red carpet, its high-backed chairs of dark-green leather with a golden C on them, its clusters of electric globes filling the room with a soft, luminous glow, is all in keeping with a certain sensation of stateliness, and the perfect silence of the service, a very good point, adds to this feeling.

The diners at the other tables were, I should say, all guests staying at the hotel. I had not the curiosity to ask who they were, but I should have expected to be told that their names were all to be found in "Debrett."

Mr. Treadwell was taking stock of me, as I was doing of him, and when the *caviar* in its bowl of ice and the *petite marmite*, strong and hot, had been served, he told me of the very simple business as to which he had been instructed to ask my advice, and that matter satisfactorily disposed of, we, with the *sole Waleska*, which, with its accompanying slices of truffle, is always a favourite dish of mine, fell on to general subjects, and I tentatively asked Mr. Treadwell whether he had a taste for classical music.

"Not so much for classical music as for a good song," said Mr. Treadwell, urbanely; and after a short pause he mentioned that he had heard

that Arthur Roberts was very amusing. I mentally tore up the tickets for the classical concert.

With the *tournedos* Mr. Treadwell told me that he had wired down to the Palace for two seats for the next night in order to hear Marie Lloyd's new songs, and asked my advice as to where he had better dine *à deux*, and whether Romano's, or Princes', or the Savoy was the most *chic* place to take a lady to supper at. I filled up Mr. Treadwell's glass from the nicely chilled bottle of Perier Jouet, and he almost winked at me as he told me of my cousin John's delinquencies: how, after he, John, had hypocritically warned my aunt Tabitha that I took a delight in theatrical performances and attempted to raise the ready smile in journalism, he had been so indiscreet as to appear before my aunt on an occasion when he had evidently come home with the milk. Mr. Treadwell went so far as to call him a "garden jackass"; and, my heart warming to the young solicitor, I told him of the Covent Garden ball and how I had discovered my cousin there, and of the tracts that had been sent to me by my aunt to give him.

With the partridge, excellently cooked, I gave Mr. Treadwell my opinions as to the merits of the various pantomimes, and asked him to lunch with me next day, and to go and see a matinée at a music-hall. After the ice came coffee and old brandy, and Mr. Treadwell said that he would like to smoke a cigar.

The other diners had all finished their dinners, and we were the only occupiers of the big room,

in luxurious quiet. Mr. Treadwell lay back in his chair and pulled at his cigar with the air of a man enjoying life.

I paid my bill: two dinners, £1 : 1s.; one bottle '83, 15s.; two coffees, 1s.; two fine champagne, 3s.; cigar, 6d.; total, £2 : 0 : 6. This done, I asked Mr. Treadwell where he would like to go and finish the evening; and he, waking from a day-dream, said, "Anywhere where they have a ballet."

"Heads the Empire, tails the Alhambra," I said as I tossed the coin, and it fell heads.

I wish I had not been so hasty in buying those classical concert tickets.

10*th January*.

CHAPTER XL

THE MIDLAND HOTEL (ST. PANCRAS)

THE dramatic moment of the evening came when Juliette, the new French maid, with despair painted on her face, out of breath, and with her bonnet on one side of her head, came running into the dining-room at the Midland Hotel, and told Miss Dainty that the dog had escaped. Miss Dainty for one moment was overwhelmed, for she pictured Jack in fierce combat with every big dog in London; but, recovering herself, said that she wanted boy messengers. The wild duck was getting cold, the manager was beginning to look unhappy, the waiter was sympathetic but helpless, the French maid was weeping. If messenger boys could straighten out the difficulties Miss Dainty should have had a dozen; but she said that she only wanted three. So three little boys stood in a row and received their instructions. One was to go, in a cab, to Miss Dainty's flat to see whether Jack had returned there; another, in a cab, was to go round to all the places that Jack had been taken to during the day, chiefly milliners' and dress-

makers' and bonnet-makers' shops, to see whether he had wandered away to any of those localities ; the third was, in a cab, to go to all the places where Jack had special canine enemies to see whether he had gone to fight a parting fight with any of them. The three small boys were sent on their way, the weeping maid dismissed to mount guard over the pile of baggage, and then I told the manager to serve us our duck and he smiled again, while the waiter allowed the look of sympathy to die out in his face and woke to sudden activity.

Miss Dainty was going out to America to play what she called "a thinking part," with an English company on tour there. She was to have gone to Liverpool by a morning train, and a little crowd, male and female, assembled to see her off, to give her the customary bouquets, and to wish her the customary good voyage. But no Miss Dainty arrived. In her place appeared an agitated French maid, who explained that her mistress could not possibly go by this train, because one of her new hats had not been sent home. The lady section of the crowd was sympathetic, the male section gave their bouquets to the maid to take back to Miss Dainty, and we all went our separate ways.

In the afternoon I got this telegram : "Alone in London and starving. Going night train. Will you give me dinner ?—DAINTY." I was of course delighted to give the little lady dinner ; telegraphed to her that I would meet her at the station and give her dinner at the Midland Grand Hotel, and sent a note to the manager of the

French restaurant at the hotel asking him to keep a table for me, and to order a small dinner for two.

A cab with a pile of boxes on the top brought Miss Dainty with her bouquets, and her maid, and Jack, the fighting dog, to the station.

"Are you going to take the dog?" I asked; and Miss Dainty said, "Certainly. I am going to take him to bite the Custom-house officers if they interfere with my sealskin cloak." Of course, such a reason as this was unanswerable.

The maid and the baggage and the dog were left on the platform, the former being given strict injunctions to keep a watchful eye on the two latter, and I took Miss Dainty off to the hotel.

Through the long curving corridor, with its brightly-painted walls and blaze of electric light, we went to the lift, and were quickly deposited on the first floor, where the restaurant is.

As a rule one does not expect to get a good dinner at a railway hotel; but I knew that the Midland was one of the exceptions which prove the rule, and that I had not done wrong in asking Miss Dainty to dine with me there. The room, a fine large saloon, has a comfortable red paper with handsomely framed mirrors to break the monotony of its surface, and what painting there is on pillars and cornice has something of an Egyptian brilliancy of colour. At one end a semicircular screen of curtains shuts off the serving-room. At the other end great doors lead into a drawing-room. The chairs, of red velvet, have a comfortable look. The lights on the tables are electric globes with yellow shades.

This was the dinner that the manager had ordered for us. When I saw *petite marmite* on the menu I groaned. I am beginning to believe that it is a sort of fetish that restaurant managers worship :—

Natives.
Petite marmite.
Sole Portugaise.
Filet Rossini.
Pomme soufflée.
Canard sauvage à la presse.
Salade de laitue.
Pouding à la reine.
Bombe Midland.
Petits fours.
Fruits.

With the soup, which was strong and hot, Miss Dainty told me how she had boarded out her pets for the time of her absence, and it seemed to me that the gold-fish, the parrot, the cat, and the love-birds had, with Miss Dainty's usual perverseness, been sent to people who would loathe the sight of them. Jack was to go with his mistress to protect her from all perils in an unknown land and to bite Custom-house officers.

When the sole and its rubicund surrounding of tomatoes appeared, I inquired whether Miss Dainty contemplated matrimony during her travels, and was politely snubbed by being told that that was a matter in which she would not think of moving without first asking my consent.

As Miss Dainty toyed with the truffles of the excellently-cooked fillet, she informed me that America is a country which understands and

admires art, and I gathered that she looks forward to returning to England as a second Bernhardt or Duse, and that the bags of dollars which, with their hands and hearts, endless swains are sure to offer her, are but a secondary consideration.

Then came the wild duck; and as the manager was squeezing the rich brown fluid from the silver press the frightened maid came bustling into the room, and we heard the awful news that Jack was lost.

By the time that Miss Dainty had sent off her little army of boy-messengers and had ordered the maid back to her post on baggage guard, our table was the centre of attraction to the room. The old Anglo-Indian colonel, whose pretty daughter was sitting opposite to him, the family party of mother and son and daughter, the young honeymoon couple, the half a dozen old gentlemen dining in solitary state, all were taking an interest in the hunt for Jack. "I shall not leave London until Jack is found," said Miss Dainty, as her slice of the duck's breast was put in front of her. "But your boat starts to-morrow," I protested. "The boat must wait," said Miss Dainty decisively. "I don't go without Jack."

We ate our pudding in silence. "I expect the poor dear is fighting half a dozen dogs now," was the only remark that Miss Dainty made with the ice.

I called for my bill: Two dinners, 12s.; one bottle 343, 15s.; two cups of coffee, 1s.; total £1 : 8s.

"I am going now," said Miss Dainty, as she

drew on her gloves, "to send Juliette and the boxes back to the flat, and then you shall drive me round to all the police-stations in London to see if Jack is at any of them."

As we walked down the long corridor I was thinking of the pleasant evening I was going to spend, when there was a patter of little feet behind us, and the next moment Miss Dainty was hugging Jack, an unrepentant, muzzleless dog, with a great cut over one eye, and an ear bitten through.

When the train containing Miss Dainty and the bouquets and the boxes and the maid and the dog steamed out of the station I sighed a great sigh, which had something of relief in it.

17th January.

CHAPTER XLI

KETTNER'S (CHURCH STREET)

"I HAVE no amusement at all now," said little Mrs. Tota—we always called her Mrs. Tota up at Simla, for she was as bright and perky as her little namesake, the Indian parrot. "George says that the night air brings on his fever, and refuses to go out after dinner."

George looked up from behind his paper and grunted; but there was a quiver of his left eyelid which looked very like a wink.

"I never go to a dance now, and you know I *love* dancing. I never have any fun like we used to have at the Black Hearts' masked balls at Simla; the only *kala jugga* I ever go into is the coalhole. I never eat a nice little dinner like you used to give us at the Chalet. I never do anything, or see anything, and all because George thinks he might suffer from imaginary fever."

George from behind the paper moaned a mocking moan. "If George wouldn't mind," I said, "I should be delighted to take you out some evening, give you a little dinner, take you

to a box at some theatre, and to a Covent Garden masked ball afterwards."

"Mind!" said George, reappearing from his paper with great suddenness. "*Mind!* Why, my dear fellow, if you will only be so kind as to do that I shall not be abused for a week. Take her out, and give her dinner and supper, a box at a theatre and a dance, and my blessing shall be with you all the days of my life."

Mrs. Tota clapped her hands. "George, for once in your life, you're nice," she said.

"We'll have a regular Simla evening," I suggested. "The nearest thing I can think of to the dining-room in the little U.S. Club chalet would be a private room at one of the restaurants."

Mrs. Tota looked to George for approval, and then nodded in acquiescence.

"The Savoy private rooms would be too big for our little party of two. Romano's has some charming Japanese private dining-rooms. There is the turret-room at Scott's, which looks down on to Piccadilly and the Haymarket. There are two sweet little corner rooms at the Trocadero, the bow windows of which command Shaftesbury Avenue. There are——"

"You seem to know a good deal about the private rooms of all the restaurants," said Mrs. Tota.

"I have an elderly relative who dislikes noise, so when I take him out to dine——"

"Oh, *him!*" interrupted Mrs. Tota. "Go on with your list."

"There are some very handsome little rooms at the Café Royal, and Kettner's, and a lot more."

"What's Kettner's, anyway?" queried Mrs. Tota; and I told her of the snug little restaurant buried away in Church Street, which was first discovered by two well-known journalists, a restaurant of comfortable nooks and corners, a restaurant of such individuality that when it was necessary to rebuild it a few years ago it was rebuilt as nearly as possible on the old lines, with its three or four public dining-rooms below, and its network of passages and warren of little rooms above. I told her of Louis, now in supreme charge, who has been part of Kettner's since Kettner's first became known to London; and of Henri, who has charge of the upstairs dining-rooms, and who, with his peaked beard and clean-shaven upper lip, is the type of *maître d'hotel* that all the French artists who record the life of the boulevards love to draw.

Mrs. Tota said that it sounded nice. She liked the name; Kettner's sounded a little unusual, and she liked the description of the old-fashioned place.

Then I summed up: "You will very kindly pick me up at the club; we will dine at Kettner's, then go across the way to the Palace Theatre, where I will have a box; after that back to Kettner's to put on your domino, which we will leave there; and then on to the Covent Garden ball, where we will sup in our box and stay until after the procession."

Mrs. Tota declared that I was a dear, and George grunted a few words of genuine thankfulness.

I went down to Kettner's and interviewed

Henri. The nicest possible little dining-room and a very simple little dinner were what I wanted.

Henri put his head on one side, like a wise magpie, and suggested oysters as *hors-d'œuvre*. I said that the idea was novel, but that I preferred caviar. Then Henri relapsed into deep thought. *Petite marmite* was his next suggestion, and on this I turned on him and rent him, figuratively, for every *maître d'hôtel* in the world seems to think that *petite marmite* or *croûte au pot* is the only possible beginning to a small plain dinner. Friendly relations were re-established, and this was our final effort so far as the menu was concerned—

Caviar.
Consommé à la Colbert.
Filets de sole à la Joinville.
Langue de bœuf aux champignons.
Epinards. Pommes Anna.
Poulet à la Parmentier.
Salade.
Asperges. Sauce mousseline.
Biscuits glacées.
Dessert.

and a bottle of Moet '89, just chilled, to drink with it.

Room A was the dining-room that Henri thought would suit us. So A was the room selected.

Mrs. Tota, in a very charming black dress with a pattern of tiny steel sequins on it, with a gorgeous ermine cloak and a mysterious bundle that I knew must contain the domino, picked

me up at the club and drove me down to Church Street. She was delighted at the appearance of the cosy little houses and the narrow entrance. Before we went to our dining-room above I asked Louis to take us through the kitchen, which, with its walls of white tiles and perfect cleanliness, is well worth seeing, and we peeped into all the public dining-rooms on the ground-floor.

"Isn't this quite wrong?" said little Mrs. Tota, who was evidently enjoying herself. "Oughtn't we to have slipped up the stairs like a couple of guilty things? Do you take your elderly relative round the kitchen?"

At that moment Henri appeared and said that our dinner was ready, and we went up the narrow stairs.

A little room, with a paper in which old gold and soft browns and green mingled, three windows with warm-coloured curtains to match the paper, bronze ornaments on the mantelpiece, oil paintings of Italian scenery on the walls, a tiny sideboard, a square table lighted by gilt candelabra holding electric lights—Room A is a very snug place to dine in.

"H'm, yes," said Mrs. Tota. "Not quite like the room in the dear old Chalet; but quite near enough."

Henri had taken us under his special protection, and had added half a dozen *hors-d'œuvre* to the menu besides the caviar, and when the time came for our slices of tongue he appeared bearing a whole tongue lavishly garnished.

It was a capital dinner, well cooked through-

out, and as Mrs. Tota praised each dish Henri beamed more and more upon us. And Mrs. Tota chattered like her namesake. We talked about the famous masked ball at Simla, at which Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, disguised in mask and domino, went up to a humorous Irish lady, and, in a feigned voice, asked her for a dance, receiving a reply that she "hadn't time to be dancing with boys to-night." We talked of gymkhanas at Annandale, and picnics at Mashobra, of A.D.C. theatricals and town-hall balls, and we effectually brought the scent of the deodars into Soho.

Mrs. Tota finished her coffee and Curaçoa Marnier, and sighed as she drew on her gloves. "Those were good days," she said, and I nodded assent.

I told Henri to bring me the bill. Two dinners, £1 : 1s.; one Moet, 15s.; two cafés, 1s.; two liqueurs, 2s.; total, £1 : 19s.

"Henri," I said, "you have let me off too lightly. It should be more than this"; whereat Henri went through an expressive pantomime which meant that to undercharge me was the last thing the management would think of doing.

We left the domino in Henri's charge, and Mrs. Tota thought she would walk the few yards to the Palace. "If all dinners in private rooms are as pleasant as that, I rather think that I envy your elderly male relative," said Mrs. Tota as we emerged into Church Street.

24th January.

CHAPTER XLII

PAGANI'S (GREAT PORTLAND STREET)

"If you will dine with me on Sunday night I will give you dinner in the most interesting private dining-room that any restaurant in London can show," I said to little Mrs. Tota.

"She'll do nothing of the sort," said George, her husband, from behind his paper.

"George!" said little Mrs. Tota, and there was a mixture of astonishment, query, and reproof in the way she spoke her husband's name.

George laid down his newspaper. "Since you took her to dine in that private room at Kettner's nothing has been good enough for her. She would like a *maître d'hôtel* and a head waiter dancing round her at every meal, and she can't go out of the front door without looking round to see if there is a manager there to bow her out."

"You are perfectly horrid, George," said little Mrs. Tota with some asperity. "You won't take me out yourself, and when other people are kind enough to offer to do so you are as cross and sarcastic as you can be."

George looked at me with the corners of his mouth drawn up by a suppressed smile, and his left eyebrow twitched as if he felt inclined to wink. I poured oil on the troubled waters. If Mrs. Tota, with her husband's permission, would dine with me at Pagani's on Sunday we would dine in the public dining-room on the first floor, and look afterwards at the drawings and signatures in the celebrated little room on the second floor.

"It is real good of you to take the wife out," said George, as he saw me off the premises. "I hate going out at night, as you know, but she enjoys it all thoroughly. She chattered about that last dinner for a good month."

On the Saturday I went to Pagani's, secured a table for the next evening in the room on the first floor, a very pretty dining-room with soft blue curtains to the windows, a blue paper on the walls, shaded electric lights, and a little bow-window at the back, which makes the snuggest of nooks. Then M. Giuseppe Pagani, one of the two proprietors, having appeared, we talked over the important matter of the menu. The difficulty that vexed our minds was whether *filets de sole Pagani* or *turbot à la Pellegrini* would best suit a lady's appetite. Finally the sole won the day. I hesitated a moment over the *Bortsch* soup, for it has become almost as much a standing dish as *croûte au pot* in most restaurants; but *Bortsch* is the customary Sunday soup at Pagani's, so it had to be included in the menu.

This was our list completed :—

Hors-d'œuvre variés.
Potage Bortsch.
Filets de sole Pagani.
Tournedos aux truffes.
Haricots verts sautés. Pommes croquettes.
Perdreau Voisin. Salade.
Soufflé au curaçoa.

At eight o'clock on Sunday I was waiting for Mrs. Tota in the arched entrance which is one of the distinctive features of the modern Pagani's. Glazed grey tiles front the whole of the ground floor, the rest of the building being red brick, and the deep entrance arches are supported by squat little blue pillars. The curve of the arches are set with rows of electric light, which give the little restaurant the appearance of having been illuminated for a fête every night.

"Now mind, I want to see everything, and be told who everybody is," said Mrs. Tota as she got out of the cab, and I promised to do my best to carry out her wishes, and suggested that we should peep into the room on the ground floor before we went upstairs.

The long room, with its golden paper, its mirrors painted with flowers and trellis-work, its little counter piled with fruit, was crowded with diners, not one of the many little tables being vacant. A great hum of talk fell on our ears, and many of the gentlemen at the tables were gesticulating as only foreigners can. I told Mrs. Tota that at least half the guests were musicians or singers, and immediately she was all attention.

One gentleman, with long hair and a close-clipped beard, she recognised as a well-known violinist ; and a gentleman with a black moustache and a great bush of rebellious hair, she identified as a celebrated baritone, though he looked strange, she thought, without a frock-coat, lavender kid gloves, and a roll of music in his hands.

In the blue room on the first floor the tables were mostly occupied by couples, and Mrs. Tota wished to know if this was where the married musicians came. The gentleman with the clean-shaven face at the next table to ours, deep in conversation with a very pretty lady in a fur toque, was certainly a doctor, and the gentleman with a white moustache, who had secured the table in the little bow-window, was evidently a soldier ; the two ladies dining *tête-à-tête* did not look musical, but on the first floor, as on the ground floor, the majority of the guests were evidently of the artistic temperament.

The *Bortsch* was excellent, and when the *sole Pagani* made its appearance M. Meschini, the partner of M. Pagani, came to our table to ask whether the dish was approved of. "It is beautiful," said little Mrs. Tota. "What are the wonderful little pink things with such a delicious taste ?" M. Meschini, without moving a muscle of his face, told her that they were shrimps, which, with fresh mushrooms and *moules*, help to give a distinctiveness to this excellent dish. "How was I to know a shrimp without his head and tail and scales ?" said Mrs. Tota, when M. Meschini had moved on.

Mrs. Tota ate some of the *tournedos truffés*,

and gave her opinion that the truffles were perfectly heavenly ; but I preferred to wait for the partridge and its casserole, with all its savoury surroundings. M. Notari, the chef, is an artist in his kitchen, and nowhere in London could we have found a better-cooked bird.

To establish my claim to be critical, I said that I had tasted better *soufflés*, but Mrs. Tota, telling me that I was a pampered Sybarite, ate her helping with perfect content. The two pints of Veuve Clicquot we drank were excellent, and with a Biscuit Pagani, two cups of Café Pagani and liqueurs, we ended a very good dinner.

I paid my bill : bread and butter, 4d. ; hors-d'œuvre, 6d. ; soup, 1s. 6d. ; fish, 2s. ; joint, 2s. ; game, 5s. ; vegetables, 1s. ; sweets, 1s. 6d. ; ices, 1s. ; salad, 10d. ; wine, 14s. ; coffee, 1s. ; liqueurs, 2s. 6d. ; total, £1 : 13 : 2, and then asked M. Meschini to take us upstairs and show us the private dining-room, which is known as the artists' room.

When we came to the little room with its ruby velvet curtains and mantel drapings, its squares of what looks like brown paper, at about the height of a man's head, covered with drawings and writings, and protected by glass, its framed drawings and paintings, Mrs. Tota turned to me and asked me if I often brought my invalid maiden aunt to dine here.

"Invalid maiden aunt ?" I said with astonishment, but remembered in a second that I had mentioned some such relative (or was it an uncle ?) when we dined in the private room at Kettner's. Mrs. Tota laughed and turned to

M. Meschini, who was beginning to explain the various works of art.

The name of Julia Neilson, written in bold characters, catches the eye as soon as any other inscription on these sections of a wall of days gone by; but it is well worth while to take the panels one by one, and to go over these sections of brown plaster inch by inch. Mascagni has written the first bars of one of the airs from "Cavalleria Rusticana," Denza has scribbled the opening bars of "Funiculi, Funicula," Lamoureux has written a tiny hymn of praise to the cook, Ysaye has lamented that he is always tied to "notes," which, with a waiter and a bill at his elbow, might have a double meaning. Phil May has dashed some caricatures upon the wall, a well-meant attempt on the part of a German waiter to wash one of these out having resulted in the "sack" of the said waiter and the glazing of the wall. Mario has drawn a picture of a fashionable lady, and Val Prinsep and a dozen artists of like calibre have, in pencil, or sepia, or pastel, noted brilliant trifles on the wall. Paderewski, Pucchini, Chaminade, Calvé, Piatti, Plançon, De Lucia, Melba, Menpes, Tosti, are some of the signatures; and as little Mrs. Tota read the names she became as serious as if she were in church, for this little chamber is in its way a temple dedicated to the artistic great who have dined.

17th December.

*** I asked M. Meschini if he would be so kind as to give me the *recette* for the *filets de sole Pagani*, and here it is just as he wrote it down for me.

Filets sole Pagani

The sole is first of all filleted, and with the bones, some mussels, and a little white wine, a *fumée de poisson* is made in which the fillets of the sole are then cooked.

The cook takes this *cuisson*, and by adding some well-chopped fresh mushrooms, makes with that what he calls a *réduction;* to this he adds some *velouté*, little cream, fresh butter, some lemon juice, pepper and salt, and cooks the whole together till well mixed, then passes it *à l'étamine*. With this the sauce is made. The cooked fillets of sole and eight or ten mussels are then placed ready on a silver dish, and the above made sauce poured over them. The top is well sprinkled with fresh Parmesan cheese, and after allowing them to *gratiner* for a minute or two, are ready to be put on the customer's table.

CHAPTER XLIII

CLARIDGE'S (BROOK STREET)

THE Princess was passing through town, and wrote that she would graciously deign to dine with me.

The responsibility of giving dinner to a Princess, even though she be not a British Princess, but the bearer of an Italian title, is no light one. Claridge's, "the home of kings," occurred to me at once as the right restaurant at which to entertain Her Highness, for the new and stately hotel that has sprung up in Brook Street has a quiet grandeur that is in keeping with its old nickname.

The Claridge's of the past was a comfortable hotel with convenient suites, but its outside was as philistine as any doctor's house in the street. Now the towering red-brick structure, with its granite columns, looks like a veritable palace. The proprietor in old days was very much in evidence. He felt the responsibility of having Royalty under his roof, and was always waiting in the hall to make his bow. So keenly did he appreciate his proud position that once, when an

enterprising artist took a room at Claridge's, so as to be able to observe a Royal personage who was going to be gently caricatured in a weekly paper, he being made aware that the crime of *lèse-majesté* was being committed, politely but firmly insisted on the artist taking his portmanteau and paint-brushes elsewhere. Royalty might be caricatured, but it should never be said that the crime was committed at Claridge's. Nowadays Claridge's is in the hands of a company, and though, no doubt, M. Mengay, the manager, is present to make his bow when Royalty arrives, he would not dream of expelling an inquisitive artist; indeed, all the caricaturists in Europe would be welcome if they had the wherewithal to pay their bills, for Royalty in the new Claridge's is given a separate house, and so is effectually shielded from prying eyes.

The right touch of grandeur is given in the *porte-cochère*, where the roadway is paved with indiarubber, so that even the horses shall go softly, and where the pavement is of marble. It takes a great number of men—six, I think—to open the doors of Claridge's, and to show the visitor into the hall; and as a great number of servants to do very little is one of the characteristics of Royal residences, the home of kings in this way asserts itself at its gates.

I went in the afternoon to order dinner and secure a table. The six men let me in, and two higher officials were at my service to direct me to the restaurant; but I did not need any guidance, for when the new Claridge's was opened I had wandered at will through all the rooms,

had admired the great stone fireplace in the smoking-room, had passed through the many suites on the higher floors ; Louis Quinze suites, Louis Seize suites, Empire suites, Sheraton and Adams suites, and had peeped into the Royal suite with its blue and green and crimson rooms, and mahogany furniture.

In the restaurant I found an old acquaintance in the shape of M. Deminger, the *maître d'hôtel.* All the small side-tables for the evening were taken, he said ; but a table for four should be converted into a table for two in order that I might be accommodated. The dinner I left to M. Nignon, the *chef de cuisine*, whose handiwork I knew well when he was at Paillard's, and M. Nobile, the manager, asking only that the dinner should be short, and saying that though I wanted a good dinner I did not, as I am not a crowned head or a very wealthy man, want an inordinately expensive one.

At eight punctually the Princess arrived, and was received with ceremony by the six at the doors. She was wearing her sable cloak, which always seems to me to be longer and handsomer than the furs worn by other women, and a dress of delicate black lace over some soft white material. The pearls and diamonds that are one of the heirlooms of her husband's family, were round her throat, and there was a sparkle of diamonds amidst the lace of her dress.

The restaurant at Claridge's is a dignified room. The windows are draped with deep red curtains and purple portières ; the carpet carries on the scheme of quiet reds, and the chairs have

morocco backs of vermilion, with the arms of the hotel stamped on them in gold. The white plaster ceiling is supported by great arches, the bases of which and the walls of which are panelled with darkish oak, into which patterns in olive wood are set. The quiet-footed waiters in evening clothes, with the arms of the hotel as a badge on the lapels of their coats, are in keeping with the room. It is a restaurant that is essentially quiet, a restaurant where hurry on the part of the diners would be out of place, a restaurant where good digestion should be inseparable from appetite. The music of the band under Meyer van Praag lends itself to the benevolent atmosphere of the place. It is soft enough and far away enough not to interfere with conversation. One of the lessons that most restaurant managers refuse to learn is that an aggressive band spoils a good dinner.

This was the menu that M. Rouget, the second *maître d'hôtel*, laid down by my plate as we took our seats :—

Hors-d'œuvre variés.
Crème Princesse.
Sole d'Aumale.
Poulet de grain à la Carifnon.
Délice de jambon frappé au champagne.
Bécassine flambée Empire.
Salade d'endive.
Asperges Anglaises à la d'Yvette.
Bombe Claridge.
Petits fours.

While I was reading this through with appreciation the Princess was looking round

the room and at the people dining. The wide spaces left between the tables met with her thorough approval, for the fact that one's neighbours hear every word that one says at many of the London restaurants is not an incentive to conversation. A lady in white at the next table to ours also met with approval, and the Princess, serenely secure in the consciousness of being perfectly dressed, could afford to praise another woman's gown. Four men dining together at the tables drew from the Princess what sounded to me like a long extract from "Debrett," and I added an item of information as to the owner of a handsome face that was to be seen at one time on the stage, and which marriage withdrew from the gaze of the public.

While we trifled with the *hors-d'œuvre* the manager came to our table, and in the course of conversation told us that the Portuguese Ambassador had entertained H.R.H. the Prince of Wales in one of the private dining-rooms the evening before. I felt inclined to say that I, too, entertained the great ones of the earth at Claridge's, but I reflected that humility was becoming in me, even though a Princess had been kind enough to dine with me.

The thick soup was good; but in no way remarkable. I do not care for thick soups, and the Princess only took a few spoonfuls from her plate. The sole, with its oysters and truffles, was very well cooked, and so was the chicken, with its savoury stuffing of macaroni and truffles. The *délice de jambon* was a triumph, light and dainty, with a delicate blending of flavours, a

dish which marked the man who made it as an artist in his calling. The *bécassine* was a toothsome mouthful, the asparagus was good, and the *bombe Claridge* was as admirable in its way as the *délice* had been. An excellent dinner, as a whole, with two dishes that were supreme works of culinary art. We drank the wine of the good widow Clicquot.

I paid my bill. Two couverts, 2s.; hors-d'œuvre, 2s.; crème Princesse, 4s.; sole, 4s. 6d.; poulet de grain, 12s.; mousse jambon, 4s. 6d.; bécassine, 10s.; salade, 1s. 6d.; asperges, 8s.; bombe, 3s.; café, 2s.; liqueurs, 3s. 6d.; wines, 15s.; total, £3 : 12s.

Dinner over, we sat in the comfortable reading-room, where the chairs of blue silk striped velvet match the cerulean tint of the walls, until the brougham was announced, and the Princess was duly ushered out by the faithful six.

24th December.

*** M. Nignon, the chef of Claridge's, was in days past the chef at Paillard's in Paris, the best-known perhaps of all the restaurants there. He has brought with him to Claridge's many specialities in cooking. This is a list of the dishes which he has given me as specialities of the Claridge's cuisine.

Potages

Bortsch à la Russe—Consommé Madrileine—Consommé à la Parme—Consommé Czarmina—Consommé veloutine à l'Impérial—Crème Comtesse—Crème Waleska—Crème de chapon Virien—Crème ambassadrice.

Poissons

Truite saumonnée à la d'Artois—Truite saumonnée à la Villard—Turbotin soufflé à la Maréchale—Turbotin au vin du Rhin à l'Allemande—Sole à la d'Aubigny—Sole au madère à la

Valois—Suprême de sole à la Valiéra—Suprême de sole en épigramme à la Mondaine—Suprême de sole à la d'Orléans—D'Artois de sole à la Polignac—Huîtres à la Kotchoubey.

Entrées

Noisettes de filet de bœuf à la Ropan—Noisettes de filet de bœuf à la Colbert—Tournedos à la Valencia—Tournedos à la Chancellière—Tournedos à la Cambacères—Tournedos à la Valence—Médaillon de pré-salé Chanford—Médaillon de pré-salé à la Cléo de Mérode—Noisettes d'agneau Ainélie—Noisettes d'agneau Beaumanoir—Côte de bœuf flambée Empire—Filet de bœuf flambé à la Brechlair—Cœur de filet de bœuf Cancléan—Poularde Rozollie—Poularde soufflé à la Royale—Poularde à la bière à la Russe—Poularde St-Cloud—Poulet reine au fumet à la Carignon—Poulet reine à la Florentine.

Chaudes et Froides.—Mousseline de jambon chaude au champagne—Mousse de poularde au porto doré—Mousseline d'épinards à la Maintenon—Mousse de langue chaude à l'Ecarlatée—Mousse de foie gras chaude à la Parisienne.

Froides.—Jeannette de poularde—Délices de pois—Ballotine de volaille sur socle.

Entrées Froides

Ris de veau à la Norvégienne—Aspic de volaille à la Ducale—Caneton de Rouen à la Claridge—Caneton de Rouen en surprise—Ramequin au nid—Poularde cendrillon—Terrine de foie gras au porto à la Savaraff—Croustade de blanc de volaille Châtelaine.

Poissons Froids

Darne de saumon à la Pickla—Truite saumonnée à la Suédoise—Truite saumonnée Ratelière—Langouste à la Césarine—Homarde à la Parisienne—Escalopes de turbot Bagration—Turban de suprême de sole Victoria—Turbotin à la Moscovite—Queues d'écrevisses en chartreuse—Mousse de homard Le Run—Salade de poisson à la Russe

Entremets

Ponchardrin à la Bourdalouse—Soufflé Palfit—Soufflé Vizir—Soufflé Metternich—Mignon soufflé à l'Orange.

Glaces

Bombe Claridge—Bombe Suzette—Bombe Prince de Galles—Biscuit Tortone—Cremolata—Pain d'Espagne Comtesse Marie—Pièces Vénitiennes—Tutti frutti—Trauch Canelli—Orange crémeuse—Fraises Archiduchesse.

CHAPTER XLIV

HÔTEL DE PARIS (LEICESTER PLACE)

He is a rising young artist with an idea, an idea which is, or was, to make him and me rich beyond dreams of avarice; all that is wanted now being a publisher who will see matters in the same light that the rising young artist does, and who will spend a hundred thousand pounds to back his belief.

Gentlemen, do not all speak at once.

The rising young artist wanted to talk to me quietly for an hour, to unfold his brilliant idea, and it seemed to me that it would be an economy of time to eat dinner and learn how a fortune can be made at one and the same time.

"Let us go to some very quiet place, then," said the rising artist, "for if any one were to overhear he might forestall us, and then——" The rising artist shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands; and I saw the possibilities of a steam yacht, and a shooting-box in Scotland, and a couple of horses in training at Newmarket all vanishing into air.

Such a calamity as being forestalled should

not occur if I could help it, I said: and appointed a meeting at a club whence we would walk to a dining-place; and the particular dining-place I had in my mind's eye was the Hôtel de Paris, in Leicester Place, which is quiet, has no disturbing element in the form of a band, and is almost entirely patronised by French people, who probably would not have understood the rising artist's idea, even if they had overheard it.

The Hôtel de Paris does not thrust itself upon the public gaze. You pass between the two great restaurants that are springing into existence in Leicester Square. To the right is the modest façade of the French Embassy chapel. To the left a lamp, with "Hôtel de Paris" on it, marks the hotel, and a large framed bill of fare shows that here also is the restaurant. Passing through a little hall, where a page and hall-porter bow with exceeding politeness, you turn to the right and find a glass door, with the word "Restaurant" on it, facing you.

The rising artist was punctual to his appointment, and by a quarter to eight we were settled down at a table for two in the restaurant, a T-shaped room, with two arches where the upright of the T joins the cross-line; and M. Conrarie, the manager, his moustaches turned upwards and his frock-coat of the neatest, was standing by, while a waiter, in plain evening clothes, submitted to us the menu of the *table-d'hôte* dinner for the day. This was it:—

Printanier Royal. Crème de céleri.
Cabillaud. Sauce Hollandaise. Blanchille.
Poulet au riz. Tête de veau en tortue.

Filet de bœuf. Tomates farcies.
Epinards à la crème.
Panier Chantilly.
Dessert.

We made our selection of dishes, and I ordered a bottle of 1889 Perrier Jouet ; for the building up of a fortune could not be talked over with the accompaniment of any meaner wine than champagne.

The rising artist looked carefully round the rooms. It is a pretty restaurant, with a paper of gold sprays of foliage on a blue background, with many mirrors, with the green of palm-leaves by the two arches, with painted-glass windows, with electric lights dependent from the papered ceiling and in red and yellow shaded lamps on the tables. The tables are dotted about the room at convenient distances, and it was at the diners sitting at these tables that the rising artist was looking curiously to assure himself that what he was going to say would not be overheard. The diners, with the exception of ourselves, were all foreigners. An old Frenchman, with a white moustache and black silk cravat tied in a great bow, was giving dinner to a smooth-faced youth who probably was his son. Next to them was a gentleman with a peaked beard who looked like a musician ; then three young men with down on their chins talking eagerly and gesticulating vehemently. A gentleman with a very long beard who talked English with a foreign accent to the waiter, and who possibly was a Russian, was at the table next to

us, and through the arches we could see a hat with black feathers and a dainty little profile of a face with a tip-tilted nose, as well as more Frenchmen, fat and thin, bearded and clean-shaven.

The rising artist was apparently satisfied with his scrutiny; and, as I dallied with a sardine and he with some other *hors-d'œuvre*, he opened the proceedings by asking me what I intended to do with my half of the fortune we were going to make. Being a practical and prudent man, I said that that depended upon the number of tens of thousands a year that we should realise, but that I had already decided on buying a large steam yacht and hiring a moor in Scotland and having a few horses in training.

The soup then made its appearance, and did not meet with our approval, for the chef had remedied a lack of strength by a liberal sprinkling from the sauce-bottle. It was not in keeping with the excellently-cooked dishes that followed.

The rising artist was going to spend his thousands in a different manner. He thought of building such a house and studio as London had never seen before. His collection of modern pictures was going to be small but very good, while a few *chefs-d'œuvre* of the old masters—Velasquez, Van Dyck, and Rembrandt for choice—would satisfy him. He did not care about racing or shooting, but his carriage horses would be the best obtainable, and he thought of building a tennis-court when he bought a little house in the country.

The whitebait was excellently cooked, and

led us into conversation as to the cooks we should presently require. A Frenchman who had at some time served under the great Cubat and understood Russian dishes was my idea of what would be my requirements, while the rising artist simply thought of going to Maître Escoffier and asking him for the best cook he had under him at the time.

The rising artist said that the *poulet au riz* was well cooked, and my *tête de veau* was succulent and beautifully hot. I began to think that it was about time that my young friend propounded his idea ; but he lingered lovingly over the details of his studio and tennis-court, and seemed more inclined to tell me how to spend the money than how to make it.

The *filet de bœuf* was cooked exactly to a Frenchman's taste, a trifle too much for an Englishman's ; the tomatoes and spinach were all that could be wished.

"Now," I said, "let's hear all about your wonderful idea."

The rising artist looked round again to be sure that nobody, not even a waiter, was within hearing, and then whispered across the table the broad lines of the plan he had conceived for making our joint fortune. When he had finished he leaned back in his chair with the triumphant air of a man who has laid the ace, king, queen, and knave of trumps on the table. I was thinking that the champagne was far too good for the idea.

The cream in its bread casing was put before us and I ordered coffee and liqueurs. "Where do

you expect to find a publisher who'll risk tens or hundreds of thousands to do this?" I asked.

"Oh, *any* publisher with *any* pluck will jump at it," said the rising artist airily. "It will be part of your share of the work to find our man."

I paid the bill: two dinners, 6s.; two cafés spéciaux, 1s.; champagne, 14s.; two fine champagnes, 1s. 6d.; total, £1 : 2 : 6; shook hands with the rising artist, and told him I was going out to try and find that publisher. If any one knows of a publisher who would be likely to risk, say, £100,000 in carrying out an artistic idea, I should be glad of his name and address.

28th January.

CHAPTER XLV

THE WALSINGHAM HOUSE (PICCADILLY)

"OH, yes," said my maiden aunt. "I read of your going out to dinners and taking actresses and grass-widows and other pretty ladies to dine. I wonder you are not tired of so much frivolity."

I answered meekly that the worthlessness of my life was often felt seriously by me, and that I took actresses and grass-widows out to dinner because they were kind enough to say that they enjoyed such little outings; but that I would really prefer much more serious company.

My aunt drew down the corners of her mouth and looked at me through her spectacles with supreme disapproval.

"If I could only," I went on, revelling in my wickedness, "secure a missionary lady, or a captain in the Salvation Army, or a shining light of the Pioneer Club, or even one of my maiden aunts, as a dining companion, do you think for a moment that I would dally with the butterflies of the pasture or the stage?"

My maiden aunt was so angry that she sniffed. "As if you would think of asking us!" she said

with a snap. "I have noticed you have been facetious at the expense of an imaginary invalid aunt; but you would be very sorry to ask me out really."

"But I do ask you. It would be one of the greatest honours of my life to entertain you at dinner."

My aunt sat silent for a moment or two, her lips so tightly shut that they were almost white. Then there came a tiny twinkle in her eyes. "Very well," she said, "when you name an evening I'll come—just to punish you."

I felt afterwards that I had done a bold thing, and while I was about it I rather regretted that I had not asked my grave and spectacled relative to sup at a Bohemian restaurant—the contrast would have been as delicious as a *soufflé en surprise;* but dinner it had to be, and as the good lady told all the rest of the family that I had asked her to dinner, but was meanly trying to get out of the offer, I wrote a formal invitation requesting the pleasure of her company at the Walsingham House at 8 P.M., and to this I received a formal answer of acceptance.

The Walsingham House restaurant is in the house which the Isthmian Club occupied so long, and it forms part of the block of chambers and hotels that stretches from the Green Park to Arlington Street. Its name in great gilt letters stands out boldly on the red-brick face; and the twin entrances, with glass shelters, one to the dwelling-house, the other to the restaurant, have become well-known features of Piccadilly. A flight of steps leads up from the door to the

restaurant, and at the top of these stairs there is a comfortable ante-room; but I preferred to wait by the fireplace in the hall, so as to be on the spot when my aunt arrived.

She came in a four-wheeler, the driver of which is a special retainer of hers. He is sober and he goes to church, and as the possessor of these two cardinal virtues, he is retained to drive my aunt on all special occasions. I saw the glint of her spectacles through the cab window, and went out to welcome her.

"Well, I've come, you see," she said with a certain amount of grimness; and when I said that that was the proudest moment of my life, she bridled and tossed her head to show how much faith she put in speeches of that kind. I told the faithful cabman that he had better be in evidence at half-past nine, and then I waited on the landing while my aunt went up to the region of the second floor to leave her cloak.

When she reappeared, I found that she was in her raiment of ceremony, and felt duly honoured. She was wearing her best black silk dress, a dress of such richness of silk that—so the family tradition goes—it will stand up of itself, and her most highly ornamented lace cap. She had her thick gold chain on, her brooch of rose diamonds, and her long enamel earrings. I ushered her in to the table for two, which I had reserved, and she settled down with a rustle, and then looked round somewhat defiantly.

"Are you well known here?" she asked, and I said that I occasionally lunched or dined in the restaurant. "I only hope that they won't take

me for one of your actress friends—that's all," she said, and, do what I could, I could not prevent the corners of my mouth from twitching. I was told severely that it was no laughing matter ; and, putting her fan down by her plate, my aunt took up the menu and read it through :—

Hors-d'œuvre.
Croûte au pot. Mock turtle.
Filets de sole Dutru.
Tournedos Walsingham.
Pommes soufflées.
Suprême de volaille Jeannette.
Canard sauvage.
Salade.
Artichauts Hollandaises.
Glaces Napolitaines.
Patisserie.

My respected relative knows what constitutes a good dinner as well as anybody does ; and though she would have dearly loved to be able to pick a hole in the menu, she put it down with a satisfied expression, and, indeed, except for the *croûte au pot*, which is to me what King Charles's head was to poor Mr. Dick, it was a very well-considered dinner.

I ate the mock turtle, very good soup, but still a foreigner's idea of what is a thoroughly Britannic dish, and while I did so my aunt, who had refused soup, sat and watched me. "You have been getting terribly stout of late years," she said, as I put down my spoon, "and for a man with a neck like yours that is dangerous. There is apoplexy in the family ; one of your

poor dear great-uncles died in an apoplectic fit. He always ate and drank too much, poor fellow."

The *filets de sole*, with their slight flavouring of cheese and accompanying shrimps and *moules*, were excellent. My aunt supped her champagne, and the corners of her mouth relaxed. But she still had some ammunition to fire away. "You were not at church last Sunday," she said with severity; but that was a matter I declined to discuss while eating dinner, and, to change the subject, I drew her attention to the beauties of the room, the deep frieze admirably painted with subjects of the chase, showing how our skin-clad ancestors collected their venison and game birds, the cunningly concealed lights, the panelling of inlaid woods, the white pillars and cornices just touched with gold, the comfortable brown-red carpet and chairs to match it, the curtains of deep crimson velvet, the ceiling with its little cupids floating on roseate clouds; and the old lady nodded her head in approval. M. Renato, the spick-and-span little manager; the waiters with white waistcoats, gold buttons to their coats, and a thin piping of gold on their collars; the band playing subdued music, the brass candelabra on the table with red shades, the fine napery and glass, were all noted by her. I told my aunt that the coat-of-arms on the china, supported by two griffins scratching their backs with their noses, were the arms of the De Greys, and with a "Hoity-toity!" I was requested not to give her lectures in heraldry.

The *tournedos Walsingham*, with truffles, *fonds d'artichauts* and a pink sauce so cunningly

mixed that one could not tell what the ingredients were, showed the artistic hand of M. Dutru; and the cold entrée, the *suprême de volaille* served on a rock of glass, was excellent. My aunt by now was in an inquiring mood, and wanted to know if there were any of my actress friends among the many diners—for by half-past eight nearly every table was occupied. I was sorry that I could not show her any lights of the stage, but I could tell her of the Irish lord who was giving a family dinner-party, of the old general dining *tête-à-tête* with his son, and of the three foreign attachés who were inventing fables as to the Dreyfus case for each other's benefit.

The duck, the artichokes, and the ice were all that they should be, and my aunt was thoroughly pleased, for she told me, smilingly, that she had always considered me the scapegrace of the family.

I paid my bill. Two dinners, 15s.; two cafés doubles, 1s. 6d.; champagne, 15s.; liqueurs, 2s.; total, £1 : 13 : 6.

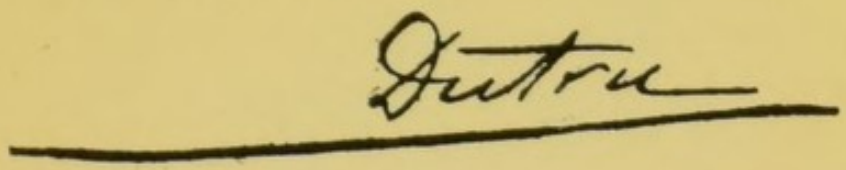
The faithful cabman was waiting outside, and as my aunt got into the cab she tapped me on the arm with her fan, and said that she had enjoyed herself.

Perhaps, after all, the old lady will remember me in her will.

21*st January*.

*** I asked Mons. Gelardi, the manager of the Walsingham House, if he would be so kind as to give me the *recette* for the *tournedos Walsingham*, and M. Dutru very kindly wrote it out for me.

Faire sauter les tournedos à feu vif: dresser sur fonds d'artichauts et saucer d'une sauce madère avec lames de truffes; envoyer à part une saucière de Béarnaise à la tomate et pommes.



Cook your tournedos over a quick fire, place them on *fonds d'artichauts* and add Madeira sauce and sliced truffles. Serve separately Béarnaise sauce *à la tomate* and potatoes.

M. Gelardi also told me of a dinner for fifty people that was to be served at the Walsingham the next night, and showed me the menu.

Hors-d'œuvre.
Caviar. Saumon fumé.
Tortue claire. Velouté printanier Royal.
Truite saumonée glacée au champagne.
Sole à la Meunière.
Filets de poulet aux truffes. Petits pois à l'anglaise.
Selle d'agneau de Galles. Artichauts aux frais herbes.
Suprême de cailles Valsingham.
Timbale d'écrevisses Américaine.
Sorbet au Clicquot Rosé.
Caneton de Rouen Rouennaise.
Salade Rachel.
Asperges d'Argenteuil hollandaise.
Cerise Jubilé. Bombe Alaska.
Friandises.
Soufflé au Paprica. Dessert.

CHAPTER XLVI

CHALLIS'S (RUPERT STREET)

I FELT like an extract from a Christmas story after the manner of Charles Dickens. I was the unfortunate, desponding individual driven at Christmas time to eat a solitary dinner in a deserted club, and as I sat down to the little table, with three waiters regarding me with placid curiosity, I felt a savage discontent that no spirit of a dead sweetheart of days gone by, no child-angel, would appear to me as they always do to the morose heroes of Christmas stories.

I had been reduced to solitude, moroseness, and a club dinner by the possession of two tickets for Barnum and Bailey's great show at Olympia. It was the day after Boxing Day, and I felt sure in the afternoon that I should find a companion eager to see the performance and previously to dine quietly at some little restaurant where dress-clothes would not be *en règle*. Somehow or other I found it very difficult to secure my man. It was the dream of the life of every man I met to go to Olympia; but not to go there on Tuesday night. If I could change the tickets for others

for Wednesday, or Thursday, or Friday night I could have had a choice of fifty companions, but on Tuesday all the married men said they had to dine at home with their wives; all the unmarried ones had some other engagement. I began to feel that I was shunned by mankind, and instead of thinking that I was conferring a great favour by an offer of the spare ticket, I adopted an almost imploring tone, begging for companionship.

I wandered from club to club, taking a gloomy pleasure in the sloppy streets and the vestiges of the gale of the night before. They fitted well with my growing melancholy. It was too late to send the tickets back and to go home and dine. I had to dree my weird, and, like the Wandering Jew, I moved on from place to place, seeking a companion and finding none.

At the last club I went to—a little Bohemian club—I found my man. He was playing dominoes. When I interrupted the game to ask him if he would dine with me and come to Olympia, instead of making an excuse, as the others had done, he said that nothing in the world would please him better. He had to go home for a minute or to, but would be back, he said, at the club at a quarter to seven. We would stroll over to some bright, cheap restaurant and have a mouthful of food, and then take cab and see the horses and gymnasts, freaks and miniature warships. I felt I had at all events one friend in the world.

A quarter to seven came and the club was deserted by everybody except a member asleep

in an armchair and myself. I sat and watched the clock, and three waiters stood by the little tables at the end of the room and looked at me and talked in whispers to each other. The minute-hand drew gradually up to the hour, and as it did so I sank down into the depths of despondency. My friend had deserted me, basely deserted me, or else he was killed, run over perhaps, or struck by a falling chimney. The minute-hand went on to five minutes past, the member in the armchair snored gently and regularly, the waiters seemed to look at me pityingly. Pity from a waiter I could not endure. I got up and went over to one of the little tables and sat down. The waiters looked placidly pleased. I was relieving the monotony of their lives. I said I would take the club dinner and a whisky-and-soda, and when two of the waiters faded away, the other remained on guard. I put my elbows on the table, and my head in my hands, and felt that I was indeed the morose hero of pathetic Christmas magazine literature.

My soup was brought, and a whisky-and-soda deposited tenderly by the side of the plate, when the door was flung open, and in came my missing friend clothed in evening dress and radiant. There was an engagement he had forgotten: he was taking a lady to dine at Challis's—new little place of Baker's—a thousand apologies—I must cancel club dinner and come over—couldn't keep the lady waiting—see me again in two minutes. And he was out of the room again like a well-dressed whirlwind.

I did cancel the rest of my club dinner, to the

suppressed grief of the three waiters, who saw thus the only relief to their boredom vanish. I put on hat and coat and walked through the darkness and slush to Rupert Street, where two great ornamental lamps made a brave splash of light in the gloom, and where a tablet of opal glass with ruby lettering on it, dependent from a highly-ornamental glass and metal door-shelter, set forth that here was the restaurant of Challis's Hotel.

To go from the darkness of the street by the direct door into the restaurant is like the transition in the pantomine from the Realms of the Demon Gloom to the Glittering Palace of the Good Fairy; and, in my splashed boots and morning attire, I felt like the solitary scene-shifter who is generally "discovered" in the midst of the glittering scene when the front cloth rises.

Challis's Restaurant consists of two rooms, opening one into the other, one decorated after the manner of the Louis XIV. period, and the other after the manner of the Louis XV. period. Both are as pretty as a bride-cake or a silk Watteau fan. White and gold and soft colour are everywhere. The ceilings are painted with clouds and little roseate deities, and echoes of Fragonard, and the other courtly painters of dainty sylvan dreams are in the panels of the wall. The place blazes with electric light, a starry constellation in the ceiling, lights shaded with blue and pink and old-gold shades in brackets on the wall, and on the table candle-lamps crowned with deep red shades. A palm topping

a little chiffonnier of white wood, a fireplace with pillars of white-and-gold, and little bronzes on the mantelpiece; chairs of dark wood, in keeping with the period; a carpet of deep red, and in one corner a little counter of white wood, with a pretty little lady behind it. Such was as much as I can remember of the setting of a scene in which I should not have been the least surprised to have seen little *abbés* and *marquises* feasting on syllabub and various dainties, and dancing pavanes and minuets and gavottes between the courses.

A waiter in white waistcoat and with gold buttons to his coat, was waiting to take my coat and hat, and my friend was beckoning me to a table where he was sitting with a pretty lady in evening dress.

I was introduced, but did not catch the pretty lady's name. She seemed to look upon it as being the most natural thing in the world that I should have been brought away half-way through one dinner to eat another, and so did my friend; and as it all seemed to be part of a Christmas story, it all became natural to me. If Santa Claus and St. George and the Dragon had come in and taken seats at one of the neighbouring tables I do not think that on that particular night I should have thought the matter called for any particular remark. Every man but myself was in dress clothes, and I felt very like the Ugly Duckling; but the unknown pretty lady did not allow me to be ill at ease. She talked, and talked admirably, on subject after subject, gliding from pictures to theatres, from

books to music, with perfect ease and knowledge. My friend sat in silent contentment, and I in a dazed state of wonder as to who this clever pretty lady might be, and how it was my friend could have forgotten his appointment with her, and I felt very thankful to her for being at the trouble to talk to a mud-splashed outcast like myself. This was the menu—

Hors-d'œuvre variés.
Consommé aux Profiterolles. Crème Jackson.
Blanchailles.
Civet de lièvre à la Française.
Aloyau à la moderne.
Poulet rôti au cresson. Salade.
Choux à la crème.
Glace aux apricots.
Petits fours.
Dessert.

The whitebait, which was the first dish I tasted, was good. The beef and the chicken were both as good as the market affords. We drank a light hock which was eminently drinkable, and when M. Coccioletti, in explanation, as he presented the bill, said to my friend, "Three dinners at 3s. 6d.," it struck me that I had eaten a very good dinner for that price.

"Good-bye, old fellow—explain next time we meet—hope you'll have a good time at Olympia," was what my friend said as he helped the fair unknown into a brougham, and got in after her. She smiled at me. I was left on the doorstep with the awful responsibility of those two tickets for Barnum and Bailey's show.

31*st December*.

CHAPTER XLVII

EPITAUX'S (THE HAYMARKET)

THE handwriting on the letter was familiar. The letter bore a U.S.A. stamp. I wondered why Miss Dainty, of all the principal London theatres, whom I had seen off one day last summer from St. Pancras, whence she started for the land of Dollars, and from whom I had not heard since, should have suddenly found reason to correspond with me.

Miss Dainty informed me that she was having a high old time in the States, that she was drawing a princely salary, that Jack, the fighting fox-terrier, was very well and as pugnacious as ever, and that she had not yet made up her mind which of the many wealthy men who had laid their money-bags at her feet she was going to marry. The real reason of the letter lay in the last sentence, in which she told me that a real nice girl who had been her room-mate on tour, was coming to England, to join a theatrical company, by the steamer that would carry her letter, and would I, she wrote, be of any service to the fair stranger I could, for her sake.

I wrote to the theatre introducing myself, at Miss Dainty's desire, asking if I could be of any service, and suggesting to Miss Belle that if she would be kind enough to let me talk to her for half an hour, I should like to do so on Sunday across a dinner-table, and proposing Epitaux's in the Haymarket as being quiet and bright.

Miss Belle, in a little letter ending, "Yours cordially," wrote that she would be pleased to dine, and added that Miss Dainty had often spoken of me.

In one matter Epitaux's is deficient—there is no entrance lounge or waiting-room. A very smart little buffet, with ornamental glass windows, faces the street, and alongside this a narrow entrance passage, gorgeous in white and gold, leads to a short flight of steps and the glass doors which shield the restaurant. I had asked Miss Belle to dine at eight, and I waited at the street entrance, hoping that instinct would point her out to me when she arrived.

Two men drove up in a hansom. A brougham disgorged a married couple. Then a hansom came with a clatter down the Haymarket, pulled up, and a lady, good-looking and very becomingly attired, opened the doors and prepared to get out. The commissionaire put the guard over the wheel, and Miss Belle, for there could be no doubt that it was she, jumped down before I had time to introduce myself and offer a hand.

Miss Belle said a pretty word or two as to the invitation to dinner, and hoped she was not late; and as we went up the entrance passage she told me that she considered Miss Dainty the

sweetest girl upon earth, and that she would have recognised me from the picture that Miss Dainty had shown her.

Miss Belle allowed me to help her off with her coat, while I explained that I had chosen Epitaux's for our dining-place because it is comparatively small, and that I was not likely to miss her arrival, as might have happened at Princes' or the Savoy. The pretty lady, looking round the dainty *bonbonnière* of a restaurant—with its walls of the lightest cream colour, its pilasters and cornices picked out with gold, its panels of deep blue-green stamped velvet, its musicians' gallery filled with palms, under which in a glass-enclosed room a young lady in black serves out the wines and liqueurs, its blaze of electric lights on the walls and its shaded lights on the tables—approved thoroughly of my choice. She had been at parties at Princes' and the Savoy, the Cecil and Romano's, since she arrived a fortnight ago; but she thought Epitaux's, which was new to her, very snug and nice.

I hoped that Miss Belle had had a good passage, but she had not; and I trusted that to make up for bad weather she had had pleasant fellow-passengers; but the passengers seemed to have been as indifferent as the weather.

Messrs. Costa and Rizzi, the two proprietors—one tall, with a moustache that a cavalryman might envy; the other short, with a grizzled beard—had been hovering by the table, and the head waiter, with the *carte de jour* in one hand, and the menu of the *table-d'hôte* dinner in the other, was waiting for orders.

I chose the *table-d'hôte* dinner—

Hors-d'œuvre variés.
Croûte au pot. Crème Dubarry.
Filets de sole Portugaise. Whitebait.
Côtelettes d'agneau aux pointes d'asperges.
Canard sauvage. Salade.
Céleri à la moëlle.
Biscuit glacé au chocolat.
Canapé de laitances à la Diable.
Dessert.

—and ordered a bottle of G. H. Mumm, 1889. Miss Belle, having settled down into conversational mood, told me that she had rooms in a house in Bloomsbury in which some of the other ladies of the company lived. "We girls go about together. We go everywhere, and nobody ever says anything to us. Yes, sir. That is one thing I will say about Englishmen, as a rule they are not fresh." She was quite surprised that English girls did not do the same. In the security of this sisterhood there was nowhere she and the other girls could not go. The night before, five of them had taken a private room at the Trocadéro, and had supped by themselves with great content, rejoicing in the absence of man. The London policemen were the institutions that "in your dirty old town" met with thorough approval from Miss Belle. She warranted them polite and ready to answer questions. "If you ask anything of a New York policeman you get a hard look back and that's all."

The *croûte au pot* was strong, but too salt.

I am, perhaps, prejudiced against the eternal *croûte au pot* and *petite marmite*. Miss Belle, who took the thick soup, approved of it highly. The *filets de sole Portugaise* were admirable.

We had a table at the far end of the room from the kitchen, which accounted for the whitebait, excellently cooked as it was, not being as hot as whitebait should be.

I felt that I had cross-examined Miss Belle as much as politeness allowed, so I told her something of the history of Epitaux's; how the site was originally that of Foote's Theatre in the Haymarket—Foote the witty buffoon, who was a big enough man in his day to pose as a rival to Garrick—and how at a later period it became the Café de l'Europe. Here, in the ante-early-closing days, after the midnight farce at the Haymarket Theatre next door, the stern critics of the pit would come to eat their chop, or Welsh-rabbit, or tripe and onions, and talk learnedly of plays and players till two in the morning. And I told Miss Belle of the old Epitaux's in the Opera colonnade, the name of which has been transferred to the new establishment in the Haymarket; how in the early Victorian days it was one of the very few restaurants where good French cookery could be found, and how the Iron Duke and other famous men used to give little dinner-parties there.

Then Miss Belle took up the running, and told me of the restaurants of modern New York, of the up-town Delmonico's, which has been built since I crossed the herring-pond, and of

Sherry's, Martin's, Burns's, and Shandley's, the three latter Bohemian, but not the less comfortable for that.

The cutlets were excellent, and the asparagus the best I have tasted this winter, while the duck was cooked to an absolute nicety. The *biscuit glacé au chocolat* was as delightful and evanescent as a good dream. Altogether it was a very good dinner, though the cook *did* have a little accident with the salt-cellar in preparing the *croûte au pot*.

Miss Belle told me of her tour in the same company with Miss Dainty, of adventures at "one-night stands," of cowboys who brought their bronchos for the ladies of the company to ride, and other tales that amused me much while we drank our coffee and liqueurs. "Guess I've talked a streak," she said, when in a pause I asked for my bill.

Two dinners, 15s.; two cafés, 1s.; champagne, 14s.; liqueurs, 2s.; total £1 : 12s., was what I paid.

4th January.

THE END

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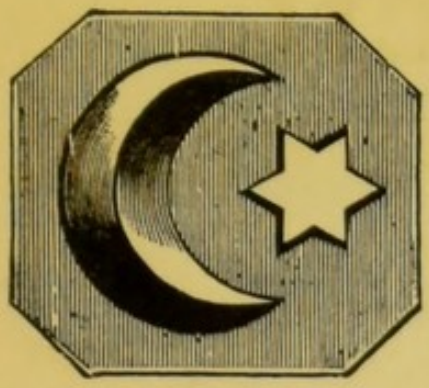

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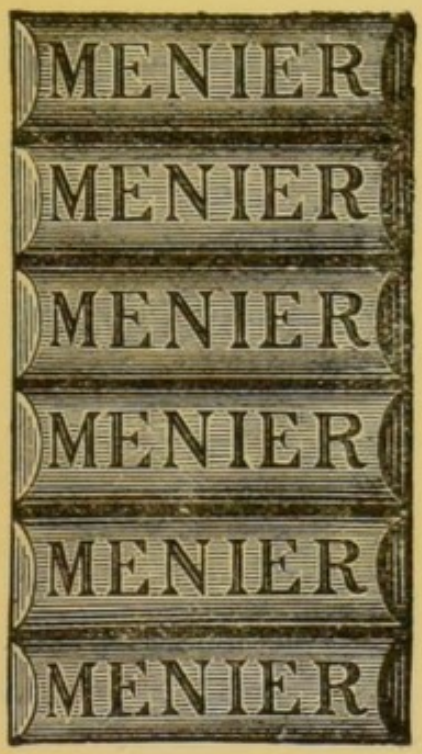

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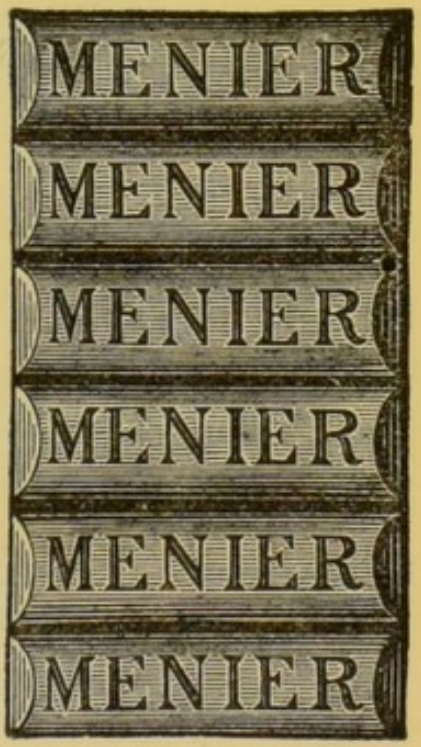

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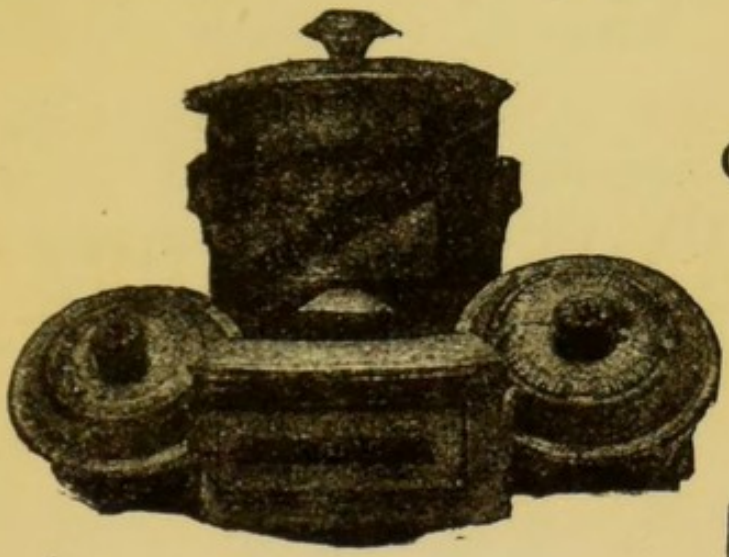

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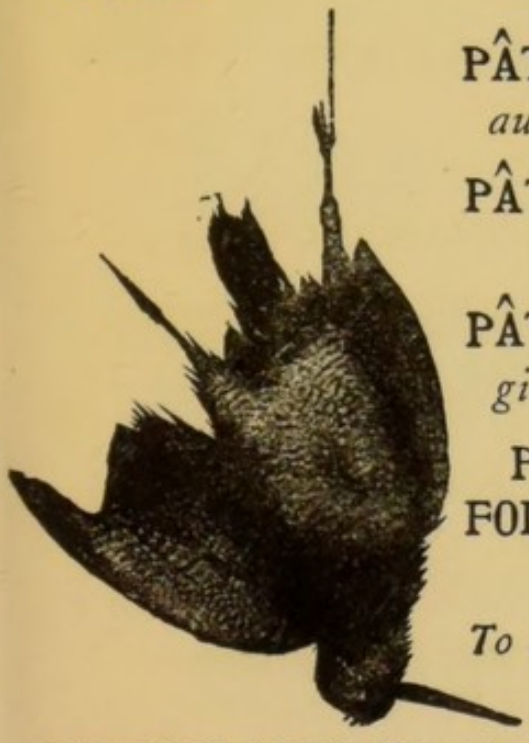

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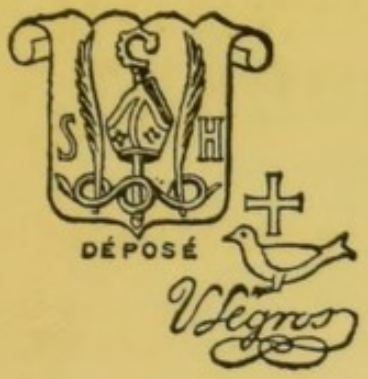

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